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The Right to Look

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I want to claim the right to look. This claim is, neither for the first nor the last time, for a right to the real.[1] It might seem an odd request after all that we have seen in the first decade of the twenty-first century on old media and new, from the falling of the towers, to the drowning of cities, and to violence without end. The right to look is not about merely seeing. It begins at a personal level with the look into someone else's eyes to express friendship, solidarity, or love. That look must be mutual, each inventing the other, or it fails. As such, it is unrepresentable. The right to look claims autonomy, not individualism or voyeurism, but the claim to a political subjectivity and collectivity: "the right to look. The invention of the other."[2] Jacques Derrida coined this phrase in describing Marie-Françoise Plissart's photo-essay depicting two women in ambiguous pursuit of each other, as lovers, and in knowing play with practices of looking.[3] This

1. Any such claim stands on the shoulders of the critical thinking about vision and visuality that (in recent times) runs from Laura Mulvey's foundational work to that of W. J. T. Mitchell, Anne Friedberg, Martin Jay, and other theorists of the look and the visual. My most recent account of this discourse is *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (1999; New York, 2009).

2. Jacques Derrida and Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Droit de regards* (Paris, 1985), p. xxxvi; trans. David Wills under the title *Right of Inspection* (New York, 1998); I have modified the translation used by Wills because "right of inspection" attempts to bridge the gap between right and law, which I feel should be kept open.

3. For an insightful discussion of this text and its implications, see Amy Villarejo, *Lesbian Rule: Cultural Criticism and the Value of Desire* (Durham, N.C., 2003), pp. 55–82. On the

invention is common; it may be the common, even communist. For there is an exchange but no creation of a surplus. You, or your group, allow another to find you, and, in so doing, you find both the other and yourself. It means requiring the recognition of the other in order to have a place from which to claim a right and to determine what is right. It is the claim to a subjectivity that has the autonomy to arrange the relations of the visible and the sayable. The right to look confronts the police who say to us, "move on, there's nothing to see here."[4] Only there is; we know it, and so do they. The opposite of the right to look is not censorship, then, but visuality, that authority to tell us to move on and that exclusive claim to be able to look.[5] *Visuality* is an old word for an old project. It is not a trendy theory-word meaning the totality of all visual images and devices, but it is in fact an early nineteenth-century term, meaning the visualization of history. This practice must be imaginary, rather than perceptual, because what is being visualized is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images, and ideas. This ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer. In turn, the authorizing of authority requires permanent renewal in order to win consent as the "normal" or everyday because it is always already contested. The autonomy claimed by the right to look is thus opposed by the authority of visuality. But the right to look came first, and we should not forget it.[6]

Here I want to advance my claim first by offering a conceptual framework to think with and against visuality and then by applying it to today's

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question of looking, see Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York, 2009).

4.   Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," trans. Rachel Bowlby, Davide Panagia, and Rancière, muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v005/5.3ranciere.html#_edn12. This text was originally published as "Dix thèses sur la politique," *Aux bords du politique* (Paris, 1998), p. 217.

5.   For an analysis of visuality's former use in visual culture, see my essay "On Visuality," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5 (Apr. 2006): 53–79. The term was widely sourced to *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, 1988), which did not refer to the earlier history of the term.

6.   Compare Derrida's insistence that writing preceded speech in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, 1976), p. 14.

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permanent crisis of visuality. Visuality's first domains were the slave plantations, monitored by the surveillance of the overseer, the surrogate of the sovereign. This sovereign surveillance was reinforced by violent punishment and sustained a modern division of labor. Then from the late eighteenth century onward, visualizing was the hallmark of the modern general as the battlefield became too extensive and complex for any one person physically to see. Working on information supplied by subalterns—the new lowest ranked officer class created for this purpose—and his own ideas and images, the general in modern warfare as practiced and theorized by Karl von Clausewitz was responsible for visualizing the battlefield. Soon after this moment, visuality was named as such in English by Thomas Carlyle in 1840 to refer to what he called the tradition of heroic leadership, which visualizes history to sustain autocratic authority.[7] In this form, visualizing is the production of visuality, meaning the making of the processes of history perceptible to authority. This visualizing was the attribute of the Hero and him alone. Visuality was held to be masculine, in tension with the right to look that has been variously depicted as feminine, lesbian, queer, or trans. Despite its oddities, the interface of Carlyle's appropriation of the revolutionary hero and his visualizing of history as permanent war with the military strategy of visualization has had a long legacy. While Carlyle's idea of mystical leadership was not a practical form of organization, British imperial visuality was organized by an army of missionaries bringing light to darkness by means of the Word, actively imagining themselves to be heroic subjects.[8] The fascist leaders of twentieth-century Europe claimed direct inspiration from Carlyle, while today's counterinsurgency doctrine indirectly relies on strategies of local and remote visualization.

   For those to be led by such heroes, Carlyle refused to even offer a name, considering them a mob except where subject to leadership. In nineteenth-century British politics, any part of the mob that claimed a place in politics was satirically deemed to be the mobility, a pun on nobility that also indicates that the people were out of place. Chartists and other radicals of the period reclaimed the name mobility as a modern form of multitude.[9] Against the "chaos" of the mobility, visuality sought to present authority as self-evident, that "division of the sensible whereby domination imposes the sensible evidence of its legitimacy."[10] The autonomy claimed by the

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   7. See Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 3–4.
   8. See Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 of *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 35, 52–53.
   9. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Classes* (New York, 1964), p. 73.
   10. Rancière, *Aux bords du politique,* p. 17.

right to look has thus been, and continues to be, opposed by the authority of visuality. Despite its name, this process is not composed simply of visual perceptions in the physical sense but is formed by a set of relations combining information, imagination, and insight into a rendition of physical and psychic space. I am not attributing agency to visuality but, as is now commonplace, treating it as a discursive practice for rendering and regulating the real that has material effects, like Michel Foucault's panopticism, the gaze, or perspective. A given modality of visuality is composed of a series of operations that can be summarized under three headings: first, it classifies by naming, categorizing, and defining—a process Foucault defined as "the nomination of the visible."[11] This nomination was founded in plantation practice from the mapping of plantation space to the identification of cash-crop cultivation techniques and the precise division of labor required to sustain them.[12] Next, visuality separates the groups so classified as a means of social organization. Such visuality segregated those it visualized to prevent them from cohering as political subjects, such as workers, the people, or the (decolonized) nation. Finally, it makes this separated classification seem right and hence aesthetic. As Frantz Fanon had it, such repeated experience generates an "aesthetic of respect for the status quo,"[13] the aesthetics of the proper, of duty, of what is felt to be right and hence pleasing, ultimately even beautiful. Classifying, separating, and aestheticizing together form what I shall call a complex of visuality. All such Platonism depends on a servile class, whether formally chattel slaves or not, whose task it is to do the work that is to be done and nothing else.[14] We may engage in whatever labor is required to do that work, visual or otherwise, but for us, the mobility, there is nothing to be seen.

The right to look claims autonomy from this authority, refuses to be segregated, and spontaneously invents new forms. It wants to separate right from law, as being a prior moment of formation, whether in the judicial process or the Lacanian law of the gaze. The idea that such distinctions are utopian is vital to justifications of authority and should be refused, albeit with a necessary dose of Gramscian pessimism. The right to look is not, then, a right for declarations of human rights or for advocacy. It refuses to allow authority to suture its interpretation of the sensible to

11.   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* trans. pub. (London, 1970), p. 132.

12.   See W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago, 2005) for a similar critique of "the order of things."

13.   Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York, 1994), p. 3.

14.   See Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, trans. Andrew Parker, ed. John Drury, Corinne Oster, and Parker (Durham, N.C., 2003).

domination, first as law and then as the aesthetic. Writing of such refusals of legitimation, Antonio Negri points out that "it is once again Foucault who lays the foundation of this critical experience, better still, of this unmasking of that (in our civilization) ancestral Platonism that ignores the right to the real, to the power of the event."[15] The right to look is, then, the claim to a right to the real. It is the boundary of visuality, the place where such codes of separation encounter a grammar of nonviolence—meaning the refusal to segregate—as a collective form. Confronted with this double need to apprehend and counter a real that does exist but should not, and one that should exist but is as yet becoming, countervisuality has created a variety of realist formats structured around such tensions. We might take Bertolt Brecht's caution about working with reality and realisms to heart here: "Reality is not only everything which is, but everything which is becoming. It's a process. It proceeds in contradictions. If it is not perceived in its contradictory nature it is not perceived at all."[16] This creation of reality as a perceptual effect under contradiction is not the same as realism as it has usually been defined in literature and the visual arts. Certainly the realism usually considered under that name in the mid-nineteenth century is one part of it, as is the neorealism of postwar Italian visual culture, but countervisuality's realism is not necessarily mimetic. To take a famous example, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* both expresses the reality of aerial bombing that was and is central to contemporary visuality and protests against it with sufficient force that American officials asked for the replica of the painting at the United Nations to be covered over when they were making their case for war against Iraq in 2003. Realism here is an attempt to come to terms with the tendency of modernity to exceed understanding in its permanent revolutionizing of conditions of existence. As Pier Paolo Pasolini mused in his consideration of Antonio Gramsci: "perhaps we should, in all humility and with a bold neologism, simply call reality that-which-must-be-made-sense-of."[17] Following this direction, the right to look is not simply a matter of assembled visual images but the grounds on which such assemblages can register as meaningful renditions of a given event.

I am using the phrase *the right to look* rather than a form based on freedom or liberty to insist on my claim to an autonomy based on one of its first principles: the right to existence. It is the difference marked by W. E. B.

15. Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution*, trans. Matteo Mandarini (New York, 2003), p. 142.

16. Quoted in Wolfgang Fritz Haug, "Philosophizing with Marx, Gramsci, and Brecht," *Boundary 2* 34 (Fall 2007): 153.

17. Quoted in Maurizio Viano, "The Left According to the Ashes of Gramsci," *Social Text*, no. 18 (Winter 1987–88): 59.

Du Bois's insistence that the enslaved in the United States freed themselves by means of a general strike against slavery rather than passively being emancipated. Think of Rosa Parks refusing to move to the back of the bus. It is the dissensus with visuality, meaning "a dispute over what is visible as an element of a situation, over which visible elements belong to what is common, over the capacity of subjects to designate this common and argue for it."[18] It is the performative claim of a right to look where none technically exists that puts a countervisuality into play. Like visuality, it interfaces formal and historical aspects. The right in the right to look contests first the right to property in another person by insisting on the irreducible autonomy of all persons, prior to all law. Autonomy implies a working through of Enlightenment claims to right in the context of coloniality with an emphasis on the right to subjectivity and the contestation of poverty.[19] By engaging in such a discussion, I am implicitly rejecting the dismissal of right as a biopolitical ruse presented by Giorgio Agamben.[20] There is no bare life entirely beyond the remit of right. Michael Hardt and Negri powerfully cite Spinoza to this effect: "Nobody can so completely transfer to another all his right, and consequently his power, as to cease to be a human being, nor will there ever be a sovereign power that can do all it pleases."[21] In similar fashion, Ariella Azoulay has expressed the legacy of revolutionary discourses of rights as precisely "struggles pos[ing] a demand that bare life be recognized as life worth living."[22] She importantly sees these demands being enacted in feminism from Olympe de Gouges's *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791) on. If the right to look is in dissensus with the law of the gaze, it is nonetheless very much a feminist project. As Rancière and Azoulay point out, de Gouges's insistence that if women have the "right" to be executed, they are foundationally equal, which further shows that "bare life itself is political."[23] Precisely the same argument should be made with regard to the enslaved, who, while having no legal standing, were nonetheless subject to legal codes

18. Rancière, "Introducing Disagreement," trans. Steven Corcoran, *Angelaki* 9 (Dec. 2004): 6.

19. See Cesare Casarino and Negri, *In Praise of the Common: A Conversation on Philosophy and Politics* (Minneapolis, 2008), pp. 86–88.

20. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Calif., 1998), pp. 126–35. Agamben asserts that "life" becomes a political term with the 1789 formation of a discourse of the rights of man, setting aside the entire question of slavery that is central here.

21. Quoted in Michael Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), p. 75.

22. Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, trans. Rela Mazali and Ruvik Danieli (New York, 2008), p. 64. See also Thomas Docherty, *Aesthetic Democracy* (Stanford, Calif., 2006).

23. Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York, 2006), p. 60.

specifying punishments. Simply, the right in the right to look acknowledges the patriarchal slave-owning genealogy of authority—and refuses it.

   Authority is derived from the Latin *auctor*. In Roman law, the *auctor* was at one level the "founder" of a family, literally, the patriarch. He was also (and always) therefore a man empowered to sell slaves, among other forms of property, completing the complex of authority.[24] Authority can be said to be power over life, or biopower, foundationally rendered as authority over a "slave,"[25] the commodity form of human life. However, this genealogy displaces the question, who or what empowers the person with authority to sell human beings? According to Livy, the indigenous people living on the site that would become Rome were subject to the authority *(auctoritas)* of Evander, son of Hermes, who ruled "more by authority than by power *(imperium)*." That authority was derived from his ability, as the son of the messenger of the gods, to interpret signs. As Rancière puts it, "the *auctor* is a specialist in messages."[26] This ability to discern meaning in both the medium and the message generates visuality's aura of authority. When it further becomes invested with power *(imperium),* that authority becomes the ability to designate who should serve and who should rule. Such mythological certainties did not survive the violent decentering of the European worldview produced by the multiple shocks of 1492: the encounter with the Americas, the expulsion of the Jews and Islam from Spain, and the establishment of the heliocentric system by Copernicus. At the beginning of the modern period, Montaigne could already discern what he called the "mystical foundation of authority,"[27] meaning that it was ultimately unclear who or what authorizes authority. As Derrida suggests, "since the origin of authority, the foundation or ground, the position of the law can't by definition rest on anything but themselves, they are themselves a violence without a ground."[28]

   24. See H. Wagenvoort, *Roman Dynamism: Studies in Ancient Roman Thought, Language, and Custom* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 17–23.

   25. This approach differs from the distinction between bare life and social life proposed by Agamben in *Homo Sacer*. Here "bare life" is the "simple fact of living" (p. 1), whose "politicization . . . constitutes the decisive event of modernity" (p. 4). Agamben sees this production of a biopolitical body as key to sovereign power, especially under the regime of the society of the spectacle that produces a convergence between modern democracies and totalitarian societies. The absence of slavery from this analysis creates an odd and insurmountable lacuna, as indicated by Ewa Płonowksa Ziarek, "Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107 (Winter 2008): 89–105, esp. pp. 94–98.

   26. Rancière, *Aux bords du politique*, p. 31.

   27. See the monumental essay by Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review* 11 (July–Aug. 1990): 920–1047.

   28. Ibid., p. 943.

complexes of visuality

Name	Symbolic Figure	Dates
Plantation Complex	Overseer	1660-1865
Imperial Complex	Missionary	1857-1947
Military Industrial	Counterinsurgent	1945--present

FIGURE 1.   This schematic representation is subject to two provisos: each complex "intensifies" under pressure of resistance, and the dates here are indicative only of the broad moment of each complex's hegemony.

Authority's presumed origin in legality is in fact one of force, the enforcement of law, epitomized in this context by the commodification of the person in slavery. This self-authorizing of authority required a supplement to make it seem self-evident, which is what I am calling visuality.

Complexes of Visuality

Classifying, separating, and aestheticizing together form what I call a complex of visuality (fig. 1). In tracing a decolonial genealogy of visuality, I have identified three primary complexes of visuality and countervisuality: the plantation complex that sustained the transatlantic slave trade; what was known to certain apologists for the British empire as the imperialist complex; and what President Dwight Eisenhower identified as the military-industrial complex, which is still very much with us. *Complex* here means the production of a set of social organizations and processes that form a given complex, such as the plantation complex, and the state of an individual's psychic economy, such as the Oedipus complex, although I do not have space to develop that side of the argument here. The resulting imbrication of mentality and organization produces a visualized deployment of bodies and a training of minds, organized to sustain physical segregation between rulers and ruled and mental compliance with those arrangements. The resulting complex has volume and substance, forming a lifeworld that can be both visualized and inhabited.

The difference between a complex of visuality and a specific sensory attribution can be seen in the difference between ancient and modern slavery. Herodotus tells us that the Scythians of antiquity blinded their slaves. As they were horse-riding nomads, the Scythians wanted to prevent
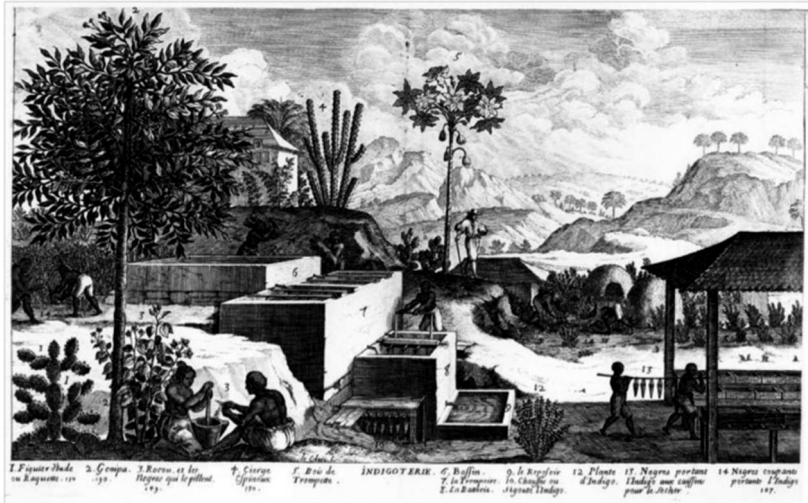
FIGURE 2. Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, "Indigoterie," from *Histoire générale des Antilles* (1667). The single overseer at the centre keeps a fourteen-part division of labor in motion by means of his surveillance. His *lianne*, or cane, the agent and symbol of corporal punishment, is at rest; his eyes do the work.

the slaves from escaping.[29] It cannot but also suggest that slavery is the removal of the right to look. Blinding makes a person a slave and removes the possibility of regaining the status of a free person. This archetype of the blindness of slavery was transformed by the formal practice of visualized surveillance in the plantation complex.[30] The plantation complex was formed by several classifying moves in the mid-seventeenth century, ranging from the establishment of the Barbados Slave Code in 1661 to the required mapping of all plantations by the Admiralty in 1670 and the creation of the discourse of natural history, dated by Foucault with unusual precision to the 1657 publication of Johnston's *Natural History of Quadrupeds*.[31] The slave was a person so classified by law and natural history, relegated to the plantation, where she or he was under the surveillance of the overseer (fig. 2).

The transatlantic slave traders did not physically blind the enslaved, knowing that their labor required visual engagement, so that runaway

29. See Timothy Taylor, "Believing the Ancients: Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions of Slavery and the Slave Trade in Later Prehistoric Eurasia," *World Archaeology* 33 (June 2001): 27–43.

30. See Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (1990; New York, 1998), pp. 82–83.

31. See Foucault, *The Order of Things,* pp. 128–29.

slaves were found across the hemisphere. However, the legal authority of slavery now policed slaves' imagination. For example, in the British colony of Jamaica the enslaved were forbidden even to "imagine the Death of any white Person."[32] By contrast, in the metropole it only became a capital offence for subjects to imagine the death of a king during the revolutionary crisis of the 1790s.[33] The difference in these laws suggests that any white person in the plantation colony was the equivalent of the sovereign in the "home" nation. Further, the plantation was permanently subject to possible revolt, whereas the metropole was visited by such tensions as part of a wider emergency.

While authority claims to have remained unchanged in the face of modernity, eternally deriving power from its ability to interpret messages, it actually has been transformed radically by the resistance it has itself produced. This contradiction has generated change within the complexes of visuality. What Foucault called "intensity" has rendered visuality and countervisuality "more economic and more effective."[34] Under the pressure of intensification, each form of visuality becomes more specific and technical so that within each complex there is, as it were, both a standard and an intensified form. That is the paradox glimpsed by Carlyle, in which history and visualization have become mutually constitutive as the reality of modernity, while failing to account entirely for each other.[35] It is that space between intention and accomplishment that allows for the possibility of a countervisuality that is more than simply the opposition predicated by visuality as its necessary price of becoming. To pursue the example of slavery and sight, after the Haitian revolution and the dramas of abolition and Reconstruction, "reckless eyeballing," a simple looking at a white person, especially a white woman or person in authority, was forbidden to those classified as "colored" under Jim Crow. Such looking was held to be both violent and sexualized in and of itself, a further intensification of the policing of visuality. As late as 1951, a farmer named Matt Ingram was

32. *Acts of Assembly, Passed in the Island of Jamaica; From 1681, to 1737, Inclusive* (London, 1738), p. 77; quoted in Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *William and Mary Quarterly* 66, 3rd ser. (Jan. 2009): 52.

33. See John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793–1796* (New York, 2000).

34. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1977), p. 207; quoted in Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Foucault beyond Foucault: Power and Its Intensifications since 1984* (Stanford, Calif., 2008), p. 32; see pp. 32–53 for more detail on this concept.

35. Raymond Williams argued that Victorian writers like Carlyle asked the right questions but supplied the wrong answers; see Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (New York, 1958), pp. 75–77.

convicted for assaulting a white woman in North Carolina because she had not liked the way he had looked at her from a distance of sixty-five feet.[36] This monitoring of the look was retained in the Abu Ghraib phase of the war in Iraq (2003–4), when detainees were forcefully told "don't eyeball me!"[37]

   If the legacy of the plantation complex is the local surveillance of people by one authority figure, whether visible or not, imperial visuality was a centralized model for the control of remote populations. The imperial complex of visuality linked centralized authority to a hierarchy of civilization in which the "cultured" dominated the "primitive." This overarching classification was a hierarchy of mind as well as a means of production. After Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), culture became the key to imagining the relations of colonial centers and peripheries, as visualized by the colonizers. In 1869, Matthew Arnold divided British modernity into tendencies towards culture and anarchy, leading him to give unquestioned support to the forces of law "because without order there can be no society, and without society there can be no human perfection." Culture is perfection, hence aesthetic, requiring forcible separation from its anarchic opposite. With an eye to the political violence in London in 1866, Arnold proposed to " 'flog the rank and file' "—the mobility—even if the cause were a good one, such as the "abolition of the slave-trade."[38] Ending slavery itself would not by 1869 take priority over maintaining authority. The classification of culture and anarchy had become a principle of separation whose authority was such that it had become right in and of itself. Political divisions at home between the forces of culture and those of anarchy were subsequently mapped onto the distinctions between different layers of civilization defined by ethnographers. So when Edward Tylor defined culture as the "condition of knowledge, religion, art, custom and the like" in primitive societies, he was clear that European civilization (as he saw it) stood above all such cultures.[39] This dramatic transformation in conceptualizing nations as a spatialized hierarchy of cultures took place rapidly, just as the classification of the plantation complex had done two centuries earlier. Arnold's thesis was quickly followed in 1871 by Darwin's *Descent of Man* and Tylor's *Primitive Culture,* which together separated

   36. See Mary Frances Berry, "'Reckless Eyeballing': The Matt Ingram Case and the Denial of African American Sexual Freedom," *Journal of African American History* 93, no. 2 (2008): 223–34.
   37. *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib*, ed. Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel (New York, 2005), p. 1214.
   38. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. R. H. Super (1869; Ann Arbor, Mich., 1965), pp. 223, 526.
   39. Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 2 vols. (London, 1871), 1:5.

types of humanity. Tylor presented Darwin's description of the evolution of humanity as existing in real time with the "primitive" being separated only by space from the "civilized." Whereas Carlyle's hero was a mystical figure, "civilization" could now visualize, whereas the "primitive" was ensconced in the heart of darkness produced by the willed forgetting of centuries of encounter. In this way, visuality became both three-dimensional and complexly separated in space. As Western civilization tended, in this view, towards "perfection," it was felt to be aesthetic, and the separations it engendered were simply right, albeit visible only to what Tylor called "a small critical minority of mankind."[40] That minority was nonetheless in a position to administer a centralized empire as a practical matter in a way that Carlyle's mystical heroes could not have done, creating what Fanon later called an "arsenal of complexes" in the colonized.[41]

If visuality has relied on an assemblage of classifying, separating, and aestheticizing, the countervisuality of the right to look has its own techniques, which I shall gloss here using the radical genealogy of Jacques Rancière, whose work has been central to my project, while emphasizing and insisting that these techniques are derived from historical practice. Classification was countered by education understood as emancipation, meaning "the act of an intelligence obeying only itself even while the will obeys another will."[42] Education has long been understood by working and subaltern classes as their paramount means of emancipation, from the efforts of the enslaved to achieve literacy to nineteenth-century campaigns for universal education that culminated (in the United States) with *Brown* v. *Board of Education* (1954). Education was the practical means of moving on from the work allocated to you. Separation was countered by democracy, meaning not simply representative elections but the place of (in Rancière's well-known phrase) "the part that has no part" in power. Plato designated six categories of people with title to power; all those who remained, the great majority, are those without part, who do not count.[43] Here the right to look is strongly interfaced with the right to be seen. In combining education and democracy, those classified as good only for work reasserted their place and title. The aesthetics of power were matched by the aesthetics of the body not simply as form but also as affect and need. This aesthetic is not a classificatory scheme of the beautiful but "an

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40. Ibid., 1:12.
41. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York, 1967), p. 30.
42. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford, Calif., 1991), p. 13. I would like to thank Ross for her brilliantly insightful introductions to Rancière's work in print and in person.
43. See Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*.

'aesthetics' at the core of politics … as the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience."[44] These forms center around sustenance and what I call the politics of eating, adapting a phrase from African and African diaspora discourse.[45] This politics is perhaps best known via the slogan forty acres and a mule that was used to encapsulate the demands made by the formerly enslaved during Reconstruction for economic and food independence. It might now be described as sustainability. These countervisualities are not visual, you might say. I did not say they were. I claim that they are and were visualized as goals, strategies, and imagined forms of singularity and collectivity. If they do not seem realistic, that is the measure of the success of visuality, which has made *vision* and *leadership* into synonyms. That extended sense of the real, the realistic, and realism(s) is at stake in the conflict between visuality and countervisuality. The "realism" of countervisuality is the means by which one tries to make sense of the unreality created by visuality's authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative. It is by no means a simple or mimetic depiction of lived experience but one that depicts existing realities and counters them with a different realism.

Necropolitical Regimes of Separation

"The commander's visualization forms the basis for conducting … an operation."[46]

Given that visuality was a technique for waging war appropriated as a means to justify authority as the imagining of history, the end of the cold war in 1989 might have been expected to create an era of postvisuality. Instead, the global Revolution in Military Affairs, usually considered to have commenced at roughly the same moment, has extended and transformed visuality using digital technology to pursue nineteenth-century tactical goals, creating what Derek Gregory has called the "visual economy [of the] . . . American military imaginary."[47] This visualized imaginary culminated in the 2006 counterinsurgency policy based on the field commander's visualization of the area of operations. The extraordinary *The US Army Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* integrated the nineteenth-century "small wars" tactics of

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44. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York, 2004), p. 13.

45. See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, 1993).

46. *The US Army Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago, 2007), p. 292.

47. Derek Gregory, "American Military Imaginaries and Iraqi Cities: The Visual Economies of Globalizing War," in *Globalization, Violence, and the Visual Culture of Cities,* ed. Christoph Lindner (New York, 2010), p. 68.

imperial governance and cold war rhetorics of terror and freedom with the digital technologies of information warfare.[48] This policy does not appear so different when considered from the postcolony, where the military-industrial complex was always already a counterinsurgency in Algeria, Indochina, Latin America, and now the Middle East. Today's counterinsurgent commander, however, considers the entire planet a space of potential insurgency. The resulting global counterinsurgency (GCOIN to the military) is an excellent example of one of the postcolony's modes of entanglement.[49] From the legacies of the plantation complex in the United States (stirred to life by the Obama presidency) to the imperial dreams being worked out globally by the military-industrial complex, each modality of visuality is presently at work. GCOIN can simultaneously take the form of an imperial small war, a governance-building counterinsurgency, and a technology-driven means of containment. This last, which appears to be in the ascendant, suggests a final intensification of visuality into digitized, necropolitical form.

In light of this conflation, it is worth emphasizing that classifying a conflict was, according to Carl von Clausewitz, the first task of the leader and therefore the first step of visuality: "The first, the supreme, most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."[50] In the view promoted by General David Petraeus, the decisive shift in Iraq and elsewhere came with the redefinition of the conflict from war to counterinsurgency in 2005. This "asymmetric warfare" was visualized as the Darwinian struggle for life or, in the words of Colonel Daniel S. Roper, director of the US Army and Marine Corps Counter-insurgency Center, "to preserve and promote the way of life of free and open societies based on the rule of law, defeat terrorist extremism and create a global environment inhospitable to extremists."[51] Foucault's assertion that politics is war by other means became policy. It entailed the adoption of population control as a military tactic.[52] Counterinsurgency militarized governmentality: "a population-centered approach, instead of

48.   See Nicholas Mirzoeff, "War Is Culture: Global Counterinsurgency, Visuality, and the Petraeus Doctrine," *PMLA* 124 (Oct. 2009): 1737–46.

49.   See Achille Mbembé, *On the Postcolony*, trans. A. M. Berrett et al. (Berkeley, 2001), p. 14.

50.   Carl von Clausewitz, *On War,* trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J., 1976), p. 88; quoted in Daniel S. Roper, "Global Counterinsurgency: Strategic Clarity for the Long War," *Parameters* 38 (Autumn 2008): 105.

51.   Roper, "Global Counterinsurgency," p. 101.

52.   See Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York, 2003), p. 48.

one focused primarily, if not exclusively, on the insurgents."[53] The strategy of clear, hold, and build, today's military mantra of counterinsurgency, means to remove insurgents from a locality using lethal force, then to sustain that expulsion by physical means such as walls, and finally to build neoliberal governance in the resulting space of circulation. Counterinsurgency thus classifies and separates by force to produce an imperial governance that is self-justifying because it is held to be right and hence aesthetic.

This idealized vision has fallen far short in practice. According to the CIA, Afghanistan has the second highest rate of infant mortality worldwide and ranks 219 out of 224 for life expectancy. In 2009, 40 percent of the population was unemployed, and per capita income was only $800.[54] This is necropolitics, not biopolitics. Mbembé has defined *necropolitics,* the question of who shall live and who shall die, as *"the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations."*[55] Mbembé derives the genealogy of this sovereign right to kill from slavery and colonial imperialism, when the sovereign could act with impunity. If the priority is to sustain the population rather than to allocate and withhold death, such conditions in Afghanistan are rightly considered intolerable. For the goal of this counterinsurgency is not to create stability but to naturalize "the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war," not as politics but as culture, the web of meaning in a given place and time.[56] Counterinsurgency's goal is to produce a global array of weak or failing states requiring permanent counterinsurgency. Indeed, the mantra of the GCOIN strategists is the need to engage with the "global jihad," deriving from a newly "global Islam … a structureless, leaderless archipelago of communities whose energy is aroused by a nervous system based on communications technology."[57] Imperial legacies are, then, coming to dominate the new counterinsurgency rhetoric in the context of advanced digital and communications technologies.

The paradoxical (to use one of GCOIN theorists' most favored adjectives) result is a combination of the techniques of the ghetto with pilotless, remote-controlled airborne surveillance and attack. Visuality's operations of classification, separation, and aestheticization have become condensed

53. Sarah Sewall, "Introduction to the University of Chicago Press Edition," in *The US Army Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, p. xxiv.

54. Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA: The World Factbook: South Asia: Afghanistan," www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html

55. Mbembé, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15 (Winter 2003): 14.

56. Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* p. 16.

57. John Mackinlay and Alison Al-Baddawy, *Rethinking Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica, Calif., 2007), p. 41.
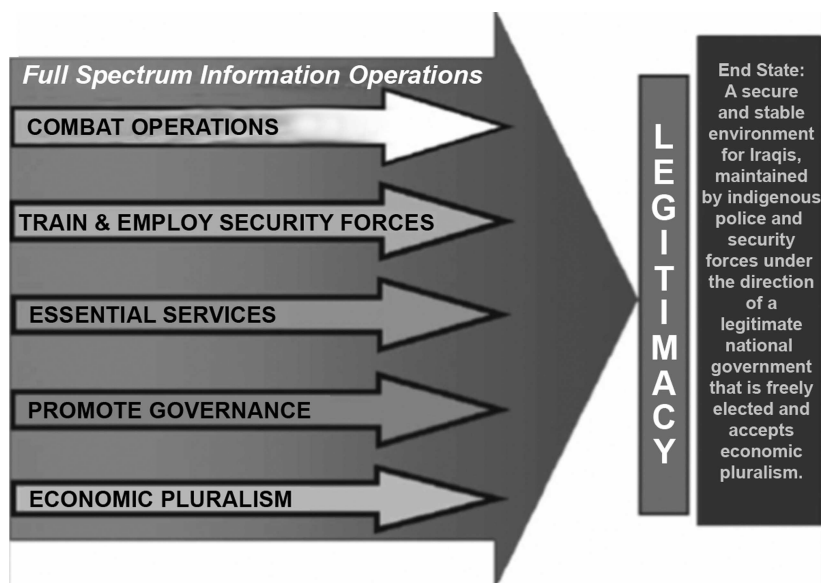
FIGURE 3.   Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, "Legitimacy." From Peter Chiarelli and Patrick Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* (July–August 2005): 4–17.

into one. In a visualization of this tactic in 2005, then Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli saw the combined operations of GCOIN generating legitimacy (fig. 3). While only two of the five components of this legitimation are traditional military activities, all are subsumed under "information operations." Information produces legitimacy; perception becomes the reality. Thus the walls and other barriers, as pioneered in Israel/Palestine, enforce a classification that is by self-definition legitimate and therefore right. In Baghdad, for example, districts were designated Shia or Sunni and, subsequently, walls legitimated this classification. Writing in the context of Israel/Palestine, Hilla Dayan argues that "regimes of separation . . . develop unprecedented mechanisms of containment, with forcible separation and isolation of masses trapped in their overextended political space."[58] If not unprecedented, given the genealogy from the medieval ghetto to the Berlin Wall, visualized-information war produces necropolitical regimes of separation controlled from the air, not the ground. These regimes are global, just as the terrain of counterinsurgency is global,

58.   Hilla Dayan, "Regimes of Separation: Israel/Palestine and the Shadow of Apartheid," in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,* ed. Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi (New York, 2009), p. 285.

FIGURE 4.   Operators of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle. Photo: Master Sergeant Steve Horton, US Air Force.

evidenced by the extensive construction of barriers on the US-Mexico border, between Morocco and the towns of Melilla and Ceuta, and elsewhere, not to mention a long list of states operating internal regimes of separation. This can be called a postpanoptic imaginary because it only intends to control, rather than reform, by separating the "host population" from the "insurgent," as if quarantining the former from infection by the latter.[59] Nor is the violence intended, as on the plantation, to sustain production.

This necropolitics is invisible to the insurgent and operates according to the principle of "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." Although the US military continues to use a moralized rhetoric of nation building, their practical administration of counterinsurgency has recently shifted to the management of disaster by killing those designated insurgents with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Those controlling the machines are usually located in the United States, while the UAV may be flying in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Iraq (fig. 4). Here visualization has no relevance to the awareness of a cultural or governmental environment but simply helps target people to be killed. Such warfare is metaphorically equivalent to video-game play. Contradicting the imperial theory of its own field

59. See Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October*, no. 59 (Winter 1992): 3–7. Deleuze does not discuss visualized means of control in his brief essay.

manual, counterinsurgency is being taught and experienced as the ulti-
mate multiplayer immersion game. Soldiers are trained using video games
and 3-D virtual environments, for example, at the University of Southern
California Institute for Creative Technologies, where a Military Terrain for
Games Pipeline has been instituted to keep the simulations up to date.[60]
Troops routinely describe combat as being like a game, and games have
been used as therapy for posttraumatic shock. UAVs and video gamers
use the same kind of joystick. Like most modern games, 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" and thereby perpetu-
ate itself.

   Military discussion, both official and unofficial, centers now on the way
in which such visualization has in some sense become the mission itself.
Today's junior officers spend much of their time compiling PowerPoint
presentations that digitally render their visualizations of the conflict. The
advance on past modes of visualization was noted in the pro-
counterinsurgency blog *Small Wars Journal*: "The graphics used in Power-
Point replace the massive campaign maps and problematic acetate overlays
which were used by armies for decades, allowing these documents to be
easily produced and mass-distributed with the click of a mouse."[61] On the
other hand, the *Armed Forces Journal* pointed to the "dumb down" effect
of the bullet-point process of PowerPoint, which often elides the key ques-
tion as to who is actually going to carry out the tasks in a list.[62] In response,
counterinsurgency advocates touted a PowerPoint presentation made by
the late Captain Travis Patriquin in 2006 during the campaign in Anbar
province, Iraq. It was circulated widely during the surge of that time, in-
cluding by national media outlets like ABC News, as an example of visual
material that was highly effective on the ground (fig. 5). Although he was
an Arabic speaker, Patriquin's tactic was more than a little reductive. In-
surgency here is reduced to an Islamic slasher movie in which the only
motive is to cause chaos and gain power for oneself. Using a standard
phrase of Muslim piety like "Allah akbar" as the insurgent catchphrase
shows that Patriquin had no strong understanding of the Iraqi situation.

    60.   See University of Southern California Institute for Creative Technologies, "Military
Terrain for Games Pipeline," ict.usc.edu/projects/military_terrain_for_games_pipeline/
    61.   Starbuck, "The TX Hammes PowerPoint Challenge (Essay Contest)," *Small Wars
Journal*, 24 July 2009, smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/07/draft-draft-draftpowerpoint-1/
    62.   T. X. Hammes, "Dumb-Dumb Bullets," *Armed Forces Journal*, July 2009, www.afji.com/
2009/07/4061641

Allah Akbar
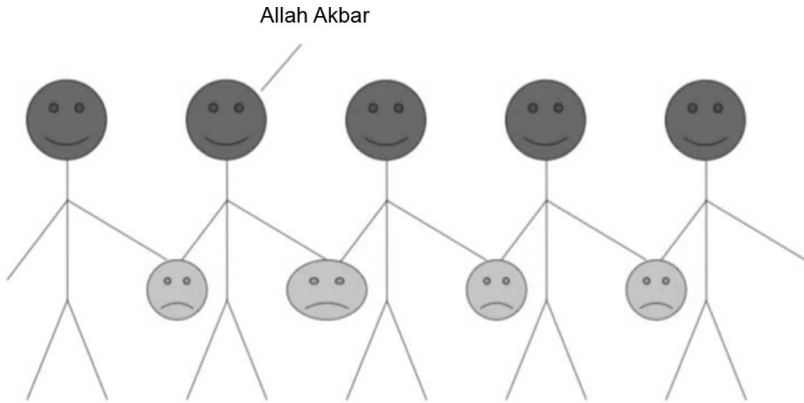
This is a group of insurgents. They like chaos and power. They get it by sawing heads off of
and intimidating good Iraqis.

FIGURE 5.   Captain Travis Patriquin's PowerPoint presentation (2005). From Starbuck, "The
TX Hammes PowerPoint Challenge (Essay Contest)," *Small Wars Journal,* 24 July 2009,
smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/07/draft-draft-draftpowerpoint-1/

He did, however, express the intense self-confidence of the counterinsur-
gency movement, which then felt itself to be in the ascendant. Against such
an enemy, all tactics would be self-legitimizing.

The reverse problem was manifested in a graphic created for General
Stanley McChrystal (ret.) in the summer of 2009, showing connections
between insurgency and counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, where he was
then the commander of the International Security Assistance Force. Some
months later the slide was released to the *New York Times* journalist Elisa-
beth Bumiller (fig. 6). The analysis presented here does not lack for sophis-
tication, although as a map of an entire society it is not especially
complicated. It would, however, be hard to tell what a soldier in the field
was supposed to do next after examining it. The visualization shows only
complexity. McChrystal reportedly joked that once the slide had been under-
stood, the war would be won.[63] He missed the point; as the commander/
visualizer, he of all people should have been able to interpret and under-
stand it. The leak suggests that visualized-information war is now a means
to map chaos, locate places for separation, and target those to be killed.

The long-standing project of defining the social from the perspective of
militarized visuality has been deliberately made incoherent, suggesting the
possible formation of a formally incoherent visuality that continues to use

63. Elisabeth Bumiller, "We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint," *New York Times,*
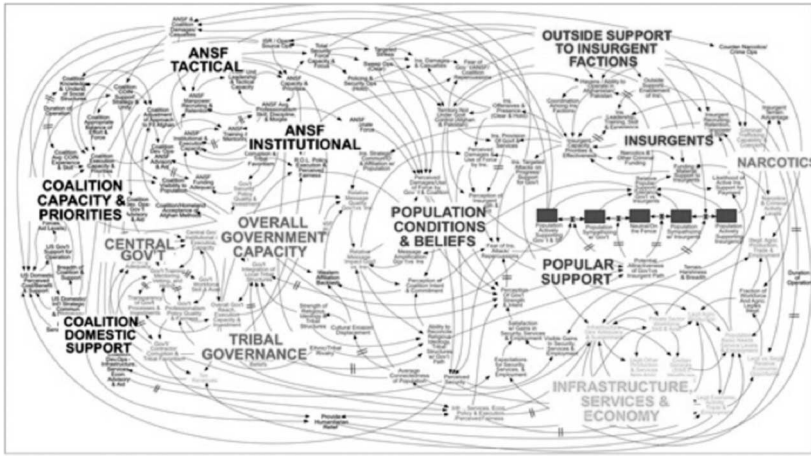26 Apr. 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html

FIGURE 6.   Visualization of Afghanistan (2009). From www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/
27powerpoint.html?scp=1&sq=bumiller%20mcchrystal%20powerpoint&st=cse

the visual language of perspective but not its symbolic form. By a formally incoherent visuality, I mean a material visualization that does not generate information about the presence of the human visualizer. Unlike Erwin Panofsky's analysis of perspective, this incoherent visuality no longer conceives of both viewer and viewed as part of its "symbolic form."[64] The viewer can toggle between image sets that he or she did not create, zoom in and out of an image whether by digital or optical means, and compare them to databases of previous imagery.[65] The viewer is able to use satellite imagery, infrared, and other technologies to create previously unimaginable visualizations. In everyday life, the prevalence of unmanned, closed-circuit television surveillance marks this switch to incoherent visualization with its plethora of fragmented, time-delayed, low-resolution images monitored by computer, mostly to no other effect than to make the watching visible. All these tendencies towards an incoherent visuality are realized in the UAV. The video feed from the UAV generates a low-resolution, necessarily top-down image.[66] While there is a certain sense of three dimensions, such imagery implies no viewer and does not require anything

64.   Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York, 1991). For a useful analysis, see Margaret Iversen, "The Discourse of Perspective in the Twentieth Century: Panofsky, Damisch, Lacan," *Oxford Art Journal* 28, no. 2 (2005): 191–202.

65.   I owe the vocabulary of *toggle* and *zoom* to Tara McPherson's response to the Animating Archives conference held at Brown University, 4–5 Dec. 2009, and I thank her for allowing me to use it.

66.   For an example, see the Department of Defense, dodvclips.mil/

of its beholder. Military personnel target missiles by laser and steer them to GPS coordinates, remaking the use of perspective for artillery targeting.[67] Since the Gulf War of 1991, so-called smart weapons using GPS coordinates have struck their targets with a disregard for the consequences, which has proven a fertile source for propaganda. By contrast, Napoleon had his "geographer artists" create maps of the battlefield calibrated from the precise viewpoint of the commanding officer, which was further indicated by numerical data.[68] Perspective here did not mean a generalized sense of three-dimensional recession and depth but a specific point of view from a given place, in keeping with Leonardo da Vinci's concept of perspective as the line of power.

  As if to emphasize the fragmentation of such viewpoints, a new UAV device known as the Gorgon Stare can generate twelve separate visual feeds from one aerial platform, covering four square kilometers of territory. Each feed can be viewed separately and concurrently. While the feeds are low-grade, taking only two frames per second compared to the standard thirty, they can be used to direct the viewer to specific targets.[69] With perhaps surprising satire, the device's name nonetheless is intended to intimidate and to make it seem that whatever insurgents might do is visible and will result in their loss of sight. We are returned to the mythical formations of authority and visuality, in which the Scythians blinded their slaves. The Gorgon Stare insists that you accept the freedom it offers or become its slave, metaphorically rendered as blindness. In fact, post-9/11 operations have repeatedly shown so-called enemy combatants in hoods and noise-eliminating headphones, making it abundantly clear that sensory deprivation is a standard consequence of such capture. The Gorgon Stare is, in effect, a set of challenges. It challenges those it surveys to find a new Perseus capable of destroying it, a gambit on a death foretold. While this is a challenge most of us would want no part in, there is another: to recognize the right to look even for the Taliban and al-Qa'ida with whom we have immense disagreements. Needless to say, like all rights, it is only in such moments of intensity that their value is tested. The issue becomes of still greater moment when we realize that the global model of counterinsurgency includes the "home" nations sponsoring it.

  67. For the Predator, see "Predator RQ-1 / MQ-1 / MQ-9 Reaper—Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), USA," www.airforce-technology.com/projects/predator/
  68. See Henri Marie Auguste Berthaut, *Les Ingénieurs géographes militaires, 1624–1831: Étude historique,* 2 vols. (Paris, 1902), 1:145–59, and Susan Locke Siegfried, "Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France," *Art Bulletin* 75 (June 1993): 235–58.
  69. Michael Hoffman, "New Reaper Sensors Offer Bigger Picture," *Air Force Times*, 19 Feb. 2009, www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/02/airforce_WAAS_021609/

Counterinsurgency is proliferating into one possible means of global-ized governmentality. This intersection became apparent in the events following Hurricane Katrina, at precisely the time in which the counter-insurgency doctrine was being written. In a (now-deleted) article in the *Army Times* on 2 September 2005, Brigadier General Gary Jones, com-mander of the Louisiana National Guard's Joint Task Force declared "this place is going to look like Little Somalia. . . . We're going to go out and take this city back. This will be a combat operation to get this city under con-trol." The journalist understood this to mean that the National Guard would be combating "an insurgency in the city [of New Orleans]."[70] In Spike Lee's powerful documentary of the events, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem for New Orleans* (2006), several sequences demonstrate the prac-tical consequences of this division of the sensible. We see then-Governor of Louisiana Kathleen Blanco histrionically announcing the deployment of the National Guard into the city with the remark that they have just returned from Iraq and will shoot to kill. We see Lieutenant General Rus-sell Honoré (ret.) arriving in New Orleans on 2 September, 2005, telling the soldiers on film to "put those damn weapons down"—and their palpable reluctance to do so. We realize that for the past four days US troops have routinely been training their weapons on their own citizens.[71] This adap-tation of domestic politics to the regime of counterinsurgency has spread. As early as 2005, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles were patrolling the US/Mex-ico border as part of the war on drugs, with three more aircraft set to be added in 2011 for a total of ten nationwide.[72] In 2008, a junior high school principal in the South Bronx described his strategy for reviving the school as "textbook counterinsurgency," rendering the teenage students into in-surgents.[73] In 2010, the Southern Poverty Law Center added a number of religious right groups to its hate watch list as a result of their anti-gay politics, such as the claim by the American Family Association that "a powerful, vicious, and punitive homosexual cabal . . . is determined to overthrow completely what remains of Judeo-Christian standards of sex-ual morality in the West."[74] In April 2010, an at-once-notorious state law

70.   Quoted in Xeni Jardin, "Al-Cajun? Army Times Calls NOLA Katrina Victims 'the Insurgency,'" www.boingboing.net/2005/09/03/alcajun-army-times-c.html. The link to the *Army Times* generates a space where the article is "no longer available."

71.   See Douglas Brinkley, *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (New York, 2006), p. 525.

72.   See Brady McCombs, "Unmanned Craft Aid Border Effort," *Arizona Daily Star,* 23 Nov. 2010, azstarnet.com/news/local/border/article_20da1f89-5af2-5ee0-b959-2d7d9496ab74.html

73.   Elissa Gootman, "In Bronx School, Culture Shock, Then Revival," *New York Times,* 8 Feb. 2008, p. A14.

74.   Mark Potok, "Gays Remain the Minority Most Targeted by Hate Crimes," *AlterNet,* 31

was passed in Arizona, requiring police to pursue those who appeared to be illegal immigrants and criminalizing any immigrant at large without documentation. The intent is to intensify the racialized divide between the citizen and the undocumented migrant worker, creating a virtual border that can be instantiated whenever a "citizen" looks at a person suspected of being a migrant. It is possible that, like many other examples of new right discourse, these will turn out to be insignificant details. It is also possible that necropolitical regimes of separation are becoming the new norm.

These imbrications of classic population management discourses with low-intensity, asymmetric urban warfare both produces, and is a product of, the intensification of visuality in the society of control. The corollary here is that visuality itself becomes visible once it reaches a point of intensification in which it ceases to need to manifest a visualization of its authority and has itself become incoherent. The so-called visual turn in the humanities since 1989 is, then, a symptomatic response to, first, the neovisuality of the Revolution in Military Affairs that followed the end of the cold war, and, now, the intensification of that visuality. Let us return to the axiomatic phrase, "move on, there's nothing to see here." Under conditions of insurgency, everyone knows that not to be the case. In Iraq and Afghanistan, insurgents and suicide bombers have often dressed in military and police uniforms to stage their attacks. Circulation itself becomes dangerous when roadside explosive devices and marketplace suicide bombings are the tactics of choice. The ultimate paradox of counterinsurgency is that the measure of its success is its permanent continuation. The more these paradoxes proliferate, however, the greater the uncertainty and hence the continued need for counterinsurgency. Far from being an accident, incoherence is a policy. This is a long-standing argument of counterinsurgents. In 1977, the Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan declared that the issue of the Palestinian territories should be reframed: " 'The question was not, "What is the solution?" but "How do we live without a solution?" ' "[75]

If counterinsurgency uses neovisuality as a strategy, can we construct a countervisuality to counterinsurgency? Those opposed to the counterinsurgent formation of necropolitical regimes of separation can in no way identify with any "insurgency" that uses its own micro-necropolitics of

Dec. 2010, www.alternet.org/rights/149378/gays_remain_minority_most_targeted_by_hate_crimes?page=1

75. Quoted in Eyal Weizman, "Thantato-tactics," in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, p. 565.

separation. This moment of paradoxical intensification for authoritarian visuality requires a new mobility to refuse to move on. It is now time to stop playing the second move to whatever deployment of militarized information war comes next. If counterinsurgency is an intensified form of the military-industrial complex, it is again of the first importance for the new mobility to reclaim, rediscover, and retheorize the practices and spaces of everyday life in the context of permanent counterinsurgency. For it was under the conditions of cold war emergency that Simone de Beauvoir, Michel de Certeau, Stuart Hall, Marshall McLuhan, and many others first insisted on everyday life as the place of the personal and hence the political. As the example of post-Katrina New Orleans shows, there is nothing banal or quotidian about this "new everyday."[76] At the same time the case of New Orleans shows that simple visibility or media coverage does not ensure any change in political practice. Where once consumer and subcultural practices seemed to offer new modes of resistance, now themselves thoroughly commodified, the task now is more paradoxical. In a period in which we are all suspects, provisionally guilty until proved otherwise, the need is first to assert the continuance of an everyday that does not require militarization. There are more questions than answers remaining, I realize. What is this new everyday? How will the violence of counterinsurgency mobilize against mobility? What means of autonomy are still viable from the legacies of countervisuality? Whose histories will count? If democracy is the global means of COIN, when do I get to vote? Several outcomes seem possible from this swirling situation: a new authoritarianism, a perpetual crisis, or, just possibly, a time in which my claim to the right to look is met by your willingness to be seen. And I reciprocate.

76.   This is the name of a Media Commons project that I edit; see mediacommons. futureofthebook.org/the-new-everyday/about