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Undoing war : war ontologies and the materiality of drone warfare / Caroline Holmqvist

Document type:	Article
Title:	Undoing war : war ontologies and the materiality of drone warfare
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Host item entries:	Millenium : journal of international studies,
Languages:	English
	Photocopies
Abstract:	<p>The turn to military robotics is a striking feature of contemporary Western warfare. How then to make sense of the increasing reliance on unmanned weapons systems, in particular, the use of combat-enabled Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/drones? Questioning the intuitive and oft-repeated claim that robotics 'take the human experience out of war' (reducing it to a video game), the author argues that in order to make sense of current developments, we need precisely to reconsider our understanding of the human, her role in, and experience of, war. In this, we are aided by a critical materialist inquiry that investigates the human-material assemblage as a complex whole, taking both fleshy and steely bodies into account. Drawing on the philosophies of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Judith Butler, the author shows that only by considering what being human means – in ontological terms – and by asking how human experience is altered through new technologies will we be able to think politically and ethically about contemporary war.</p>
Authors:	Holmqvist, Caroline
Keyword in English:	POLEMOLOGY MEANS OF COMBAT TECHNOLOGY AEROPLANE/PLANE
Keyword in French:	POLEMOLOGIE MOYEN DE COMBAT TECHNOLOGIE AVION

Call number	Disponability / Due date
355/996 (Br.)	Available