



Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2013 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

SESSION 1K

anticipated or intended.

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Session Moderator: Benjamin Hole, Philosophy

258 MGH

1:15 PM to 2:45 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Biopower and Heterology: An Examination of Protest and Resistance through the Photographs of Abu Ghraib

Samuel (Sam) Pizelo, Senior, English (Creative Writing)

Mentor: Monika Kaup, English

Contemporary theorists are still coming to terms with Michel Foucault's conception of power structures and how those relate to biopower, the State's control over its subjects. My research focuses on what Michel de Certeau calls heterology (logic of the Other) present within these structures. I use the theoretical work of Certeau to examine heterology and tactics (everyday ways of "making do") as well as Bruno Latour's framework of Actor Network Theory to chart the movement of actors within the structure. Latour also explains the "mediation" that happens, where the actor itself is changed through the process of action. It is this mediation, as part of an actor-network, that I will use to describe the photographs of Abu Ghraib, detailing the complex assemblage of military personnel, detainees, and even the non-human agency of the cameras themselves. I explore the contextual "framing" of the photography through a close reading of a number of the photographs released, an examination of their material reproduction through various news media (news outlets, Government publications, and the internet), and their reception in both American and British cultures and Iraqi culture. In addition, I use a number of secondary sources, such as the documentary film *Standard Operating Procedures* and the White House press release, to understand how the production and reproduction of these photographs might serve political reasons, either complicit with or subversive to the motives of State structures of power. Preliminary results suggest that the actor networks at Abu Ghraib engaged in politically subversive behavior through an intuitive combination of competing ideologies that norms of the State could not fully capture. The "framing" of the photographs both ideologically and culturally served to portray messages that the American Government, at the time of the photographs' release, could not have