Captured by the Camera’s Eye: Guantánamo Photographic Representations and the Framing of Identities in the Global War on Terrorism

“one did not need to be at the camps; the power of the image made everyone who saw the photos into a witness” (Zelizer, 1998, 14)

Introduction

In January 2002, images of the detention of prisoners held at US Naval Station Guantánamo Bay as part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWoT) were released by the US Department of Defense, a public relations move that Donald Rumsfeld later referred to as ‘probably unfortunate’ (Rose, 2004, p.2). These images, widely reproduced in the media, quickly came to symbolise the detention facility and the practices at work there. Six years on, the images of orange-clad prisoners (or detainees as they are officially known) kneeling, being carried or led remain a powerful symbol of US detention practices, whether invoked by news media, human rights activists or producers of popular culture. However, since the release of these initial photographs from Guantánamo, the ‘expeditionary’ detention facility has evolved into Joint Task Force-Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO), the specialised integrated facility for detention and interrogation. JTF-GTMO has spread across multiple sites and now has the capacity to hold over 2,000 detainees. Official images of these new facilities released by the Department of Defense have followed, documenting this evolution and providing one of the few access points for the public to the workings of US detention practices.  

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1 This is not the first time that Guantánamo as a detention facility was featured so prominently in the media. During the early 1990s, public attention was focused on the coverage and subsequent controversy over Camp
Readings of these images of Guantánamo vary however. To some the images represent the excesses of US power in the GWoT: popular newspapers in the US such as the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, prominent organisations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Amnesty International, as well as figures such as President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State Colin Powell, have all publicly condemned the facility (Colin Powell says, 2007; Associated Press, 2005). To others, the images symbolise retribution for the events of September 11, 2001, and the need to “do what it takes” to provide security for US citizens. Opinion polls in the United States reflect this split, and suggest the presence of a sustained, albeit diminishing, level of support for Guantánamo. For example:

- Immediately following the coverage and publication of the images of detainees arriving at Guantánamo in January 2002, 72% of Americans supported the treatment of “Taliban soldiers” there and only 4% opposed it (Gallup, 2002).
- In July 2003, 65% supported holding suspects without trial in a military prison while 28% opposed it (Washington Post-ABC Poll, 2003).
- In 2005, despite the revelations of Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse and the Supreme Courts rulings against the government in the *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* and *Rasul v. Bush* cases the previous year, support ranged from 58% of Americans approving of Guantánamo (compared to 36% who disapproved) (Gallup, 2005), to seven out of ten believing that prisoners were being treated “better than they deserve” or “about right” (Rasmussen, 2005).
- When asked who was responsible for the abuse of prisoners – whether in Guantánamo or Abu Ghraib - 48% believed the ‘bad apples’ were responsible, while 36% blamed official policies (Pew, 2005). Most (54%) believed that Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib do not represent a wider pattern of abuse.
- In July 2006, the majority of Americans continued to support the government’s policy of holding suspected terrorists without charge or trial by as much as 44% (Pew, 2006) or 57% (Washington-ABC, 2006), with 67% of Americans confident that the US was protecting their rights and 51% confident that Guantánamo had made the US safer from terrorism (Washington-ABC, 2006).
- Finally, as recently as November 2007, more than half of Americans still favoured keeping Guantánamo open (Gallup, 2007).

In other words, despite the continued circulation of the images of Guantánamo and the associated sustained high-profile criticism, both nationally and internationally, six years on a majority of Americans continued to support the existence of JTF-Guantánamo and the efforts of US forces there as part of the GWoT. Given the content of the images released from Guantánamo, how might an interpretation or reading of these images support the US government’s policy of maintaining the facility indefinitely and help account for, rather then undermine, its continued existence?

Bulkeley, the Haitian refugee camp established in 1991-1993 to house HIV-positive refugees denied entry to the United States (see Farmer 2005 for a more detailed account).
To date analyses of Guantánamo have focused on the implications for law (Aradau, 2007; Michaelsen and Shershow, 2004), the debate over its ‘exceptional’ character (Isin and Rygiel, 2007; Neal, 2006; Gregory, 2006; Johns, 2005), or the contest over definitions of the detainees (Howell, 2007; Masters, 2007), with the overall focus largely on examining the linguistic practices at work. Non-linguistic practices, however, are also an important part of the discourse surrounding Guantánamo. As Weldes suggests, discourse is not constituted through linguistic practices alone, but through non-linguistic as well; they ‘are mutually constitutive and jointly productive of the meanings of the social world’ (1999, p.110). The images of Guantánamo as non-linguistic articulations offer insights into the manner in which subject positions, or identities, are constituted, specifically how these subject positions are constructed through security discourses that draw on visual representations. They therefore offer a new and potentially instructive additional way of understanding how it is that American support for detention continues to be strong.

With regards to Guantánamo, the construction of terrorist identities articulated by the Bush administration and enacted by US personnel requires inordinate amounts of power: from the occupation of Cuba itself, through the construction, staffing and regulation of the detention facility and the military city that surrounds it (including building the legitimacy and support this entails), for the identities, or subject positions, that have consequently been used to legitimise the indefinite detention and torture (or in the words of the administration ‘harsh interrogation techniques’) of individuals. These efforts have been facilitated by the visual representations of Guantánamo, working with the linguistic representations, to create an interpretative frame (Butler, 2007). This is therefore part of the performative power of the state: the power ‘to orchestrate and ratify what will be called reality or, more philosophically, the reach and extent of the ontological field’ (Butler, 2007, p.952). As Judith Butler argues, through the control of the representations of war, in this case the GWoT, a state establishes frames for viewing and therefore for understanding war. In other words, a state succeeds in generating support by controlling what can be seen and what cannot, formulating and renewing a political background of understanding and legitimacy ‘through the frame’:

In this sense, the frame takes part in the active interpretation of the war compelled by the state; it is not just a visual image awaiting an interpretation, it is itself interpreting actively, even forcibly. (Butler, 2007, p.952)

What is in the frame generated by the state becomes the representation of the war and therefore its visual record. In controlling the frame, these images therefore become ‘not things we think about, but things we think with’ (Gillis in Zelizer, 1998, p.3) and think through. In terms of photography, settings, access, rules or

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2 In using articulation I borrow from Weldes, taking it to mean “a process through which meaning is produced …and temporarily fixed by establishing chains of connotations among different linguistic [and non-linguistic] elements” (1999, p.98). These linkages, or articulations, are not fixed, but through repeated usage come to appear natural or common-sense.
expectations regarding photography determine the frame and therefore any photographer who accepts these restrictions is operating within the established frame, ‘is embedded in the frame itself’ (2007, p.952). This may be especially true in the case of Guantánamo where the only point of access for the public to detention practices is through the sanctioned images of the facilities at Guantánamo.

Secondly, while the very definition of what is included in the frame is important, it cannot be determined without understanding or recognising that which is left out. Through the process of framing, an active force of delineating the boundaries between what is included and what is not is at work: ‘we cannot understand this field of representability simply by examining its explicit contents, since it is constituted fundamentally by what is cast out and maintained outside the frame within which representations appear’ (Butler, 2007, p.953). As Butler explains, an image that is admissible ‘into the domain of representability’ also ‘signifies the delimiting function of the frame even as, or precisely because, it does not represent it’ (2007, p.953). Applying this to the process of identity construction, as Campbell does, the identity of the ‘us’ cannot be completed without the constitution of a dangerous ‘them’ outside (1998). Taking this one step further, it is the boundary itself that becomes important, the delineation between the inside and the outside. This is especially important as the boundary itself is mutable and a site of contention. Determining the boundary of the frame is an act of power as much as is defining the articulations and the contents of the frame, and therefore the effort to fix the boundary is ‘a nonfigurable operation of power that works to delimit the domain of representability itself’ (Butler, 2007, p.953), and therefore must also be examined.

Returning to the framing of Guantánamo, control over the representation of Guantánamo is therefore enacted through what is seen in the images, through what is not seen, and through the establishment and movement of this boundary itself. In other words, the practices captured and consequently framed by the camera’s eye are articulations that work within the wider GWoT discourse to constitute identities, for terrorists and guards who watch and control them ‘inside’, as well as for the US ‘outside’. The boundary used to delineate this framing however is not fixed, as can been demonstrated by the US (re)framing of Guantánamo representations over the years.

In order to explore these images and this (re)framing for an insight into the constitution of these subject positions and the consequent representation of captured terrorists ‘outside the wire’, I begin first with an exploration of the images themselves, focusing specifically on the control over their production and initial circulation, moving to their (re)production, (re)interpretation and (re)articulation (specifically by those whom I categorise as part of the Guantánamo resistance movement), and finally to the shifting of the frame itself in response to this resistance. The content of these images, as well as well as their context(s), are

3 A general theme of this work is therefore these boundaries between inside/outside and the different politics this entails – terrorists versus guards, terrorists and guards versus soldiers on the base, base staff versus visitors, those who have been to the base versus those who have not (in the US and in the world), the US versus the rest of the world. And those that subvert these boundaries entirely: terrorists acting as guards on the inside, guards who are more inside than others, and guards becoming terrorists on the outside, for example. These images reinforce the former but do not capture the complexity of the latter.
interesting for a number of reasons, beginning with the fact that these images have been made public at all.

Seeing Inside the Wire: Controlling Production

From the Crimean War onwards, cameras have been used to document war, increasing in (apparent) verisimilitude with time and technology (Sontag, 2004, p.34). The style and format of these representations of war, however, generate an aesthetics that depends significantly on whether it is ‘our’ war or ‘theirs’. When it comes to looking at wars involving American forces, representations of war are dominated by the representations of the ‘front-line’, though on closer examination this is most often limited to ‘a catalogue of armaments’, images of ‘our troops’ preparing, and of ‘our leaders’ (Griffin, 2004); rarely does combat or the cost of combat appear. The GWoT does not escape or change this pattern, but amplifies it. Embedded journalists, military photographers and soldiers engaging in ‘military tourism’ (Lisle, forthcoming) are a constant, seemingly unlimited source of these images, distributed through traditional press and a growing number of soldier’s own web postings (‘milblogs’) (Hewitt, 2004). Yet these new, and in some ways more varied sources of images, continue to (re)produce the traditional representations (Griffin, 2004, p.397). This narrow definition of war photography means that other representations of war are often left out – whether it is the images of war dead, of damage caused, or images of the detention of ‘our’ prisoners. As Griffin demonstrates, of the thousands of images surveyed, less than 1% of the images used to represent the GWoT and the Iraq War included ‘others’, and no images of detention were included (2004). So, whether justified by military necessity, national security, or as complying with the Geneva Conventions (to which I will return shortly), images of detention are not part of the traditional visible representations of war – with the interesting exception of Guantánamo.

Moreover, in contrast to other detention facilities in the GWoT such as Bucca in Iraq or Bagram in Afghanistan), Guantánamo maintains a relatively closed visitation programme - families are not permitted to visit under any circumstances, while journalists, ICRC aid workers and lawyers must go through an elaborate and lengthily application and screening process (cite travel doc, Stafford Smith, 2007). Visitors (if granted access) are provided a military escort and are subject to a series of regulations regarding their movements, including strict rules limiting photography inside the facility. Since late 2002, following the introduction of new regulations regarding photography, any photos that are taken of detainees must be out of focus, from behind a detainee or cropped to remove the detainee’s face in order to respect

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4 We are not permitted to see the dead – whether civilians or American soldiers – as this may affect our sensitivities and as in the case of the GWoT this may be considered anti-American and unpatriotic (Butler, 2007, p.951).

5 This is however not the first time that images of the detention of prisoners by Americans have been captured on film. Publicising the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II was part of official government policy (cite?), while the capture and treatment of Viet Cong in Vietnam was documented and became part of the anti-war campaign (cite?).

6 Military officials permit families to visit Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib by appointment, providing access to a specialised visitor centre, while at Bagram a video-linkup between detainees and family is available (DoD, 2007; DoD, 2005).
'the spirit of the Geneva Conventions’ (Rosenberg, 2008). Furthermore, as a member of the press or political establishment, visitor access may also consist solely of a pre-programmed guided tour of the facilities, with stops at the chaplaincy, the hospital, the now disused Camp X-Ray site (‘to see the weeds growing’) or a ‘tour cell’ (a demonstration cell used exclusively for visits) (Rosenberg, 2008; Yee, 2007; Rose, 2004). Finally, when leaving the naval station, visitors and personnel alike are again subject to search in order, ostensibly, to prevent the loss or theft of confidential material, which includes preventing the release of images on cameras or laptops that have not been cleared (Rosenberg, 2008). Through these escorted visits, what visitors are permitted to see, photograph and (re)produce for ‘outside’ representation while on site and ‘inside the wire’ is strictly controlled.

But despite the fact that strict controls over the facilities exist, images of Guantánamo are nonetheless readily available and widely circulated. In sharp contrast, no other site (with the exception of the now infamous images leaked from Abu Ghraib) has received the extent of media or photographic coverage that Guantánamo has. Seven years since the start if the GWoT and six years since the start of the Iraq war, very few images are available of military detention facilities other than Guantánamo. Camp Bucca and Camp Nama in Iraq, the Naval Consolidated Brig in South Carolina, and the internment facilities in Diego Garcia, all used to hold prisoners in the GWoT, remain invisible. In contrast, despite the challenge in taking pictures in Guantánamo, there are thousands of photos of Guantánamo from inside the wire, many of which since 2007 have been made available on the JTF-Guantánamo website, and making up part of the ‘virtual tour’ of the facilities (JTF Guantánamo, 2008).

In fact, the most iconic of all the images of Guantánamo - the images of kneeling detainees taken on January 11, 2002, the first day of Camp X-Ray - were produced not by a journalist, but by the only photographer permitted to access the site in those early days, naval photographer Petty Officer Shane McCoy. ‘McCoy was assigned to Combat Camera, an elite unit that took secret pictures not for the public but the Pentagon brass’ (Rosenberg, 2008a). On the authorisation of the Pentagon, as confirmed by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Victoria ‘Torie’ Clarke, and therefore in contrast to the more traditional military policy of not permitting photographs of detention, McCoy was told to ‘Take pictures. Choose some. Write captions. Send them to Washington’ (Rosenberg, 2008a). Shortly after, and again with the approval of the Pentagon (Fleischer, 2002), they appeared on CNN with the aim therefore of making them widely visible.

Therefore, with the exception of a few images that have been successfully smuggled out, the images that have made it ‘outside the wire’ constitute the

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7 Journalist David Rose described his experience of these guided tours as Potemkin-like (2004, p.55).
8 Admittedly, this could also be accounted for by a lack of journalist or public interest in the sites ‘over there’ as much as the level of control over the production of images. Nevertheless, the US administration is not actively promoting these sites to the same degree.
9 To date, for example, I have only been able to locate one image of the Bagram Theatre Internment Facility, a picture of a ‘sally port’ which was posted on Wikipedia as of March 2008.
10 This is not to mention the secret detention facilities allegedly operated by US personnel around the world.
11 This is, however, with one notable exception, Guantánamo Camp 7, which is discussed below.
12 One such illicit photograph is the now infamous image of the orange-clad detainee, hooded and shackled, being led away from the camera taken by photographer Shaun Schwarz and which for example appears in modified form as part of the promotional material for the documentary ‘Taxi to the Dark Side’ (cite?).
majority and have been approved for public release by US officials. This includes tourist snaps like those found in personal memoirs (Yee & Molloy, 2005) or the more ubiquitous official military-approved photographs found on the JTF-Guantánamo website or sold by Getty Images. The result is that, as Butler describes, every photograph that is produced according to these regulations contributes to building an interpretation, to building a frame which helps to generate meaning for the site. So aside from providing insights into the practices at work in the enactment of military detention policies, these images have come to represent Guantánamo, to frame it, to delineate the inside from the outside, and consequently, as will be discussed now, to help constitute a terrorist as well as a US state identity for those watching from ‘outside the wire’. It is through this control that the US administration has attempted to frame, and in many ways succeeded in framing an understanding of Guantánamo and by extension of the GWoT.

**Framing Guantánamo**

The first thing to note on closer examination is that Guantánamo is most often represented not only by one or two images but by several different series of photographs, and that these series as a whole not only reflect the evolution of the detention facilities but (re)produce many of the key articulations in the discourse surrounding US detention practices in the GWoT. While the release and the publication of the ‘orange series’ of photographs parallels the opening and closure of Camp X-Ray, the move to Camp Delta not only meant a corresponding change in photographic content but also an opportunity to change the visual representation, the frame, of the site, which consequently played a significant part in efforts to (re)situate Guantánamo within the public discourse. Since April 2002, instead of the ‘orange series’, two new categories of images have been consistently (re)produced to represent Guantánamo: a ‘white series’, and an ‘empty cell series’, each of which works to introduce a new kind of meaning to the representation of the site. Watching, in particular, the way in which faces and bodies appear, are marked, and disappear within these series provides an insight into the manner in which identities are constituted through the framing of Guantánamo. With this in mind, I therefore turn to a more detailed analysis of the first series, ‘the orange series’, and the resultant framing of Guantánamo for insight into the production of meaning in the GWoT.

**The Orange Series: Seeing Inside the Wire**

When the US administration announced the opening of the detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay, the accompanying images of detainees arriving at Camp X-Ray both produced and released by the Pentagon immediately captured public attention, featuring in many major news outlets. This initial series of images, now iconic, continues to circulate widely and often as the accompanying images for a press report, whether in the US, UK or elsewhere, despite the time lapse since the closure

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of Camp X-ray. It is this series of images that I refer to as the ‘orange series’, a series broadly characterised by an outdoor and tropical setting in which orange-clad figures, shackled, and in some cases blindfolded, kneel, are carried, are led and watched by figures dressed in green military fatigues, and where the camera’s eye is mediated by chain-linked and barbed-wire fences.\(^{14}\)

Despite the reaction of some viewers who read these images as a failure of policy in the GWoT (reaction in the UK for example included *The Mirror’s* publication of the kneeling figures on its front page with the heading ‘Stop This Brutality In Our Name, Mr. Blair’ (2002)\(^ {15}\)), the orange series of images also produced the opposite effect, working with the official discourse to support the existence of terrorists and the role the US has to play in bringing them to justice. Callers to US talk shows in January 2002 ‘were 100 percent behind the Camp X-Ray security measures.’ This supportive reading may have been the product of several key articulations of the elements in the images contributing to a resultant (re)constitution of subjectivities for both terrorists and the US. This includes those practices captured by the camera’s eye of marking the bodies in the images and situating them through their relative positions and surroundings, beginning with the practices of limiting different types of seeing at Guantánamo as a means of identifying subject positions inside the wire.

To start with, within the orange series the faces of the detainees are always hidden from view. Blacked-out goggles, surgical masks, caps, and averted gazes are alternate ways in which detainees were prevented from seeing - whether their surroundings, the guards, or each other (Baltimore Sun, 2002).\(^ {16}\) As justification, this

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\(^{14}\) It is important at this stage to consider the ethics of reproducing these images. I have chosen to include the images, despite the violence that this potentially reproduces, as on any level engaging in an analysis of the images requires a degree of reproduction, whether it is a description and discussion of the images or the images themselves. I feel that in reproducing them, but engaging with them as a point of a more informed critique is preferable to not engaging with them directly. It also offers you the opportunity to look, and not just see, with me for your own reading.

\(^{15}\) In the UK, a poll conducted of Mirror readers found 91% support despite *The Mirror’s* own critical coverage of Guantánamo (Mirror, 2002).

\(^{16}\) The absence of hooding in this frame is important. Hooding does not appear in the images of Guantánamo though it does in the images of the transport to Guantánamo, capture in Afghanistan and in Iraq. This practice has increased dramatically in the GWoT and is hugely controversial. In the context of Iraq, UN representative
practice or covering eyes (as well as their ears and hands) has been attributed on the one hand to the dangerous nature of the individuals being transported. As General Richard Myers, then chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff explained: ‘These are people that would gnaw through hydraulic lines in the back of a C-17 to bring it down...So these are very, very dangerous people, and that’s how they’re being treated’ (CNN, 2002). According to Rumsfeld detainees are ‘(t)hese are extremely dangerous people. One has bitten a guard and at least one other has threatened to kill Americans. These people are committed terrorists...We are keeping them off the streets, the airlines, and out of nuclear power plants. It seems a reasonable thing to do’... detainees are nevertheless being ‘treated humanely today and will be in the future’ (Dowdney et al., 2002). Their ability to see (and hear) has been articulated as dangerous, and covering their faces as shown in the images is for security, firstly the security of the US personnel restraining them but ultimately ‘our’ safety. In other words, it is the nature of the detainees that has dictated these practices and not the US military, but that the US military’s response is humane.

On the other hand, the goggles and surgical masks (along with the practice of capturing detainees with the camera from the side or behind only) have also been explained as a way in which the US is complying with accepted international standards and treating detainees ‘humanely’. These practices not only limit detainees from seeing, and therefore from resisting their capture, but also prevent the viewer from seeing their faces, which would be considered ‘inhumane’. According to Torie Clarke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs from January 2001 to June 2003, the practices of covering detainee faces ‘spares a captive humiliation banned by the Geneva Conventions’ when they are captured on camera. So publishing these images should have communicated and reassured the public that the US was ‘complying with the spirit of the Geneva Conventions’ and treating detainees ‘humanely’ (Rosenberg, 2008a).

This application and the interpretation of the Geneva Conventions with regards to the orange series and photography more generally, however, relies on three factors: that the images in context do not suggest prisoners are being ‘subjected to treatment that is humiliating, insulting, disrespectful, or dangerous’; secondly, that their intent is not to cause ‘insult’ or ‘humiliation’ (including potentially that which may be perceived as humiliation by families and communities); and thirdly, does not make a prisoner individually recognisable.

Sergio Vieira de Mello approached Bremer specifically to discourage the use of hooding of Iraqi detainees which was highly controversial at the time (Power, 2008).

17 As we have since learned, these practices were in part derived from the training delivered to US service personnel in preparation for their possible capture (Mayer, 2007; Eban, 2007) and detention. In other words, this practice of limiting sight therefore owes as much to the US military’s own fears over the likely treatment of ‘us’ by ‘them’.

18 This articulation of the US as humane is a recurrent theme in the discourse of the GWoT (Jackson, 2005, p.136). The US mission in Afghanistan was narrativised at one point as a humanitarian mission to rescue the Afghan people, especially the Afghans ‘womenandchildren’.

19 Until 2005, the US government maintained that the detainees were not prisoners of war and therefore not subject to the protections outlined in the Geneva Conventions, though they would be treated ‘in the spirit of Geneva’ (Rumsfeld, 2004). The U.S. Supreme Court has since ruled in 2006 (Hamdan v. Rumsfeld) that the detainees are protected under the Geneva Conventions, despite the attempt to legally constitute a category outside these regulations, citing in particular the regulations that require those captured to be protected until ‘their status has been determined by a competent tribunal.’ (Supreme Court of the United States, 2006)
It is therefore this final point, that detainees are not individually recognisable, that forms the basis of the US administration’s continued claim to respect the ‘spirit of Geneva’ when it comes to photographic representations. By preventing viewers from seeing detainee’s faces, by *effacing* detainees and removing their individual identities, the US administration claims that they are sparing the captives a public (if not a personal) humiliation.\footnote{Whereas the Abu Ghraib images or the images published of a captured Saddam Hussein post-2003 could be more clearly interpreted as a breach because in the former the treatment is almost incontestably abusive (and therefore disavowed as ‘bad apples’) and in the latter case because he is individually identifiable, the Guantánamo images are less clearly a violation.}

In addition, this photographic framing works with efforts to ensure that detainees are not individually recognisable through the policy of not releasing the names of detainees held (Stafford Smith, 2007) and the related practice of leaving detainee (and guard) names out of photo captions. It took 4 years and a court ruling under the Freedom of Information Act for the government to release the names of the men held at Guantánamo, though to this date the US military refuses to confirm the identities of the first twenty detainees ‘captured’ in those photographs (Rosenberg, 2008; Davis, 2006), this is despite the public knowledge that the ‘Tipton Three’ (UK citizens Ruhal Ahmed, Asif Iqbal, and Shafiq Rasul) were among those who arrived in January 2002. The related practice of omitting names in captions in the orange series, replacing them with the labels ‘Al Qaeda’, ‘Taliban’ or ‘terrorist’ as suggested in DoD press releases, also work to de-individualise detainees. As Sontag argues, this practice of leaving names out of captions unless it is a photo of a ‘celebrity’ is a complicit acceptance of the government’s policy of effacement: “to grant only the famous their names demotes the rest to representative instances of their occupations, their ethnicities, their plight (Sontag, 2003, p.70). This effacing of detainees in the orange series is an anonymisation of these individuals and a reduction of their identity to detainee within this frame.

While the International Committee of the Red Cross (the ‘guardians’ of the Conventions) have not ruled officially that the US is incorrect with its interpretation of the orange series and *exposing* the captives to ‘public curiosity’ (Mirror, 2002), the ICRC did approach US authorities in 2002 to ask them not to use these photos (BBC, 2003) as they may, despite or because of the practices taking place, be a violation of that ‘spirit’. And, following the furore, the Pentagon did attempt to (re)impose a level of control over the images, pulling them from their websites, re-labelling them ‘for official use only,’ and contacting news organisations to discourage their use in an effort to limit further distribution. The interpretation of the photos and therefore their legality therefore remains ambiguous. What is suggested, however, is that the US administration can reinforce its own claims of an identity as a humane agent in complying with the Geneva Conventions.

\footnote{Within the Conventions, it is the application of Articles 13 and 14 of the Third Convention for POW and the Fourth Convention for non-combatants (one of which should apply to the detainees) that is in question. Specifically, that individuals ‘must at all times be treated humanely’ including ‘protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity’ and are entitled in all circumstances ‘to respect for their persons and their honour.’ The act of putting detainees, if considered entitled to protection under the Geneva Conventions, ‘in an unnecessarily degrading situation - irrespective of whether it was seen by the outside world - would in itself be a breach of the law’ (Dworkin, 2003). Asking whether the photos are a breach of the Conventions is a separate question to asking whether they depict one.}
Effacing the Terrorists

Secondly, an important consequence of limiting ‘our’ view of detainee faces is not only that the detainees remain de-individualised and anonymous, but that these practices also limit detainees from seeing the camera, and therefore from turning their eyes and therefore their gaze back at the viewer, eliminating the potential to return our gaze.

In the history of photography (and in art more broadly), the gaze of the subject is an important clue to the relations between the subjects and between the subject and the viewer: the connection between the viewer and the subject is at its most powerful when the gaze is returned [Monaco, 2000]. Certain war or atrocity pictures capitalise on this gaze, deliberately ‘facing’ the subject so that the viewer feels more intimately connected in some way to the image. The subjects of Don McCullin’s work, whether refugees fleeing the conflict in Biafra or Vietnam war soldiers, deliberately stare at the camera with their ‘thousand yard stare’ almost calling us to action (Danchev, 2005). In contrast, the detainees in the orange series do not. They do not or cannot look and see the camera and consequently their ability to communicate with the viewer is limited. The closeness that is brought about between a subject and a viewer who are able to gaze at one another is absent from these images, as is a sense of detainee empowerment. When the detainees gaze is averted, when they become faceless, a disempowerment, even a humiliation or loss of dignity, is suggested as they are subject to a gaze that cannot be returned.

Furthermore, watching the guards and their gazes within the frame provides the viewer with another point from which to derive meaning from these images. ‘Torment, a canonical subject in art,’ as Sontag explains, ‘is often represented in paintings as a spectacle, something being watched (or ignored) by other people’ (2003, p.38). The guards in these photos, whose faces are clearly visible - imagine for a moment a set of images where their faces were covered by hoods or masks - direct their gaze either at the detainees (and therefore also direct our gaze) or look elsewhere in the frame. When their gaze is directed downward and fixed on the detainees, with the detainees gaze averted, their relative power and authority is communicated. However, as the guards never stare back at the camera - imagine again if they did as occurs in the Abu Ghrail images - or their attention is drawn elsewhere, it is also clear that the situation is under their control. When their gaze is drawn away from the detainees and the action of the frame ‘(t)he implication is: no, [what is occurring] cannot be stopped – and the mingling of inattentive and attentive onlookers underscores this’ (Sontag, 2003, p.38).

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22 The terms ‘guards’ is used broadly here to include all US military staff working at JTF-Guantánamo despite the varied roles they undertake (perimeter security, interrogator, linguist, psychologist, medic, chaplain etc.). The differences between these types of guards are however important but must be addressed in a separate article.

23 The fact that the faces of the guards are not hidden is interesting given the secrecy that in some cases seems to surround Guantánamo. Their names are hidden from us the viewer, as well as from detainees (Begg, 2007; Stafford Smith, 2007), but not their faces.
Therefore, the framing that occurs within the orange series includes a systematic visual and literal (supported by the rhetorical) effacing of the detainees. In suggesting a compliance with the ‘spirit’ of the Geneva Conventions by effacing the detainees, hiding their faces and therefore their individuality, the US authorities paradoxically also encourage the reading of detainees as faceless, making it easier to represent their identity as solely detainee and therefore terrorist. This is accomplished through the practices which prevent ‘them’ from seeing ‘us’, and consequently prevent ‘us’ from seeing their faces. This effacing, however, also works with the practices surrounding the marking of detainee bodies.

**Orange-suits: Marking Terrorist Bodies**

While following the faces of detainees and guards is important, the practice of marking bodies is also a means of constituting identities, or subject positions, and therefore is part of the framing of Guantánamo. Within the orange series detainee bodies are identified as a focus of our gaze and a point of interpretation where meaning can be read by viewers/spectators by the practices that dress their bodies. The suits, along with the shackles and wires that restrain them, act as visual reference points for deriving meaning from these images.

Firstly, using the uniforms borrowed from the American prison system, detainees have been marked as different from the guards that surround them (and the viewers). The orange jumpsuit or boiler-suit as a uniform has a well-established visual history of association with prisoners, the justice system and the guilt of those who wear them. It is for that very reason that under US law individuals being held in custody but appearing ‘publicly’ in court to be tried are not permitted to wear this uniform, as the trace of this practice may prejudice a jury or the public. Combined with the shackles, and in some cases the shaved head, surgical masks or goggles, this marking with a uniform is a practice that begins a process of differentiation between identities, such that a body can be transformed into an Other that is dangerous (Connolly, 2002). In other words, marking the bodies of detainees with an orange jumpsuit facilitates a process of difference leading to Othering that is an essential component of constructing this threat of terrorism, particularly when juxtaposed against the bodies of guards in their green camouflage military uniforms and the trace of authority and legitimacy that this carries in some readings.
Secondly, detainee bodies in the orange series of images are marked by the guards and wires that surround them, forming a key component of the visual representations of Guantánamo and therefore the constitution of the subjects within it. Like the set of a play or film, part of the power of these images comes not only from the representations of the detainees, but also from the elements of the visual discourse that surrounds them and which also works to frame them within the shot and convey meaning. In the case of the orange series, this frame within a frame and marking of detainees occurs within each image as the detainees are surrounded by guards, some of whom carry or lead them, as well as by the wires and fences that define the boundary of the site.

In every frame circulated of Camp X-Ray, guards stand over detainees and surround them as they kneel or are led; in some they position detainees, their hands covered by surgical gloves. As a viewer, we therefore never see a detainee alone but always see him relative to the guards that surround him. The presence of guards therefore prevents the viewer from establishing a more intimate connection with detainees, a device that is noticed and then capitalised in the resistant (re)readings and (re)productions of the anti-Guantánamo campaigns.

Moreover, the presence of guards in these images, often physically bracketing detainees, also establishes their relative identities and the power differential at work. The physical positioning of guards as they watch or lead detainees communicate their authority in the frame: their feet firmly on the ground, arms crossed or tucked into belts, or in one case casually leaning against the fence communicates to us that they are comfortable (if not at ease) and in control. By contrast, detainee bodies appear in positions that we as the viewer may find uncomfortable, hunched shoulders, kneeling they appear disempowered, subjugated and subordinated relative to the standing guards. Their positions relative to the guards works to situate detainees as passive and therefore emasculated within this frame, especially where it might be impossible to connect a gender to these bodies through their dress. Finally, when the hands of guards touch detainee bodies, they are always covered by surgical gloves, telling us something else about the bodies of detainees and further marking them as unsafe.

The second system of restraint that acts to mark detainee bodies consists of the wires and fences that surround them within the frame, suggesting that these bodies need to and are being restrained. This effect is particularly noticeable as images of the detainees are often mediated by the presence of the wire, adding a frame within the image and suggesting to the viewer the sensation of being kept in,
hemmed in, even caged, a technique that is often used in photography or film (Monaco, 2000). These elements help to suggest the extent of danger posed by these bodies while at the same time communicating the efforts of the US forces to contain and pacify that threat.

Overall, though the detainees in these photographs remain anonymised, they are never unidentified. The policy of visual effacement and marking does not mean they have no identity, but that an identity over which they have little control is imposed on them, whether through the practices that limit sight or the use of uniforms or surroundings to mark their bodies, it is through the framing process of the images themselves that identities are read and therefore may be constituted, and in some cases reinforced through a use of captions that situate the orange-clad figures as “Taliban”, “Al Qaeda” or detainees only.

From these images and the manner in which the elements of the visual discourse are articulated, key messages from the orange series can be read. Most importantly, that terrorists exist and are dangerous, more dangerous than your average criminal, and they must therefore be watched and restrained on a new scale. However dangerous they may be, terrorist bodies have nonetheless been identified, contained, even pacified. The orange series of images, without the captions or verbal articulations of the Bush administration, act to communicate a meaning about terrorist identity but also about US military power and its response to this threat. These photographs can manage this threat. Given this, a reading of these images as communicating security is perhaps more understandable, offering a possible explanation for why the majority of Americans support these practices. Therefore, beyond documenting the arrival of detainees at Guantánamo, these images function to help constitute meaning in the GWoT. Appreciating how they generate meaning through their frame and therefore as part of the discursive practices in the GWoT is important for understanding the GWoT as a whole.

**Icons of Outrage: Rearticulation and Resisting**

Despite the short space of time (or time frame) during which the orange series of images were produced, and that Guantánamo has evolved considerably from those early days, the orange series continues to ‘haunt’ us. The series is reproduced and circulated widely on the internet and in the press. The power of these images, their ability to capture and communicate a complex series of meanings has led to their status as iconic images of the GWoT. [Definition of iconic, Greenberg cite, quote]. Their iconic status may in part be due to the possibility that these images can be read a number of ways; they come to represent different meanings to different people depending on a viewer’s pre-existing perspective and the narrative to which they subscribe regarding the GWoT.

As Sontag reminds us, echoing Derrida but with specific regard to photographs, interpretation is always contested, never closed. Alter the caption and a photo may be used, reused and (re)produced with a different meaning: the well-know image ‘Migrant Mother’ by Dorothea Lange has come to mean the best and the worst of Depression-era US government policies and later rearticulated to represent the horrors of the Spanish Civil War as well as the politics of the Black Panthers; the raising of the US flag at Surabachi, an icon of American patriotism, has been (re)used
in publicity for jeans and to protest for peace; and the portrait of Che Guevera which has accompanied many a revolutionary or anti-war protest has also been used to sell T-shirts (Greenberg, 1991). Even “photographs of an atrocity may give rise to opposing responses” (Sontag, 2004, p.11), as Sontag explains the same photograph of children killed by shelling during the Bosnian war was used by both Serbs and Croats as evidence of atrocity committed by the other side (2004, p.9). Images may therefore give rise to resistant readings, those that are not the intended or even mainstream readings.

The images of Guantánamo reflect this contingency and therefore readings that are consistent with the official discourse, as well as resistant readings are possible. The orange series has been so widely used and circulated, in part, because the images can be read in so many ways. Despite all the power exerted by the administration with regards to Guantánamo and the GWoT, the highly contingent nature of identities, and on top of that the contingent nature of the representations of these identities, suggests that efforts to fix detainee, as well as guard, identities through these images have failed. Torie Claire perhaps should not have been as surprised as she was with the reception to the images: ‘Did I ever misread what was in those photos,’ Clarke wrote. ‘The problem wasn’t that we released too much, it was that we explained too little...which allowed other critics to say we were forcing the detainees into poses of subjugation.’ Clarke underestimates or overlooked the power that would be needed to fix a meaning to these images (if at all possible).

In particular, the elements of these images can and have been successfully rearticulated within the discourse of anti-Guantánamo campaigns to transform detainee identities in the orange series from terrorist to torture victim. This is accomplished both through the appropriation of these DoD images by the resistance movement for their own campaigns as well as the production of new images, most importantly images of protesters dressed as Guantánamo detainees (‘performing’ Guantánamo), which draw on the same elements, in order to oppose US detention policies and practices. Whether reusing or (re)producing it, the orange series of images of Guantánamo have in particular contributed significantly to the contest over what Guantánamo means. While images alone cannot drive change, as argued by Berger (2007) and Perlmutter (1998), the images of Guantánamo have resulted in the constitution of a new ‘icon of outrage’ (Perlmutter, 1998) that has been used to successfully mobilise an anti-Guantánamo campaign that, if it has not resulted in the closure of Guantánamo, has contributed significantly to its scaling back from 600 and a potential of 2,000 detainees to the 227 it holds today. Or, viewed a different way, the appropriation and rearticulation of the images has forced to a reframing of US detention practices so that Guantánamo appears humane and remains within the frame, so that attention is focused away from Bagram and other sites of US detention practices. How this rearticulation took place will be explored more in the final chapter. It is, however, the administration’s reaction to this rearticulation, a reframing that has occurred, to which I now turn.
Shifting the Frame

Since April 2002 and the move from Camp X-Ray to Camp Delta, the representation of Guantánamo has correspondingly changed. While the practices surrounding detention at the US facility remain similar – the short-shackling, blindfolding and the dressing in orange uniforms of new arrivals in particular (Stafford Smith) – the frame has shifted so that these are no longer visible. Instead, visual representations of Guantánamo are dominated by a different series of images: the orange series has been replaced by a ‘white series’, and an ‘empty cell’ series. Whether this can be understood as a deliberate reframing or not, a shift in the frame has nevertheless occurred following the significant criticisms that were levelled at the Bush administration and the release of the initial images. Replacing the orange suits, therefore, are a series of images that seek to reinscribe the ‘humane’ onto US detention practices. Once again watching the face and bodies and how they are framed offers a point of reference for reading these images for the constitution of identities.

The White Series: The New Face of Detention

Within the white series the blacked-out goggles are gone, as are the orange jumpsuits/boilersuits. Instead, detainees most commonly appear dressed in white shirts and trousers, occasionally with a white skull-cap. Though they often remain accompanied by guards, in some images in the series, detainees are seen sitting and interacting with one another or playing sports. Instead of images of detainees arriving and being ‘processed’ (at least 14 detainees arrived after the move to Camp Delta, for which there was significant press coverage, including high profile speeches by Bush), we the viewer ‘outside the wire’ are presented with a different set of photographs.
Firstly, the change of uniform reflects the introduction of a new system of categorisations or marking of detainees that occurred at JTF-Guantánamo in 2003. Though some detainees remain dressed in orange - those who are recent arrivals or are being punished – the bodies that are visible appear dressed in white (occasionally tan) and are the bodies of detainees who have the greatest degree of freedom to move and interact with other detainees within Camp Delta. In other words, this new frame does not include orange-clad bodies, instead bodies are associated and marked by a uniform that suggests cleanliness. The guards’ bodies, however, have also been altered. They now appear within the frame in desert combats as opposed to the green camouflage ones. While marking these bodies differently may be driven by a wider transformation in the US military, it also works to change the representation of the US military and its role in detention within this frame.

Secondly, in some images we are permitted to see detainees ‘at play’, either sitting conversing with one another, eating, praying, or playing with a ball in an exercise yard. Whereas in Camp X-Ray and therefore the orange series, detainees are most often represented as passive and severely restricted in their ability to move. The white series depicts bodies being moved and moving with more freedom: when accompanied by guards detainees feet never appear shackled, and when on their own, detainees movements are seemingly uninhibited. This framing therefore calls to mind the representations of Japanese-Americans interned during World War II. At the time, the US administration of Roosevelt permitted the publication of images of its internment facilities for Japanese-Americans during World War II. Images from this period and place depict Japanese-American detainees at work, at school and play, without the captions or the context these pictures could otherwise be mistaken for life for ordinary hard-working, if less prosperous, Americans. Therefore within Guantánamo, these images of detainees ‘at play’ could be read as an attempt to suggest something similar - the normality of their lives in detention.

Turning from the body to the ‘face’ of detainees in the white series, not only have orange bodies been banished, but the faces of detainees are removed entirely. In other words, detainees remain effaced. But, the manner in which this is accomplished is significantly different. Masks, goggles or hunched shoulders are no longer used to hide their faces, instead detainees are effaced principally through the
cropping of photographs and the removal of any images where detainees are photographed from the front. The images of Guantánamo detainees that have been released and appear in the press are those where detainees’ heads have been literally cut out of the image – they have been figuratively decapitated by the frame of the photo.

This framing accomplishes several things. Firstly, it allows the US administration to continue to claim that it is acting in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions by not permitting images of individually recognisable detainees to leave Guantánamo, therefore (re)presenting their policies towards detainees as humane. The change in frame permits the US authorities to (re)inscribe their respect for the ‘spirit of Geneva’ by limiting the possibility of individually identifying them. Secondly, this cropping as opposed to covering up of faces means that the possibility of a connection with a face is reduced further. Though ‘a face’ may be seen in the bodies of these men as they appear in the images (as Danchev would argue interpreting Levinas (Danchev, 2005)), the face that is not seen is left to the imagination to devise encouraging a different relationship between the viewer and the subject. Though this effacement may be done in the name of ‘humane treatment’ and ‘in the spirit of Geneva’, it succeeds again in stripping detainees of an important part of the connection between the viewer and the subject in these images – their gaze and ability to return the spectatorship. Thirdly, the remnant of the face that is occasionally left is most often the chin which is often bearded. For American audiences, this bearded face may also help to reinforce the association between these bodies and terrorism, as the beard in American culture has historically been articulated as a symbol of wildness and barbarity, as with Cuba’s Castro (Weldes, 1999). And lastly, these images continue to allow the US to identify specific bodies as terrorists. The presence of men at the camp, like the orange series provides the US administration with a way of visually demonstrating the existence of terrorists and their continued determination to bring them to justice.

Within the white series therefore, bodies are marked differently and appear to move more freely than in the orange series, while the goggles and masks are absent. This newer white series however succeeds in carrying on the representation of detainees as de-individualised and the US response as humane through the

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24 Even within the military tribunal system in place, court artists are not permitted to depict detainee faces (Stafford Smith, 2007).
systematic effacing and marking that has occurred, with consequences for the way we read the meaning of Guantánamo itself.

**Empty Cells: The Humanity of Clean Spaces**

In addition to the shift in frame through the white series, US authorities have also permitted and actively promoted the production and circulation of a second series of images, the ‘empty cell’ series. Whether visiting the website or the site itself, visitors to JTF-Guantánamo are invited to view the empty cells (with or without ‘comfort items’ laid out), the empty, but sophisticated, hospital facilities, the empty exercise yards (with exercise equipment and football ready for use), the empty tribunal room, and the empty and abandoned Camp X-Ray (JTF Guantánamo, 2008; Stafford Smith, 2007; Yee & Molloy, 2005). These spaces are emptied and cleaned, literally and figuratively, of human presence for the visitor tours and photographs that are released, and therefore, as I argue, is part of the effort to demonstrate not only the modern, but the ‘humane’ facilities that the US military operates in Guantánamo.

Firstly, within the empty cell series, bodies are absent from these images, even clean white-clad or guard bodies. If the images are populated by anything it is the ‘comfort items’ that detainees are permitted, neatly laid out, folded, clean and lined up of the bunk. It is here that the orange suit reappears, though we are also shown the white uniforms of the better-behaved detainees. The orange suits have therefore not disappeared entirely from the frame of Guantánamo, but have been disassociated from bodies and displaced to the images of empty cells where their meaning changes. We are also invited to see how the US respects religion, by the images of the Qur’an and of other symbols associated with religion that are released, as well as the value it places on health and well-being, and justice through the images of the ‘state of the art’ facilities that the US has constructed for medical treatment of detainees or for the specially developed military tribunal process that is underway.

The removal of the face, and even the body, which ordinarily ‘demands’ something of the viewer, particularly when turned towards us, is removed from the images of Guantánamo, leaving the viewer with a less demanding and therefore limited connection with the individuals depicted. If there is a face in the empty cell series, it is captured through the absent-presence, to borrow from Derrida, of the detainees, in the empty cells, hospital ward, exercise yard and military courtroom. In viewing these images, we are invited to see how a detainee might live if they occupied that space, but not invited to see them as individuals.

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25 Simon Norfolk’s photographic work in particular plays with the absence-presence post-war, see [http://www.simonnorfolk.com/](http://www.simonnorfolk.com/).
This framing of empty facilities therefore works with the discourse articulated by US officials suggesting detainees are being held at ‘state of the art’ facilities and are treated humanely.26 Bush, Rumsfeld, Cheney and Attorney General Mukasey have publicly stated that the facilities and treatment are both sophisticated and humane (Rumsfeld, 2004). This discourse has carried over into the Senate, as House Armed Services Chairman Duncan Hunter (Republican of California) described Guantánamo as

a world-class detention facility where detainees representing a threat to our national security are well-fed, given access to top-notch medical facilities and provided an opportunity to obtain legal representation, which, incidentally, uniformed soldiers under the Geneva Conventions are not given (as cited in Kellerhals, 2005). 27

Moreover, whereas the surgical gloves worn by guards in the orange series only hinted at the cleanliness of the US (and therefore the corresponding dirtiness of detainees), within the empty cell series the cleanliness is there for all to immediately admire as a sign of the humane treatment that the US offers. In other words, the policy of hiding bodies in the empty cell series succeeds in cleaning the representation of Guantánamo to the military and administration’s advantage. The cells and facilities cleaned of the dirty bodies of detainees works to add legitimacy to the claims that the facility is ‘state of the art’ and humane for its inmates. As Aaron Belkin describes, this tie between clean and civilised is a longstanding military tool used to build legitimacy for the military (Belkin, forthcoming) and works to tell us how humane the US as a country is.

These images also work to support the administration’s position in the ‘diagnostic competition’ that is underway in the media regarding detainees’ mental health (Howell, 2007). The administration and the human rights groups that are opposing Guantánamo both engage in a pathologization of detainees: the administration to reinforce the articulation that terrorists are madmen and human rights groups to suggest that their indefinite detention has rendered them mad. The 26

26 To voice an opinion that these facilities are not treating detainees humanely is, however, constructed as an act that helps the terrorists by providing another way of recruiting. For a facility that has cost the US taxpayer approximately $54 million, with an annual running cost of $90 million to $118 million (Bowker & Kaye, 2007) it is important that it be considered state of the art.

27 According to Senator Bill Frist, who similarly visited the site and was provided the tour of the facilities, ‘I left with an impression that health care there is clearly better than they received at home and as good as many people receive in the United States of America’ (Frist, 2006).
images of clean and ‘world-class’ facilities, including the hospital spaces helps to support the US is doing everything in its power to look after the well-being (including the mental health needs) of the detainees.

It is therefore no wonder that pro-Guantánamo advocates such as conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh have labelled it Club Gitmo (‘Your tropical retreat from the stress of jihad...Send your little jihadi to daycare in air-conditioned comfort! The food at Club G’itmo beats the taxpayer-provided lunches in the infidel’s schools...Every check-in gets a brand new Koran and prayer rug’ (The Rush Limbaugh Show, 2008)), suggesting that its cleanliness and ‘humane' treatment is suitable for a luxury Caribbean resort and more than what the detainees deserve.

Furthermore, the empty cell series works with and extends the discourse of the safety provided by the facility. The empty cell images and their bars and wires work with the accompanying frequently seen photos of Guantánamo, those of wires, gates and watchtowers that make up part of the representations of JTF-Guantánamo. These images, again usually without human presences, work not only to reinforce the idea and interpretation of a clean and therefore humane space, but of a space that exists to guarantee the safety of ‘us’ from the terrorists. The watchtowers in this series stand in for guards (an absence presence that again suggest guards gazing down on detainees) though none are present in the frame, just as the wires on their own suggest a threat contained. Moreover, in many of the most frequently reproduced images of the wires, gates and towers, the US flag appears as if to remind the viewer who is doing the guarding - whether it is part of the JTF-Guantánamo crest that appears at the main gates to Camp Delta, a US flag draped across the tower or seen flying juxtaposed against the barbed wire fence. Some may read this as the irony of a symbol of freedom mapped onto a symbol of control and restraint; others clearly read this differently, as a symbol of American commitment to freedom and determination to bring justice in the GWoT. So, just as the wires and the shackles in the orange series create a sense of bodies restrained which can be read as safe for some, the white and empty cells series continue to reproduce this with its continued emphasis on cells and watchtowers that make up the site.

Overall the images of the white and empty cell series continue to work to communicate the existence of terrorists, while meanwhile supporting a less contestable representation of the US as powerful yet humane. As the frame has shifted from one series to the next (and therefore the boundaries around identities),
the articulation of the US as humane is more easily read from the images, though the suggestion and links with the administrations rhetoric remains the same: detainees are dangerous and a threat but that they remain successfully restrained and contained by the US military. If this shift is deliberate, then the frame has been moved by DoD in order to (re)institute control over the interpretation of the images of Guantánamo and the representations of the detainees.

By carefully maintaining a practice of visually representing Guantánamo, US officials have therefore succeeded in supporting their broader GWoT discourse visually – constituting a terrorist identity by representing, in the images released, US military practices of effacing, marking, restraining and watching ‘people that are darn dangerous’ (Bush, 2006), ‘the worst of the worst’ (Fleischer, 2002), and ‘the most dangerous, best trained vicious killers on the face of the earth (Rumsfeld, 2002), while constituting an American identity that does a ‘tough job’ maintaining security (Rumsfeld, 2002) but is respectful of human rights and ‘humane’ (Fleischer, 2002). As evidence of the success of this reframing, anti-Guantánamo campaigners continue to (re)produce imagery that draws uniquely on the orange series as representative of the site, suggesting that it is harder to sustain a narrative of US military violence and injustice in a frame where the bodies or faces have been removed; where the image has been scrubbed of human presence. By shifting the frame, the US administration has constituted an identity that is safe, clean and above all else humane – a framing which forms an important component in the legitimization of the GWoT.

Outside the Frame: Beyond the Domain of Representability

Finally, what is left out of the frame entirely - and not just pushed out through the carefully reframing - is important for consideration of the subject positions constituted through the images of Guantánamo. As has been suggested by journalists, lawyers and human rights activists, not only is Guantánamo not represented in its complexity, but the ‘road to Guantánamo’ is left out. So, rather then photographs acting as windows onto the site as part of the US authorities efforts of transparency, and therefore seeming as constraining what goes on there, the reframing of Guantánamo representations of terrorists and the US identity has occurred, all part of making sense of Guantánamo. In this sense, seeing does become knowing. However, in only seeing what the US officials permit and encourage those ‘outside the wire’ to see, not only are aspects of Guantánamo literally under-represented but as attention is focused on the site, less attention is correspondingly directed at other sites/sights that are important in the GWoT. As Butler (2007) suggests, admitting an image into the ‘domain of representability’ necessarily constitutes a domain of unrepresentability; that which is excluded because it is not seen as representing. Therefore in framing Guantánamo through the shift from the ‘orange’ series to the ‘white’ and ‘empty cell’ series, a corresponding move have also enabled the exclusion of a number of important images, including, but not limited to: those taken but not shown at Guantánamo, those not taken at Guantánamo, and those (not) taken elsewhere ‘outside the wire’ and on the ‘road to Guantánamo’ which feature the bodies of detainees.
Turning first to those taken but not shown, a number of photographic practices are reported to have taken place at Guantánamo and that do not appear ‘within the frame’ of the site. These include, firstly, the images taken by visitors and military personnel alike that are ‘embargoed’ (JTF Guantánamo Public Affairs, 2007, p. 4), having failed to meet the standards of what is acceptable representation as outlined in the Media Ground Rules or according to military ‘operational security’ (JTF Guantánamo, 2003, p. 27.2) and as already discussed. In terms of photographs not taken at all, those of Camp 7 are the most notable, Camp 7 being the ‘Platinum Camp’ used to hold the 14 or 15 ‘high-value’ detainees, and which has been kept secret until officially acknowledged in February 2008 (Rosenberg, 2008b). Though two military lawyers have been finally granted access under strict conditions of secrecy (Rosenberg, 2008c), Camp 7 remains off limits to journalists, is not part of the ‘Gitmo tour’ (virtual or ‘real’) nor are there any photographs available.

Secondly, there are the images that Human rights activists and others report have been produced and campaign to have released. Detainees report being photographed as they are stripped and searched before and after boarding the plane, photographed as they are ‘processed’ upon arrival, and while they receive punishments or ‘ERFing’ (Begg & Brittain, 2007; Rasul, Iqbal & Ahmed, 2004). Similarly, videotapes are also produced – though more rarely and possibly more quickly destroyed – of detainees while at Guantánamo, including specifically interrogations. These practices have been acknowledged by the Pentagon (Mazetti & Shaw, 2008) and are documented in the JTF-GTMO Standard Operating Procedures (JTF Guantánamo Headquarters 2003, p. 4.1; 2004, p. 4.1), yet they remain ‘outside the frame’, despite repeated attempts by campaigners to make them ‘public’. 28

A third group of images must also be considered when examining what is left out of the frame in official representations of Guantánamo, particular on the JTF-Guantánamo visitors website. These are the images of the working military occupants and their world ‘inside the wire’, who nevertheless are represented and identified in the in-house’ staff magazine The Wire (June 2002-Present). 29 In fact, The Wire, was created with ‘news stories not only for but about the JTF-160 community… [JTF GTMO staff] love to see their name [and their pictures] in the paper’ (Pellegrini, 2002, p.1). And covering military personnel is more interesting: ‘In the end, they’re just detainees. In some ways, it’s more exciting to find out what an Army bus driver does’ (p. 5). The smiling and proud faces of military personnel at work and at play, as well as stories and images of visiting military and political leaders ‘meeting the troops’ are a constant feature in this frame, while detainees remain virtually absent. This is the opposite of the public facing press. Nevertheless, what is missing from the

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28 The taping of interrogations has been the subject of most of the controversy, such as the recent controversy over the disappearance of the final Jose Padilla interrogation tape produced by the CIA while he was incarcerated in a naval brig in Charleston (Semple, 2008), and by the leaking by lawyers of interrogation tapes of Canadian juvenile detainee Omar Khadr (Noronha, 2008).

29 The physical environment of NAS Guantánamo is also a continuing theme: the arid landscape in which it is situated, the beaches and ocean that surround it, as well as images of the town of Guantánamo which is its neighbour. The most frequent image to grace the cover is that of the legislatively-protected iguana, which, in its frequent representation, is therefore included in the field of representability inside ‘The Wire’ in contrast to detainees, suggesting they are more interesting or relevant for readers.
public press, the JTF Guantánamo public website and even from The Wire are the images of the foreign nationals (from St Helena for example) who work in the shadows of the base (Stafford Smith, 2007), cleaning the site or working in the kitchens.

**Not Taken and Not Shown ‘Outside the Wire’**

What Guantánamo representations also exclude are the images of the ‘road to Guantánamo’: the associated sites/sights that are part of a broader detention strategy in the GWoT including the extraordinary rendition programme, the capture and transport of detainees (especially as these are alleged to have taken place on a battlefield in Afghanistan, and which evidence suggests is untrue in the majority of cases), or other sites of detention such as those in Afghanistan (which was often the first or second point of detention before Guantánamo as detainees are ‘processed’ and ‘screened’ for ‘value’ and ‘rank’ (Department of Defense, 2004)), Iraq, Diego Garcia, North Carolina, or even the immigration detention centres across the US (Olshansky, 2007). The Bush administration has repeatedly held up Guantánamo as representative of its humane and progressive approach to detention in the GWoT, providing unprecedented numbers of official photographs to be released. However, what has not been promoted with the same vigour are representations of detention in the GWoT elsewhere. The fact that 774 boys and men have been detained at Guantánamo over the six year period is a small, if extremely unfortunate, number compared to the estimated 14,000 who in 2006 were being detained as ‘enemy combatants’ by US forces around the world (Quinn, 2006). In other words, the focus on the images of Guantánamo also serve the purpose of not only presenting a ‘humane’ and ‘controlled’ detention facility, but of detracting attention from other forms of detention occurring around the world, and eliding the practices that may be occurring in a less visible way. Meanwhile, just as the focus on the Abu Ghraib abuse photos camouflage the institutional forces that may have led to those abuses (Kaufman-Osborn, 2006), the focus on the practices within the images of Guantánamo occludes the overall institutional forces that are at work to ‘breed and sanction such exploitation’ (Kaufman-Osborn, 2006).

Nevertheless, despite the relatively lower profile of these other detention facilities, there is some suggestion that sites in Afghanistan, for example, are being used more as Guantánamo is being scaled back. In other words, the actual movement of the practices associated with Guantánamo are moving beyond the limit of even the new Guantánamo frame; from a site of current relative high visibility (Guantánamo) to one of less (Afghanistan). For example, Bagram’s Pul-i-Charki prison has grown to 630 detainees since its opening in 2004 and now holds twice as many detainees as Guantánamo (Schmitt & Golden, 2008). The rearticulation and resistance to Guantánamo may have resulted in the problem being transferred and hidden, moved beyond the boundaries of the frame, rather then stopped.

Interestingly, one of the few more recent images of a detainee being ‘processed’ comes from Afghanistan. In contrast to the Guantánamo images, and

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30 For example, that from the very beginning of the GWoT and the deployment of forces to Afghanistan, there have been reports of abuse ‘over there’.
that which is not included in those frames, these images are more likely to include detainee faces, and in the case of the photo below, military personnel ‘processing’ them.

-photo-

Ultimately, what looking outside the frame suggests, as Butler’s analysis of the Abu Ghraib photographs does (2007), is that in addition to analysing the images themselves for meaning, one can situate these photographs in a wider frame to understand the discursive practices at work; to understand how the selection of the frame and its boundaries works to create meaning in the GWoT. Whether the photos are reproduced in The Wire or released to the popular press, the selection of the frame for representation should be of interest as much as the contents.

Conclusion

Much as in Victorian times, exhibitions would be arranged to demonstrate to the public the functioning of jails without permitting them access to the jails themselves (Foucault, 1991 [1977]), the images of Guantánamo are intended to provide the public with a window into the operations of the US military in Guantánamo. As an institution, a prison, and especially a military prison relies on being both seen and unseen. The public is kept out of the prison – as much as inmates are kept in – but a public spectacle of the prison must occur in order for prisons to justify their existence (Foucault, 1991 [1977]). With regards to Guantánamo, these images allow US authorities to demonstrate to their own domestic audience, as well as international audiences, the effectiveness of the US military and state by proving the existence of terrorists - that they can be identified and captured - while acting as a display of military strength.

While photographs create the illusion of consensus (Sontag, 2003, p.5), this consensus is false and may depend on the framing as much as the viewer’s perspective. It is therefore possible to read these images as consistent with the official administration’s discourse, particularly the newer Camp Delta series of photographs, despite the success of the resistance movement in (re)articulating the images as representing inhumane and torturous practices.

In controlling the production of images of Guantánamo, the US military, and by extension the US administration, have sought to constitute and produce an embodied terrorist - an identity that is dehumanised through a strategy of effacement. However, in the process of creating representations of terrorists for publics ‘outside the wire’, the US government also constituted an international icon – the orange-clad detainee. While trying to build support for their detention and interrogation policies in the name of the GWoT they have constituted an iconic body which has been, and continues to be, used as a political space for resistance. In response the US military has literally and figuratively shifted the frame, producing,
circulating and promoting a new set of images, removing the bodies in particular as a strategy for the reconstitution of the identity of the US as modern and humane. Images of Guantánamo within the broader GWoT discourse help situate the subjectivity of the detainees relative to that of Americans – both US military personnel and the citizens that are interpellated into those positions. That is, in order to secure ‘the homeland’ and the values it supposedly represents, the US administration has used the representations of Guantánamo detainees to constitute a terrorist identity and an identity for the US, specifically as a nation that is ‘humane’, engaging in a discourse drawing on both linguistic and associated material practices to represent the incarceration of this ‘enemy other’ as the current defining interest of national security.

What these images therefore remind us of is that a great deal of power is at work at Guantánamo, not only power exerted to restrain and interrogate the prisoners, but more importantly to create a public spectacle of these captive ‘terrorists’, working with other discursive practices, such as speeches, to frame the GWoT. By carefully maintaining a practice of visually representing Guantánamo, US officials have succeeded in supporting their broader GWoT discourse visually – constituting a terrorist identity by representing, in the images released, US military practices of effacing, marking, restraining and watching ‘people that are darn dangerous’ (Bush 2006), ‘the worst of the worst’ (Fleischer, 2002), while constituting an American identity that does a ‘tough job’ maintaining security (Rumsfeld, 2005a) but are respectful of human rights and are ‘humane’ (Fleischer, 2002).

Nevertheless, despite the attempts of the US administration to fix the frame, this has remained impossible, due largely to the efforts of the Guantánamo resistance movements. The iconic detainee created with the orange series remains the most powerful and recognisable symbol of Guantánamo, hampering official attempts to close of other interpretations and readings of the site as a necessary and effective part of its counterterrorist strategy. The iconic nature of the orange series of photographs has done lasting damage to the international reputation of the US.

Asked why he thinks Guantánamo Bay, commonly dubbed Gitmo, should be closed, and the prisoners perhaps moved to U.S. soil, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen said, ‘More than anything else it’s been the image - how Gitmo has become around the world, in terms of representing the United States’ (Burns, 2008).

With the incoming Obama administration, the closing of Guantánamo is imminent. However, as this paper has tried to argue in part, we must not forget that which is outside the frame and its part in helping to constitute that which is within it. The legacy of Guantánamo relies powerfully on its visual legacy and the practices of delineating what is seen and what is not.

[11,542]

References


‘Colin Powell says Guantánamo should be closed’ (2007), Reuters [Online], 10 June 2007 [accessed 8 December 2008].


