MOHAMEDOU OULD SLAHI'S *GUANTÁNAMO DIARY* THROUGH THE LENS OF IN_VISIBILITY

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_Abstract

This article reads Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary* as an intermedial occasion to stage questions on the axis of in_visibility. The concept of in_visibility constructs the methodological and hermeneutical approach of the paper. The book is analyzed as an *intermedial* example through the lens of the *archive structure* where two distinct medial voices emerge—one *textual*, that of the Guantánamo detainee, and one visual, that of the black bars of redacted text that regularly interrupt and brutally abuse Slahi's narrative. What makes the intermedial work extraordinary is the powerful encounter between visibility and invisibility, concepts that exchange their semiotic significance and are reevaluated. By analyzing the intermedial narratological techniques of *Guantánamo Diary*, this article describes the complexity of the in_visibility concept and destabilizes its normative connotations.

1_Introducing *Guantánamo Diary* through the Lens of In_Visibility

> Just imagine yourself going to bed, putting all your worries aside, enjoying your favorite magazine to put you to sleep, you've put the kids to bed, your family is already sleeping. You are not afraid of being dragged out of your bed in the middle of the night to a place you've never seen before, deprived of sleep, and terrorized all the time. Now imagine that you have no say at all in your life—when you sleep, when you wake up, when you eat, and sometimes when you go to the toilet. Imagine that your whole world comprises, at most, a 6 by 8 foot cell. If you imagine all of that, you still won't understand what prison really means unless you experience it yourself.[1]

Mohamedou Ould Slahi, born in Mauritania in 1970, was detained in the Guantánamo Bay detention camp from 2002 until his release on October 17, 2016. He was suspected of involvement in the so-called Millennium Plot[2] and was held without charges, since there was no evidence against him. The opening passage quoted above is an excerpt from Slahi's diary written in 2005 that was first published in 2015 with black-box redactions[3] made by the US Government.[4] In *Guantánamo Diary*, Slahi describes his daily life as a detainee and his physical and psychological abuse. He was sexually molested by interrogators, he was severely beaten and held in absolute isolation. A second edition, published in 2017 after Slahi was released from prison, includes a 'restored' text that had been previously censored.[5] This was not an exact

restoration: Slahi did not have access to the original text, so he had to fill in the gaps from memory or by reinventing the story.[6] Additionally, the author and his editor decided not to entirely remove the redaction boxes but to keep them in a transparent form, so the alleged restored text is visible and at the same time the reader knows that it was previously invisible.

This article examines narrative dynamics of invisibility and visibility through the genesis of *Guantánamo Diary* (*GD*), thereby decentering the theoretical concept of in_visibility from its normative connotations. The inclusion of the underscore in the word in_visibility is used to emphasize the ambiguity of the term and the necessity to deconstruct the rigid borders between what is considered visible and invisible. The vacuum that invisibility shapes represents something that appears to remain hidden or covered up. What actually happens though is that this vacuum occupies a particular place in a system of communication that emphatically points to something that is absent. Thus, on the one hand, invisibility makes itself visible by making the absence of something apparent but, on the other hand, only has the capacity to do so under certain circumstances and from a particular point of view. As a result, there is always something invisible in visibility itself because what makes something visible also, at the same time, keeps something else invisible. The continual interchange between visibility and invisibility emphasizes their fluidity.[7]

Making a comparison between the two editions of *GD*, this paper draws a parallel between the body of the text and the body of the detainee through the lens of in_visibility. While the body of Slahi was invisible both for the public and for his family behind bars in Guantánamo Bay and part of the body of the text remained invisible for a broad public behind the redactions, I argue that the visibility of a pure[8] violence emerged with the publication of the first edition of the book. After Slahi's release from prison, both the body of the detainee and that of the text gained back their visibility; however, a part of them is still invisible: the trauma cannot be healed as long as Guantánamo remains open and the original hidden words are still secret. I regard the placement of the blacked-out sections in the second edition not just as a reference but argue that they act as a symbol that illustrates the irreparable damage that the violation of human rights can provoke.

The detainee's body is related to the body of the text through a biopolitical analysis: The life of the detainee and consequently the editorial evolvement of his text

(transition from the first to the second edition) are determined by regimes that have authority over power and knowledge. This condition can be related to what Michel Foucault defines as sovereignty's power, namely the right "to make live and to let die."[9] The concept of in_visibility will be used both as a methodological tool and as a hermeneutical key to unlock the significance of the different editions of the book. Jacques Rancière's[10] theory of representation and anti-representation will help to understand the complexity of *GD* by reading it as a form of anti-representation, a reading that is directly related to the question of in_visibility. Rancière's theory will be used for analysis of the two editions of Slahi's book.

During its release the book was considered as a publishing event, as it was the first book that has been published by a Guantánamo detainee, while he was still in detention.[11] Accordingly, academic research has also dealt with this issue from various perspectives. There have been attempts to study it as a postcolonial slave narrative,[12] "as a form of knowledge and knowledge production in and about the war on terror"[13] or in the context of radical pedagogies by studying it in the Human Rights and Literature Classroom[14]. Since research so far has not analyzed the shifts between the two editions of *GD*, my contribution is to study the transition from the first to the second edition and to interpret the development of the book through archival structures using a comparative intermedial methodology. Adopting this methodology, I analyze how the artifact is transformed from a classified secret document to the two published editions and how this process is intertwined with the concept of in_visibility.

The article is structured in the following way. Section 2 focuses on the historical context of the book's author, which is directly related to the notion of in_visibility: As a detainee in Guantánamo Bay, Slahi becomes in_visible in a legal (Nancy Hollander[15]) and ontological (Judith Butler[16]) limbo. His legal and political rights are violated, since he is exposed to an extrajuridical violence and held without trial. His legal in_visibility becomes additionally ontological because he is dehumanized through a brutal interrogation plan. Despite his liminal situation, he manages through his powerful narrative to position himself as a subject, who is self-aware of his precarious condition. Section 3 continues with an analysis of the historical and juridical framework of Slahi's manuscript by describing how the manuscript evolved from the first to the second edition, a process that rendered the original text in_visible by exposing a part of it while keeping another part secret.

In section 4, I analyze *GD* by means of archival structure. Archive, which Jacques Derrida[17] shows to be situated and guarded in a privileged space, is not typically related to what is considered as literature. However, I will show that *GD* intersects with the Derridean concept of archive to demonstrate how through his text Slahi challenges hegemonic archival structures. To achieve this, I will explore the evolution of *GD* from Slahi's handwritten manuscript to the declassified document with black redactions (first edition) and at the end the "fully restored text" (second edition). Even if in this process the archive goes through a transformation, the artifact is never fully restored, since in the second edition Slahi has to fill in the redactions by memory. I argue that although the archive remains, its hegemonic status is considerably destabilized. This attempt might help to better understand the institutionalization and preservation of the archive, when it intersects with art and fictionality.

The next two sections, 5 and 6, focus on the first and the second edition of *GD* respectively. By using a comparative intermedial methodology (Irina O. Rajewsky[18]) the book is defined as an intermedial example, since it combines text with visual signs (black redactions). Thus, it can be read as an artifact, by which the interchange between text and image implies the interplay between visibility and invisibility. In the first edition, the narrative corresponds to the visible violence of the redactions. In order to analyze the visual elements of the book, this article brings the notion of iconic negation (Emmanuel Alloa[19]) while, at the same time, reading the redactions as gaps (Wolfgang Iser[20]) that bring into question the borders between visibility and invisibility. I will argue that the reader should confront these gaps not only as a call to respond, that is, as a responsibility to fill them in; they must also reflect upon their mere existence and power to show something by hiding something else (Dieter Mersch[21]). The second edition is explored as a form of 'restoration' (Slahi[22]) of the text, which leads to the following conclusion: the black veil of censorship has not been lifted at the end but emerges as an alternative form of making something in_visible. Following this direction, I will reflect upon the notion of trauma and the perceptual and epistemological structure of 'invisible visibility' (Michel Foucault[23]).

2_Becoming In_Visible in a *Legal* and *Ontological Limbo*

In January of 2000, after twelve years of studying and working in Germany and Canada, Slahi decided to return to his country in Mauritania. He was detained twice

en route, first by the Senegalese Police and then by Mauritanian authorities, where he was interrogated by FBI agents regarding his involvement with the so-called Millennium Plot.[24] After the conclusion that there was no basis to believe in his involvement, he was released. However, in September of 2001, he was arrested again by Mauritanian authorities. His detainment lasted two weeks, until the interrogation ended up with the same decision: publicly affirming his innocence.[25]

On the 20th of November of the same year, the Mauritanian police arrived at Slahi's home and asked him to come with them for further questioning, a request that he voluntarily accepted. What followed was an odyssey that lasted fifteen years. The Mauritanian was transferred by the US government first to Jordan, then Afghanistan and in 2002 to Guantánamo Bay, where he was imprisoned for fourteen years without trial.[26] The only 'charge' leveled against him was that he had joined al-Qaeda in the 1990s. He had gone to Afghanistan as a student to join the fight against the communist government but he broke all ties with al-Qaeda after the Communist government collapsed.[27] Slahi's attorney Nancy Hollander describes his condition of being held without charge or trial as a 'legal limbo.'[28] In 2010, the US District Court Judge James Robertson granted Slahi's handwritten 2005 *habeas corpus* petition and ordered the Obama Administration to release him, a decision that the government appealed. Slahi was finally released and returned to his homeland on October 17, 2016.[29]

Slahi's is not an exceptional case of human rights violation but rather the result of the geopolitical distribution of *legitimate* and *illegitimate violence* within the context of what has come to be called the *War on Terror*.[30] The rhetoric of the *War on Terror* is based upon the famous declaration of President George W. Bush after the terrorist attack of 9/11: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."[31] This bipolarized ideology was established legally via the *USA PATRIOT Act* on October, 26, 2001. According to it, the attorney general could *take into custody* any alien suspected of activities that endanger the *national security of the United States*. Under this Act, the detainees can be subjected to 'special interrogation techniques,' including torture, justified in the name of state security.[32]

However, this new kind of war does not acknowledge the detainees of Guantánamo as being in a prisoner-of-war status.[33] As a result, the detainees are stripped of the protection of international law and specifically that of the *Third Geneva Conven-*

tion and the *Convention against Torture*.[34] Their human rights and civil liberties have been taken away, since the detainees have been officially represented as pure vessels of violence that should be handled outside of legal protocols and the juridical principles of civilized conflict. This precarious condition is also connected with the liminal national space that Guantánamo occupies ("in, yet not within, Cuba, but at the same time a 'bit of American territory,' as the 1953 history of the naval base proclaimed"[35]). Its peculiar history and geographic location facilitate the current violent penal regime.

Being detained under constant surveillance and without juridical protection, the prisoners of Guantánamo live in a condition of permanent in_visibility. Guantánamo's ambiguous legal position is defined both inside and outside of different legal systems, a fact that increases the fluidity between visibility and invisibility. As a result, the detainees are legally in_visible. As Judith Butler comments, the indefinite detention of the Guantanamo detainees "provides the condition for the indefinite exercise of extra-legal state power," which further leads to their indefinite in_visibility. They are *invisible* due to their lawless status but, at the same time, they are *visible* since "the Court deemed that the prisoners should have access to the federal courts and the right to bring a petition for habeas corpus to challenge whether they are being unlawfully denied their freedom."[36] Though the Guantánamo's administration placed the prisoners outside the law, the 2004 Supreme Court decision in *Rasul v. Bush* brought Guantánamo inside the rule of law and opened the doors of the federal court.[37] According to this decision the prisoners should have access to the courts in order to be able to challenge the legality of their detention. That can be interpreted both as an attempt to bring Guantánamo within the domestic law and also as a concern to limit the U.S. military rule abroad.

One can see how the concept of terrorism is strategically used to justify illegitimate violence as an acceptable response to what the sovereign characterized as uncivilized violence. Since the prisoners of Guantánamo represent a violence that is outside the scope of law, they can be held without the need for any legal justification (legal in_visibility). This rhetoric leads to the brutal and inhumane treatment of the detainees. U.S. military interrogators subjected Slahi to a 'special interrogation plan' that was personally approved by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.[38] Slahi's torture included extreme isolation, sexual and psychological humiliation, death threats and a mock kidnapping.

In an article about the Guantánamo prisoners, Butler expands the perspective on their legal in_visibility to an *ontological* one, since the tactic of treating the detainees outside the scope of law is also an attempt to deprive them from their ontological status as human beings:

> It is not just that some humans are treated as humans, and others are dehumanized; it is rather that dehumanization—treating some humans as outside the scope of the law—becomes one tactic by which a putatively distinct "Western" civilization seeks to define itself over and against a population understood as, by definition, illegitimate.[39]

In the case of Slahi, however, the dehumanization process is not successful, since he is able, through the work of his writing, to assert his presence in Guantánamo and pave the way for other detainees to tell their stories.

3_The Odyssey of an In_Visible Manuscript

> I thought I was writing for my lawyers, so they could know my story and defend me properly. But I soon saw I was writing for different readers, ones who could never set foot on Guantánamo. […] Writing became my way of fighting the U.S. government's narrative. I considered humanity my jury; I wanted to bring my case directly to the people and take my chances. […] But just writing those pages empowered me. […] It's strange to me today to realize that in those days I may actually have been more interested in getting my story out than in getting out of GTMO.[40]

Slahi's narrative is strategically used to reclaim his ontological and legal status. This is effective in every step of the evolution of the book, concerning both its writing and publication. Therefore it is useful to do a short historical review of this process.

Over the course of 2005, Slahi handwrote the 466 pages of his manuscript that was given to his attorneys, Nancy Hollander and Sylvia Royce, only after being redacted by the censorship regime of the U.S. government. The original text brings a realistic and powerful report to the genre of historical torture narratives while, at the same time, presenting certain narratological gestures derived from political literature. *GD* is an active resistance against human rights violation that attempt to mute and destroy the subjectivity of the tortured person. Further, the manuscript contains a legal orientation: Slahi presents his narrative as an elaboration of his habeas corpus petition[41] when he continuously poses to his interrogators the question "Why am I here?" *GD*

functions not only as a document of torture or literary work but also as a powerful legal instrument, as it is strategically used as the detainee's testimony.

Under the strict protocols of Guantánamo's censorship regime, the manuscript was considered classified and handed over to the U.S. government for review.[42] It was stamped as "SECRET" because of the claim that its release could endanger national security by exposing classified information and as "NOFORN," meaning that it could not be shared with other foreign nations or intelligence services.[43] Thus the manuscript remains in a condition of in_visibility since it can be seen only by a 'privileged team.' According to the introduction of Slahi's editor Larry Siems "[i]t was deposited in a secure facility near Washington, DC, accessible only to those with a full security clearance and an official 'need to know'."[44] After many years of litigation and negotiation, the manuscript was finally cleared for public release and was handed to the human rights activist, journalist and editor Larry Siems in the summer of 2012.[45] *GD*, promoted via websites and petitions by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), was finally published by Siems in January of 2015 and contained more than 2,600 black-box redactions. The fact that it was published, even with censorship applied, can be regarded as a step for the author towards regaining his legal and ontological visibility. To demonstrate how redactions work in the first edition, see the quoted example below:

> I am happy and ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ is very pleased," said ▓▓▓▓▓ when ▓▓▓▓▓ showed up the day after the ▓▓▓▓▓, accompanied by a ▓▓▓▓ white ▓▓▓▓▓ in ▓▓▓▓ late twenties.*
>
> "What does 'pleased' mean?" I asked ▓▓▓▓▓. I had an idea, but I wanted to be clear since the word was a quotation from ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓.
>
> "Pleased means very happy."
>
> "Ah, OK. Didn't I tell you that I wasn't lying?"
>
> "Yes, I'm glad," said ▓▓▓▓▓ smiling. ▓▓▓▓▓ happiness was obvious and honest. I was hardly happier about my success than ▓▓▓▓▓.[46]

Siems' decision to include the redactions—keeping them as black blotches to show their visual effect on the body of the text—enhances the plausibility of the author's report. He additionally supports the testimonial character of the witness by trying to retrieve a chronological narrative. In his introduction to the first edition the editor clarifies how he tried to rework parts of the chronology by integrating flashbacks back into the main narrative.[47] Siems' notes supplement the author's narration and

strengthen his testimony by contextualizing it and providing juridical, historical and political details. The editor's contribution and intervention add a further layer to the intermedial archive of *GD* and supports the argument of Joseph Slaughter that the redacted papers themselves are palimpsests because they include narratives written, rewritten and unwritten on top of each other.[48]

After Slahi's release from Guantánamo on October 16, 2016, he decided, along with his editor, to 'free the text from the restraints of censorship' and 'restore' the book. Since it was impossible for him to replicate the exact text, he recreated the censored blocks, as faithfully as possible, 'reconstructing' the narrative.[49] The fully restored text was finally published by Larry Siems in 2017. The blacked-out spaces of censorship remain visible in the second edition, but their transparency makes the hidden words readable. The following example illustrates how the redactions function in the second edition of *GD*:

> "Have you taken a polygraph test before?
>
> "Yes. I have!"
>
> "So you understand the process and how the test works?"
>
> "I guess I do."
>
> But John started a long explanation anyway. I noticed an ant walking up the wall, and then many more leading and following her. I learned to follow ants in the Mauritanian secret prison, watching them until they left the cell and me behind. I watched this one climb, going about her daily business and not realizing the drama that was unfolding before her very eyes. I drowned myself in her world, and I missed a lot of what the tester was saying. I was so nervous, but I took this as the first good omen of the morning. I was wondering if I should just concentrate on the ant and answer the questions without thinking.[50]

4_*Guantánamo Diary* and Its Archival Structure

GD is a multifaceted work that is susceptible to different ways of classification and analysis. In the first place, we could read it as a *diary*, which is also part of the title of the book. However, Slahi breaks with the canonical form of a diary: although the text is self-referential, it is addressed to *Dear Reader* rather than *Dear Diary*. It can be defined as a *memoir of a prisoner* that narrates the transnational geography of his capture and as a *testimony* of collective suffering before the court of human justice. For Siems[51], *GD* represents an *epic* of our times—its structure and size as well as the scope of the story and the repetition of formulaic phrases are all characteristics of the epic form.

My approach is to read *GD* by means of an archival structure with several evolutionary stages and to examine the signification of its individual stages for the development of the book. This article explores how art intersects with the archival structure and gives rise to further questions such as how literary works can themselves take the form of an archive, when a literary object is moving from a private and privileged space into public. This intersection between fiction and history gives space for "playing with the dynamics between voicing and silencing, past and becoming, singular and collective, oblivion and focalization, and much more."[52] Before examining Slahi's case through Derrida's concept of archive[53] it is useful to revisit Derrida's lecture entitled "Mal d' archive: Une impression freudienne."[54]

Derrida suggests that there are two principles embedded in the Greek etymological root of the word archive (*arkhe*): *commencement*, in the physical, historical or ontological sense; and *commandment*, in the nomological sense.[55] In the former case, archive relates to *localization*, site-specificity with historical coordinates; it is the beginning of something situated in space that appears with certain features. The archive was originally situated in a privileged space, a household, and is thus connected with *guardiance*, since it stores or preserves something. In the latter signification, the *arkhe* refers to the superior magistrates (*archons*), who declare the law by guarding the archived documents. Derrida combines the topological with the nomological (the place and the law) via a philosophical gesture that renders the local institutional and the private public.[56] Although an archive implies something private (invisible) that is conserved and stored, it is the process of archiving itself that makes the archive public (visible) and grants it institutional power.[57] The archive becomes visible as an institution by its localization in a certain place but its content is at the same time invisible for the public, since only a privileged team (the archive's guardians) can have access to it. When the archive gets open for the public, its content gains in visibility. Its visibility is controlled and supervised by the authority that has the nomological right to keep the archive.

In that sense, one could read the fragmental text of *GD* by means of archive structures and explore its three versions (manuscript, first and second edition) as traces of the archive's transformation. Slahi does not only question the hegemonic structures of the archive but also empowers himself by intervening in their rigid limits, especially through his choice to 'restore' his story. Slahi's manuscript was written in his solitary

cell at Camp Echo in Guantánamo and it was then directly handed to the U.S. government. The classified manuscript (a notebook diary) was situated in a *privileged* place and kept there together with other classified documents. On the one hand, it is the topological characteristic and on the other, the nomological one, which establishes the law of archive's *guardiance*. However, as Derrida confirms, there is "no archive without outside."[58] With the first edition, the archived text was opened to the public, though it was still not given in its complete form. It was a modified and controlled form of the text because only one part of it was visible. The redactions kept a part of it invisible. Quoting Derrida, "this institutional passage from the private to the public […] does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret."[59] With the second edition, the tension between text and image (the black-box redactions which are now readable) alters the parameters but nonetheless maintains the archive. There is again an interplay between what is shown and what is hidden that highlights the interconnection of the archive with the concept of in_visibility.

5_In_Visible Narrative and Violence in the First Edition of *Guantánamo Diary*

My approach is to read *GD* as an 'intermedial' example, in which the notion of in_visibility is used as a methodological tool and hermeneutical key of the work. The concept of intermediality describes phenomena that take place between different media. *GD* can be characterized as 'intermedial' because it has to do with a crossing of the borders between verbal (readable words) and the visual signs (black-box redactions). The interchange between text and image corresponds to an interchange between visibility and invisibility. The visible black-box redactions make the words invisible while, at the same time, the invisible words are making the exercised violence visible.

In the first edition[60] of *GD* the textual narrative is continually interrupted by the black bars of censorship, i.e., by visual elements. The black layers are not complementary to the textual narrative, but rather, by making the words invisible for the reader, function in a competitive and disturbing manner. They are added to the book to eliminate the words and to substitute them. Although the visual signs that cross and interrupt the textual narrative are not part of Slahi's aesthetic plan, the result is iconotextual and can be analyzed with the lenses of intermediality.

The notion of in_visibility plays a fundamental role in the ambivalent relationship between text and image. First of all, when the black bars hide the words and make them invisible, a certain form of *negation* appears. In his essay on iconic negation[61] Emmanuel Alloa describes how images can have the capacity to negate. Using the multiple forms that Alloa defines, it can be shown that the visual signs of *GD* also establish a multiple negation. The redactions constitute, a *narrative negation*, as they operate by omitting part of the narration. The capacity of the text to represent is hindered and the narration is interrupted and abruptly muted. The unnarrated within this declassified document, which was once narrated, represents itself as a political absence.[62] Additionally, the black spaces confirm a partial or what Alloa terms a *mereological negation* as they negatively influence the syntactic order of the narration. At the same moment they impose a *medial negation* by making the medial form of the text invisible. The rejection of the medial form of the text leads to the affirmation of another medial form: where the text becomes invisible, and the visual signs become visible.

What makes this intermedial tension between verbal and visual signs even more interesting and complex is what the bureaucratic practice of declassification and censorship decide to make invisible. The black spots usually cover up precisely the kind of information that the interrogation along with torture struggle to squeeze from a subject. In the case of Slahi, it is remarkable to consider what has escaped the censor's ink and what has been blocked out, which reveals decisions that look strange or even, at times, absurd. For example, there are several scenes of torture that remain uncensored, such as the exposure of the detainee to loud music and scary pictures or his sexual molestation[63] while, on the other hand, a poem[64] that Slahi wrote is blacked out and covered up as well as some details from his everyday routine. Elsewhere the ink of censorship covers up secret information (names and places) without making any real effort to turn the narrative away from the brutal interrogation techniques:

> For the next month I had to deal with ████████ and his small gang. "We are not ████████; we don't let lying detainees go unpunished. Just maybe not physical torture," he said. I had been witnessing for the last months how detainees were consistently being tortured under the orders of ████████. ████████ was taken to interrogation every single night, exposed to loud music and scary pictures, and molested sexually.[65]

However, the notion of invisibility must not be interpreted in any sort of normative way. The visual elements that make Slahi's narrative invisible, stage at the same moment the pure violence that is visibly exercised upon him. At the same time, the visibility of the black bars empowers the invisible subject (body and words) by performatively outlining its political absence. It is no longer the detainee that struggles to gain voice and is muted; it is a narrator that exposes his own wounds of oppression and represents the violation of his human rights. Following this argument, this kind of invisibility can be read as the ultimate form of visibility. As Alexandra Moore remarks in reference to the first edition of *GD*:

> Siems's decision to include the redactions makes visible the process of narrative construction and, with it, the process of Slahi's political subjectivization. Together Slahi's narration and the redactions thus make visible the staging of dissensus.[66]

Following Moore's quote, it is worth mentioning that the redactions become an integral part of the text by reorganizing and reorienting the narrative process. The declassification makes the documents double-voiced (having on the one side the voice of the narrator and on the other that of the censor) and brings into visibility an increasing dissensus between the voices.

Returning to the blacked-out 'spaces': they can also be interpreted as gaps in the text waiting to be filled in by the reader. In his major work entitled *The Implied Reader*[67], Wolfgang Iser outlines a phenomenological approach to the reading process that is relevant to the ambiguous significance of in_visibility in Slahi's book. He suggests that by reading a text one must not only consider the actual text but also "the actions involved in responding to that text."[68] This signifies that every work has two poles: the artistic pole, which refers to the author of the book and the aesthetic one that is linked with "the realization accomplished by the reader."[69] Every time somebody reads a text they actualize it through their perception, a process that also influences the whole creative process. According to Iser, this is possible because each text has some unwritten implication and certain invisible gaps that can be bridged or filled in by the reader.[70] The reader can fill them in according to his or her expectations, historical-cultural context or according to the hermeneutical direction that indicates the text itself. In the case of Slahi, visible bars of censorship create another form of 'gaps' that invite the reader to fill them. In this fashion, they do not constitute a vacuum that

would lead to pure invisibility but rather a visual indication that motivates the reader to see what is hidden or even to reflect upon the visibility of the invisible.

One could argue in Slahi's *GD* that it is the depth of *responsibility* that motivates the reader to fill in the gaps of the text and correspond to them.[71] The fragmented and even disjointed nature of the text comes not from imaginary blanks but from visible gaps. Therefore, the reader is responsible not only for completing them in order to make the narration of the detainee comprehensible, but also for reflecting on their mere existence: on the blackness that the extrajuridical violation of freedom of speech leaves behind. The reader is not capable of destroying the gaps and unmuting the oppressed voice, but it is his or her moral responsibility to make the narrator visible by acknowledging his invisibility. The recipient is supposed to comprehend the opacity of black boxes as a sign of extrajuridical violence. The invisible words become agents of a transnational subject who narrates the legal and biopolitical paradoxes of Guantánamo. The image or iconic element is not comprehended here either as a reference to something that represents or as a *deixis* in the sense of showing something; it vacillates between showing and showing itself in the sense of appearing.[72]

The visible words constantly refer to the invisible ones, since the readable words need the hidden ones in order to be syntactically and semantically completed. My attempt is to investigate the first edition as a mournful scenography, where the orphan words try to articulate a voice facing the absence of their sequential words. When they do speak, their voice is broken, fragmental and interrupted by the black veil of censorship. This lyrical and elegiac analogy does not seek to increase the feeling of empathy in the reader, but to impose a biopolitical analysis by which body and words as well as visibility and invisibility remain inseparable.

The interplay between visibility and invisibility in the first edition of *GD* can also be discussed regarding language itself. Jacques Rancière's concept of anti-representation is useful in that direction. According to Rancière, one of the main constraints of representation is the dependency of the visible on speech, in the sense that speech always tries to *make something visible*, to *make it seen*. This 'making visible' becomes possible through the operation of 'substitution' (making something absent appear to be present) and through the operation of 'exhibition' (making something hidden visible).[73] However, representation fails at the end, because speech makes something visible by not actually making it visible in the sense of visually perceptible reality; in

other words, there is always an implied imbalance between what is actually visible and what is made visible by speech. Through his analysis of this paradox, Rancière builds his description of anti-representation: what is newly visible by the speech does not 'make visible' but rather imposes presence by exhibiting "its particular opacity, the under-determined character of its power to make visible."[74]

In the first edition of *GD*, one can see how this anti-representation imposes presence by its complete inability to 'actually' make something visible while, at the same time, still having the capability to render it in_visible. The opacity of the black-box redactions imposes presence by revealing the incapability of making the hidden words visible. It is the power of anti-representation that not only destabilizes what seems worthy or unworthy of being represented but also disrupts the relation between presence and visibility.

6_The (Un)Lifted Veil and the *In_Visible* Trauma in the Second Edition of *Guantánamo Diary*

After his release Slahi asked the US government to give him back his original, uncensored manuscript. The government refused repeatedly and so Slahi and his editor Larry Siems started to work together in order to publish the fully restored text. It is worth considering how Slahi describes this process in the introduction of the second edition. There he writes about the "repaired version"[75] of the text and confesses that "it often felt like we were trying to restore a very ancient building. […] I began with the obsession of replacing what was taken out brick for brick, tit for tat […]."[76] Slahi describes this process as *repair*, or *restoration* of an ancient building. The narrator continues his description: "Repairing this broken text has been about seeing things that someone wanted hidden. Sometimes that someone was me."[77] It is worth mentioning that this process of restoration of the text is complicated because Slahi must not only confront what was hidden from the censor's ink but also himself:

> When I received the photocopy of my book in Guantánamo I stayed up all night reading it, afraid that I wrote something I would regret. And yes, there were things that embarrassed me. I was especially ashamed of my habit, when I was young, of making up sarcastic nicknames for people I met.[78]

Here the problem of in_visibility emerges again; going further, we can compare what was actually hidden and invisible in the first edition and what can be exposed through a process of 'making visible' (*Sichtbarmachung*) in the second one. The *repair* that Slahi endeavors is an actual transition from invisibility to visibility. Yet it is

still not so easy to distinguish between these two poles, since, as it has already been argued, it is the visibility of the black veil (redactions) that makes the invisibility of the hidden words visible.

If the 'restoration' of the text is similar to a healing process, why then do the black redactions, even if they are now transparent, remain in the book? One could give a threefold response to that question. Firstly, it can be argued that they take over the function of a healing process, which struggles to eliminate the trauma. It softens the wounds caused by the violation of freedom, but the trauma still exists. The censored words and the captured body are free, but they will never be fully recovered and re-stored, and they *must not be* since there is an inscribed history in the body and text that must be preserved. That is the main function of the continued existence of black boxes in the new edition: they are there in order to testify to the collective suffering of the detainees and the violation of their human rights in Guantánamo. This however does not diminish the powerful narrative of the author, who insists on refilling the gaps and giving voice to his experience:

> I noticed an ant walking up the wall, and then many more leading and following her. I learned to follow ants in the Mauritanian secret prison, watching them until they left the cell and me behind. I watched this one climb, going about her daily business and not realizing the drama that was unfolding before her very eyes. I drowned myself in her world, and I missed a lot of what the tester was saying. I was so nervous, but I took this as the first good omen of the morning. I was wondering if I should just concentrate on the ant and answer the questions with-out thinking.[79]

Secondly, the black layers remain in the text because they are part of the archive's history and specifically of the passage from private to public. The archival structure has gone through a transformation. In the beginning it was the original manuscript of Slahi; later it was the declassified manuscript with the layers of censorship, and fi-nally, in the end, it was a "fully restored text."[80] However, the text was never *fully* re-stored. In the second edition Slahi fills in the blacked-out spaces by remembering them or by reconstructing some scenes in his mind: "In the longer censored passages, I knew the action that was being described, but not the phrasing or the order of the sentences or even the exact aspects of the person or the experience I had described."[81]

Has the black veil of censorship been lifted at the end or is it an alternative form of making something in_visible? This question leads to the third aspect of the discussion and is embedded in the notion of in_visibility. If the veil had been lifted, then both the

author and the reader would have been able to read the original manuscript and thus the fully restored text. What happens in the second edition though is something completely different and more complex: the veil is not lifted but rather replaced by another one that imitates the former with a slight difference. It is now transparent rather than opaque, so the words behind it are readable; however, one should not forget that these are not the original words but an attempt at resurrecting lost ones and the new veil is there to make visible that the original text remains invisible. Using Foucault's terms, this process can be described like the perceptual and epistemological structure of 'invisible visibility' that commands the clinical anatomy: the anatomists see the opaque 'envelopes' that cover the parts of our body as a 'transparent veil' that reveals the relation between these parts.[82] In similar fashion, the reader of the second edition sees the hidden elements behind the transparent veil of redactions. The veil though was impossible to lift because the opacity and darkness of the extrajuridical violence cannot be assuaged while Guantánamo still remains open, and the state keeps the original document.

What now remains for the narrator to do is to recreate his narrative and rewrite it without forgetting his story. As a result, the second edition should not be thought of as a failed effort at restoration. It is a new text representing a new visibility. The narrative has been radically changed because the restored parts have been written by a man who is now no longer in detention. By 'repairing' the text it seems that he makes the invisible words visible, but what he is actually doing is inventing new and free words while, at the same time, letting the dark redacted layers remain visible as memorials of his trauma. The visible words represent the new voice of the narrator. His old voice and words remain hidden and invisible behind the opacity of a cruel and violent system. They are lost somewhere in the ontological and juridical limbo of Guantánamo together with the precarious life of the other detainees. Consequently, the visible *brave new words* and transparent layers still reflect the invisibility of the old, censored ones. Rancière's concept of anti-representation can be used also in the second edition, in order to enlighten how visibility is entangled with invisibility: the black-box redactions become transparent but the words that they reveal are not the original ones. They 'make visible' by *not actually making visible*. However, they exhibit two different things: the new words from a man that is not anymore in detention and the trauma that still exists.

7_Conclusion as Open Invitation

Summarizing, it is essential to reconsider the concept of invisibility as in_visibility, which has been used in the present paper as a methodological and hermeneutical key for unlocking the semantics of an extraordinary intermedial example. Slahi's book can, additionally, become a plateau in order to destabilize the normative connotations of visibility as well as invisibility and inscribe a new radical signification upon it. In the first place, the current analysis shows that one should not consider the concept of in_visibility a complex between conjunction and disjunction or an association deriving from the binary opposition between visibility and invisibility. In order to renegotiate the normative regime of representation, it is necessary to show how invisibility is not only a negation of visibility but can itself depict and show things.

In the first edition of the book the reader can perceive two different narrators.[83] The first narrator is the one that speaks with words; the second narrator is the censorship regime that covers the words with visual elements, enslaving them behind black bars. On the one hand, there is the narrator with his broken words and on the other, the censorship as the embodiment of violence. The first one articulates words and the second one cuts them off. This iconotextual relationship, between his text and the obscuring black bars, reflects the antagonism between abused and abuser. Although the second narrator seems to dominate the first by deleting his words and making them invisible, it actually creates space for the muted voice by making its own violent practices visible. This dynamic allows the *deterritorialization* of the normative connotations of in_visibility. This *reterritorialization* of the concept of in_visibility takes place where visibility and invisibility are entangled and function through a new dynamic: "[…] words and forms, the sayable and the visible, the visible and the invisible, are related to one another in accordance with new procedures."[84]

In the second edition of *GD* the split narrator becomes unified again. However, it is not the unification of the visible words with the censored ones, but rather an encounter between the newly released Slahi and the detained body and speech of Slahi still in text. While the released narrator cannot give voice to his former muted words, he is able to invent new ones. He deals with his traumas and demonstrates them by keeping the black layers as a reminder of the inscribed history of captivation both upon his body and upon the text. By revisiting his history, he penetrates the black boxes and makes them transparent. The hidden words have never been released; on

the contrary they still remain an unspoken secret. Thus, in the second edition we have the emergence of two narrators, a past one and a present one and between them the transparent black boxes, as a reference to the lost words and as a reminder of the pure violence of the sovereign state.

Reading *GD* as an intermedial example in the means of a Derridian archival structure, we have the opportunity to explore both the concept of archive as a literary genre and to formulate hermeneutically the difference between the two editions. After Slahi's text was localized in a particular archival place, it was opened up for publication; but this passage into the public sphere did not happen without passing through the institutional censorship machine. In this special form of archive, the words and images become political agents that narrate the destiny of the detainee. The effects of his punished body are mirrored in those of the text, which is violated by the censorship regime. When the enslaved body gets free, then the text gets restored "as […] an ancient building or damaged painting"[85] that needs restoration and reparation. Nevertheless, the text or the body of the detainee can never be *fully* restored or recovered because the traumas of violence are still visible (black layers) though the less disturbing (transparency of the layers).

Slahi and his *GD* texts are connected by a strong parallel destiny; this is easily seen in the fact that, within only hours of his release, Slahi was video chatting with his editor about possible ways to republish the text.[86] Since he is now free the words also have to be free, even if that only means a process of reinvention and recreation. Slahi still struggles for the shutting down of Guantánamo. On January 29, 2021, he was one of seven individuals, all former Guantánamo detainees, who wrote an Open Letter to President Biden, which was published by the New York Review of Books:

> Considering the violence that has happened at Guantánamo, we are sure that after more than nineteen years, you agree that imprisoning people indefinitely without trial while subjecting them to torture, cruelty and degrading treatment, with no meaningful access to families or proper legal systems, is the height of injustice. That is why imprisonment at Guantánamo must end.[87]

In his introduction to the second edition, Slahi writes:

> I considered humanity my jury; […] I wasn't sure if the pages I wrote and gave to my lawyers would ever become a book. But I believed in books, and in the people who read them; I always had, since I held my first book as a child. I thought of what it would mean if someone outside that prison was holding a book I had written.[88]

Now Slahi's manuscript is accessible in many forms: the first edition, translated into nineteen languages within two years; the second edition; and a film adaptation entitled *The Mauritanian*[89], which was directed by Kevin Macdonald and released on February 12, 2021. As the case of *GD* is still dynamically moving in the axis of in_visibility, the reader of this paper is invited to rethink this concept. S/he is also encouraged to get rid of the normative connotations of it, which only lead to a one-way evaluation (positive or negative) of visibility and invisibility. The present paper wishes to be perceived as a radical break, a rupture of the normative simplifications of visibility and invisibility and, as such, it carries the possibility for a new opening.

Closing, the reader of this paper can take the opportunity to accept the invitation written by Slahi himself:

> When this book was first published, when I was still in prison, I sent a message through my lawyers that appeared as an Author's Note in that edition. That note said:
>
> "In a recent conversation with one of his lawyers, Mohamedou said that he holds no grudge against any of the people he mentions in this book, that he appeals to them to read it and correct it if they think it contains any errors, and that he dreams to one day sit with all of them around a cup of tea, after having learned so much from one another."
>
> I want to repeat and affirm this message here, and to say that now that I am home, that dream is also an invitation. The doors of my house are open.[90]

_Endnotes

1   Mohamedou Ould Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary: The Fully Restored Text* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2017), 314–315.

2   On December 14, 1999, Algerian citizen Ahmed Ressam was arrested on his way to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), where he planned to carry out a terrorist attack. This revealed and led to the prevention of several attacks, which were planned by al-Qaeda for the turn of the millennium. For further information, see Mitchell D. Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor: Plots Against the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 57–67. Doi: <10.9783/9780812205220.57>. Slahi was connected with the Millennium Plot because of his acquaintance with Ahmed Ressam. The latter, however, never implicated him. See Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Mohamedou Ould Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 24–27.

3   From now on the 'black-box redactions' will also be referred to as 'blacked-out spaces/sections/ parts,' 'black boxes/bars,' 'black layers,' 'black veil,' '(un)lifted veil.' These terms will be used interchangeably.

4   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015).

5   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017).

6   Introduction from the author to the second edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 18.

7   Johanna Schaffer, "Sichtbarkeit: Epistemologie und Politik eines Schlüsselbegriffs analoger und digitaler Medienrealitäten," in *Handbuch Medien und Geschlecht*, eds. Johanna Dorer et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2019), 1–12.

8   The word 'pure' carries a double meaning of something clean and absolute. Firstly, the violence is pure (clean) because it has not been adulterated by law. The violence that is exercised upon Slahi is extrajudicial and connects with what Foucault calls 'clean torture,' which is the disappearance of the public spectacle aspect of torture. Secondly, the violence is pure (complete) because it no longer requires any particular justification. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 9.

9   Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975–76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 241.

10 Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image* (London and New York: Verso, 2009).

11 Burhan Wazir, "Life from a Camp Delta Cell," *The World Today* 71, no. 1 (2015): 46–47, here: 46, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44283464>.

12 On the Guantánamo Bay as new kind of colony and as a nexus of imperialism and on a postcolonial reading of *GD*, cf. Mary Pappalardo, "Writing from the New Colony: Place, Subjectivity, and Textual Production in Guantánamo Diary," *Research in African Literatures* 50, no. 1 (2019): 20–35, <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/728331>; and Yogita Goyal, "The Genres of *Guantánamo Diary*: Postcolonial Reading and the War on Terror," *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 4, no. 1 (2017): 69–87. Doi: <10.1017/pli.2016.32>.

13 Uzma Jamil, "How Muslims Became Corn," *ReOrient* 2, no. 2 (2017): 175–89, here: 185. Doi: <10.13169/reorient.2.2.0175>.

14 Alexandra S. Moore, "Teaching Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary* in the Human Rights and Literature Classroom," *Radical Teacher* 104 (2016): 27–37, here: 34. Doi: <10.5195/rt.2016.263>.

15 "Mohamedou Ould Slahi's Guantánamo Diary: One Man's Account of Rendition, Torture and Detention Without Charge at the Hands of the US," video documentary by *The Guardian*, accessed June 14, 2022, <http://guantanamodiary.com/>.

16 Judith Butler, "Guantanamo Limbo: International Law Offers Too Little Protection for Prisoners of the New War," in *The Nation*, March 14, 2002, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/guantanamo-limbo/>.

17 Jacques Derrida, trans. Eric Prenowitz, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *Diacritics 25*, no. 2 (1995): 9–63. Doi: <10.2307/465144>.

18 Irina O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," *Intermédialités / Intermediality* 6 (2005): 43–64. Doi: <10.7202/1005505ar>.

19 Emmanuel Alloa, "Ikonische Negation: Unter Welchen Umständen können Bilder verneinen?," in *Bild und Negativität*, ed. Lars Nowak (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019), 51–82.

20 Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader*: *Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

21 Dieter Mersch, *Ereignis und Aura*: *Untersuchungen zu einer Ästhetik des Performativen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

22 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 49–50.

23 Michel Foucault, trans. A. M. Sheridan, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 165–166.

24 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 9–10.

25 See the timeline of his detention in the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), ix.

26 See Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 21–44.

27 See Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 22–23 and "Mohamedou Ould Slahi's Guantánamo Diary," *The Guardian*.

28 Spencer Ackerman and Ian Cobain, "Guantánamo Diary Exposes Brutality of US Rendition and Torture," in *The Guardian*, January 16, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/16/-sp-guantanamo-diary-exposes-brutality-us-rendition-torture>.

29 Goyal, "The Genres of *Guantánamo Diary*," 70.

30 Butler, "Guantanamo Limbo."

31 See the full text of President Bush's address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, "President Bush Addresses the Nation," in *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2001, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html>.

32 Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.

33 The legal *in_visibility* of the detainees is strongly related to the official status that was given to them on January 22, 2022, by the US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. It was on that date that he explained why these kinds of prisoners should be called *battlefield detainees* or *unlawful combatants* rather than *prisoners of war*. He argued that the war against terrorism was not an ordinary war between recognizable nation-states since it was outside the parameters of conventional war and apparently even of legal jurisdiction. For further details, see the interview of Secretary Rumsfeld about military operations in Afghanistan and about criticisms of US treatment of detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, "Defense Department Briefing," in *C-SPAN*, January 22, 2002, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?168309-1/defense-department-briefing>. This kind of in_visibility was further established through the military order issued by Bush on November 13th, 2001, which authorized an indefinite detention for the suspected terrorists. Law has been suspended in the name of national security and the detainees cease to become eligible for human rights and are thus exposed to extrajuridical violence.

34 For further discussion see Peter Brooks, "The Humanities as an Export Commodity," *Profession*, (2008): 33–39, here: 35–36, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595880>.

35 Amy Kaplan, "Where is Guantanamo?," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3, (2005): 831–858, here: 832, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40068318>.

36 Kaplan, "Where is Guantanamo?," 846.

37 Kaplan, "Where is Guantanamo?," 833–834.

38 Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, "Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody: Report of the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate," in *New York Times*, November 20, 2008, 136–137, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/documents/report-by-the-senate-armed-services-committee-on-detainee-treatment>.

39 Butler, "Guantanamo Limbo."

40 Introduction from the author to the second edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 38–39.

41 Eleni Coundouriotis, "Torture and Textuality: *Guantánamo Diary* as Postcolonial Text," *Textual Practice* 34, no. 7 (2020): 1061–1080, here: 1063. Doi: <10.1080/0950236X.2019.1580216>.

42 "Slahi Mauscript Received 2012," in *The Guardian*, January 20, 2015, <https://www.the-guardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2015/jan/20/-sp-read-mohamedou-ould-slahis-original-hand-written-manuscript>.

43 See Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 15.

44 See Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 15–16.

45 For a more detailed history of the manuscript, see Larry Siems' introduction of the first edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 15–16.

46 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), 308.

47 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015), xii.

48 Joseph R. Slaughter, "Vanishing Points: When Narrative Is Not Simply There," *Journal of Human Rights* 9, no. 2 (2010): 207–223, here: 212. Doi: <10.1080/14754831003761712>.

49 Introduction from the author to the second edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 18.

50 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 297.

51 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 405.

52 Marie-Pierre Ulloa, Anat Weisman, and Vered Karti Shemtov, "Archives: Literary Perspectives on the Intersections Between History and Fiction," *Dibur Literary Journal* 3 (2016): 1–4, here: 1.

53 There is a variety of notions of archives. At the center of the many philosophical and intellectual discussions of archives are especially French thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Paul Ricoeur.

54 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 9–63.

55 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 9–11.

56 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 10.

57 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 10.

58 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 14.

59 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 10.

60 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015).

61 Alloa, "Ikonische Negation," 61–70.

62 Slaughter, "Vanishing Points," 213.

63 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 212–213, 222–223.

64 See the restored/rewritten poem in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 355.

65 Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015).

66 Moore, "Teaching Mohamedou Ould Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary*," 34.

67 Iser, *The Implied Reader*.

68 Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 274.

69 Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 274.

70 Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 108, 182, 208, 210, 214.

71 More about the double figure of *Responivität-Responsibilität* in Mersch, *Ereignis und Aura*, 99, 106.

72 Dieter Mersch, *Epistemologies of Aesthetics* (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2015), 116.

73 Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 113.

74 Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 121.

75   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 49.

76   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 50.

77   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 51.

78   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 51.

79   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 297.

80   See cover of Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017).

81   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 50.

82   Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, 166.

83   Lisa Hajjar, "Front Matter," *Middle East Report*, no. 275 (2015): 46–47, here: 46, <http://www.js-tor.org/stable/24426588>.

84   Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 13.

85   Editor's note on the text of the restored edition in Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 18.

86   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 17.

87   Mansoor Adayfi et al., "An Open Letter to President Biden About Guantánamo," in *New York Review of Books*, January 29, 2021, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2021/01/29/an-open-letter-to-president-biden-about-guantanamo/>.

88   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 39.

89   Kevin Macdonald, *The Mauritanian*, directed by Kevin Macdonald (2021; Los Angeles: STX-films).

90   Slahi, *Guantánamo Diary* (2017), 369.