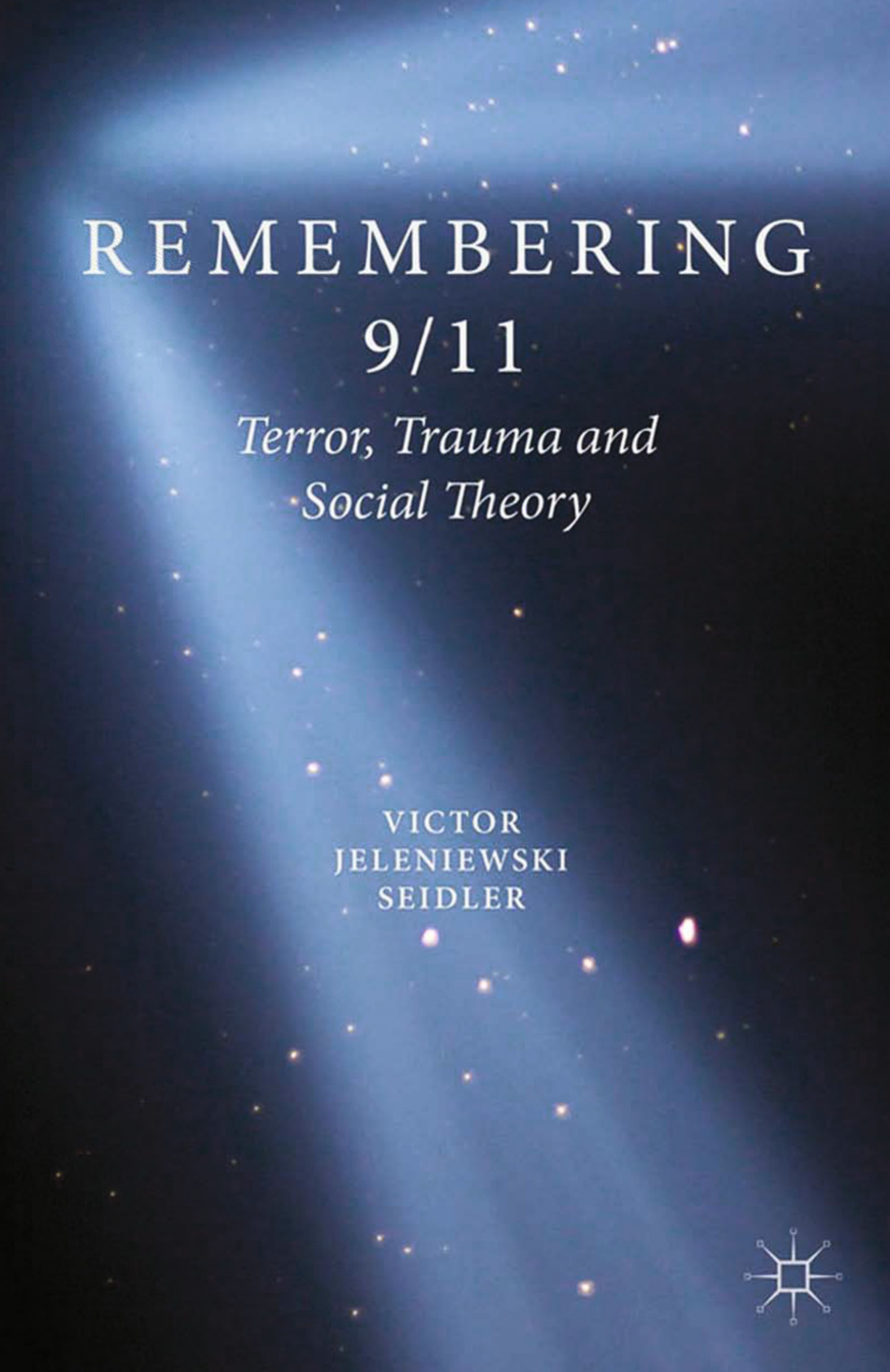

REMEMBERING 9/11

Terror, Trauma and Social Theory

VICTOR
JELENIEWSKI
SEIDLER

Remembering 9/11

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JEWISH PHILOSOPY AND WESTERN CULTURE

REMEMBERING DIANA: Cultural Memory and the Reinvention of Authority

Remembering 9/11

Terror, Trauma and Social Theory

Victor Jeleniewski Seidler
Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

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In memory of all those who died on 9/11 and in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that followed

'Not to know suffering means not to be a human being.'

Genesis Rabbah 92:1

'Just as the water reflects one' s face, so does one's heart reflect other human hearts.'

Proverbs 21:1

'This age ... surprised by its tragedy, it longs for diversion, and catching itself in the act it looks for words.'

Karl Kraus

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Preface: Remembering Fear and Terror after 9/11

The attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC on 9/11 framed 'events' that were to break into our lives and thus shape a defining moment in the history and self-conceptions of 'the West'. It helped to define a 'before' and an 'after' 9/11 in ways that it would take time to grasp. As media images were flashed across the globe, so they were shaped through transcultural dynamics of reception, thus showing that images, like memories, are not fixed but are fluid as they circulate, migrate and travel across space and time. It also shaped a philosophical and intellectual crisis. We could feel that our prevailing traditions of philosophy and social theory were being disrupted and we were to find ourselves in a new landscape of fear and terror, which intellectuals in the West felt ill prepared for. I want to explore not only how these traumatic events have been remembered but also how they have led to the securitization of everyday life and a new risk culture of global uncertainties.

The ferocity and the suddenness of the attacks and the ways in which they were received in different parts of the world helped to form a *new landscape* of insecurity, risk and uncertainty. The world visibly became a more dangerous place and we were forced, whatever our histories and geographies, to recognize that we were living in troubled times. Rather than memories being shared with particular communities, thus constituting and reinforcing group identities, 9/11 showed how transcultural, transnational and even global circulations of memory worked within the globalized media world. In the USA, people began to ask questions about 'how could they hate us so much that they could perpetrate such acts of terror?'.

But these early questions, as I want to show, were soon put aside as feelings of anger and revenge came to the surface. President George W. Bush was soon joined by Prime Minisiter Tony Blair in defining a 'war on terror' that has helped to redefine the politics and culture of the West in its relationship with Islam and particularly with jihadi Islamist movements. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were also to define the presidencies of Barack Obama and various governments across Europe. For some, a particular form of closure was offered by the assassination of Osama bin Laden, who was eventually found in Pakistan in 2011 after enormous resources had been focused on tracking him down for over a decade.

'9/11', as it became known, was an event that was going to be remembered in both psychic/personal as well as cultural/collective terms, as it was to frame *embodied narratives* that were to take shape at different layers in personal and political life. The fact that '9/11' as a term needs no further explanation is a potent reminder of the role that language and culture play in our interpretation of historical events. As a global event witnessed across the world, it allows us to grasp how memories travel across cultural, generational, media and disciplinary boundaries. It also shows how memories are constantly on the move as they travel between different media (particularly digital media) in the production, preservation and dissemination of memories across generations and across cultures. It was to reframe stories that nation states across the world told about themselves as it framed a geopolitics that raised fundamental questions about the West's relationships with Islam.

9/11 was also to define a new and uncertain landscape of ethics and politics, as people around the world were to find themselves positioned as *witnesses* in real time to the unfolding of these traumatic events. The process of making sense of the tragedy did not have to unfold as it did in the USA and I want to show how taking in these events in London, from a different space, allowed for different meanings to be made. To say that 9/11 was made and not born is to acknowledge the central role that culture plays in conferring certain meanings on 9/11 while deflecting or suppressing others. It is to understand culture as inherently political.

As we learn that words and images do not merely reflect reality, but rather help to create it by shaping our perceptions, senses and bodily experiences into specific, socially distinct forms, we appreciate that while the events of that day are an indelible part of history, it was through language and culture that we made sense of them. However, we also experience events at different levels and there can be tensions between *embodied experiences* and the prevailing cultural meanings that governing powers seek to impose. For example, the use of '9/11' divided the timeline of US history into 'before' and 'after', thus creating a rupture in the experience of Americans; the foregrounding of this rupture made it seem as if nothing that came before could provide an adequate frame for interpreting or responding to the new conditions of life.

Through global media technologies, people were able to watch the scenes of the planes going into the Twin Towers. Soon they were to become *iconic* images that were to shape memories, particularly the horror of seeing people falling to their deaths. This was to be a selective memory; in the years that followed, the images of falling bodies were to become 'too familiar', as though they could no longer be seen. A blow had been struck to the USA's sense of invulnerability; suddenly, people were made aware of the dangers they faced and the ease with which terror could strike. This was a *sense of insecurity* that quickly spread as it became a matter of future fears, of anticipating where Al-Qaida might strike next. As countries gathered for a strike against Al-Qaida training camps in Afghanistan, it was clear that they were also making themselves possible targets, as became clear through the attacks in Bali, Madrid and London in the years that followed. As the images of 9/11 haunted a generation, so they also *travelled* across generations as they were framed through new technologies. Often, it was as heroes that the dead were to be remembered, as there was a forgetting that possibly different decisions could have been made if the relatives of the dead had been *listened to*, with consequently fewer deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Memories and memorialization

As people gathered in 2011 to mark the passing of ten years at the site of Ground Zero in downtown New York and to listen to the roll call of names that was to follow a brief biblical reading given by President Obama, many others in the USA and around the world watched the proceedings on television and remembered. Ten years had passed, but many people could return to the moment and recall where they were when they heard the news and first saw the terrible images of the planes flying into the Twin Towers. As Andrew Sullivan recalled: 'It dawned on me that the first plane had been partly a way to get the whole world watching as the second mass murder took place. What kind of evil is this? A silence fell over the room. We were all standing or pacing. After a while, I walked outside and heard the eerie quiet of a sky without planes, and saw people walking about in a daze. And a little later I saw the towers fall, one after the other, imploding, like my psyche' (*Newsweek*, 12 September 2011, p. 18).

As Sullivan recognized:

> Images matter. Within a few hours of going back to sleep after hearing mere words, I was in an utterly different world. As a way of generating pure, unalloyed terror, this was demonically perfect. I was terrified by the thought of the mayhem in the buildings. I was immobilized watching a live, instantaneous mass death. I was terrorized by the huge wall of dust that spread like a CGI wave through the streets of lower Manhattan. I was, like most of us, simply terrorized. And it is only now, a decade later, that I've come to see how significant that feeling was, how transformative it would become. We often talk about terror in terms of the terrorist. We do so less in terms of the terrorized. But it is how this act changed those of us who were bystanders that made this event more awful than a mere mass murder. It was mass murder as theatre and as threat. (*Ibid*., p. 18)

Trauma takes time to register and to be able to *name* it for what it is. It goes through different stages and makes itself felt in different registers at different times. Marking a decade can be given a special significance, but there is no evidence to say that it brings any kind of closure. As Sullivan acknowledged: 'It took months for this initial trauma to ebb, years for my psyche to regain its equilibrium. And it took me close to a decade to realize just how slickly Osama bin Laden had done his evil work, how insidiously his despicable performance art had reached into my mind and altered it, how carefully he had set the trap and how guilelessly I – we – had walked right into it.' He insisted that: 'We need to understand that 9/11 worked. It worked as a tactic to induce American self-destruction.' As he recalled:

> I remember watching the towers fall, and feeling something deeper fall as well. This was the end of American innocence, the end of the American century…We saw an emblem of an entire civilization tumble to the ground in the middle of the city that had once brought the skyscraper confidently and brashly to the world…The skies were silent. Nobody seemed to know if this was the end or just the beginning. But what we did know was that only one word sufficed to define the scale and gravity of what had taken place: war. And in that very formulation, in the depths of our psyches and souls, we took the bait. (*Ibid*., p. 20)

In the face of these terrors and a new risk culture of global uncertainties, how were we to think about 'the West' after 9/11 and what shape was it to take in our new global political imaginaries? What exactly were the targets of these attacks? In the Amerika Haus in Munich, there was also a conference held entitled '9/11 Ten Years After: History, Narrative, Memory'. It sought to assess the impact of the day that supposedly 'changed everything' and to explore the question of whether the global master narrative of 9/11 as a 'seminal event' still holds true a decade later. Has 9/11 really 'changed the world' and who benefits from the notion that it has? Five years after the event, David Simpson, author of *9/11: The Culture Of Commemoration*, voiced his suspicion that '9/11 did not blow away our past in an eruption of the unimaginable', but rather reconfigured 'that past into patterns open to being made into new and often dangerous forms of sense'.

If the images had cut deep, it was to take time to find words that fulfilled the need to make sense of these unthinkable events, words that were able to 'show the invisible, speaking the unspeakable', as Simpson explained. As Meike Zwingenberger noted in her review published on *H-Soz-u-Kult*: 'Writers like Jonathan Safran Foer or Frederic Beigbeder have been creating strong and disturbing images, such as the famous "Falling Man", that the mainstream media either accidentally missed or wilfully left out…However, besides the encouragement of patience, literary responses to 9/11 and its aftermath can also bear a sense of urgency. As the various examples of anti-Iraq-War poetry proved, literature has the ability to hold war up to a critical justice. Patience and urgency work hand in hand to counteract the fixed images and narratives of 9/11' (*H-Soz-u-Kult*, October 2011, p. 2). Often it is through these diverse writings that we can begin to grasp the ways in which 9/11 has seeped into the global cultural unconsciousness.

Tracing the emergence of memorial patterns revolving around 9/11, the workshop also wanted to explore which aspects had been marginalized, forgotten or purposely left out ten years later. Drawing on historical work, some have interpreted 9/11 as a historical marker that signifies the end of the 'American Century'. Others have focused on explaining the reactions to 9/11 within an exceptionalist framework that stresses ideology and the role of religion in American culture. But what was striking was the Eurocentric vision within which these assessments of 9/11 were being made, particularly in the ways they were exploring the ramifications and reverberations of 9/11 that were also to prove so devastating to people in Afghanistan and Iraq. If 11 September 2001 was called 'the day that changed everything', it also did so for many civilians who were to be caught up in the terrors and losses of what were to become known as the 9/11 wars.

There were also questions about how had we learnt to imagine 'the West' in its relationships with other civilizations, cultures and traditions, and how this was going to change. I explore these questions through a Western politico-cultural lens because it was largely the secular narratives and self-understandings of the West that were being so violently challenged. This refers not only to traditional notions of the Western Enlightenment as the bearer of reason, science and progress, but also the *active forgetting* of contributions that other cultures, including Islam, had played in the shaping of Western traditions of science and civilization. Traditionally, the USA had imagined itself as bringing the benefits of freedom and democracy to those who had been colonized and was reluctant to recognize the abuse of its global power. This faith in its own innocence and good intensions had survived, even though this image was often at odds with the realities of its global power and dominance after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 and before the emergence of China as a global power.

The Bush administration had learnt to think about its relationships with the rest of the world through the framework of a neo-conservatism that welcomed the USA's global hegemony and expected the rest of the world to appreciate the benefits of neo-liberal capitalism that it brought. It did not expect to be hated. It was bringing good to the rest of the world and it was assured that 'we are good, they are evil', so that for Bush, bin Laden and Al-Qaida came to represent 'evil' and the terror they used against civilians was framed as an act of envy against 'our way of life'. Since they were evil, they *could not* be negotiated with and there could be no question of really coming to understand their motivations. They were beyond the pale of reason and they had captured Islam and supposedly perverted it for their own purposes.

In its withering 567-page report published on 23 July 2004, the 9/11 Commission declared: 'Our leaders did not understand the gravity of the threat.' It showed that the US government had failed to protect the American people through a fatal lack of imagination. The Commission refused to apportion blame between the Clinton and Bush administrations, but concluded: 'What we can say with confidence is that none of the measures adopted by the US government from 1998 to 2001 disturbed or even delayed the progress of the Al-Qaida plot' (*The Guardian*, 23 July 2005, p. 1).

Following the report's publication, the Commission Chairman, Thomas Kean, said: 'Nineteen men armed with knives, box cutters, Mace and pepper spray penetrated the defences of the most powerful nation on earth. They inflicted unbearable trauma on our people and at the same time they turned our international order upside down' (*ibid.*). In making this admission, he recognized that the world, at least for the USA, had changed irrevocably. As the report recognized: 'The most important failure was one of imagination. We do not believe leaders understood the gravity of the threat' (*ibid.*).

There was also an intellectual crisis, not only because the report was critically received and many found its narrative unconvincing but also because it acknowledged how little our inherited intellectual traditions helped to illuminate the realities we faced. For a while after 9/11, there had been a realization that popular culture was in crisis. The *Newsweek* film critic David Ansen commented in his 1 October 2001 article that American popular culture had 'turned its back on the world for decades, leaving us unprepared when reality hit back'. On the same date, *TIME* magazine reporters noted a shift in public mood that had entertainers facing a 'crisis of relevance': 'So much that we could say casually a month ago rings empty, even cruel today…The language that artists, comedians, storytellers, and actors used to explain us to ourselves now seems frivolous, inappropriate, or simply outdated' (*TIME* magazine, 1 October 2001, p. 24).

The Baker-Hamilton report that was published in December 2006 offered a new direction for the war in Iraq that the USA had been losing for a while and also pointed to a different kind of intellectual crisis in the understanding of other cultures, as well as containing some important warnings for policy makers. It pointed out, as Jonathan Steel reported, 'that of the 1,000 embassy staff in Baghdad only six speak Arabic fluently. Fewer than 10 analysts in the Defence Intelligence Agency have more than two years' experience in charting the insurgency, so it is no surprise that they consistently misunderstand it' (*The Guardian*, 15 December 2006, p. 39). But it also reflects *an intellectual crisis* within modernity that fails to appreciate the significance of culture and cultural differences that are too easily framed within a dualistic split between irrational tradition and a rational modernity. It is because 'others' are deemed to be 'irrational' that you cannot hope to reason with them. This has framed a colonial inheritance that assumes an implicit cultural superiority and thus a dangerous *learned ignorance* of other cultures that has proved so devastating in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that insists that the only language *they* can understand is violence.

Modernity and the 'clash of civilizations'

Modernity as framed through a tradition of Enlightenment rationalism through the works of Montesquieu, Hegel, Marx and Weber depends for its self-definition as rational, universal and enlightened on the presence of an excluded 'other'. The West comes to imagine itself as 'the West' traditionally through a contrast with an 'Oriental' other that is deemed to be passive, traditional and irrational. As Ali Mirsepassi, an Iranian intellectual, has written: 'Deep within the discourse of modernity we find a hostility to non-

Western cultures that both operates to *exclude them* from the realm of meaningful participation in the making of the modern world, and positions them as in dire need of whitewashing and "civilising" by the West.' He pointed out that: 'This quintessential modern binary between an essentially un-modern and irrational "East" and the heroic (I would add "masculine"), enlightened "West" has only gained strength in the wake of the Iranian Revolution and the rise of so-called "Islamic Fundamentalism", leading Samuel Huntington, amongst others, to characterize the future as a "clash between civilizations"' (Mirsepassi, 2000, pp. 12–13).

Mirsepassi emphasized the complexity of the Iranian encounter with modernity. He pointed out that it has spanned a century and a half and that 'the question of the Iranian accommodation to modernity' was 'the central pillar of Iranian intellectual efforts in the nineteenth century'. This means that it is 'too complex to be characterised in the dramatic and militaristic language of a "clash"' (*ibid.* 2000, p. 13). Learning from Edward Said's seminal study *Orientalism* (1979), many scholars were challenged to re-examine the role of representations in the production and legitimation of political and cultural supremacy. They also learnt to question the practice of excluding non-Western cultures and peoples on the basis of essential differences. But, as Said recognized, critical writings on Orientalism did not cause profound changes at the public level, where popular culture often reinforced tacit Orientalist notions of Middle East people as fanatically Islamic. Often they continued to portray Islam itself as *essentially irrational*, antagonistic to change and somehow incompatible with the modern world. Said pointed out that in the 1980s and 1990s in the USA and Europe, there was a revival of colonialist nostalgia among the literate public.

When Bernard Lewis wrote his article on 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', first delivered as a prestigious lecture and later published in *Atlantic Monthly*, he began by posing the question 'Why do they hate us?' and promised to provide a context for a fleeting empathy where Americans would understand 'Islamic resentment' through 'Muslim' eyes. But what is notable about Lewis' exposition is that there were no references to historical or political events that might help to answer the 'question'. The causes cannot be those, say, of social and economic injustice that might lead a Westerner to rebellion because it is assumed somehow that they can *only* be understood in terms of the 'Islamic mind'. These motivations stem from ancient beliefs and loyalties first, and contemporary conditions can only be allowed to provide a secondary motivation in relation to them. It is this point about 'something deeper' that Samuel Huntington picked up to exploit the myth of a monolithic Islamic essence to secure his vision of the West's new global rival. We find in Huntingdon's work an implicit imparting of an irrational and metaphysical mode of being to Muslims.

While expressing his admiration for Islam, Lewis worked with an implicit comparison between the secular, rational and modern West and an inexplicable, volatile Islamic essence. But we are reassured that it is only a minority that are encouraging a 'mood of hatred and violence'. We are subsequently told that this 'surge of hatred distresses, alarms, and above all baffles Americans'. Any fear or suspicion that this 'hatred' may have anything to do with the ways that the USA as a global hegemonic power has acted in the region is immediately allayed; rather, it materialized without any visible or self-evident cause. As Lewis explained:

> For some [in the Islamic world] America represented freedom and justice and opportunity. For many more, it represented wealth and power and success, at a time when these qualities were not regarded as sins or crimes.
>
> And then came the great change, when the leaders of a widespread and widening religious revival sought out and identified enemies of God, and gave them a 'local habitation and a name' in the Western hemisphere. Suddenly, or so it seemed, America had become the archenemy, the incarnation of evil, the diabolic opponent to all that is good, and specifically, for Muslims, of Islam. Why? (*Atlantic Monthly*, 26 September 1990, pp. 47–54)

According to Lewis: 'We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilisations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.' Of course, there are issues about who the 'our' refers to and the ways that Judaism as a civilization somehow comes to be *subsumed by* Christianity and set in opposition to Islam. Since both Islam and Judaism suffered at the hands of the Crusades as well as later in the face of the Spanish Inquisition, there are different ways in which these Abrahamic narratives can be related to each other. But what seems vital to Lewis is the contention that the roots of Muslim rage lay deep in the past and have little to do with any historical and political violations on the part of the West, and more to do with an ancient form of enmity. If there are specific grievances that Lewis acknowledges, none are sufficient in themselves for explaining Muslim rage and must therefore be laid aside in order to search for 'something deeper than these specific grievances'.

If Lewis acknowledges the effects of European colonialism and Western support for hated regimes in the Middle East that became such an intense focus for the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, colonialism is still resolutely dismissed almost instantly as a central factor because it is 'over' and therefore cannot be significant. There is *no* consideration given to the legacies of colonial rule. We find in the context of a general defence of the West against all of its critics that the essence of 'Muslim rage' is to be found in the Islamic conception of 'imperialism', which is not a matter, as it is for Western critics, of 'the domination of one people over another … What is truly evil and unacceptable is the domination of infidels over true believers' (*ibid.*, p. 53).

As Lewis sought to explain: 'For misbelievers to rule over true believers is blasphemous and unnatural, since it leads to the corruption of religion and morality in society, and to the flouting or even the abrogation of God's law' (*ibid*., p. 55). The motivation, then, for Muslim insurgents is a single-minded devotion to domination of the world along Muslim lines. This allowed Lewis to conclude that: 'Fundamentalist leaders are not mistaken in seeing in Western civilisation the greatest challenge to the way of life they wish to retain or restore for their people' (*ibid*., p. 56).

With Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (1997), we have the assertion that Islam is essentially other and antagonistic to the West, and, further, the notion that the entire non-Western world is essentially other and at least potentially antagonistic to the West. We find a reaffirmation of the classical Orientalist rhetoric that frames an ontological East/West binary, which implies that everything that goes on inside a Muslim society is conceived as having purely Islamic motivation. As Mirsepassi noted, there is only one considerable break with the Orientalist tradition: 'This is the renunciation of "universalism": modernization of the world, we are told, never will and never can be the equivalent of Westernisation. Instead, the spirit of tomorrow will be "the West versus the rest". This is no prophecy of doom for the West: Huntington is implicitly saying that democratic principles of justice and equality are essentially Western, and we should practise them among ourselves' (Mirsepassi, 2000, p. 50).

But the Arab Spring that brought down authoritarian rule in Tunisia, Egypt and also eventually in Libya after a NATO intervention, as well as seeing a challenge to regimes across the Middle East, with popular uprisings in Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, showed that, at least initially, a younger generation that had been empowered through the use of new technologies and social networking sites such as Facebook were able to challenge violent rule. They rejected the Islamist path of Al-Qaida and spoke in terms of democracy and human rights. They were able to communicate across borders and circulate images of state violence that was being brutally deployed against them. They were able to use social networking sites to get their messages out and thus to learn from each other in the creation of new forms of generational resistance.

But 9/11 was to set a different path for the USA and its Western allies. As Andrew Sullivan explains, as one who took the bait and ten years later was attempting to understand his own support for what was unhelpfully names as 'the war on terror':

> The bait was meant to entice the Unites States into ruinous, polarizing religious warfare against the Muslim world, so that the Islamist fringe could seize power in failing Muslim and Arab dictatorships. The 9/11 attacks were conceived as a way to radicalize a young Muslim population through a ginned-up war of civilization against the Great Satan on

> the Islamist home turf of Afghanistan and then Iraq. It looks obvious now. It wasn't then. We were seized with righteous rage ... Our president, meaning well, did his best, and it was more than good at the beginning. But in retrospect, he never mastered the fear or the moment either. Instead of calming the population over the coming months, he further terrified us with drastic measures that only seemed to confirm the unprecedented gravity of the threat ... many concluded the threat was grave enough to justify shredding some of the Constitution's noblest principles and precedents. This handful of fanatics was supposedly a greater threat than the Nazis and the Soviets. And so much of our inherited moral wisdom – such as the absolute stricture against torture and the ideal of habeas corpus – were tossed aside. (*The Observer*, 12 September 2011, p. 20)

According to Sullivan, it was the psychic terror of 9/11 that accounted for the swamping of reason and helped to shape the fear that Al-Qaida was about to arm itself with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and thus to win acceptance for the identification of Saddam Hussein's Iraq with the threats of Al-Qaida. As Sullivan sought to explain his own support for Bush's 'the war on terror': 'In our panic, fear kept spiralling upward ... If our minds had not been flooded with dread, many of us would never have believed that 9/11 was just a dummy run for a much bigger strike with weapons of mass destruction, provided by Saddam Hussein. But that was what our government told us, in tones that certainly sounded sincere.'

Reflecting on his judgment, Sullivan acknowledged that: 'Yes, I know that many were not fooled. I tip my hat to them. I am ashamed my own panic overwhelmed my own judgment. But that is an explanation, not an excuse: I cannot imagine any other circumstances in which I would simply trust the government, period. But, as fear dominated my being, trust I did – as did a majority of Americans who supported the war that handed bin Laden exactly what he wanted' (*ibid.*).

Sullivan acknowledged that over the last ten years: 'The human cost – in lives, limbs, and loves – is incalculable. And not just for us. Millions of Iraqis lived through the closed human equivalent to hell for years as the incompetent occupation tore Iraq apart. That trauma wrought in children as well as adults, will not end, and will reverberate for decades, rendering the country even more vulnerable to sectarian blandishments or a new dictatorship if civil war breaks out again' (*ibid.*, p. 21). So, as Sullivan reflected over the last decade since 9/11: 'But we need to admit that our response was close to fatal. A bankrupted America that tortured innocents and disregarded its own Constitution is barely recognizable as America ... fear is a tougher enemy than mere mistakes. It can only be overcome by hope. And hope is a choice, not a fate. Until we decide to grasp hope again, the war will live on. Within us all. Waiting for resolution' (*ibid.*).

Accounting for terror

I want to explore the deep and wide legacies of 9/11 for a whole range of actors and politics and the ways in which memories have been carried across space and time as they have travelled, circulated and migrated. To this I will shift the reader back-and-forth in time, hopefully bringing them close to the traumatic personal and public liveliness of the catastrophe itself, and then out again through more than a decade of reflection. It is in this *layering* of the psychic/personal and the cultural/collective of grief, trauma, hope, despair, witnessing, justice, revenge, rhetoric, race and religion that I hope to illuminate the securitization of everyday life that has followed in the wake of 9/11 and the new risk culture of global uncertainties.

As Stephen L. Carter pointed out, Americans have a propensity to point to their own faults: 'Ten years have passed, critics moan, and One World Trade Center isn't finished. Controversy lingers over both the placement and content of the memorial at the site.' He asked pointedly: 'Why do we even build them – these memorials to life's cataclysms, to the suffering and horror of the present hour? In theory we build memorials so that future generations will remember, but in practice they too often aid to forgetting. Too many times it is the memorial and not the tragedy that we recall' (*Newsweek*, 12 September 2011, p. 5).

Carter was reminded of Edith Wyschogrod's *An Ethics of Remembering*, which says that the great challenge in the wake of catastrophe is building 'a community of shared experience'. In terms of 9/11, he recalled that briefly: 'For a powerful national moment, the tragedy belonged to all of us. Then our national community was rent asunder.' But he insisted that: 'The nation has real enemies, and the call to vigilance is perhaps the most prominent lesson of 9/11. President Obama talks about "eliminating our enemies" before they can strike us but he did step back from the "war on terror" that had helped name the civilizational war that Bin Laden had longed for.' A decade later, he insisted that: 'Still we must not forget that brief moment of common purpose. Our task now is to discover what else besides tragedy unite us' (*ibid.*).

Listening to more personal narratives, Ms Gallop, aged 32, can count herself relatively lucky. She survived the attack on the Pentagon, clawing herself out of the rubble moments after American Airlines Flight 77 ploughed into the building, and somehow finding her son who she was registering that day for daycare. But she can never return to her career as a soldier. Though she had flipped through the 9/11 Commission Report, she had a gnawing sense that she would never have a satisfying explanation for what happened on that day or an answer to that most fundamental of questions of who was to blame. Speaking to Suzanne Goldenberg reporting for *The Guardian* in Washington DC, she said: 'With the level of failure that took place, with the degree of death, how come after all of this, they could discover there was no one really accountable?'

As Goldenberg put it: 'She arrived yesterday leaning heavily on the stick she uses to support a damaged hip and spine. Elijah, who was 2½ months that day, scampered around waving his juice cup. He has learning difficulties as a result of the attack. "I relive it every day. There is always something to trigger it", she says, "No matter what they do. No matter how much therapy you go through, it doesn't go away."'

According to Goldenberg:

> Time also stopped that day for Ms Hughes. She arrived at the commission hearing in a polka-dot dress, wearing a badge with a picture of Kris, smiling and looking tanned. 'He turned 33 on Monday', she says.
>
> Kris, her first-born son, was a securities trader at a firm on the 98th floor when the second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, hit the South Tower of the World Trade Center.
>
> 'I spoke to him and they were trapped. The fire was spreading, and they couldn't get out, and the doors were locked', she says.
>
> Since his death, she has attended every hearing of the 9/11 Commission, and while her life before the attacks had little in common with Ms Gallop's, she has arrived at a similar conclusion.
>
> 'It's not that I am surprised, because politicians have always been the same for hundreds of years. What angers me and annoys me is that no one has been held accountable for what they didn't do. No one has been fired, and no one has been reprimanded, and some have even been promoted.' (*The Guardian*, 23 July 2004, p. 3)

As the Commission Report itself acknowledged: 'On September 11, the nation suffered its largest loss of life – 2,973 – on its soil as a result of hostile attack. The New York Fire Department suffered 343 fatalities – the largest loss in any emergency response agency in history. The lessons of 9/11 for civilians and first responders can be stated simply: in the new age of terror they – we – are the primary targets.' This led the Commission to conclude that: 'A rededication to preparedness is perhaps the best way to honour the memories of those we lost that day' (*ibid.*, p. 5). But it also makes clear that President Bush had wondered immediately after the attack whether Saddam Hussein's regime might have had a hand in it. 'See if Saddam did this', Richard Clarke, the former White House counter-terrorist tsar, recalls the President telling him in a note on the evening of 12 September 2001. While he believed the details of Clarke's account to be incorrect, Bush acknowledged that he might have spoken to Clarke at some point, asking him about Iraq.

The Commission Report stated that:

> Secretary Powell recalled that Wolfowitz – not Rumsfeld – argued that Iraq was ultimately the source of the terrorist problem and should be attacked. Powell said Wolfowitz was not able to justify his belief that Iraq was behind 9/11. 'Paul [Wolfowitz] was always of the view that Iraq was a

> problem that had to be dealt with', Powell told us, 'And he saw this ... as a way of dealing with the problem.'
>
> Powell said that President Bush did not give Wolfowitz's argument 'much weight'. Though continuing to worry about Iraq, Powell said, President Bush saw Afghanistan as the priority. At the September National Security Council meeting, that was some further discussion of 'phase two' of the war on terrorism. President Bush ordered the Department of Defense to be ready to deal with Iraq if Baghdad acted against US interests, with plans to include possibly occupying Iraqi oilfields. (*Ibid*.)

Hauntings and counter-memories

Countries are haunted by their own unresolved histories and even if they have learnt to shape narratives that help to present the past in ways that ruling groups can feel good about, there are often *counter-memories* that refuse to be silenced. As the USA tried to recruit allies in Europe, there was the haunting of the Second World War and the memory that the USA had helped Europe, and American soldiers had lost their lives when Europe needed to be saved from the Nazi threat, so now it was time for European countries, and not just the UK, to come forward and support the USA in its 'war on terror'. At the same time in the USA, there was the haunting of the war that was still part of the cultural memory in Vietnam and a determination that, this time, it would not lose but would somehow also compensate for the defeats of the past.

In *Specters of Marx*, Jacques Derrida argued that Marxism would haunt Western society from beyond the grave. He framed the notion of *hauntology* as a way of disrupting popular understandings of history as a linear progression and as a product of a time which, is seriously 'out of joint'. Hamlet remains one of Derrida's crucial points of reference. In *Specters of Marx*, the book which initiated the 'ethical turn' in his work, Derrida argued that the possibility of a just future depends on our readiness 'to learn to live *with* ghosts' (2006, p. xviii). He insisted on an obligation to live not solely in the present but 'beyond all living present', aware and attentive to those already dead or not yet born. So it was that Bush was also calling on the ghosts of American soldiers that had died fighting on the fields of Europe, but at the same time, he was haunted by the different ghosts of Vietnam that he sought to put to rest somehow.

Hanoi is not Baghdad, but President Bush, on a visit to Vietnam in November 2006, did not shrink from drawing comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam. 'We'll succeed there unless we quit', he said. It would just take time for 'an ideology of freedom to overcome an ideology of hate'. As Mary Riddell reported: 'Mr Bush's communist hosts must be puzzled by this analogy. Had the President blinked, perhaps, as Saigon fell? Had he misremembered how the home team won the war?' She took the signs of rampant capitalism in Vietnam to mean:

> In a twist of history, America appears to have won the war it lost. So what, exactly, was the devastation for? Why were five million innocent lives wiped out? Orphanages are full of children born deformed by chemical defoliants: 10,000 people have been blown up by landmines in the years after a war that killed 50,000 American soldiers. And all so a US president could return, 30 years on, to talk tariffs with a regime that his country vowed and failed to crush. The final irony is that communist rule was empowered, not weakened by the bloodshed. (*The Observer*, 19 November 2006, p. 33)

But as Riddel reminded us: ‘Communism is not comparable to jihadism entrenched by the invasion. Bush and Blair cannot, and should not, stampede out of the Persian Gulf as Nixon's forces once fled South East Asia. Vietnam did not become a bloodbath; Iraq, with all its tribal hatreds, might. The one bridge between the old quagmire and the new is fear underpinned by the bogus faith that the only alternative to Westernised democracy is nemesis’ (*ibid.*).

On the same visit, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice revealed a tendency *to blame* the Iraqis for the terrible bloodshed and loss of life that followed in the wake of the occupation, saying Iraqis ‘don't have a future’ if they gave in to the sectarian tensions that are tearing apart their society. There was an increasing sense of desperation in Washington DC with the mid-term Democratic victory in Congress that the country could fragment through civil war and that neighbours, like Iran and Syria, could destabilize the whole region. ‘Iraqis have one future and that is a future together. They don't have a future if they try to stay apart’, Rice said in a speech on the sidelines of the Asian Pacific summit (*ibid.*).

The doctrine of humanitarian intervention has been hugely damaged by the war in Iraq and the terrible civilian deaths that it has brought in its wake. The occupation forces are responsible for creating a situation in which civil war became the eventual outcome, and they cannot be allowed to blame the Iraqis as a way of deflecting responsibility for their own involvements. Who is to be held *accountable* for these deaths? Would the war have been able to continue if the Western media had been able to track individual deaths and show the sufferings involved for families and communities? Some of these voices have been heard on the Western media, but these have been relatively few in number.

Finally, Bush and Blair, under pressure from the Iraq Study Group, had been forced to admit that they were losing the war. The Iraq Study Group report acknowledged that: ‘The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating.’ As Andrew Rawnsley recognized: ‘The analysis is not that revelatory and the recommendations are not that novel. It is not what the group says that is of most importance. What's significant is who is saying it. This is the American political elite announcing that Iraq has been lost and what is now to be discussed are the terms and timing of the retreat’ (*The Observer*, 10 December 2006, p. 25).

William Pfaff, an American commentator, recognized that the mid-term congressional elections showed that the US public wanted to get out of Iraq almost as much as the British. He realized that: 'For Americans, Iraq has ceased to be a video game running along the edge of public consciousness.' But as he acknowledged, Bush continued to declare that inviting Iran and Syria to help stabilize Iraq was unacceptable and was against talking to them. He still expected 'victory'. This meant that, for many Americans, even if: 'The existing policy is a failure … nothing can be changed because no one can imagine a valid alternative. American intentions and actions have, it is held, been correct, their goals irreproachable. If anyone is to blame it is the Iraqis, who failed to seize the wonderful opportunity the United States offered them. Neocons are now saying that the Iraqis did not deserve our help. Some suggest they are an inferior breed' (*The Observer*, 19 November 2006, p. 37).

Though Pfaff would call this living in a 'condition of denied reality' and did not include the British in this accusation, it reached into colonial forms of thinking that for so long had shaped the West's relationships with the Middle East. At some level, it is part of the explanation of why we hear so few Iraqi voices sharing their traumatic pain at the terrible losses they have suffered, on a scale that dwarfs the losses of 9/11 and the Madrid and London bombings.

Somehow it is easier to treat these deaths as 'casualties of war' and to *turn our faces away* from the images we have seen almost daily since the invasion began with a demonstration of 'shock and awe', as if to obliterate the memories of 9/11 in yet another overwhelming strike. As Chris Hedges recognized in his indispensable *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (2003), the first Gulf War 'made war fashionable again. It was a cause the nation willingly embraced. It gave us media-manufactured heroes and a head pride in our military superiority and technology. It made war fun … Television reporters happily disseminated the spoon-fed images that served the propaganda effort of the military and the state. These images did little to convey the reality of war' (2003, p. 143).

Hedges reminded us that: 'The record of the press as mythmakers stretches at least from William Howard Russell's romantic account of the 1854 charge of the Light Brigade – he called the event "the pride and splendour of war" – to Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. The true victims of war, because we rarely see or hear them (as is usual in most war reporting), faintly exist.' It is this state of 'faintly existing' that we seem to have become accustomed to. It is as if these images showing people being blown up by suicide bombers in a market square in Baghdad are not 'really' suffering because they only 'faintly exist' – they do not 'really exist' and there is something phantom and ghost-like in their deaths. Hedges recognized that: 'War finds its meaning in death. The cause is built on the backs of victims, portrayed always as innocent. Indeed, most conflicts are ignited with martyrs, whether real or created. The death of an innocent, one who is perceived as emblematic of the nation or the group under attack, becomes the initial rallying point for war. These dead become the standard-bearers of the cause and all causes feed off a steady supply of corpses' (*ibid.*, p. 144).

Hedges remembered that following the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, it was widely disseminated that Iraqi soldiers removed hundreds of Kuwaiti babies from incubators and left them to die on hospital floors. As a journalist, he recalled: 'The story, when we arrived in Kuwait and were able to check with doctors at the hospitals, turned out to be false. But by then the tale had served its purpose' (*ibid.*, p. 145). The original source of the story turned out to be the daughter of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the USA, Saud Nasir al-Sabah. Ellias Canetti wrote in *Crowds and Power* (1962) that: 'It is the first death which infects everyone with the feeling of being threatened. It is impossible to overrate the part played by the first dead man in the kindling of war. Rulers who want to unleash war know very well that they must procure or invent a first victim…Nothing matters except his death; and it must be believed that the enemy is responsible for this' (1962, p. 138).

The press, Michael Herr wrote in *Dispatches* (1991), his book on the Vietnam War, 'never found a way to report meaningfully about death, which of course was really what it was all about. The most repulsive, transparent gropes for sanctity in the midst of killing received serious attention in the papers and on the air. The jargon of the Process got blown into your head like bullets, and by the time you waded through all the Washington stories and the Saigon stories, all the Other War stories and the corruption stories and the stories about brisk new gains in ARVN effectiveness, the suffering was somehow unimpressive' (1991, p. 215). Of course, the global media has moved on and a similar effect has been achieved by the overwhelming nature of the images and the speed with which you somehow get accommodated to them. We *get used* to seeing images taken by US troops that supposedly give you some grip on the conditions on the ground, but then you are *positioned to witness* the shootings from the point of view of the troops doing the shooting and the dangers they face.

Digital media and other voices

At rare moments, a different Iraqi voice can be heard, for the global media cannot be so easily controlled as it was at the time of the Vietnam War. With the Internet and blogging, there are alternative sources of information and it becomes harder for governments *to control* the media so effectively. Sometimes an individual voice gets through and touches you in ways that begin to bring home a different reality. In a drama entitled 'Baghdad Burning' for BBC Radio 4, a searing account of life in Baghdad drawn from a real-life Internet blog of a 24-year-old Iraqi woman, for security reasons known only as Riverbend, was presented. She shared the fear of living through those first nights of 'shock and awe' and her attempts to learn how to survive in the new world after the bombardment. She was forced to live a mostly housebound existence that allowed her to rediscover the subtleties of domestic life. She made us aware of the humiliation that was felt as a woman was dragged into the street by American troops without wearing her hijab and of the suicides of men who were humiliated at Abu Ghraib and so were unable to live with their public shaming. She also revealed cultural sensitivities that are unwittingly trampled on by the US army and the lives that were damaged in the process.

Riverbend shared her fears and depression. She made us aware of the brutalities of occupation. She shared the devastations of nature as she let us understand how important the date trees are in Iraq. People would offer dates to each other and they would mark celebrations. But the US army destroyed the date trees in Baghdad because they interfered with their vision. She described how the trees lay like dead bodies in the street. She *mourned their loss*. In the countryside, the Americans had learnt to destroy the date trees and so destroy sources of income. It was an act of revenge that they seemed to have learnt from the Israelis, who sometimes attacked olive trees in the occupied territories. They were taking out their revenge on a nature that could not speak back and thus were shaping forms of oppression through destroying the relationships that people have with trees. Every broken tree marks a terrible loss as it reveals the brutality and thoughtlessness of occupation.

As William Pfaff hoped for some kind of awakening to the brutalities of the war and the suffering they have helped to cause, he believed that:

> In America, it's as though Bush, his inner cabinet, and the neocons have been playing a video game, with fictional characters and victims, virtual death and torture. Now the disc has suddenly finished, and it's time to shut down the player ... This is not just a figure of speech. American policy has been running on images rather than evidence of real nation and people doing things for real human motives. It has been populated by abstractions: Global Terrorist Conspiracies, Rogue Nations, Fanatics Who Hate Our Freedom, Generations of Terrorism and The Global Menace of Al-Qaeda. (*The Observer*, 19 November 2006, p. 37)

These abstractions have assumed *a reality of their own* and they have shaped the narratives in which the war in Iraq has been imagined.

This is a theme that was also taken up by Pankaj Mishra in a piece entitled 'Our Own Low, Dishonest Decade' that explored how writers have responded to the challenge of representing the new realities created by the wars that followed in the wake of 9/11. Mishra recognized how: 'The boyish Anglo-American plot to remake the world in their preferred image seemed to have no idea that resentful memories of similar remakings by European imperialists define the identity and self-perceptions. Contrary to the belief that 9/11 was history breaking in, the attacks actually deepened a historical solipsism in the United States and brought on a weird amnesia in post-imperial Britain' (*The Guardian*, 3 September 2011, p. 3).

As Mishra noted: 'There were also many public intellectuals itching to be in on the action. Christopher Hitchens claimed to have felt an exhilarating ideological clarity while watching the World Trade Center collapse. "Well, ha ha ha, and yah boo", he mocked those advising against a war in Afghanistan in November 2001, while predicting that the Taliban "will soon be history".' He also recognized that: 'At once hysterical and empty, such battle-cries define not only the dominant rhetorical style of this era but also the nature of the 9/11 wars: optimal and extensive destruction attended by minimal meaning, announcements of a cosmic contest accompanied by what Burke in *The 9/11 Wars* calls an "appalling ignorance" of the local conditions, the circumstances and the cultures of other protagonists. Indeed, false historical analogies, loudly and repetitively asserted, replaced the attempt at knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 3).

Re-visions

According to Pfaff, the USA itself, 'where actual people live, has been turned into an abstraction: the Sole Superpower, which everyone in the world knows is a Righteous Nation, the Mars (in the neocon Robert Kagan's formulation) defending the fragile Venus which is Europe, the Straussian (Leo Strauss, the University of Chicago philosopher) Realist unflinchingly battling in a Hobbesian universe to protect the Kantian Europeans, with their illusions of global parliaments and peace, from nameless horrors' (*The Observer*, 19 November 2006, p. 37). This is also implicitly a narrative of masculinities, with the 'tough' and heroic masculinities presented by the USA and the 'softer' masculinities in Europe that were more likely to need protection.

As Americans know only too well, as reported by Pfaff: 'This is what we exist to do. We are the leading nation, the most moral, born with the redemptive mission to create what the Puritan preacher Jonathan Winthrop called the "City on the Hill", democracy "of the people and by the people" that originated the modern world with our repudiation of monarchy and inherited privilege' (*ibid.*). It was the USA that won both the First and the Second World Wars, then the Cold War, and according to its own self-image and vision of itself, it has created 'and [is] now confronting the ultimate test of the "long war" against Evil itself, incarnate as Terror' (*ibid.*).

There are also resonances in the imperial dreams that Britain has found difficult to let go. As Peter Beaumont has written: 'After years in which this country seemed to be readjusting to a more realistic sense of its place in the world, more recently there has been a resurgence across the political spectrum of a culturally conservative and hubristic belief in Britain's special role for good in the world. Indeed, it was this misplaced, at times almost evangelical conviction, that in large part led Tony Blair to pursue the invasion of Iraq, calculating quite wrongly that an act that he had been warned might be illegal would be justified by its anticipated benefits' (*The Observer*, 10 December 2006, p. 27).

Of course, the insistence of the uniqueness of British values is nothing new. Nor is the counter-argument that they are an overblown fiction based on an inflated post-colonial sense of our worth in the world. But what is worrying, as Beaumont recognized, 'is that once again we are being seduced by gazing into a distorted mirror of ourselves and liking too much of what we see. It is the narcissism of national obsessions. And it blinds us to the reality of how we can really effect a difference in the world' (*ibid*.). It is something similar that allowed Pfaff to say that: 'It is not Orwellian in that the neocon ideologues George Bush and Tony Blair certainly believe all this. They are not being manipulated…It is not Orwellian because the creators of this cartoon-like conceptual world have themselves become actors in the virtual universe their ideas and actions have made. They have left reality behind – or they simply ignore it, as they did in invading Iraq' (*ibid*.).

According to Pfaff's characterization: 'We have moved from 1984 to 2006, into a post-Orwellian condition in which Big Brother has become a part of his creation. He is now imposing it on others by acting as though it were real, at whatever expense to others. This is our problem today. In some measure we have all been drawn into this virtual world. How do we leave?' (*ibid*.). This is a question that shows the need to rethink the relationship between philosophy and social theory so that it can help question the *work* that these abstractions are doing and thus help us to *ground* our visions in the everyday realities of people's lives and sufferings. This was part of what Wittgenstein's later philosophy called for when he said: 'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (1958, p. 116) and when he insisted the problems of philosophy were not solved by hunting 'out new facts; it is, rather, of the essence of our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything *new* by it. We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand' (*ibid*., p. 89).

When we come to think about the terrible costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and raise questions of accountability for war crimes, we need to have the facts clearly in view. Wittgenstein recognized this, but he was insisting that it is often not a matter of simply hunting out more facts as if they will provide solutions to the moral predicaments we face for a war that was perpetrated in our names, even if we were opposed to it from the beginning; it is also a matter of learning about *how easily* we can be led astray by abstractions and the philosophical and moral work that we need to do to remind ourselves of the *everyday sufferings* of war. The responses to 9/11 could have been different and governments could have chosen to take a different path. This was what many of the relatives of those who died in the attacks wanted. They did not seek revenge, but they wanted to learn from the traumatic events around 9/11. They wanted to confront the sources of terrorism so that people and governments could take effective action against them and make the world a safer place.

In the West, there is a general consensus that the world has not been made safer by the decision to invade Iraq and there is considerable anger at the ways in which democratic decision making was bypassed and arguments around WMDs were deployed in order to win public opinion for a war that many people did *not* want. Of course, we might wish that another path had been taken and we might regret that we face a likely intensification of terrorist activities because of the horrors and sufferings of war and the deaths of so many civilians.

At the beginning of 2007, we were already on the edge of discovering that as many US military personnel had been killed in the war in Iraq as were killed in the traumatic events of 9/11. This provided an important moment of reflection that six years later helps to make connections between 9/11 and the threats that we face in the present. With the excitement around the presidential election of Barack Obama in November 2008 and his promises for a radical shift in direction for the USA that would include a withdrawal from Iraq and the development of a multinational foreign policy, there was at last the possibility for real change.

But Obama's eventual decision to send another 40,000 troops to Afghanistan was a disturbing sign that his presidency would not escape from the Bush legacy of endless war. Though Obama had questioned the wisdom of the discourse of 'the war on terror', knowing that it threatened to homogenize the very different threats that terrorists might present in different parts of the world, it was difficult to shift a narrative that had been so firmly established within the media and had shaped people's imaginations about the threats and insecurities that they faced.

It was going to take time to shift the terms of discussion and the difficulties that Obama faced in closing down Guantanamo Bay, even though he had firmly declared that the USA would no longer participate in torture techniques such as waterboarding and would return to the rule of law, showed the difficulties he faced. But there were still enormous hopes that he would make a difference and that his election represented a deeply held feeling for a *shift* in direction, at least in his second term, which will last until 2016. But his presidency has also been deeply affected by the global financial crisis that broke in 2008 and that also restricted his room for manoeuvre in his foreign policy, which after the initial promise to close Guantanamo Bay has not broken radically with the lines set down by Bush.

But the anxieties created by the attempted blowing up of a Delta Airlines flight travelling from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009 by a young Nigerian Islamist who had completed a degree at University College London before spending time in Yemen, where he had supposedly been prepared to take on an Al-Qaida mission, immediately brought back memories of 9/11 and the traumatic fears that it represented. It showed yet again the traumatic shock of 9/11 and the hold that it still had over the US psyche, as well as the need for Obama, who had been silent for the first couple of days after the attempt, to make two statements to reassure the public and to call for a review of security measures. It brought back the differences between the USA and Europe and so echoed the early days before the war in Iraq when Bush and Blair were concerned with gaining support for their planned attack. It can be helpful *to return* and reconsider those days and the responses to them in detail to track unfolding events so that we can better understand the path from the trauma of 9/11 as a response to terror that was to lead to war and torture, and how this was tied up with dominant masculinities and the ways in which they are so often reinforced with the promise of violence and war.

Embodying social theory

I have been writing this book ever since 9/11, so for well over a decade, and have experimented with different ways of layering the psychic/personal with the cultural/collective in shaping more embodied narratives for *a formative* social theory. I want to say something about developing psychosocial methods. As we think about the limits of critique and theories of deconstruction that have so powerfully shaped contemporary traditions of social theory and philosophy, remembering 9/11 can also help us affirm a formative sense of agency, vulnerability and hope that people need to get through the losses they have experienced. This is to also acknowledge tensions and contradictions as people are attempting to affirm what has meaning in their lives, loves and relationships in circumstances of terror and horror in which they did not choose to participate.

People recognized that they *needed time* to deal with the terrible shocks of what had unfolded before their eyes on the global media, but also that they wanted to give shape to their own forms of mourning, often resisting the rage and retribution that was to come politically as Bush took control of the situation with a war in Iraq already clearly in his sights because of the insistent power of the neo-conservative establishment in Washington DC.

Vulnerability can be a source of strength and people, at least for a while, wanted to ask deeper questions about *how* the USA had come to be hated so much that people were prepared to take innocent civilian lives in such dramatic ways. People wanted time to formulate the most *helpful questions* and they did not want to be rushed into easy conclusions. In this transitional space, they were not looking for a theory of terror that could somehow explain what had happened. Many people recognized that the secular rationalism that had shaped their common-sense intellectual inheritances left them ill-prepared to think about religion, let alone Islam, about which they knew very little. This called for a *slow theory* that could gradually take shape through the thinking *and* feeling that was gradually to take form as the shock slowly melted away. I felt a similar ignorance of Islam and radical Islamist movements that had been taking place within Islam over the years as I watched events unfold in London. There was a distance that possibly enabled me to write through these days in ways that could well have been impossible in New York. I wanted to listen to diverse voices as well as to think through the ethnography to allow the different voices to *give shape* to theoretical concepts for a formative social theory that could illuminate the terror and the trauma as it was unfolding.

In this, I was possibly echoing a feeling that Foucault had in the shifts in his own writings from a focus on knowledge/power that would show how powerful institutional logics in mental hospitals and prisons would shape the subjectivities that could emerge to a later sense, partly stimulated by a recognition that prisoners had their own resistant discourses, to a concern with ethics and subjectivity. Foucault recognized that he could *not* explain the journey from a focus on regulation and power to his later concerns with the ethics of truth-telling. The concerns with power and knowledge were no less significant, but they tended to minimize possibilities of agency that he was later concerned with – the ways in which we can also shape our own lives through bodily practices. I think this helps give shape to a formative somatic social theory that helps to question the disembodied traditions of an Enlightenment modernity.

Foucault was drawn to Greek traditions for different sources that could both critique and also renew and possibly transform contemporary disembodied subjectivities giving life meaning beyond the terms of a neo-liberal consumerism. In part, this was to disturb notions of historical progress and thus acknowledge, as Walter Benjamin also did, that we might have to look to those movements crushed by power in the past in order to renew an embodied humanism in the present. This can involve giving up certain *visions of control* that are so firmly identified with dominant masculinities within modernity and which were lived out in the convictions of Bush and Blair, who were convinced that they were right to go to war in Iraq, even though people were protesting against this in cities around the world.

Foucault's ethical turn is in some ways also reflected in Judith Butler's later work, particularly in *Precarious Life* (2006) which helped her possibly to think beyond a post-structuralist tradition that traditionally framed ethics in discursive terms. Butler came to recognize how much our *vulnerability* as human beings helps to shape responsibilities we can feel towards others. But the strengths of a somatic social theory is in its recognition of how easy it is to override our bodies, *not* to hear what they are saying because of the tightness of control we have learnt to regulate them with. Traditionally, for dominant masculinities, but moving across genders in post-feminist times, emotions and feelings are experienced as signs of weakness and thus as threats to our status as rational selves. If we are to talk about the movement of affect across bodies, we also need to engage with embodied emotional lives and the difficulties we have inherited in *listening* to them.

As we remember, over a decade later, the impact of 9/11 and the shock and trauma that was to follow in its wake, we also need to be able to engage different levels and layers of emotional life as we appreciate the different stages that