

GEOCORPOGRAPHIES OF TORTURE

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Abstract

This paper is driven by the following questions: What role did U.S. policy play in establishing the ground for the acts of torture at Abu Ghraib? What are the codes, conventions, technologies, aesthetics and visual archives that enable both acts of torture and their visual representation and consumption? How can one begin to describe those points of intersection between the genealogies of techno-politico-military power, race and visual regimes of subjugation, violence and torture? In order to address these questions, I propose to situate the racial category of whiteness along a number of intersecting axes: as instrumentalising technology; as mediating prosthetic within the field of vision; as shadow archive actively inflecting relations of power across contemporary media, subjects and institutions; and as racial category that is constitutive of *geocorpographies* of torture. In coining this term, my aim is to bring into focus the violent enmeshment of the flesh and blood of the body within the geopolitics of race, war and empire.

Introduction

I acknowledge the Cadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional owners of the land upon which I stand and from which I speak.¹ I want to situate this acknowledgement within the very corpus of my paper in order to mark a number of indissociable points of historical connection. In my paper, I will examine the corporeal effects of

colonial invasion and imperial violence exercised by U.S. military personnel within the carceral context of Abu Ghraib, Iraq. On the public release of the photographs taken by U.S. military personnel during their torture sessions of Iraqi prisoners, we were compelled to bear witness to pictures that documented torture, sexual assault and humiliation.

The practices of torture perpetrated at Abu Ghraib are not remote from the location of this conference, Sydney, Australia. Inscribing the cosmopolitan surrounds of this city is a dense and stratified historical palimpsest that speaks otherwise. This palimpsest bespeaks the history of colonial invasion and the imperial establishment of the colony. As such, within the larger radius of this site, the Cadigal people bore the full brunt of colonial violence. As a number of Aboriginal curators have documented in their exhibitions and installations, the magnitude of this violence encompassed kidnap, torture and sexual assault. Tess McLennan-Allas and Aaron Ross in their exhibition, *In the Interest of Bennelong*, tactically transformed the regal rooms of that charged site of colonial rule, Government House, overlooking Bennelong Point, into a space that documented the violent origins of the practices that resulted in the Stolen Generations. In their exhibition, they focused on the violent abductions of Bennelong and Colby in 1798 and the consequent manner in which they were placed in positions of slave labour at the service of the colonial regime. In a banner headline accompanying the

exhibition, McLennan-Allas and Ross raised this compelling question: "Why can't we have the 'Lest We Forget'?" (1998). A few hundred metres from Government House, Brooke Andrew, in another foundational colonial space, Customs House, staged the exhibition *Menthen*, in which, in his words, he "symbolically liberate[d] one hundred Aboriginal shields from their restless slumber within the Australian Museum collections" (1999). Liberated from their ethnographic and anthropological captivity, these one hundred shields bore testimony to "the first resistance by Aboriginal people" in the face of the colonial wars that followed the invasion (1999).

Situated within this historical context, I want to underscore that this ground upon which I stand is trammelled by colonial violence and harrowed by loss. This colonial violence, however, is not something to be relegated to the past: its ongoing contemporary effects on the Indigenous people of this country have been fully documented by Aboriginal writers, historians and academics. Ray Jackson, President of the Indigenous Social Justice Association, has for decades been exhaustively documenting the enormity of the police and penal violence inflicted upon Australia's First Nation peoples (see Djardi-Dugarang Newsletter, Bi-monthly Newsletter of I.S.J.A, Sydney).

In the course of this paper, the torture and sexual assaults that were perpetrated on the prisoners of Abu Ghraib will not be examined as the work of a few "aberrant" or "deviant" individuals, as the official investigative reports concluded, but rather as the product of the combined political, legislative and juridical machinery of the U.S. imperial nation-state and its attendant colonial relations of white supremacist power.

Night Shift

On August 24, 2004, in the wake of the international outcry over the documented abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD [Department of Defense] Detention Operations (*The Schlesinger Report*) submitted their findings to Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defence. The Executive Summary of the *Schlesinger Report* begins thus:

The events of October through December 2003 on the night shift of Tier 1 at Abu Ghraib prison were acts of brutality and purposeless sadism. We know that these abuses occurred at the hands of both military police and military intelligence personnel. The pictured abuses, unacceptable even in wartime, were not part of authorized interrogations nor were they even directed at intelligence targets. They represent deviant behavior and a failure of military leadership and discipline.... No approved procedures called for or allowed the kinds of abuse that in fact occurred. There is no evidence of a policy of abuse promulgated by senior officials or military authorities (Danner 2005: 323).

In many respects, the *Schlesinger Report* is a remarkable document. In textual terms, the Report is marked by a series of rhetorical strategies designed to shift responsibility for the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib from the highest governmental level of authority to the circumscribed parameters of a few "deviant" individuals. The use of the chronotope of "night shift" functions to establish a time and place symbolically marked as underworldish: night shift is positioned as a time of license within which the enlightened laws and civilized rules of day are suspended. Undercover of night, unreason, lawlessness and

violence are unloosed. In the context of a nation governed by white supremacist ideologies, the racial charge of night, as exemplary colonial trope of blackness, sets the scene for the inevitable descent of U.S. military personnel into the heart of darkness. Abu Ghraib, as Orientalised space of absolute license from western norms, is where law and reason will be suspended under the command of a few Kurtz-like figures. These are the white mythologies that the west never tires of telling itself: of the temporary descent into the darkness (of "night shift") that is always ready to be redeemed by the white light of official procedure, investigations and reports. In this manner, the investigation and punishment of every individualised act of transgression functions to validate the operation of law whilst, simultaneously, effacing the foundational illegality and violence that inscribes the very institution of colonial law. Drawing attention to the violent double logic of colonial law, Irene Watson explains how, in such instances, "unlawfulness continues in a space declared lawful" (2002a: 258).

In this white *mythos* of the descent into the heart of darkness, the key players are seen to be a few aberrant U.S. military personnel and the imprisoned "sand niggers", the racist epithet used by U.S. military personnel to describe the Iraqi prisoners. The use of this racist epithet, as Andrew Bacevich has documented, "penetrated into the upper echelons of the American command" (2006). Bacevich cites this comment "from a senior officer: 'The only thing these sand niggers understand is force and I'm about to introduce them to it' "(2006). The structuring tropology of both the official and unofficial language of the U.S. military can be seen to pivot on a series of predictable racialised oppositions - black/white, light/day, civilised/barbaric - that are effectively used by the

authors of the *Schlesinger Report* in order to make 'common sense' of the scandal of violence and torture at Abu Ghraib. The binary significations of these charged tropes are drawn upon in other sections of the Report. For example, under the rubric of "Abuses" the Report states:

The aberrant behavior on the night shift in Cell Block 1 at Abu Ghraib would have been avoided with proper training, leadership and oversight. Though acts of abuse occurred at a number of locations, those in Cell Block 1 have a unique nature fostered by the predilections of the noncommissioned officers in charge. Had these noncommissioned officers behaved more like those on day shift, these acts, which one participant described as 'just for the fun of it', would not have taken place (Danner 2005: 328).

The use of the trope of "night" effectively serves to naturalise the violence and abuse that took place in Cell Block 1: night is, naturally, doxically, the time when the worst of the worst happens. The move to naturalise, and thus contain, the abuse and torture that took place at Abu Ghraib is underscored by the way in which the events are described as having "a unique nature fostered by the predilections of the noncommissioned officers in charge." The rhetorical strategy of locating the torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib under the naturalising imprimatur of "night" is here buttressed by arguing that the acts of torture "have a unique nature" whose source can be both located and contained within the bodies of the noncommissioned officers: torture and sexual violence resulted merely due to the nature of their deviant and aberrant desires, their predilections. As I will proceed to document in the latter sections of this essay, this shifting of

blame to the “predilections” of a few “noncommissioned officers” becomes untenable in the face of the dense and stratified U.S. white supremacist history that shadows and licenses these acts of sexual violence and torture.

Radical Unfreedom: Contemporary Colonialism and State-Sponsored Terrorism

This white supremacist history must be tracked back to foundational moments of colonial violence that continue to shape and inform the contemporary U.S. nation. In the context of the U.S. imperial nation-state, Andrea Smith, tracking the violent history of genocide against Native Americans, writes: “the U.S. is built on a foundation of genocide, slavery, and racism” (2005: 177). Situated in this context, what becomes apparent in the scripting of the 9/11 attacks as the worst acts of terrorism perpetrated on U.S. soil is the effective erasure of this foundational history of state-sponsored terrorism on the First Nations peoples of the U.S. In a parallel manner, this historicidal erasure is what has also been enacted in the Australian context, where Australia’s own violent history of state-sponsored terrorism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been effectively white-washed out of official existence in discussions of contemporary acts of terror. This historicidal act of whitewashing effectively clears the ground for contemporary acts of violence on the corpus of the nation to be chronologically positioned as the ‘first’ or hierarchically ranked as the ‘worst’ in the nation’s history. Underpinning these white acts of historicidal erasure in both the U.S. and Australian contexts is official - government, media and academic - positioning of Indigenous peoples in terms of a “permanent ‘present absence’ ” that, in Smith’s words,

“reinforces at every turn the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified” (2005: 9).

In her work, Smith establishes critical points of connection between the “war on terror” being waged in places like Iraq and the issue of Indigenous sovereignty within the context of the U.S. nation:

it is important to understand that the war against ‘terror’ is really an attack against Native sovereignty, and that consolidating U.S. empire abroad is predicated on consolidating U.S. empire *within* U.S. borders. For example, the Bush administration continues to use the war on terror as an excuse to support anti-immigration policies and the militarisation of the U.S./Mexico border (2005: 179).

In the Australian context, these political and legislative overlaps between the “war on terror” and anti-immigration policies have been documented in painstaking detail by Suvendrini Perera (2002; 2007). Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2004; 2005) and Irene Watson (2002a; 2002b; 2007) have brought into sharp focus the critical points of intersection between the issue of Indigenous sovereignty and the colonial relations of power that continue to inscribe the Australian nation.

The U.S. military’s scripting of the sexual violence and torture that was perpetrated at Abu Ghraib in terms of the aberrations of a few deviant individuals becomes untenable when situated within this larger colonial framework of state-sponsored terrorism and legislated violence. As Andrea Smith writes:

White supremacy, colonialism, and economic exploitation are inextricably linked to U.S. democratic

ideals rather than aberrations from it. The 'freedom' guaranteed to some individuals in society has always been premised upon the radical unfreedom of others. Very specifically, the U.S. could not exist without the genocide of indigenous peoples. Otherwise visitors coming to this continent would be living under indigenous forms of governance rather than under U.S. empire (Smith 2005: 184).

Situated in this context, the acts of sexual violence and torture that were committed at Abu Ghraib must be viewed as reproducing, within the extended locus of empire, foundational moments of colonial rule. As Antonia Castañeda documents in her essay "Sexual Violence in the Politics of Conquest" in the context of the establishment of the state of California:

the sexual and other violence toward Amerindian women in California can best be understood as ideologically justified violence institutionalised in structures and relations of conquest initiated in the fifteenth century. In California as elsewhere, sexual violence functioned as an institutionalised mechanism for ensuring subordination and compliance. It was one instrument of sociopolitical terrorism and control – first of women and then of the group under conquest (1993: 29).

As I argue below, the foundational violence of these white supremacist practices of colonialism are precisely what remain, to paraphrase Castañeda, institutionalised in contemporary structures and relations of ongoing imperial conquest.

At Abu Ghraib, the military rape of Iraqi women instantiates the contemporary reproduction of this colonial violence as a form of sociopolitical terrorism and control, precisely as the reach of this

sexual violence is expanded to encompass the phallogcentrically and homophobically transgendered bodies of conquered Arab men. I refer here to the manner in which the Iraqi male prisoners were 'feminised' by being compelled to wear women's underwear over their heads, and to the way they were forced to engage in homosexual sexual acts. (I discuss in detail the intersection of race, sexuality and gender in the practices of torture perpetrated at Abu Ghraib in Pugliese forthcoming). In keeping with the gendered power relations of Orientalism, the bodies of Arab men are phallogcentrically transgendered and theatrically arranged into the passive and available feminised bodies that, in the western visual imaginary, belong to the "phantasm of the harem" (Alloula 1986: 4). What is operative in such instances is what Medya Yegenoglu terms the "interlocking of the representation of cultural and sexual difference"; this interlocking of cultural and sexual difference "is secured through mapping the discourse of Orientalism onto the phallogcentric discourse of femininity" (1998: 73).

"Gitmoizing" Abu Ghraib Prison and the "Migration" of Policies of Torture from Guantanamo Bay to Iraq

I have spent some time unpacking the rhetorical moves in the *Schlesinger Report* that were instrumental in attempting to shift responsibility for the torture that took place at Abu Ghraib to a few "aberrant" individuals in order to contest this official displacement of blame and responsibility. The rhetorical strategies that I have been tracking can also be seen to be at work in the subsequent AR 15-6 Investigation of the Abu Ghraib Prison and the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade Report (*The Jones/Fay Report*). Reading the *Jones/Fay Report*, one can again

discern the same displacement of blame onto the figures of “aberrant” individuals. The *Jones/Fay Report* asserts that “Doctrine did not cause the abuses at Abu Ghraib” and that “The abuse...was directed on an individual basis and never officially sanctioned or approved” (Danner 2005: 419 and 435). On the contrary, as I will proceed to demonstrate, the torture that took place at Abu Ghraib resulted fundamentally because of U.S. government policy. The decision of President Bush, on 7th February 2002, to suspend the applicability of the Geneva Conventions toward both al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan enunciated a radical shift in policy that would effectively ramify down to the lowest levels of U.S. military doctrine and practice:

Our recent extensive discussions regarding the status of al Qaeda and Taliban detainees confirm that the application of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949 (Geneva) to the conflict with al Qaeda and the Taliban involves complex legal questions. By its terms, Geneva applies to conflicts involving ‘High Contracting Parties,’ which can be States. Moreover, it assumes the existence of ‘regular’ armed forces fighting on behalf of States. However, the war against terrorism ushers in a new paradigm, in which groups with broad, international reach commit horrific acts against innocent civilians....(Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 134).

Responsibility for the emergence of this “new paradigm,” that will see the effective suspension of the Geneva Conventions, is unilaterally laid at the feet of “terrorists”: “Our Nation recognizes that this new paradigm – ushered in not by us, but by terrorists – requires new thinking in the law of war” (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 134). Bush

then proceeds to outline the doctrinal ramifications of this “new thinking in the law of war”:

I accept the legal conclusion of the Department of Justice and determine that none of the provisions of Geneva apply to our conflict with al Qaeda in Afghanistan or elsewhere throughout the world because, among other reasons, al Qaeda is not a High Contracting Party to Geneva.

.... Based on the facts supplied to the Department of Defense and the recommendations of the Department of Justice, I determine that the Taliban detainees are unlawful combatants and, therefore, do not qualify as prisoners of war under Article 4 of Geneva. I note that, because Geneva does not apply to our conflict with al Qaeda, al Qaeda detainees also do not qualify as prisoners of war (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 134-35).

In *The Legal Narrative*, an essay that discusses the official memos that preceded and followed Bush’s decision to suspend the Geneva Conventions with regard to both Taliban and al Qaeda detainees, Joshua Dratel writes: “like the Nazi’s punctilious legalization of their ‘final solution’, the memoirs reproduced here [in *The Torture Papers*] reveal a carefully orchestrated legal rationale, but one without valid legal or moral foundation” (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: xxii). “The torture lawyers,” writes David Luban, aimed “to construct a judicially-endorsed practice of permissible torture”; they “were constructing a torture culture” (Luban 2006: 71 and 51). The spurious “legal rationales” that will effectively lead to the suspension of the Geneva Conventions work systemically to cast this same convention as, in the words of Alberto R. Gonzales, White House Counsel, “quaint” and therefore “obsolete”: “In my judgement, this new

paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions requiring the captured enemy be afforded such things as commissary privileges, scrip (i.e., advances of monthly pay), athletic uniforms, and scientific instruments" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 119). As the American Bar Association has argued, in its condemnation of the Administration's refusal to include both Taliban and al Qaeda detainees under the protection of the Geneva Conventions, "There is no indication that there is any category of armed conflict that is not covered by the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Conventions apply to the totality of a conflict including the regular forces, irregulars (whether or not privileged combatants) and civilians" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 1141-42).

The rhetorical moves deployed by the Administration to render the provisions of the Geneva Conventions "quaint" and "obsolete" function to undermine both the credibility and relevance of the Conventions so as to enable the eventual dismissal of much more substantive aspects of the Geneva Conventions:

First, some of the language of the GPW [Geneva Conventions Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War] is undefined (it prohibits, for example, 'outrages upon personal dignity' and 'inhuman treatment'), and it is difficult to predict with confidence what actions might be deemed to constitute violations of the relevant provisions of GPW (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 120).

The scripting of both "outrages upon personal dignity" and "inhuman treatment" as amorphous, "undefined" and therefore vacuous categories functionally enables these same categories to be dismissed in their application to both Taliban and al

Qaeda detainees. It goes without saying that precisely what was unleashed upon the prisoners of Abu Ghraib was a combination of outrages upon personal dignity and inhuman treatment. And, despite the revelations of torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib, the Pentagon, in the revision of its *Army Field Manual* (which outlines "core instructions to US soldiers worldwide") is "pushing for its new policy on prisoner detention to omit a key tenet of the Geneva Conventions that bans 'humiliating and degrading treatment' "(Barnes 2006: 9). The key tenet that has been slated for omission is Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, "which bans torture and cruel treatment of prisoners, whether lawful combatants or traditional prisoners of war" (Barnes 2006: 9). In justifying this key omission, the Pentagon has argued that Article 3 "creates an 'unintentional sanctuary' that could allow al-Qaeda members to avoid telling interrogators what they know" (Barnes 2006: 9). The violent twists of logic that inscribe this position need to be unpacked: a key tenet in an international convention against torture and cruel treatment of prisoners of war *unintentionally* generates a space of sanctuary from violence and abuse for captive prisoners and thus needs to be omitted and disregarded from the U.S. code of military practice!

The voluminous exchange of memos between President Bush and his legal advisers discloses a paper trail driven by the need to construct an elaborate appearance of a "legal rationale" that will legitimate torture. One of the most disturbing memos was issued by the Office of Legal Counsel, US Department of Justice to Alberto Gonzales, Counsel for the President:

You have asked for our Office's views regarding the standards of conduct under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

or Punishment as implemented by Sections 2340-2340A of the title of the United States Code. We conclude below that Section 2340A proscribes acts inflicting, and that are specifically intended to inflict, severe pain or suffering, whether mental or physical. Those acts must be of an extreme nature to rise to the level of torture within the meaning of Section 2340A and the Convention. We further conclude that certain acts may be cruel, inhuman, or degrading, but still not produce pain and suffering of the requisite intensity to fall within Section 2340A's proscription against torture. We conclude by examining possible defenses that would negate any claim that certain interrogation methods violate the statute (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 172).

Putting to the side the examination of a convenient list of "possible defences" that might offer the perpetrators of torture legal impunity, the Office of Legal Counsel is here promulgating what would appear to be a finely nuanced biopolitical program of torture that pivots on questions of "intensity" and "severity". Torture is here positioned as only coming into ontological existence when the torturers produce levels of pain that are "of an extreme nature". Torture is, through this move, circumscribed by an ontological ground that must be, at every turn, shadowed by the possibility of death. The disturbing consequences of this biopolitical circumscription are clinically and lucidly elaborated under Section B of this memo, under the rubric of "Severe Pain or Suffering":

The key statutory phrase in the definition of torture is the statement that acts amount to torture if they cause 'severe physical or mental pain or suffering.'.... Section 2340 makes plain that the infliction of pain or suffering per se, whether it is physical or mental, is insufficient to amount to torture. Instead, the text

provides that pain or suffering must be 'severe'. The statute does not, however, define the term 'severe'. In the absence of such a definition, we construe a statutory term in accordance with its ordinary or natural meaning.... These statutes suggest that 'severe pain', as used in Section 2340, must rise to a similarly high level – the level that would ordinarily be associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as *death, organ failure, or serious impairment of bodily functions* – in order to constitute torture (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 176. My emphasis).

Torture, then, is delimited to the infliction of pain such that it either causes death or, alternatively, places the victim within the fatal parameters of "organ failure or serious impairment of bodily functions". Any violent action inflicted on the victim that fails to produce potentially fatal results is thereby quarantined from qualifying as torture. In terms of military doctrine, this extraordinary qualification must be seen as enabling and legitimating all the acts of violence performed on the prisoners of Abu Ghraib – as long as they did not result in death. In the wake of this fatal circumscription, torture is officially sanctioned along a continuum of carefully managed intensities, punctuated by levels of pain that, the reflexively disciplined torturer 'knows', must not go beyond that defined level of intensity that will place his or her victim within the domain of possible death.

Articulated here is a biopolitical economy of torture that is predicated on an objectifying theatricalisation of pain. This objectifying theatricalisation of pain demands the victim produce an intelligible, codified range of significations that will alert the torturer to the fact that he or she is crossing a seemingly visible and intelligible line in

the exercise of violence and the production of pain toward a clearly discernible death. This semiotics of torture produces a body that communicates its intensities of pain to the torturer in an apparently unequivocal manner, signalling through its repertoire of cries, moans, screams or faints whether or not the victim is approaching the irreversible line where she or he crosses over to death. Posited here is the notion of the torturer as a type of hermeneut, decoding and interpreting the symptomatology of pain and anguish offered up by the victim's body. The torturer plies the body, tears, brutalises and violates its surfaces and its interior. In the process, the torturer is positioned as semiotically intextuating the body: every injury is available to be interpreted as a sign that will communicate to the torturer precisely where, along this clearly legible continuum of pain (mild to severe), the victim is located. Inscribed within this economy of torture is a double violence: at the same time that the body is violently compelled to perform a repertoire of signs of trauma, the victim must speak the linguistic truth of confession, delivering up a narrative of secrets that fundamentally supplement the truth-in-violence exercised upon her or his body.

Let me quote once again the key section from the memo issued by the Office of Legal Counsel: "These statutes suggest that 'severe pain', as used in Section 2340, must rise to a similarly high level – the level that would ordinarily be associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as *death, organ failure, or serious impairment of bodily functions* – in order to constitute torture" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 176. My emphasis). Within this seemingly rigorous circumscription of torture, the facticity of torture *qua* torture really only comes into being,

paradoxically, in the death of the victim. The veridicality of torture, its truth-value, must be seen as ultimately predicated on the production of death. If one pursues the legal rationale of this memo to its logical conclusion, at the moment of the victim's death, the torturer is finally confronted with the incontrovertible evidence of having produced *torture as such*: the cadaver of the victim bears mute testimony to this fact. Before the unarguable evidence of this fact, the victim had merely been on a 'journey' toward torture. Within this teleological economy of biopolitical violence, it is only the terminus in death that establishes the fact that torture as such has taken place.

If the army doctrine found in Field Manual 34-52, *Intelligence Interrogation*, 28 September 1992, clearly acknowledges that: "When using interrogation techniques, certain applications of approaches and techniques may approach the line between lawful actions and unlawful actions. It may often be difficult to determine where lawful actions end and where unlawful actions begin" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 675) -- then, in the context of this biopolitical economy of torture that I have been mapping, the 'hermeneutical' question as to whether or not torture, and thus unlawful action, has taken place can only be definitively answered in the death of the victim. Moreover, as the American Bar Association makes clear in its response to the torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib:

Section 2340A defines torture to be any 'act committed by a person under color of law specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain...' The Administration has interpreted this "specific intent" language to virtually eliminate its use against torturers: '[E]ven if the defendant knows that severe pain

will result from his actions, if causing such harm is not his objective, he lacks the requisite specific intent even though the defendant did not act in good faith'. So long as the purpose is to get information, this interpretation suggests that any means may be used (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 1139).

In the face of the policy decisions, cited above, that formally and legally established a state of exception with regard to the practice of torture in the context of the "new paradigm", the investigative reports produced by the military in the wake of the disclosure of the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib are characterised by the most flagrant disingenuousness in their shifting of blame to a few "aberrant" individuals. *The Mikolashek Report* (Department of the Army, the Inspector General, Detainee Operations Inspection, 21 July, 2004) argues that:

Based on this inspection, we were unable to identify system failures that resulted in incidents of abuse. These incidents of abuse resulted from the failure of individuals to follow known standards of discipline and Army Values and, in some cases, the failure of a few leaders to enforce those standards of discipline (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 636-37).

In the context of policy directives issued from the highest office in the land, the *Mikolashek Report* proceeds to conclude that "the DAIG [Department of the Army Inspectors General] did not identify a system cause for the abuse incidents" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 652). The systematicity of policy directives sanctioning torture must here be occluded, as a system effect is transmuted into a local, and thus contained, error generated by a few aberrant individuals. In his searing radio broadcasts from prison, Mumia Abu-Jamal has drawn repeated attention to

the systemic status of racialised violence within U.S. prisons as something the U.S. military has exported to Abu Ghraib. Abu-Jamal has demonstrated how the U.S. military has sent prison personnel, such as Lane McCotter (who has an established record of violence within the U.S.'s "internal gulags"), to Abu Ghraib: "The horrific treatment of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib has its dark precedents in prisons and police stations across America" (2004a; 2004b. See Pugliese forthcoming for a more detailed discussion of the export of the U.S. prison-military-industrial complex to places like Abu Ghraib).

In both her autobiography and a recent interview, Janis Karpinski, the former Commander in charge of rebuilding the civilian prison system in post-Saddam Iraq, including Abu Ghraib prison, describes how Major General Geoffrey Miller, Commander, Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, was "sent to Abu Ghraib to review prison interrogation procedures" (2006: 197). Arriving on the 31st August 2003, he declared "he was going to 'Gitmoize' the operation; that meant he was going to extend his procedures [for interrogation of prisoners] at Guantanamo Bay to Abu Ghraib specifically" (Karpinski and Adams 2006; Karpinski 2006: 197). Evidenced here is the official transposition of Guantanamo Bay interrogation and torture techniques to Abu Ghraib – a transposition effectively sanctioned by the imprimatur of the President's "new paradigm" and the suspension of the Geneva Conventions. Karpinski quotes Miller as declaring soon after his arrival at Abu Ghraib: "'Look, the first thing you have to do is treat these prisoners like dogs. If they ever get the idea that they're anything more than dogs, you've lost control of your interrogation'" (Karpinski 2006: 198). When asked how far up the chain of command responsibility for the torture and abuse that occurred at Abu Ghraib

should go, Karpinski replied: "It needs to go all the way up certainly to the Pentagon, to the Secretary of Defense, his Deputy Secretary for Intelligence, who was literally joined at the hip with General Miller, directing how interrogations should be conducted and other techniques that should be developed; and we know that the Secretary of Defense does not work in a vacuum so that he reports to the Vice President in conjunction with the President" (Karpinski and Adams 2006).

Where, in the official investigative reports into the torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib, the policy directives sanctioning torture through the suspension of the Geneva Convention are acknowledged they are shown to have been misapplied by being deployed in inappropriate contexts. *The Schlesinger Report*, Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD [Department of Defense] Detention Operations, August 2004, under the rubric of "Policy" argues that "Interrogators and lists of techniques [of interrogation] circulated from Guantanamo and Afghanistan to Iraq... It is important to note that techniques effective under carefully controlled conditions at Guantanamo became far more problematic when they *migrated* and were not adequately safeguarded" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 911. My emphasis). The critical term "migrated" recurs in key moments throughout this report. It emerges, indeed, as a type of symptomatic repetition: "Law of war policy and decisions germane to OEF [Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan] *migrated, often quite innocently*, into decision matrices for OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom]" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 949. My emphasis). Inscribed here is a type of impersonal migratory drift of policy that possesses no agent or official source to whom responsibility can be assigned. This

continental drift of policy is scripted as occurring through an indeterminate process of "migration" that, paradoxically, despite the fact it possesses no named agent or subject, proceeds "innocently" to influence "decision matrices" in Iraq's Abu Ghraib.

It is unsurprising that these moments of official disavowal repeatedly lay the blame for the torture and abuse that occurred at Abu Ghraib at the feet of a small number of individuals. The Fay-Jones Report, Investigation of Intelligence Activities at Abu Ghraib, August 2004, concludes that "the primary cause of the most egregious violent and sexual abuses was the individual criminal propensities of the particular perpetrators" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 1007). The American Bar Association Report to the House of Delegates, August 2004, makes short shrift of these official disavowals: "what does seem clear is that the memoranda and the decisions of high U.S. officials at the very least contributed to a culture in which prisoner abuse became widespread" (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 1137). It was this very combination of government and military memoranda and the work of agents on the ground, such as Major General Miller, that enabled the institutional and structural violence of "Gitmoizing" Abu Ghraib prison. The systemic deployment of practices of torture captured in the "Gitmoizing" neologism is further evidenced by recent reports of torture and abuse at Bagram prison in Afghanistan: "From accounts of former detainees, military officials and soldiers who served there, a picture emerges of a place that is in many ways rougher and more bleak than its counterpart in Cuba" (Golden and Schmitt 2006).

Geocorpographies of Torture

In coining the term “geocorpographies” I want to encapsulate in one word the following thesis: that the body, in any of its manifestations, is always geopolitically situated and graphically inscribed by signs, discourses, regimes of visibility and so on. Its geopolitical markings can only be abstracted through a process of symbolic and political violence. The geopolitical significations that invest the body are constitutive of its cultural intelligibility. In arguing that what was perpetrated at Abu Ghraib prison was a geocorpography of torture, my aim is to bring into focus the violent enmeshment of the flesh and blood of the body within the geopolitics of war, race and empire.

In the context of the imperial war unsuccessfully being waged *outside* of Abu Ghraib prison, the prison itself must be read as a space that was mobilised by the U.S. in order to reproduce, at a micro level, another theatre of war. As theatre of war, in which the Geneva Conventions were politically suspended, Abu Ghraib operated in terms of a space where the power to torture and kill could be exercised with impunity. Abu Ghraib must be understood in the same terms that Frantz Fanon deployed in order to describe what he called the “colonized sector”. In the “colonized sector”, writes Fanon, “you die anywhere, from anything. It’s a world of no space.... The colonized sector is a sector that crouches and covers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate. It’s a sector of niggers, a sector of towelheads” (2004: 4-5). The violence of colonial occupation evacuates space: there is no space; rather, in this colonised sector, bodies become coextensive of space as such: they are the ground upon which military operations are performed and through which control of the colonised country is secured.

Within the internal confines of Abu Ghraib prison, the geocorpographies of the Arab prisoners became metonymic adjuncts of the external terrain of Iraq – as territory to be raped, mutilated into submission and conquered. Every act of insurgency exercised by Iraqis outside the prison could be, in a specular and symbolic manner, contained within the prison through the literal punishment and torture of the Iraqi prisoners. “Torture”, writes Elaine Scary, “is a grotesque piece of compensatory drama.... because the reality of power is so highly contestable, the regime is so unstable, torture is being used” (1987: 28 and 29). Through practices of torture on the subjugated bodies of Iraqi prisoners, an imperial-white-heteronormative homophobic masculinity could be ritually, theatrically secured. Nowhere is this fact more graphically evidenced than in the image of a U.S. soldier sitting on an Iraqi detainee sandwiched between two stretchers: stripped naked, immobilised between the stretchers and crushed under the weight of the triumphant soldier, the geocorpography of Iraq is here rendered as effectively vanquished.

The crushing violence of this image evokes the shadow archive of white supremacist lynchings of African Americans; the tortures perpetrated at Abu Ghraib resonate with this horror archive on a number of levels (see Davis 2005: 52-55; Pugliese forthcoming). Situated within the racialised regimes of geocorpographies, the violent subjugation of Arabs can be seen to be coextensive with the white supremacist exercise of power over African American bodies in order to secure, symbolically and physically, control over their absolute others: “whites lynched African-Americans”, write Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck, “when they felt threatened in some way – economically, politically, or socially” (1992: 3). In this

context, Tolnay and Beck identify lynching “as a mechanism of state-sponsored terrorism designed to maintain a degree of leverage over the African-American population” (1992: 50).

Prosthetic White Citizenship

Tolnay and Beck argue, in their analysis of the history of lynching in the U.S., that lynching served “as a symbolic manifestation of the unity of white supremacy” (1992: 50). This thesis would appear, on the surface, not to be applicable when transposed to the context of Abu Ghraib in that some of the military personnel who tortured the Iraqi prisoners were non-white. I would argue, however, that within the confines of this Iraqi prison, in which Abu Ghraib was made to signify as Orientalist prison-seraglio, the wielding of power through practices of torture must be seen as securing and reproducing a coercive form of unity of white supremacy that cuts across the actual ethnicities, both white and non-white, of the military personnel who performed the practices of torture. The multi-ethnic constituency of the military personnel at Abu Ghraib, in scripting the Arab prisoners as so many “sand niggers”, participated in the collective reproduction of whiteness; whiteness here understood as that form of racialised power institutionally sanctioned to inflict pain and death on the coloured other with impunity. The scripting of the Arab prisoners as “sand niggers” enabled the non-white military personnel, momentarily at least, to recalibrate their status along the white supremacist racial hierarchy and resignify their own raciality in terms of what I would term “prostheticised whites” – that is, coloured subjects contingently and proximally positioned as whites because of their prosthetic assumption and reproduction of white supremacist values and practices.

As I have argued elsewhere (Pugliese 2005), the critical power in conceptualising race in terms of a *prosthesis* lies in the way in which it effectively dislocates race from its biological ground, as a type of naturalised biological datum, in order to disclose its status as *technè*, that is, as a biopolitical technology of power. In the context of Abu Ghraib and the multi-ethnic constituency of its torturers, the non-white soldiers who also participated in the torture of Arab prisoners must be seen as assuming whiteness in terms of a *scopic prosthesis*. As *scopic prosthetics* of whiteness, visual regimes of white supremacy are positioned as technologies of power that are contingently made available for uptake by non-white subjects. As *scopic prosthetic* of whiteness, the physiology of seeing is disclosed to be mediated by visual regimes of racialised power that structure how one looks and what one sees; the term ‘*scopic*’ underscores, in this context, the voyeuristic dimensions of looking that inscribes this particular visual economy. This *scopic prosthetic* must be seen as fundamentally enabled by the political, governmental and military exercise of white supremacy. In the assumption of this *scopic prosthetic* of whiteness, the assignation of whiteness could be temporarily secured by non-white soldiers through the production of violence against the Arab prisoners.

Whiteness is here understood not in terms of a biologically essentialised attribute, exclusively determined by one’s phenotypical features (colour of skin, texture of hair and so on); rather, whiteness must be seen to operate in terms of a transnational technology of racialised power that is simultaneously contingent upon specific sites, subjects and relations. Whiteness, as Vron Ware argues, “is not reducible to skin color but refers to ways of thinking and behaving

'steeped' in histories of raciology" (2001: 205). As such, at Abu Ghraib, phenotypically non-white military subjects are enabled symbolically to assume a type of prostheticised whiteness in the face of another non-white subject. In Abu Ghraib prison, through the exercise of violence, whiteness – as a technology of racialised power invested with autonomy, authority, control and mastery – is secured through historically and culturally codified rituals of defilement, coprophilia, necrophilia, beatings and rape upon the body of the indigene, slave, detainee, victim.

The motility and prosthetic nature of raciality and racial power that I am attempting to delineate occupies that opaque space that Fanon terms a "penumbra". This penumbra, Fanon argues, "dislocates consciousness" and it can mean that in select contexts "some blacks can be whiter than the whites" (2004: 93). Within this penumbral schema of raciality and racial power, whiteness operates at once as embodied performative and as extra-biological; as such, it is contingently made available to be prosthetically grafted and taken up by non-white subjects. One could argue, in this context, that it is precisely this prosthetic form of whiteness that invests it with the dynamic resilience that enables it to secure, in Edward Said's terms, its "flexible positional superiority" (1991: 7) – regardless of context and of the phenotypical categorisation of its agents. In viewing whiteness in terms of a prosthetic technology of power, the dexterity, resilience and inventiveness of the category in terms of its ability to negotiate, rewrite and govern racial borders and categories becomes culturally and historically intelligible.

The assumption of prosthetic whiteness by non-white subjects within the context

of Abu Ghraib cannot, however, be simply reduced to the exercise of a type of coercive psycho-dynamic of group solidarity driven by localised white supremacist relations of power. This localised view of what occurred at Abu Ghraib is too reductive: it fails to grasp the larger geopolitical and economic networks of white power that invest what unfolded in this military prison. The white supremacist dynamics operative at Abu Ghraib must be sutured back to the larger corpus of the U.S. nation and its ethnoscape of hierarchically organised relations of racialised biopolitical power. Operative at Abu Ghraib is what I term elsewhere "infrastructural whiteness", that is, the effaced structurality of whiteness as constituting a type of infrastructure that enables the reproduction of unequal relations of racialised power that translate into economic, political and social disadvantage for non-white subjects (Pugliese 2007). Situated within this macro context of infrastructural whiteness, the U.S. army operates as a conduit to escape structural poverty and economic disadvantage for Asian, Latina and Latino, and African American subjects. According to Lisa Cacho, over one quarter of employees in the U.S. army are Asian or Latino or Latina (2004).

In her work, Cacho has tracked the manner in which the army functions as a covert citizenship processing plant for illegal immigrants in the U.S. (2004). Douglas Gillison, moreover, has exposed the way in which U.S. Marine recruiters have been "selling and delivering counterfeit documents to illegal aliens in order for them to join the service" (2005). As Cacho argues, entry into the military is often represented for these ethnic groups as a route of escape from their illegal status, as citizenship can be conferred to non-citizens who serve in the military – even posthumous

citizenship can be conferred to serving non-citizens. In other words, placing one's life at stake in a war zone earns the illegal alien a right to "surrogate white citizenship". Cacho brings into sharp focus the double standards at work here: the life-risking dangers entailed for illegal aliens in the crossing of national borders will not earn the right to citizenship; however, life-risking violence in theatres of war effectively transmutes the illegal into the legal/citizen subject. Cacho delineates the effaced gendered dimensions of this national economy of illegal subjects militarily converted into surrogate white citizens: Latina and Asian women who reside in the U.S. under the status of illegal aliens play a fundamental, yet unacknowledged, role in servicing the military: "their reproductive labour enables the sourcing of citizens for war" (2004).

Situated in this context, I would name the "surrogate white citizenship" that is conferred on illegal aliens once they have been processed militarily "prosthetic white citizenship". Prosthetic white citizenship is what is conferred upon non-white subjects of the white nation. As a prosthetic, it is a citizenship that cannot be corporeally owned or nativised as the prosthetic of white citizenship remains visibly an adjunct to the non-white body. Understood within the doxic binaries of common sense epistemologies, prosthetic white citizenship is not of the body; rather, as *technè* (technology) in opposition to *physis* (the natural), it can never be corporeally nativised. Prosthetic white citizenship, as a technology of power, is always imposed or conferred from the outside (of the body); as white *technè*, it can only ever be taken up by its non-white subjects as simulation, precisely as a type of prosthetic limb that always gives away its adjunct status as non-native artifice. Even as prosthetic white

citizenship can be conferred upon non-white subjects, it can, precisely because it is viewed in terms of an artificial adjunct to the non-white subject, be withheld and erased. I refer here, in the Australian context, to the recent deportation of the non-white Australian citizen, Vivian Alvarez Solon, back to the Philippines by Australian immigration officials and to the recent report documenting the wrongful imprisonment of up to ten Australian residents, including children and the mentally ill, within Immigration Detention Centres over the last few years (Metherell 2006: 7).

I mark this larger transnational economy in order to underscore the infrastructural whiteness – legislative, political, military and economic -- that enabled the white supremacist violence that unfolded within the confines of Abu Ghraib.

NIGHT SHIFT: ABU GHRAIB

In between the blows, under cover
Of the hood, you listen for the whisper of the fist
In the darkness it will come
Punctuating the sessions

Pivoting on a box, hooded mannequin trailing
Leads and wires, each surge of current
Electrifies you, the darkness crackles
Sparks fly and you jerk and writhe amidst
Fumes of singed flesh hair

For a moment, you radiate an aura --
A spasm of light exposes
A circle of boots that have already kneaded
Your flesh and ironed
Flat your vertebrae

The blood smeared across
The tiles traces the contours of dismembered
Geographies, cuts and confusions pool
Blood in lakes and estuaries that flow
Toward no ocean, moraines of splintered bone
Litter this landscape, tufts of hair
Wrenched from their sockets are wedged
Between the hinges of doors where heads were
conveniently
Jammed, glistening shards of teeth litter

This bruised landscape in which uric seepings
Sour the ground

The tiles offer a grid
Against which to measure this disorder –
It is impossible to tell where your bodies begin
And end here there are no bodies only
Dismembered parts – legs, arms, buttocks
They are ordered into geometries of violence
That configure a kaleidoscope of heaped
Torsos and appendages –
In a moment of levity and triumph
The soldiers scale this human pyramid and
Stake the flag of freedom
Into the back of one of the prisoners.

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Notes

¹ I have retained the oral elements of the paper in order to mark the politically inscribed dimensions of the location at which it was delivered.