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Nosheen Ali

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Books vs Bombs? Humanitarian development and the narrative of terror in Northern Pakistan

NOSHEEN ALI

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ABSTRACT *This article examines the role of humanitarian discourse and development in reconfiguring the contemporary culture of empire and its war on terror. It takes as its point of entry the immensely popular biographical tale,* Three Cups of Tea*, which details how the American mountaineer Greg Mortenson has struggled to counter terrorism in Northern Pakistan through the creation of schools. Even as this text appears to provide a self-critical and humane perspective on terrorism, the article argues that it constructs a misleading narrative of terror in which the realities of Northern Pakistan and Muslim life-worlds are distorted through simplistic tropes of ignorance, backwardness and extremism, while histories of US geopolitics and violence are erased. The text has further facilitated the emergence of a participatory militarism, whereby humanitarian work helps to reinvent the military as a culturally sensitive and caring institution in order to justify and service the project of empire.*

In this article, I interrogate the role of cultural discourse and humanitarian development in an age of terror and neoliberal empire. Several scholars have investigated the cultural politics of the war on terror, problematising its official rhetoric and the conduct of the war, as well as media productions of the war.[1] Contributing to this literature, my purpose here is to examine how humanitarian discourse and intervention reframe the narrative of terrorism, and remodel the practice of American military culture in the current conjuncture of empire. By 'empire', I am referring to the extensive set of conceptions and practices through which US hegemony is legitimated and accomplished.[2]

The point of entry for my analysis is the immensely popular biographical text, *Three Cups of Tea* (TCT), which narrates the life and work of the American mountaineer-turned-humanitarian Greg Mortenson, and his efforts to counter terrorism in Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan through the creation of schools.[3] Apart from becoming the most admired story of

Nosheen Ali is a 2009–2010 Mellon/ACLS Early Career Fellow affiliated with Stanford University, 65 Rio Robles East, #3104, San Jose, CA 95134, USA. Email: noshali@stanford.edu

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humanitarian development in the US, TCT also seems to have become a strategic guide for the US military. It is striking, for example, to read on the book's official website that:

> *Three Cups of Tea* is required reading for US senior military commanders, for officers in the Norwegian War College, Forsvarsnett, for US Special Forces deploying to Afghanistan, Pentagon officers in counter-insurgency training, and Canadian Defense Ministry members. The book has been read by General David Petraeus—CENTCOM Commander, Admiral Mike Mullen—Chairman Joint Chief of Staff, and … several other US military commanders who advocate for building relationships as a part of an overall strategic plan for peace. Mortenson has addressed the National Defense Senior Leadership Conference at the Pentagon, visited over two dozen military bases, NORAD, and been to the Air Force, Naval and West Point Academies.[4]

In the sections that follow I investigate how the simplifications and silences present in *Three Cups of Tea* create a redemptive narrative of terrorism that enables the text's uptake by the US military, as well as its popularity with the American public. I argue that this narrative embodies a depoliticised and dehistoricised representation of Northern Pakistan, of rural 'ignorance' and 'extremism' within it, as well as of global terrorism more generally. It promotes a liberal interventionism that apparently provides a humane and progressive perspective on terrorism but, in fact, occludes the complex material and political conditions that engender it. It also reproduces the West-affirming terms of development discourse that 'separate the world's components into bounded units, disaggregate their relational histories, turn difference into hierarchy, and naturalize … [such] … representations'.[5] Finally, since its publication TCT has facilitated what I call a 'participatory militarism', in which humanitarian development projects service the cultural reinvention of the military to justify and extend US imperialism.

First, however, let me provide a brief context for *Three Cups of Tea*. The book is co-authored by Greg Mortenson and the journalist David Oliver Relin, but is essentially written by Relin as a tribute to Mortenson's educational efforts in Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hence, when I discuss Mortenson's work, I am referring not to Mortenson the individual, but rather to Mortenson the constructed individual as represented by Relin and the publishers of TCT. The distinction is important, since the texture of even a non-fictional story is often shaped by publishing considerations rather than fact and the protagonist's actual experience. For example, as Mortenson has noted in his interviews, his preferred sub-title for the book was 'One Man's Mission to Promote Peace … One School at a Time' but his publishers pushed for a more marketable line—'One Man's Mission to Fight Terrorism and Build Nations … One School at a Time'—because 'terror sells'.[6]

TCT is the only phenomenally popular text that Americans have read and continue to read about Pakistan—a country that has become the new frontier in the US war on terror. The text was number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list for several weeks, and honoured as *Time*'s Asian Book of The Year for 2006. It has been a popular text in US schools for discussing

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development as well as the war on terror. Indeed, as the official site for TCT tells us, Mortenson has himself 'developed a rubric for the National Education Association to teach the book'. The book also came out in two edited versions for children in 2009—*Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr Greg and Three Cups of Tea* for ages four to eight, and *Three Cups of Tea: Young Readers Edition* for ages eight to 13. Recognising his services, the Pakistani government awarded the highest civilian award of 'Star of Pakistan' to Greg Mortenson in March 2009.

A significant part of TCT is devoted to Greg Mortenson's personal life. Mortenson spent his early years in Tanzania, where his parents were Lutheran missionaries and teachers. His father co-founded the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center, and served in the US military before the family's missionary–humanitarian work in Africa. Mortenson also joined the US army after graduating from high school, and served in Germany for two years. He went on to do his undergraduate degree on a GI scholarship, and later trained to become a medical nurse. In 1993, after the death of his sister Christa, Mortenson decided to climb K2, the second highest peak in the world, which forms part of the Karakoram range in Northern Pakistan. But his attempt failed, and his life was saved by the people of Korphe, a remote village in the Baltistan area of Northern Pakistan. In return, he promised to build them a school, and spent the next several years of his life building schools not just in Korphe but also in other parts of Northern Pakistan. He went on to create the Central Asia Institute in 1996, which has since built more than 70 schools for girls and boys in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

At the outset let me state clearly that *Three Cups of Tea* illuminates a remarkable tale of courage and compassion. Like numerous readers, I too am deeply moved and inspired by Mortenson's genuine and enduring devotion to the cause of education in Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan. This article, then, is meant neither to deny Mortenson's contributions nor to undermine his personal struggle.

My purpose, instead, is to analyse the spatial, political and cultural narrative of terror presented in *Three Cups of Tea*, and to situate the text as well as its import in the ongoing reworking of development and militarism under conditions of empire.[7] Hence, I ask: how does TCT represent the regional space and social context in which Mortenson seeks to intervene? What assumptions about culture, development and terrorism underpin the way in which the problems of rural Pakistan are framed, and solutions proposed? What silences characterise the representation of the USA in the text? And, since the publication of the book, how have Mortenson's development-oriented efforts in education become implicated in militaristic discourses of counter-insurgency?[8] The four sections below correspond to each of these questions.

The region, collapsible and dangerous

The primary geographical focus of TCT is the terrain of Baltistan, which is located in a region that until recently was called the 'Northern Areas' in

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Pakistan.[9] Mortenson started his educational efforts in the Braldu valley of Baltistan and then moved on to create schools in other parts of the Northern Areas. Thus, when the book speaks about the 'region', the reference appears to be the Northern Areas as a whole. This is suggested even by the map that is provided at the beginning of the book—a map entitled 'The Northern Areas'. Around 50 pages of the book are devoted to other areas—such as the Pakistani territory of Waziristan and places in Afghanistan—where Mortenson also expanded his educational efforts.

Let me provide a brief context of the Northern Areas as it forms the core site for the book. The Northern Areas comprises a rural, mountainous region located in the north of Pakistan, bordering India, China and Afghanistan. It covers a vast terrain of around 72 500 sq km, and lacks a clear constitutional status because of its historical affiliation with the disputed territory of Kashmir. Despite its imbrication in the Kashmir issue, the region has remained relatively peaceful. Indeed, it is renowned as a haven for international tourists, such as Mortenson himself, who first came to the region to climb its stunning peak K2.

Culturally the Northern Areas is home to a million people residing in more than 700 villages. Reliant on agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, they belong to at least five indigenous ethnic groups—Shina, Burushaski, Balti, Wakhi and Khowar. Each of these groups has a multifaceted sociopolitical and cultural history, including princely dynasties, linguistic patterns, customs, epics, festivals, dances and architecture. Each group also practises distinct kinship relations, and complex intergroup dynamics that vary from valley to valley in this extensive mountainous terrain. The social landscape of the region is further shaped by the Shia, Sunni, Ismaili and Nurbakhshi interpretations of Islam that are practiced in the Northern Areas—sometimes alongside older shamanistic folk traditions. These Muslim communities have historically lived in relative harmony in most of the parts that today comprise the Northern Areas.[10]

In TCT the Northern Areas is described as the 'wild country' with 'wild mountain valleys'.[11] It is 'the poorest region of one of the world's poorest countries', a place where there are 'warring sects' and people have been living 'as they have for centuries'.[12] To be sure, TCT has contextual descriptions, often presented in humanising, positive terms, and 'quite accurate' portrayals of the main characters, as an anthropologist who has worked extensively in Baltistan said to me. However, the overall image conjured is of a barren and backward land waiting to be claimed and tamed. Such imagery contrasts sharply with my own experience as a field researcher in the Northern Areas over the past five years, and with people's self-representations in the region. Filled with historical settlements where people—despite many material needs—pride themselves on the respect and industriousness with which they have tended the land, the region cannot simply be termed 'wild', and their sustainable rural lifestyles dismissed as 'poor' and 'menial'. Images of mountain societies as timeless and history-less are likewise misguided, and typical of the lowland perspective from which social analysis is often written.[13] Particularly in the context of the Northern Areas, this perspective

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runs counter to local histories of caravan trade, travel, religious conversions and political and military struggles that formed the heart of the British–Russian Great Game in the 19th century.[14]

Along with the essentialising tropes of backwardness—characteristic of development interventions more generally—TCT also invokes fear by portraying the region as 'wild', 'warring' and steeped in ignorance, filled with 'extremist *madrassas*' that gave 'birth to the Taliban'.[15] For example, the back-cover of the book states:

> From eerie blue glaciers, where snow leopards stalk their prey, to high-altitude fundamentalist villages, where the faith is as severe as the surroundings, and down the deadly opium trails of Afghanistan at war, *Three Cups of Tea* traces Mortenson's decade-long odyssey to build schools, especially for girls, throughout the region that gave birth to the Taliban and sanctuary to Al-Qaeda.

Further, the introduction to the book says:

> Slamming over the so-called Karakoram 'Highway' in his old Land Cruiser, taking great personal risks to seed the region that gave birth to the Taliban with schools, Mortenson goes to war with the root causes of terror every time he offers a student a chance to receive a balanced education, rather than attend an extremist *madrassa*.[16]

Before examining the book's claims about education and the 'root causes of terror', I ask: what is this region that gave birth to the Taliban?

To describe the region of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) as one that gave 'birth to the Taliban' is incorrect, and embodies a dangerous jump of geographies and logics. The bulk of the KKH lies in the administrative territory of the Northern Areas in Pakistan, and the bulk of the book is focused on the region of Baltistan that lies in the Northern Areas. Baltistan is 95% Shia and, by the book's own admission, the first Wahhabi madrasa was created here in 2001—which, too, is not synonymous with the Taliban. Indeed, the Northern Areas as a whole is 60% Shia. To claim that this Shia-majority region is the birthplace of the Sunni fundamentalist, violently anti-Shia Taliban is simply absurd. The Taliban were predominantly based in the Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan regions of Afghanistan.[17] Their origins are more properly traced to the CIA and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) production of the *mujahideen* during the Cold War, through *particular* kinds of madrassas in *some parts of* Afghanistan and *some parts of* western Pakistan that trained and armed Muslim students from around the world in a new, rabidly fundamentalist version of Islam to service the strategic interests of the USA.[18] Indeed, an explicitly violent curriculum that was to be used in these madrassas was produced by the University of Nebraska, Omaha, and published in both Dari and Pashto through a USAID grant.[19] As such, one might more appropriately declare the US as the 'region that gave birth to the Taliban'.

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However, TCT is a text in which such uncomfortable truths are not present, and indeed, details in general do not matter.[20] While we learn about the different places and people that Mortenson encounters on his mission, there is little sense of spatial differentiation in the broad claims of the book—and little desire to make such differentiation. The enormous space of the Northern Areas, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan—incredibly diverse regions even within their own boundaries and stretching from Pakistan's eastern to its northern and western borders—are lumped together as one 'region', and further combined with parts of Afghanistan that have a different historical and cultural context altogether.[21] In this collapsible 'region' the spaces and people appear interchangeable. Because an abstract cultural template of poverty and danger is applied to diverse locations, one gets a sense that there are mobile, multiple enemies all around in Muslim places that are self-evidently poor and ignorant, and thus potentially violent and dangerous.[22] The many references to 'poor Muslims' makes it seem that the story can be transplanted to any Muslim context. Hence, unsurprisingly, public reviews of the book often mention how the book helps a reader understand not just Pakistan, but Central Asia and the Middle East as a whole.[23]

The most troubling irony is that the focal region of Mortenson's work—the Shia region of Baltistan with its Tibetan-Buddhist heritage—has nothing to do with the war on terror, yet is primarily viewed through this lens in TCT. While it has madrassas affiliated with different interpretations of Islam, the Northern Areas more generally is not a terrain teeming with fundamentalist madrassas and Taliban on the loose—the definitive image of the region in TCT, especially on its back cover, in its introduction and in its general publicity. Hence, despite the now characteristic token statements like 'not every *madrassa* was a hotbed of extremism', the subtext of TCT remains rooted in a narrative of fear and danger.[24]

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The rural, ignorant and extremist

It is not just that an inaccurate, politically consequential description about being the birthplace of the Taliban is imposed on a rich and diverse landscape such as the Northern Areas, which has an entirely different context from that of the NWFP and FATA in Pakistan—areas that also have a rich and diverse landscape beyond the extremist madrassas introduced primarily in the 1980s. What is all the more striking about TCT is that blanket claims about an already vast, collapsible region—defined by Mortenson's travels rather than by geographical specificity—are apparently extendible to all of 'rural Pakistan'.

Relin tells us that *The Oregonian* was the first major US newspaper to cover Mortenson's efforts in Pakistan. He goes on to quote from this first story about Mortenson:

> A politically volatile area, rural Pakistan is a breeding ground for terrorists who share anti-American sentiment.[25]

Thus, not just areas north and west of Pakistan are conflated and reduced to the narrative of terrorism, but all of rural Pakistan is declared a volatile, terrorist zone. Such extensions of logic are made possible by the book itself, which often juxtaposes the 'rural poor', 'madrassas', and 'extremism'. Recall, for example, Mortenson's work in 'fundamentalist villages, where the faith is as severe as the surroundings' which I quoted earlier.

The connection between rurality and extremism deserves close examination, as it is essential to the logical framework of TCT. This framework encompasses a series of linked claims. First, people residing in Pakistan's rural areas are poor, illiterate and therefore ignorant. Second, because of a failed state education system, the rural poor are easily attracted to extremist madrassas that provide free lodging and meals; hence they are prone to extremism. Finally, creating schools is the best way to counter this extremism and thereby to fight terrorism. The problem of terrorism is thus defined as a problem of poverty and illiteracy prevalent in rural Pakistan, which inevitably leads to religious extremism.

This equation constructs the rural areas of Pakistan as dangerous spaces that are always already constituted as a threat. Of course, one cannot deny that rural Pakistan has many extremist madrassas—spurred in large part by CIA, ISI and Saudi sponsorship—that these madrassas are a threat to Pakistani society and international security, and that parents do send children to these madrassas out of poverty. However, imposing this 'single story' on rural Pakistanis denies these people dignity and agency, and makes it impossible to apprehend the rural on its own terms outside the narrative of poverty, illiteracy and terrorism.[26] Because this story is not placed in the larger context of schooling, rurality and Muslim life-worlds, it ends up reducing a complex reality to a convenient, sanitised account of terrorism.

If one must generalise about religious identity in the diverse rural regions of Pakistan, surely the conclusion would be the opposite of what is claimed by TCT. Rural areas of Pakistan have been known for their adherence to a pluralistic sense of faith in which Islam is perceived as an idiom of morality instead of theology, and devotion is deemed more important than dogma.[27] Far from being illiterate village conformists, Muslims in parts of Northern Pakistan consider debate and intellectual engagement as an integral element of living their faith.[28] In the Northern Areas in particular even the clergy has most recently been known for leading a secular-Shia movement against biased public school textbooks, not for creating hubs of anti-school, 'extremist madrasas'.[29]

Madrassas—which literally means 'schools' in Arabic—have a rich and diverse history as centres of Islamic learning in Pakistan, as well as in the Muslim world in general. However, they are most often invoked in TCT with attributes such as 'extremist' and 'fundamentalist', which conveys the sense that the Northern Areas do not just teem with madrassas—an incorrect picture of the region to begin with—but are riddled with fanatical ones at that. The suggestion is that, before Mortenson created schools for the poor, extremist Taliban-producing madrassas were their only choice.

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For example, within a discussion of Wahhabi madrassas in Pakistan, we are told that:

> ... vast swathes of the country were barely served by Pakistan's struggling, inadequately funded public schools. The *madrassa* system targeted the impoverished students the public system failed. By offering free room and board and building schools in areas where none existed, *madrassas* provided millions of Pakistan's parents with their only opportunity to educate their children.[30]

The proliferation of madrassas is presented as a 'simple matter of economics', leading a military official at one of Mortenson's lectures to ask if a school could be created next to every madrassa—'like a Starbucks'—to drive the 'jihadis out of business'.[31]

The logic of creating a school to counter the madrassa is stupefying even on its own terms. If free room and board is a key attraction of a madrassa, how can schools that parents have to pay for compete against them? Further, while many madrassa students do come from less privileged households, it is incorrect to assume that the 'poorest of the poor' are somehow automatically drawn towards them. They are less likely to attend *any* school—and this is true especially for remote villages like Korphe where Mortenson built his first school.

Most importantly, even if education is considered, madrassas are hardly the only choice. Many government schools offer incentives such as free books, free uniform and stipends for girl students. Significantly private education is a dynamic and growing sector in rural and peri-urban areas of Pakistan, and a low-cost private school is the most preferred option for schooling in these areas.[32] In a comprehensive recent study by Cockroft *et al*, we learn that 58.8% of Pakistani children were enrolled in a government school, 36.1% in a private school, 3.8% at a madrassa or madrassa-based school, and 1.2% in non-formal and NGO schools.[33] Particularly in the Northern Areas it is impossible to overlook its inhabitants' intense desire for secular education, and the presence and appeal of a wide range of low-cost government, private and community schools that have existed in the region since the 1940s. TCT tells us that Pakistanis are attending madrassas without ever acknowledging the reality of these other, far more prevalent forms of schooling—a silence that creates an inflated sense of madrassa presence and popularity in Pakistan in general, and in rural Pakistan in particular. This absence is conducive to creating the spectre of rural ignorance and extremism that is central to the text.

TCT further enhances this spectre through slippages between madrassas, extremist madrassas and terrorism, such that any Islamic education appears to be suspect and reducible to terrorist training.[34] In its emphasis on pushing people away from madrassas towards secular schools—considered essential for 'winning the war on terror'—TCT not only demonises madrassas wholesale, but fails to grasp the simple fact that, for a vast majority of rural and urban Pakistanis, a religious education alongside a worldly one is considered normal and desirable. People might send their children to

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religious specialists and centres particular to their interpretation of Islam even if their children are attending a good local school. Because people do not perceive a contradiction between the religious and the secular, it is not surprising that, within the small percentage of families that send a child full-time to a madrassa, 75% send their other children to a public or a private school.[35] Most fundamentally, in its insistence on assuming poverty to be a driver for madrassas, TCT refuses to acknowledge any positive parental motivations for madrassa preference—such as Islamic learning and moral discipline—which are in fact elemental to the existence and appeal of madrassas for the poor and rich alike.[36] By further jumping to the conclusion that the rural, illiterate, madrassa-going Muslim is the key driver for terrorism, TCT also fails to acknowledge the political grievances behind acts of terror such as 9/11, as well as the predominantly urban, educated backgrounds of those involved in anti-Western Islamist violence.[37]

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The USA, innocent and benevolent

In the aftermath of 9/11 the cause of terrorism was traced and confined to the problem of Islam.[38] In part through TCT this religio-cultural narrative has been complicated by combining the problem of Islam with that of poverty and illiteracy. Muslims are still the problem—no longer because of Islam *per se*, but because they are poor and ignorant, and easily amenable to extremist interpretations of Islam. Hence it remains an Islam versus the West narrative, but now combined with the white man's burden. By locating the root cause of terrorism in poverty and ignorance—naturalised as the most defining features of Muslim lands—TCT provides a thoroughly depoliticised and ahistorical narrative of terrorism in which the devastating effects of US interventionism in the region are erased, and thus the US rendered innocent.

As highlighted earlier, we are told nothing about how the 'extremist madrassa' that TCT presents as an integral part of the Pakistani landscape, was in fact a product of US foreign policy during 1979–88. Importantly the use of Islam as a strategic tool in Afghanistan emerged not in response to the Russian invasion, but before it, so that the Russians could be drawn into battle, and given their 'own Vietnam war'.[39] Far from being a result of poverty, the *mujahideen* were produced through the mobilisation of tremendous wealth. With the aid of US, Saudi and Gulf money, the CIA helped to fund, train and arm the Pakistani ISI, the most retrogade 'freedom fighters' like Osama bin Laden and Gulbudin Hekmatyar, and thousands of Muslims from Afghanistan and Pakistan whose religious identities and economic needs were exploited to enlist them in a brutal modern war labelled as *jihad*. Apart from militarising and Islamicising Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Afghan jihad came to influence more than 100 000 foreign Muslim radicals.[40] Indeed, the CIA–ISI strategy was to deploy the Afghan jihad as a model for militant, Islamist resistance against the Soviets elsewhere, with the result that *mujahideen* forces spread beyond Afghanistan to places such as Chechnya and Kosovo.[41]

This story is well known today through several academic, journalistic and policy writings, yet it remains largely absent from popular, contemporary narratives on the war on terror in the US. If mentioned, the blame for the cold war production of *jihadis* tends to get placed entirely on the ISI and the Saudis—still the Muslim others—instead of acknowledging the central role of US funds, arms and training.[42] In one of the most oft-quoted passages from TCT, Mortenson says:

> I've learned that terror doesn't happen because some group of people somewhere like Pakistan or Afghanistan simply decide to hate us. It happens because children aren't being offered a bright enough future that they have a reason to choose life over death.[43]

One might ask: how is a bright enough future offered to children who have grown up under the systematic destruction of the Cold War and now the war on terror?

In portraying terror as exclusively linked to poor, susceptible Muslims, TCT not only conceals the role of the US in sponsoring terror through madrassas but also hides its part in backing state terror more generally. For example, at the 'School' of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, more than 60 000 Latin and Central American military, police and civilian personnel have been trained in techniques of torture, extortion, kidnapping and assassination.[44] Not surprisingly the graduates of the School of the Americas have been linked with US-backed dictatorial regimes and severe human rights atrocities. Such schools—not unlike the extremist madrassa—have served the official US foreign policy of securing US strategic and corporate interests by destabilising the developing world through creating, arming and supporting proxy agents of repression or engineered democracies. Given such political realities, and the fact that the US is the world's biggest arms exporter, it is not unfair to suggest that the US has been at the heart of globalising terror, violence and extremism in the world.[45]

If this sounds hyperbolic, it is because the cultural logic of development and imperialism constitutes the political economy of 'objective' knowledge and social science analysis. While attitudes of care and humanitarianism are validated, even celebrated mediums of development thinking and practice, politicised critique and anger are invalidated as mediums of 'voice' and 'participation' in theory and practice.[46] This unequal deployment and legitimation of a particular affect within disciplinary knowledge helps fetishise certain embodied attitudes as civil while others are rendered uncivil. Ultimately this affective fetishism of care and common humanity renders unspeakable the uncivil extremism of the US geopolitical agenda.

In a world where one of the richest, most highly educated nations has been the cause of long-standing, systematic terrorism, it is both amusing and offensive to read that poverty and illiteracy are the 'root causes' of terrorism. Certainly it was not poverty that caused the Nazi concentration camps, the Soviet gulags, and French colonial slavery in Haiti. By locating terrorism in the material and cultural poverty of the Muslim other, not just US but other

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Western histories of violence and imperialist terror more generally are erased by TCT. If 'the enemy is ignorance'—as the title of a chapter in TCT proclaims—the cultivated ignorance of schooled US citizens has done far more to sustain processes of terror than the ignorance attributed to the rural, Pakistani Muslim in the text. Moreover, if 'changing the culture' through education is the reason behind Mortenson's efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, one wonders: who will change American culture?[47]

I also question the taken-for-granted assumption that an American individual can casually talk about 'changing the culture' in places where culture and life itself has already been radically transformed through US support of the military and the militant. The claim is not just paternalistic and arrogant—fitting right in with the Pentagon rhetoric of 'changing cultures' and the modernising vision that normalises Western trajectories of development—it is also inherently unequal. Can someone from Korphe in Baltistan go to the US and change the culture there? While Mortenson mentions that 'I had more to learn from the people I work with than I could ever hope to teach them', a sense of reciprocity in learning and recognition of local knowledge remains entirely unexplored within a narrative of modern schools countering rural ignorance.[48]

To be sure, TCT does dwell on the virtues of attending to the local. Drawing upon established ethnographic and development wisdom, Mortenson wears local clothes and respects local customs, while emphasising how he 'builds relationships' and 'listens to people' in order to spread the message of education. He also travels to the Philippines and Bangladesh to learn about their models of community development. While these efforts are commendable, it is interesting to note that the community-based, participatory education model that Mortenson ends up following was being practised in the region by institutions like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme long before Mortenson's arrival.[49] Yet such precedents find no mention in TCT. This makes Mortenson's educational effort seem pioneering, which in turn makes the self-serving narrative of terrorism in the text more compelling.

TCT is perhaps most appealing because it encompasses a sense of self-interrogation about the role of the US in the war on terror, especially its excessive and costly use of military force as well as its lack of attention to local development needs. Compared with the singularly militaristic and Islamophobic rhetoric that dominated the post-911 discourse in the US, this critique is undoubtedly significant. Yet the text authorises another de-historicised narrative, by reducing terrorism to the spectre of dangerous, illiterate Muslims in undifferentiated landscapes teeming with extremist madrassas. Moreover, when books and bombs are seen as *comparable* strategies for winning an imperialist war, the broader history and logics of which remain unexamined and unchallenged, it reflects 'how far we have fallen' and the poverty of the political discourse rather than a humanistic perspective.[50]

It is instructive to compare the narrative of humanitarian work in *Three Cups of Tea* with that in *Mountains beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure The World*.[51] Both texts are stories of American humanitarian heroes engaged in international development, with

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Farmer focusing on healthcare in Haiti and Mortenson on education in Northern Pakistan. On the website amazon.com the books are even paired together as a package deal, since they belong to the same genre and are often bought together. Instead of remaining limited to a discourse of self-evident poverty and malnourishment, and far from taking the rhetoric of US democracy and development in Haiti at face value, *Mountains beyond Mountains* embodies a politicised and historicised humanitarianism. It links Haitian poverty and disease directly with structural processes, and details the various ways in which the US military–corporate complex has led to the repression and impoverishment of Haitians. Focusing on the 'interconnectedness of the rich and the poor', and on 'transformation, not education', *Mountains beyond Mountains* emphasises the relationality of the American self and Haitian other.[52] In TCT the relationality of the American self and Pakistani other disappears in a discourse of poverty and ignorance that is largely closed, self-evident and self-affirming—and thus orientalising.[53] While the crude caricaturing of the Muslim is replaced with a more humanising one that respects and works with the local, the narrative nevertheless remains locked in a discourse that celebrates US humanity in the face of the assumed ignorance and terrorism of the Muslim.

Moreover, if the USA is a 'deeply divided nation' over how to conduct the war on terror, TCT hits this feeling of national anxiety with just the right notes.[54] It is mildly self-critical about the war on terror, without actually problematising either terrorism or the war itself. The problem of America's lack of popularity in the Pakistani and Afghan region is presented as mere misunderstanding, stemming from 'their' ignorance—instead of their acute awareness of the hypocrisy and violence of US policy. But these 'root causes' need not be acknowledged, or addressed. The book suggests that, like Mortenson, perhaps all that Americans need to do is bring civilisation to Muslims by creating schools, and this will win hearts and minds. Mortenson is quite literally produced as a humanitarian idol in remote, terrorising lands—a 'real life Indiana Jones' as the book's back cover tells us—who is saving Muslims from themselves, and securing the US. Through Mortenson's dispositions of care and sacrifice, TCT affirms the inherent goodness of the American character, and serves as a balm for the American conscience by providing a palatable, therapeutic narrative of 'their' terror and 'our' humanitarianism in times of expanding US imperialism. Indeed, it has also come to facilitate a reinvention of empire, as I elaborate in the next section.

Development and the new military culture of counter-insurgency

> I don't do what I'm doing to fight terror. I do it because I care about kids. Fighting terror is maybe seventh or eighth on my list of priorities.[55]

> What's the difference between them [Pakistanis/Afghanis] becoming a productive local citizen or a terrorist? I think the key is education.[56]

> The British policy was 'divide and conquer'. But I say 'unite and conquer'.[57]

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While counter-insurgency is surely not the reason why Mortenson initiated his educational efforts, he has increasingly described school-building as the key answer to the problem of terrorism—in TCT itself as well as in the many public and Pentagon lectures that he has given since the publication of the book. Indeed, at one point in the book (third quotation above), Mortenson's voice as a humanitarian development worker morphs clearly into that of a US military strategist, comparing the US strategy of 'conquering' with that of the British colonisers before.

Importantly Mortenson's schools solution goes *alongside* the use of US military force, even though in some parts of TCT and in some media reviews of the text one gets a sense that he is proposing books *in place of* force. For example, Mortenson says that he supported the war in Afghanistan, but felt that military campaigns should be accompanied by rebuilding, which is essential for 'winning the war on terror'.[58] He thus argues for a more comprehensive approach, in which development becomes the very means of attaining US security—an argument that has found a willing audience among military officials in the US. According to Major James Spies, the Counterinsurgency Operations course director at West Point:

> Mortenson's involvement in central Asia is critical to a holistic approach to assisting other countries. The military has re-learned the lessons of counter-insurgency that point out the need to build up the whole of a society to assist them in solving the core problems that created an insurgency.[59]

Hence, even as Mortenson refused funding from the US military to protect the neutrality of his work, his approach and effort has facilitated the reinvention of the military as well as of 'development' and 'reconstruction' in the current moment of empire.

Development in the post 9-11 context has become part-and-parcel of the project of US military occupation and hegemony, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, for example, 'development assistance' is not only provided through US corporate contractors via USAID, but also through military units called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that build schools, dig wells and provide medical help. The military also runs agricultural laboratories and drip-irrigation projects as a 'security measure' and to 'build a rapport with the villagers through education and employment'.[60] These techniques of 'soft power' resonate with the 'pacification' experiments implemented by the US during the Vietnam War and serve a number of aims. First, they achieve local goodwill and military intelligence, so that the efficacy of the war in the occupied territory may be enhanced.[61] Second, the talk of protecting and serving civilians helps to silence critics, and cover up the devastation of lives and homes caused by military bombing. Third, these techniques serve to expand the military's already bloated existence. Finally, they give a positive image to the occupation at home, helping to justify and extend it.

This new militarism—which the counter-insurgency doctrine calls 'armed social work'—has blurred the lines between military warfare and civilian development. Because aid workers are increasingly seen as combatants, local

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and international NGO work has become extremely dangerous, aggravating civilian miseries caused by the war.[62]

Reconstruction is also a billion-dollar business for US and multinational corporations, which not only profit from large-scale infrastructure projects in the short term, but are also ensured continued profiteering by gaining control of land and natural resources, and by reshaping a country's economic policies along neoliberal lines. This 'disaster capitalism' has been implemented especially in Iraq, with territories flattened through intense firepower and local industry destroyed through new laws in order to pave the way for US corporate and military hegemony.[63] Even state-of-the-art health institutions were destroyed by design, with illusory promises that they would be grandly rebuilt.[64] Moreover, the White House now has an Office of the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization, which has elaborate 'rapid response' reconstruction plans for changing 'the very social fabric of a nation' in up to 25 countries that are *not yet* in conflict.[65] These plans include pre-approved teams of private companies, non-governmental organisations, and think tanks that will work for 'democracy' and a 'market economy' in the ravaged countries—often ravaged through the involvement of Western arms or armies, only to be saved by Western private corporations working with development organisations. The changing of 'culture' is thus presented as a cure for conflict situations, but has effectively become the rationale for imperial expansion.

The discourse of poverty and extremism helps tremendously in entrenching this 21st century form of colonialism. Linking terrorism to poverty and ignorance provides a fitting logic for 'changing cultures' through 'reconstruction' activities such as education, which might also serve to create local consent for imperial ventures as it feeds into people's desire for literacy and social mobility. It plays an even more important role in creating consent at home, by producing the image of a benevolent America and its military.

This was strikingly demonstrated in an article by the *New York Times* journalist Thomas Friedman, in which he cites the inauguration of a girl's school in Afghanistan—created by Greg Mortenson—as a reason for extending the US presence in the country.[66] Interestingly—and yet not surprisingly, given the strategic blending of the soldier and the humanitarian in the new counter-insurgency approach—the school was inaugurated by Admiral Mike Mullen, the US Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Friedman writes:

> When you see two little Afghan girls crouched on the front steps of their new school, clutching tightly with both arms the notebooks handed to them by a US admiral—as if they were their first dolls—it's hard to say: 'Let's just walk away'. Not yet.

And again:

> Mortenson's efforts remind us what the essence of the 'war on terrorism' is about. It's about the war of ideas within Islam—a war between religious zealots who glorify martyrdom and want to keep Islam untouched by modernity and isolated from other faiths, with its women disempowered, and those who want to embrace modernity, open Islam to new ideas and empower Muslim women

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> as much as men. America's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were, in part, an effort to create the space for the Muslim progressives to fight and win so that the real engine of change, something that takes nine months and 21 years to produce—a new generation—can be educated and raised differently.

The colonial logic of deploying culture to justify 'the long war' and occupation does not get more straightforward than this.[67] Imperial power as the beacon of modernity, development, civilisation and women's empowerment is precisely the discourse used by British and French colonisers in Egypt, India and Algeria among other places to explain their occupations.[68] Importantly, and commendably, Mortenson has recently been critical of US troop escalation and a military solution in Afghanistan. But what gets picked up by the US media and army is the idea of a humanitarian-painted US militarism, and Mortenson's support of it.

For example, Friedman's article goes on to state:

> Mortenson said he was originally critical of the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan, but he's changed his views: 'The US military has gone through a huge learning curve. They really get it. It's all about building relationships from the ground up, listening more and serving the people of Afghanistan.'

This grassroots, *participatory militarism* goes alongside the reinvented image of the military as a harbinger of humanitarian development, and helps the military recover from its scarred image of an occupying force committing torture. It is also a project that has long been in the making, as part of what Derek Gregory calls the 'cultural turn in late modern war', whereby cultural knowledge is not 'a substitute for killing but rather, in certain circumstances, a prerequisite for its refinement'.[69] This cultural turn is aided by what I would call an 'ethnographic turn' in empire in which—similarly to the ethnographic turn in development—practices of knowing and working with the local express empathy and humanitarianism, while effectively re-legitimising the imperial project through an erasure of power relations and structural inequality.[70]

It may be argued that a humanitarian military that works for development and women's rights is better than a strictly militaristic one. Yet this is a dangerous and misleading argument. The ravaging effects of a prior US imperial aggression in Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be countered by yet another round of occupation, justified through the creation of girls' schools by American humanitarians and inaugurated by US army generals. As both the US-based Afghan Women's Mission (AWM) and the Afghanistan-based Revolutionary Association for Women in Afghanistan (RAWA) have made clear, women's rights cannot be won through war and occupation. Women's lives have become much worse since the beginning of the US occupation, as a result of NATO bombings, of the empowerment of misogynist warlords who have committed rape and thrown out women members of parliament and of an anti-women Taliban insurgency that has only become stronger with the extended US presence.[71] Hence both AWM and RAWA, among other US and international voices, have called for ending the war instead of its escalation.

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Conclusion

TCT has not just been a phenomenal American sensation. The book has been very well received in Pakistan, as it tells a moving account of a foreigner's dedicated service to rural Pakistanis. However, since 9/11, and partly because of their lack of exposure to northern Pakistan, many urban Pakistanis have also come to see their northern territories as normalised in TCT: the region is backward and wild, and needs to be tamed through education—a simple and seductive picture that seems intuitively plausible.

My purpose in this paper has not been to discount the need for and value of education and grassroots development work. Books are quite obviously better than bombs, and this demand has become a key rallying point for peace activists in the US and Pakistan alike. But one has to assess the nobility of a humanitarian intervention within the larger politics that it represents and perpetuates. Through the figure and work of Greg Mortenson, *Three Cups of Tea* produces a narrative about the war on terror that is devoid of history, power and politics. It deploys and normalises particular, decontextualised constructions of culture and underdevelopment to displace blame, defining the American self as well as the Muslim other in ways conducive to US policy, and reassuring for the American public. Even as the text provides a more sympathetic account of Pakistani Muslims—particularly through memorable characters such as Haji Ali—its general depiction of Pakistan remains couched in an otherising narrative of terror that essentialises the country as a zone of ignorance, backwardness and extremism. Hence, *as a rule*, most Pakistanis, though 'not all', appear to be pitiable and dangerous. Further, Mortenson's ethnographic approach and knowledge is precisely what gives this narrative an aura of realism. Finally, TCT has become implicated in a participatory militarism in which an ethnographically sensitive military strives to 'listen' and 'build relationships' to 'serve people'—in order to occupy better, and longer.

There is surely a dire need for humanitarian work and for rebuilding in the wake of a devastating occupation. Hence the argument is not to exit and forget, but to acknowledge historical and contemporary aggression, be accountable for war crimes and pay reparations, work towards undoing the damage, and take steps at home and abroad so that ruthless foreign policies are not repeated. What needs to be practised is not a hawkish, colonising humanitarianism but an 'anti-colonial', 'historicizing humanism' which acknowledges suffering but also the relational histories that have produced it.[72] Moreover, this humanism acknowledges the social life-worlds of others in their own terms and voices, instead of apprehending them solely through the assumed prisms of imperial mercy or disdain.

Finally, we also need to question the affective politics of humanitarianism, particularly as it has come to be understood in situations of political conflict. The label of 'humanitarian' has become an exclusive preserve of Western saviours, who are deemed to *care* as they are building hospitals, schools and relief camps in darker nations. Simultaneously, labels of 'extremism' and 'violence' have become naturalised properties of poorer regions, as if the political economy of colonial exploitation, neoliberal dispossession and

savage militarism—processes that lie at the heart of Western civilisation and its ability to be humanitarian—are not extreme and violent. One wonders why the poor and illiterate villagers of Korphe—who saved Mortenson's life and nursed him back to health by sharing meagre resources and giving him their 'finest' possessions—are not considered to have 'humanitarian instincts', while those of Mortenson are readily assumed.[73] After all, Mortenson embarked on his journey because he felt that he must repay the Korphe people for their extraordinary generosity. They had no such obligation.

Notes

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1 See, for example, M Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004; D Gregory, 'The rush to the intimate: counterinsurgency and the cultural turn in late modern war', at http://web.mac.com/derekgregory/iWeb/Site/The%20cultural%20turn%20and%20late%20modern%20war.html; and K Dodds, 'Hollywood and the popular geopolitics of the war on terror', *Third World Quarterly*, 29, 2008, pp 1621–1637.

2 These include the discourse of exceptionalism that constructs the USA as a special nation destined to lead the world, the belief in the maintenance of US military superiority through permanent overseas bases, the imperialistic ideology that the USA intervenes in other countries to protect 'freedom' and 'democracy', the US domination of other nations through direct or covert wars and the backing of surrogate regimes or militias, and the economic control of foreign markets and natural resources (through the involvement of institutions such as the World Trade Organization) to service US corporate and strategic interests. See, for example, A Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy*, Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

3 G Mortenson & D Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, New York: Viking, 2006.

4 At http://www.threecupsoftea.com.

5 G Hart, 'Denaturalizing dispossession: critical ethnography in the age of resurgent imperialism', *Antipode*, 38(5), 2006, p 997.

6 A Brenner, 'Greg Mortenson's mission to promote peace, one school at a time', *Wild River Review*, 28 February 2008, at http://www.blogs.targetx.com/wildriverreview/penworldvoices/2008/02/greg_motensons_mission_to_prom.html.

7 While I critically examine the discursive effects and military uses of TCT, a detailed analysis of the reception of the book is not within the scope of this paper.

8 While TCT is reminiscent of the otherising tendencies of Western orientalism—which I highlight in the paper—it is not my aim to analyse the text using orientalism as the central lens. TCT is not primarily concerned with producing forms of knowledge about the other, and is not written in overtly racist terms. Rather than invoking orientalism as imposed conceptual framework, I interrogate the text on its own terms and examine the representational, humanitarian and military politics that it engenders.

9 The name of the Northern Areas was changed to Gilgit-Baltistan through a reforms package in August 2009. To avoid confusion, I will use the region's old name since TCT was written before the name change.

10 See M Sökefeld, 'Selves and others: representing multiplicities of difference in Gilgit, Northern Areas of Pakistan', in M Lecomte-Tilouine & P Dollfus (eds), *Ethnic Revival and Religious Turmoil: Identities and Representations in the Himalayas*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 309–336. In recent years, however, the region has seen a rise in Shia–Sunni animosity as a result of the sectarianising policies of the Pakistan state, as well as the cold war mobilisation of political Islam.

11 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, pp 77, 200.

12 *Ibid*, pp 95, 189, 183.

13 I Stellrecht, 'Dynamics of highland–lowland interaction in Northern Pakistan since the 19th century', in I Stellrecht & M Winiger (eds), *Perspectives on History and Change in the Karakorum, Hindukush, and Himalaya*, Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe, 1997, pp 3–22.

14 The Great Game refers to the Anglo-Russian struggle for control over Central Asia in the 19th century. See S Hussain, 'Small players in the great game: marginality and representation on the northern frontiers of nineteenth-century colonial India', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 29, 2006, pp 235–253.

15 For a critique of development discourse, see J Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

For a critique of development discourse in the Northern Areas, see D Butz, 'Orientalist representations of resource use in Shimshal, Pakistan, and their extra-discursive effects', in I Stellrecht (ed), *Karakora – Hindukush–Himalaya: Dynamics of Change (Part 1)*, Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1998, pp 357–386.

16 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 5.

17 A Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven, CT: Yale, 2000.

18 The ISI is the largest intelligence agency in Pakistan. '*Mujahideen*' here refers specifically to the Muslim fighters recruited, funded and equipped by US and Pakistani intelligence services during the 1980s Afghan war. See, for example, J Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism*, London: Pluto Press, 2000.

19 D Craig, '"A" is for allah, "J" is for jihad', *World Policy Journal*, 2000, pp 90–94.

20 Factual errors add to the text's disregard for regional and political context. For example, George Schaller recommended the Khunjerab National Park in the Northern Areas, not the 'Karakoram National Park' (p 116) as we are told, and Mortenson could not have attended Mother Teresa's funeral in spring 2000 (pp 233–235) because she died in autumn 1997.

21 The collapsing of different regions into a homogenous landscape is characteristic of the security lens through which Pakistan and Afghanistan have been viewed in US policy, most recently crystallised in the political category of 'Af-Pak' under the Obama administration.

22 See Cons & Paprocki in this volume.

23 For example, see http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1666993/book_review_three_cups_of_tea_by_greg.html.

24 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 243.

25 *Ibid*, p 228.

26 See C Adichie, 'The danger of a single story', at http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html. See also Sengupta, this volume.

27 R Kurin, 'Islamization: a view from the countryside', in A Weiss (ed), *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State*, 1986, pp 115–128.

28 M Marsden, *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

29 N Ali, 'Outrageous state, sectarianized citizens: deconstructing the "textbook controversy" in the Northern Areas, Pakistan', *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 2, 2008, at http://samaj.revues.org/document1172.html.

30 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 243.

31 *Ibid*, pp 243, 295.

32 T Andrabi, J Das, A Khwaja & T Zajonc, 'Religious school enrollment in Pakistan: a look at the data', *Comparative Education Review*, 50, 2006, pp 446–477.

33 A Cockcroft, N Andersson, D Milne, K Omer, N Ansari, A Khana & U Chaudhry, 'Challenging the myths about madaris in Pakistan: a national household survey of enrolment and reasons for choosing religious schools', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 2009, pp 342–349.

34 Such proclamations about Islamic education are prevalent in Western media more generally. For a critique of such representations, see K McClure, 'Madrasas and Pakistan's education agenda: western media misrepresentation and policy recommendations', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 2009, pp 334–341.

35 Andrabi *et al*, 'Religious school enrollment in Pakistan'.

36 Cockcroft *et al*, 'Challenging the myths about madaris in Pakistan'.

37 According to statements released by al-Qaeda, these political motivations include opposition to the presence of US military bases and troops in Muslim lands, as well as to US foreign policy towards Israel. For an examination of the class and educational backgrounds of those who engage in Islamist violence, see P Bergen & S Pandey, 'The madrassa scapegoat', *Washington Quarterly*, 29(2), 2006, pp 117–125.

38 Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*.

39 Cooley, *Unholy Wars*, p 10.

40 Rashid, *Taliban*.

41 R Blackburn, 'The imperial presidency, the war on terrorism, and the revolutions of modernity', *Constellations*, 9, 2002, pp 3–33.

42 The history of US foreign policy is mentioned—but not critiqued—in only a couple of places in TCT through passing, almost submerged references to Stinger missiles, as on pp 213 and 217.

43 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 292.

44 Amnesty International, *Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles: The Human Rights Dimensions of US Training of Foreign Military, Security and Police Forces*, New York, 2000; and L Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

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45 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
46 See the introduction to this issue for a discussion of the limits of voice and participation in the new culturalisms of development.
47 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 209.
48 *Ibid*, p 150.
49 See M Khan & S Khan, *Rural Change in the Third World: Pakistan and the Aga Khan Rural Support Program*, NY: Greenwood Press, 1992.
50 Gregory, 'The rush to the intimate', p 45.
51 T Kidder, *Mountains beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure The World*, New York: Random House, 2003.
52 *Ibid*, pp 37, 44.
53 E Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon, 1978.
54 Mortenson & Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*, p 301.
55 *Ibid*, p 138.
56 *Ibid*, p 268.
57 *Ibid*, p 189.
58 *Ibid*, p 294.
59 At http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090309/NEWS/90309037.
60 GRAIN, *The Soils of War*, March 2009, at http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=217.
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62 P Omidian, 'Living and working in a war zone: an applied anthropologist in Afghanistan', *Practicing Anthropology*, 31(2), 2009, pp 4–11.
63 N Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.
64 O Al–Kubaisy, *Iraq: Occupation Year 7*, 5 April 2009, at www.countercurrents.org.
65 N Klein, 'The rise of disaster capitalism', *The Nation*, 14 April 2005.
66 T Friedman, 'Teacher, can we leave now?', *New York Times*, 18 July 2009.
67 See T Hayden, 'Understanding the long war', *The Nation*, 7 May 2009, at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090525/hayden/single?rel=nofollow.
68 L Abu-Lughod, 'Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others', *American Anthropologist*, 104, 2002, pp 783–790.
69 Gregory, 'The rush to the intimate', p 4.
70 See the introduction to this issue; and T Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.
71 See E Rostami-Povey, *Afghan Women: Identity and Invasion*, New York: Zed Books, 2007; and S Kolhatkar & M Rawi, 'Why is a leading feminist organization lending its name to support escalation in Afghanistan?', *AlterNet*, 8 July 2009, at http://www.alternet.org/reproductivejustice/141165/why_is_a_leading_feminist_organization_lending_its_name_to_support_escalation_in_afghanistan/.
72 See S Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, p 164; and L Malkki, 'Speechless emissaries: refugees, humanitarianism and dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology*, 11(3), 1997, p 248.
73 M Gardner, 'A gift for an entire village', *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 September 2006, at http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0912/p17s01-bogn.html.

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Notes on contributor

Nosheen Ali is a 2009–2010 Mellon/ACLS early career fellow affiliated with Stanford University. She has a PhD in development sociology from Cornell University, and is currently writing a book on state-making and citizenship struggles in Northern Pakistan. Her research interests span the fields of political anthropology, cultural theory, environmental justice, and international development. Nosheen serves on the editorial board of *SAMAJ* (*South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*) and is a founding member of the international network GRASP (Group for Research in the Anthropology, Sociology, and Politics of Pakistan).