



Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception

Brian Massumi

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Color coded terror alerts, invasion, drone war, rampant surveillance: all manifestations of the type of new power Brian Massumi theorizes in *Ontopower*. Through an in-depth examination of the War on Terror and the culture of crisis, Massumi identifies the emergence of preemption, which he characterizes as the operative logic of our time. Security threats, regardless of the existence of credible intelligence, are now felt into reality. Whereas nations once waited for a clear and present danger to emerge before using force, a threat's felt reality now demands launching a preemptive strike. Power refocuses on what *may* emerge, as that potential presents itself to feeling. This affective logic of potential washes back from the war front to become the dominant mode of power on the home front as well. This is ontopower—the mode of power embodying the logic of preemption across the full spectrum of force, from the “hard” (military intervention) to the “soft” (surveillance). With *Ontopower*, Massumi provides an original theory of power that explains not only current practices of war but the culture of insecurity permeating our contemporary neoliberal condition.



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