### 1AC v2

#### We begin our story with a requiem for the battlefield:

#### Until the 15th century, the pinnacle of ranged combat in Europe was the crossbowman. During the Great Italian Wars it was replaced by the *arquebusier*, an infantryman armed with one of the earliest handguns. Its arrival precipitates the expansion of the battlefield, as the range of guns far exceeded that of crossbows at the time. By the conclusion of the Italian Wars their adoption was widespread across Europe. Warfare was changed forever.

#### A question arises from the advent of the *arquebus*, demanding an answer: when one can target from anywhere, do the limits of the battlefield simply expand, or disappear entirely?

#### The story of war is always the story of its disappearance and reappearance – combat is no longer fought on a stable battlefield but is dispersed by its own logistical planning and systems of targeting. War is no longer an event, but the absence of such – real violence subsumed by its own image.

Öberg ‘19

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If we look closely, we see that the real world begins, in the modern age, with the decision to transform the world, and to do so by means of science, analytical knowledge and the implementation of technology – that is to say that it begins, in Hannah Arendt’s words, with the invention of an Archimedean point outside the world (on the basis of the invention of the telescope by Galileo and the discovery of modern mathematical calculation) by which the natural world is definitively alienated. This is the moment when human beings, while setting about analyzing and transforming the world, take their leave of it, while at the same time lending it force of reality. We may say, then, that the real world begins, paradoxically, to disappear at the very same time as it begins to exist. (Jean Baudrillard, *Why Hasn’t Everything Already Disappeared?*)

Antoine Bousquet’s excellent and much anticipated book *The Eye of War: Military Perception from the Telescope to the Drone* traces how the history of the rationalisation of vision and the mathematisation of space during the Renaissance have enabled an ever expanding martial gaze. Herein the reader, among many things, gets an in-depth look at the changing fields of military perception and the subsequent attempts to hide from its view. As the author notes, this development leads towards the dispersal and disappearance of the battlefield in its traditional sense. In this intervention, I would like to put forward a complementary view of the battlefield in relation to the trajectory traced by the author. This view can be summarised as an insistence that from the end of the 18th century and onwards, the traditional battlefield starts to disappear as it is operationalised through military doctrines, planning, and conduct. Moreover, as a direct consequence, the battlefield reappears, refracted through military attempts to model space and time. Below I attempt to sketch out this dual process of disappearance and reappearance by engaging with the history of the military imaginary which both sees and targets, and which arguably corresponds to that martial gaze of which the book speaks so well.

As *The Eye of War* illustrates, often through fantastic pictures and drawings from historical times, the introduction of new weapon-systems and their social interpretation influence the possibility of targeting and the remits of the battlefield. Historically, we may perhaps argue that varying conceptions of the battlefield have been part of warfare for as long as there has been strategic dispositions in war, evident particularly in attempts to connect tactical means with strategic ends. At times such connections have been drawn on spatially and temporally demarcated battlefields. However, at other times, we find examples of how the conception of the battlefield challenges such remits. For example, in medieval warfare when a strategy of attrition was employed to starve an opponent, the target was crops and the tactics was to put your army in the field, aggressively devastate the countryside, and live off the land. Here the battlefield expands and the target shifts from the enemy soldier to the milieu in which a system of production is established. Or when the strategy was one of plunder, the target was likely to be a poorly protected enemy fortress and the tactics assaulting its walls and exciting pay, while avoiding surrounding armies through manoeuvre. Consequently, the attempt to operationalise the tactical means into strategic ends, that is, the attempt “to target”, potentially constitutes and challenges the remits of the battlefield.

That said, the characteristic of the classical battlefield was often a combination of disparate units, tactical conducts, and weapon-systems in gradual transition. One such transition during the Great Italian Wars (1494-1559) between two types of “targeteers”: the crossbowman and the arquebusier, is captured in Charles Oman’s classical work History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century. Oman (quoting Gascon Montluc) writes as follows regarding the French army:

Arquebusiers were known, but there were very few of them in the early years of the war: it was only in the second generation that the arquebus superseded the cross-bow. Montluc remarks that in 1523, when he was ensign in the company of Monsieur de la Clotte, he had only six arquebusiers with him, and they were all deserters from the Spanish army. ‘Encore en ce temps la il n’y avait point d’arquebusiers parmi notre nation’. He then proceeds to remark that he wishes that the arquebus had never been invented. ‘Would to God that this unhappy weapon had never been devised, and that so many brave and valiant men had never died by the hands of those who are often cowards and shirkers, who would never dare to look in the face those whom they lay low with their wretched bullets…’ The day had gone by when a certain commander used to order that quarter should never be given to men carrying firearms, but they were still hated and despised, and it took some time to teach French generals that they must rather be encouraged, and introduced on the largest scale possible.’

This quote illustrates the shift from when the arquebus was rare and firearms were seen with hatred and contempt, towards a gradual acceptance of “their wretched bullets”, until we reach the point where their use was encouraged as part of all major armies. Beyond the fact that methods of warfare change due to the introduction of new weapon systems, this historical example illustrates an important aspect of the constant contestation of the traditional battlefield. The arquebusier doing the targeting (and thereby efficiently killing “so many brave and valiant men”) is present at the field of battle and at the same time hated, accepted, and encouraged. That is, the character of the battlefield is negotiated through the direct relationship between targeteer and target and their corresponding tactical means.

Arguably, such negotiation between targeteer and target changes drastically in character from the Napoleonic wars and onward. With the risk of simplifying matters, we may say that from the medieval times up to the 18th century, the battlefield was characterised by a gradual homogenisation of units and their array. From a situation where warfare was dominated by disparate units and weapon systems, we move towards standardised infantry and cavalry based units and the use of firearms and bayonets. This is a homogenisation that mirrors the rise of modern society in a more general sense. However, it is not until the next century, with the French Grande Armée, particularly due to the administrative care of Lazare Carnot (1753-1823) and the military thinking of the likes of Comte de Guibert (1743-1790) that the military imaginary starts to view the battlefield as a consequence of military analysis and planning. That is, as an operational model. As is well known, the operational dimension of warfare comes up in part as a result of the levée en masse, responding to practical needs to oversee and manage a system of national mobilization with the training and movement of large-scale units. Technological innovations such as the railroad and the telegraph among others, also helped ushering warfare into this new era. It is from this time onward that the battlefield expands through logistics, new intelligence, new command structures, and the administrational machinery of which the most obvious examples are the improved staffs and corps and the divisional system.

While the culminating battle of the Napoleonic wars, Waterloo, was fought at a battlefield where 140,000 [soldiers] men and 400 guns were crammed into an area of roughly 3,5 miles, the latter half of the 19th century becomes characterised by the dispersal and implosion of the battlefield. As Bousquet has directed our attention to in his work, after the birth of modern warfare the battlefield dissolves due to the increased range of weapons systems. Its disappearance is also facilitated by how the military logistics of perception conditions the appearances of targets, particularly through how the “eye of war” manages to move from the commander occupying a high-point next to the field of battle, to being facilitated by balloons, binoculars, aerial reconnaissance, satellites, algorithms, and cloud computing. It is as part of this process we eventually reach the contemporary era where targeting is characterised by polar inertia, as targets arrive as digital images from anywhere on the globe in front of a stationary targeteer. However, I would like to argue that, parallel to this, there is a corresponding process taking place, which erases and remodels the battlefield as a result of the military disposition that is born with the operational dimension of warfare.

To grasp this disposition and its consequences we need to ponder the fact that it is no coincidence that the operational dimension emerges at precisely the time when the traditional battlefield is starting to disappear. As The Eye of War outlines, global targeting is enabled by a logistics of perception. However, the demand for maps and images as well as the attempts to make sense of the battlefield arguably receives its impetus and frame of reference from elsewhere. It finds its nexus in standard operating procedures, regulations, instructions and manuals, military working groups, administrative ideals, organisational routines, and bureaucratic rituals. And, as the battlefield is managed, coded, and homogenised, it simultaneously starts to become an external point of reference, enacted through operational analysis and planning far from the battlefield itself.

Let us not forget here that “to analyse” literally means “to dissolve”, as the perception of the operational analyst subsumes the field of battle into compartmentalised objects and relations. Moreover, as Carl von Clausewitz reminds us, operational planning is necessarily a reductive enterprise. That is, it subtracts from the world, when reducing this said world to a theater of war. We may therefore say that the battlefield receives its force of reality through operational analysis and planning and appears as an “alienated” entity dominated by range, trajectories and a territory coded through a military grammar. Nevertheless, it seems that when the battlefield reappears as a concept or scenario, that is, as a model, it also starts to vanish. Therefore, it is arguably in the development of operational models of warfare: the doctrinal handbooks, the logistical apparatus, and the staff meetings on what to target, we find a corresponding erasure of the battlefield.

If we return to the introductory quote, particularly to the insistence that the real world begins with the invention of an Archimedean point outside the world, we may say that it is with the introduction of the operational level of war that military practice and theory find and substantiate its own external point of reference. It finds it at the start of the Napoleonic wars, in the introduction of an operational military machinery which gradually starts to think warfare independently of the army in the field. It substantiates it through a code that strives to make war an efficient and integrated version of its own programmatic execution. This code outlines how to arrange and rearrange, compose, coordinate, and manufacture targets and effects. It also works as a method through the tasking and employment of tactical units, the translation of rules and diagrams into select weapon systems, and the integration of protocols into a concentration of force, making fires and bomb drops preplanned responses to problem situations.

In the final chapter of The Eye of War we encounter a battlefield that is spatially and temporally boundless, what the author calls a “Global Imperium of Targeting”. What relationship between targeteer and target characterises this limitless battlefield? I will end by briefly introducing two alienating reference points that I have discussed elsewhere: the operational environment and the battle-rhythm as examples of a military modelling of space and time.

According to the military imaginary, the operational environment consists of: ‘the composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military capabilities’ (see military doctrine). This term imposes a set of spatial relations that are conditioned through military concepts and functions: logistical routes and lines of communication, the range of weapon-platforms, perceived centres of gravity, the margining of targets, their weaponeering, and so forth. This spatial concept transmits relations through reductive doctrinal denominators such as “target-sets”, “undesirable systems” or “future end-states,” often visualised through PowerPoints.

Corresponding to the remits of the operational environment, the ‘battle rhythm’ is the ‘combination of procedures, processes, and actions which facilitates extended continuous operations’. It is synchronised zulu-time: a coordinated 24 hour universal clock time enabling warfare to endure in real-time and coordinate fires and manoeuvres into tactical effects. The battle-rhythm is anticipatory, relating to ideas of dynamic actions, particularly in so called dynamic targeting. But it is also pre-planned as it forecasts and codes future time to shape its unfolding and becoming in accordance with the preparation and execution of warfare.

So, as the traditional battlefield and its conceptualisation and contestation by crossbowmen and arquebusiers alike disappears due to the operationalisation of a martial gaze, what reappears is an abstract model of military space/time. This model perceives of the battlefield as that which facilitates military capabilities as extended operations as it targets for action. This means, I think, that in the Global Imperium of Targeting that The Eye of War portrays, the soldiers embodying the martial gaze assumes the roles of managers over our world as if it were this abstract and homogenous space/time. This points to a world that is indeed, a ‘battlespace in potentia’ watched over by ‘glacially indifferent machines’, as the author so eloquently puts it. However, it also points to the role of the military imaginary which oversees this gaze and which refines the modelling of space and time to impose a point of view on that which it sees.

In short, the traditional battlefield may be dead, but we continue to live under the eye of its operational model.

#### The space race is the final chapter in this story of warfare– bombarded with fetishized media images of the space-age military and social systems of tomorrow, military logistics has finally solved the problem of risk by encircling the globe itself. After all, if all the world is a battlefield, why not remove yourself from it entirely?

#### Ecological failings have forced the algorithmic data mill to search for new domains to terraform – Mars and asteroids are all that we have left – these neo-colonial paradigms instill us with the drive to fly, to render mappable and transparent the stars and to grid the sky in order to achieve total visibility – thus, warfare becomes as boundless as the cosmos, a total genocide of alterity expanding infinitely to the very universe’s limits.

Grove ‘19

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In this emerging epoch of capitalism, we will witness en masse and at the end of the barrel of a gun Glen Coulthard’s reworking of “accumulation by dispossession” as rare earth minerals, dwindling petroleum supplies, and water all become significantly more important than human labor. Coulthard’s point in Red Skin, White Masks, which we should take quite seriously, is that “primitive accumulation” was never primitive; it was ongoing particularly in settler societies, and it is now accelerating. In this diagram of resource- rather than labor- intensive capitalism, we end up with Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics, or the affirmative and productive industrialization of death and annihilation.

Contra Balakrishnan’s hope of falling profits, the liquidating rather than proletarizing of populations can still produce capital accumulation. This can be accomplished by selective displacement and murder such that new infrastructures for flows like oil pipelines or access to the rare earth minerals necessary for technological transformation become available to support cognitive economies less constrained by labor. What populations remain, driven mad by anxious consumption, are sufficient to maintain adequate consumer demand for increasing profits. In this diagram of capital accumulation, we have dispossession and platform transformations for new means of consumption, from the internet, to the internet of things, to the projected internet of spiritual machines—it stacks platform on top of platform. In what Benjamin Bratton has called the black stack or stack geopolitics, the successor of Donald Trump is the slicker and more sophisticated Elon Musk or Peter Thiel, for whom inventing gadgets and electric cars is already being projected out to interplanetary schemes for asteroid mining, Martian colonization, and a universal income guarantee for the few who will follow the intergalactic pathway of  human development and commerce.

What we can already see in the excitement over Donald Trump by the alt- right wing of tech enthusiasts is precisely this ruthless disregard for human life in the name of getting things done. And this has been a long time coming. In 1989 Félix Guattari had this to say about Donald Trump: “Just as monstrous and mutant algae invade the lagoon of Venice, so our television screens are populated, saturated, by ‘degenerate’ images and statements. In the field of social ecology, men like Donald Trump are permitted to proliferate freely, like another species of algae, take over districts of New York and Atlantic City; he ‘redeveloped’ by raising rents, thereby driving out tens of thousands of poor families, most of whom are condemned to homelessness, becoming the equivalent of the dead fish of environmental ecology.”45 We should repeat Guattari’s social ecological judgment of Trump for Musk, Bill Gates, and others whose toxic ecology is now pursuing an interplanetary scale of conquest.

Peter Sloterdijk, Vilem Flusser, and Lewis Mumford, in response to the cybernetic zeal for the future, refer to what they call posthistory. Each of these thinkers is attempting to understand a culture that is built around the idea that a particular race of humans, moderns, has escaped Marx’s warning that “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please.”46 Posthistorical humans believe that they do have the power to determine their own circumstances. Posthistory then is not meant in a Hegelian way. For each of these thinkers, the post marks an aspiration and state of exhaustion that ensues from the failure to make good on its promise. Euro- American world making— terraforming— has reached a limit with the seeming permanence of global interconnectivity and programming. As Flusser puts it, moderns now face the problem of programming where the capacity to program returns each of us to the question of who or what programs us. The aspiration of totality eats itself but continues anyway. Even the dark spots that periodically emerge in the world without exteriority are at best interruptions— wars, catastrophic accidents, acts of nature. Seceding, much less disappearing, is no longer possible as the globe is currently enacted and perceived. There is nowhere to hide. “History brings about the catastrophe of local ontologies.”47 Mumford adds to this formulation the concern that the state of exhaustion and the presumption of a programmed order simultaneously inflates the hubris for global- scale management and creates a sense that there is nothing to be lost or gained as everything is transferable, malleable, useful or not. For Mumford, with the eclipse of animism and the sacred, we also lose the capacity to understand value beyond instrumentality. In this sense, we are done with history because what does happen is not historical, not an event; everything is modulation. Therefore, for all three thinkers it is possible that we are not a “we” in any meaningful moral sense but that we are nonetheless stuck: a global condition without a global people.

Those not completely alienated by the state of affairs swing to the other extreme, hell- bent on renewed expansion. Elon Musk’s desperation to take globalization on the road to Mars is the result of the same stuckness, but he rallies resources for a vicious exit strategy. Just as those ground up, lost at sea, or stolen for labor were, Mars is the horizon of possibility for another great age of exploration. Whether anyone makes it to Mars or if most of us are left behind is secondary to the redoubling of Euro- American terraforming.

Posthistory, stuckness, dreams of planetary and species transcendence— this is what I have in mind for this book’s subtitle, “Geopolitics at the End of the World.” Transcendence in this industrial and instrumental register seeks another savage ecology, a new planet to saturate, another surface to render spatial at the cost of regions and places of contour and difference. Whether life is discovered on Mars or not, the aspirations of colonization are dreams to once again transform “lifeworlds into locations.”48 For Sloterdijk, the global approach transplanted from one planet to the next still captures the difference between the metaphysical age of antiquity and the modern age in the geometric difference between ascending and flying. Ascending was the imagination of escape velocity—to leave Earth and continue on and away. Flying requires mapping and following a surface, making a planet by flattening the planet epistemologically. Even those who wish to ascend to Mars actually want to fly, that is, resurface another sphere rather than cast off into the mysterious void of space. Mars is desired because it is useful; it is what is next. Mars is an effort to postpone the end rather than begin again. And so the pursuit of a savage ecology continues well beyond the contradictions of terrestrial capitalism.

If neither the planetary limits nor the limits of capital accumulation hedge against capitalism’s expansion, then we cannot take seriously Moore or Balakrishnan’s even half- hearted hope that contradiction will produce “grave diggers,” or that civil wars may return to fracture capital.  There will be grave diggers, but they will be automated by an algorithmic hunger for which there is no satiation. To put it another way, civil society, humans, and the political are— for a capitalist metabolism run on minerals and regulated by lethal automated force— luxuries, not necessities. The cozy relationship of Google and the state, as well as the vast network of joint ventures between defense departments and technology firms around the world, suggests that the state has new forms of innovation and control that do not require either Hegel’s or Marx’s visions of social order and social control.49 The horror show of the next  century, if not derailed,  will be entrepreneurs and resource tyrants all the way down. In a world of necropolitical accumulation by dispossession, the reproduction of capitalist social relations may matter in the short run but not significantly in the longer term.

Labor automation in both economic and security sectors, vastly augmented by heuristic machine learning, can quite literally live off itself. This is assuming “the self” can continue to expand to asteroids and nearby planets. The limits and the catastrophe that we have been reduced to hoping for may be temporally and spatially out of reach. For those in what McKenzie Wark has called the vectoralist class, there is no catastrophe.50 The ecological population growth apocalypse is an opportunity for an upgrade. The vectoralist class, or those for whom interest, and benefit is not directly limited by the logic of capital, is even smaller than the dwindling size of the labor class. Further, unlike labor, they are better prepared for adaptation and reinvention than Marx would have suspected possible in the nineteenth century. As such, Peter Thiel and other paleo- accelerationists who funded and now celebrate the election of Donald Trump are coldly indifferent to the possibility of race wars, ecological collapses, and territorial displacement.

#### The guns fire, targeted by space-based tracking systems, fully autonomous and too quick to comprehend. Resources are accumulated by space-faring mega-corporations to fuel infinite expansion of infinite violence. The war fights itself. How can you possibly fight back?

#### When the whole world is a target, where can you hide?

#### This is the violence of the simulacrum, the absolute liquidation of Otherness in the name of transparency – a spectacular genocide against alterity, conducted in the name of nothing at all.

Guignion ‘18

[David, M.A. at the University of Western Ontario. 2018. “The Mirror of Humanism; or, Towards a Baudrillardian Posthuman Theory”, <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7739&context=etd>] pat

Baudrillard’s two books on war, The Gulf War did not take place and The Spirit of Terrorism propose that war has been engulfed by the mass media. According to Rick Roderick, in his eight-part lecture series: The Self Under Siege: Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, Baudrillard wanted to cover the Gulf War on “CNN where it would really happen” (Roderick), because as the “media promote the war, the war promotes the media, and advertising competes with the war” (Baudrillard, Gulf War 31). For Baudrillard, the degree to which these wars were broadcast over television networks attests to a transformation of the nature of war itself. As he explains, “when it has been turned into information, [war] ceases to be a realistic war and becomes a virtual war” (41). The system of war is not the only one affected by this turn toward virtuality. Those fighting, if on the side of the invader, find a great deal of safety in the war zone itself. As Baudrillard writes, “A simple calculation shows that, of the 500,000 American soldiers involved during the seven months of operations in the Gulf, three times as many would have died from road accidents alone had they stayed in civilian life. Should we consider multiplying clean wars in order to reduce the murderous death toll of peacetime?”

(69). Still, Baudrillard’s remarks overlook the enormous casualties suffered by the losing side. In this case, the term “war” does not capture the essence of these military movements as well as the term “invasion,” indicative of a form of neo-colonialism. The transformation of these wars from the domain of reality to that of the virtual performs a dual function for the neo-colonial efforts of the West. First, there is a virtual violence, a violence of the image. In this operation the real events of these wars are substituted for the image of these wars: “The image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and offers it for consumption” (Baudrillard, The Spirit of Terrorism 27). This process not only replaces the real with the virtual, but filters which images and messages are distributed. The images distributed operate to convince the viewer of the reality of these wars, or, more precisely, their virtual reality. Second, these wars function to destroy the other, virtually and symbolically. The West’s drive toward global hegemony “is a giant project meant to symbolically liquidate all values through consensus or force” (Baudrillard, The Agony of Power 67).

Global power, for Baudrillard, “is the power of the simulacrum” (66). Under the code of the simulacrum, where people are reduced to the status of cybernetician, the other poses an avid challenge to global hegemony. Global hegemony responds to this roadblock by declaring war on “the alterity of the other” by either converting or annihilating it (Baudrillard, Gulf War 37). The simulating machine dabbles in the affairs of reality when zones of resistance that do not subscribe to its oppressive logic emerge. In many ways, Baudrillard’s theorization of war bridges the gap between simulation and reality, pointing to a milieu—the war machine—that simulation mobilizes in the service of eradicating difference.

Baudrillard’s writing on war points to the erasure and eradication of those points on the globe that are outside of the purview of “our truth” where “nothing is true unless it is desecrated, objectified, stripped of its aura, or dragged onstage” (Agony 67). The West strives to make everything seen, everything tangible, everything real through the “museification” (Baudrillard, The Vital Illusion 40) of the other. The virtuality of the scenes of war exist to convince the viewer that the war is real; that there is something to be fought over, as opposed to neo-colonial genocide. The role of the museum in this process is, in a sense, to deliver the final blow to the objects of this neo-colonial effort. Those affected literally die from the bombardment of artillery strikes and drone strikes, but they also die “from being transplanted from a slow order of the symbolic, master over putrefaction and death, to an order of history, science, and museums, our order, which no longer masters anything, which only knows how to condemn what preceded it to decay and death and subsequently to try to revive it with science” (Baudrillard, Simulacra 10).

#### Thus, a final question arises: How do you oppose war when war opposes itself?

#### When every move is tracked and there’s nowhere to run, why not stand still?

#### If the battlefield disappears, why not disappear with it?

#### “I have no message. I am not a messenger” – instead of attempts to resuscitate war’s rotting corpse, you should instead affirm a deeper “No” not just to warfare, but the very ordering that produces it.

***\*advocacy text***

Öberg ‘14

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Baudrillard is often read as being ‘neither for, nor against’ war, as his writing tends to question the possibility of reality rather than how it is conceived (Baudrillard 1995: 58, 67, see also Shapiro 2014 in this special issue). But perhaps we can find, in his notion of ‘fractal war’, a ‘deeper No’, not to war as such but to the virtual ordering of past, present and future consensus which contemporary war obscure: ‘(t)his no, which comes from the depths, should not be understood as a work of negation or of critical thought. It is simply the response of defiance against a hegemonic principle descending indifferently from a great height for the consent of the people’ (Baudrillard, 2006a). Where does this ‘no’ take us with regards to war? Perhaps we might say (with the risk of oversimplifying) that war, despite its disappearance as symbolic act due to virtualization and processing, returns as a radical challenge. This would be a war which has little or nothing to do with Clausewitzs’ “war as a continuation by other means” (or the Foucauldian reversal of this) but rather refers to a duel between a systematic and technocratic globalist challenge (often exemplified by, but never reducible to, Western interventions) and a radical refusal of this expanded as resistance and counter-violence. This duel should not be confused with a clash between the West and Islam but is rather one which potentially involves us all (Baudrillard 2010: 68-70): a duel beyond the end of war where the past, present and future of events and singularities are constantly at stake.

V. Postscript: ‘I am not a messenger’

I was fortunate enough to witness Baudrillard speak at one of his many visits to Japan. The event took place in early October 2004 in a very hot lecture hall at Waseda University, Tokyo. It was packed to the brim with students, researchers, and media, some of whom were literally hanging in from the windows to catch a glimpse. During the Q&A after the lecture Baudrillard was asked by one of the professors whether he had a message to all the young people in the audience. The professor argued that since many students were born in the 1980’s and thereby steeped in the era of virtualization which Baudrillard spent more than three decades criticizing, he might have some advice on how they should navigate the future. Baudrillard’s response to the question was swift. He simply stated ‘I have no message. I am not a messenger’ (Baudrillard cited in Tsukahara 2004: 70-71). Although Baudrillard followed this up with a lengthy discussion on the topic it was one of the most memorable parts of the lecture for me. Particularly because it would have been so easy for him to pose as the well-intending messenger by engaging with present social concerns of the students: unemployment, societal insecurities or the precarious aspects of global life. In hindsight it seems to me that his “no” was not so much a refusal to talk about the future of the students, as it was a “no” to the blackmail that the well-intended question entails: a “deeper no” directed towards the ordering of reality.

So if Baudrillard was not a messenger in that lecture hall in Waseda University what was he? One of the characteristics of Baudrillard’s thought is illustrated by this constant attempt to disengage from the issues at stake while at the same time orbiting around them, working to dissolve or displace them in return. Ryan Artrip and Francois Debrix (2014 this special issue) discuss the violence of the representation of war in relation to dissemination and proliferation and urge us to learn how to ‘recognize the symptoms’ of this representation in the very things we cherish, such as democracy and the progress of digital technology. Taking in this dual aspect of images and language they outline how each representation of war at the same time thickens the “fog of war”. Acknowledging the tension that they make explicit and at the same time ask Baudrillard for a ‘message’ (be it on war or on the future of Japanese university students) would be akin to missing the crucial insight that the response always inadvertently participates in making reality appear real (Öberg 2014 this special issue). On the other hand, what is the role of theory if it is not at the same time a message? Moreover, does not invoking Baudrillard’s critique also imply a paradox since it demands acceptance while at the same time urges us to refuse the role of messengers “simulating Baudrillard”? As Gerry Coulter put it at the ‘Baudrillard and War’ colloquium at the Swedish Defence College in Stockholm: ‘Baudrillard had no choice to be Baudrillard, but we cannot choose to be Baudrillard’. So what can we be as (Baudrillardian) theorists of war?

Perhaps the most important point of Baudrillard’s three critiques of war (outlined in this introduction) is how they aim to challenge the alleged irreversibility of contemporary imaginations of war or warfare, while refusing to reify them as real. At the end of his life, Baudrillard himself acknowledge that this was something he always had struggled with, stating that writing is ‘like trying to walk in the snow without leaving footprints’ (2007b: 125). The question ‘do we still have a theory of war after Baudrillard’, absurd as it might seem to the mainstream theorist of war, should therefore not be shrugged off too easily. What if contemporary war studies – in its fervor to explain and understand war – leaves us with the ‘rotting corpse’ of a ‘dead war’ (Baudrillard 1995: 24, 23), that not only media but also theorists do their best to revive and resuscitate? The question would then be, not what Baudrillard’s theory of war is, but what a theory of war that differs from war could possibly look like. Such ‘anti-empiricism’ might be hard to stomach for many mainstream students of war. But when listening to the former General Rupert Smith stating to public acclaim (two decades after Baudrillard) that ‘war no longer exists’ (Smith, 2008) one is left wondering if the theory of war is not already more spectral and hollow than its proponents would care to acknowledge.

#### The Role of the Judge is to be a fatal theorist.

1. We don’t have any pre/post fiat distinction.
2. Procedurals and the roj are on the same level since nothing interacts in a vacuum
3. The winner is the debater who creates a better relationship towards communication – if you prove that our theory of communication is wrong/bad you win under the roj.

#### Illusions are cool and logic sucks

Shapiro ‘17

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In other words, Trump is the candidate of the era of simulation. Invoking “the truth” against him does not work as a strategy. Trump is already more advanced than the discourse of truth. We are in a hyper-reality where there is no more truth and no more falsehood. Carl “The Truth” Williams, a former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, passed away in April 2013.

Alan Cholodenko comments: If hyper-reality was born for Baudrillard during or just after the Second World War, then there have already been several simulation-Presidents: JFK the first televisual President, Reagan the Hollywood actor and first TV show host (of the General Electric Theatre)-President. Trump takes his place in this lineage. He is the second TV show host (of The Apprentice)-President, the first live show, reality TV show CEO host become live show, reality TV show CEO host-President of the live show, reality TV show America, Inc.)

The mistake of the multitudes of journalists and editorialists like the Washington Post’s Greg Sargent is to not understand that the system of “truth and lies” is not some eternal, ahistorical or “scientifically objective” reality. It is an historically constructed cultural discourse or arrangement tied to an epoch which is finite in time. As Foucault might say, the concern with “true” and “false” is an epistème – an epistemological a priori, an expression of a specific power-knowledge constellation within an era – whose time has come and gone. The insistent belief in “truth and lies” is also embedded in the Plato-initiated “metaphysics” of the “human subject,” the subject-centered worldview, the sovereign (democratic or scientific) subject who “knows” and can therefore judge and determine when “knowledge” or a “fact” has been betrayed.

In the new epistemological system beyond “truth and lies” to which Trump is finely attuned, of which he is the master, and which liberals do not get, the object itself is the hot thing. The spotlight is on objects (conceptual not physical), and they are a relationship, an association which knows nothing of whether they are real or fake. They transcend and straddle true and false. “Things have found a way of avoiding a dialectics of meaning that was beginning to bore them: by proliferating indefinitely, increasing their potential, outbidding themselves in an ascension to the limit, an obscenity that henceforth becomes their immanent finality and senseless reason.” (Baudrillard, Fatal Strategies; p.7) Trump will change what he says on any given topic from day to day, or on any given Sunday. The liberal media will “prove him wrong” with evidence, but this demonstration will have an effect exactly the opposite than that intended upon and for the “silent majority” of half of Americans for whom they are the liars. When did this happen (when was the “Canetti point”)? Impossible to say. To know the point of origin of that would be to overstate the claims of knowledge, to violate the methodological recursivity of our awareness of being lost within the culture of simulation (as Baudrillard has taught us in his fascinating lengthy discussions of the “Canetti point,” and as Gerry Coulter has taught us, for example, in his essay on America).

When Trump said that thousands of Muslims were celebrating on rooftops in Jersey City, New Jersey on 9/11, he was right. 100% right, as he later tweeted. Within the epistemology (theory of knowledge) of the humanist-democratic subject and of truth, the alleged rooftop event of course “did not take place.” Yet in the hyper-modernist epistemology, the rhetorical and emotional power of the words invoked and the mental images evoked by Trump (the advent of hyper-imagination) carry the weight and dynamic force of the image-immersed beyond-chimerical “object” of those evil Muslim celebrators. Probably Trump saw on TV in September 2001 some cynical celebrations in the Palestinian territories. The clandestine wormhole connection between physically remote points in space is plausibly extant. In the culture of virtual images, it is perfectly OK to transpose the bin Laden-sympathetic revelers from one geographical location to another, the hyper-space of Trump’s creative memory mingled with the hyper-dimensional expanding televisual space on the interior of the flatscreen.

Fantasy is possible in a world that is still real. A fantasy could be said to be not true, some sort of illusion (in the non-Baudrillardian meaning of this word) or deception. But when images are everywhere, and they are universally exchangeable with each other, the made-up mental images become hyper-real. Which now (literally) means (hyper-means) more real than real. Meaning becomes hyper-meaning.

Would not the ubiquity of video documentation and recording devices of every kind increase the availability of truth? Whipping the cam around, looking amazing from every angle? No, the effect is just the opposite. When documentation and recording are everywhere, then they are nowhere. They cease to exist in any meaningful sense. They serve no purpose whatsoever anymore. They are pure technology fetish in the bad sense, decoupled through their excess from what they were supposed to enhance or invent. As a hybrid radical-leftist-and-mainstreamer, I do believe that there is a good side to surveillance, a deterrence of crime. But if surveillance is everywhere, then this good side no longer functions. This is the same paradoxical logic that is operative for all virtual and digital media technologies. Yes, all of these wonderful new things are available to us, but we omitted the step of thinking carefully about the appropriate measure of their application. We forgot to humanly judge this. Hybrid posthumanist and humanist. We never took seriously the great thought of Albert Camus, that in almost every area, we need to have a sense of limits (as Dominick LaCapra pointed out). Academic referentiality – which Baudrillard was opposed to – is like this too. If you overdo it, become obsessed with footnotes, then you enter into the twilight zone of hyper-referentiality and then the whole business does not function anymore. You do it because you have to do it and the original purpose is lost.

The “proof” (ha ha!) is now upon us that Baudrillard was right all along. We are now fully in the era of simulation and telemorphosis, of the New Truth of the omnipresent image (both picture-image and word-image – the multi-media of the screen having transformed written words from texts into images). The New Truth is not a lie – that would be too easy and the claim is retrograde. The New Truth institutes its own hyper-reality, which is at present our only reality. The only way to contest simulation and the New Truth would be a strategy or perspective of “taking the side of objects” (see, for example, my most recent IJBS essay, for an elaboration of this). We would have to get to know the codes which underlie and instantiate simulation and reverse them. Reversibility of the code comes from “objects” within the code which want more objecthood. Until we can start to do that, to paraphrase David Cronenberg’s Videodrome: LONG LIVE THE NEW TRUTH!