

Reading America's Psyche After 9/11 through *Camp X-Ray*

Camp X-Ray Üzerinden 11 Eylül Sonrası Amerika'nın Ruh Halini Okumak

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Abstract

The collapse of the World Trade Center Towers in 2001 opened a new era in world history. As a global mark, the period that followed the September 11 attacks brought more unease not only to the United States but to several countries with special damages to some Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan. The dominating debris image was soon shaped and reinterpreted by the defensive attitude of the American government to launch a war against terror. Besides promoting an effective security policy by democratic means in the American sense, surveillance measures were also heightened, making Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo Bay notorious for its dehumanizing service. Taking its departure from September 11, this paper aims to analyze the detainee camp in Guantanamo post-9/11 in its retold version in the film with the same name *Camp X-Ray* (2014) with a focus on the nation's foundational rhetoric of power that does not abstain from dehumanizing attitudes. Unlike the prison system, the camp in Guantanamo for the detainees erases one's individuality and offers endless nothingness for the one inside. Also, this reveals America's psyche after 9/11.

Keywords: 9/11, detention camp, war on terror, dehumanization, Guantanamo, America's psyche.

Öz

2001 yılında Dünya Ticaret Merkezi Kuleleri'nin yıkılması dünya tarihinde yeni bir dönem açmıştır. Küresel bir işaret olarak, 11 Eylül saldırılarını takip eden dönem sadece Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne değil, bilhassa Afganistan, Irak, Suriye ve Pakistan gibi bazı Asya ülkelerine daha tedirginlik vermiştir. Hakim olan enkaz görüntüsü, kısa süre sonra Amerikan hükümetinin teröre karşı savaş başlatma yönündeki savunmacı tavrıyla şekillenip yeniden yorumlanmıştır. Amerikan anlayışı çerçevesinde demokratik yollarla etkili bir güvenlik politikasının desteklenmesinin yanında gözetim önlemleri de artırılmış ve bu durum Guantanamo Körfezi'ndeki X-Ray Kampı'nın insanlık dışı bırakmaya hizmet eden kötü şöhrete kavuşmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu makale, 11 Eylül'den yola çıkarak, 11 Eylül sonrası Guantanamo'daki tutuklu kampının, aynı adı taşıyan *Camp X-Ray* (2014) filminde yeniden anlatılan versiyonunda, özellikle farklılık söz konusu olduğunda insanlık dışı bırakıcı tutumlardan kaçınmayan ulusun temel iktidar söylemine odaklanarak analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Hapishane sisteminin aksine, Guantanamo'da tutuklular için kurulan kamp, kişinin bireyselliğini silip yerine sonsuz bir hiçlik koymaktadır. Ayrıca bu, Amerika'nın 11 Eylül'den sonraki ruh halini de ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 11 Eylül, tutuklu kampı, teröre karşı savaş, insanlık dışı bırakma, Guantanamo, Amerika'nın ruh hali

Introduction

The collapse of the World Trade Center Towers in 2001 opened a new era in world history. As a global mark, the period that followed the September 11 attacks brought more unease not only to the United States but to some Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Pakistan, with long-lasting damages. After that day, nightmare, shock, panic, disaster, apocalypse, attack, and evil became among the most frequently used words, especially for Americans, whether they had witnessed the events. National security became one of the immediate concerns, and Western intelligence agencies were soon reassessed. The extent of distress has been mentioned by several disciplines in differing aspects, from politics to arts, specifically because Americans did not have this kind of experience until 2001.

Jean Bethke Elshtain explains one of the main reasons for the long-term effect of shock many Americans went through as such: “Americans don’t have living memories of what it means to flee a city in flames. Americans have not been horrified by refugees fleeing burning cities. No more. Now we know” (2004, p. 8). History added a new turn to the accounts as pre-and post-9/11, resulting in life-changing cases for many people. Many found it hard to cope with the absence of the towers. The feeling of void towards the towers' collapse resulted in various outcomes. Marriages and/or relationships, businesses, literature, and arts reflected the psychological effect of the memory of terror for quite a long time, suggesting reflections regarding *national security and personal safety*. The dominating debris image was soon shaped and reinterpreted by the defensive attitude of the American government to launch a war against terror. The rage evoked a “display of national unity and patriotism; volunteers clogged military-recruiting centres. American flags were in evidence everywhere. Citizens around the world held vigils at US embassies” (Tindall & Shi, 2009, p. 1115). Considering the country’s policy of foundation and insistence on frequent military interventions, a vital link appears between what was done in the past and the events happening in the post-9/11 world. The type of defence following the attacks suggested immediate mobility in military terms. Furthermore, such a rush soon resulted in the announcement of the war on terror in 2001, lasting till 2021. In the tenth year of the attacks, the United States Department of Justice formed a strategic report that focused on the importance of the continuation and necessity of extreme safety cautions nationwide to prove and preserve the nation’s determination and strength for the ongoing war:

For its part, the department has improved its ability to identify, penetrate and dismantle terrorist plots as a result of a series of structural reforms; the development of new intelligence and law enforcement tools; and a new mindset that values information sharing and prevention, while vigorously protecting civil liberties and privacy interests. Working with partners in the intelligence community, the military and law enforcement, as well as with communities across America and counterparts around the world, the department has not rested -- and will never rest -- in its efforts

to safeguard America. (Ten Years Later: The Justice Department After 9/11, 2011)

Besides the stated enforcements, honour appeared to be of great importance, which explicitly reflected the avenging tone in the aftermath course: "As the Justice Department and the entire nation honour the memory of those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks, the department remains fully committed to the fight against those who target Americans and our way of life. The best way to honour the legacies of the victims of 9/11 is to prevent further terrorist attacks on this country, which remains the highest priority and most urgent work of the department" (Ten Years Later: The Justice Department After 9/11, 2011).

In addition to promoting effective security policy by democratic means in the American sense, surveillance measures were also heightened, especially by the Patriot Act, which was put into practice a month after the attacks. According to this act, the government has the full authority to detain and arrest any suspicious behaviour or attempt of terrorism through enhanced surveillance procedures. Furthermore, the prison system was enlarged significantly by re-opening the Camp X-Ray detention camp in Guantanamo Bay. The camp, which served to house Cuban refugees that sought asylum from America, had altered its means. Though there is little information about the treatment of Cuban refugees between 1994 and 1996, historical accounts suggest that Camp X-Ray will be remembered for its brutal service by the released former detainees and in the news archives about Gitmo. Taking its departure from September 11, this paper aims to analyze the detainee camp in Guantanamo post-9/11 in its retold version in screenplay with the same name as *Camp X-Ray* with a focus on the nation's foundational rhetoric of power that does not abstain from dehumanizing attitudes, especially in the case of difference. Unlike the prison, the camp in Guantanamo erases detainees' individuality and offers endless nothingness for them.

From Early Settlement to Millenia

In order to understand the long-acting rage rhetoric since the attacks, it is necessary to remember the fundamental texts that had effectively shaped American identity and ignited the soul of togetherness. If we go back to John Winthrop's famous lecture "City Upon A Hill", delivered in 1630, a text that directed America's path throughout the years, it becomes evident that it contains a discourse of superiority and power as it says,

may the Lord make it like that of New England. For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. [So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.] We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, [and all professors for God's sake].

Winthrop highlights the necessity to pursue God's will in addition to hard work to overcome all the hardship about survival. This speech, which has a warning

aspect for the newly settlers, has been used with an altered focus. It has been misinterpreted and consulted as a text in order to declare the nation's superiority.

In the same voice, there is Patrick Henry's speech delivered on March 23, 1775, that suggests a just and divine cause in shaping the country's identity:

Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three million of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise friends to fight our battles for us.

Texts such as "The Crisis", "Speech to the Second Virginia Convention", and "The Declaration of Independence" were inspirational for the American Revolutionary War as the new nation openly stated the extremely discomforting treatment of England since the 1600s even after America declared her independence. Monarchy, invasion, and lack of democracy and liberty were among the biggest obstacles to the country's independence and uniqueness. However, after the Revolutionary War, America's promise of *liberty and democracy for all* became valid only for the white, leaving black people and the Natives aside for centuries. Emerging as an imperialist and colonizing nation, America soon became the resonance of its recent past. The painful experience America once had was reflected towards the non-white within the territories of the new country. For instance, as also stated by Howard Zinn in his lecture on American Exceptionalism, the new nation soon showed its intention to expand with the annexation of Texas in the 1830s, which was soon followed by the annexation of Chicago in the 1880s (MIT Video Productions, 2019). Whether it is called annexation or invasion, there has always been a strong self-trust of power towards the intention to prosper. Although the mentioned texts date back to the 17th and 18th centuries, they still resonate, especially in cases of justification to invade lands outside the continent. Believing in the statement "The eyes of all people are upon us" has been a matter of defence that suggests and loads strong suspicion over other nations, making them readily responsible and even guilty. Winthrop's text encourages the thought that New England is a "selected" country (Lahur Kirtunç, 2008, p. 99) destined to have prosperity and power over others.

Similarly, in "The American Crisis", published in three parts from 1776 to 1783 during the American Revolution, Thomas Paine insists on the importance of freedom and encourages people to get united for this new nation together with God's will. It was crucial to keep the high motivation of the masses amid the struggle for freedom from British domination. In an aggressive tone throughout the text, he states: "Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph" (Paine). In a similar tone, several American leaders in the 20th and 21st centuries echoed the mentioned texts to justify their cause to interfere with and claim

right in the countries that America targeted. Looking at this within the context of exceptionalism, which is America's foundational narrative, it holds that the "United States has a unique place in history, differing fundamentally and qualitatively from all other countries; it also emphasizes a 'God-given destiny' to guide the rest of the world according to the mainstream US political, social, and economic worldview" (Nayak & Malone, 2009, p. 254).

The spatialization of the United States as a territory and its environs has a particular colonial history. As a new nation, recently emancipated from England's rule, the United States expanded westward, claiming land and resources initially from the indigenous inhabitants. The appetite for growth continued within the country. Though America suffered from some inevitable economic crises in her history, she has been among the few countries to take the lead in the fate of other countries. Through that vision, America has long taken part in several wars and gradually announced herself as the world's superpower responsible for providing security in and out of the country. However, this was severely challenged by the 2001 attacks, and the government started security precautions in its strictest sense. Soon, an environment and soul were created to unite against the evildoers to ensure the country was secure and that the evil was wiped out. Moreover, it was necessary to bring freedom, justice and democracy to the places that help and nurture the terrorists. As a country that has never been the target of such destruction, the shock of the attacks resulted in the rhetoric of war in the governmental part that maintained and even increased the revengeful tone in the following time after then-president Bush declared *war against terror*: "Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done" (The White House: President George W. Bush, 2001, September 16). And to remind the country of the necessity of solidarity, Bush announced, "freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward. And freedom will be defended. [...] The resolve of our great nation is being tested. Make no mistake. We will show the world that we can pass this test" (The White House: President George W. Bush, 2001, September 16).

A similar reaction continued via the media with the implication of the necessity of an immediate war as Kellner lays out:

The television networks themselves featured logos such as "War on America," "Attack on America," "America under Attack," and circulated discourses that assumed that the United States was at war and that only a military response was appropriate. Few cooler heads appeared on any of the major television networks that repeatedly beat the war drums day after day, without even the relief of commercials for three days straight, driving the country into hysteria and making it certain that there would be a military response and war. (2007, p. 625)

The revengeful rhetoric that came immediately after the attacks never lessened its tone, especially against those who are not Americans in and out of the country. Strict security measures started at airports and several entrance points

to the country. However, additional security cautions were taken against Muslims following the events. Intolerance of Muslims highly increased immediately post-9/11. That is, “all traits of aggression and wickedness are thus projected onto the Other while constituting oneself as good and pure” (Kellner, 2007, p. 628). To make sense of that kind of an unprecedented event, stories have been turned into screenplays with themes of rage, revenge, and phobia post-9/11 such as *Syriana*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *United 93*, *World Trade Center*, *Rendition*, *Babel* and *My Name is Khan*. The films have spread the dominant understanding and hatred towards Muslims, whether they are American or not. Moreover, there is possibly a link between the films and the speeches given in the immediate aftermath of that day, as from that day on, most of the attention was turned into the Muslims in the country regardless of the content of the President’s speech:

The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace. They represent evil and war. When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find comfort and solace and peace. And that’s made brothers and sisters out of every race -- out of every race. America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads. And they need to be treated with respect. In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect. Women who cover their heads in this country must feel comfortable going outside their homes. Moms who wear cover must be not intimidated in America. (The White House: President George W. Bush, 2001, September 17)

Although Bush seemed to have made a reintegrative speech, it fell behind the dominant national approach towards Muslims. There appeared a particular division and hatred towards Muslims both within the nation and worldwide. There was also media support in the first days after the attacks to create and ignite disgust, especially towards Muslims. Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills explain how also European leaders see Islam and Muslims post-9/11:

European leaders have used equally problematic metaphors in statements about Islamic communities within their countries. Former French Interior Minister and now President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, publicly labelled Muslim immigrants ‘gangrene’ and ‘scum’, and Danish MP Pia Kjørsgaards called Muslims ‘a cancer in Denmark’. Recurring metaphors of disease, decay, and dehumanization are a frequent part of European and North American public discourse. American syndicated radio host Neil Boortz informed his audience of over 3.75 million listeners that: “Islam is a creeping mold infestation. Islam is a virus. It is a deadly virus that is spreading throughout Europe and the West. We’re going to

wait far too long to develop a vaccine to find a way to fight this. (2009, p. xii)

Although the president's speech seemed to have a soothing and embracing tone, the societal outcomes such as Islamophobia proved the contrary. Such hatred and revenge towards Muslims in public life and politics ignited *War Against Terror*. However, the war was not the ultimate plan of the government to fight terrorism. Within a short time, surveillance measures were increased and reached the extent that justified the construction of the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay in 2002 to keep individuals who are considered to have terroristic intentions and backgrounds.

By 2002, detainees held by US forces principally and initially from Afghanistan were sent to the notorious Bay in Cuba. Though the detainees were chosen from where US forces were based, any suspicious report from any part of the world was considered. New detainees appeared from Pakistan, Yemen, Kuwait, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, China, Spain, Jordan and Turkey. Besides airports, stories of hatred and discrimination grew towards Muslims in businesses, schools, and universities, shortly in several areas of public life. There were real-life stories of people saying that they were severely kept in Gitmo among the detainees, although they had no connection with Al-Queda or any related groups. The detainees who were not held by US forces were taken to Gitmo either by denunciation or mere suspicion.

The first detainees arrived on January 11, 2002. Instead of holding and arresting suspected individuals in their own countries, "The United States administration considered that holding detainees outside of the territory of the United States would deprive federal courts of jurisdiction over detainees' claims; a premise that was found unconstitutional seven years later" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2015, p. 15). Besides the war, the government also planned a judicial structure, showing the extended security conditions. The idea of keeping the suspected in one place and calling them detainees has, within years, reached a case that Guantanamo Bay detention camp has received nothing more than notoriety because it had far exceeded and deviated from its task. As a well-known fact, "the precautionary measures have evolved and have concerned many specific issues, such as allegations of abuse and torture of detainees" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2015, p. 17). Despite the unveiled condition of the detainee camp, there was almost no American attempt or interference from any other country to change the treatment of the detainees in Guantanamo. Though the American government persisted in the victim discourse, she has been, on the other hand, powerful enough to commit injustice in the name of freedom and democracy in front of the world, and this explains why the American government has not declared any unease for what has been done in Guantanamo since 2002. In other words, "the War on Terror was stated as an act of "military humanitarianism," but did not go any further than "contemporary imperialism", what has been done in Guantanamo is America's another announcement of her insistence of superiority along with growing

violence. With Guantanamo, America became the “symbol of captivity” (Smith, 2011, p. ix).

Though designed in the form of a prison, there continued an altered type of war in Guantanamo, located on the southeast corner of Cuba, far away from the world’s reach. This recent construction is one of the most evident proofs of the unending sense of invasion under the disguise of kind power and freedom because “as a signifier of wartime coordinates, Camp X-Ray colloquially signifies all the incarceration facilities at Guantanamo, imaged as chicken-wire cells open to the elements, imagined as a simultaneous staging of penitentiary hypervisibility and imminent political disappearance” (Anderson, 2009, p. 1731).

Reflections From Camp X-Ray During the War on Terror

Besides the political sense, in the period following the attacks, arts targeted the indelibility of the events and movies have continued this for quite a long time. There have been made over a hundred films since 2001 that reflected the shocking effect of the attacks, and it has been put on screen in differing ways: the unknown threat has been either zombie, a natural disaster or apocalyptic scenarios suggesting that the world has come to a definite end. Though there are several scenarios to narrate the suddenness of the events, vengeance, peace, and freedom remain as main ideas in most films. A majority of the films insisted on the theme that what really happened could not have ever happened in America.

Directed by Peter Sattler, *Camp X-Ray* provides a close-to-real depiction of the life inside Gitmo. Released in 2014, the movie stands among numerous movies with its content that lays a close-to-real description of the detention camp, Camp X-Ray, in Guantanamo, displaying life both for the detainees and the soldiers situated there. It portrays the aftermath of the attacks with its real-life reflections of this detention camp both in the architectural and psychological sense. It represents how the readily existing tendency of intolerance in America increased significantly towards Muslims following the attacks. Also, the American military’s approach to detainees under the rhetoric of democracy forms the other significant part of the movie, which is a case often undermined in Hollywood movies.

In the film, according to the regulations, there should be a suicide watch every three minutes, rules should not be loosened as the detainees are over-experienced and know the procedure better than the soldiers, and the camp is a war zone. Moreover, there is no such thing as a family visit to this war zone. Another critical task is not to prevent them from escaping but from dying; any intention of refusing to eat should be noticed and force-feeding. The soldiers are allowed to talk, yet they should not give any information about their lives. They can read newspapers that are two months old.

The film portrays the impossible friendship between a soldier and a detainee called Ali Amir, who initially appears to enter his house with several mobiles in a plastic bag he brought. Some minutes after, unknown people catch him while he is praying. After getting arrested, he is made blind and deaf until the

destination point, where several cells are on the first floor of the detainee camp in Cuba. The soldiers, on the other hand, are allowed to talk, yet they should not give any information about their lives. The detainees can read newspapers that are two months old. Like the other detainees, Ali continuously shouts out to learn why he is kept in that detention facility and shows increasing aggressive behaviour in the limited and 24/7 luminous space he is forced to live in. Not having proper communication with the soldiers working as guards in the camp, he is noticed by them as a potential rebel. Labelled as wild and problematic by the soldiers, Ali stands out as a conscious detainee compared to several others. Unlike others, he does not want to give in but continues to stay sound and healthy to regain his freedom as he has witnessed the extreme torture-like treatment of the others in the cells who refuse the guards' commands. He also consciously stays away from force-feeding and the suffering that comes after it, finishes the books in the library and complains about not receiving enough books to read. Amir is not on good terms with the soldiers there, and he grows interested in a new soldier, Cole, who incidentally finds herself in Guantanamo instead of her wish to be sent to Iraq. Cole's arrival does not make any difference for the other detainees. Yet, Amir gradually grows hope as he starts to feel he is living as he manages to communicate with someone, though very silently.

Film critic Matt Zoller Seitz states that the film tells about "what happened to America's psyche after 9/11: the moral numbness that set in right away and never entirely lifted" (Seitz, 2014). The prison setting draws a similar version of the biased perception of the American imagination. The detainees are allowed to pray five times a day, and they are allowed to have Koran in their cells, yet the way the soldiers communicate with them is pretty humiliating. When Ali asks for new books, the unknown woman soldier says: "I thought you could only read Quran." And she also gets stunned when Ali says he has read the whole Bible as the film goes beyond a love story. Contrary to some criticism, the audience witnesses how civil death, which is *the status of a person who has been deprived of civil rights (Civil Death Statutes)*, finds a body in the atmosphere of Gitmo. The detainees are not allowed to refuse to eat as they should not lose their life as detainees. They should also not refuse medical check, and if seen necessary for some reason, they should take all of their clothes without stating any disapproval, all leading to the act of dehumanization, which is "the act of perceiving or treating people as if they are less than fully human and (it) leads to discrimination against other individuals or entire groups" (Scrimin & Rubaltelli, 2021, p. 2707). As the subjects that have also experienced civil death, detainees also witness the dehumanizing essence of the supervision in the camp both in the film and in the actual camp atmosphere.

In his analysis of the prison, Foucault states that the prison is "an apparatus for transforming individuals" (1977, p. 233) and Caleb Smith resonates with this, saying, "through isolation and surveillance, it trains its inmates to discipline themselves, turning its assembly of malefactors into a congregation of docile and submissive subjects. And in the literature and critical scholarship of the American prison, we confront two starkly opposed figures: a reflecting, self-governing soul and a cadaverous, dehumanized body; [...] yet the two seem

almost irreconcilable” (2011, p. 4). Although both Foucault and Smith highlight the discipline of the prisoner after the punishment process in terms of the general prison system, it proves hard in the case of American prisons. And the system works worse for the ones in the detainee camp. They are detained in quite an isolated part of the world in a structure designed to disregard the detainee as an individual with its strict rules inside. In the case of the detainees of Gitmo, most of whom have no idea despite the long time of captivity in the Camp Guantanamo, the “legal codes divested the convict of rights; its ritualized disciplinary practices stripped away his identity; it exposed him arbitrary and discretionary violence at the hands of his keepers; it buried him alive at the hands of his keepers. Its ideal subject was who ‘was once dead and is alive’” (Smith, 2011, p. 6).

The camp atmosphere Smith depicts is a kind of space where personal space is violated, mainly because the detainees could be interrupted anytime with an arbitrary inquiry by the guards. And also, for both parts, it could be viewed as a non-space as the interaction between the detainees and the guards offers nothing more than a command-obey relationship where not any mutual sense other than hatred is experienced and “how thesis of Foucault’s Discipline and Punish- that prisons produce self-governing subjects through isolation and surveillance- loses its explanatory power in the age of Guantanamo” (Smith, 2011, p. 202). Self-governing skills and discipline remain a distant resolution after the detainees’ release, who has long been inhumanely violated both physically and psychologically. The psychological pressure of being suspected could leave permanent traces leading one to continual self-doubt and uncertainty in their life after the camp. As a first-person witness and sufferer, Abu Zubaydah, who “has never been charged with a crime,” says that he has been through nudity, put on a waterboard, exposed to sleep deprivation, and spent 11 days in a coffin-shaped box. Alex Gibney, the director of the documentary titled *The Forever Prisoner*, states that “He faces the horror that some people at Guantánamo face, which is maybe the most existential horror of all, beyond even a prisoner who is given a life sentence,” “Your future is forever undefined. You don’t know whether you’re ever going to get out or whether you’ll ever get an explanation of why you continue to be there” (Smith, 2021). Gibney highlights that there is nothing left for the detainee regarding identity as the self is erased. Moreover, the way detainees are treated in Gitmo bears suspicions, as there is secrecy in the operations inside, again making one remember Smith’s statement that “prisoners are not beyond the embrace of the law, they are mortified by it” (2011, p. 23). Mostly performing through arbitrariness, both in absolute and in the film, *Camp X-Ray* is entirely away from the usual prison system as the camp does not suggest anything such as transformation, discipline and a standard and familiar punishment system. Unlike the panopticon model with the chicken wire cells open to elements enabling hypervisibility, as it is formerly stated, the camp suggests uniqueness and the existence of unequal force due to its unsystematized operation. The camp has few resemblances with prison, just like the individuals in them; they are not convicted as prisoners but are under the heavy burden of being potential convicts. Though in most cases, the prisoners

know why they are held in prisons, in the camp, there are individuals born just because they look suspicious, may have relations with the terror unions, or are suspected just because they are Muslims. Keeping an individual incarcerated without evidence after quite a long time is illicit; the inside system in the camp bares inhumane manners like denuding, waterboarding, and sleep deprivation by unseen interrogators in secret sites (Rosenberg, 2019). As Judith Butler says, both for Guantanamo and some inhumane legal framework,

we see the operation of a capricious proceduralism outside of law, and the production of the prison as a site for the intensification of managerial tactics untethered to law, and bearing no relation to trial, to punishment, or to the rights of prisoners. We see, in fact, an effort to produce a secondary judicial system and a sphere of non-legal detention that effectively produces the prison itself as an extra-legal sphere maintained by the extrajudicial power of the state. (2004, p. 92)

In a similar vein, it is explained that the camp “exists as a distinctive Foucauldian entity in ways that do not entirely resonate in other supermax prisons. [...] It adheres to techniques of normalization aimed at transforming detainees into beings who are docile, obedient, and useful for generating “enormously valuable intelligence” for the war on terror. On the other, such penal technologies, coupled with harsh interrogation (and torture), repressive conditions of confinement, and few prospects for release, produce resistances that undermine the expressed mission” (Welch, 2009, p. 4).

The above-stated cases in Gitmo, such as waterboarding, denuding, torture, forced sleep deprivation, and force-feeding, which are also given in the film *Camp X-Ray*, reveal the very fact of an incarcerated body hard to name, define and classify. It stands out as an example of a legitimized power thanks to governmentality in order to “consider itself its own justification” (Butler, 2004, p. 95). And this hierarchic governing is heightened in this detention facility with the observers who have limitless right to interfere with the detainees’ space, body and thus life whenever they want. By doing so, the observers create discomfort in the detainees’ area until they act according to the arbitrary rules of the observers. While the obedient is rewarded with staying away from torture, the disobedient is penalized with violence by the guards with their chief’s high permission, which is also clearly reflected in several examples throughout the movie. During the observation, the soldier guards favour the power they are given and act with the confidence it has created in them. And depending on this hierarchic case, they take the detainees for granted as they mock the way the detainees live in the cells, like their religion, prayers, preferred traditional food, desire to read more books, and now about the agenda other than the newspapers from weeks ago.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the attacks of September 11 have changed the familiar problems of the world into a more frightening and worrying condition as there has appeared a comprehensive surveillance system in any parts that we can

imagine. The meaning of security has changed for Americans. It has resulted in the American government finding a new solution to the incarceration system to cope with extreme suspicion and reconstruct the detainee camp in Guantanamo to hold the individuals as detainees that the American government considers suspicious. As holding individuals due to behaviour or appearance that is arbitrarily considered to have terroristic intentions is readily a case out of the law, constructing an imprisonment facility is hard to name as a prison. However, a detention facility should also be considered illegal. With the accustomed conduct of considering herself as a superpower who is quite disturbed by the idea of losing it, the American government has comfortably displayed the detention camp in Guantanamo with its nearly 600 detainees in its first years. *Camp X-Ray*, both as a film and as a real-life detention centre of the same name, paints a conflicting vision of reality. It has long been operated with hierarchical impositions fueled by dehumanization, obliterating anything associated with individuality and subjectivity.

Camp X-Ray revisits the heightened surveillance case after the September 11 attacks by highlighting the imbalance of power dynamics and the questionable morality of the war. The presence of both the young protagonist and the detainee Amir lays out the dehumanizing aspects through the experience of the controller and the controlled. The isolation of the mostly Muslim detainees from differing countries in a place insistently called a detainee camp prevails conflicting ideas towards America's rhetoric of democracy. Yet, when the country's past is considered, over-defensive attitude and ambiguity of equality speeches.

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