See you in the funny pages: penal sites, teletechnics, counter-artifactualities

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See you in the funny pages: penal sites, teletechnics, counter-artifactualities

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ABSTRACT

A 2016 image by cartoonist Chris Kelly powerfully brings together two regimes of detention in Australia, one 'domestic' and directed largely at Indigenous prisoners, the other 'offshore', and directed at refugees and asylum seekers. In both cases, it was CCTV footage which provided the means of exposure of violent abuses in these detention systems, although this exposure simultaneously exposes the very failure of CCTV, as a mechanism deigned precisely to magnify the state's powers of surveillance. This paper traces the interactions between inmates, advocates, activists and artists in these two campaigns of exposure. It reprises James Der Derian's 2001 concept of MIME-NET (Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network) to explore the possibilities of a new social activism of images.

A ghastly apparition, captured as if on a CCTV screen, shows a figure, misshapen, inert, slumped into a wheel chair, or perhaps it is an electric chair. Its face is closely shrouded; its fish tail drops awkwardly awry on a rest designed for feet. Its webbed hand-fins are manacled. Another strap runs along the torso, and is pulled tight over what might be its shoulders. The hooded head lolls, as if in a drugged stupor, held upright only by a thick collar or noose. A figure of the non-human contorted into a human posture: an amphibian in a machine, monstrous, unclassifiable; a fish on a bi-cycle that is not going anywhere (Figure 1).

This nightmarish apparition might not be one that many of us can identify, but the punitive apparatus that immobilizes and entraps it is instantly recognizable. From the rough nooses by which lynched black bodies swung from trees to the hoods and the blindfolds used at Abu Ghraib prison, from the neck-chains and shackles forced on Aboriginal prisoners marched across their countries to island prisons, to the straight-jacket of the asylum and penitentiary, the chemical hand-cuffs and electronic restraints of the display enclosure and the cage, these are the constitutively racialized technologies of colonial violence: incarceration, criminality and torture. In turn, they constitute the object of their punishment and capture as that which is always already racially marked, the criminalized subject of violence and terror. The medium and agent of this mutually constitutive relation of technology and subject is the racializing gaze, itself a technology in which black and other non-white bodies remain constantly entrapped and terrorized, a gaze

Figure 1. Chris Kelly, Cartoon for Eaten Fish. Reproduced with permission. www.chriskelly.net.au.

whose lenses are yet again vertiginously magnified and enhanced by a panoply of other optics of scrutiny and surveillance trained on those it constitutes as its targets.

The image, then, embodies the incarcerated subject whose monstrous body is indissociable both from the penal somatechnologies (the hood, the collar, restraint chair) of its violent confinement, and from the arsenal of visual circuits and frames of representation by which it is inhumanized and rendered other. As such, this is a creature of what Joseph Pugliese and Susan Stryker term 'the somatechnic labyrinth' (Pugliese & Stryker, 2009, p. 3), inhabiting the spaces 'between embodied subject and technologized object … between the human and the non-human … the living and the inert', one that 'asks us to pay attention to where, precisely, a prosthesis stops and a body starts' (Pugliese & Stryker, 2009, p. 1).

What follows is an attempt to tread a wayward and shifting course through a somatechnic labyrinth of racializing prosthetics, carceral sites and penal teletechnics; of incarcerated bodies which are, paradoxically, the objects of both commodified spectacle and punitive surveillance, and yet are simultaneously made invisible, obscured or redacted from public view; and as well of embodied resistances and re-mediations, the intercepted looks and disruptive gazing that these target bodies in their turn effect.

The image with which I began belongs, if uneasily, to the genre of the cartoon, and is the work of the Walkley Award winning Australian journalist, Chris Kelly. The notorious image it refers to, however, originated in CCTV footage that was rebroadcast on national television via an expose on the Australian ABC's *Four Corners* program (ABC, 2017). This now infamous image shows an Indigenous teenager, Dylan Voller, strapped and hooded in a mechanical restraint chair at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Alice

Springs, in Central Australia. It is an image that caused a sensation, some of it hypocritical, as information regarding the use of these forms of restraint was already in circulation. Yet, there is a sense that the images, once publicly brought before our eyes, were particularly shocking, perhaps because of the ways in which they undeniably evoked prior iconologies of racialized punishment and torture, such as the hooded man of Abu Ghraib. The last was described by W.J.T Mitchell 'central image-event of the epoch' (Mitchell, 2011, p. xv), and some would argue that the Don Dale CCTV footage of Dylan Voller is an Australian image-event of a similar order of significance.

But Chris Kelly's cartoon also directly references another recent instance of hidden state violence and torture. His is one of a sequence drawn by Australian cartoonists in support of Ali Durrani, a young Iranian detainee then incarcerated in Australia's detention center on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea (Perera & Pugliese, 2016b). Ali's nom de plume name was Eaten Fish, invoking the ways in which refugee bodies are consumed, commodified, devoured, spent, discarded and spat out within Australia's regime of border protection. In picturing Eaten Fish in the same slumped and inert posture as Dylan Voller, Kelly maps on to each other two regimes of detention, one 'domestic' and directed largely at Indigenous prisoners, the other 'offshore', directed at non-white refugees and asylum seekers.

We owe the exposure of violent incapacitation of Dylan Voller to the fact that it was originally recorded on CCTV, a technology designed to magnify the state's powers of surveillance and one that forms part of its vast apparatus for identifying, tracking and making visible its target bodies. The screens of closed circuit televisions are sites where penal and visual technologies meet the tactics of racial and spatial management. In her absorbing study, *Dark Matters*, Simone Browne argues that both pre- and post-panoptic surveillance practices from CCTV to biometrics find their antecedents in the practices of the transatlantic slave trade with its closely calculated arrangements for organizing and overseeing captive bodies during the Middle Passage through the exercise of synoptic power, and the inventorying, tracking and branding of slave bodies. Marking that within the field of surveillance studies 'race remains undertheorized, and serious consideration has yet to be given to the racial subject in general', Browne asserts that 'Surveillance is the fact of anti-blackness' (Browne, 2015, p. 10), while in turn blackness functions as 'a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and enacted' (p. 9). CCTV operates, whether in public spaces or within carceral institutions, as part of this surveillance apparatus that 'narrates' – that is, that identifies, marks, emplaces, explains and emplots – the movements of racialized bodies. Yet the surveillance of racism and anti-blackness remains open to a persistent counter-surveillance, the 'black looks' (Hooks, 1992) of those being monitored and overseen. Recent instances of this kind of asymmetrical counter-surveillance (including what is sometimes called 'sous-veillance'), or the black looks that hooks and Browne both reference, are the 'copwatchers' of New York city who routinely follow and record police interactions with black people on the street; or more broadly, the cell phone recordings of police violence that have surfaced via the Black Lives Matter movement, and which have their antecedents in the infamous video recording of the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles in 1991 (Ransby, 2018).

In what follows I situate CCTV as a form of racialized penal teletechnics, a term I borrow from Derrida's reflections in *Echographies of Television,* a set of extended interviews with Bernard Stiegler, recorded in the 1990s (though not published in English until 2002). In these interviews Derrida focuses in particular on questions of temporality, embodiment

and the real and their relation to what he characterizes as the two distinguishing features of teletechnics, *artifactuality* (or the fictional fashioning of the event) and *actuvirtuality* (the blurring of the boundaries between the real and the virtual):

> I would insist not only on the artificial synthesis (synthetic image, synthetic voice, all the prosthetic supplements …) but above all on a concept of virtuality (virtual image, virtual space and so virtual event) that can no longer be opposed, in perfect philosophical serenity to the actual reality in the way that philosophers used to distinguish between power and act … This virtuality makes its mark even on the structure of the produced event. It affects both the time and space of the image, of discourse, of 'information', in short, everything that refers us to this so-called actuality, to the implacable reality of its supposed present. (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 6)

The 1993 interview on artifactuality is preoccupied with one of the defining visual texts of the era, the brutal beating of Rodney King by members of the Los Angeles police department, recorded on a Sony Handycam by an Argentinian plumber, George Hamilton (Goldstein, 2006). In the context of the recent cell phone recordings that have emerged through the Black Lives Matter movement, I want to return to the 'aporetic tension' that Derrida puts forward between [tele]technics and testimony in the reception of the King video, a relation in which, however, he insists, 'one can never be pure of the other' (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 95). It is in this tension between testimony and teletechnics that Derrida locates the possibility of grasping the event in all its irreducible singularity.

Screened on Australia's national broadcaster, the image of Dylan Voller seems to break out of the closed circuit of the prison's surveillance system, to return us to what Derrida describes as the 'implacable reality' of the event. Along with several other sequences of violence against Aboriginal youth recorded as part of the Don Dale Centre's routinized monitoring of inmates on CCTV, the image of Voller escapes the conditions of its production, to situate him and his fellow inmates, not as incorrigible and irredeemably criminal and inhuman, but as themselves targets of criminality and inhumanity: Indigenous youth routinely subjected to cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment by agents of the state. Conjoined, through the medium of Kelly's cartoon, with the violence visited on incarcerated refugees, the image of Voller breaches the confines of an artifactuality and actuvirtuality that, in Derrida's terms, function as an 'alibi' for 'the delusion of the delusion', the 'denial of the event'. Rather, in Derrida's terms,

> we must remember not only that a consistent deconstruction is a thinking of a singularity, and therefore of the event, of what it ultimately preserves of the irreducible, but that 'information' is a contradictory and heterogeneous process. It can and must be transformed, it can and must serve, as it has often done, knowledge, truth and the cause of democracy to come, and all the questions they entail. We can't help but hope that artifactuality as artificial or manipulative as it might be will … yield to the coming of what comes, to the event that bears it and toward which it is borne. And to which it will bear witness, even if despite itself. (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 6)

I cite this passage as one that seems to locate the space for the transformation of 'information', that is, for activism, in its insistence on the irreducibility of the event, in the service of knowledge and truth to come. This article locates itself in this contradictory space between the temporality of the virtual and the real, between artifactuality and its counters, between the information of technics, 'even if despite itself', and the embodied information of the witness.

The campaign to save Eaten Fish

> Every story I said in my drawings is nothing but the truth. I drew whatever happened to me.
> (Eaten Fish, personal communication, 2016)

Three forms of visual technology come together in Kelly's image: the age-old graphic technology of a drawing made with a stylus on a flat surface, the CCTV images of the violence inflicted on Voller, and the televisual reportage through which the latter was exposed. Kelly's cartoon is itself part of a larger collective of other cartoons, all motivated by the desire to make visible the hidden violence of offshore detention. In turn, these draw on the violence meticulously documented in the cartoons of Eaten Fish (see https://eatenfish.com/). This visual chain of cartoons, surveillance images, activism and public media reveal the complex somatechnologies of testimony and witness, surveillance and sous-veillance, event and artifact, virtual and real.

The cartoon campaign for Eaten Fish was initiated by Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites [RAPBS], a group I co-founded in 2015 in an attempt to combine activism, analysis and creativity with the aim of bringing to light the realities of Australia's offshore detention camps (http://rapbs.org/). Between 2015 and 2017 (when Ali Durrani received asylum in Norway under the ICORN program) RAPBS joined the campaign calling for medical care in Australia for Ali, who suffers from a range of disorders, and was increasingly subjected to harassment and sexual assaults – by guards, fellow inmates and locals – in Manus Island camp (Harvey, 2016; Perera & Pugliese, 2016a, 2016b). Unlike the sexual assaults on women detainees held in the Australian funded camp on Nauru, which received comparatively greater exposure, what happened at the Manus Island camp, where only male inmates were held, remained a taboo topic with Australian media. The cartoon campaign was an attempt to break through this silence and was deliberately conceptualized to focus mainstream attention on the plight of Ali. RAPBS, in conjunction with the *Guardian* cartoonist First Dog on the Moon, who had built up close links with Ali, developed the political strategy of using cartoons to generate attention for Ali's plight. The campaign drew, in both senses of the word, on First Dog's popular following and access to mainstream media.

For RAPBS, Joseph Pugliese and I undertook a detailed analysis of Eaten Fish's cartoons in order to document the treatment meted out to him out of sight and out of mind on Manus Island. In a short piece titled 'A nightmare World in Plain Sight' (Perera & Pugliese, 2016a), we attempted to signal some of the dynamics between the seen and not-seen, between watching and hiding, between what is kept in the dark and what is brought to light, and between surveillance and visibility or exposure, in the images of/by Eaten Fish. The drawings, at first carefully inked on pages torn from a notepad, or sometimes painted in coffee dregs, document the myriad ways in which the inmates of Manus Island are rendered targets, driven to the edges of endurance in hellish surroundings. They present a world of nightmarish events transpiring in the bright tropical sunshine. In their minute renderings of a teeming world, charged with sexual menace, the drawings at times evoke the infernal paintings of Hieronymus Bosh, and a cosmology of threat and terror in which Australian overseers, contractors, locals and even the surrounding landscape conspire to prey on, collude and consume the victim –as suggested already, these are embodied in the name Eaten Fish.

Among the most chilling of the drawings are those which show prisoners being subjected to sexual violence in a series of collusions among guards, managers, health professionals and

fellow-prisoners. Under the all-seeing eyes of CCTV, protectors and predators are indistinguishable. In 'Manus Island Detention Centre Sexual Harassment', two lurking figures behind the palm trees argue over a potential victim: 'I love him so much, I know him very well. He's going to accept to have sex with me' one says; 'Sorry buddy … he is mine', the other counters. In the foreground, a third figure schemes, 'I didn't have sex for three years … HE MUST LET ME TOUCH HIM', while pretending a friendly interest in the artist's drawings. The only objection is from a crab, a creature which often supports the character of Eaten Fish in the drawings and attests to the artist's belief that it is only the small and lowly who truly see and know the world. In contrast, the god's eye view of the presiding CCTV incites, 'touch him sexually', while the sun echoes, 'Touch him, man'. The drawing is, literally, a cry for help: a minutely drawn frame within the frame shows bound hands reaching over the fence, imploring 'I need help, I need you' to the indifferent scene outside. In this image the presence of the CCTV monitor acts not as a deterrent, but on the contrary as an incitement to rape and sexual violence, a point to which I will return (Figure 2).

There are two features that are common to all Eaten Fish's drawings: in each the viewer can identify two (and later three or more) graves of the refugees who died in offshore detention: Reza Bahrathi (aged 23, an Iranian Kurdish man who was bludgeoned to death by a guard in 2014), Hamid Kezehei (another Kurdish Iranian, aged 24, who died of a heart attack in 2015 following a botched airlift, after contracting septicemia in the filthy conditions of Manus camp) and, later Omid Masoumali (a 23 year-old refugee on Nauru, who set himself on fire in May 2016 before the eyes of a visiting United Nations delegation). In December 2016, a fourth man, Faysal Ishak Ahmed, was found dead,
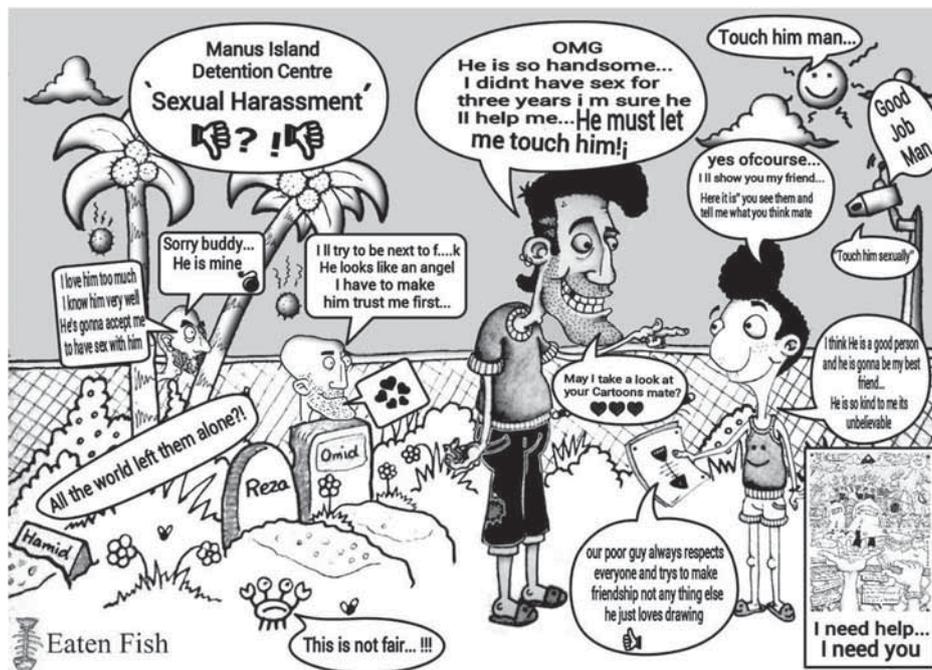
Figure 2. Manus Island Detention Centre Sexual Harassment. © Eaten Fish. Reproduced from Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites.

followed by several others (see Bui et al., 2018). These graves appear in all Eaten Fish's drawings, often accompanied by the refrain 'I don't want to be next'.

The other common feature in all of the drawings is the conspicuous presence of CCTV and other surveillance mechanisms. A van marked Transfield, one of the shifting cast of private contractors which manages the camps, equipped with surveillance cameras to signify Australian oversight, is at the center of a nightmarish drawing which hints at hidden depths of sexual terror in the camp. A headless chicken labeled DIAC pursues a detainee, crying 'I only want Ali little fuck me and eat me'. A weeping figure laments: 'weeks ago I saw a dream … a big fucking chicken escaped from kitchen … it was looking for me. It told me that it loves me. I eating chicken every day for food. I hate chicken'. A helicopter marked PNG army hovers above. Apart from the graves marked 'Hamid' and 'Reza', the figure is alone, behind a wire mesh, while the bright sunlight and postcard scene outside mock his terror and desolation (Figure 3).

In another drawing, medical staff at the health center are shown reveling and feasting while the injured and ill call desperately for help. A doorway leads directly to the graveyard, and a coffin lies on the floor. Inside a walled-in enclosure marked Mental Health, a hapless inmate can be glimpsed, to whom staff appear completely indifferent. The walls and ceilings are adorned, positively festooned, with an array of surveillance cameras (Figure 4).

Viewing these drawings, we began to consider the significance of the constant presence of surveillance cameras. What do they tell us about the role of the cameras and monitors in the camps? Who is watching? Who is being monitored? Who is being protected? Are the cameras recording the success of the 'no-advantage' policy calculated to cause maximum damage to its subjects? Or are they simply inert witnesses to crime? How do the monitors impact on the bodies of those being watched and on those (imagined or
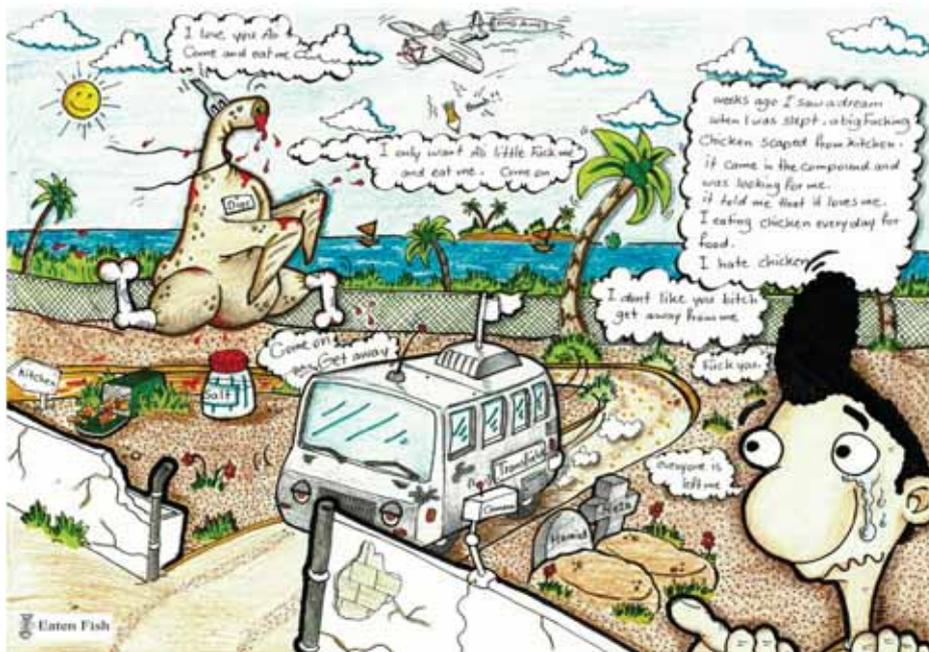

Figure 3. ©Eaten Fish. Reproduced from Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites.

Figure 4. ©Eaten Fish. Reproduced from Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites.

present) who are watching? What are the effects on Eaten Fish himself of his insistent attention to these forms of unceasing surveillance?

Somatechnologies of surveillance

As mentioned above, CCTV forms part of an apparatus of surveillance that is constitutively racialized. In its post-panoptic manifestations, this is an apparatus whose ubiquity is closely associated with practices of neoliberalism, as Giles Deleuze succinctly outlines in his theorization of the society of control. Deleuze traces a shift from Foucault's disciplinary model of predictable and enclosed forms of surveillance to the society of control that, paradoxically, appears all the more open and transparent because of the pervasiveness of its surveillance apparatus:

> In disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in societies of control one is never finished with anything – the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation' (Deleuze, 1992, p. 5)

While the society of discipline is discontinuous, though of long duration, the society of control is 'short-term, of rapid rates of turn-over, but also continuous and without limit' (p. 6).

Deleuze identifies the corporation as the distinctive institution of the society of control. The corporation practices a 'higher order capitalism': 'what it sells is services and what it wants to buy is stocks' (Deleuze, 1992, p. 6). 'The family, the school, the army, the factory are no longer analogical spaces that converge towards an owner – state or

private owner – but coded figures … of a single corporation that now has only stock-holders' (p. 6). We might connect this to the corporations involved in the detention business, as they move seamlessly between local and civic institutions such as the hospital and the detention center or prison. Broadspectrum, which ran Australian offshore deten-tion, gained the contract for security in the court system of Western Australia. Wilson Security, one of the contractors on Nauru and Manus Island, whose very questionable practices are revealed in the leaked dossier of complaints known as the Nauru files (https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/nauru-files), also operates across a range of quotidian civic spaces. It is responsible for security on the campus of Melbourne University and manages parking lots on the streets of Fremantle, where I live. Wilson Security was also awarded a contract (since ended) for security at the National Gallery of Victoria, despite very public protests by artists (Francis, 2017). At the same time, many Wilson Security operatives are deployed in the battle zones of the war on terror. Similarly, Inter-national Health and Medical Services [IHMS], which provides health care for refugees incar-cerated on Nauru and Manus Island, has as its largest contractor the US army in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both the Don Dale detention center and the detention centers where refu-gees are held are staffed by former military and para-military operatives who have served in war-zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Organizational structures, personnel, technologies and practices are shared across these operational sites and the same lexicon of criminality ('the worst of the worst') is employed to describe subjects under these agencies' control; practices such as water-boarding or the use of dogs to create terror link domestic prisons in the US and Australia, Australian on-shore and off-shore immigration detention camps and war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. The resemblance between the hooded man of Abu Ghraib prison and the spit hood in which Dylan Voller was enshrouded is part of a dense mesh of linkages. Indeed, these objects of torture function as racialized somatechnologies that are transnational in their circulation and deployment. As racialized somatechnologies, they operate in differ-ential ways on bodies that are differentially located: in the physical subjection of the impri-soned bodies, *and* in the performative practices of agents of the state by whom they are deployed. They discipline, shape and inflict pain and suffering on the bodies of captive subjects through their racialized prosthetics (the hoods in the Abu Ghraib and Don Dale images) and their teletechnical apparatus (the camera or screen as incitement and voyeur). For agents of state discipline and control, they provide a repertoire of performa-tive devices, practices, gestures and tactics enabling these agents to enact and, literally, mark their positions of subjecting power and triumphalism underpinned by a clear sense of impunity. We might juxtapose the infamous image of Sabrina Harman's thumbs-up sign at Abu Ghraib prison with the less widely circulated photograph of a white police officer adopting the same triumphant posture over the dead body of an African American in St Louis County, Missouri (Phillips, 2016).

Elsewhere, I discuss these embodied performances before the camera in relation to Oppenheimer's film, *The Act of Killing*, which documents the mass killings in Indonesia in 1965. The film works to reorient the seemingly remote time and place of the atrocities at its center by disconcertingly folding them into other spaces, temporalities and media through an array of visual, performative and technological transpositions; through uncanny conjunctions and rifts in time and unlooked-for connectivities between bodies, technologies and places (Perera, 2014). Oppenheimer asks the Indonesian killers of 1965

not only to recount, but to restage for the camera, the murders they performed over half a century ago. In his notes, available on the film's website, Oppenheimer recounts a critical experience of spatial and temporal dislocation on a day in 2004 when, after reenacting some of his murders, one of the Medan killers posed for snapshots with thumbs-up and V-signs. Two months later, images of US soldiers adopting just such cheerful poses before their digital cameras, framed against the tortured and terrorized Iraqi bodies at Abu Ghraib prison, would circulate globally (Oppenheimer, 2012).

The visual and performative echoes between these two sets of images, the staging of the interplay between the roles of torturer, killer, performer and spectator, is no simple matter of coincidence, nor of the operation of universal norms; rather they are the product of specific visual, representational, technological, cultural and ideological prac-tices, situated by shared modalities and materialities of enacting, viewing, consuming and responding to violence (Perera, 2014). For Oppenheimer, what makes the Indonesian killers' re-enactments of the 1965 massacres a 'nightmarish allegory' of Abu Ghraib, and of a whole prior history of violent representations of captured bodies, was that the former 'so admired American movies, American music, American clothing' (Oppenheimer, 2012). As such, their acts of torture are suffused with, and in turn reproduce and refract, those ima-ginaries, esthetics, styles and affects that also shape the trophy images and practices of Abu Ghraib. These are material instances of the teletechnical transnational circulation of somatechnologies of the society of control. In turn, every instance of their reproduction on our screens makes them visible as artifactualities that reinforce racial relations of power and control.

CCTV and the society of control

'The corporation', Deleuze writes, 'is a spirit, a gas' (1992, p. 4). The corporation, like an invis-ible miasma, pervades and insinuates spaces previously delineated as separate and distinct, such as the demarcation between the prison and its outside, or between civilian and mili-tarized spaces, between places of punishment or containment, and places of leisure. A key technology that ties these corporatized spaces together is that of the surveilling appar-atus of CCTV: the street and the prison, the supermarket and the hospital, are alike subject to its silent gaze, and mark all spaces under its purview as subject to oversight and monitoring, as it simultaneously marks subjects within that space as objects of surveillance. In doing so, as previously discussed, it does not render them safer, but rather functions to emplace and narrate subjects as already suspect or out of place. In each of these locations, the images generated by CCTV can be understood as part of a sequence that is metastable across sites and contexts. James Der Derian named this networked system MIME-NET or the Mili-tary-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network, in which war, industry, media and entertain-ment all interpenetrate, circulate and re-mediate the same set of narratives, images and technologies, interchangeably deployed across the CCTV monitors, cinema screens, compu-ters, game boxes, cameras and cell phones that connect these continuous, yet seemingly disparate spheres and activities (Der Derian, 2001).

The elaborate invocation of the apparatus of surveillance in Eaten Fish's artworks can be located in the context of a number of other instances where this same apparatus is deployed also as a form of witness and counter-artifactuality. In such works the corpora-tized capacities of MIME-NET to surveil and control are at the same time themselves

rendered subject to surveillance, interruption and deflection. For her 2000 video, The Surveillance Shoe, the US artist Jill Majid developed 'a hybridization of surveillance hardware and a pair of high-heeled shoes' in which a 'CCD surveillance camera with infrared technology is built into the shoe's design'. Of the video produced through this somatechnological artifact, 'Legoland', Majid writes: 'It is as if the city is a scroll, and with the kick of my free leg, I can unroll it' (Majid, 2000). Majid's night time walk through the city reveals the spaces that are outside the reach of its fixed official surveillance apparatus, 'unrolling' them with every kick of her prosthetic heels.

Majid, who has developed a series of installations working with the CCTV systems of authorities such as the police and local councils, notes that the CCTV camera, as a sign of watched space, denotes 'the body or institution that is watching', while maintaining the opacity of the 'body or institution that is watching'. This question is one that returns again and again in a series of disparate texts and performative acts that problematize the relation between the object and subject of the surveilling gaze. One of the best-known examples is Michael Hanneke's film *Cache* (*Hidden*) where CCTV footage of their own street frontage is inexplicably delivered to a privileged white, comfortably cosmopolitan Parisian household, finally serving to open up a whole repressed history of colonial violence, and bring to light the scene of a massacre of Algerians in the heart of Paris, on the banks of the Seine – an event that was not recorded on CCTV and that remains outside the authorized memory of the nation. The title of the film, *Hidden,* asks us to consider what is revealed and what is concealed within the seemingly neutral, depthless gaze of contemporary CCTV. There are many interpretations of the agency behind the mysterious deliveries of CCTV footage of its own face, or façade, to the household in the film. I understand the images within a framework of Derrida's theorization of autoimmunity, that is, as the generation of counter-images and repressed memories of France's colonial past and present that are internal to, rather than foreign bodies within, the body of the nation (Derrida, 2003). This question of the national and the foreign is one of Derrida's central concerns in his reflections on teletechnics.

In a series of installations Majid works in the spaces between the subject of surveillance and the surveilling institution, such as intelligence agencies or the police, inserting herself as a foreign body within the field of vision of the CCTV cameras, suggesting the ways in which CCTV's narrative of target bodies may be itself interrupted or manipulated. Through these counter-artefactualities Majid explores the possibilities of disrupting or deflecting the temporality of CCTV, with its seamless circulation of images through the MIME-NET. In a project in collaboration with the Amsterdam police, Majid produced an installation in the red light district of the city designed to call attention to the extensive presence of CCTV cameras in the neighborhood: 'After months of negotiations, I succeeded in officially covering four of the Headquarters' cameras in jewels, in colors with police-assigned meanings.' In order to receive authorization for her project, Majid reinvented herself as a corporation called System Azure, complete with a manifesto couched in PR-speak:

> While an old Chinese saying claims 'When the wise man points to the moon the idiot looks at the finger', System Azure upholds the reverse: The wise consider the finger. Why? Looking at the finger is more interesting. The finger is reality. In considering the finger you consider how the moon is being represented. Who is pointing this finger? Toward what is my attention being directed and why should I look there? What does this finger want me to see? With

these questions in mind one can choose to see as the finger sees, to look at the moon in another way, or to look at something else entirely. (Majid, 2002)

Majid's tongue-in-cheek commentary on pointing the finger at the apparatus of surveillance returns us to Ali's drawings. On one level, in works such as the representation of the medical center, it appears that the drawings call on the viewer to look at the finger, to point to the machinery of CCTV as part of the apparatus of inhumanity. In others, they seem to aspire to record what the camera sees, to replicate, as counter-artifactuality, the all-seeing vision of the overseeing monitors. In these images, little Ali himself appears as a character within the landscape of the camp. Like Majid inserting herself into the set of the CCTV's field of vision, the appearance of little Ali transforms the affectless, objectifying and indifferent information recorded by CCTV, bringing into view the suffering and terrified subject of incarceration, one whose embodied testimony is in stark contrast to that of the camera. It is in light of this gap between Eaten Fish's 'true story' of what happened to him and the documentary evidence of the recording camera that I interpret Derrida's remarks regarding the Rodney King video and the 'heterogeneity of testimony to evidence' in the courtroom: 'To be a witness consists in seeing, in hearing, etc. but to *bear* witness is always to speak, to engage in and uphold a discourse' (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 94). Although Derrida concedes that 'discourse itself already harbours technics', he repeats:

> Technics will never make a testimony, testimony is pure of any technics, and yet it is impure, and yet it already implies the appeal to technics. This contradiction or aporetic tension brings to light the necessity of rethinking the contributions of testimony and technics, and all the consequences with respect to history and to memory. (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 93)

The scandalous outcome of the trial of police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King was that, despite the evidence of the video recording, King's abusers were found not guilty by the jury. In the footage of a defenseless man being brutally beaten by armed officers of the state, the jury saw, rather, an act of black aggression and white self-defense. Almost a quarter century later, in the face of the cell phone evidence that showed Eric Garner suffocate to death in a chokehold on a Staten Island sidewalk, after calling out no less than eleven times that he couldn't breathe, it was again the narrative of the monstered, obese and always already diseased black body that gained credence in official narratives. Nearly four years since Garner's killing, federal and state investigations remain unresolved despite the global visibility of the footage of his death (Mays, 2018).

The funny pages

I read Eaten Fish's drawings as both counter and counterpart to the teletechnics of CCTV, bringing into view, as counter-artifactualities, the daily crimes that transpire in Manus camp. Although the evidence of these teletechnics may document the commission of crime, it is not the medium of CCTV, but the humble and unpretentious genre of the cartoon that appears able to bring to light the crimes occurring in plain sight. Deploying the humble counter-technics of the cartoon, Eaten Fish offers, through the pen and paper technics of cartoon drawing, his embodied *testimony* of the somatechnologies of violence that he and his fellow detainees are subjected to; here the low-status, 'soft' technics of paper and pencil are pitted against the 'hard,' official evidence of the CCTV.

Eaten Fish's cartoons, then, may be said to evidence a counter-technics in order to produce counter-artifactualities that would otherwise remain as undocumented, unseen and invisible despite the relentless surveillance of CCTV screens and monitors. They disrupt the monologic notion that technics is purely the preserve of electronic technologies; Eaten Fish employs what could be considered the most rudimentary of technics, drawing by hand with pencil and paper, in order to challenge the hegemonic teletechnic apparatus of the MIME-NET. The aporetic tension between these two is generated precisely by the graphically asymmetrical relations of power that inscribe them. 'See you in the funny pages' is a dismissive riposte that suggests that its targets are of such insignificance that they belong among the trivia of the newspaper, relegated to the status of the children's comics and crosswords. Yet in the case of Ali's cartoons, and of those artists who advocated for him, it is only in these funny pages that the truth can be told.

Eaten Fish's cartoons can be inserted in a much longer graphic history that I have chosen to bracket here, one that runs at least from the Holocaust era to the present. This was the history invoked by the international cartoonist network Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI) when, in a wonderful development, they focused attention on Eaten Fish's plight through the medium of the funny pages. In October 2016, Eaten Fish was recognized through CRNI's annual award for Courage in Editorial Cartooning. The citation for the award described the work as follows:

> Eaten Fish is one of those whose work as a cartoonist brings to light the horrors that are happening around him. CRNI believes that his body of work will be recognized as some of the most important in documenting and communicating the human rights abuses and excruciating agony of daily life in this notorious and illegal prison camp. His work pushes through the veil of secrecy and silence and layers of fences in a way that only a talented artist speaking from the inside can. We hope that this award will help shine a brighter light on the excesses of this camp. (CRNI, 2016)

'Everything is cover': visual technologies before the law

I locate Eaten Fish's drawings, and the cartoonists' campaign that flowed from them, as part of a project of counter-'information', one that produces counter-artifactual testimonies that engage, interrupt and exceed the 'information' of teletechnics, on which it relies, and with which it exists, as Derrida put it, in an aporetic tension. I conclude by referring to two final instances that both complicate and illuminate this aporetic relation.

The first is the campaign by her family for the public release of CCTV footage relating to the death in custody of a 25 year old Aboriginal woman, Ms Dhu. Ms Dhu, a young Yamaji woman, died in Port Hedland jail after agreeing to pay off her overdue fines through a period of incarceration. Her infringement against the law was discovered when her family sought help for her from the police because of her abusive partner. Instead of receiving help as a target of domestic violence, Ms Dhu found herself cast in the role of the accused (guilty of not paying her parking fines and swearing at police) and incarcerated. In jail Ms Dhu suffered intolerable agony as the broken rib inflicted by her partner turned sceptic; her calls for medical treatment were dismissed by both police and hospital staff on three separate occasions as attention-seeking on the part of a hysterical addict. In the CCTV footage, police are shown dragging her inert and moaning body to and from her cell shortly before her death. The surveillance video also shows Ms Dhu suffering a blow to

her head after she is roughly yanked upwards by a police officer. Yet despite the visual evidence of her being subjected, on several occasions, to dragging, flinging, shoving, gripping and other forms of manhandling, the Coroner's report failed to recommend any charges in the case of Ms Dhu's death. Reviewing this shocking judgment, Joseph Pugliese and I posed the question of how the law sees the evidentiary footage presented by its own monitoring apparatus:

> The records of racialised deaths in custody are an archive of such repertoires of gestural violence that remain outside the purview of the law. These repertoires of violence are becoming increasingly visible as they are recorded by screen technologies such as CCTV. Yet … so profoundly entrenched is the institutional racism that transpires within the police cells, corridors, vans and triage areas that Aboriginal or refugee victims traverse that the CCTV cameras become *virtual accomplices* in the crimes perpetrated against the victims of police violence (Perera & Pugliese, 2016c, emphasis in original).

As in the case of the instances of violence in custody documented by Eaten Fish, we argue that repertoires of racist violence are seemingly neutralized by what 'appears to be an embodied, internalized and historically validated knowledge in which the actions of the state's agents, from medical staff to prison authorities, are proactively invested with impunity. It even appears that ever more flagrant repertoires of abuse and trauma are incited through recording devices, which, even as they are installed to supply the evidentiary grounds for any crime or misdemeanor, will systemically fail to result in any prosecution or serious level of accountability for their actions' (Perera & Pugliese, 2016c).

This conclusion is borne out by a *New York Times* investigation of the police practice of 'testilying' presenting false testimony in court, despite the increasing availability of surveillance footage that disproves their statements:

> As more police encounters are recorded – whether on the cellphones of bystanders or the bodyworn cameras of officers – false police testimony is being exposed in cases where the officer's word might once have carried the day … Yet interviews with officers suggest the prevalence of cameras alone won't end police lying. That's because even with cameras present, some officers still figure – with good reason – that a lie is unlikely to be exposed. (Goldstein, 2018)

My second instance, drawn from statements by two separate women held in detention on Nauru, bears out the understanding of the state apparatus as virtual accomplice to the violence perpetrated by its agents. The first woman, Mina, told a reporter:

> For a long time I couldn't even sleep properly. I live in a tent which is only secured with a door of plastic. All night I feel the huge male security guards walking around my head. Security guards are huge men supposed to protect us, however they torture us and behave like we are their slaves. Last week one of them stared at me and held his penis and pretended he was having sex with me. I asked another officer to look at the footage and see how the guard had harassed me, but he claimed they don't keep camera recordings (Vasefi, 2016).

Reminiscent of the Abu Ghraib photographs in which, as Mark Danner (2004) notes, the camera functions as the ultimate third party in the proceedings, the guard's performance reinforces the understanding that, regardless of whether or not the recording apparatus is actually operating, the camera may act as a form of further incitement of perversion and abuse for the bodies differentially positioned under its gaze. As in Eaten Fish's cartoon described above, it situates the camera as an incitement to sexual violence and rape.

Another imprisoned woman on Nauru, Nina, provides the following testimony:

Nina said she had requested CCTV footage from the emergency department but was told by a representative of IHMS, the health service provider in the detention centre, that cameras were switched off 'for the purpose of maintaining confidentiality'.

'The manager of IHMS just told me, 'Sorry all cameras are off,' and that they are always [off],' she [Nina] told the Guardian.

'Everything in here is cover [up],' she says. (Davidson, 2016)

Here, the camera operates as a device that, purportedly turned off to protect the 'privacy' of patients, is yet again is a virtual accomplice in the failure to deliver protection or justice. A report by the Auditor-General on the use of surveillance apparatus in the camps reveals the lack of accountability with regard to these technologies on the part of both the government and its agents, and the multiple ways in which the recording apparatus, whether by recording or failing to record, colludes in the failure to protect detained subjects:

In respect to the retention of digital (audio-visual) records, available evidence indicates that relevant contract guidelines were not always complied with … DIBP [Department of Immigration and Border Protection] has no assurance that the visual records retained by the subcontractor are in keeping with the centre guidelines which prevent the capture of visual records of the centres and of asylum seekers, with the exception of incidents and CCTV footage. In addition, the department could not make available any records to demonstrate that the privacy of individuals, including in relation to filming children without parental consent, had been considered in respect of filming, handling or storage of these digital records. (ANAO, 2016, p. 56)

Teletechnics, the law and the body

The two instances above suggest the increasingly fraught and entwined relations among teletechnics, incarcerated and criminalized bodies, the agents who police them, and the legal and juridical processes of the state. In a brief essay that Joseph Pugliese and I wrote regarding Ms Dhu's case, titled, 'What the Law Saw' (2016c), we referred to Richard Sherwin's analysis of the intersection of law with visual technologies. Sherwin notes that 'when law migrates to the screen it lives there as other images do' entering 'a condition of ontological and ethical uneasiness threatens the legality of law's claim to power' (Sherwin, 2102, ii). For Sherwin, this is an argument for the importance of visual literacy for legal practitioners.

Our interest, however, is also in how, as we gain access to the images upon which the law bases its judgments, we are enabled us to ask in turn how the law itself sees: to identify the visual blockages and blind spots in its line of vision that challenge law's claim to authority and that expose its own institutionalized repertoires of racist violence. As the images available to the law migrate to the screen, able to be juxtaposed alongside other images, such as Eaten Fish's testimony, as well as viewed against historical knowledges and experiences of repertoires of racist violence, the law demonstrates its own inability to see.

Derrida's closing comments in *Echographies* are pertinent here. He remarks that the potential transformative effects of [tele]technics are more apparent on the bodies of subjects, rather than (as yet) in the social spaces that it inhabits, such as the law:

The relation to technics is not something to which a body must yield, adjust, etc. It is more than anything something that transforms the body. It is not the same body that moves and reacts in front of these devices. Another body gradually reinvents itself, modifies itself, conducts its own subtle mutation' (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 96)

What Derrida names here are precisely the operations of somatechnics by which bodies are transformed by teletechnics, just as the penal somatechnologies, such as hoods and surveillance apparatus, transform the bodies of both the victims and their violent agents. In response, incarcerated subjects such as Eaten Fish testify to the resistant power to exercise their own reinventions of somatechnologies – revealing the latter as not simply teletechnics of surveillance but as complicit in the acts of sexual violence and torture – for example, as the bodies 'in front of these devices' are transformed into sexual objects that can be acted upon with impunity.

Yet, Derrida concludes, such a 'thinking of the [transformative effects of the] technical has not yet been integrated into law, our law': 'What I am saying here is not just speculative. It has effects every day. We can't read the news or a court record without perceiving this. These effects are massive.' He ends with a prediction: 'And in the very long term, this situation will have to change. When it does, we will inhabit, our inheritors will inhabit, a completely different world. But it's beginning slowly' (Derrida & Stiegler, 1996/2002, p. 99).

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