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## War&Technology (Editorial)

Jacques Derrida (2008), when asked if the attacks of 9/11 would become one of the major events of the last century, answered that it is symptomatic that we refer to this event by means of its date: 11 September, 9/11. He concluded that it was a “thing” which probably has the status of an event for which we do not have yet a proper name. Referring to Derrida’s words, W.J.T. Mitchell wrote (2011) that every history in fact consists of two histories, one focused on what actually happened, the other on the ways of interpreting and describing the events. The first type of historical narrative is focused on facts and figures, while the other is focused on images and words that enable understanding of past events. Narratives about the past are no longer a domain reserved only for historians, because more frequently they are created in real time by official and independent media (e.g. the attacks on the WTC, when the emergency services learned about the plane that had crashed into the WTC towers from a television broadcast), millions of social media users around the world (Cottle 2006; Monahan 2010; Grusin 2010, Huff M. et al 2013), and the narration of movie directors and video game developers.

A number of social scientists, journalists, scholars, and philosophers have observed that the outcome of the attacks was a radical shift in political discourse and social practices—explained by the necessity of applying new security measures and justified by the “state of exception” (Agamben 2008; Sidel 2007; Sottiaux 2008; Neal 2010). As a result, the notions of terms such as terrorism, bioterrorism, torture, and enemy combatants were redefined in the context of 9/11 (Peters 2004; Meisels 2008; Nathanson 2010; Miller 2013; Stampnitzky 2013). This semantic operation and the introduction of the policy of fear allowed the authorities to make the “state of exception” a permanent state, which caused long-lasting effects and changed the social processes of interpretation of historical events—not only those directly related to the 9/11 attacks, but also those of earlier events from the history of the U.S. military.

These semantic operations were brilliantly identified and described by Peter Singer, who observed that many addresses delivered by George W. Bush during the “War on Terror” are based on the vision of clear binary scheme which allows a clear differentiation between Good and Evil. Singer noted that Bush’s Evil was almost a substantial entity which acts independently of human actions (Singer 2004).

According to Bush, those who attacked the WTC were “enemies of freedom” or “enemies of democracy”, and the prerogative of their actions was “to plot Evil”.

Taking into consideration the long-lasting and significant effects of these cultural changes in the social perception of international military conflicts and the threat of domestic terrorism, it is no wonder that most of the authors who responded to our call for papers devoted to the relations between war and technology have dedicated their papers to topics related to the 9/11 attacks.

Most of these texts are devoted to critical analysis of how those post-9/11 phenomena have been reflected in the sphere of pop culture. Thus, in his text about American gaming industry, Filip Jankowski shows how the majority of the shooting games released between 2001 and 2008 created a heroic depiction of American soldiers' WWII effort by using national stereotypes, erasing civilians from the theatre of war, and reinforcing the U.S. government's position as the primary guardian of global order in the face of the threat of international terrorism. It seems that a highly polarized depiction of military battles during WWII was the equivalent of President Bush's “Axes of Evil” speech and, in retrospect, it can be seen as a propaganda tool aimed to strengthen public support for US military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The author also analyses the games that have emerged since 2008, when the gruesome acts of torture committed by American personnel in Abu Ghraib prison were revealed and Barack Obama was elected president. Since then, game producers have created a more realistic reflection of military conflicts, abandoning the binary description of ours as good and enemies as evil and presenting the player with moral dilemmas.

In the current issue of *TransMissions*, we also include a block of papers devoted to critical examination of the interrelations between the current military complex and the moving image industry. In her paper, based on the analysis of Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper* (2013) and Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), Bethany Crawford shows how the film industry has reinforced neoliberal political agendas and military incentives by creating filmic endorsement glorifying the U.S. government's military campaigns. In her paper, Kaja Łuczyńska presents military technologies as a precise and effective tool for managing conflicts. She shows that along with the post-2008 politics of “no boots on the ground”, such an image of military technologies led to the erasing of the image of casual victims (on both sides of the conflict) in the social perception of contemporary conflicts.

Based on the considerations of philosophers and critics of post-9/11 politics such as Noam Chomsky and Jean Baudrillard (among others), she shows the influence of the Western taboo of death on the perception of military interventions in the Middle East. The same line of inquiry is presented in the paper by Tatiana Prorokova, who, while analysing the moving image industry, shows how unconditional belief in the power of technology has changed American society and ensured its confidence in “superiority and dominance of its possessors”.

In the first months after the attacks, the fear of being considered an “enemy of freedom” stopped numerous U.S. intellectuals and scholars from asking questions about the actual causes of the events of 9/11. Also, the “war on terror” declared by George W. Bush led to the international military campaign against Al-Qaeda and other militant organizations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (from 2004), as well as to the introduction of a number of legal measures such as the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act, which was based on the unclear and arbitrary category of “domestic terrorism”, which enabled the limitation of civic rights for the sake of security. The researchers point out that this Act resulted in noticeable loss of privacy as well as the reduction of transparency in public life. Both these phenomena are the subject of the papers by Marta Stańczyk, who analyses Hollywood productions concerning WikiLeaks and Hackers, and by Ivory Mills, who assesses the impact of technologies used to wage war in cyberspace. On the other hand, the paper by Sandra Trappen assesses the consequences of the engagement of anthropologists in the so-called Human Terrain System, a phenomenon which is referred to as “a cultural turn in military”. It seems that all three texts correspond to each other, because while the milieus of anthropologists and psychologists have rejected this type of cooperation as an unethical and undesirable breach of independence in the area of knowledge they are pursuing, it has become evident that the Human Terrain System is a key concept that applies not only to anti-insurgency military actions, but also to the frontiers of cyberwar. The concept appears one more time in the documents leaked by Edward Snowden 2013, concerning on-line actions developed by the American National Security Agency (NSA) and the British intelligence bureau, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) against supporters of WikiLeaks, The Pirate Bay portal, and hacktivist groups such as Anonymous.

The last two texts in the current issue of Transmissions are devoted to more general topics concerning the image of war and technology in contemporary culture, but they can still be read in the same context as the other texts in this volume. In her paper about the return of the nuclear technology debate, Agnieszka Kiejziewicz analyses post-Fukushima movies (both fiction and documentary), accurately pointing to the fact that in some way the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011 plays a similar role to 9/11 in that it invigorated historical debates on the country’s nuclear past. Meanwhile, the paper by Magdalena Podsiadło also addresses the problem of heroic narrative, albeit based on the image of rape in Polish contemporary cinema.

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