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Frontline(s)

Abstract

The challenge of theorising and analysing socio-political phenomena can feel overwhelming given today's somewhat threatening *realpolitik* (9/11, US-led wars on Afghanistan, Iraq and now, perhaps, Syria) and the rapid pace with which (dis)information is received, digested and discarded. Through an act of 'literary montage' construction, and prefaced by some interpretation of my own, I offer this 'exhibit' as an attempt to highlight this sense of dislocation whilst simultaneously 'building a picture'. A specific concern is to problematise the notion of 'the frontline'. Given blatant military and economic imperialism by the US, underscored by the construction and fetishising of the rational subject under modernity and the social democratic state, I suggest that frontlines are located in any public or private space where the legitimacy of these interests and categories is questioned. Expressions of difference, including peace activism, thus become 'proliferating illegitimacies'¹ and are policed as such. Against this context, the texts positioned here tell of growing realisation and fear of the coldness and instrumentalism at the heart of empire-building, of which both the horrific violence currently inflicted on Iraqi people, and the discounting and suppression of dissent to war worldwide, are part. For a global anti-capitalist/pro-justice movement that recognises trade in arms as a core constraint on human potential, reaching beyond this fear - retaining the hope of the 'politics of possibility' with which this 'movement of movements' has come to be identified - emerges as a latent and essential challenge.

¹ Cf. De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, London: University of California Press, 96.