Who cares for which dead and how? British newspaper reporting of the bombings in London, July 2005

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper begins with the recent interest in what Mbembe has called 'necropolitics': the politics of the distribution of life and death by modern sovereign states. The necropolitical works through the production of spatialities, visualities, and bodies that are classed, racialised and gendered in particular ways. The paper explores a series of such productions in its discussion of the British press coverage of the bombs that exploded on London's public transport system on 7 July 2005, and in particular the photographs used by the newspapers. It argues that the newspapers pictured bodies as gendered and racialised, with the former fixed and visible much more clearly than the latter. It further argues that the newspapers differentiated between various bodies by assuming that a certain sort of care was deserved only by some of those involved in the bombings. Finally, the paper examines how the coverage worked to place the readers of the newspapers in a specific position in the necropolitical order of power as citizens who care only for certain people, and in a particular way. The paper concludes by considering the implications of that specific caring for contemporary necropolitics and its visualities and spatialities.

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1. Introduction

Imagining politics as a form of war, we must ask: What place is given to life, death, and the human body (in particular the wounded or slain body)? How are they inscribed in the order of power? (Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', p. 12)

It seems increasingly difficult to disagree with the imperative that Mbembe (2003) learns from Foucault and Agamben, and from his analysis of the history of modern sovereignties: that politics now must indeed be imagined as a form of war. It must be imagined as war, says Mbembe, because so much politics now seems to revolve around questions of life and death. Who is entitled to live? And who is seen to deserve death? Who has 'the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die' (Mbembe, 2003: 11)? Whose lives are worth protecting, and whose are deemed disposable? Whose life, if lost, deserves mourning, and whose does not (Butler, 2004)?

The list of historically recent events that have made these questions particularly pressing is a long one: the AIDS pandemic (Comaroff 2007: 197) argues that it is impossible to contemplate the shape of late modern history… without the polymorphous presence of HIV/AIDS; famines and genocides (Robinson, in preparation); 'natural' disasters such as the tsunami of 2004 (Olds et al., 2005; Keys et al., 2006) and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (Braun and McCarthy, 2005; Giroux, 2006); the implications of contemporary 'technoscience' which is 'producing knowledge through experimentation with the structure and organization of bodies, matter, and life' (Clough, 2004: 3); and what Nancy (2000: xiii) has described as the 'autistic multiplicities' of wars over identity. While such events by no means exhaust contemporary politics, they and others like them have encouraged many critics to consider more or less violent death as increasingly significant. Necropolitics, then, is constituted through a 'polis in which an unprecedented capacity and concern to enhance life is rivaled only by the power to destroy it' (Comaroff 2007: 207).

Conceptual accounts of the necropolitical tend to emphasise Agamben's claim that everyone, potentially, is vulnerable to deadly abandonment by the state (Ek 2006; Minca, 2005: 411). Social scientists from a range of disciplines have begun to engage with the empirical detail of various manifestations of necropolitics, however, and they instead pay particular attention to the processes by which violent death is visited on some bodies and not on others (see for example Das, 2001; Kleinman et al., 1997). 'Bodies' is a key term here. Like Mbembe, various writers draw on both Foucault's and Agamben's accounts of a 'biopolitics' in which modern government is achieved through the production and management of certain sorts of bodies. (Some work has also considered how this management continues even after death, in some circumstances: see for example Johnson, 2004; Verder, 1999). Most geographers' investigations into the imagined and real distributions of life and death have also preferred to emphasise their systematic unevenness. Several have remarked on the ways in which life and death...
are allocated according to a precise differentiation of human bodies. This is a differentiation at once discursive and material, and at work in both political practices and political imaginaries. In New Orleans, note Braun and McCarthy (2005), the bodies abandoned by the state were almost entirely poor or black, and usually both; Pratt (2005) argues that the intersections of femininity, non-whiteness and poverty condemned certain bodies to 'bare life' in Vancouver; while Olds, Sidaway and Sparkes describe how reports of the tsunami in the Western media focussed overwhelmingly on the deaths of white people, as if those deaths were the worst aspect of the tragedy, thus 'banishing' non-white death to a field of chronic neglect (Olds et al., 2005: 477). In these explorations of contemporary necropolitics, then, the allocation of life and death is understood as resting on bodies produced as gendered, racialised and classed. Bodies produced as feminine, non-white and poor are those most likely to be abandoned in zones of exclusion.

This paper also uses a case study to emphasise the complex and constitutive differentiation between bodies in the context of violent death, by examining the reporting by British national newspapers of the bombs that exploded on London's public transport system on 7 July, 2005, in which 56 people died, including, it seems, four bombers. These newspapers covered the bombings and their aftermath for weeks after the event. They were unanimous that the 52 who died who were not bombers did not deserve their terrible end and that readers should mourn their deaths: 'pray for them all', exorted one front-page headline (Sun 9 July, 2005: 1). The newspapers were also unanimous that the bombers deserved no mourning, and none of the newspapers gave them obituaries. This uneven distribution of grief recalls some comments by Butler written in the aftermath of the New York attacks. Butler (2004: xiv) examined 'the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and what kind of subject must not', and she made it clear that this differential allocation 'operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary exceptions of who is normatively human' (Butler, 2004: xv). This paper explores what kind of bodies were produced as normatively human in the aftermath of the London bombs by the British press, as well as what kinds of bodies were produced as inhuman.

Central to the making and relative positioning of these human and inhuman bodies in the press was an implicit and specific understanding of 'care'. 'Care', of course, is a highly complex process with various dimensions (Hollway, 2006). The aspect of care most relevant here is caring about, which occurs when a need for care is recognised (Sevemhuissjesan, 2003: 7). The newspaper coverage invited its readers to recognise a need to care about only some of those who died in the explosions on 7 July - those who died who were not bombers - and the appropriate expression of that care was to grieve for their deaths. Grief and mourning can also take different forms, however (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003), and the specific mourning demanded for those killed by the bombs also entailed claims to similarity both among the dead and between the dead and the newspapers' readers, claims which defined the 'normatively human'. The contours of this caring and its effects are explored in more detail in the latter part of this paper.

The production of differentiated bodies and of a certain kind of grieving care must be understood in the context of the bombs exploding at a specific moment in the history of British postcoloniality. As the paper shows, although racialised differences mattered very much in the press coverage of the bombings, the distinction made by the press between those whose deaths deserved mourning and which those did which was not a distinction made on the (imagined) grounds of 'race'. In this case study, to be normatively human was not necessarily to be seen as white. This is rather different from the much more clearly racialised necropolitics traced by Olds et al. (2005) or by Braun and McCarthy (2005), for example, and the reasons for it are complex. However, the newspapers' refusal to allocate grief differentially to differently racialised bodies must surely, at least in part, be an effect of an ongoing intersection between a colonial imaginary and decades of anti-racist struggle, the latter a legacy of migrations from British (ex-)colonies and elsewhere (Hall, 1991). Seeing 'race' in the newspapers was thus curiously variable; never quite invisible, its visibility was more or less intense, and mattered more or less, in different ways at different moments. The conclusion of this paper, however, suggests that this refusal to racialise the distinction between the normatively human and the inhuman nevertheless had its own, pernicious, necropolitical effects.

An aspect of the press coverage of the explosions in London in 2005 to which this paper will pay particular attention is the photographs that were used. As well as the pages and pages of reporting, analysis and opinion (the distinctions between these three often blurred), the papers carried pages and pages of photographs of various kinds, which did their own productive work alongside the newspapers' written text. The importance of photographs to the reporting of the bombings is hardly surprising. Many commentators have remarked on the significance of visual imagery to contemporary necropolitics. While there has been a great deal of discussion of various visualisations that attended the planes flying into the World Trade Centre towers in 2001, for example (see for example Bal, 2004; Brooker, 2005; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2003; Lisle 2004; Mirzoeff, 2005; Retort, 2005; Zelizer, 2005; Zizek, 2002), here I will depend more on the work of scholars who have emphasised the visual economies through which bodies become visible in particular ways, and thus differentially positioned in the necropolitical order (Feldman, 2005; Grewal, 2003; Wells, 2007; Wexler, 2000). My use of the term 'visual economy' follows Poole (1997), who uses it to emphasise both the materiality of images and the uneven circulation of those images between diverse locations. While the importance of the visual to the necropolitical has by no means been ignored in the literature, few have worked at the level of specificity invited by Poole's approach. Much of the discussion so far has employed understandings of the visual that are either pitched at a high level of abstraction and generalisation (Jones and Clarke, 2006), are formalist (reading the effects of images from their appearance alone (Pratt, 2005)), or work with a very simple understanding of the work of spectating (as in the polemic by Retort (2005), or in the claim of Braun and McCarthy (2005) that television coverage of Hurricane Katrina made the state's abandonment of particular people utterly self-evident). The work of Campbell (2003, 2004, 2007) is an exception here, however; he too draws on Poole's work to produce much more grounded and nuanced accounts of the intersections of visuality, visual images and the work of spectating (Campbell, 2007).

In this paper I hope to make three specific contributions to the emerging engagement with contemporary necropolitics. Firstly, and following the examples of Poole and Campbell, examining the photos in the British press in the summer of 2005 suggests that the visual economy in which they were embedded was a complex one. Different sorts of photographs were used, with different effects; and some things that were made highly visible in certain photos were almost invisible in others (following the comments above, the paper suggests that 'race' in particular occupies a peculiarly mobile position in the spectrum of the visible). All this suggests that geographers need to work with a much richer understanding of the visual economy - of its diversity of visual images and of their possible visualities - than they have hitherto done.

Secondly, I hope to contribute to the spatial vocabulary through which the necropolitical might be understood. Not surprisingly,
geographers in particular have paid considerable attention to the importance of spatiality to the necropolitical order. Various ‘spaces of exception’ have been identified (Braun and McCarthy, 2005; Gregory, 2004; Minca, 2005; Pratt, 2005), but it is Gregory’s work on the current violence in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine (Gregory, 2004, 2006a), and on the US Naval Station detention centre at Guantanamo Bay (Gregory, 2006b), which most explicitly discusses the spatiality that characterises the necropolitical. This is a spatiality of ‘here’ and ‘there’ in which, as distance is folded into difference (Gregory, 2004: 17), the boundaries between those whose lives should be mourned (‘us’) and those whose lives should not (‘them’) are made. Gregory describes this spatiality as topological because it is produced by iterative efforts to place boundaries between those whose lives matter and those whose lives do not, and by the ‘passages between inside and outside, law and violence’ (Gregory 2006b: 407) that such boundary-making entails. This ‘strange and paradoxical overlapping of bonding and un-bonding’ (Diken and Laustsen, 2006: 443) has led others to use topological figures to describe such ‘torsions’ of ‘connective dissonance’ too (Gregory, 2004: 255–256; see Ek, 2006; Hannah, 2006). In this paper, I suggest, as Gregory does, that these torsions are highly mobile, are not always materialised in the physical environment, and are not imagined as consistently visible. However, I also supplement this account by arguing that, in the British press in July 2005, another, more spectral spatiality shadowed the necropolitical. The in/visibility of the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was more apparitional than topological: more elusive than paradoxical. The spectres and ghosts that Mbembe (2001) evokes as inherent in the postcolony are present in the metropole as well.

Thirdly, paying particular attention to the use of photos in British newspapers in July 2005 suggests that geographers need to pay more attention to the spectating positions that are produced by media coverage of necropolitical events (a point also made by Jones and Clarke, 2006). Campbell’s work, for example, usefully emphasises the productive effects of photographs. However, in paying most attention to the signifying effects of certain photos, I would suggest that his work says much more about discursive effects than it does about the production of subject positions. In this paper, I want to pay particular attention to the way in which newspaper readers were positioned, and particularly what they were invited to feel. Given that this is the focus of this paper, I pay very little attention to the production of the photos I discuss, nor to the journalistic practices that created the newspaper coverage I analyse. Nor do I explore how actual readers occupied the position that their newspaper offered them. Instead, the paper aims to explore the ways in which the newspapers produced certain kinds of bodies in their text and photographs, and how they also attempted to align their readers with some of those bodies.

Another absence from this paper should also be briefly explained. There are no reproductions of any of the photographs the paper discusses. The first reason for this is that images have the effect they do not only because of what they show, but also because of where they are displayed (in this case, the surrounding text and photographs, the rest of the newspaper) and how they are encountered (in homes, on underground trains, in offices, with others or alone, and so on). Only the first of these can be reproduced in this journal, and then only approximately. The other, equally crucial aspects of their reception cannot be reproduced, and without those aspects their character is fundamentally different. They become evidence for my argument rather than (or as well as) newspaper photographs, and in that sense you would be looking at different sorts of images from those that appeared in the press in July 2005. Secondly, I argue here that the photographs visualise necropolitical distinctions between bodies, and I do not wish to reproduce such visualisations.3

The next section of this paper will describe the range of subjects represented visually in the British press in its coverage of the bombs of 7 July 2005. The one following will examine the representation of those bodies as gendered and racialised, and the third will explore the specific, caring position produced by the newspaper coverage for its readers. The fourth section turns to the photos and text that produced the bombers as those whose lives were not worth mourning. While some aspects of their representation are entirely predictable given the current vitality of Orientalism in our colonial present (Gregory, 2004; Grewal, 2003), I also want to argue that the visual and spatial field in which they were constituted as ‘terrorists’ was complex. This leads me to reflect in conclusion on those claims that we are all vulnerable to necropolitical disposability, as well as on the politics of caring for those who died who were not bombers.

2. Picturing 7/7

Three bombs exploded on underground trains, and one on a bus, between 8.51 and 9.47 in London on the morning of 7 July 2005. Newspaper coverage began the day after, and made extensive use of photographs from a variety of sources. The papers were erratic in attributing images, as is usual (Zelizer, 1998); but it is still possible to note the wide range of sources used. Many came from professional press photographers; some of these were sourced through agencies like Associated Press and Getty Images. Others came from ordinary people taking photos on their mobile phones or electronic personal organisers. Yet others were photos of people involved in the bombings in some way which had been taken in quite other contexts – family snaps, closed circuit television stills, graduation portraits – and reproduced by the newspapers. All were obviously embedded in written reporting of various kinds, and, as I have noted, cannot be understood apart from that textual framing (Campbell, 2004).

Apart from a very few photos of where the bombs exploded,4 most of the photographs in the newspapers focussed on, and thus served to constitute, specific groups of people (cf Zelizer, 2001). There were five of these groups (of photographs): survivors, those searching for survivors, emergency workers, and the ‘terrorists’ and ‘victims’ as they were universally called.

There were many photographs of people who had survived the explosions. None of these photos showed any severe injuries explicitly. Indeed, following the usual practice of British journalism reporting ‘British’ death, there were no photos of dead bodies or body parts (Campbell, 2004; Taylor, 1991; Wells, 2007). Many newspapers used several photos of people on stretchers or on hospital trolleys, bandaged or wrapped up, in particular photographs of a wounded man with blood on his face next to an ambulance – John Tulloch – and another of a man, Paul Dadge, supporting a woman, Davinia Turrell, as she walked holding a burns mask to her face. Some of the written eyewitness accounts, however, especially in the tabloid newspapers, were fairly graphic, and the tabloid newspapers also used more photographs showing more injuries more clearly than did the broadsheets.

Secondly, there were many photos of those searching for family or friends among the survivors, often pictured holding a photo of


3 The editor of this journal suggested that, despite my analytical and critical misgivings, some readers may want or need to see the photographs the paper discusses. Many are reproduced on the website of the British Broadcasting Corporation: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/sk/2005/london_explosions/default.ssm. For an attempt to read these photos differently, see Rose (2007).

4 Only two of these sites were shown. The first was the bombed bus in Russell Square and the second was the train carriage bombed very near Aldwych station.
those they were searching for. Thirdly, there were many pictures of emergency service workers, especially fire-fighters and medical personnel in the immediate reporting one or two days after the event. After that, as the reporting focussed in one way or another on the police hunt for the bombers, many photos concentrated on police bodies, particularly armed police on the streets of London and other large cities.

The last two sorts of people produced by the photographs used by the papers were those who died as victims of the bombs, and those who bombed. The victims were frequently pictured by the newspapers through the reproduction of many different kinds of photos: graduation portraits, family snaps, driving licence mugshots. The bombers were also often pictured through the same kind of photos, as well as various stills from closed circuit television (CCTV) footage.

3. Gendered and racialised bodies: the dead, the survivors and those searching for survivors

This section focuses on how 'victims', survivors and those searching for survivors were represented in the newspapers through both text and photography, focussing in particular on the specificities of their corporeal, visual and spatial constitution. Central to that constitution were particular ways of envisioning gendered and racialised difference.

In this reporting, women were pictured as much more emotionally expressive than men. Among survivors, women were often shown as shocked, weeping, dazed. And among those pictured searching for survivors, again it was images of women that displayed intense emotional work: tears, clenched faces, wobbling chins. Men instead were shown as much less emotional, more stoic, even when injured; and it was almost only men who were shown as injured. The three photographs that took up all of page 15 of the Daily Mail on 8 July 2005 are typical of this pattern. Two of the pictures show wounded men, one 'bloodied' and the other 'gashed', as their captions say. The third picture is of a woman, physically unharmed but obviously upset: her caption reads 'Ordeal: A woman’s face betrays her horror and disbelief.'

In understanding this gendering of those hurt in various ways by the bombs, it seems necessary, with Dowler (2002), to recall how war has been gendered by the British media at least since the First World War (Goldstein, 2001; Higonet, 1993; Taylor, 1991; and see Hickey, 1997). Soldiering is properly masculine: men are brave and prove their manhood by being wounded and their citizenship by dying: women do not fight, but remain at home, or on the homefront, nurturing or grieving. This powerful cultural discourse produced the almost complete absence of weeping men in British press coverage in July 2005; it also produced a particular horror of wounded and dead women. Photographs very rarely showed women as physically hurt by the attacks. Apart from the image of Davinia Turrell, whose injuries were mostly hidden by the mask, I found only two other photographs, in all the coverage, of wounded women. Several papers, particularly the Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror, put considerable effort into finding photos of Davinia Turrell before her injuries, as if there was a special need to displace the damage done to that particular face: John Tulloch's wounded face, meanwhile, was published repeatedly (see Tulloch, 2006).

In representing these deadly attacks, the British press thus relied on a number of established discursive practices, with the result that men were pictured as physically hurt and damaged by vio-

ence while women were pictured as responding to it emotionally. However, it is important to note that this gendering was only evident in the newspapers' photographs. It was not evident in what was written, where men too were reported as moved, terrified and grieving, and where women were described as dying in horrific ways. This gendered difference was thus projected visually; which is another way of saying that it was carried by photographed bodies. And in being photographed as an embodied repertoire of gesture and comportment, I would argue that it was also naturalised. Women were seen as the expressers of emotion, naturally, because emotion was written on and through their bodies.

Against this specific vision of naturalised gendered difference, racialised difference, I would suggest, was a much more evanescent corporealised effect. As Poole (1997) has argued, histories of colonialism have made it very hard for modern Western subjects not to see bodies through a screen of racialised differences. Thus it is not surprising that, in relation to those killed by the bombs who were not bombers, racialised differences were acknowledged by the papers. But there was more to the British newspapers' visualisation of these racialised bodies than that. The newspapers not only consistently remarked on the diversity of people among the missing and dead; they all (with the exception of the Daily Telegraph) actively celebrated it. They used that diversity, with some help from a speech by the Mayor of London, as a sign – 52 signs – that London is a city that welcomes people from all over the world. Those racialised bodies became symbols of London's tolerance, according to all the newspapers, a tolerance that was in stark contrast to the 'intolerance' of those who had attacked it. This celebration of London's tolerance of diversity had a rather paradoxical effect though, an effect remarked by both Brooker (2005/6) and Lisie (2004) in their discussions of the remarkably similar celebrations of New York after 9/11 (see also Owens, 2004). The celebration of diversity was a celebration of something repeatedly described as both unique to London and representative of the whole world. Hence London was 'the universal city' (Independent, 15 July: 7), both in the sense that people from all over the world came to it but also, in an assimilative move, one which represented the whole world. And the dead symbolised that local claim to (a specific version of) the global.

Indeed, rather than being positioned as transnational or perhaps even post-national, the dead were positioned very clearly in London, as Londoners, by all the newspapers. In fact, the dead were placed even more precisely, at the times and places of the explosions that killed them: the press obsessively repeated at what times the bombs went off and maps of their locations; repeatedly, reporting was structured around the locations of the bus and the three underground stations.

Having been made into Londoners in this way, the connections that many of the dead had with all sorts of different places, in different ways, were ignored by the newspapers. There was very little coverage of their funerals, for example, which would have taken their deaths away from the bombs both temporally (it took a long time to identify bodies), spatially (as the families of the dead who were migrants took bodies to funerals elsewhere in the world) and culturally (as various funerary practices would have come into view). Hence there was also a strong sense that once in and of London, cultural and racialised differences among the dead, the survivors and those connected to them were not important. While

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6 Massey (2006) has discussed the Mayor of London's speech, and pointed out that while it celebrates the cosmopolitanism resulting from immigration into London, it is much less critical of the politics of London's own relations to other parts of the world.

7 Exceptionally, the Guardian (21 July 2005: 12–13) reported on a funeral in Turkey. In contrast, the Evening Standard (29 July 2005: 7) claimed after one funeral that there would be '51 other funerals just like Ms Brand's'.
racialised bodies were seen, therefore, the culturally differentiated practices that such a visual sign might signify were not reported.

So, although in one sense racialised differences were acknowledged in the British press, in another sense the differences they might signify were muted by the category of ‘being a Londoner’. They were also all but obliterated by the category of ‘gender’. I have already noted that gendered difference was installed as natural in the newspapers’ photos of the bombings. What I now want to suggest is that, in that reporting, racialised and culturally differentiated bodies were also subordinated to (naturalised) gendered identities and relations. I will offer three instances of this move. The Sun headline that has already been quoted – ‘pray for them all’ – was accompanied by two large photos, originally family snaps. The photos were of ‘two beautiful, decent women. One Christian. One Muslim’ (Sun 9 July, 2005: 1). While the picturing of (young, pretty) women as the most moving of victims went unquestioned, the combination of text and images both acknowledged cultural and racialised difference while also suggesting that such differences are insignificant in the face of violent death: the two women’s families ‘were united in fear and panic’, according to the Sun (9 July, 2005: 1). My second example is a photo of an unnamed black Rastafarian man comforting a weeping white woman. This was reproduced several times in different newspapers, and again both displays, and suggests the irrelevance of, cultural and/or racialised distinctions – while demonstrating clearly gendered ones.

My final example is the coverage given to Marie Fatayi-Williams. Mrs Fatayi-Williams travelled from Nigeria to London to look for her son Anthony in the aftermath of the bombs. From one short article in the Guardian and one of its photos (Guardian, 12 July 2005; 13 July 2005), it seems that, with help from a range of other men and women, she staged quite an elaborate event for the press on a street near the bombed bus, to demand why the identification of bodies was taking so long. She also spoke very movingly of her love for her son, her fear that he was dead, and her horror of political violence. She held a photo of her son, and other photos of him had been printed on posters and t-shirts. While the Guardian mentioned the motivation for her action once (Guardian, 12 July 2005: 1), all the other papers ignored it (as well as cropping her group of supporters and their photos of Anthony from their photos), and focussed entirely on her as a mother pleading emotionally for an end to violence. Her identity as an upset woman displaced all other understandings of her. According to Tim Collins elsewhere in the Guardian, her speech sprang from ‘that most powerful of all emotions, a mother’s love’; ‘sprunging from the heart’, her words gave ‘verbal form to the whirlpool of emotions’ (Guardian G2, 13 July 2005: 2). Bel Mooney’s article in the Daily Mail (13 July 2005: 12) opened by noting that, ‘dressed in traditional Nigerian clothes’, Mrs Fatayi-Williams was ‘an astonishing sight’; but she too then quickly moved on to suggest that, ‘inscrivably’, ‘from the heart’, ‘she spoke for mothers down the centuries who’ve let their tears fall and asked: why?’.

The representation of Marie Fatayi-Williams is another example of how the burden of visually representing emotional responses to the violence of the explosions was given to women by the British press. It is also an example of how that particular corporealised understanding of femininity worked largely to erase other signs of difference that bodies might also carry, in particular racialised and cultural differences. Racialised differences were visible and acknowledged – indeed even emphasised in order to make London’s ‘tolerance’ into a universalising quality – but they were also exceeded and displaced by images of shared grief and gendered difference. That erasure of certain differences was also at play in the temporal and spatial locating of the dead in London and as Londoners, which was one of the most powerful imaginative geographies (Gregory, 2004) at work in the British press in July 2005.

4. The gender of representation: constituting caring newspaper readers

In their review of feminist cultural geography, Jacobs and Nash (2003) argue strongly for the continuing need not only to examine the ways in which gendered difference is represented, but also the effects of those representations. The previous section argued that, in the newspaper reporting of the London bombs in July 2005, representations of gendered difference mattered. Women were visually given the task of responding emotionally to those violent events; and there were also some suggestions that women were the most undeserving of all those who did not deserve to die in that way. This section explores what subject position was produced for newspaper readers by this particular construction of femininity.

I want to begin by returning to Marie Fatayi-Williams and emphasising a further aspect of her representation as a grieving mother whose pain speaks directly from the heart. Her representation in this way restricts Fatayi-Williams entirely to the realm of the emotional. Yet there is a established history and extensive geography of women whose children have been violently murdered, and who appeal to the state for the return of their child’s body by holding photographs of them in public spaces: in Chile (Dorfman, 2003), Argentina (Radcliffe, 1993), Indonesia (de Alwis, 2000) and Turkey (Baydar and Iyemen, 2006), to name but a few. In another refusal of connections to elsewhere among those affected by the bombs, any parallels between Fatayi-Williams and these events were ignored by the British press. Now, while any parallel could not have been exact (the state holding Fatayi-Williams’s son’s body was not his killer), nonetheless, to suggest that there might be a parallel immediately makes it clear what the newspaper representation of Fatayi-Williams ignored in its emphasis on her emotions: her address to the state. She wanted her son’s body back from the state that was withholding it from her. In this particular feminisation of certain emotions, then, the possibility of active engagement with the state was erased. Women can only watch and weep, passively.

And I want to argue that watching and weeping was precisely what the readers of newspapers were invited to do by the structure of the newspapers’ reporting of the bombings. Jones and Clarke (2006: 302) have recently noted that the media ‘must appeal to a subject’. I want to argue in fact that, in their demand for a grieving kind of care, the press addressed a particular kind of feminised subject. Readers were asked to show that they cared about the deaths of some of those killed on 7 July by weeping and mourning them. The reporting of the London bombs thus produced a conservatively gendered structure of feeling that put newspaper readers in a specific, feminine position in the necropolitical order of power.

Here it is necessary to pay particular attention to the photographs printed in the newspapers of the missing and the dead. The publication of such photos is a relatively new phenomenon in British journalism. It emerged during the 1990s as a response to various bomb attacks in London and elsewhere. (The very first time newspapers published photos of all those killed in a bomb attack was after the blast in Omagh in 1998.) In the weeks after the London bomb attacks, photos of the dead were printed repeatedly; in news reports, in obituaries, in commemorative pull-outs. As has already been noted, these were mostly the sorts of photos we all have, of ourselves and our families and friends: snaps from holidays, parties, with children, the odd graduation portrait. The ordinariness of these photos was affirmation of the ‘ordinariness’ of those who died, and of their similarities, since all the photos fell

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* I want to emphasise here that I am trying to describe a particular configuration of a specific kind of femininity with a certain sort of emotionality that produces passivity. I am not saying that to be feminine is to be passive and emotional; nor am I implying that to be political is not to be emotional.
into easily-recognisable photographic genres and all showed their subjects doing a similar range of things.

So, once again, despite the visual marking of racialised differences and the concomitant possibility of cultural difference, difference was erased in favour of representing the dead as similar: as Londoners, as ordinary, as mourned, as unjustly dead. What the use of this particular kind of photography also did was to suggest that the dead were also similar to the readers of newspapers. After all, most of us take photos of our loved ones that look just like those the papers printed; and in our photos of ourselves, we do the same things as they did, and we look just like they look: happy, exuberant, a bit self-conscious, red-eye-d, awkward, smiling dutifully, over-exposed. The Sun evoked this similarity quite explicitly, choosing to mimic loosely the format of a family photo album on the pages where they printed twenty photos of the dead and missing on 10 July; the pages were black, the photos were framed in white and put at angles to each other, and under each picture the name of the person was written in a font that looked a bit like handwriting.

The efforts to make us, newspaper readers, the same as them, the dead – the same because we look as they look, we live as they lived – was an another attempt to erase differences, this time to erase any differences between us, the newspaper readers and them, the dead. They look like us, they lived like us: the only difference between us and them is that they died and we are still alive. And that of course is a difference about which nothing can be done: the dead cannot be brought back to life. So their photos become no more than ‘pognant’ (the term used by Daily Mail [9 July 2005: 9] to describe its website display of dead and missing photos). They become nothing more (or less) than an emotional experience. We might show we care about them in a number of ways – pray, mourn, cry, perhaps leave flowers at King’s Cross Station – but we are not placed in a position that asks us to do any more than that. Caring about the dead was made to mean no more than feeling bad about their deaths.

It is in this sense that this paper argues that the structure of newspaper reporting of the bombs in London in July 2005 feminised its readership. In effect, readers of the newspapers were being asked to do no more than the women those newspapers pictured: watch the horror and weep.

Young (2003: 2) has argued that just such a passive position is central to the gendering of what she calls ‘a security state that wages war abroad and expects obedience and loyalty at home’. She argues that a central part of the United States’ ‘war on terror’ abroad is its construction of its loyal citizens at home as passive, submissive, and subordinate. That is, the security state’s loyal citizenry is feminised. Young suggests that there are two aspects to this subordination. The first is that the citizenry is threatened by aggression from outside, a threat which, as Kaplan (2003) has also argued, can never be entirely confined to the outside, and to which the next section of this paper will return. The second aspect is that the citizenry is weak and acquiescent to the security state. They do not make any demands on it; on the contrary, they are grateful for its protection. This is precisely the passivity to be found in the British press’s representation of Marie Fatayi-Williams. Her demand addressed to the state – an emotional one, to be sure, but also a political one – was obscured by the emphasis on her emotion alone. (The Guardian essay noted approvingly of Fatayi-Williams that ‘she does not condemn, she appeals’ [Guardian G2 13 July 2005: 2].)

The emotional response demanded from its readers by the British press when presented repeatedly with photos of the dead was similarly passive. This is not to confute the newspapers with the state; but it is to suggest that both are contributing, in somewhat different ways, to a politics in which people become citizens by feeling particular emotions (Berlant, 1998; Owens, 2004; Zelizer, 2005). The photos were looked at, something was felt, a certain caring happened, but nothing, it appeared, needed to be done. We can leave the action to others.

Those others, in Young’s (2003) account, are constituted in relation to a passive, feminised citizenry as masculinised political actors. But they are not constructed as aggressive in this particular heterosexual relation. Young argues that passive citizens produce, and are produced by, a security state that characterises itself not as aggressive but as defensive. It presents itself as the protector of the weak and innocent from outsider threats in ‘a logic of masculinist protection’ (Young, 2003: 10). Hence, perhaps, the Daily Mail’s slip in describing, in a photo caption, the foil thermal blanket in which a group of shocked commuters were wrapped as a ‘security blanket’ [8 July 2005: 211].

In the vicious necropolitics that nevertheless proceeds from this imaginary, yet more bodies are produced and placed in its order of power. In particular, certain forms of masculinity are produced, which were also pictured in particular ways by the British press after the bombs exploded. This was especially evident in the photographs of the police that were printed as the hunt for the bombers proceeded. Many photos were used showing armed police, bomb disposal experts in full gear, and forensic investigators in white coats. Some of the tabloid papers went to great lengths to detail the equipment these mostly male, tool-up bodies were wearing; it is as if, after even a fairly muted display of hurt and vulnerable bodies, the papers wanted to display again and again hard, armoured bodies that apparently could not be damaged so easily. These bodies were consistently described as ‘our’ protectors. They were there as a reaction to the bomb attacks, and not as aggressors.

This section has pursued the newspapers’ gendering of bodies and subject positions in the aftermath of the bombs in London by suggesting that the construction of gender in the photographs and text of the newspaper reporting extended out from the newspaper pages in an attempt to constitute a certain sort of readership. This readership was positioned as embodying a specific form of caring femininity, which has a passive relationship to a masculinised state that codes itself as protective and defensive rather than aggressive.

5. Imag(in)ing the bombers as in/visible

This paper now turns to the British coverage of those other men, repeatedly described not as protectors but as aggressors: the bombers (cf Radstone, 2002).

Photos of the ‘terrorists’ emerged bit by bit as the investigation into the bombings proceeded, and they were of various kinds. One was a photograph from a closed circuit television camera of the four men at Luton station on their way to London, carrying the rucksacks which contained the bombs. The papers also used school photos, or photos from a family event, and driving licence photos; and The Times found photographs of one, Mohammad Sidique Khan, at work as some sort of teacher (the papers could not agree of what kind). These photos were used again and again by all the papers, in reports, analysis and commentaries. As already noted, though, they never appeared in obituaries. To repeat: these men were apparently not worth grieving.

A crucial part of the press’s representation of the bombers in the ‘logic of gendered meanings and images [which] helps organize the way people interpret events and circumstances, along with the positions and possibilities for action within them’ (Young, 2003: 2), was the imagined geography in which they were placed. Young argues that the masculinist logic of the security state is sustained by the production of both an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’. The second section of this paper has already noted the way in which the dead were represented as ‘Londoners’ above all, and there
was some talk of ‘Fortress London’ in some newspapers (e.g. *Evening Standard* 28 July 2005: 2-3). But the security state also depends on threatening others outside itself; ‘it constitutes itself in relation to an enemy outside, an unpredictable aggressor against which the state needs vigilant defense’ (Young, 2003: 8).

The British press certainly made every effort to place the bombers as outsiders, despite their British births. Unlike the dead who were confined to London, the ‘terrorists’ were given global connections. This was particularly clear in the maps of each produced by the newspapers. Maps showing exactly where so many died only showed central London; but maps accompanying stories about the bombers consistently showed their purported links with different locations: London, Leeds, Lahore, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Egypt. This effort to make the bombers different, other, ‘them’ from ‘there’, also accounts for the persistent use of photos of their faces by the newspapers. All the newspapers printed photographs of the bombers’ faces repeatedly. Yet, obviously, these men were dead, no-one was searching for them, there was no need to identify them. So why were they shown so often, their faces so important that the *The Times* (14 July 2005: 1) went so far as to print over the picture it found of Khan ‘Unauthorised reproduction forbidden’? I would suggest that this is another example of the racialisation of bodies. The repeated use of photos of faces suggests again and again that the enemy was not white, and that terrifying difference is indeed visible on bodies (Nayak, 2006: 416; Noxolo, 2006; Rai, 2004).

Yet as well as this effort to place the bombers abroad, and to construct a visible, terrorist, black masculinity, all the newspapers felt compelled to print photos of the birth certificates of the four bombers which confirmed their British citizenship. Perhaps this is because they thought their readers just would not believe this unless they saw firm evidence. More likely, as Young (2003) and Kaplan (2003) argue, the security state cordons off its nation from the world but also, in its need for ‘threats’ against which it can protect its ‘good’ citizens, it also requires threats from within, and the birth certificates provided evidence of that threat. I now want to trace the implications in the visual field of this need for an internal threat, to argue that it produces a highly unstable visualisation of ‘them’.

Photожournalistic visuality is not, usually, understood as unstable. It depends on photographs that can be seen as both descriptively accurate and symbolically resonant (Zelizer, 1998). The accuracy of visual description – whether in a photograph or in the words of an ‘eye-witness’ – was hardly ever problematised in the coverage of the London bombs; in the two or three days immediately after the bombs, much of the reporting had to depend on eye-witness accounts of what had happened and the reliability of such witnesses was never questioned.9 And photographs were used by the newspapers in the time-honoured tradition of photожournalism, as seemingly transparent windows onto the world, turning those of us who were not there into apparent witnesses of places and people. The only occasions on which the veracity of the photos on which the press coverage depended for so much of its authenticity and impact was questioned all involved photos of the ‘terrorists’. For if these ‘terrorists’ were troublingly ‘homegrown’, according to the press, then this trouble carried over into the photographs they used to produce them.

The accuracy of photographs’ descriptive power was only ever interrogated in relation to photographs of the bombers. Here, and only here, appearances were seen as problematic. According to the *Guardian* (14 July 2005: 1), bomber Hasib Hussain was ‘a boy who didn’t stand out’. The *Daily Express* (15 July 2005: 3) printed three school photos of Hussein and described his face as ‘blank, expressionless’, unrevealing. In particular, versions of a comment made by a ‘security source’ about the CCTV still – which showed the four men at Luton Station carrying backpacks – were repeated by all the papers: ‘it was like the infantry going off to war, or like they were going on a hiking holiday’ (Observer 17 July 2005: 15). ‘They looked for all the world like just another group of friends heading for a day out’ (Mail on Sunday 17 July 2005: 7). That is, the CCTV image tells us nothing about what these men were doing or were about to do: Jonathan Freedland went so far as to write in the *Guardian* (18 July 2005: 5) that ‘what we see most in this image is not what’s in it, but what we put there’. So in another way, then, the British press were agreed that photos of the bombers revealed nothing about them.

If some photos of the bombers were understood as meaningless, and others as showing the significance of their ‘race’, I would argue that yet other photos of the same men were doing something different again: their family photos (from which their faces were often extracted), which show them at their weddings, with their families, as schoolchildren. Now, the family photos of the dead ‘victims’ worked powerfully to signify the embeddedness of the dead in loving (now grieving) families. Those photos of the missing/dead were always accompanied in every paper by a few sentences about the person they showed, which usually included something about where they worked and their usual route to work, and almost always that they had family and friends desperately concerned for them, or mourning them. It was striking just how much these individuals were made part of their families by the newspapers’ reporting (see also Grewal 2003); their photos brought the signs of familial togetherness that are so important to their domestic performance (Rose, 2003) into the newspapers’ public circulations.

Signs of familial togetherness were much less obvious in relation to the bombers’ family photos, however (Noxolo, 2006). Their wedding photos, or a casual snap of Abdullah Shaheed Jamali sitting on a sofa next to his wife and holding their son, were not surrounded by textual evidence of their connections to a loving family. In Jamali’s family snap, his son’s face was digitally blurred by several papers, removing the image from the realm of the familial entirely. In the case of the bombers, then, the familial relationality of the image is much thinner than it is in the case of the photos of victims. But it has not disappeared. An aura of ordinary familiality still lingers in relation to these photographs. And here racialised difference seems to be visible but unimportant once again, because these photos do carry that same sense of the ordinary, the normal, the everyday, that the photos of the other dead do. What they suggest then, like the birth certificates, is that the enemy could be anyone from anywhere, they too could look ordinary, with ordinary photographs taken of them.

The evanescent visualisation of racialised difference, then, occurs as powerfully in the production of the ‘bombers’ by the newspapers as it does in their production of the ‘victims’. The ‘terrorists’ are at once over ‘there’ and ‘here’; they are black but also they look just like everyone else; they are ‘fanatics’ who look like ordinary blokes. This suggests a geography that is not only contorted and twisted in its efforts to maintain boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, but also a spectral spatiality that appears and almost disappears as the visible signs of difference come into focus and out again. Gordon (1997) and Pile (2005) have shown how the spectres of colonial pasts haunt the postcolonial present; and Mbembe (2001) has evoked the appurtritional present of the postcolony. In the British press in July 2005, we can see the haunted present of a postcolonial, ex-imperial city, a spectral contemporary in which ‘race’ is an evanescent everything and (almost) nothing. This is an uncanny imagined geography, with ‘them’ in/visibly amongst ‘us’. The visibility of ‘them’ can be both celebrated and feared,
but the real strangeness is not only that 'we' can never be sure who 'they' are, but, as a consequence, 'we' can never be sure who 'we'
are. Borders saturate as well as divide space, and 'home' is never quite the same. Here is the spectral haunting the topological:
deathly, evanescent, its space failing in its divisive task and the ex-
cluded neither fully in nor fully out of the visual field.

6. Conclusion

The delineation of the bodies that, according to the press, de-
served to live rather than die on 7 July was complex. It is possible
indeed necessary to argue that the newspaper reporting pro-
duced both an 'us' who did not deserve to die and a 'them' who
killed. 'We' were both those who died who did not bomb, and the
newspaper readers. 'They' were 'terrorists'. 'We' were ordinary,
caring people doing ordinary things in our ordinary, familial lives.
It is also necessary, however, to recognise that this was not always
clear, let alone a visible, distinction. 'We' were differentiated;
some of us were alive and others dead; some were masculine
and others feminine; some were passive citizenry while others
embodyed the active state10; and across all this, racialised difference
flickered, at times mattering very much and at others not at all.
While death and gender minimised the importance of racialised dif-
fferences, racialised and cultural differences were acknowledged to
exist among 'us' insofar as they allowed London to claim the status
of supremely tolerant city. In similarly ambiguous ways, 'they' were
both domestic and foreign, both ordinary and extraordinary, both
visible and invisible. Thus in the press coverage of the bombs,
embodied categories were produced, displayed and erased in a com-
plex spectrum of in/visibility.

Because of this complexity, it is important to think of the visual
field produced in the newspapers as a visual economy in which the
effects of images depends in part on the specific practice of their
display. For it is not simply the content or format of the photos that
mattered in the production of this complex visual economy. This is
especially obvious in the case of the various family photos that were
published, which in some cases (the 'victims') were made to signify
intensely the familial togetherness that is so important to the
domestic display of family snaps, and in others were nearly shorn
of that togetherness (the 'terrorists'). And it is for this reason also
that discussions of the visual production and distribution of differ-
ent sorts of bodies in the necropolitical order needs to consider the
production of different sorts of spectating positions carefully.
It is not simply a question of how certain images make us 'feel', as
Campbell (2007) suggests. As this paper has argued, the very fact
that the photographs discussed here did demand an emotional re-
sponse was already a powerful positioning of newspaper readers:
in this case, one that made 'feeling' the only response to the bombs.

The paper has attempted to specify what kind of 'feeling' that was.
I have suggested that it was a 'caring about' some dead but
not about others. It was a 'caring about' that grieved and mourned
but did no more than that; it was a 'caring about' based on similarity;
it cared only about those who were just like us, and it thus pro-
duced an 'us'. In its enactment after the bombings, it created an 'us'
as a 'pain alliance' among all those who mourned (Berlant, 1998:
638), an alliance frequently pictured by the newspapers with their
many photographs of memorial services and vigils for the dead.
Berlant (1998) calls this kind of collective emotional identification
'sentimental politics': sentimental politics are being performed
when putatively supra-political effects or affect-saturated institu-
tions (like the nation or the family) are proposed as univer-
salist solutions to structural racial, sexual, or intercultural antago-
nism' (Berlant, 1998:638). In such sentimental politics, she
continues, 'the ethical imperative toward social transformation is
replaced by a civic-minded but passive ideal of empathy' (Berlant,
1998: 644). The particular kind of 'caring about' demanded by the
British press in July 2005 was certainly passive. The newspapers in
July 2005 assumed that feelings could substitute for other kinds of
action, but Berlant's argument does not imply that this is a process
of de-politicisation. Rather, it is a change in the form of the politi-
cal. She argues that politics now take place in an 'intimate public
sphere' (Berlant, 1997) in which the expression of feeling is more
powerful than the calculation of interests or the assertion of prin-
ciple. To caricature Berlant's argument, to be a good citizen now
entails not voting but emoting. What the newspapers in July
2005 were doing, then, was not inviting their readers to replace
the political with the emotional, but rather to enact their position
as citizens through appropriate forms of emotion (in this case, a
certain kind of care). That this caring about some of the dead
was naturalised by being pictured on the bodies of women returns
my argument to the biopolitics with which it began. The necropol-
itics both includes and excludes through the production of certain
gendered and racialised bodies across which emotion is differen-
tially distributed.

Indeed, the only two embodied differences that were entirely
unproblematic in that press coverage were the differences between
men and women, and the dead and the living. There was an
unbridgeable distinction between readers of newspapers and the
dead; and gendered difference equated women with emotion. Both
these corporeal differences – alive/dead and male/female – worked
to deny any need for action in relation to the bombs, the first be-
cause nothing can bring the dead back to life, and the second by
separating emotion from action. Both passivisations were natural-
ised by being written on bodies, largely through work of photos
in newspapers. By assuming a weak, feminised citizenry and news-
paper readership, the state and its apparatus were produced as ac-
tive, protective agents, implicitly masculine.

Yet these two differences, grounded in corporeality – life/death
and masculine/feminine – in fact also cut across those bodies con-
stituted as human or inhuman, one of 'us' or one of 'them'. Mascul-
inity and death were marked both on their 'bodies' and on (some
of) 'ours'. In this sense the bombs cut a swathe through the distinc-
tion between the normatively human and the inhuman, even as
they also constituted it by producing them/terrorists and us/victims/survivors. This suggests that while it is not the case that
everyone is equally vulnerable to being condemned as non-human,
it is the case that there is a complexity to that allocation which
geographers have yet to acknowledge. It is a complexity intensified
by a ghostly visuality and an uncanny spatiality which can both re-
veal and erase, shadow and haunt, spectacularise and spectralise:
and either way, feed into the necropolitical sovereignty under
which only some lives are deemed worth caring about, and only
then in very particular ways.

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