

War is Culture: Global Counterinsurgency, Visuality, and the Petraeus Doctrine

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IN ONE OF HIS SIGNATURE REVERSALS OF ACCEPTED WISDOM, Michel Foucault modulated Carl von Clausewitz's well-known aphorism on war and politics to read, "Politics is the continuation of war by other means" (48). That is to say, even in peace, the law is enacted by force. In conditions of state-determined necessity, that force appears as a direct actor in legitimizing what Giorgio Agamben calls "the state of exception." In English law the term would be "martial law" (Agamben 7). By extension, if globalization has again become the "global civil war" (Arendt) that was the cold war or has created a new state of "permanent war" (Retort 78), then war is global politics. So what kind of war is the war in Iraq (Reid)? It is now being waged by the United States as a global counterinsurgency. In the field manual *Counterinsurgency* issued by the United States Army in December 2006 at the instigation of General David Petraeus (Bacevich), counterinsurgency is explicitly a cultural war, to be fought in the United States as much as it is in Iraq. Cultural war, with visuality playing a central role, takes "culture" to be the means, location, and object of warfare. In his classic novel *1984*, George Orwell coined the slogan "war is peace" (199), anticipating the peace-keeping missions, surgical strikes, defense walls, and "coalitions of the willing" that demarcated much of the twentieth century. In the era of United States global policing, war is counterinsurgency, and the means of counterinsurgency are cultural. War is culture. Globalized capital uses war as its means of acculturating citizens to its regime, requiring both acquiescence to the excesses of power and a willingness to ignore what is palpably obvious. Counterinsurgency has become a digitally mediated version of imperialist techniques to produce legitimacy. Its success in the United States is unquestioned:

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who in public life is against counterinsurgency, even if they oppose the war in Iraq or invasions elsewhere? War is culture.

The publication of the new counterinsurgency strategy, designed both for strategic planning and for daily use in the field, marks a transformation of the revolution in military affairs (RMA). At the end of the cold war, anxious about its declining role and about the possibility of new minor conflicts, the United States military launched the revolution in military affairs. The term *revolution* was not used idly. For, as the counterinsurgency manual shows, the army has been a devoted reader of revolutionary theory from Lenin to Mao Zedong and Che Guevara. The RMA was designed to give the military the advantages of speed and surprise usually held by guerilla and revolutionary groups. The Rumsfeld strategy in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, marked by a hi-tech, high-speed, lethal force capable of accomplishing significant goals with a relatively small number of personnel, was the high point of this revolution, its reign of terror. Its height of ambition was to turn the military strategy into a cultural project. In a 1997 essay published in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, one general argued: “it is no longer enough for Marines to ‘reflect’ the society they defend. They must lead it, not politically but culturally. For it is the culture we are defending” (qtd. in Murphy 83). The end of Rumsfeldism was by no means the end of the cultural politics of war. Counterinsurgency is the permanent continuation of the RMA. The doctrine contains a timeline for its predetermined success and continued application in the extended future, measured as far as fifty years ahead. Like its predecessors, such as the now-notorious COINTELPRO program (1956–71), this strategy centers on the interpenetration of United States public opinion with events in Iraq. It should be read as a technique of discipline, normalization, and governmentality, in the manner taught to us by Foucault. In everyday politics, the

refusal to engage with the counterinsurgency strategy has now marginalized the antiwar movement and all but removed Iraq from the headlines. In the first half of 2008, the three major television networks in the United States devoted a total of 181 minutes to coverage of the Iraq war in their nightly newscasts.

As an indication of its radicality, the new counterinsurgency manual has already been downloaded from the Internet over two million times, making it a global best seller. In an extraordinary step, it was republished by the University of Chicago Press in a twenty-five-dollar hardcover edition, complete with an endorsement from the Harvard professor Sarah Sewall (US, Dept. of TK). She calls the new doctrine “paradigm shattering” because it argues for the assumption of greater risk in order to succeed, requiring “civilian leadership and support” for the long war (qtd. in Power 9). This presumed novelty is located in a recognizably conservative interpretation of history and culture. In the first pages of the counterinsurgency manual, insurgency itself is defined as existing on a continuum from the French Revolution of 1789 as one “extreme” to a “coup d’état” as the other (1-5).¹ Counterinsurgency, imagining itself quashing all modern revolts from the French Revolution to the military coup, thus figures itself as legitimacy. It seeks both to produce an acquiescent national culture and to eliminate insurgency, understood as any challenge to power. It does so not simply by means of repression but by the progressive application of techniques of consent under the imperative “culture must be defended.” The counterinsurgency manual offers an instrumental definition of power as “the key to manipulating the interests of groups within a society” (3-55). But power alone is not enough: “Victory is achieved when the populace consents to the government’s legitimacy and stops actively and passively supporting the insurgency” (1-14). Dominance must be accompanied by a consensual hegemony that generates the legitimacy of counterinsurgency in thought

and deed. At that point, the war will have rendered a culture in its own image. It is important to note the audacity of this strategy, for “legitimation” is precisely the weak point of constitutional theories of the state in general and the state of exception in particular. In a move typical of the radical right, that potential weakness is turned into a point of strength as counterinsurgency assumes legitimacy as both its justification and mission.

The counterinsurgency strategy has therefore produced the militarization of what the army calls “culture” in general and visualized media in particular. Legitimacy must in the end be literally and metaphorically visible for all to see. Consequently, “media activities” can be the primary activity of an insurgency, according to the army, while “imagery intelligence” in the form of still and moving images are vital to counterinsurgency (US, Dept. of the Army 3-97). Judging that intelligence relies on the following understanding: “Cultural knowledge [is] . . . essential to waging a successful counterinsurgency. American ideas of what is ‘normal’ or ‘rational’ are not universal” (1-80). This apparent gesture to cultural relativism is in fact a rationalization of cultural hierarchy: the army asks its soldiers not to accept difference but to understand that Iraqis cannot perform like Americans. Consequently, readers are advised to consult such apparently unlikely works as *Small Wars: A Tactical Handbook for Imperial Soldiers* (1890) by Charles E. Caldwell, produced at the height of British imperialism. Such references reframe counterinsurgency as the technical management of imperial dominions, even as the notion that Iraq is a small war undermines the public assertion that it is the equivalent of the Second World War. Instead, it locates the Iraq war as a technique of government instead of as an existential struggle. The 1940 *Small Wars Manual* argues that “[s]mall wars are operations undertaken wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the affairs of another state

whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation.” In the counterinsurgency manual, military intervention is understood as militarized bio-power: the preservation of life, determined by foreign policy interests. Counterinsurgency now actively imagines itself as a medical practice: “With good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like surgeons cutting out cancerous tissue while keeping other vital organs intact” (US, Dept. of the Army 1-126). It was not for nothing that Saddam Hussein was shown undergoing a medical inspection after his capture in 2004, a visualization of counterinsurgency as biopower. Its obscene counterpart was the cell-phone-captured video of Saddam’s execution, “accidentally” released to emphasize the counterinsurgency’s power over bare life.

The counterinsurgency manual often draws parallels with the imperial hero T. E. Lawrence’s experience in “Arabia,” citing his maxim “Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly” (1-155) as one of the “paradigm shattering” paradoxes that concludes the opening chapter. Lawrence himself had advised that his “Twenty-Seven Articles” on working with Arab armies was intended only for those engaged with the Beduouin, and he was, after all, promoting an anti-imperial Arab revolt. He also advised borrowing a slave as a manservant. On the other hand, for all his racialized characterizing of the “dogmatic” Arab mind, Lawrence insisted that the would-be ally of the Arabs must “speak their dialect of Arabic” (Brown 160; see also 153-59). The United States Army has just begun offering soldiers a pamphlet with some two hundred Arabic words and phrases, spelled out phonetically. Lawrence’s evocation in the counterinsurgency relies greatly on his heroic cinematic representation in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962, dir. David Lean), with Peter O’Toole in the starring role. By figuring itself as Lawrence, counterinsurgency blends the

reflected glamour of Hollywood heroism with the colonial trope of going native, that is to say, of adopting the practices of the local culture in order to defeat it. Counterinsurgency constantly mixes its present-day urgency with claims from earlier eras, evoking a genealogy of imperialism and a sense that the time of counterinsurgency is out of joint. This temporal shift is both specific and general. It looks back to the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, which formed modern Iraq, and imagines the West re-creating the country in its own image. More generally, it looks to the First World War era as “a laboratory for testing and honing the functional mechanisms and apparatuses of the state of exception as a paradigm of government” (Agamben 7). In this sense, Iraq, Afghanistan, and any other ventures of counterinsurgency such as Iran, Palestine, or Pakistan are technical experiments in the production of war as culture. The goal of these experiments is a globalization of capital enabled by modern technologies of information and war framed in the political culture of high imperialism.

Culture itself is understood in this contradictory fashion as a totalizing system, governing all forms of action and ideas in an oscillation between Victorian anthropology and the first-person-shooter video game. The anthropologist Edward Tylor first argued in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871) that “Culture or Civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man” (qtd. in Young 45). The counterinsurgency strategy similarly understands culture as a “web of meaning” or as an “operational code’ that is valid for an entire group of people,” acquired by all members of a particular society or group by means of “enculturation” (US, Dept. of the Army 3-37). According to the manual, culture therefore conditions how and why people perform actions, distinguish right from wrong, and as-

sign priorities, as if it were a set of rules (3-38). The digital metaphors suggest the fully rendered 3-D environment of the video game that requires the designer to anticipate all possible moves by the player. Indeed, a day after the invasion of Iraq, Sony filed a trademark application for the name “Shock and Awe” to use in a PlayStation game (Galloway 70). The war game itself is played according to General Tommy Franks’s mantra: “Speed kills” (qtd. in Ricks 127). The rush to Baghdad in 2003 was presumed to be “game over,” a target that has shifted to capturing Saddam Hussein, killing Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, or defeating al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia. However, it was not long before that Lieutenant General William S. Wallace, the then commander of United States ground forces, complained to the *Washington Post* that “[t]he enemy we’re fighting is different from the one we’d war-gamed against” (qtd. in Noah). The narrative now is that there is no possible way to end the game except by continuing to play, just as the latest platform games invite the player to participate in permanent play rather than exit.

The apparently unforeseen direction of the war results in part from the very rigidity of the concept of culture being deployed by the military. If “culture” dictates the rules, then there should be only one way to play the game. That cultural rules are flexible is explained in anthropological style: “For example, the kinship system of a certain Amazonian Indian tribe requires that individuals marry a cousin. However, the definition of cousin is often changed to make people eligible for marriage” (US, Dept. of the Army 3-38). It is an odd example because cousin marriage can be interpreted as incestuous. In a series of recent essays in the *National Review*, the Harvard anthropology PhD Stanley Kurtz has claimed that because Muslims practice parallel cousin marriage, they are incapable of becoming part of modernity. Explicitly basing his argument on Tylor, Kurtz claims that parallel cousin marriage is only found in the regions that

were part of the eighth-century CE Islamic caliphate (“Marriage”). He then goes on to blame Edward Said for the mysterious failure of anthropologists to notice this immense cultural divide in humanity (“Assimilation”). Despite its tendentious character, this weaponized theory of culture that holds ancestral Islam to be a permanent state of exception from humanity has found a ready home on the radical right and has now informed the counterinsurgency strategy. It is now Department of Defense policy that an anthropologist be attached to each combat brigade in Iraq and Afghanistan, causing much controversy within the professional ranks of anthropologists (Amer. Anthropology Assn.). This role was already envisaged by the counterinsurgency manual, which calls for a “political and cultural officer” in each unit, an updating of former Soviet tactics. Three social scientists—Michael Bhatia, Nicole Suveges, and Paula Lloyd—have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, as of March 2009 (“In Memoriam”).

Visualization is the key leadership tactic that holds together the disparate components of counterinsurgency. This terminology has its own significant genealogy within the annals of imperialism, for visuality and visualization were the key attributes of Thomas Carlyle’s Hero (Mirzoeff). In Carlyle’s 1840 series of lectures *On Heroes*, the conservative and immensely influential nineteenth-century historian (1795–1881) argued that the Hero can “see” history in what he called “clear visuality.” For the masses, the Hero offers only one supreme right, the right to be led (Carlyle 79). Visuality was therefore a technique for the individual dominance of the ruler and the institution of sovereignty, derived from the ability of the modern general to visualize the entire battlefield that extends beyond any person’s biological sight. As sovereign, visuality envisages a top-down view of the world in which only it can see what is to be done. As governance, visuality trains and commodifies vision to acculturate to the prevailing mode of production.

Counterinsurgency insists on heroic leadership, manifested as the ability to perceive visuality as its narrative strategy by which to play its game. In the section of the counterinsurgency manual intended to be read by officers in the field, visuality is defined as the necessity of knowing the map by heart and being able to place oneself in the map at any time. This mapping is fully cognitive, including “the people, topography, economy, history, and culture of their area of operations” (US, Dept. of the Army A7-7). The counterinsurgent thus transforms his or her tactical disadvantage into strategic mastery by rendering unfamiliar territory into a simulacrum of the video game’s “fully rendered actionable space” (Galloway 63). When soldiers refer to action as being like a video game, as they frequently do, it is not a metaphor. By turning the diverse aspects of foreign life into a single narrative, the counterinsurgent feels in control of the situation as if a player in a first-person-shooter video game. The commander thereby feels himself to be in the map, just as the game player is emotively “in” the game. Taken together, these abilities are summarized as the “commander’s visualization,” using Carlyle’s own term. The counterinsurgency manual embraces sovereign visuality: “Soldiers and Marines must feel the commander’s presence throughout the A[rea of] O[perations], especially at decisive points. The operation’s purpose and commander’s intent must be clearly understood throughout the force” (7-18). Indeed it is policy that “[t]he commander’s visualization forms the basis for conducting . . . an operation” (A-20). Counterinsurgency is legitimate because it alone can visualize the divergent cultural forces at work in a given area and devise a strategy to coordinate them.

Command visualization is the field version of the nineties-era RMA term “full spectrum dominance,” the visuality of our times, based on dominating “offense, defense, stability, [and] support” (Ricks 152). In Iraq alone, hundreds of millions have been spent on synthetic-aperture radar, infrared- and other aircraft-based means

of visualized surveillance, to little apparent practical effect. A very popular video game called Full Spectrum Warrior is played using a virtual-reality helmet and is now being used as a therapeutic tool for soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress. The continued importance of visualization in counterinsurgency shows that visualization is not the refutation but the development of the RMA, now dominated by informational control. Known as C4I, the strategy unites “command, control, communications, and computers for intelligence.” One instance of the C4I policy was the creation of the Iraqi Media Network by the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003. An initial \$15 million no-bid contract was awarded before the invasion took place to the contractor Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) to generate television, radio, and a six-day-a-week newspaper. Against all the odds, the re-named Iraqi Public Service Broadcaster did get on the air and opened its programming with a verse from the Koran. That gesture was at once cancelled by Washington, which compelled the network to broadcast instead an hour-long daily show called *Towards Freedom*, produced by the British government. Unsurprisingly, six months after the war a State Department poll showed 63% of Iraqis watched al-Jazeera or al-Arabiya, but only 12% watched the government station. The response was to award a new \$95 million no-bid contract to the Harris Corporation, a manufacturer of communications equipment with no television-production experience (Chandarasekaran 133–36).

Failures of this type that have been replicated throughout Afghanistan and Iraq have led to an acceleration of violence as a tactic. In congressional hearings and other forums, officials have repeatedly described what is manifestly torture as the application of “techniques.” For all the doublespeak at work here, counterinsurgency relies on the gradated use of force as a technique of legitimation. It is legitimate to use torturing force on the recalcitrant body of the person designated as an insurgent because

the counterinsurgency is legitimation and the insurgency must acknowledge it to be so. The practice of torture was both inspired and legitimated by the television series *24*. The show depicts a fictional counterterrorism unit defusing international crises within a twenty-four-hour period, gaining information by means of torture without hesitation. In one notorious instance when even the hero Jack Bauer (Keifer Sutherland) is uncertain, his colleague plunges a knife into the knee of a victim and elicits a confession that had hitherto seemed remote. Among the fifteen million viewers every week were apparently some military interrogators, who directly adapted techniques shown in *24* for use in Iraq (Mayer). The show *24* explicitly disparages the notion that the use of torture might benefit the insurgencies it is trying to suppress. Yet it is clear that detention without trial, denial of internationally protected legal rights, and the use of torture has been a vital element in developing and sustaining insurgency.

In seeking to understand these paradoxical alternations between media and military practice, it is useful to return to the concept of mapping. Agamben has shown that the state of emergency confuses questions of borders between the norm and the exception, generating a “zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other” (23). In “normal” governance, the police create a cordon between what is visible and invisible, demarcated by the slogan “move on, there’s nothing to see.” Thus, the police do not interpellate us, whether as suspects or citizens, but simply insist that we keep circulating (Rancière 176–77). This use of force diverts attention from what we know very well to be there but are not allowed to look at by exemplary “force of law” (Agamben 39). When counterinsurgency deploys itself as a visualized field, it does so by means of what one might call post-perspectival means of representation. Perspective defines the place of representation, whereas the state of exception is a nonplace, like the mystical perception of Carlyle’s Hero.

Composed of digitized images, satellite photographs, night-vision goggles, and map-based intervention, postperspectival space creates a 3-D rendition of “Iraq” that corresponds to the counterinsurgency experience of space in a grid accessible only to the “commander,” the modern-day Hero. In this view, civilian houses destroyed by bombing are understood as collateral damage, not total war. Numerous first-person accounts by rank-and-file troop members testify to their confusion as to where they were and what direction they were going during combat missions, perhaps contributing to the high levels of suicide, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by veterans. In this blurred zone of neovisuality, counterinsurgency can allow the forbidden to emerge into visibility, whether by choice or accident. So there was a deliberate “revealing” of the coercive tactics used at the otherwise invisible Guantánamo Bay camp in order to strike fear into actual and potential insurgents as to what awaited them if captured. On the other hand, the photographs from Abu Ghraib emerged in a way that was clearly accidental, even if the army had taken no precautions to prevent it. Nonetheless, not only was no mention made of Abu Ghraib in the 2004 presidential election but all those in the chain of command above the prison itself were actually promoted. The “revelations” prevented neither the generalization of torture nor the expansion of the counterinsurgency, although they have led to limitations on cameras among enlisted personnel. This indifference to what is known or unknown has become one of the strengths of the counterinsurgency’s aspiration to a totalizing vision. No single countervisualization can damage its claim to totality.

Indeed, counterinsurgency now enacts an apparently “paradoxical” coordinated political and military strategy to sustain chaos as a means of requiring military intervention. Those supporting the occupation of Iraq now see future chaos as the consequence of withdrawal and current chaos as the necessity of

remaining. Whereas Carlyle persistently raised the specter of chaos as the alternative to heroic leadership, creating chaos is now a matter of technique and strategy. The Iraqi woman who blogged as Riverbend described the technique in December 2006: “You surround it from all sides and push and pull. Slowly, but surely, it begins coming apart. . . . This last year has nearly everyone convinced that that was the plan right from the start. There were too many blunders for them to actually have been, simply, blunders” (Riverbend).² If this seems excessive, consider the facts, documented by Oxfam and the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq in July 2007: in a population of some 27.5 million (3), eight million people are in need of emergency aid, a figure composed of four million who are at risk of famine, two million internally displaced people, and two million refugees outside Iraq. Forty-three percent of Iraqis live in “absolute poverty,” while 70% have inadequate access to water and 80% lack access to sanitation (“Rising” 3). While violence had decreased by 2009, these indicators have remained strikingly bad. In February 2009, the Brookings Institute compilation of Iraq-related statistics showed that 2.8 million Iraqis were internally displaced and another 2.3 million were living abroad. Fifty-five percent of Iraqis still lack access to drinkable water and only 50% have what is described as “adequate” housing (“Iraq Index” 29–40). In the “game environment” created by counterinsurgency, the trick is to get to the next level rather than complete every action at the current stage of play. For the goal of counterinsurgency is not to create stability but to naturalize “the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war” (Foucault 16), not as politics but as “culture,” the web of meaning in a given place and time. Counterinsurgency is trying to produce the Middle East as a culture of weak or failing states requiring permanent counterinsurgency. There are signs that it is becoming a domestic paradigm for governmentality as well. For instance, a junior high

school principal in the South Bronx described his strategy for reviving the school as “text-book counterinsurgency” (Gootman A14).

If counterinsurgency uses visuality as a strategy, can we construct a countervisuality? It is crucial to understand here that visuality is already countervisuality, in that it is a visualization of the battlefield where an opposing force is using its own visuality. So too is the state of exception already a counterinsurgency, for it requires an opposing insurgency as a means of legitimation and will seek it out if none is forthcoming under the slogan “Bring ‘em on!” However, the visuality of war as culture is vulnerable to an alternative cultural narrative, or narratives, as the field manual itself acknowledges. Just as counterinsurgency turns its apparent weakness concerning legitimacy into a strength, so can the centrality of biopower to counterinsurgency be turned into its weak point. There is an unresolved contradiction within counterinsurgency between its cultural project and its aspiration to control life. According to Foucault, biopower has two forms, one that disciplines the individual body, such as drills performed by individual soldiers to instill military discipline, and another that regulates the population as a whole to ensure the greatest benefit like retirement or vaccination schemes. If the police are the institution that regulates the mediation of individual bodies and the population, racism is that which creates breaks “within the biological continuum addressed by biopower” (Foucault 255). In its modern form, Foucault argues, racism may ultimately require the death of the inferior as the elimination of a biological threat, as in the case of Nazi Germany and other twentieth-century extremist states. Such cases indicate that, if politics is war by other means, a significant part of those means can be racism, including figures of gender and sexuality. I am not suggesting that race is foundational, or that exterminationist racism is again prevalent, but that race is now being remade as the

site of the contradiction between body and population that the state closes by force as its means of legitimation. This contradiction has manifested itself in the acceleration of racism as hostility to immigration produced by the permanent counterinsurgency that has to come to be symbolized in the name Lou Dobbs. Nonetheless, biopower is compelled to disavow its own racism that is understood not only as illegitimate but also as delegitimizing. The patently racist 2007 Swiss election posters depicting a black sheep being expelled by four white sheep were effective precisely because the metaphoric concept of the black sheep disavowed the racist intent. By contrast, Nigel Hastilow, a British Conservative Party candidate who evoked the notorious “rivers of blood” speech by the openly racist Enoch Powell in October 2007 had to stand down. Even more than sexual transgression, racism that cannot be disavowed delegitimizes biopower. The counter to counterinsurgency thus interpellates the primary threat to bare life in the past and present as racism. It shows that the foundational authority for the modern state of exception in the Atlantic world was chattel slavery, which was itself the primary experience of that state, rather than Roman law. Not only is biopower as a historico-political formation racializing in its effects, it is always already racialized in theory.

If this seems somewhat remote from a practical contestation of the state of exception, I beg to differ. As the Nazi theorist Carl Schmitt had it, the state of exception must be above all distinguished by its capacity for decision (Agamben 30–31). There are key occasions when that decision and decisiveness, its only justification, cannot be deployed because the decision’s mode of authority is racialized in contrary fashion. That contradiction has most often been seen in effect when a reconstruction of the social fabric is required but cannot be enacted because a prior racialization prevents it. And the name for that contradiction in the United States is now Katrina.

Katrina showed how the built environment of New Orleans revealed the sedimented racism of slavery, segregation, and the so-called New South. The sovereign state of exception could not be deployed on behalf of its racialized other without undoing the forcefulness of the force of law. Further, Katrina is one of many events that have made it clear that the threat to bare life is now planetary, involving animal and plant life as well as human survival. Climate change is certainly the product of the human deployment of biopolitics, but the response to it necessitates a revolution in biopolitical affairs that matches and confronts the revolution in military affairs. Think of all those Humvees, getting at best eight miles to the gallon, not to mention the M-1 tanks that do no more than a mile per gallon, let alone the air-conditioned palace that is the new American embassy in Iraq. At the same time, the visualization of the planet required by this revolution is a proper counter to the visuality used by counterinsurgency. Al Gore's *PowerPoint* presentation, filmed as *An Inconvenient Truth*, with its dramatic but simple images of glacier retreat and dried-up lakes, has shown what can be done. This counter-visibility works because it is comparative and historical but lets the viewer decide what it is that they have seen, while of course being strongly suggestive. These images of "natural" disaster that are caused by human agency are the counterpoint to war as culture. In a world of genetically engineered food, plants with built-in insecticide, and cloned sheep, it is no longer surprising to say that what was once nature is now all culture. To challenge that point of view we must go one step more. To reclaim the global as meaning the planetary, instead of the circuits of capital, and to refuse to equate culture with war, it becomes necessary to visualize how capital has become nature, spawning war as culture.

NOTES

1. Citations to the field manual are from United States, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*.
2. In July 2007, she herself left Iraq for Syria.

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