Chapter 5
Empires of pain:
terror as a contemporary form of rule

The truly intractable problem of modernity in a country like Iraq is coming to terms with the emergence of a polity made up of citizens who positively expect to be tortured under certain circumstances.

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For the English jurist Blackstone, writing in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1769), the rack, the medieval symbol of state torture, was "an Engine of the State, not of Law".[1] Today, after more than two centuries of apparent liberalization of attitudes towards state cruelty, systematic torture is used in many countries, and by no means only in the Third World. The description of the grotesque public cruelty visited on the regicide Damiens with which Foucault opens *Discipline and Punish*[2] may well have been characteristic of an era soon to be replaced by a new rationalized model of control, but torture now has the endemic - and indeed, epidemic - character, in Sartre's words, of "a plague infecting our whole era".[3] And the diffusion of the infection of torture, along with its abiding partners arbitrary arrest, disappearances and political killings by governments, is the core of the contemporary form of terror as a mode of rule. The emphasis placed by Foucault and Giddens on surveillance as the primary form of modern social control must, if totalitarian rule is to be considered as a tendential property of modern states, be more closely linked with contemporary practices of violence to the body than either theorist has considered. Giddens nominates terror as a component of totalitarian rule, but does not deal in any detail with its relation to surveillance. For Foucault the issue does not really arise - "the disciplinary society" embodies what is for him an overwhelming power, even omnipotence. Yet the "survival" of torture in the modern world suggests that it is deeply embedded in the social fabric.[4]

This chapter moves on from the preceding discussions of *militarization* and *surveillance* to the question of *terror as a form of contemporary rule*. Beginning with a brief review of types of contemporary state terror according to *intensity*, *type of terror*, *direction or type of target group* and *mode of effectivity*, the chapter then reviews the principal factors associated with the prevalence of terror, and in particular, torture. These include the criminalization of certain categories of political activity under the general heading of the "exceptional crime", whose alleged violators have no protection in practice; either a preliminary "bank" of political legitimacy by majority groups that

1. Edward Peters, *Torture*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.113.

2. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

3. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface" to Henri Alleg, *The Question*, (London: John Calder, 1958), p.20.

4. One clue to Foucault's blind spot about the pervasiveness of state political violence is suggested in his original example. The dreadful death visited on Damiens which he takes as his paradigm of the ancien regime of social control resulted specifically from his status as a *regicide*. To be sure, non-political criminals suffered in commensurable ways at the time, and, in the modern period, political prisoners are not butchered in the baroque manner of Damiens' death. But for political prisoners of many countries today, this is a matter of degree only. The limitation may also have been connected with Foucault's disinterest in political resistance.

accepts the use of torture against minority groups, or some functional substitute for the need for domestic legitimacy, such as external support in lieu; widespread incommunicado detention; and lack of effective control over state security agencies by the judiciary or public groups.

The second half of the chapter deals with the question of the nature of terror, arguing that it is in fact, despite its all too terrible physical aspects, primarily a cultural and psychological matter, and as such, constituted by processes of cultural construction. The fundamental requirement for terror to take hold, to become a form of rule is the diffusion of suspicion of The Other as a normal state, a corrosion of solidarity. Deformation of the language of everyday talk accompanies this process, leading to what has been described as a "semantic delirium". Ordinary words may become laden with explosive connotations. Fantasy - of power or powerlessness may emerge: agents of the state begin to speak with a quality of baroque excess; and would-be victims are enervated by gossip and rumour. Equally, state agents may unconsciously protect themselves with a de-amplified language that permits a certain degree of denial (to the self) of what is actually happening. Torture itself, as a theatre of state power, also turns out to hinge on matters of language: the centrality of the question, the confession, and the obliteration of the world that accompanies such pain.

Studies of the activities of death squads and intelligence agencies in different parts of the world show a remarkable similarity in the processes of abduction, detention, torture itself, and return to society - whether as a living person, as a body, or as a member of another category, the disappeared. This derives from the fact that these activities are in fact rituals, or more precisely pseudo-rituals of the totalitarian state, and as such show the remarkable similarities of ordered sequences of symbolic events like rites of passage of separation, transition and incorporation. It becomes clear, when looking at accounts of torture, that the generation of an effective culture of terror involves an assault on prior certainties of the ground of knowledge, or rather, the creation of what has been called an "epistemic murk". Most important in this process is access to "the space of death", a reality known to both victims and torturers, and a crucial part of the fiction of power of the latter.

New techniques for the infliction of pain are being scientifically devised, and increasingly being deployed by governments. Medical and psychiatric professionals are involved on a positive basis in the facilitation of torture, the discovery and recommendation of new forms of physical torture, the administration of chemicals to affect the mind, and the development of sensory-deprivation techniques which have the effects of physical torture, but leave no physical evidence.

A final consideration in the construction of cultures of terror is memory, the inflection of the remembered, constructed past on the acts of the present and the considerations of the future. Terror and memory are intertwined: terror has its effects precisely in the realm of memory, memory re-charges the effects of the original act. Levels of terror can vary, and as current active terror diminishes, the effects of past acts may be sustained by state-orchestrated symbolic reminders. The mixing of such rehearsals of past acts and the selective suppression of alternative histories can become a powerful means of sustaining terror as a form of rule using only low-level acts of terror.

Varieties of modern terror

For our purposes, terror is an integral part of any concept of totalitarian rule, and a part of militarization when the object of that process is the population of the country concerned.[5] In the modern era, the application of state terror is closely bound up with the establishment and development of more or less permanent national security states epitomized by domestic political intelligence apparatuses. While it is often the case that intelligence agencies and their personnel are not directly involved in torture and political killings, in a very large and diverse number of cases they are. As has already been said, there is a spectrum of types of intelligence and security agencies - some "cleaner" and others "dirtier", some more concerned with intelligence assessment and data collection than covert action and killing, firmly under constitutional and legal controls rather than a law unto themselves. But as the Indonesian example will show, even when torture or disappearances are carried out on an administrative basis by regular combat personnel the intelligence services have at least a direct or indirect role in the provision of information on victims - or as in the case of the killings of criminals in 1983-84, in the conceiving of the very plan and orchestrating operations.[6] In reality, the activities of the intelligence apparatus of the state have a symbiotic relationship with terror in many militarized states today. In many countries, in the words of one Arab analyst, we are dealing with

> investigatory institutions whose organizing principle is torture (whose criterion is not the number tortured any more than the number of executions defines a system of capital punishment).[7]

It need hardly be said that while there are variations in the forms of terror as rule, they are not reducible to the political character of the states involved. Sartre's conclusion from the Algerian war is bleak and relevant to the world at large:

> "Appalled, the French are discovering this terrible truth: that if nothing can protect a nation against itself, neither its traditions nor its loyalties nor its laws, and if fifteen years are enough to transform victims into executioners, then its behaviour is not more than a matter of opportunity and occasion.[8]

State terror varies according to *intensity, type of terror, direction or type of target group* and *mode of effectivity*. The actual levels of terror employed in contemporary states vary considerably. Most common is simple casual brutality by the soldiery or police of a country, moving on through stages from disappearances and extra-judicial killings towards civil war (against some or many groups in a society) through to a sustained

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5. Of course, even when the militarization is turned primarily outwards, as in the case of the United States and the Soviet Union, the nuclear basis of their force structures ensures that terror - of what may happen rather than has happened - is a daily, if not always conscious, experience for their own populations. See Joel Kovel, *Against the State of Nuclear Terror*, (Boston: South End Press, 1983), and Robert J. Lifton, *The Broken Connection*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1979. This has probably been the case since the advent of long-range weapons of mass destruction and doctrines of total, industrialized war - the earlier years of World War 2. One might go further and say that there is no sustained militarization without a degree of terror for the domestic population - whether it is the object of the militarization or the nominal beneficiary.

6. Chapter 11 below.

7. al-Khalil, op.cit., p.66.

8. Sartre, op.cit., p.12.

administrative practice of torture. Civil war, states of emergency, rule by decree bring their own types of fear. The terrorist extremes are the Soviet Union under Stalin, Germany under Hitler, and Pol Pot's Cambodia. Yet the extremes do not exhaust the scales. Indonesia underwent its own holocaust in the six months after October 1st, 1965, during which at least half a million people and probably more were simply murdered. Large scale murder has not been not common in Indonesia itself (as opposed to East Timor) in the subsequent two decades, with two extremely important exceptions: the intelligence-directed campaign of death squad killings of alleged criminals in 1983-84, and the murder of an estimated 5,000 political prisoners in late 1968. Since that time, killings and disappearances have been unusual occurrences rather than the norm, but have often been used as a political signal by the regime. The Indonesian examples demonstrate the place of historical rhythm and memory: low-level terror gains potency by feeding off the memory of the more extreme versions.

Terrorism is usually thought of as a weapon of the weak, a strategy pursued by groups out of power. Yet this is far from the case - state supported terror of the types already mentioned far outweighs "private" terror. (See Table 5.1.) Chomsky and Herman usefully distinguish between the "retail terror" of small non-state groups and the "wholesale terror"

Table 5.1
Killings by state and non-state terrorists

	Killings (n)	As multiples of German non-state total (n/31)
Non-state		
German: Red Army Faction, and all other non-state, Jan. 1970 - April 1979	31	1
Italian: Red Brigades and all other non-state, 1968-82	334	11
PLO: Israelis killed in all acts of terror from 1968-81	282	9
World: All "international terrorists", CIA global aggregate, 1968-80	3,368	109
Single incidents of terror		
El Salvador: Rio Sumpul River, May 14, 1980	600+	19+
South Africa: Kassinga (Angola) refugee camp, May 4, 1978	600+	19+
Guatemala: Panzos, May 29, 1978	114	4
Israel: Sabra and Shatila (Lebanon), September 1982	1,900-3,500	61-113
Larger dimensions of state terror		
Argentina: 1976-82 "disappeared"	11,000	355
Chile: 1973-85	20,000+	645+
Dominican Republic: 1965-72	2,000	64
El Salvador: Matanza I, 1932	30,000	968
El Salvador: Matanza II, 1980-85	50,000+	1,613+
Guatemala: Rios Montt pacification campaign, March-June 1982	2,186	70
Guatemala: 1966-85	100,000+	3,226+
Indonesia: 1965-66	800,000+	25,806+
Indonesia: Invasion and pacification of East Timor, 1980-85	200,000+	6,452+
Indonesia: extra-judicial executions of alleged criminals, 1983-84*	4,000-10,000	128-320
Soviet Union: Afghanistan, 1979-85	200,000+	6,452+
Libya: External assassination of Libyans, 1980-83	10+	0.32
Cambodia: Pol Pot era, 1975-80	300,000+	9,677+
US-sponsored Contras: in Nicaragua, 1981-85	2,800+	90+
United States: Assault on Indochina, 1955-75	4,000,000+	129,032+

Sources: Edward S. Herman, "U.S. sponsorship of international terrorism: an overview", *Crime and Social Justice*, 27-28 (1987), p.21, except for Indonesia: 1983-84*: see Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Indonesia*, (Washington: Asia Watch, 1988), p. 259, and David Bourchier, "Crime, law and authority in Indonesia", in Arief Budiman (ed.) *State and Society in Contemporary Indonesia*, (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, forthcoming).

of the state.[9] Terrorism by non-state groups usually fits into one of two broad categories. The best-known instances of contemporary retail terrorism (at least in western countries) are associated with either left wing guerilla groups in the advanced capitalist countries (e.g. the Red Army Faction) or national liberation movements (e.g. the Irish Republican Army [Provisional], or the Palestine Liberation Organization and its rival groups). The second type is more commonly associated with right-wing urban terrorism in Europe: the "strategy of tension" involving apparently random bombings and killings designed to push democratic governments in a fascist direction by panicking citizens and ministers alike. Contrary to the claims in the mass media and by governments, the evidence is clear that in industrial countries this type of right-wing terrorism has been much more prevalent in the past thirty years than its left-wing or national liberation counterparts.[10]

However state terror remains the central issue. Table 5.1 shows the magnitude of the disparity between "retail" and "wholesale" state terror, and the range of types of terror involved in large-scale, "wholesale" state-terror. "Counter-insurgency" campaigns provide the setting for almost all of the large-scale examples Herman lists - except that these "campaigns" were really protracted wars against primarily civilian populations, that often lasted for years, moving through cycles of different types of terror.

Petras has usefully distinguished several different types of state terrorist activities, which vary according to "the density of social organization in civil society and the level of self-mobilization", and according to the particular character of the crisis in the economy, more specifically, accumulation crises.[11] Drawing on the experience of Central and Latin America, Petras distinguishes four types:

1. The initial period of extermination and destruction of social movements, popular institutions, and regimes;

2. The reconsolidation and institutionalization of the state terror network and the recomposition of the socioeconomic forces in command of the accumulation process;

3. Forcible implantation of the new accumulation process...and the violent measures to contain the contradictions engendered at the social and political level; and

4. Deepening economic crises, leading to divergent responses from local and international terror networks; the decomposition of the state terrorist regime and the revival of social movements leading to an *escalation* of state terrorism *or* a

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9. See Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *The Political Economy of Human Rights, Volume I: The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*, (Boston: South End Press, 1979); and Edward S. Herman, *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda*, (Boston: South End Press, 1982), and "U.S. sponsorship of international terrorism: an overview", *Crime and Social Justice*, 27-28 (1987).

10. See, for example, Geoffrey Harris, *The Dark Side of Europe: The Extreme Right Today*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press). The most virulent and "successful" cases in Europe have been Turkey and Italy. In both cases violent campaigns designed to erode public confidence in the police forces and legal system were aided by alliances between the terrorist groups and senior officials in the intelligence and police services.

11. James Petras, "Political economy of state terror: Chile, El Salvador, and Brazil", *Crime and Social Justice*, 27-28 (1987), p.107. For a more wide-ranging and precise delineation of types of accumulation crisis and state responses, see also Robin Luckham, "Militarism: force, class and international conflict", *IDS Bulletin*, (August, 1977).

> tactical retreat. In the latter case, electoral systems are superimposed over the terror apparatus, which retreated and reconsolidates for future reactivation.[12]

This dynamic model, while too compressed and arguable in detail, is useful for understanding the shifts from one mode of terror to another - from *mass* terror to *selective* terror, from *covert* terror to *overt* terror.

Iraq provides one further example, and an indication that the type of terror depends in part on the character of the preceding terror, and its mass psychological results. Iraq since the commencement of the second Ba'athist government in mid-1968 has been controlled in part through a carefully-orchestrated pageant of cruelties that has moved and altered over time, according to the difficulties and needs of the regime. The Ba'ath came to power in a Pan-Arabist fury a year after the Israeli defeat of neighbouring Arab states in the June 1967 war. Within months the regime discovered a network of "Zionist spies", who were soon tried, publicly executed in a carnival atmosphere in Baghdad amidst hundreds of thousands of onlookers, and their corpses left to swing on view for days. The enthusiasm of the gallows-watchers slowly abated as the pace of executions quickened and the range of target groups expanded. The thrill of public confessions, often televized, began to give way to the dulled fear of inadvertent, or even unavoidable, complicity in acts that rendered ordinary citizens liable to surveillance or even torture.

In time the regime began to cannibalize itself. After a decade as head of internal security, Saddam Hussein seized power from the former Ba'athist president, and commenced a profound purge of the party leadership. The first confessions of former leaders were filmed and, according to some reports, shown to an audience of several hundred party leaders.

> A grief-stricken Saddam addressed the meeting with tears running down his cheeks. He filled in the gaps of Rashid's testimony and dramatically fingered his former colleagues. Guards dragged people out of the proceedings and then Saddam called on the country's top ministers and party leaders to themselves form the firing squads.[13]

The story cannot yet be verified - and therein lies part of its power, as the tale raced through the party hierarchy, and leaked slowly beyond the party to an already cowed populace.

Inducements to torture

The obvious prerequisite for the existence of torture is the human capacity for sadism, or at the very least, the capacity to rationalise away the obvious facts of human pain. But in its contemporary, state-organized mode, terror and its paradigmatic expression, torture, seem to be associated with the prevalence of six main conditions:

(1) the criminalization of political activity under the category of the exceptional crime to which otherwise prevailing standards of criminal procedure do not apply;

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12. Petras, op.cit., p.89.

13. al-Khalil, op.cit.,, p.72. Al-Khalil goes on to remark, "Neither Stalin nor Hitler could have thought up a detail like that...Can anyone devise a more brilliant tactical move to implicate potential foes in their personal ascent to immortality, assuming brotherly love is put aside as a consideration?"

(2) either initial domestic legitimacy to permit use of terror against minority groups, or high levels of foreign support in lieu of domestic legitimacy;

(3) a perceived extreme level of threat in the eyes of agencies holding themselves responsible for the security of the state, and a perception that existing legally-based forms of rule are inadequate to deal with that treat;

(4) legal sanctioning or at least acceptance of long periods of incommunicado detention;

(5) aggressive political intelligence operations against citizens; and

(6) low levels of accurate public knowledge of, and responsible government control over, security agencies.

Crimen Exceptum and the return of torture

Perhaps the most important factor in the prevalence of torture is the criminalization of political activities through the doctrine of the exceptional crime. The concept of the *crimen exceptum* was developed in Europe during the medieval period - a category of crime of such danger to society and outrage to God that otherwise unheard of latitude in its prosecution was tolerable in good faith.[14] Torture for ordinary crime declined in Europe in the great abolitionist reforms of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Political crime prior to that time was generally treated under the ancient and broad heading of lese majestė. According to Cardinal Richelieu

> There are some crimes which it is necessary to punish first, then investigate. Among them, the crime of lese-majestė is so grave that one ought to punish the mere thought of it.[15]

Richielieu's treatment of thought crime has been adumbrated by Papadatos, in a state-centric manner no doubt appreciated by state-managers:

> The supreme interest of the State in defending its existence, as well as the functioning of its fundamental political institutions, has obliged the legislator in criminal matters to intervene much earlier than usual in the criminal process, in order to attack the crime against the state in its germinal stage and before it is too late. He attacks the crime at the stage of preparation and even in the simple external manifestation of the criminal resolution, so that it is stopped at the very threshold of the conscience, that is, at the very first stage, at the internal phase which embraces the conception and the criminal resolution not yet externalized.[16]

Richelieu also spelled out the shift in the qualities of proof necessary in such crimes, anticipating the treatment of the "exceptional crime" on an administrative basis in dozens of states today:

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14. Peters, op.cit., p.6.

15. Cited by Barton L. Ingraham, *Political Crime in Europe*, (Berkerley: University of California Press, 1979), p.26.

16. Cited by Ingraham, ibid, p.29

> In normal affairs the administration of justice requires authentic proof; but it is not the same in the affairs of state...There, urgent conjecture must sometimes take the place of proof; the loss of the particular is not comparable with the salvation of the state.[17]

The subsequent French treatment of political crime between the Revolution and the end of the nineteenth century viewed dissident activities somewhat differently. Under the influence of positivist legal doctrines and the erosion of *ancien regime* certainties of rule French law allowed relatively favourable treatment for political prisoners, abolishing the death penalty for most political crimes, and drawing a distinction between political opposition to the government of the day and treason to the state. After the slaughter of the Communards such liberalism on the part of the French state waned. The rise of transnat-ional class- and ethnic-based political movements, together with institutionalized and state-orchestrated working class nationalism[18], produced, in the period from the First World War and the post-1945 colonial wars, a withering of nineteenth century leniency towards "moral crimes".[19] The nuclear state and the Cold War generated a still greater absolutism of "nationalist" (in fact bloc) feeling. In the colonial wars in Algeria, Vietnam, and Afghanistan and in the domestic behaviour of a host of countries, torture was reintroduced in administrative fact and military practice for exceptional crimes.[20]

Terror and Legitimacy

Writing about modern states, Peters points to their "unsettling combination of vast power and infinite vulnerability" in a generalization of the exceptional crime as justification (implicit or brazen) for torture:

> Paradoxically, in an age of vast state strength, ability to mobilize resources, and possession of virtually infinite means of coercion, much of state policy has been based on the concept of extreme state vulnerability to enemies, external or internal.[21]

For many Third World states there is no paradox at all: their domestic levels of legitimacy are low, and the survival of the state is dependent on external legitimation and

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17. Cited by Ingraham, ibid, p.30.

18. C.f. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983) on state "invention of tradition" in the late nineteenth century, especially the concluding paper by Hobsbawm.

19. See Ingraham, op.cit., pp.229-245; and Peters, op.cit., p.120.

20. The French case needs complementing with the different histories of the treatment of political crime in other states - liberal democracies and otherwise. There is however, a remarkable amount of convergence of policy towards a strengthening of state powers amongst the liberal democracies in areas such as military secrecy, nuclear affairs, and a generally growing restriction on diffusion of state "secrets". Ingraham discusses the quite different histories in Britain and Germany. The British practice, Ingraham argues, since at least the mid-nineteenth century, has been to use the considerable legislative powers of the state in a preventive manner, "avoiding the issues raised by the political opposition at all costs, shunning direct confrontations whenever possible, smothering the opposition in a morass of humdrum regulations, harassing them with arrests and prosecutions for petty offences, and above all, shrinking from the glare of publicity. In this way the English have been able to maintain their reputation as an oasis of political liberalism in an age in which liberalism in the management of political crime is dead." (op.cit., p.314) One should not be surprised after such a passage to discover that Ingraham's conclusion is that "the legal and discriminating use of repression, joined with other political measures, can be, and has been, be effective in pacifying revolutionary movements" and that this can be done without establishing a "permanent police state". (1979:319) For less complacent views of that history and its contemporary outcomes see Corrigan and Sayer 1985, Bunyan 1976, 1981, Ackroyd et al 1977, Thompson 1979 and Duncan Campbell's numerous accounts of the British intelligence state.

21. Op.cit., p.6.

support.[22] Of thirty five countries examined by Chomsky and Herman which were using systematic torture in the 1970s, three-quarters (twenty four states) were militarily and politically aligned with or dependent on the United States.[23] The Soviet Union has a smaller number of client or allied states outside Europe but a number of those (most prominently Iraq and North Korea) have or have had similar practices.[24] Both superpowers have aided the spread of state terrorism - by direct or proxy invasions to install or protect clients, by subversion of disliked governments, and most importantly, by the provision of support for governments practising terror through financial and military aid, and diplomatic support.[25] The role of the United States agencies in spreading the practice of torture itself is quite clear:

> There is a great deal of evidence of U.S. training in methods of torture and provision of torture technology, which has been diffused throughout the system of U.S. client states. Electronic methods of torture, used extensively in Vietnam, have been adopted throughout the U.S. sphere of influence. A.J. Langguth claims that the CIA advised the Brazilian military on the limits that would prevent premature death in the use of field telephones for interrogation. A recently published interview with a Salvadorean death-squad officer shows that officials from the Salvadorean police and intelligence services have received intensive training in interrogation methods from the United States, including advice on the use of torture.[26]

The stress placed on the role of superpower patrons by writers such as Chomsky and Herman is often rejected by analysts of Third World militarization. Yet this is to defy repeated evidence. The Indonesian case will be analyzed in Part 2 below. The importance of external support was clear to the Argentinian military. In 1981, General Camps discussed "The Defeat of Subversion" in a newspaper article:

> In Argentina we were influenced first by the French and then by the United States. We used their methods separately at first and then together, until the United States' ideas finally predominated. France and the United States were our main sources of counter-insurgency training. They organized centres for teaching counter-insurgency techniques (especially in the U.S.) and sent out instructors, observers and an enormous amount of literature.[27]

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22. See Charles Tilly, "War and the power of warmakers in Western Europe and elsewhere, 1600-1980" in Peter Wallensteen, Johan Galtung, and Carlos Portales (eds.) Global Militarization, (Boulder: Westview, 1985); and Tilly, "War-making and state-making as organized crime", in Peter Evans, Dieter Rueschemyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

23. Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, op.cit., frontispiece.

24. See Amnesty International, *Torture in the Eighties*, (London: Amnesty International, 1984) for specific countries, and annual Amnesty reports. On North Korea see the report by Bruce Cumings in Asia Watch, Human Rights in Korea, (Washington: Asia Watch, 1986). On Iraq see al-Khalil, op.cit.

25. This sentence paraphrases Herman's discussion of the United States: "U.S. sponsorship of international terrorism: an overview", *Crime and Social Justice*, 27-28, (1987), p.10. While the great majority of cases are well inside the U.S. camp, the Soviet role over the same period was limited mainly by capacity, not ambition.

26. Ibid., p.16.

27. Cited in *Nunca Mas [Never Again]: A Report by Argentina's National Commission on Disappeared People*, (London: Faber and Faber, in association with Index on Censorship, 1986), p.442.

In the more autonomous examples, terror is usually employed against minority groups by governments enjoying the general positive or at least pragmatic support of a substantial section of the population - even if the particular policies of selective terror are not approved of.[28] This is certainly true of both the Soviet Union under Stalin and Germany under Hitler, at least in the early phases. It is less true for Cambodia, where sheer military dominance played a role, in addition to the complete fragmentation of non-communist opposition after the defeat of the Lon Nol regime and Pol Pot's skill in playing off and eliminating intra-party factions. In South Africa external assistance has played a significant part in enabling a minority to control a majority, though the element of autonomy, rooted in control over a resource-rich economy, is very great.[29] And the use of terror to develop domestic legitimacy, and the type of terror employed for this purpose, depends on the history of the relations between the government and the different population groups. Public terrorist spectacles that foster, if not actually create, legitimacy in the early days of a regime may become risky at a later stage when the terror has spread more widely.[30]

Tempting the state: incommunicado detention

A crucial condition for the widespread use of torture in a state is the legal sanctioning of, or at least an inability to prevent illegal use of, long periods of incommunicado detention, arbitrary arrest, and the suspension of the principle of habeas corpus. One of the common first responses to serious threats to the state today is the enactment of legislation or regulations which permit precisely a lengthening of the period of incommunicado detention and an abrogation of such habeas corpus provisions as may exist. This may either be done on a universal basis, or provided "only" for those arrested in connection with "exceptional" crimes.

> Incommunicado detention, secret detention, and `disappearance' increase the latitude of security agents over the lives and well-being of people in custody.[31]

This may seem tautological: abuse of prisoners is possible because state officials are allowed to abuse prisoners. The point is that reliance upon substantial periods of incommunicado detention, legally-based or otherwise, is the only condition under which

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28. Noam Chomsky makes the point that in the extreme case of Hitler, the fact of his considerable personal appeal should not be mistaken for support for his genocidal projects: "In an important study of this matter, Norman Cohn observes that even amongst Nazi Party members, in 1938 over 60% `expressed downright indignation at the outrages' carried out against the Jews, while 5 percent considered that `physical violence against Jews was justified because "terror must be met with terror"'. In the Fall of 1942, when the genocide was fully underway, some 5% of Nazi Party members approved the shipment of Jews to `labor camps', while 70% registered indifference and the rest `showed signs of concern for the Jews'. Among the general population support for the Holocaust would have surely been still less." All that was required was passive compliance, and the hint that repression might come closer. Noam Chomsky, *The Culture of Terrorism*, (Boston: South End Press, 1988), p.255, citing Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide*.

29. A general point here is that "client" is too simple a term to describe the complex balance of autonomy or subordination of, for example, Indonesia or South Africa in relation to the United States. This is a difficulty with Chomsky and Herman's discussion of "client-fascism" *(op.cit.)*. See Patrick Flanagan, "U.S. imperialism and the `third world'", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 12,1 (1980) for a critique which has its own exaggerations. Tilly 1985a, 1985b distinguishes between "clients" and "clones" according to the degree of economic autonomy (specifically concentration of trade) from the political and military patron state. The difficulty is that Indonesia, for all of the basically welcoming attitude to western foreign investment and trade, is hardly a structural clone of the United States. What is cloned is the relation of general subordination shared with others in the world system but with varying degrees, bases and domains of autonomy.

30. See the example of public executions in Iraq discussed below.

31. Amnesty International, *Torture in the Eighties*, op.cit., p.11.

security officials can carry out interrogations using torture on a sustained basis. If incommunicado detention periods are non-existent or brief, then outside individuals and groups remain able, either directly or through victims' lawyers, to monitor the condition of prisoners reasonably effectively and appeal for redress of abuses through the courts, the press, or through personal networks within the state. The work of sustained torture is possible only in legal night - under the cloak provided by the acceptance of "reasons of state".[32]

Governments, even the most dictatorial, usually feel the need to offer justifications for actions that they know to be immoral or unsavoury. Torture, however, is one pattern of action that government representatives hardly ever try to justify publically. There are, however, many euphemisms and codewords, usually employing masculine imagery of strength and hardness, always coupled to vague allusions to the regrettable things necessary for the preservation of order. General Jacques Massu, a French army commander in Algeria, was an exception. He did in fact justify the use of torture by his troops - in order to save lives, etc. - giving rise to the term "Massuisme".[33] In addition, state-oriented writers have begun in recent years to offer "hypothetical" justifications for torture in the context of non-state terrorism against the West under idealized and sanitized scenarios - "the world is being held to ransom, and you are faced with the choice of inflicting a limited amount of pain on one person in order to save ...". Such positions are usually linked with doctrines of "counter-terrorism" now flourishing and contribute, as Peters suggests, to

> the classic argument for retaining torture: the possibility of the heroic, unemotional torturer in the service of the state on behalf of innocent victims.[34]

Peters cites a document attributed to a French army officer in Algeria, providing regulations for torture which reflect these attitudes:

1. It is necessary that torture be properly conducted.
2. It must not take place in front of children.
3. It must not be performed by sadists.
4. It must be done by an officer or another responsible person.
5. It must be humane, that is, it should cease immediately when the type (sic - [fellow or chap]) confesses. And above all, it should leave no marks.[35]

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32. In the course of a dialogue with the democratic Spanish government in 1985, Amnesty International was able to persuade that government to revise its Anti-Terrorist Law and habeas corpus provisions, but was still contesting the fact that prisoners held incommunicado were not allowed to appoint counsel of their own choice, have family or friends (or consular officials) informed of their whereabouts), or have a private interview with their court-appointed lawyer. "Amnesty International still considers that the perpetuation by law of prolonged incommunicado detention, even with improved safeguards, is the crucial factor in facilitating the torture and ill-treatment of detainees." *Spain: The Question of Torture*, (London: Amnesty International, 1985), pp.4-5.

33. Peters, op.cit., p.177.

34. Ibid., p.177; see also Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

35. Peters, op.cit., p.178.

The uncontrolled state

A final set of conditions concerns the constraints on security agencies, or rather, the lack of them. This is a matter of both lack of control by nominally supervisory authorities within the state, and lack of information to enable public bodies of citizens to demand that such controls be established and implemented. Even in liberal democratic states, foreign policy, defence policy and political intelligence are the parts of government least subject to democratic influence. The lack of reliable information about the activities of terrorist agencies of the state is an element of their power, inflating their claims of influence, encouraging rumour, gossip and fantasy of state omniscience and omnipotence.

As argued in the preceding chapter, intelligence and security agencies have a built-in capacity and propensity to arrogate power to themselves, and to claim that their interpretation of their agency's mission is validated by reasons of state which override responsibility to the elected government of the day. The degree of insularity of these agencies' activities from the rest of government varies from case to case. In general, the greater the insularity of the agency from outside scrutiny, the more likely it is that torture will be employed.

The secrecy that surrounds such agencies in "peacetime" in liberal democracies is amplified in states under stress. The size, budgets and actual missions of particular intelligence and security agencies are almost always never disclosed. "National security" justifies minimal disclosure. This secrecy prevents proper scrutiny of their activities - by the public, legislatures, or most other executive agencies. Once abuses of citizens' rights begin in such agencies, there are fewer levers of influence from within the remainder of the state available to those who would attempt to reduce their autonomy. These qualities of intelligence and security agencies in the liberal democracy apply without question in much greater degree in communist and most Third World states.

The cultural construction of terror

Terror, and its most effective component, torture, is usually thought of as a palpably physical matter. Yet the foundation of terror as a form of rule is not the direct fear of the torturer, but a more indirect consequence of the empire of pain: suspicion. What is most powerful is the effect that the induced fear has on relations of ordinary solidarity between people. The primary fear becomes fear of the identity of the other. Terror, rooted in such physical extremities, is finally a cultural and psychological construct. To understand the effectiveness of terror, it is necessary to try to disentangle some of the cultural processes of its construction.

The corrosion of solidarity

The Argentinian National Commission on Disappeared People stressed the place of isolation and silence in the construction of effective terror:

> A feeling of complete vulnerability spread throughout Argentinian society, coupled with the fear that anyone, however innocent, might become a victim of the never-ending witch-hunt.[36]

This condition is found in a diverse group of twentieth century states employing, or attempting, totalitarian rule. Conquest, for example, writes of the Soviet union under Stalin:

36. Nunca Mas, op.cit., p.3.

> Right through the purge, Stalin's blows were struck at every form of solidarity and comradeship outside that provided by personal allegiance to himself. In general the Terror destroyed personal confidence between citizens everywhere.[37]

Not only does this inhibit the basis for political resistance, it also corrodes the foundations of sane daily intercourse amongst strangers. Kapuscinski tells an Iranian story of an elderly man at a bus stop remarking on the oppressive heat of the day:

> The other people at the bus stop had been listening in dread, for they had sensed from the beginning that the feeble elderly man was committing an unpardonable error by saying 'oppressive' to a stranger.... For a moment, for just an instant, a new doubt flashed through the heads of people standing at the bus stop. What if the old man was a Savak agent too? Because he had criticized the regime (by using 'oppressive' in conversation), he must have been free to criticize... The ubiquitous terror drove people crazy, made them so paranoid that they couldn't credit anyone with being honest, pure, or courageous. After all, they considered themselves honest and yet they couldn't bring themselves to express an opinion or a judgement, to make any sort of accusation, because they knew punishment lay ruthlessly in wait for them... In this way terror carried off its quarry - it condemned to mistrust and isolation anyone who, from the highest motives, opposed coercion. Fear so debased people's thinking, they saw deceit in bravery, collaboration in courage.[38]

This parable (Kapuscinski is hardly a reporter of facts) provides an extreme example of the foundation of the effectiveness of institutionalized terror in a diffuse and corrosive uncertainty about the conduct of daily life. Gregory Henderson, testifying to Congress in 1976 about the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in the late Park period, focussed on the question of induced cynicism as a prop of that regime:

> It is impossible for most Americans to imagine to what an extent this giant state-within-a-state has set man against man, sown suspicion throughout the land, atomized constructive political endeavour, transformed one of the world's most avid and ancient political traditions into the cynicism and apathy of separated, suspicious, and fearful men.[39]

Two decades of Ba'athist terror in Iraq produced an endemic "self-withdrawal" in the 1970s, both inside the country and amongst exiles:

> This kind of fear reduces human beings to a bundle of reactive sensations, all keyed up for the next blow. With its emergence, all civic values, comradeship, nationalism, any sense of community, and even the private capacity to reflect disappear.

Silence, suspicion and isolation assault ordinary feelings of solidarity abruptly, as this type of fear arising from an unavoidable awareness of "rampant institutional cruelty" void both the normal moral expectations of daily life and the otherwise universal expectation that there is some ground for "innocence" and legal safety:

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37. Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties*, (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p.282.

38. Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Shah of Shahs*, (London: Picador, 1986(), pp.44-45.

39. U.S. Congress, *Activities of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency in the United States.* Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Part 1, (March 17 and 25, 1976.), p.10.

> These sensibilities do not gently fade away; they are obliterated the instant fear of this nature takes grip of the psyche and irrespective of how highly cultivated they may once have been.[40]

The kind of fear to which al-Khalil refers in Iraq from the mid-1970s was not the immediate response of that country's citizens to the advent of Baa'thist power. In the beginning the Ba'athist target was the Other - "Zionist and imperialist spies" - and the initial killings were designed to achieve a kind of celebratory complicity for the largest possible number of Iraqi citizens. In the first executions in January 1969 seventeen victims were publicly hanged in Liberation Square in the capital. Their corpses were left to swing, carefully spaced seventy meters apart, "increasing the area of sensual contact between mutilated body and mass", a mass estimated between 150,000 and 500,000 people who had been encouraged to come to the carnival by the press and media. Every month or so for the next year the ghastly show was repeated, though over time enthusiasm diminished as the plausibility of accusations declined and awareness of the spreading risks of becomong a victim increased. [41]

This early Ba'athist "theatre of power" gained a large part of its potency, according to al-Khalil, from the feeling of moral exhaustion and political gullibility that was in part induced by Ba'athist ideology in the decades after the first Ba'athist government in 1958, and which gathered pace after 1968-70.

> ...between 1958 and 1968 the self-assurance of the masses gave way to a debilitating moral vacuum as they lost or at least questioned all instinctual knowledge of themselves accumulated over several decades of a slow political emergence. Their own "truth" could no longer be taken for granted, and was open to being managed or shaped into something else...In such a setting, terror laced with culpability, the fear of death becomes an inordinately powerful and positive force for holding the body politic together.[42]

Semantic delerium

Distortions of language are an important element of the working of sustained terror, within the wider society, amongst the ranks of torturers and their superiors, and in the cells. "Surely", Taussig writes,

> it is in the coils of rumour, gossip, story and chit-chat where ideology and ideas become emotionally powerful and enter into active social circulation and meaningful existence.[43]

This is part of the operation of what the Argentinian National Commission on the Disappeared referred to as the "semantic delirium" that smothered Argentinian society for a decade. Kapuscinski's Iranian parable stressed the theft from language of innocent meanings for everyday words and expressions.

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40. Samir al-Khalil, *The Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp.65-66.

41. al-Khalil, ibid, p.61.

42. Ibid, p.60,

43. Michael Taussig, "Culture of terror - space of death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the explanation of torture", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26,467-497, (1984), p.494.

> Experience had taught them to avoid uttering such terms as oppressiveness, darkness, burden, abyss, collapse, quagmire, putrefaction, cage, bars, chain, gag, truncheon, boot, claptrap, screw, pocket, paw, madness, and expressions like lie down, lie flat, spreadeagle, fall on your face, wither away, gotten flabby, go blind, go deaf, wallow in it, something's out of kilter, something's wrong, all screwed up, something's gotta give, - because of all of them, these nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns, could hide allusions to the Shah's regime, and thus formed a connotative minefield where you could get blown to bits with one slip of the tongue.[44]

The semantic delirium often extends to the discourse of the state officials. Jacobo Timerman reports interviewing an Argentinian naval officer he knew, prior to Timerman's own arrest. The officer expressed a visceral hatred for the guerillas, not least animated by his own wounded pride, defending his vision of controlled extermination:

> "But if we exterminate them all, there'll be fear for several generations."
> "What do you mean by all?"
> "All...about twenty thousand people. And their relatives too - they must be eradicated - and also those who remember their names."[45]

The Governor of Buenos Aires expressed the same compulsive exterminist fantasy in even more baroque - and insane - terms:

> First we will kill all the subversives, then we will kill their collaborators, then their sympathizers, then those who remained indifferent, and finally, we will kill the timid.[46]

Within the ranks of the torturing bureaucracy at the point where the practitioners of torture deal with members of the related bureaucracies at several removes from the torture itself (but accepting its "benefits"), distorted language has the familiar function of de-amplifying what is in fact occurring. Just as the Nazis referred to genocide as "cleansing" and the extermination camps as "labour camps"[47], and the nuclear planners employ an array of euphemisms to distance themselves from the reality of their work, so too do torturing bureaucracies employ a de-amplifying language. Lifton's comments on the language of genocidal bureaucracies is applicable to intelligence and security bureaucracies more generally:

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44. Kapuscinski, op.cit., p.44.

45. Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p.48.

46. General Iberico Saint-Jean cited in Gregory and Timerman, op.cit., p.69. National variations in the ideological ferocity and tone of state terrorist regimes are important. It is possible that Argentina's (and that of other Latin American cone countries) combination of Latin catholicism, an infusion of post-1945 Nazism, and thriving anti-semitism gave its fascist language a particular flavour. Comparing the Brazilian and Argentinian regimes of the time Mainwaring and Viola argue that the Argentinian was much more radical in its intention to change the political culture permanently.

> The level of terror helped reinforce extremely hierarchical authority relations, from the elementary schools to the universities, from the workplace to the jails...All forms of `non-conforming' behavior were subject to punishment: homosexuality, long hair for males, beards and mustaches, pants for women, unmarried men and women living together. The regime wanted to implant a more nationalist, militarist political culture, based on the values of machism, female subordination, heroism, and patriotism ... Like the Brazilian regime, but in more extreme and self-conscious ways, it attempted to destroy knowledge and concern about democracy."

Scott Mainwaring and Eduardo Viola, "New social movements, political culture, and democracy: Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s", *Telos*, 61 (Fall 1984), pp.25-26.

47. Of course, some of the death camps were also labour camps with factories attached. Jorge Semprun's meditation on his own incarceration in Buchenwald, *What a Beautiful Sunday* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1982), stresses the fact that "reform through labour" was a common theme of the Nazi and Stalinist camps.

> This de-amplification of language, with its attendant numbing, denial and de-realization - may extend to the point of relative silence, thereby maintaining the mixture of part-secrecy and "middle knowledge" likely to surround genocide.[48]

"Part-secrecy and middle knowledge" is a useful phrase to describe the kind of knowingness of the existence of the practice of torture amongst the personnel of totalitarian regimes at several removes from the actual business. For Lifton, "middle knowledge" refers to a kind of denial which is never total, but rather "a partial awareness ... side by side with expressions and actions that belie that awareness." Lying between full awareness and unconsciousness, middle knowledge is particularly relevant to analyzing situations of bad faith in the construction and maintenance of repressive regimes, which is summarized by Wellmer's phrase (speaking of Germany) "a still-unmastered past". It is particularly appropriate for the kind of institutionalized bad faith rooted in the politically necessary repression of memory and other sources of awareness which the practice of torture requires to proceed.[49]

Language is also important in the discourse of torture itself, the terms used for torture and the torturers - mostly, if not always, invented by themselves and sometimes used by their victims. Such terms always reify the relation of executioner and victim and the experiences of the latter, and function to legitimate the torture and broader terror. Consider, for example, the connotations of the term the Argentinian military prefers to use for the 1970s - the "Dirty War". This phrase supports the self-image of the Argentinian officer corps through its masculine connotations of a distasteful but necessary task performed by basically honourable men who would rather be involved in a clean war. Reports from a number of countries provide examples of torturers giving themselves nicknames with a dramatic tone: in Argentina, for example, "Shark", "Snake", "Blondie", Rotbelly", "Dummy".[50]

Similarly, particular tortures are given slang names - often animal ("the parrot's perch" - [Chile] suspension down from a horizontal pole placed under the knees, with the hands tied to the ankle); alimentary ("le petit dėjeuner" - [Zaire] the victim drinking their own urine); technological - benign ("the conveyor" - [Soviet Union] keeping the victim awake and under interrogation for days or even weeks on end; "the telephone" - [Chile] blows with the palms of the hands to both ears simultaneously), or otherwise ("the submarine" - [widespread] submerging the victim forcibly and repeatedly in foul water or excrement).[51]

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48. Robert J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p.496. The question of numbing brings up the issue of the practitioners of torture - their recruitment, training, and the consequences for them as much as for their victims. This will not be dealt with here, but see especially the superb clinical sketches in Cases 4 and 5 in Series A of Frantz Fanon's "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" in his *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp.212-217. The remainder of that paper deals with the profound psychological and psycho-somatic effects of the French war against Algeria on the Algerian population.

49. Lifton briefly discusses the concept of "middle knowledge" in his *The Broken Connection* (New York: Touchstone, 1979: p.17) in his advocacy of a formative-symbolizing perspective on death derived from Otto Rank. The paragraph from which the above quotation is taken is helpful in further understanding both the situation of torture and the survival of regimes of terror: "But that denial [of death, such as Freud emphasized] can never be total; we are never fully ignorant of the fact that we die. Rather we go about life with a kind of `middle knowledge' of death, a partial awareness of it side by side with expressions and actions that belie that awareness. Our resistance to the fact that we die - the numbed side of our middle knowledge - interferes considerably with our symbolizing process. We, in fact, require symbolization of continuity - imaginative forms of transcending death - in order to confront the fact that we die."

50. Nunca Mas, op.cit., p.25.

51. Scarry (op.cit., p.44) points out that the slang names for tortures in fact are made up from three "spheres of civilization" - mimesis of technology, cultural events, and nature or nature civilized.

Interruption: talking about torture

It is vital to pause here, to interrupt the flow of reading from a distance, to recall precisely what is being signified. I have felt more than uncomfortable when preparing this section of the work: reading about torture is a peculiar experience, not least because one's own latent sadism is mobilized in cognition (as in much drama or fiction). Moreover, analysis by its nature is, at least in its first moments, deeply insensitive to the uniqueness of each person, searching for generalizations, and worse, apt phrases. One can only hope that the movement of synthesis yields some reparation.

I have always felt particularly uncomfortable about the assignment of names to particular techniques, and their use in what aspire to be emancipatory writings about torture.[52] *It has always seemed to me to involve a kind of short-circuiting of experience, an objectification that permits an unackowledged vicarious participation in the activity, an acceptance of the world the torturer presents as real to his victim. A letter from a Paraguayan former prisoner gives voice to the experience of "the submarine":*

> *They made me sit on the edge of the trough at its highest part, having first tied my feet with ropes and my hands behind my back. I was stripped of my clothes.*
>
> *Suddenly they grabbed me by the shoulders and pushed me to the bottom of the trough. I held my breath while making desperate efforts to get my head out of the water and take in some air. I managed to free my head but they submerged me again, and when my efforts to get out became violent, the heaviest members of the group trampled on the top part of my body. I could no longer bear the lack of air and began to swallow through my mouth, nose and ears.*
>
> *My ears started to hum as the water made its way in. They seemed to be blowing up like a balloon. Then came a sharp whistling, very loud at first, which has not yet completely gone and which I hear when there is complete silence. The more I swallowed the more my struggles to breathe also increased and they all pressed me down to the bottom of the trough - my head, chest, hands...*
>
> *I must have swallowed 8-10 litres of water. When they took me out and laid me on the ground, one of them trod heavily on my stomach; water poured out from my mouth and nose, spurting like a jet from a hose...*[53]

Scarry's response provides the vital element of reparation here,

> *To attach any name, any word to the wilful infliction of this bodily agony is to make language and civilization participate in their own destruction; the specific names chosen merely make this subversion more overt.*[54]

This is the empire of pain [Coetzee]. Even the quotation of accounts of torture - "documentary realism" - has an attendant risk. Although it was not to such uses of language as this that Teodor Adorno was referring in his often misquoted remark that

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52. Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi list and detail a great many procedures in "A Torture Glossary", *Secret Police: The Inside Story of a Network of Terror*, (London: Abacus, 1981), p.312-324. While their intentions are admirable, there is something curiously disturbing about the listing - perhaps because of the distancing from the experience of victims that such listings generate.

53. Cited by Scarry, op.cit., p.43.

54. Scarry, op.cit., p.43.

after Auschwitz poetry could not be written, his point should be felt viscerally by emancipatory researchers. There is something dishonourable, Adorno said, about using suffering as the source of art, "thrown as fodder to the world that murdered them."

> *The so-called artistic representation of naked bodily pain of victims felled by rifle butts, contains, however remote, the potentiality of wringing pleasure from it.*[55]

There is no simple response: to keep silent is clearly the greater sin. Shifting narrative modes from analysis to victims' accounts provides some chance guarding against the effects of reification of the experiences and provides more opportunities for the mobilization of empathy and insight.

Torture and language

Torture is inextricably linked to language through interrogation - the question. Torture always coincides with interrogation, the apparent inquiry for information, evidence, and above all, confession. Elaine Scarry has subtly analyzed the phenomenology of torture in terms of conversion of real pain into a fiction of power through three steps that make up "the unconscious structure" of "moral stupidity, here as in its less savage forms":

> First, pain is inflicted on a person in ever-intensifying ways. Second, the pain, continually amplified within the person's body, is also amplified in the sense that it is objectified, made visible to those outside the person's body. Third, the objectified pain is denied as pain and read as power, a translation made possible by the obsessive mediation of agency.[56]

The spectacle of power is created by a perceptual shift:

> The physical pain is so incontestably real that its seems to confer its quality of "incontestable reality" on that power that has brought it into being. It is, of course, precisely because the reality of that power is so highly contestable, the regime so unstable, that the torture is being used.[57]

Many people have noted that although the nominal purpose of torture is always the obtaining of information allegedly possessed by the victim, such acts are very often committed against those who could not possibly know anything. Something else must be involved, whether the victim is in fact knowledgable or not. The minimum and universal objective is degradation, humiliation and the destruction of elemental human dignity and identity.

Scarry's account takes us further into the remarkably uniform structure of torture by concentrating on the place of the relation between the physical pain and the verbal interaction. To the victim, intense pain is literally world-destroying.

> In compelling confession, the torturers compel the prisoner to record and objectify the fact that intense pain is world-destroying. It is for this reason that while the

55. Adorno cited in Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and Literary Imagination*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p.1.

56. Scarry, op.cit., p.28.

57. Ibid., p.27.

> content of the prisoner's answer is only sometimes important to the regime, the form of the answer, the fact of his answering, is always crucial.[58]

Timerman's account confirms Scarry's intuition about the final incommunicability of "world-destroying pain":

> One might logically assume that I thought I knew it all, knew what a political prisoner was, how he suffered in jail, the things a tortured man felt. But I knew nothing. And it's impossible to convey what I know now. In the long months of confinement I often thought of how to transmit the pain that a tortured person undergoes. And I always concluded that it was impossible. It is a pain without points of reference, revelatory symbols or clues to serve as indicators.[59]

Most importantly, Scarry's focus on voice, question, and confession pinpoints two complementary, politically significant, emotional responses to the victim who confesses - that of the torturer and that of the wider society. The starting point is the difference between responses to the physical and verbal elements of torture, a perceptual shift made not only by torturers but shown in the disdain for victims who are often described as having "betrayed" their friends and associates.

> Almost anyone looking at the *physical* act of torture would be immediately appalled and repulsed by the torturers. It is difficult to think of a human situation in which the lines of responsibility are more starkly or simply drawn, in which there is a more compelling reason to ally one's sympathies with the one person and repel the claims of the other. Yet as soon as the attention shifts to the *verbal* aspect of torture, those lines have begun to waver and change their shape in the direction of accommodating and crediting the torturers.[60]

This occurs, she suggests, through two conventional interpretations of pain and confession, both interest-laden and both in an important sense, false.

> "The question" is mistakenly understood to be the motive; "the answer" is mistakenly understood to be "the betrayal". The first mistake credits the torturer, providing him with a justification, his cruelty with an explanation. The second discredits the prisoner, making him rather than the torturer, his voice rather than his pain, the cause of his loss of self and the world. These two misinterpretations are obviously neither accidental nor unrelated. The one is an absolution of responsibility; the other is a conferring of responsibility; the two together turn the moral reality of torture upside down.[61]

I have quoted at length from Scarry's work because she illuminates ordinarily unexamined aspects of what is usually taken to be a self-revealing act of brutality. Yet a surprising number of characteristics common to widespread contemporary torture practices are made more clear in the process. Scarry's last observation on this small theatre of power begins to make the links to the wider political theatre through which the

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58. Ibid., p.29.

59. Timerman, op.cit., p.32.

60. Scarry, op.cit., p.35.

61. Ibid., p.35.

baffled screams of the victims resonate and amplify. This form of social unreason has a structure, an unconscious one with elements of ritual which help to constitute and reproduce rule by terror.[62]

Terror as ritual of state

Torture in this view can be seen as a "pseudo-ritual" that illuminates "the essential relationship of the totalitarian State to society".[63] Gregory and Timerman point to the remarkable similarities of ordered sequences of symbolic events like rites of passage of separation, transition and incorporation, from arrest to death or release, in their case in Argentina, but in fact, much the same in the Soviet Union under Stalin or South Korea under Park or Chun. Arrest usually occurred at night at the victim's home, although sometimes at other times of the day and on the street or at the workplace. In Argentina the men carrying out the arrest were organized as heavily-armed groups of plain clothes operatives known as "work groups". Local police would be warned off from interfering in such operations, rendering the area around the victim a "free zone" or a "green light zone".[64] Unmarked cars and plain clothes operations in such zones intentionally served only to shout the "secret that everybody knew": the work groups were not skulking criminals but

> ritual specialists operating in the sacred space, or "free zones" of the totalizing State which, through their activities was creating itself through the cannibalization of society.
>
> The message that was conveyed to Argentinian society through the concealment of the identity of the abductors was not that the acts being committed were "illegal" and reprehensible; quite to the contrary, the message, dramatically staged, was that these acts were legal in an absolute sense and expressed the quintessential exercise of State power, stripped of its institutional trappings.[65]

Somewhat similar stories could be told of KCIA pick-ups of activists in Korea, or the killing work of Kopassus commandos in the campaign against criminals in Indonesia, or the para-state death squads in Central America or the Philippines.[66] Characteristically the

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62. Despite the importance of the subject in both political and moral terms there are remarkably few reliable comprehensive studies of contemporary torture and terror. Two of the small number are Amnesty International's *Torture in the Eighties* (London: Amnesty International, 1984) and *Political Killings by Governments* (London: Amnesty International, 1983), Peters' *Torture (op.cit.)* and on surveillance and state terror more broadly Plate and Darvi's *Secret Police (op.cit.)*. Amnesty International's series of national reports are without equal. Three extremely important national reports are *Nunca Mas: the Report of the Argentinian National Commission on Disappeared People (op.cit.)* Solzhenitsyn's multivolume *The Gulag Archipelago I and II*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), and Amnesty International's *Torture in Greece: the First Torturers' Trial, 1975* (London: Amnesty International, 1977).

63. Gregory and Timerman, op.cit., p.63. I would say "embodies" rather than "illuminates", emphasizing the fact that torture (and related acts like abduction and arbitrary arrest) are the principal ways in which the wider society is terrorized - indirectly.

64. Cases of military or police officials attempting to prevent such abductions taking place are not uncommon. For example, the attempted intervention of a naval officer in the abduction of Selma Julia Ocampo, reported in *Nunca Mas*, op.cit., pp.13-14.

65. Gregory and Timerman, op.cit., p.65.

66. The Iraqi secret police have developed a macabre variant on the ritual of abduction, torture and disappearance. The government does not deny complicity; on the contrary.

> What one assumes to be the corpse is brought back weeks or maybe months later and delivered to the head of the family in a sealed box. A death certificate is produced for signature to the effect that the person has died of fire, swimming or other such accident. Someone is allowed to accompany police and box for a ceremony, but at no tiome is he or she permitted to view the corpse. The cost of the proceedings is demanded in advance, and the whole thing is over within hours of the first knock on the door. The gap between the formality and the reality of such a death can henceforth be acted out as a gigantic lie by all

abducted person then becomes one of the disappeared - an absolute rupture creating an amplifying mirror of anxiety and terror in the minds of the abducted and those left behind.[67]

In the prison cell, "safe house" or army barracks prisoners, even when not being tortured, are treated in a remarkably uniform manner: what the Argentinian journalist Eduardo Luis Duhalde described as the disintegration of personal identity, or *cosificacion* (that is, the becoming of a thing). In an extreme application of the techniques of dehumanization and attempted annihilation of personality common to "total institutions", the symbolic and material transition from freedom to abduction to unalterable location in the "secret" detention centres[68] was organized materially and psychologically to destroy the human identity.

> The *"cosificacion"*, fruit of the isolation and the loss of time, added to permanent inactivity, leads the prisoner to a loss of his identity. There is no place where he can organize the "space of I". Inert and without anything that belongs to him, he cannot elaborate any kind of individual relation to the environment.[69]

Torture itself, the annihilation of identity intended through it, and the mode of detention together constitute a social death following the separation from society through abduction. The defiling of the body of the victim comes to signify both the power of the regime and the "`living proof' of social death"; or as Gregory and Timerman stress,

> the reification of these negated social relations [that make up the identity of the victim] and the physical matter through which the State constituted its totalitarian identity.[70]

As in other rituals of life transition, there is a complementary relation between the processes of disintegration and reconstitution of identity in a new form undergone by the individual and the broader processes of constitution and re-affirmation of the structure of the society.

> In the process of torture the totalizing State simultaneously created both law and crime through the cannibalization of society as vested in the social identity of its victims. This transformation of human beings into "disappeared ones", symbolized by and reified in the bodies of its victims achieved its end not in the physical death of the victim, but in the destruction of the body as an object to be buried and remembered.[71]

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concerned, including the victim's family who are now able to announce the event and carry out the appropriate public mourning ceremony." al-Khalil, op.cit., p.64.

67. On abduction see *Nunca Mas*, op.cit., pp.10-19, Solzhenitsyn, op.cit., and numerous accounts throughout Plate and Darvi, op.cit. Of course, in some cases, such as the killings of criminals, disappearance was shortlived - the bodies turned up quickly. But the lack of certainty is in itself literally terrifying. See the Chilean exile Ariel Dorfman's novel *Widows* (London: Abacus, 1984) for a superb non-naturalistic account of a response by the women of one village.

68. The numbers and diversity of secret detention centres discovered after the fall of the dictatorship in Argentina would be difficult to believe without the testimony and evidence. Their reporting covers almost one hundred and fifty pages in *Nunca Mas*.

69. Duhalde, cited in Gregory and Timerman, op.cit., p.66.

70. Ibid., p.67.

71. Ibid., p.68.

For torturers and their superiors, for victims and bereaved, for activists and by-standers, the cycle of abduction, torture and uncertainty is the centre of the diffuse culture of terror whose effects grip the society, immobilizing so effectively. The idea that through such activities the state constitutes itself by cannibalizing society is one part of the explanation of certain qualities of excess that often overtake totalitarian regimes, especially when they see themselves under severe threat.[72] In that circumstance they expand the numbers and range of categories of "enemies of the state", even to the point of risking the goodwill of previously quiescent or supportive social groups.

Accounts of torture regularly demonstrate an eerie obsessiveness. In part this can be explained by the fact that the information that allegedly supplies the motive for the question is often either not known to the victim (and hence *cannot* provide an adequate answer) or is a minor part of the torturer's actual concerns. As Sartre said, it is the executioner who becomes Sisyphus.

> The purpose of it is to force from *one* tongue, amid its screams and the vomiting up of blood, the secret of *everything*...It is the executioner who becomes Sisyphus. If he puts the *question* at all, he will have to continue forever.[73]

Gregory and Timerman have an additional explanation in terms of the character of rituals. "Rituals of the state", they maintain,

> do not create cultural meanings. They do not resolve the fundamental contradictions posed by the existence of the individual as a discrete and, hence, identifiable member of a society. Such rituals lack the resolution that primitive rituals achieve through reincorporation and, therefore, require an endless, obsessive, compulsive repetition in order to achieve their vicarious effect.[74]

Such reincorporation into Argentinian society as did occur was "as abstract and unidentifiable members of a Platonic category" rather than as socially mediated individuals. The ritual of torture is, they argue, only an ersatz pseudo-ritual, thereby robbing the totalizing state of the victory its seeks.

While this contribution to the explanation of compulsive repetition makes a great deal of sense, the optimistic implication does not seem to follow.[75] It is not clear that state-constructed rituals are *necessarily* epistemologically incomplete, emotionally unsatisfying, or existentially inadequate. In the context of the legitimation difficulties of advanced capitalist states Habermas makes a related claim:

> *There is no administrative production of meaning*...Cultural traditions have their

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72. The prevalence of metaphors such as the "purification" of the nation hints at these qualities - as in the South Korean usage after Chun came to power for "purification camps" and the "special law on political purification". (Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Korea*, op.cit., pp.50-52) On the "myth of purified identity" in another context which is relevant here see Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

73. Sartre, op.cit., p.23.

74. 1986:69. Immediately after Chun came to power in South Korea in 1980, thousands of real or alleged dissidents were arrested and tortured as of a matter of course. "Even confession was insufficient to stop the torture, since many had to write and rewrite them a dozen times - an Orwellian experience more commonly associated with Communist states than the `free world'." (Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Korea*, op.cit., pp.33-34.) Conquest commented on the Stalinist purges: "When we read, in cases of no particular importance, and ones never to be made public, of the use of the `conveyor' system tying down team after team of police investigators for days on end, the impression one gets is not simply of vicious cruelty, but of insane preoccupation with a pointless formality. The accused could perfectly well, it seems, have been shot or sentenced without this frightful rigmarole." (op.cit., p.146)

75. Gregory and Timerman draw on Stanley Diamond's, "Subversive art", *Social Research*, 49,4 (Winter, 1982).

> own, vulnerable, conditions of reproduction. They remain `living' as long as they take shape in an unplanned, nature-like manner, or are shaped with hermeneutic consciousness.[76]

As with Gregory and Timerman's claim this is an unproven and politically optimistic view that runs the risk of romanticizing "natural cultures".

Tyrannical regimes do fall, oppression is never as total as it proclaims, and resistance survives even under the most painful dominion. Yet, as Gregory and Timerman point out, for a decade after the eruption of the counter-insurgency programmes against the Argentinian left, there was "negligible" domestic resistance to the junta.[77] The final fall of the junta was caused, immediately at least, by economic collapse and political over-reaching in the Falklands-Malvinas war.

There seems to be a gap in the analysis between the structure of the experience of abduction, torture and disappearance and the wider structures of the cultures of terror of which they are constitutive. Terror is both a physical, physiological fact, and a cultural construct. The unconscious structures revealed in the limited range of variation in practises of torture by agents of totalitarian rule are part of a still wider cultural construct of terror as a form of rule. I have stressed already the central part played in this process by the corrosion of everyday forms of solidarity, the inflation of mistrust, and the expectation of debased motives. Terror rules through the word, the sense of acts, rather than through the acts themselves.

Living in the space of death

> Deeply dependent on sense and interpretation, terror nourished itself by destroying sense.[78]

The stress on terror as a form of sense, a structure of feeling, involves a cultural construct that partakes of the themes of the cultures of the dominator and the victim in "a distorted yet reciprocating mimesis" (Taussig). Writing about both the massacres of Putumayo Indian rubber-workers in British-owned plantations in Colombia in the decade before World War I and the terror of the Argentinian junta in the 1970s, Taussig goes to great lengths to restrict the place of rational choice in the explanation of the motives for terror. In the case of the Putumayo, the slaughter of Indians was economically disastrous: what started as a means of subordinating hunter-gatherers to the dull compulsion of capitalist economic relations became an end in itself. In the Argentinian case, we have already seen evidence of the obsessive, compulsive, non-rational dimensions of the driving ideology. To be sure, in both cases, there are supplementary explanations to be provided based on the demands of the material circumstances various groups faced. The militarization of Argentina and the counter-insurgency actions can be explained with reference to the military elite's perception of what was necessary to "restore order and calm" on the one hand, and at some level of mediation, to restore the conditions for

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76. Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), p.70. Emphasis in the original.

77. However, perhaps the most important resistance was an act of ritual: that of the Mothers of the Disappeared in their regular and frequent acts of witness in the Plaza de Mayo. "It was this essential relation, that of a mother to her child, that quietly erupted within the space of death as the single most indelible and indestructible tie of the disappeared ones to society, and of society to humanity." (Gregory and Timerman, op.cit., p.71) This extraordinary phenomenon also contained qualities of ritual, and was imbricated in relations of gender and age, qualities of witness as a form of power, the place of the mass media, and the relations between national and global society.

78. Taussig, op.cit.,, p.128.

effective accumulation of capital. But neither of these explanations is sufficient to explain the actual processes that then ensued - especially why the savagery took the forms of baroque excess it did, and just how a culture of terror actually operated.

Above all, Taussig stresses,

> ... cultures of terror are based on and nourished by silence and myth in which the fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious flourishes by means of rumour and fantasy woven into a dense web of magical realism.[79]

Despite all of the profane reality of incommunicable pain to human bodies, the fundamental issue of terror is one of epistemology, or more accurately, the construction of knowledges out of pain and threat to induce terror and immobilization. The executioner needs the victim in order to realise his fantasies, or at least, objectify them.[80] Terror invokes a particular mode of being, the space of death:

> The space of death is crucial to the creation of meaning and consciousness, nowhere more so than in societies where torture is endemic and where the culture of terror flourishes...The space of death is pre-eminently a space of transformation: through the experience of death, life; through fear, loss of the self, and conformity to a new reality; or through evil, good. Lost in the dark woods, then journeying through the underworld with his guide, Dante achieves paradise only after he has mounted Satan's back.[81]

Reading the accounts of the survivors of the torturer's hand the importance of the motif of the space of death jumps out, as for example in this Argentinian testimony by Dr. Norberto Liwsky:

> I began to feel that I was living alongside death. When I wasn't being tortured I had hallucinations about death - sometimes when I was awake, at other times while sleeping...The most vivid and terrifying memory I have of all that time was of always living with death. I felt it was impossible to think. I desperately tried to summon up a thought in order to convince myself that I wasn't dead...I had the sensation of sliding toward nothingness down a huge slippery tube where I could get no grip. I felt that just one clear thought would be something solid for me to hold on to and prevent my fall into the void. My memory of that time is at once so concrete and so personal and private that the image I have of it is an intestine existing both inside and outside my own body.[82]

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79. Taussig op.cit., p.469. Here Taussig is drawing on Walter Benjamin's essay on surrealism in his *One Way Street and Other Writings*, (London: New Left Books, 1979):

> "Any serious exploration of occult, surrealistic, phantasmagoric gifts and phenomena presupposes a dialectical intertwinement to which a romantic turn of mind is impervious. For histrionic or fanatical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious takes us no further; we penetrate the mystery only to the degree that we recognize it in the everyday world, by virtue of the dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday." (p.237)

"Magical realism" is often used to define the rhetorical and narrative mode of Latin American political novelists such as Miguel Asturias, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Alejo Carpentier. See, for example, the discussion of "The Politics of Eternal Return" by Robert Boyers, *Atrocity and Amnesia: The Political Novel since 1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

80. There is very little work on the basis of torture in gender relations. For one avenue see Theweleit's study of the themes of fantasy amongst German Freikorps militants, Male Fantasies: Volume 1 - Women, Floods, Bodies, History, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

81. Taussig, op.cit., pp.467-8.

82. Reported in *Nunca Mas*, op.cit., p.23.

The space of death is equally a cultural reality to the torturers, something to be fantasized about, a place to which the prisoner must be introduced by name, as a threat but also as part of the construction of the perceptual shift that must be accomplished to achieve the "fiction of power":

> The first time they took me to be interrogated they told me: "If you don't sing we'll take you to the very edge of death. Then we'll pull you back from the edge, and push you back, again and again. If we overdo it we'll put you in a nylon bag and throw you in the Cemeterio del Norte." The background music to this speech, apart from the radios playing at full blast, was the screams of those being tortured in the adjoining rooms.[83]

Here the transformation to take place played a clear part in the make-up of the fiction of power: the torturers describe the space of death and their esoteric knowledge. Note the pseudo-scientific claim, the agent as instrument, and the merging of the themes of science and control in the space of death ("then we'll pull you back from the edge...").

The generation of a culture of terror through the application of techniques of abduction, disappearance, and torture in such a manner finally depends on what Taussig rightly calls "epistemic and ontological murk":

> To an important extent all societies live by fictions taken as reality. What distinguishes cultures of terror is that the epistemological, ontological and otherwise purely philosophical problem of reality-and-illusion, certainty-and-doubt, becomes infinitely more than a philosophical problem. It becomes a high-powered tool for domination and a principal medium of political practice.[84]

The progress of the state: scientizing torture

Yet it is important to remain aware of the fact that acts of torture are in some respects highly purposive actions by agencies of modern states. The unconscious elements of pseudo-ritual and mimesis of reciprocating savageries are a powerful force in structuring the experience of the individual in detention and the society suffused by a culture of terror. But there are other forces involved, bringing highly conscious planning and consideration into the practice of torture and the spreading of terror. Earlier in this chapter I referred to the role of external assistance and planning for client states, and in the preceding chapter I discussed the application of social science within the framework of domestic political intelligence. Two core modern disciplines - and frameworks of everyday meaning - are most intimately involved with the contemporary plague of torture: medicine and law, although social sciences are finding their application in the broader sphere of propagation of terror under the heading of psychological warfare.

Medical workers, especially physicians, are associated with the practice of torture in two ways. The first is in a permissive, facilitating, and legitimating role - by falsely certifying the well-being of prisoners subject to torture, or more directly by assisting in the infliction of torture by advising on the limits of pain of the individual concerned. Former prisoners in many different countries have reported such roles for doctors and

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83. Extract from anonymous testimony from the Batallón de Infanteria, No. 13, Uruguay. Amnesty International, *Uruguay: Deaths Under Torture, 1975-77*, (London: Amnesty International, 1978), p.6.

84. Taussig, op.cit.,, p.492.

nurses as commonplace.[85]

The second way in which medical workers are assisting the work of torturers is by devising new and, from the state's perspective, more appropriate forms of inflicting pain and distress - by scientizing torture. A Uruguayan political prisoner reported a doctor supervizing torture in a prison,

> and during interrogation, I heard him advising the torturers on which part of the body to hit a person who had got some illness.

However, an even more disturbing trend is emerging as awareness of torture spreads and with it, the diagnostic skill of doctors in detecting the subsequent physical signs of torture. New methods of torture, particularly using psychopharmacology and methods of cognitive manipulation such as sensory deprivation are a response to the needs of states to use methods of torture which are both more "efficient" (in terms of time and labour to produce a given result) and less detectable. The use of drugs in interrogation was particularly prevalent in the detention of Soviet political prisoners in psychiatric hospitals in the 1960s and 1970s, but is now becoming more widespread in the Third World.[86]

Sensory deprivation techniques so far seem to be the monopoly of the advanced industrial countries - Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union - and South Africa. The two best-known examples are the use of a modified form of sensory deprivation procedure by British interrogators in Northern Ireland, and the extensive use of such techniques in the design of the West German prison at Stammheim to hold the Baader-Meinhof group. At Stammheim all walls and furniture were painted white, lights were always left on, prisoners were under constant electronic surveillance, and floors were designed to be silent to footfalls (hence the name *Tote Trakt* [silent floor]).[87] The result was the suicide of Ulrich Meinhof and Holger Meinz starving himself to death.

The British use of the modified sensory deprivation techniques was mixed with sleep deprivation and beatings for infractions of instructions.

> When not being actively interrogated, these men had their heads hooded in a tightly woven black bag; they were subjected to noise of 85-87dB - "like the whir of helicopter blades"; and they were forced to stand with their hands above their heads against the wall.[88]

The results of this scientific work were so terrifying that almost all of one group of twelve men treated in this way suffered overt psychological illness, and three became psychotic within twenty four hours ("loss of the sense of time, perceptual disturbance, leading to hallucinations, profound apprehension and depression, and delusional beliefs").[89] The

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85. For a survey see Plate and Darvi, op.cit., pp.151-162. See also the Amnesty International Danish Medical Group, *Evidence of Torture*, (London: Amnesty International, 1977); *Ethical Codes and Declarations Relevant to the Medical Profession*, (London: Amnesty International, n.d.); and Alfred Heijder and Herman van Geuns, *Professional Codes of Ethics*, (London: Amnesty International, 1976).

86. See Plate and Darvi, op.cit., pp.151-2) on the systematic use of a variety of drugs in Chile.

87. Peter Watson, War on the Mind, (Harmondsworth: Penguin,1978), p.276.

88. Watson, ibid., p.274.

89. Ibid., p.278, based on the work of Tim Shallice. Robert Lifton discusses the paradigm case of medical participation in genocide in his *Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, op.cit.

effectiveness of these techniques is such that they can be expected to begin appearing in the Third World in due course.

Terror and memory

A final consideration in the construction of cultures of terror is memory, the inflection of the remembered, constructed past on the acts of the present and the considerations of the future. The subject is huge, and little written about.[90] Paul Fussell has shown something of the profound effects of the First World War on "modern memory", meaning the period after that war and before the outbreak of the next European war.[91]

Terror and memory are intertwined: terror has its effects precisely in the realm of memory, memory re-charges the effects of the original act. The actual armed forces of domination cannot be everywhere at once. One central aim of terror is to leave traces in memory, to flourish "in the coils of rumour, gossip, story and chit-chat", "to flourish by means rumour and fantasy woven into a dense web of magical realism".

In Indonesia or South Korea today the terror which matters most is not what is manifest in day-to-day social relations for the majority, which is uneven, diffuse and low-level in its effectivity. Rather, it is the memory of past suffering at the hands of those those still in power. In Indonesia, there is the memory of the deranged time of 1965-66, when political allegiances, alleged or actual, determined not just one's outlook on the state and neighbours, but the possibility of violent death or guilty life. Hundreds of thousands - perhaps half a million - were killed, hundreds of thousands arrested and imprisoned without trial for a decade or more, yet more purged from state and quasi-state employment, and millions forced into longterm cowed passivity for nothing other than active association with a hitherto wholly legal political party.

In an uneven, varying pressure and tempo, the weight of the "still-unmastered past" (Wellmer on Germany) bears down on the living in Indonesia. The state has been extremely active in rehearsing and cultivating its preferred history of its coming to power and continuing raison d'etre (which amount to the same thing in practice). It has also effectively suppressed the means by which the silent but thunderous effects of that holocaust can be voiced and, perhaps, mediated and transcended. Through the promulgation of the state ideology of Pancasila, the content of state-orchestrated cultural production, the surveillance of former political prisoners and their families, and the caste-like regulatory purification rituals such as requirements of certificates of personal (political) cleanliness (meaning lack of involvement with the pre-1965 Communist Party or its associated organizations of women, workers, peasants, etc.), the triumphalist New Order state has used the memory of holocaust, an unmastered past, to sustain a latent terror in contemporary political and social discourse and to limit the possibilities of a discourse of reparation.[92]

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90. On the interplay between individual memory, collective memory and historical memory see especially Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980). Halbwachs died in Buchenwald in 1945.

91. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). Something comparable has yet to be written on the shifts in the structure of that collective European-American memory as a result of the 1939-45 war and, especially, the war against the European Jews.

92. Lifton's remark above about the characteristic de-amplification of language within genocidal bureaucracies, and its contribution to "maintaining the mixture of part-secrecy and `middle knowledge' likely to surround genocide" (*Nazi Doctors*, *op.cit.*, p.494) is relevant again here, in several ways. Firstly, the distribution of knowledges about the holocaust in Indonesian society is uneven in extent and