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Going to Ground(s):
The War Correspondent's Memoir

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> Home: twenty-eight years old, feeling like Rip Van Winkle, with a heart like one of those little paper pills they make in China, you drop them into water and they open out to form a tiger or a flower or a pagoda. Mine opened out into war and loss. There'd been nothing happening there that hadn't already existed here, coiled up and waiting, back in the World.
>
> ——Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (1977)

There is a strange set of lines in Stephen Crane's memoir of the Spanish–American War, "War Memories" (1899)—strange because we have become accustomed not to find them so. Crane, as we know, first tried to get to this war in November of 1896, as part of a famously disastrous filibustering expedition eventually fictionalized in "The Open Boat." He returned again in the spring of 1898 to report on some of the war's most important battles, measure the political climate of postwar Havana, and comment on Cuba's potential future. But in this, the memoir Michael Robertson rightly calls the author's "other" war masterpiece, Crane focuses on practically none of the above.[1] In fact, he actually begins by quoting a war correspondent who declares that it's "impossible" to get to "the real thing" of war "because war is neither magnificent nor squalid; it is simply life, and an expression of life can always evade us. We can never tell life, one to another, although sometimes we think we can."[2] And then, at the end of this memoir—after having shared many startling images of battle—Crane declares that "you can depend upon it that I have told you nothing at all, nothing at all, nothing at all" (258).

Of course, from Walt Whitman to Ernest Hemingway to Michael Herr, American chroniclers of the battlefield have often told us that the real war never quite makes it

into the books. Especially when the writer returns to what war correspondents and soldiers alike call "the World," a memoir can often seem only to gesture at what is otherwise unspeakable. Iraq and Afghanistan correspondent for the *New York Times* Dexter Filkins, for instance, closes his absorbing and beautifully crafted memoir, *The Forever War* (2008), by comparing himself to Laika, the canine Russian cosmonaut, weightless and comically unable to speak.[3] Filkins parallels his own silence to the smooth, comfortable, and decidedly liberal order of Harvard University, where he has come to write:

> Back in the world, people were serious, about the fillings in their sandwiches, about the winner of last night's ballgame. I couldn't blame them, of course. For me, the war sort of flattened things out, flattened things out here and flattened them out there, too. . . . And then I got back to the world, and the weddings and the picnics were the same as everything had been in Iraq, silent and slow and heavy and dead. . . .
>
> People asked me about the war, of course. They asked me whether it was as bad as people said. "Oh, definitely," I told them, and then, usually, I stopped. . . . My friend George, an American reporter I'd gotten to know in Iraq, told me he couldn't have a conversation with anyone about Iraq who hadn't been there. I told him I couldn't have a conversation with anyone who hadn't been there about anything at all. (339–40)

At the very least, Crane and Filkins remind us that this self-silencing is often manifested *in* the war memoir, not something simply remedied by it. Indeed this is a reaction that has traditionally been interpreted, in soldiers' stories, as a result of war's own supposedly inexpressible violence and chaos. In what we commonly characterize as a universalizing idiom, war is cast as inherently anarchic and thus beyond any human rationale or explanation. These days, we tend to use the insights of trauma theory to interpret this reaction, commonly linking it historically to Anglo-American disillusionment with World War I. Filkins's title, *The Forever War*, for example, alludes to famous lines in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the novel that can be said to have originally provided the template for trauma studies.[4] These days, trauma seems to have an even wider resonance in literary and cultural analysis.[5] Judith Butler, for instance, has argued that only by lingering with the domestic trauma of 9/11 can the US ever hope to come to terms with the debilitating effects of its ambitions abroad. That is, if we do such "tarrying," as she calls it, we might begin to connect such suffering to that of others, and indeed to "the mechanisms of its distribution" across the globe.[6]

We might, as she puts it, understand "who else suffers from permeable borders, unexpected violence, dispossession, and fear, and in what ways" (xii).

All of these viewpoints have a worthy place in our criticism—I have drawn on each myself over the years. Indeed, if I have a quarrel with these approaches, it would be that these dominant discursive registers through which we view postwar writing—traumatic, universalist, political—are too often taken up in isolation from one another, with the first two modes emphasized at the expense of the third. The more I teach and write, that is, the more it seems that war reporting and memoir-writing actually work to *coordinate* these different orders of meaning, and to continuing political ends. In part, the revision I am suggesting is a matter of being willing to synchronize aesthetic considerations more directly with the perceptual, experiential, and political dimensions of war.[7] If we take a second look at Filkins's book title, for example, we might see that it puts neither its allusion to Hemingway nor a purely universalizing idiom solely in play: rather the "forever" war also marks how time itself can freeze in battle, making military operations matters of inches and years, not miles and days; the title alludes to the irony of enemies becoming friends and then the reverse; it reminds us of the way individual war events can take on a larger scale in personal memory and in our writing; and it makes the political observation that the post-9/11 wars of terror and anti-terror have seemed to string together into conflicts that cross political borders of all kinds and have no end.

Moreover, both Crane's and Filkins's titles point to another oddly neglected condition of the American war correspondent memoir: that it is customarily written at or to the home front. We might therefore liken its moment of composition to the expression "going to ground"—a colloquialism we commonly attach to a return to a home base or (often pejoratively) to a retreat to safety. But I want to expand the meaning of the phrase to refer, as well, to these memoirs' need to reengage the "grounds," the domestic ideological rationales under which policy makers wage war. Meanwhile, highlighting this odd phrase also helps us demarcate the difference between soldiers and reporters, whose reactions to war tended to be conflated. That is, by "going to ground(s)," I also mean to signal our need, methodologically speaking, to return to the foundational news dispatches that, after all, authorize a war correspondent's memoir differently from that of a soldier's. Attending to the domestic "address" (in both senses) of dispatches and memoirs has other benefits as well. All too often, we assume that the retrospective work of memoir is to go between the cracks of what had previously been "news"; we take that approach because we often assume that reporting has put a premium on repressing one's opinions or subjective responses in real time. But in fact, as I have shown elsewhere, political evaluations of US, indigenous, or "enemy" (read: rival imperial) aims and missions have been quite explicit tasks for both reporting and memoir-writing starting in the Victorian era and moving forward; even the most conventional forms of battlefield reporting can contain tacit, coded assessments of rival combatants' political legitimacy.[8] Traumatic or universalist idioms can indeed trouble these idiomatic tasks of political evaluation,

but we should not assume the political dimensions of war went unreported in the first place, or that they simply evaporated in a haze of postwar "disillusionment." Quite the contrary.

To be sure, the worlds of Crane's and Filkins's dispatches are in many senses far apart from one another—geographically, technologically, and temporally; their memoirs provide only a limited genre sample as well. But juxtaposing these two particular texts also points towards an important set of patterns in US transnational and imperial history. Both journalists, after all, wrote about US invasions initiated by suspicious or erroneous pretexts, driven by superheated nationalism, and haunted by contradictory claims of liberation and occupation in which, we should remember, the newspapers that they wrote for had already been implicated (William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and today's *New York Times*, respectively). Meanwhile, though writing about different regions of the globe, both writers are deeply influenced by the residual shadow of European imperialism. And finally—to broach perhaps the most uncomfortable topic of all—both writers demonstrate how the home front can seem, at first, to make certain subjects of war virtually unsayable.

These silencing effects, however, go deeper than the apparent domestic political climate in any particular moment. Rather, thanks to the pathbreaking work of William Appleman Williams, Amy Kaplan, Elizabeth Samet, Robert Westbrook, and others, we've often tried to think about even more fundamental reciprocities between the imperial and domestic fronts—to recognize, for instance, that reports of war often interact with home front ideas about national sovereignty, "foreign influence," or citizen-soldiers' political socialization (the "why we fight" question).[9] In what follows, I mean to demonstrate that these deeper grounds are what the war correspondent's memoir frequently must engage. Indeed it is coordination of these matters within often-competing registers—universal, political, and traumatic—that often constitutes what we might call the forever war taking place within the genre itself. It is, at its core, a war over meaning, one that reflects and reproduces pain, regret, anger, and even silence. I will begin by looking at "War Memories" and the news reports on which it drew.[10]

I

First published in abridged form in 1899, "War Memories" looks back on Crane's work for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and Hearst's *Journal* during the war's Cuban and Puerto Rican campaigns, respectively. As Kaplan's superb reading of Crane's San Juan Hill report makes clear, Crane's presence in battle often became a news event itself.[11] The traditional tendency, however, has been to see Crane's reporting as idiosyncratic, partly because of his celebrity, and partly because Pulitzer would eventually fire him. In fact, though Crane's dispatches vary, they generally cut between quite conventional modes: direct witnessing, "our-correspondent-was-there" accounts of war maneuvers and spectacular battles (e.g., "STEPHEN CRANE AT THE FRONT FOR THE WORLD");

sidelight camp-following and occasional profiles of fighting men, including assessments of troop morale, leadership, and honor (e.g., "REGULARS GET NO GLORY"); and then, during and after battle, implicit lectures to the home front on the readiness of indigenous peoples (based on their battle performance) for political sovereignty.

And so, in February of 1899, when one magazine took up the assignment of interviewing "Mr. Stephen Crane on the New America," to get him to comment on Cuba's prospects after the cessation of hostilities, Crane hardly bit his tongue. Instead Crane opined that despite "practically thirteen years of continuous war" the island's "industries of tobacco, sugar, and ore are vast in possibility."[12] Moreover, having been freed from the "evil Spanish government," Cuba would, Crane predicted, be granted independence by the US, or perhaps be granted annexation (a hedging we've often overlooked but implicit in this journal's invocation of a "new" America). In the same interview, meanwhile, he also warned that Cubans themselves had "not behaved well in the most prominent cases" of battle (242), angering American soldiers by stealing supplies and taking credit for victories the US soldiers had died for.[13] But fortunately, as far as Crane was concerned, the good will emanating down from the US would supposedly erase the suspicions these actions had cost. In the long run, he said, political comity would be restored.[14]

Nevertheless, in a move we now find all too familiar, when the discussion turned to whether this US benevolence amounted to "imperialism," Crane told his home audience no. In words anticipating the Bush-era framing of Iraq, Crane said that, as hostilities ended, "the forces of this nation [the US] are now engaged in trying to comfort these people and tell them they are not going to suffer oppression." Of course phrases like "these people" were suffused with racial and class paternalism that bespoke the imperial outlook Crane denied.[15] In addition, by assuming that charitable US intervention would only be greeted by a Cuban indifference—"one must not suppose that there was any cheering enthusiasm [by the Cubans] at the landing of our army here," he wrote—Crane merely echoed the argument he had often made on the domestic front about the poor in the US (in, for instance, his portrait of Maggie Johnson's brother Jimmie), a connection also quite explicit in his regular dispatches.[16]

To Robertson and other scholars, however—albeit for different reasons—what is noticeable, supposedly, is how few of these elements make their way into "War Memories." For Robertson, it is a matter of the memoir's aesthetic experimentalism. Explicitly citing the style of French impressionists, Crane now seems as interested in "effect[s] of mental light and shade," and in capturing "something meaningless and at the same time overwhelming, crushing, monstrous."[17] And in positing that not one in a thousand American soldiers really thought about "the enemy" in the ways US nationalists did at home (213), Crane's memoir chooses to focus down, more characteristically, on two extraordinarily vivid accounts of brutal and shocking death: the demise of a young surgeon named Gibbs, and that of a former Claverack classmate named Reuben McNab. In Crane's actual dispatches, a brief obituary was the standard

form.[18] But in his memoir, Crane's quick-burst, stuttering cadence, his use of breathless repetition, his blurring his own body with those of the dying, all follow the patterns that many attribute to the prosthetic rewitnessing of traumatic war scenes.[19] On seeing Gibbs die, for example, Crane writes, "I heard somebody dying near me. He was dying hard. Hard. It took him a long time to die. He breathed as all noble machinery breathes when it is making its gallant strife against breaking, breaking. But he was going to break. He was going to break. . . . Every wave, vibration, of his anguish beat upon my senses. He was long past groaning. . . . I thought this man would never die. I wanted him to die. Ultimately he died."[20] With the former correspondent now both overwhelmed by and fixated on such moments, Cuba and its future no longer seem on the table: as Kaplan puts it in her San Juan Hill analysis, "the spotlight on wounded bodies effaces the political context by fetishizing those bodies as the only meaningful focal point."[21] And indeed, because the memoir is otherwise pocketed by trivial, even seemingly narcissistic reflections on relatively minor matters, this political effacement seems much more the order of the day. True, some of these events shift suddenly from incidental matters into fearful, large dangers: that a bunch of bananas suddenly threatens to knock the correspondent over as his dispatch-boat rolls in the sea[22]; or, after an uneventful night passage, that his "frail" little boat is nearly cut into "two parts as neatly as if she had been cheese" by a patrolling US warship (204). But otherwise, the insignificant seems to stay that way. "Oh, yes, you are howling for blood," Crane says to his readers, "but I tell you it is more emphatic that I lost my tooth brush" (229). In the face of this kind of deflationary rhetoric, some scholars have concluded that Crane had abandoned his prewar views altogether, imperialist or otherwise.[23]

In truth, however, the war correspondent's difficulty in coordinating different registers of meaning—again, traumatic, universalist, and political—seems to me better understood as the very *subject* of "War Memories." Especially illustrative is Crane's investigation of the first-person plural, or what I would call the slippery "we." Rather than exclusively using the first-person plural to bind the identities of soldiers, journalists, and readers in the nation together—an effect we often attribute to spectacle—Crane examines how rival or incongruous interpretive frameworks or experiences don't come together into a single war that "we" can agree on. Crane foregrounds an internal argument over what he repeatedly calls "sameness," or the question of whether diverse memories—and now we might notice the plural in his title—can really be unified under any single interpretive regime. For instance, he speaks of falling into his bunk and wondering whether the figures at the officers' dinner are "identical" to "the figure scrambling, afraid of its life, through Cuban jungle,"[24] or to the pathetic, hungry men he had seen at Siboney (cf. *Reports of War*, 146ff.). "We" watch the shelling of a hillside; then Crane shifts to a "quiet dinner" on a warship, among officers, shelling the shore at the same time Japanese boys are bringing everyone liquor (206). ("You see?" Crane writes, "War! A bunch of bananas" [206]). Elsewhere, Crane refers to that "mysterious class of persons who were

evidently trying to kill us. Our enemies? Yes—perhaps—I suppose so. Leave that to the people in the streets at home" (212). In part to signal his own home-front naiveté—"I know nothing about war, of course, and pretend nothing," he had written at the 'front' for Pulitzer's *World* (143)—Crane tries out different analogies to capture aspects of war experience (the sounds of different brands of rifles, for instance). But in the memoir, he undercuts his own attempts to impose figurative likeness: in one passage, he starts out by claiming battle to be "exactly like quail shooting," with Marines like "gentlemen in leggings" and "the Spaniards were the birds." But then he says, "I doubt if they would sympathise with my metaphors" (215–16). The key thing here, I think, is that Crane's self-muting was often cast *as* a political judgment, not its effacement. For instance, in contrast to the garrulousness of his own spectator-self, as Kaplan shows, Crane's dispatches often wrote admiringly of "Regulars" and their "taciturn silence" (172) while they were "wallowing through the muddy fords, pursuing [their] way through stiletto-pointed thickets" (171), only to be shot at.[25] "It is the one thing in the universe," he would recall in his memoir, "which makes one fling expression to the winds and be satisfied to simply feel" (216). Contrary to what we often think, invoking the "universal," or muting oneself, here meant a quite particular political response.

Even more to the point, that rival interpretive positions sometimes produced awe or silence did not mean that Crane made "the enemy" or empire disappear completely. After all, the national identifier ("Spaniards") lingers in his memoir's syntax throughout. And as a result—despite his attempts to fracture experience, perception, and memory—the national designation cannot help but to unify the US cause even when the mockery of the "enemy" is cast as merely a home-front, "street"-driven concern.[26] For example, there is his famous scene involving the corpse of a Spanish soldier:

> His strong simple countenance was a malignant sneer at the system which was forever killing the credulous peasants in a sort of black night of politics, where the peasants merely followed whatever somebody had told them was lofty and good. But, nevertheless, the red-headed Spaniard was dead. He was irrevocably dead. And to what purpose? The honour of Spain? Surely the honour of Spain could have existed without the violent death of this poor red-headed peasant? . . . Sleep well red-headed peasant. You came to another hemisphere to fight because—because you were told to, I suppose. (239)

Even as he seems to discount ideas of imperial "honour," Crane places this body in a hemisphere not its own—in (supposedly) "our" backyard. And by positioning the unknown body as a peasant impressed into battle, the passage calls up an unfavorable

contrast to the democratic pageantry of US troops (putative volunteers). Indeed the "black night of politics" positions that Spanish peasant in the infamous Black Legend, a notion of autocratic obeisance and inquisition that frequently colored representations of the Spanish empire.[27] This scene is built, in other words, around a contrast in domestic political socialization that the experiences of trauma or "universal" war reinforce rather than efface. The political mission holds Crane's attention even as he invokes a supposedly unsayable "more" of war that might ask him, or us, to look away.

II

The roughly three hundred articles written or cowritten by Dexter Filkins during his posting in Iraq from early 2003 to mid-2006 might seem far afield from Crane's moment.[28] And because today's newsgathering would seem to have inverted the Victorian-era premium on partisanship in favor of the ritual of "objectivity," we likewise assume Filkins's professional approach to newswriting would be more based on the suppression of his opinions than Crane's ever was.[29] Yet Filkins's modus operandi was in fact remarkably similar to Crane's, reflecting how much he too consigned himself to reporting on, and then assessing, the envelope of declared US aims. Following an assignment in Afghanistan, Filkins covered the American occupation of Iraq on the ground, occasionally accompanying US troops into battle and keeping his eye on their morale and their own sense of the mission. Yet during that invasion and thereafter, he also measured Iraqi consent and dissent to US aims and, in particular, to the prospects of Iraqi democratic sovereignty. In time, as well, the trauma of war added its voice to Filkins's own mental chorus, making Iraq into a part of his identity that he, like Crane, could not easily bring home.[30]

Unlike Crane, of course, Filkins never believed the mission he covered—from the invasion to just prior to the so-called surge—was a success. Naturally, he couched his growing critique in ritual reflexes of contemporary news "balance"; nevertheless, his own skepticism was evident from the start.[31] Initially, for example, he opined that past horrors under Saddam Hussein had made even pro-US Iraqis deeply dubious of the new occupation. Their enthusiasm, as Filkins put it repeatedly, was "muted." Later, he thought, that distrust had spun full circle: when Iraqi government officials took steps to become more "fully sovereign," it turned out they didn't want the US "to go home too soon after all."[32] And as the civil war deepened, Filkins felt that democracy itself had become the target of the emerging insurgency, while the counterinsurgency mission foundered in its own malaise. In a *New York Times Magazine* profile of Army lieutenant colonel Nathan Sassaman—whose troops had been charged with dumping local Iraqi citizens into the Tigris River—Filkins argued that the American military had in fact never really embraced counterinsurgency tactics at all.[33] To Filkins, instead, troubles like Sassaman's had only confirmed Israeli historian Martin van Creveld's argument that counterinsurgencies always fail because they demoralize one's own

soldiers, causing internal troop discipline to break down and abuses inevitably to follow.[34] On several counts, Filkins clearly felt the mission was fatally flawed.[35]

In fact, what is striking is how early Filkins began to reset the *how* of his own reporting. By June of 2004, barely halfway in, one finds him already writing in a more retrospective and literary mode, talking about "sifting through the jumble of memories," or thinking back through a series of discontinuous "flashbacks."[36] By the early fall, he puts forth the metaphorical construction that Iraq had become a "shrinking country" unavailable to the standard reportorial routine. The vicious anarchy of the sectarian conflict, and the growing disregard on all sides for the immunity for reporters, had made covering the war all but physically impossible. As a result, a bunker mentality had taken hold of the reporter fraternity: "On some days, it seems, we are all crowded into a single room together, clutching our notebooks and watching the walls."[37] Holding notebooks no longer filled with news, of course, opened up the possibility that a memoir could not be a memoir if the war itself had become unfindable. (A year later, invoking something like Crane's impressionism, Filkins would say that Iraq was a place where parts were constantly "falling into a new and different pattern, like so many bits of colored glass."[38])

The truth, however, was that the category of trauma had long made its presence felt in Filkins's dispatches, not just to define his style, but to work as a mode of political analysis through which he assessed Iraqi receptiveness to the occupation. Rather than the celebrations American neoconservatives and others had predicted, Filkins instead reported what he called a "degraded" Iraqi instinct to trust anyone, a faith "broken by so many years of state-sponsored betrayal."[39] Only a month after the invasion, a visit to one of Saddam Hussein's former torture chambers seemed even to undermine the task of accurate political measurement Filkins had assigned himself. Surrounded by what he called the "looted chaos" of the scene, he wrote that "it seemed impossible to piece together a history" that would validate one informant's testimony about the past over another's.[40] And four days after that, Filkins found himself in a literal trauma ward: a local hospital without working electricity, drugs, or suitable triage protocols to deal with the chaos the US invasion had re-created.[41]

All that being said, it is important to pause here momentarily to describe precisely how Filkins's reports cast the mission and its undoing. Though Filkins did call the US presence an "occupation," he tested US goals primarily in the terms the political and military operation *declared* for itself. Filkins indeed made no mention of the enduring lies about Hussein's involvement in 9/11. But he nevertheless gauged the success or failure of the US mission primarily in terms of declared military strategy, the Iraqi embrace of democratic institutions, and the supposed "success" of the overall security scene. Thus, he remained within a domestic, US-national ideological framework of objectives that, as with Crane, put the label of imperialism largely in abeyance. If, alternatively, one thought that the invasion of Iraq was actually a neoconservative power play to create a geopolitical beachhead against China or against Iran; if one thought the war was really about oil; if one thought the invasion

was the last throes of a British and then American empire turned restless superpower, flexing its muscles simply because it could—well, these issues rarely penetrated Filkins's *Times* reporting or his memoir. The citation of Van Creveld is one of the few moments where a longer view is potentially in play. (And that reference would not appear in *The Forever War*.)

Indeed, the fact is that the universalist languages Filkins sometimes resorted to, in his original reports, not only undercut US mission goals but any of the alternative political interpretations above as well. Indeed, in Filkins's increasing accenting of the madness of suicide bombers, or his focus on the "forever" nature of combat, war threatened to become its eternal, anarchic self but never quite detached from a covert association with Iraq or Afghanistan themselves. The effect was no more apparent than in a quite literary piece filed late in his stay, entitled "Among the Ghosts," which would later be incorporated into the memoir's penultimate chapter, "The Departed." Filkins had visited two different graveyards of British soldiers, both in Baghdad, remaining from World War I (and its aftermath). But instead of evoking a historical parallel or imperial genealogy behind the Iraq conflict itself, the site instead became the occasion for a bathetic, Eliotic comparison to US Marine funerals for those now dying at the hands of insurgent snipers. Filkins recounted someone reading from the traditional Marine's prayer book at a memorial service, focusing on lines that say one must die not for the older world but for a newer, better one. But in such a violent context, the uplifting invocation rang hollow. The absurdity and meaninglessness of dying vitiated any real mobilization of the past other than to invoke the return of war's supposed "essence," of young men (British and American) dying far from home.[42]

Different variants of this impulse made their way, of course, into *The Forever War*. But though it roughly follows the course of his stay in Iraq, Filkins's book is more willfully discontinuous and impressionistic, shuffling time and place, making new analogies and literary associations, as "War Memories" had.[43] Naturally, Filkins is now able to remove the daily news hook, press conference, or puff piece flattering to Green Zone sources.[44] Mainly, however, *The Forever War* works not just by looking back but by doing what his reports had already begun to do: make the future chaos of Iraq continuous with its past. Perhaps the most striking element in this regard is the memoir's narrative threshold: a prologue called "Hells Bells" and the three chapters that follow. Here Filkins takes us into the Iraq War through his earlier assignment in Afghanistan, a country that he makes seem comparatively orderly, if only due to the draconian rule of the Taliban. But then Filkins uses his first chapters' titles, "Hells Bells" and "Jang," to bring the reader into the baptismal fire of war, well before we've even seen the political content of the struggle ahead. Moving strongly into a universalist register, not only does Filkins's use of this Afghani word ("Jang") call up an essence of war, he also makes clear that this essence is that of a revolving door of players, fighters who alternate between being passionate jihadists and cynical mercenaries, and who ensure that the war "could go on forever."[45]

Here again, therefore, one sees the mixed effects of such recoordination of his working discourses. By calling up a universalist essence of war (Jang), Filkins the memoirist puts into question the geopolitical differences created by his own juxtaposition of Afghanistan and Iraq in the first place. And if anything, the next step of Filkins's literary threshold takes this erasure of borders even further by grounding us in Ground Zero. Having returned temporarily to the home front, Filkins now recounts how he had forced his way into the falling Twin Towers area on 9/11, actually sleeping amid the devastation in order to file eyewitness reports. Along with the inch-by-inch story of "Hells Bells," this is in fact our first introduction to the protagonist-figure of Filkins himself, the war correspondent who runs into the fire rather than away from it, willing to look at a surviving airplane strut, a blasted telephone, or an intestine in the street (45). But there, among the ruins of what was once the home front, the Twin Towers disaster had only reminded Filkins of being back in the Third World—a thought he imagined running through the minds of New York street vendors as well (45). "Jang," war's capacity to turn the globe or one's politics on its axis, is now found to be even within the formerly domestic (US) sphere. Albeit seeming to move in the directions Judith Butler has called for, the end result of Filkins's comparison is quite different: suffering is merely everywhere.

Moreover, this move carries over into the memoir's estimation of Iraq's past and future. For many Iraqis, in Filkins's view, the past was also invariably pushing its way into their present (75), as the cause of democratic change morphed into their own private 9/11. And in an effect familiar to readers of Crane's fiction, the baptism of the "children"-soldiers of the US into war's horrors likewise comes to stand for the prospect of Iraq's own emergent disintegration.[46] If anything, *The Forever War* is even more explicit about the collapsing difference between the Iraqis and the Occupation forces than Filkins's reports had been. "From the beginning," Filkins now writes, "Iraq was a con game, with the Iraqis moving and rearranging the shells, and the Americans trying to guess which one hid the stone."[47] In turn, the figure of Ahmed Chalabi—the exile who had misled the US about WMDs—in many ways becomes the governing demon of the book, a protean villain making a mockery of Iraq's democratic aspirations.[48] Again, the globe spins, but now it spins *inside* the Iraqi: "When I looked into Chalabi's eyes and saw the doors and mirrors opening and closing," Filkins writes, "I knew that I was seeing not just the essence of the man but of the country. . . . *L'état c'est lui*. Chalabi was Iraq."[49]

And this spinning invades the journalist as well. To see the effect of this involution on Filkins himself, one need only compare one archival piece, "Suicide Bombers Aim at a Shiite Holy Day in Iraq" (February 20, 2005), to the corresponding section in his memoir called "Kill Yourself."[50] In 2005, Filkins had investigated individual bombings for their rational intention: assessing the nationality of the bombers, their timing, which cadre claimed responsibility, and so on. And in his report at the time, Filkins had included a domestic political benchmark for readers at home: a group of US senators who had arrived and, with horrific blindness to the continuing

violence, actually certified "progress" being made in Iraq. In contrast, however, *The Forever War*'s recasting of suicide bombings instead opens up Filkins's own fears: for instance, the fantasy of a traffic jam of willing suicide bombers; the oddity that severed heads often floated free after suicide attacks; the fact that such bombings often gave off white smoke.[51] Filkins also delves into the perverse, bleak humor of bombers targeting ribbon-cutting ceremonies that then had to be cordoned off ("which kind of defeated the purpose" [173]). Even when the memoirist recounts a trip he took to Syria, to speak with a jihadist sponsor, the coldhearted indoctrination revealed by Filkins's visit—"Jihad is our oxygen," says a voice he hears on an instructional bombing video (181)—makes political rationales look like madness. In other words, the memoirist now mocks the rationality that the reporter had formerly been so intent on. The fact that Filkins had continued to stick to his daily ritual of recreational running in Iraq now seems more like a worrisome compulsion. As if he was on the streets of Cambridge, the Filkins of the past runs and runs, occasionally while bombs explode around Baghdad. On one run, he finds a child or two who want to run alongside him but who later disappear. He discovers that he offends a checkpoint guard neither because he is a reporter nor because he is an American—but because his legs are uncovered by his running shorts.[52]

Similarly, the darker, ironic layers of the title "Kill Yourself" are easy to overlook if we read the memoir too literally. Of course we realize early on that Filkins's title is evidently thinking back not just on suicide bombers but on his own insensitivity to the risks around him. We had seen him earlier, on 9/11, running into a fire, and perhaps we admired it. Now our reaction is guided quite differently: "Sometimes," he writes, "it felt like the sounds of bombs and the call to prayer were the only sounds the country could produce, its own strange national anthem."[53] But he's not done: Filkins then tells a story in which, after trying to report on one such bombing, he and his fellow reporters had been attacked by a mob while riding in a car. Surrounded by this danger, Filkins found himself encouraging his driver to try to run down one of those Iraqis (184). The correspondent has become, in other words, someone willing to kill, himself: to mirror back the angry violent forces set against him. Later he will remember how planes returning to Iraq would dive in steeply, so as not to draw insurgent fire; then there was the insanity of driving into cities through the ruins of abandoned cars, fences, and sawed-off palm trees.[54] "Driving in" again, he has told us earlier, "was an upper and downer at once, like putting a bullet in the chamber"[55]—again, an ambiguous moment of recall, since such a bullet could be aimed outward or inward, to "kill yourself." In short, there was no longer sufficient space between the (suicidal) country he was covering and his own reactions to it. The memoirist thus arrives at one of the most important, vexed, and again involute judgments of the book: "*We'd become Iraq*, become the unhappy land, become so much a part of it that we worried about our place in the other world to which we were now returning. And from which we were now so estranged" (147–48, emphasis mine). Of course there is much more that this memoir covers. But with this moment, I think, the overall silencing mood of

its final chapters is fully in place. The fluid, double-edged transposition Filkins has effected is complete: Iraq first seeming to disappear, become inaccessible, too protean and fractured; and then, a countermovement, whereby "we" had become Iraq and thus estranged from the domestic homeland, carrying thoughts unsayable on its streets.

To be sure, these pivotal transpositions, particularly the idea that "we'd become Iraq," do have other complexities, and I'm not sure *The Forever War* sorts them out, fully, any more than "War Memories" does. That transposition is not, for example, fully consistent with Filkins's other declaration that Chalabi "was" Iraq (257). Likewise, it is worth asking whether Filkins's own zeroing in on the eternal jihad of the suicide bomber runs interpretive risks much like Crane's invocation of a Black-Legend "dark night of politics." In his clearer moments, after all, Filkins himself resists the idea of a national essence that anyone could ostensibly "become." And then there is that slippery "we" again. (Reporters? Soldiers? Policy makers? The nation?) Filkins's better self surely recognizes that Chalabi was the Proteus called into being not simply by Iraq as such but also by the occupation, and by the US neoconservatives who, after all, saw the mission as a political operation from the get-go.[56] Rather than simple silences, these are the gaps within the politics, alas even the fractured collective identity, of the American mission that the reporter has, willingly and not, carried both abroad and home.

III

Yet what else, finally, is it about the return to ground—now in the sense of the physical return, the actual meeting up with one's US audience—that can make a given set of war experiences so unsayable? Of course the silences I have attempted to describe above are not exclusively the returning reporter's own: during the war in Iraq, for example, coffins of US combat soldiers could not be photographed; most Democrats had long lined up behind a Republican war; all but a few newspapers would eventually abandon their news bureaus in Baghdad as the Iraq civil war deepened. Correspondents, meanwhile, spoke again of very real posttraumatic reactions, not merely the forever war of interpretive idioms I have emphasized.[57] If we are ever to arrive at a more nuanced, historically contingent, and particularistic sense of the deeper cultural layers of the home-front side of this equation, all these factors would have to be considered. Here, at most, I can conclude by underscoring the risks of repeatedly reverting to a Hemingwayesque rehearsal of war's "universal" violence or the home front's supposed "innocence"—when these things may not be universal or innocent at all. Rather than simply applying the monochromatic label of postwar "disillusionment," we therefore need to be more cognizant of the politics that may linger behind it.

Naturally, any given journalist's mood of self-silencing can be unpredictable: in some moments rigid and estranged, in other silently passionate or violently muted. But

as I have tried to show, it is precisely in these ways that apparent silence can also be seen, paradoxically, as quite expressive. Variously or at once, it can express personal awe at the everyday sacrifices of soldiers; anger at the resistance of indigenous citizens to the salvific claims of the US mission; frustration about public indifference at home, seeming or real. Or, sometimes, it is a reporter's core political vocabulary that has been disabled, a result of witnessing jihadists and mercenaries, occupiers and the countries they occupied, democrats and con men, trade places at will. In addition, both Crane and Filkins suggest that the military strategy of "limited" counterinsurgency (ironic misnomer that it is) may only leave war correspondents feeling more personally exposed, more prone to feeling they are reporting on an absurd yet violent enterprise: a bunch of bananas, a shrinking country, or a nation insurgents come to from a darker place, beyond liberal-democratic norms.

Indeed it is for these various reasons that we should not assume that witnessing imperial violence abroad necessarily brings an anti-imperial critique home, or even an antiwar one. On the contrary, the resolute way in which Crane and Filkins (certainly not always to our pleasure) remain dutifully "on mission" is precisely what mutes their sense that they can express such a continuing commitment at home. Filkins's determination to restrict his overt political critique to mission claims, for example, reflects his notion of journalistic responsibility, a duty both to speak within the boundaries of a mainstream domestic political debate and to honor the troops who have fought under its auspices. In this way, despite his own reservations throughout, Filkins ends up affirming the supposedly "democratic" pageantry of common soldiers even as—like Crane—he finds them child-like about the world they have been sent to fight in. Conversely, by staying focused on the putative goal of Iraqi political sovereignty, Filkins also expresses his continuing admiration for those Iraqis who had been murdered because of their investment in a liberal-democratic future. This commitment, as well as the implicit elitism of a news fraternity that saw itself hardened by war, can easily make it seem as if it is one's home-front audience that is not *in* "the World" it hopes or claims to be saving. However legitimately grounded that feeling might be, when it collaborates, consciously and otherwise, with other fears—say, those generated by racialized languages and perceptions of implacable, irrational enemies—these persisting beliefs run the risk of undercutting the most incisive work that war correspondents can do.

We also might do well to consider both the transnational and intranational particularity of what we say "home" is to begin with. By this I do not mean merely a given war correspondent's unexamined invocation of a supposedly "democratic" norm still relevant at the (US) home front. Rather, one might notice, for example, that when Crane referred to leaving jingoism to the "streets at home," he was not referring to the ground to which he would actually return. Crane had traveled back *not* to his national homeland but to England, taking up an exile that Theodore Roosevelt, in his earlier incarnation as Police Commissioner of New York, had been instrumental in forcing on him.[58] Crane actually published his abridged version of "War Memories"

first in a short-lived British literary miscellany and then again for England in book form (thus its British spellings); his famous interview pronouncing Cuba's future was likewise for the London *Outlook*. At that moment, Great Britain—in effect, Crane's new home audience—had shifted its position during the war, from expressed neutrality to US support, given the US promise of independence for Cuba, a promise that Crane had miscast as an offer of annexation. In truth, what was ahead for Cuba was not warm benevolence from the country to the North but economic dependence and subordination, conditions worked out at Cuban expense both with and against the British capitalists and industrialists who had long invested in the island nation.[59] Given the initial British readership for Crane's memoir, one might reexamine yet another inflection to that seemingly domestic "we" and recognize that it was a term easily read, at least in part, in transatlantic terms. Perhaps the first-person plural tacitly reaffirmed Anglo-American hegemony as one empire handed over the hemispheric reins to another—much as, of course, Great Britain would also do with Iraq.[60]

Filkins's literary strategy, as I've said, is to stay focused on the ongoing occupation and its reversals. But at another layer, he also ends up dividing the national home front in ways we might not expect. Cambridge's highly stylized silences, it turns out, do not represent the American "we," entirely, either; instead Filkins posits that city against a mid-American landscape in Georgia—first, against a place named Pearland, where he attends the funeral of a soldier, and later, when he goes to Colorado Springs to talk with Nathan Sassaman again. If the global map has been spun on its axis, now it is the American heartland that is—well, *dis*heartened, emptied out as a place where one might go to ground. Earlier, Filkins's identity bound itself to the "we" of the American occupying force; then, as Iraq itself disappeared under his feet, we see him restricting that first-person plural to the fraternity of newsmen and to soldiers or dead Iraqis, all baptized by war. And yet now, when he returns to Georgia or Colorado, he is actually coming back to a homeland that, though traditionally the American heartland, is virtually "dead" to the nation at large. The region is as internally exiled from a place like Cambridge as Filkins himself is. If anything, this revised map speaks to Filkins's sense that national unity itself may also be among "the departed."[61]

As Crane also knew, this very lack of "correspondence" to the home front—resulting in self-silencing and coded expression, acts of return that result in feelings of internal exile—doesn't end when the war does. One can't help but notice, for instance, the brief aside in *The Forever War* when Filkins refers to how, while in Iraq, he'd been looking over his shoulder the whole time at the "angry bloggers" back home.[62] In retrospect, that is, even a war zone can occasionally feel like a more reasonable space to be. And on top of that, it is a sad but perhaps inevitable fact that laying the groundwork for the war correspondent's pending departure back *to* the front sometimes means discounting one's overt political positions even after they are in print. (Filkins, of course, has continued to report on Afghanistan, Turkey, and the Middle East generally.) Thus, perhaps, a final literary association of Filkins's "The Departed." To cycle back into "Jang," or perhaps back into wars whose political

players have changed positions once again—well, to do that, in part, means not only reimmersing oneself in war's chaos but recredentializing oneself by defusing the vulnerability that had come with defending one's opinions at home. And thus a returning American correspondent, these days, is often compelled to minimize the political content of his or her reports, to play duck and cover, and perhaps to rejoin his or her news fraternity. That fraternity, after all, often holds memories of the departed more than the US-national political discourse does. Under such conditions, it is not surprising that a reporter wants to reassure us, after pages and pages, that he or she has really told us nothing at all.

Notes

[1] Michael Robertson, "Stephen Crane's *Other* War Masterpiece," in "Stephen Crane in War and Peace," ed. James H. Meredith, special issue, *War, Literature and the Arts* 11 (1999): 160–71.

[2] Stephen Crane, "War Memories," in *Wounds in the Rain* (London: Methuen, 1900), 201.

[3] Dexter Filkins, *The Forever War* (New York: Vintage, 2009), 339. Laika's name, it should be added, means "barker" in Russian, and in all likelihood she died during her space voyage.

[4] The well-known lines are Frederic Henry's: "Perhaps wars weren't won any more. Maybe they went on forever." Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), 118.

[5] The literary-critical use of trauma itself, of course, is quite varied; see the summary in Trevor Dodman, "'Going All to Pieces': *A Farewell to Arms* as Trauma Narrative," *Twentieth Century Literature* 52, no. 3 (2006): 249–74, especially 267n4. See also Lorna Martens, *The Promise of Memory: Childhood Recollection and Its Objects in Literary Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); and John Kotre, *White Gloves: How We Create Ourselves Through Memory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

[6] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), 30.

[7] See, for instance, the thoughts on a more "dynamic" and contingent notion of the relation between aesthetics and cultural studies expressed in the introduction to Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby, eds., *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); and Christopher Castiglia and Russ Castronovo, "A 'Hive of Subtlety': Aesthetics and the End(s) of Cultural Studies," *American Literature* 76, no. 3 (2004): 423–35.

⁸ I have discussed Victorian conventions of war reporting and memoir in Christopher P. Wilson, "Plotting the Border: John Reed, Pancho Villa, and *Insurgent Mexico*," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 340–61. See also my discussion of Ernie Pyle and David Finkel in Christopher P. Wilson, "Ridiculous Impingements of Normalcy: Home Fronts, Good Soldiers, War Correspondents," *War, Literature and the Arts* 24 (2012): 1–25.

⁹ See especially Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation* (Chichester, UK: Wiley, 1979); Robert B. Westbrook, *Why We Fought: Forging American Obligations in World War II* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2004); Elizabeth D. Samet, *Willing Obedience: Citizens, Soldiers, and the Progress of Consent in America, 1776–1898* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). For my understanding of war memoir, I have relied throughout on Nirmal H. Trivedi, "Witnessing Empire: U.S. Imperialism and the Emergence of the War Correspondent" (PhD diss., Boston College, 2009), http://hdl.handle.net/2345/665.

¹⁰ For all citations of Crane's war dispatches in text, I am using the authoritative Stephen Crane, *Reports of War*, vol. IX of *The Works of Stephen Crane*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), and I follow its form for headlines in all caps. The interview with the London *Outlook*, "Mr. Stephen Crane on the New Empire," however, I take from *The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane*, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann (New York: NYU Press, 1964), 241–44.

¹¹ Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 128–33.

¹² Crane, "Mr. Stephen Crane on the New Empire," 241, 242.

¹³ For example, in "STEPHEN CRANE'S VIVID STORY OF THE BATTLE OF SAN JUAN," Crane observed indignantly, "In the great charge up the hills of San Juan the American soldiers who, for their part, sprinkled a thousand bodies in the grass, were not able to see a single Cuban assisting in what might easily turn out to be the decisive battle for Cuban freedom" (Crane, *Reports of War*, 163). Cubans, Crane said, "will stay at the rear and collect haversacks, blankets, coats and shelter tends dropped by our troops" (164).

¹⁴ Crane had also done the advance work here, saying that "the better people of Matanzas [from where Crane reported] also wish annexation" (ibid., 185). Hearst's *Journal* ran this piece under the headline "STEPHEN CRANE SEES FREE CUBA" (184–85, 501).

¹⁵ Ibid., 243. Compare these assessments with Stephen Crane, "HAYTI AND SAN DOMINGO FAVOR THE UNITED STATES" (ibid., 115–18). Crane wrote, for instance, of the former's army, "The negro soldiers think chiefly of bread, bananas and rum, but they have somehow had it gimleted into their skulls that the Americans menace their country" (116–17).

¹⁶ Stephen Crane, "HUNGER HAS MADE CUBANS FATALISTS" (ibid., 147, see also 146–52).

After his warning about how US troops were greeted, Crane says of the Cuban soldier: "he exists with the impenetrable indifference or ignorance of the greater part of the people in an ordinary slum. / Everybody knows that the kind of sympathetic charity which loves to be thanked is often grievously disappointed and wounded in tenement districts where people often accept gifts as if their own property had turned up after a short absence" (147). See also John Patrick Leary, "America's Other Half: Slum Journalism and the War of 1898," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 1 (2009): 1–33, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0v654385.

[17] Crane, "War Memories," 246.

[18] For Gibbs, see Crane, *Reports of War*, 130.

[19] See Dodman, "'Going All to Pieces.'"

[20] Crane, "War Memories," 207–8.

[21] Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 129.

[22] Crane, *Reports of War*, 202.

[23] See Robertson, "Stephen Crane's *Other* War Masterpiece," 163–65; and Donald Vanouse, "Stephen Crane in Cuba: From Jingoism to Criticism," *Stephen Crane Studies* 11, no. 2 (2002): 23–32.

[24] Crane, "War Memories," 227.

[25] The template example of this is Stephen Crane, "REGULARS GET NO GLORY" (Crane, *Reports of War*, 170–73). Cf. 119, 137, 139, 140.

[26] Originally, in fact, Gibbs's death was actually caught up in a dispute about whether the Spanish were mutilating bodies, an accusation that—though Crane ultimately denied it—the *World* did not correct (ibid., 485–86).

[27] On the Black Legend, see especially María DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[28] This count comes from the indexing of Filkins's articles in ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851–2008), accessed in March 2014.

[29] I refer to Gaye Tuchman's classic description in "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 4 (1972): 660–79. For a helpful overview of more recent scholarship on this often-misused and misunderstood concept, see Mark W. Brewin, "A Short History of the History of Objectivity," *Communication Review* 16, no. 4 (2013): 211–29.

[30] In its pivotal chapter "Pearland," Filkins's memoir in fact includes a horrific witnessing of a soldier's death, much as "War Memories" had—a death for which Filkins and his

photographer partly felt responsible (Filkins, *Forever War*, 211). This is the soldier, William Miller, whose funeral Filkins attends in his final chapter (314ff.).

31 In the archive, for instance, when Filkins needed to interject critique, he might refer to how a US official was "regarded by many Iraqis" or cite a rival "perception among his critics." Meanwhile, Filkins's titles typically worked to create paradox or reflect balance: for instance, Dexter Filkins and Ian Fisher, "U.S. Is Now in Battle for Peace After Winning the War in Iraq," *New York Times*, May 3, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/03/world/aftereffects-nation-s-future-us-now-battle-for-peace-after-winning-war-iraq.html; or Dexter Filkins, "Chaos and Calm Are 2 Realities for U.S. in Iraq," *New York Times*, August 24, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/24/world/after-the-war-the-reconstruction-chaos-and-calm-are-2-realities-for-us-in-iraq.html. By the summary piece "28 Months: A Nation in Blood and Ink," *New York Times*, August 14, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/14/weekinreview/14filkins.html, Filkins speaks of two parallels worlds in Iraq. See also Dexter Filkins, "In Shadows, Armed Groups Propel Iraq Toward Chaos," *New York Times*, May 24, 2006, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980DEFDF113EF937A15756C0A9609C8B63.

32 Dexter Filkins, "Suddenly, It's 'America Who?'" *New York Times*, February 6, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/06/weekinreview/06filk.html.

33 Dexter Filkins, "The Fall of the Warrior King," *New York Times Magazine*, October 23, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/magazine/23sassaman.html. In part, this reflected the timing of his tenure, prior to the surge; see his later estimate of David Petraeus, Dexter Filkins, "General Principles," *New Yorker*, December 17, 2012, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/12/17/general-principles.

34 For a sample of these views, see Martin L. van Creveld, "Brutality or Restraint: Learning from Two Very Different Counterinsurgency Successes," *IP Journal of the German Council on Foreign Relations* (Spring 2006): 78–89, https://ip-journal.dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/21218.

35 See Filkins, "Suddenly, It's 'America Who?'"; Dexter Filkins and David S. Cloud, "Defying U.S. Efforts, Guerillas in Iraq Refocus and Strengthen," *New York Times*, July 24, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/24/international/middleeast/24insurgents.html; and Filkins, "Fall of the Warrior King." See also Dexter Filkins, "'Ahmad's War, Ahmad's Peace': One of the Good Guys," *New York Times*, October 30, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/30/books/review/30filkins.html.

36 Dexter Filkins, "A Correspondent in Iraq: Scenes of Hope and Dread," *New York Times*, June 27, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/27/weekinreview/27filk.html.

37 Dexter Filkins, "Get Me Rewrite. Now. Bullets Are Flying," *New York Times*, October 10, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/10/weekinreview/10filk.html.

[38] Dexter Filkins, "Will It Be Different Now?" *New York Times*, December 18, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/18/weekinreview/18filkins.html.

[39] Dexter Filkins, "Muted Joy as Troops Capture an Iraqi Town," *New York Times*, March 22, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/22/world/a-nation-at-war-the-scene-muted-joy-as-troops-capture-an-iraqi-town.html.

[40] Dexter Filkins, "Iraqis Confront Memories in a Place of Torture," *New York Times*, April 21, 20013, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/21/world/aftereffects-brutality-iraqis-confront-memories-in-a-place-of-torture.html.

[41] Dexter Filkins, "In a Functioning Hospital, Scenes of Chaos and Horror," *New York Times*, April 27, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/27/world/aftereffects-medical-care-in-a-functioning-hospital-scenes-of-chaos-and-horror.html.

[42] Dexter Filkins, "Among the Ghosts: Heroes and Grand Plans," *New York Times*, July 9, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/09/weekinreview/09filkins.html.

[43] For further reading into personal matters Filkins did not discuss, see Seth Mnookin, "*The New York Times*'s Lonely War," *Vanity Fair*, December 2008, http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/12/nytimes200812.

[44] See, for instance, Dexter Filkins, "U.S. Envoy Promotes Role of Iraqi Women," *New York Times*, February 17, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/17/international/middleeast/17BREM.html; or Dexter Filkins, "Bremer Pushes Iraq on Difficult Path to Self-Rule," *New York Times*, March 21, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/21/world/struggle-for-iraq-reconstruction-bremer-pushes-iraq-difficult-path-self-rule.html, which refers to Bremer's "widely admired work ethic" having resulted in "impressive achievements."

[45] Filkins, *Forever War*, 51.

[46] Ibid., 182. Cf. Dexter Filkins, "When the Price for Speaking Out Is Death," *New York Times*, January 16, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/16/international/middleeast/16candidate.html, with Filkins, *Forever War*, 80–81; or Dexter Filkins, "In Taking Falluja Mosque, Victory by the Inch," *New York Times*, November 10, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/10/international/middleeast/10mosque.html, with "Hells Bells" in Filkins, *Forever War*, 3–9. See also Dexter Filkins, "For a Bleak Horizon, Rose-Tinted Glasses," *New York Times*, September 7, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/07/weekinreview/the-world-a-bedeviled-occupation-for-a-bleak-horizon-rose-tinted-glasses.html.

[47] Filkins, *Forever War*, 121.

[48] Ibid., 254–66. Cf. Dexter Filkins, "Chalabi, Nimble Exile, Searches for Role in Iraq," *New York Times*, March 26, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/26/world/the-struggle-for-iraq-leadership-chalabi-nimble-exile-searches-for-role-in-iraq.html.

[49] Filkins, *Forever War*, 257.

[50] Dexter Filkins, "Suicide Bombers Aim at a Shiite Holy Day in Iraq," *New York Times*, February 20, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/20/international/middleeast/20iraq.html; and Filkins, *Forever War*, 168–84.

[51] Filkins, *Forever War*, 176.

[52] Ibid., 215–17. Cf. Dexter Filkins, "A Jog in Baghdad Offers Lessons About Life in a War Zone," *New York Times*, September 4, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/04/international/worldspecial/04BAGH.html.

[53] Filkins, *Forever War*, 174.

[54] Ibid., 146–48. The trees were truncated so by the Occupation, as Michael Herr once wrote, in order to deny "the enemy valuable resources and cover." Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 4.

[55] Filkins, *Forever War*, 147.

[56] Cf., for example, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Knopf, 2006); and Frank Rich, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold: The Decline and Fall of Truth from 9/11 to Katrina* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

[57] See Mike Hoyt and John Palattella, *Reporting Iraq: An Oral History of the War by the Journalists Who Covered It* (Hoboken, NJ: Melville House, 2007), especially the testimony of Anne Garrels, 110–11.

[58] See Christopher P. Wilson, "Stephen Crane and the Police," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1996): 273–315.

[59] For an overview of this history, see B. J. C. McKercher and S. Enjamio, "'Brighter Futures, Better Times': Britain, the Empire, and Anglo-American Economic Competition in Cuba, 1898–1920," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 18, no. 4 (2007): 663–87.

[60] Conversely, one might also notice that Crane's hypothetical regular soldier, the heroic figure that he counterpointed to a visibly Dutch-ancestry aristocrat of war that newspapers preferred to celebrate—well, that regular was actually Irish American. See Crane, *Reports of War*, 172.

[61] Of course, as Rachel Maddow and others have pointed out, continued privatization of the war's machinery, paralleled by less political investment in political consensus, makes towns like Pearland less visible to the nation as a whole. See Rachel Maddow, *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power* (New York: Crown, 2012).

[62] Filkins, *Forever War*, 145. Cf. Filkins and Cloud, "Defying U.S. Efforts."

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