



Of STATES and THEIR TERRORISTS

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ABSTRACT This lecture, presented by Friedrich Kittler in 2002 as part of the Mosse Lecture Series at Humboldt University (Berlin), explores in a sequence of short historical vignettes the thesis that power systems such as the old British and the new American empires produce their own, system-specific enemies. In each case the technological environment provides the basis for the struggle between “states” and their “terrorists,” and the success of either party will depend on the degree to which they are able to adapt to and/or mobilize that environment. In addition, Kittler offers a philosophically informed genealogy of the “nomadic” state enemy, arguing that a basic dynamic of the escalating showdown is the increasingly invasive securing of natural resources.

KEYWORDS: Al-Qaeda, nomads, Osama bin Laden, Red Army Faction (RAF), terrorism, Horst Herold

All life has wandered off into building blocks.

—Ingeborg Bachmann



Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Services,

We all serve a higher purpose. I, for instance, serve a Greece in which there are no services and which allows free speech, plain and simple. You, however, are still counting on classic wars in the future. At least I hope you do, for given the two superpowers currently facing each other across the Pacific, to hope for anything else would be hopelessly naive. Nonetheless, I suspect that nobody really wants to know what classic wars would amount to in today's world. Their horrors exceed our imagination.

Instead, we Europeans find ourselves in the situation of the proverbial rabbit mesmerized by the snake: we are fixated on the seemingly distant spectacle of two absolute enemies, one of whom is neither a subject according to international law nor mindful of any basic human rights, while the other cleverly neglects the classic distinction between criminal prosecution and martial law, policing and military intervention.

Scholars from Carl Schmitt to Michael Jeismann have unearthed the long history that preceded the appearance of absolute enemies in the shape of “pig systems” and “rogue nations” that have to be wiped from the face of the earth. But we should briefly recall the relative enemies in the bygone times when European wars were still the province of *la chevalerie*, the knighthood. His Most Catholic Majesty Francis I of France is said to have remarked of the Holy Roman emperor Charles V: “My brother Charles and I are of one heart and mind—we both want Milan.” A beautiful and worthy sentiment, no doubt, but neither did it dissuade Charles's mercenaries from pursuing their bloody handiwork at the Battle of Pavia in 1525, nor did it keep the emperor from holding Francis captive for a year until he was released under the terms of the Treaty of Madrid. Yet none descried the other as in- or unhuman. For, as the bon mot intimates (and Jacques Lacan explains), the desire of brothers—even if they are royal brothers in name only—is always reciprocal and based on the recognition of rivals as equals (see Lacan 2006: 662). So much—or so little—about the times of classic wars when the enemy was no more than a temporary, coequal adversary.

It is, I believe, a matter of justice based on mutual recognition and equivalence not to resort to different standards when analyzing different—that is, relative and absolute—wars. Every system of power has the enemies it produces. But before I start to pursue this burning issue, I would like to illustrate the underlying hypothesis with a minor example from so-called contemporary history.

I

When the good old Federal Republic of Germany chose to bid farewell to its postwar idyll, it embarked on the modernization or—as others call it—colonization of its lifeworld. Almost overnight the many cozy single-family homes provided by the Adenauer government for returning POWs and their estranged wives gave way to endless high-rises,

the construction of which demanded extensive clear-cutting operations carried out by chainsaw commandos. New residential areas with beautiful names like Freiburg-Binzengrün or Erfstadt-Liblar shot up into the sky.¹ Not surprisingly, the inhabitants of these so-called satellite cities, stacked in concrete layers around elevator shafts and garbage chutes, soon adopted statistically monotonous consumer habits and leisure practices. All this would have resulted in endless traffic jams had the developers not taken precautionary measures. Drawing on old plans whose execution had been delayed by a world war, the Federal Republic proceeded to cover itself with the world's densest highway system. Soon every satellite town boasted a superstore as well as its own highway exit. A new epoch began in West Germany—and we can claim that we were present at its birth.²

And then there were parties, torched department stores, and bank robberies, staged or committed by strangely untraceable perpetrators. Only with the publication of so-called admission statements featuring a distinctly Eastern logo did the police come to realize whom they were dealing with, at which point the unsolved cases were handed over to a fledgling agency known as the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), the Federal Criminal Police Office. Initially, the BKA didn't do much better, but then it retained the services of a certain middle-class Social Democrat and chief commissioner, whose long-standing dream (to quote the title of a novel by Oswald Wiener) was the improvement of Central Europe. This herald of modernization³—that is to say, the computerization of manhunts—had a firm grasp of the simple, yet basic, idea that guides my talk: every system of power has the enemies it produces.

The terrorists (as they were now known) were able to navigate the waters of partisan warfare with all the alacrity of Mao Tse-tung's fish because they had adapted their lifeworld to satellite cities and highway systems. They invariably drove high-speed BMWs to make full use of passing lanes, and they rented whitewashed high-rise apartments, where nobody knows your name, in order to throw the inconspicuous leftovers of their bomb-making activities down the garbage chutes. Not to mention the fact that the neighboring woody areas made for excellent shooting ranges. Once the BKA managed to penetrate the behavioral patterns of this dismal lifeworld, the perpetrators were as good as behind bars, which, as you will recall, had been built according to the same modernist standards. Not even repeat bank robbers, bomb throwers, and murderers were able to fully blend into a computerized world: for instance, even under an assumed name it was still dangerous to pay the rent by way of the usual electronic transfer. With this in mind, Dr. Horst Herold, the congenial spirit presiding over the BKA, conceived of the negative computerized manhunt: a countrywide electronic search for quotidian bureaucratic procedures deliberately avoided by certain tenants. The end is known, though not necessarily understood. Only today, living in our prewar apartments, does it slowly dawn on us what it

meant that the Federal Republic sealed its earthly residues under layers of concrete and asphalt.

Let us move from the local to the global. Instead of highways, air traffic; instead of BKA mainframes, Internet surveillance; instead of strange cash payments, interest-free transactions based on trust alone, as is common in Islam; and, finally, instead of Stuttgart-Stammheim, Guantánamo Bay. Only the high-rises remain unchanged. Put differently, the question is, how did today's superpower acquire the enemies it has?

II

In order to grasp matters, it is necessary to take a quick look back at older empires. Before it was replaced by the United States during the Second World War, the British Empire rested on two pillars, one (in its day) extremely modern, the other very traditional. The innovation with which Britain entered the First World War was a unique telegraph cable network that connected all the ports the Royal Navy depended on to maintain maritime superiority. This "all red" British network kept the fleet apprised of each and every enemy movement and replenished coal depot. No other state, and least of all Britain's opponents, enjoyed such a global strategic and logistical capacity to wage war at a distance. In other words, already on the second day of the First World War Germany suffered a double blockade: it was cut off from news by the British cable monopoly and from resources (including Chilean nitrates) by the Royal Navy.

The second pillar also secured a steady supply, though this was one of cannon fodder rather than goods. While other colonial powers such as France and Belgium reduced their black and yellow subjects to Spartan work slavery, Britain had learned the bitter lessons of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and the Boer War of 1899. Only the telegraphic wiring of widely scattered garrisons had saved the viceroyalty against the insurgency of numerically far superior Indian auxiliary regiments; only the mobilization of colored soldiers had secured victory over Boer partisans intent on retaining their own colored slaves. Suddenly, whole regiments of Sikhs, Gurkhas, and other colonial groups who had fought bloody skirmishes against the East India Company were ready to kill and die in the name of Queen Victoria. No wonder the "sahibs' war," as Rudyard Kipling titled his short story about the conflict between masters, ended for many Boers in barbed wire-surrounded concentration camps.

The Nobel laureate of 1907 also revealed the poetic ways in which colored whites, those strange wooden irons, came into being long before CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]-sponsored Afghan alliances. Kipling, creator of *Mowgli* and *Kim*, was born in the British Raj and thus spoke Hindi before acquiring English. Nannies are older than mothers. Kipling's lyrical burden of having to bring culture to other races was probably first thrust on him in 1881, when (long before the days of the Saudi kings and their bin Ladens) the Mahdi

managed to subjugate an entire country—the Anglo-Egyptian condominium of Sudan—to the teachings of Muhammad ibn-Abdul Wahhab. The world's first rogue state was born when Gordon Pasha's severed head was displayed on the walls of Khartoum. The empire was forced to rely on poets and modern weaponry. "We have the Maxim gun and they have not," rhymed Hilaire Belloc, with a view toward those crucial differences of skin color that dictated that machine guns (just like the atom bomb) were to be used only against nonwhites. Kipling's lyrical burden, however, became unbearable once this neat martial distinction was subverted: starting in 1899, whites trained their machine guns on whites, Boers mowed down Britons and vice versa. As a result, Kipling concluded that the British Empire could no longer afford to strike rotten compromises with unreliable royal relatives perched on other European thrones, especially those willing to roll out the red carpet for visiting Boer presidents. Only the support of black, brown, or yellow natives could assure the stability of an empire in which—as in that of Charles V—the sun would never set.

Long before the CIA came along, then, Kipling invented a new literary hero in the shape of a young semi-orphaned half blood. Sitting astride the old bronze cannon of Lahore and dancing among moguls and viceroys, Indian mother and lost Irish father, Kim the nomad travels through half of India.⁴ Thanks to his ability to move between the fronts he is able to pull off a decisive move in the "Great Game" that pits Queen Victoria against Czar Nicholas in their struggle over (of all countries) Afghanistan. A half blood achieves what a hundred civil servants and twenty regiments fail to do: the nomad saves our stable abodes. Tens of thousands of armed Sikhs and Gurkhas, Britain's colonial world war elites, were to follow Kim's shining example, and above all, there was the one Lawrence of Arabia, who took Kipling's colonial romance literally by persuading young Saudi princelings, who had only camels, falconry, and ibn-Abdul Wahhab on their mind, to fight the Turks. Less than thirty years after H. H. Kitchener's bloody victory over the Mahdi, T. E. Lawrence turned absolute enemies into kings. Their machine gun-equipped camel riders brought down the sultanate itself, destroyed the old order of the Orient, and opened up its nomadic expanse. Unlike those in charge, however, London's secret agent remained unaware of the oil riches hidden underneath the liberated desert. And so, on an unguarded morning, Lawrence of Arabia died his motorcycle death. The white man's burden slipped from his shoulders, to be taken over by our man in Riyadh or Mosul.

III

Only after this prelude known as the First World War do I feel entitled to talk about the present and future; anything else would be as censored as your average press handout. Superpowers, after all, are the result of a *translatio imperii*. America's singular global position

stems from the Second World War, when Britain, descending into a sea of blood, sweat, and tears, signed over its empire to the United States. This did not happen with the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, which only concerned the sell-off of the Atlantic sideshow; it had to do with the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Japan's early Sunday morning attack on a sleepy Hawaii, though constantly cited as a precursor to 9/11, had its own sad and sound reason: namely, the refusal of the United States to have Japan, so poor in natural resources, participate in the industrial and military transition from coal to oil. In 1943 Japan replaced not only its foreign secretary but also its entire strategy, "which was to be of the greatest importance to the postwar development of Southeast Asia" (Hillgruber 1996: 118). Instead of the slave nations envisioned by the military, there was to be a "Greater Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere," whose success was to rest upon granting all the former colonies from Vietnam to the island nations of Indonesia and the Philippines the right to self-determination and ownership over their own oil resources. When the student revolutionaries of my generation chanted their "Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh" in order to position themselves as future foreign ministers, they probably didn't realize in the name of which tenno they were raising their voices.⁵ And the story continues with al-Qaeda's current operations on Bali or Mindanao.

Facing this serious challenge to its rule over East Asia and the Pacific, the United States embarked on a military-technological revolution. In essence, its logistical war efforts focused on covering both hemispheres and all ocean coastlines with runways and aircraft hangars. Outbidding a world power that had depended on a contractually guaranteed maximum fleet size, the United States secured its position by becoming history's very first empire to rely on airpower. The Second World War provided the US Air Force with the bases in Western Europe, South America, Africa, and India necessary for the global campaign against the Axis powers; following the war, the logistical net was tightened and came to incorporate the defeated nations (which, incidentally, may serve to explain what kind of pentagram or pentagon, with its flyover rights, makes life so difficult for the German federal government).

But what is of far greater importance in today's Great Game are those exotic locales and islands that allow the airborne superpower to embark (in the words of Salvador Dalí) on its journey into upper Mongolia, that is, Eurasia's hidden heartlands. When in late 2001 fully loaded B-2 bombers took off for Kandahar and Kabul, their runways and ordnance depots were still located on Diego Garcia, a formerly British island deep in the Indian Ocean, whose entire population had been relocated to the beautiful Seychelles in 1973. Just as Malta acquired its fame as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" responsible for bombing the supply lines of the German Africa Corps, today's islands and port cities shine forth in the resplendent glory of strategic weapons systems.

This means, however, that the superpower is encroaching on its opposite. The opposite of the sea is the desert, the opposite of the city, the steppe. Step-by-step the civilizing process—or, more precisely, the US military infrastructure—is advancing into regions hitherto closed off to Western Civilization (that memorable nonsensical notion). First, we have tin-sheet huts or cargo cults that deify the crashed debris of a military-industrial complex until the world order itself totters; then, as the city runs up against the steppe and houses encounter tents, the nomads become irritated. That seems to be the case today. When Osama bin Laden was still generously issuing communiqués to the international press, his propaganda centered on the hospitality that the sacred desert had extended to American garrisons, barracks, and hangars.

We are well advised, therefore, to undertake a small excursion into the history of philosophy before continuing with the history and future of war. Whether we choose to adopt Ronald Reagan's terminology and conjure up evil empires or decide to employ the diction of the younger George Bush and speak of rogue states, the logic of the distinction remains the same: we, the good, here on this side, are facing off against evil itself on the other. The binary seems so common and self-evident that before Friedrich Nietzsche nobody saw the need to question it. The first treatise in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (to which Michel Foucault added a masterly, though not necessarily military-historical, analysis) attempts to foreground its limitations. When the aristocrats of pre-Socratic Greece distinguished between themselves and the plebs in terms of good and bad, they were using the notion of "good" to praise their own virtues, which in those days referred to courage rather than morals. According to Nietzsche's informed analysis, all cultures that affirm a basic distinction between good and evil can be traced back to the pious doctrine first propagated by the historical Zarathustra in the borderlands between Persia and Afghanistan. The gods Ahura Mazda and Ahriman are struggling for dominance with such ferocity that the soul is obliged to assist Ahura Mazda the Good in removing Ahriman the Evil from this world. As if Zeus, by emasculating his bad father, Chronos, had wanted to eradicate evil itself.

The pious or impious revelations from the mouth of Zarathustra sounded so perplexing to Nietzsche's "Greek ears" that he proposed a different, namely, geopolitical, reading of good and evil. In the sermons Zarathustra addressed to his Persian farmers, "evil" referred to the Eastern nomadic tribes, which as large-scale breeders refrained from settling down and instead preferred to periodically raid farming villages to carry off cattle and children. The sedentary farmers, by contrast, were "good" in as far as they (following the example of their docile livestock) obeyed the words of Zarathustra, the supreme Good One. Indeed, so grateful were they for his words that they resolved to henceforth follow their shepherd (who, though a shepherd in name only, is still known today as the good shepherd).

The shepherd, however, did not deign to mention that farmers have a particular preference for wresting virgin lands from nomads in order to subject it to their plowshares; it was left to Sophocles to spell it out (*Antigone* 5.337–40). Thus spoke Zarathustra, the Old Persian “minister of settlement” (Potratz 1963: 87).

The distinction between good and evil is thus one not of morals but of culture, yet in order to gain acceptance among its subjects it conceals itself under a veil of morality. On the one hand, then, there is war for war’s sake, a nomadology in the sense of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari; on the other hand, there is peace for the sake of agricultural enterprises whose surplus value is channeled into the construction of cities, the stone icons of sedentarism. Both life-forms exist side by side; both are an option. Nietzsche realized that in order to propagate these glad tidings he had to put the revocation of slave morality into the mouth of the very priest who had come up with the calamity in the first place. According to the testimony found in *Ecce Homo*, this is how the book titled *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) came about: “Zarathustra created this fateful error of morality: this means that he has to be the first to recognize it” (Nietzsche 2005: 145).

Nietzsche’s analysis is timelier than ever. While he still enjoyed freedom of movement before being confined to the immobility of uncharted cave systems, bin Laden presented himself to waiting cameras astride a horse, the very image of a nomad. Of course, things are not what they seem: when Arab princelings indulge in their medieval passion for falconry, they allegedly prefer modern jeeps over beautiful Arab horses and withdraw precisely into those tribal regions or steppes in northern Pakistan that over the past year have also become the last refuge for the Taliban. As if to interpret those jeeps, Schmitt’s *Theory of the Partisan* emphasizes: “The dead ride fast, and when they become motorized, they ride even faster” (2007: 76; translation amended).

Paradoxically, however, the motorization and updated militarization of contemporary nomads are not—as in our minor German example—a matter of fake license plates and nightly burglaries but something the superpower brought about itself. As you will no doubt recall, for well over a decade those nomads—who as the enemies of our enemies appeared to be our friends—were useful helpers. Even a global superpower in command of stratosphere and ionosphere, bomber fleets and reconnaissance satellites, is now and then in need of a sharp sword, especially when it wants to avoid the moral-lowering arrival of flag-draped zinc coffins. Hence the CIA once again mimicked the British employment of Kipling’s Sikhs and Gurkhas by mobilizing Pashtuns, Tajiks, and other Afghan tribes against the Red Army. Equipped with portable Stinger missiles, they were ordered to break, or at least challenge, the air superiority of the other superpower. If the basic distinction is no longer that between good and evil but that between good and bad, then

“good” refers to all those skilled in the arts of killing and dying, which is the least that can be said about the mujahideen or the lower ranks of al-Qaeda.

But it is also the least that must be said about the new elites of the US Armed Forces, who in the wake of the abolition of general conscription appear to be mimicking the nomads. Ever since René Descartes put an end to the old man-animal symbiosis, the coexistence of tribes, pets, and livestock, by turning animals into machines and humans into (literally subjected) subjects, military-industrial complexes—from Louis XV’s *École Militaire* all the way to Los Alamos and Livermore—have taken his philosophy ever more literally. Good old cavalry horses gave way to combat choppers, while the reports delivered by mounted spies were replaced by satellite reconnaissance fed to computer-aided individual combatants, with the result that not much separated fighters of the Northern Alliance from regular GIs. The nomads of old ventured for hundreds of miles beyond their herds or villages on their bloody outings; those of today can be flown to any hot spot at the drop of a hat: Mazar-e Sharif yesterday, north of Basra tomorrow. Much like the Vikings, rapid deployment forces turn up where they are least expected, only to disappear before you know it. As a result, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, that skin of onion layers extending eastward from Washington, is dissolving in front of our eyes. And there is a certain symbolic joke to the fact that the high command of this new global blitzkrieg is located in Florida, the touristic parody of modern tribal migrations. But who can tell what long-term cultural and political consequences will arise from the transformations of armies (no longer guided by modern concepts like fatherland or home soil) into high-tech global nomads? Divinations and prophecies of coming wars are and always have been the prerogative of the Oracle at Delphi.

IV

But enough about prehistory, let’s move into the dark present. Since September 2001, it is glaringly obvious how precarious the distinction between cattle-breeding and machine-equipped nomads has become. No doubt some of the old nomadic hatred of cities and sedentary cultures was still at work in the destruction of the World Trade Center—a hatred that to this day incites the bedouins of the Negev desert to forfeit the stone houses built for them by the Israeli government in favor of portable tents. Even Goethe, owner of a fair-sized mansion in Weimar, reputedly said to a friend that you stand upright in tents. What was new and unheard-of on that September morning was the perfect mimicry with which exotic outsiders took control of the airspace above Manhattan. Like the bygone hijackers working for Yasir Arafat, or those in command of the abducted *Luftansa* jet on its long flight to Mogadishu, the murderers knew how to handle explosives and handguns, yet they were also familiar with cockpits, onboard computers, and fuel reserves: they had accessed

a multilevel complex feedback system usually outside our reach. The only procedure they did not care to rehearse was the landing approach. In addition, the perpetrators, whose defiance of death poses eternal riddles, were backed by a strategic planning that must have operated on a global level almost matching that of the superpower under attack. As far as I can tell, Jürgen Kaube remains the only observer to have quoted Schmitt's prophecy (see 2007: 80) that the telluric partisans of old will morph into space-traveling cosmopartisans. In World War II jargon: *Feind lernt mit*—the enemy is learning.

But so are friends. In stark contrast to his sluggish European vice-roys, Bush Jr. doesn't mince words. "We are in a recession. We are at war," he announced at the outset of his 2002 State of the Union Address. Six months later he added phrases that threaten to stick in one's throat. The New Jerusalem on the other side of the Atlantic, he claimed, stood for freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. Nation-state or nomad, professor or partisan—whoever dared dispute those three values was guilty of harboring anti-American sentiments and thus a potential target of preventive counterstrikes. For better or worse, Bush's words have the power to bring about what they conjure up: they may well turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy by riling up and calling to arms precisely those whose nonexistence they envisage.

But with all due deference to the victims, who like most of us were noncombatants, I am unable to follow this new US tablet of values (as Zarathustra called such grandiloquent words). Freedom has been a given since the days of Homer's heroes, democracy since the days of Pericles, and our liberal-democratic order since Herold. But why and to what end does this enumeration of values suddenly take an abrupt turn? Why does the political flip into economics? Is free enterprise a cover name for high-tech nomads who want to remain anonymous when fishing in the muddy waters of our desires? Are free entrepreneurs not supposed to be able to penetrate the market without benefiting from the threat of preventive wars? Andy Warhol's silly serial joke notwithstanding, Moscow and Beijing have long since become part of McDonald's extensive chain.⁶ Obviously, we end-consumers are not the issue here.

For over a century, wars and technologies have dreamed of being ahead of their day. In reality, however, they are forced to engage in recursions that burrow into ever deeper pasts. Lack of nitrate scuttled Alfred von Schlieffen's ingenious plan of attack. Just as up-to-date computer design is steadily closing in on the big bang, the logistics of war (irrespective of wishful ecological thinking) consume ever-older resources. The Second World War began with the switch from coal and railroads to tank oil and airplane fuel, the Pax Americana with the exploration of uranium (in Germany, the task was assigned to Hanns-Martin Schleyer). When, finally, Richard Nixon in 1971 canceled the direct convertibility of the US dollar into gold, it

seemed at first as if his main goal was to put a stop to the nefarious plans of Gert Fröbe, also known as Goldfinger. More likely, the fate of the currency was to be tied to oil rather than to gold. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain why the world's most debt-ridden national economy is still able to attract so much foreign capital. According to prognoses made by DASA [the Defense Atomic Support Agency] (which, as the successor to the Peenemünde Army Research Center, should know what it's talking about), the world's oil wells are as calculable as they are finite. Despite all drilling ventures (such as underneath the shelf off Namibia), we will not come across any deposits equal to those of Saudi Arabia or Iraq. (It is no coincidence that in 1941 a few German Messerschmitts were ordered to support the short-lived uprising of Saddam Hussein's uncle against the British.) Around 2070, neither sooner nor later, the last drop of oil will be squeezed out of the desert. DASA said so.

I therefore cannot follow Herfried Münkler when he denies any link between war aims and oil wells. Farmers are not alone in their hostility to pristine steppes; modern airpowers too are pushing their oil companies ever farther into the heart of Eurasia, Dalí's hallucinogenic Inner Mongolia. Otherwise, jeeps would remain immobilized in garages and bombers would be stranded in hangars and onboard nuclear-powered carriers. The whole gigantic infrastructure that arose in the bloody aftermath to Pearl Harbor (in other words, all of America's military might) would turn into worthless junk. And since the optimistic vision of pure software wars evaporated in airplane fuel thanks to the miraculous survival of the mirror servers of the World Trade Center (which from a computer-technological point of view makes the attack appear like a bit of a flop), things once again boil down to hardware, raw materials, energy sources.

V

I have reached the end of this confused snapshot. The Federal Republic was a minor, manageable example. We all know and make use of the infrastructure in which the BMW nomads of the self-appointed Red Army Faction were able to survive above or underwater, at least for a short while. But nobody, not even those in the highest echelons, seems to have any idea what dizzying networks of oil pipelines and slums, global positioning systems and databanks, rapid deployment forces and cellular abuse, are currently covering the globe—that is to say, in what kinds of labyrinths the nomads strike and seek refuge. When the Taliban (students of the Koran who have to recite it in High Arabic without understanding a single word) first caused problems for the CIA, there was hardly anybody in Langley who understood their language. Virginity is not always a virtue. Someone like Herold would first have to discern the patterns and grids that today's global infrastructure, this more or less successful extension of the United States (to briefly turn Marshall McLuhan from head to feet), turns toward wolves rather than toward pet dogs.

But together with his wife, Herold remains confined to a former barrack of the Federal Border Guard, under orders neither to write nor to appear in public, as if his knowledge had infected him with the plague—and yet, unlike me, he would be the most qualified to penetrate the darkness and take stock of the situation.

NOTES

Translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young

1. *Translator's note:* That Kittler should throw in a reference to Freiburg, the town in which he spent over twenty years, comes as no surprise. Erfstadt, located a few miles southwest of Cologne, is an arcane historical reference: before being assassinated on October 18, 1977, Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the most prominent victim of the Red Army Faction, or RAF, was held captive in Erfstadt-Liblar.
2. *Translator's note:* Kittler is playfully inserting an iconic Goethe quote (which, incidentally, also serves to support the martial dimension of his lecture). Accompanying the invading coalition forces led by the Duke of Brunswick, Goethe witnessed the unexpected victory of the French citizen army at the Battle of Valmy on September 20, 1792. In his later account he writes that he told his companions that same evening: "From this place, and from this day forth begins a new era in the history of the world, and you can all say that you were present at its birth" (quoted in Doyle 2002: 193).
3. *Translator's note:* A pun on Horst Herold, head of the BKA—*Herold* happens to be the German word for "herald."
4. To quote one of the most beautiful openings in the history of the novel: "He sat, in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zam-Zammah, on her old platform, opposite the old Ajaib-Gher—the Wonder House, as the natives called the Lahore Museum. Who hold Zam-Zammah, that 'fire-breathing dragon,' hold the Punjab, for the great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot" (Kipling 1994: 7). In just two sentences Kipling manages to jump from a cheeky, unnamed half blood to the world-historical "Land of Five Waters." [*Translator's note:* As pointed out in the companion piece to this lecture, Kittler incorrectly identifies Kim as a "half blood" (see Winthrop-Young, "Hunting a Whale," in this issue).]
5. *Translator's note:* A swipe at former 1968 student activist Joschka Fischer, who served as German foreign minister from 1998 to 2005.
6. *Translator's note:* A reference to an iconic (and ironic) Warhol quotation: "The most beautiful thing in Tokyo is McDonald's. The most beautiful thing in Stockholm is McDonald's. The most beautiful thing in Florence is McDonald's. Peking and Moscow don't have anything beautiful yet" (1975: 71).

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