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The force of law, subjectivity, and the human body – Self-accounts in the Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA) Archive

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**Power of Law Conference, University of Helsinki, 30–31 January 2010**

**“Law, Subjectivity and the Human Body – The Accounts of a Self in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Regulations”**

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My paper is part of a study on subjectivities as they take place within and through law. The analysis in this paper builds mainly on my reading of Judith Butler’s *Giving an account of oneself*, and it is a sketch in search of the dialectical law-subjectivity-body connection.

I begin with a very simple question put to twelve black letter law documents: ‘*who happens here?*’. I listen to the accounts of a ‘self’ given through the documents, and I carefully follow that ‘self’ in its encounter with ‘force’ through human embodiment. In the final act a dialectical relation forms between the ‘self’ in the accounts and the human body, and law has come into force.

The case which I study is the legal subject called ‘the Administrator’ as he emerges through a series of self accounts given in the twelve Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Regulations. These are legal Acts that define the institutions and authorities of the CPA in Iraq 2003-2004. While the study could be seen as one on the problems of laws of war and occupation, it could also be read as a study on the formation of law and legal subjectivity, as well as embodiment in law.