

blot out conscience through drugs we would severely compromise what we value the most—our individual free will (pages 292-93).

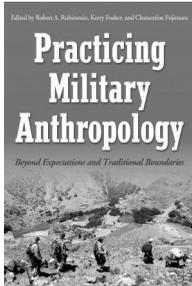
War online, as videogames, drone pilots who kill and go to fetch the kids from kindergarten, drones that can target on their own, robots that take the risk out of battle and make decisions, soldiers whose brains are manipulated through neuroscience to blot out fear and conscience—the list is disturbing and long. This reviewer cannot claim to understand the details of new technology, but Coker writes in great detail about it and illustrates the role it may come to have with science fiction and fiction, ancient and ultramodern. Avant-garde technology is accompanied by works of science fiction, computer games, and films—all of which the classically educated Coker seems to know as well as his classics.

This is a very demanding book, intellectually and conceptually. It is disconcerting because it deals with imminent reality; some of this technology is here now. Drone pilots experience trauma not from being in the battlefield, but from being away from it—they kill, but are not in battle, hence no risk, no danger, and no sacrifice. The ethical issue is the difference between war and murder. Until now, drone pilots have been uniformed, but for how long? Then the work will be wholly “technical,” civilian, and not different from a war game, it would seem. What are the ethical implications of such a development? Lawyers are speaking about humanitarian law applied to autonomous weapon systems—a contradiction in terms, literally speaking.

Coker writes very well; his pen is an elegant one. The reader is treated to a literary feast, and it is not easy to digest the many courses served. The final chapter reflects on technology’s impact. He writes:

Character is at the heart of this change, it is being relentlessly challenged by the march of science. It is being undermined by genetics, by evolutionary psychology, and by neuro-science (the idea that behaviour is determined by modules of a hard-wired brain) (page 293).

This book is not only about warfare under technology’s spell, but, more importantly, about man’s general condition today. It is in the battlefield that the contrast between the Greek and the Geek is most pronounced, for here the human being has always—or so far in history—been asked for supreme courage and sacrifice, for character. If war can be rendered riskless and rid of sacrifice, is it still war? And more importantly, are soldiers in such a war still soldiers?



Practicing Military Anthropology: Beyond Expectations and Traditional Boundaries

Edited by Robert A. Rubinstein, Kerry Fosher, and Clementine Fujimura

Review by Dr. James Dorough-Lewis Jr., Senior HUMINT Instructor for the Department of Defense and former Social Scientist for Human Terrain Systems

For a researcher in the social sciences, putting one’s career at the service of the military involves a degree of professional risk; however, it is far from the terminal move a vocal minority, especially though not exclusively found within the anthropological community, might have

one believe. Social scientists operate under imperatives of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice that strike some as being at odds with their interpretations of military institutions. And yet, as Rush discusses in the first chapter of *Practicing*, the defense and academic communities have long histories of productive partnerships in which social scientists are no more or less beholden to standards of ethical practice than within purely academic settings. Over the course of its seven chapters, *Practicing Military Anthropology* fills a critical gap in knowledge about the frequently marginalized first-hand perspectives of anthropologists who have built fruitful relationships with the military in spite of, and sometimes by virtue of, the apparent challenges.

True to its subtitle, this work approaches a contentious topic with surprising articulation and authenticity. Rubinstein, Fosher, and Fujimura introduce *Practicing Military Anthropology* with the hope of shedding light on the breadth of interaction occurring between the military and the social sciences as well as where the military has repeatedly demonstrated itself to be a worthwhile subject of anthropologists' attentions. Fujimura's explanation of becoming a military anthropologist (Chapter 2) and Holmes-Eber's description of her daily life as a professor of culture at the Marine Corps University (Chapter 4) bookend Turnley's narrative of moving through a gambit of successes in applied anthropology eventually bringing her into contact with the intelligence community (Chapter 3). These chapters express a range of victories and hurdles, of pride and self-consciousness that constitute an invaluable repository of lessons learned about the practical side of doing social science research for the military. *Practicing Military Anthropology* performs superbly its intention of speaking to social scientists already working with the military or those considering doing so, particularly young scholars who may have limited exposure to careers in the defense sector. It is very much a collection of reflective essays by, for, and about applied researchers within the military context, and on its surface appears to have little to offer outside that audience.

That said, eavesdropping can have its advantages. *Practicing Military Anthropology* would likely benefit senior members of the defense community for two reasons. First, the authors are anthropologists active in their specialties and, in my experience, solidly representative of their colleagues. In this context they confront the central critiques and concerns among social scientists about working for military institutions. They do so in terms that demonstrate both how seriously they consider these tensions and how profoundly personal experiences inform the reasoning by which they have negotiated them. The authors speak with sincerity and clarity, refreshingly free of guile or political wordsmithing about their own journey towards an appreciation of the military as a constantly evolving institution and a collection of intelligent, curious, and very human professionals. To take a phrase from Fosher a bit out of context, "[N]othing replaces a native informant" (page 94). *Practicing Military Anthropology* holds the potential to improve the relationship-building capacities of senior leaders working with or depending on members of the social science community. Any member of the defense community interested in concrete examples of how social scientists have tackled controversies associated with working with the military, and found the experience rewarding and affirming, will find this book uniquely insightful.

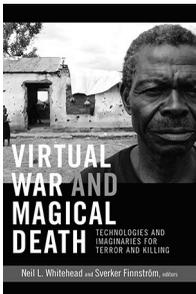
Second, the authors in several places outline areas of strength and opportunity for the military's incorporation of embedded social science capabilities. Turnley, for instance, mentions how one perspective on social network analysis popular in military circles undermines rather than supports an understanding of organizational effectiveness, and then refers the reader to more promising alternatives. Fosher discusses the shortcomings of approaches to training that treat culture as rules of etiquette over processes for making sense of the world. She goes on to outline how her work with the Marines led to improvements on the ground (Chapter 5). Additionally, anyone seeking a glimpse of what right looks like in terms of leveraging applied social science research towards mission success would do well to review Chapter 6. There, Varhola—himself a military officer and anthropologist—describes the nexus of maximum synthesis between military operations and field ethnography. In this respect, *Practicing Military Anthropology* represents a wealth of opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation between academe and the military.

Rubinstein closes with what may be one of the most astute and succinct analyses of the ongoing conflict between those who support a formal military-social science relationship and those who do not (Chapter 7). He points to traditions in anthropology privileging diversity of opinion and encouraging the exploration of key social institutions, among which the military counts. Though brief, the reader, whether an inquisitive social scientist or a senior leader, can expect *Practicing Military Anthropology's* stories, suggestions, and raw information to provide a return on the investment of time and interest.

Virtual War and Magical Death: Technologies and Imaginaries for Terror and Killing

Edited by Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College



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Army readers will find that the late Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström, anthropologists from the University of Wisconsin and Uppsala University respectively, have edited an intriguing—yet at times vexing—book on virtual war. The work offers a masterful ethnographic perspective on virtual war, stemming from a synthesis of the “techno-modern” with the “magico-primitive,” while providing a critical analysis of the Army’s Human Terrain System (HTS). To be fair, the work draws upon scholarly arguments derived from lessons learned from anthropology’s colonial and neo-colonial legacies and is not meant to be overbearingly antagonistic in its approach. Still, for at least some of the chapter contributors, it is readily apparent that the HTS is indeed viewed as the equivalent of a present-day “military invasion of anthropology.” Additionally, the angst generated within that academic discipline concerning what is legitimate and ethical scholarship permeates the work, especially in regard to some perspectives taken on embedded HTS anthropologists, and high profile scholars, such as former program spokesperson Dr. Montgomery McFate.