

THE MILITARY BODY IS BORN

“There are no men who understand themselves better than soldiers and priests.” (Napoleon Bonaparte, *Napoleon in His Own Words*, p. 107)

“Military enterprises are the most effective means of keeping a people occupied, for nothing arouses their interest so much as an important war .. [as to those displaced] .. all discontent is vented on the common enemy. The rest of the people .. offer prayers and vows to God for ultimate victory, or at least are so stirred by expectation and news .. that there is no place for thoughts of revolt in their minds: either in thought or in deed everyone is preoccupied by the war.” (Giovani Botero, *The Reason of State*, p. 76)

“Bureaucracy, militarism, and mercantilism were all manifestations of social discipline in particular spheres, different ways of serving the state. Ministers and officials, officers and soldiers, entrepreneurs and artisans, in fact all the subjects of the state were disciplined in their work and their attitudes. The change from corporative, regionally secured liberty to the modern political order, from medieval feudal rule to the early modern form of national government, called for a general streamlining – of the mechanism of government and the internal agencies of the state, of the churches, now linked to the state and often controlled by it, of the state-organized armies and the state-controlled economy.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 268)

“ .. let us introduce the concept of *total mobilization*: the times are long gone when it sufficed to send a hundred thousand enlisted subjects under reliable leadership into battle .. ” (Ernst Jünger, ‘Total Mobilization’, 1930 in: *The Heidegger Controversy*, (ed) Richard Wolin)

“ .. the principal point of greatness in any state is to have a race of military men.” (Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, p. 148)

“.. wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations .. Wars are no longer waged in the name of the sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purposes of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital.” (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol I*, p. 138)

“War is a natural state.” (Napoleon Bonaparte, *Napoleon in His Own Words*, p. 123)

Introduction/statement of problem

- *The genesis of the modern **destructive** machine*
- *The genesis of the modern **productive** machine*
- *The origin of military knowledge, and its facilitation*
- *The military model that infiltrates the whole of society*
- *From 'defence' to 'offense': from the Classical/Baroque to the Modern*
- *From the control of circulation to the 'discovery' of speed*

This session was designed to get us to think about two issues: first, the mobilization and assembly of forces for warfare; second, the mobilization and assembly of forces for production. Foucault's hidden references in *Discipline and Punish* to the equivalence between the barracks and the prison, and the prison and the workhouse, and the factory and the barracks, and the school and the hospital, and all with prisons, got me to think about the multiple ways in which *discipline* encodes itself upon our lives.

Later in the unit (in particular when we get to informatics and globalization, and indeed the more systematic analysis of modern industrial capitalism) we will consider a series of these in detail. For now, let us continue to imagine the critical threshold between the classical/Baroque epoch and modernity proper. It seems to me at least that warfare (both between states, and within states) is fundamentally important; its reformulation over the classical period as a whole developing almost the model by which the whole horizon of human experience in the next century would be constituted. So let us bear in mind these two senses of the word *mobilization*: on the one hand, the mobilization (or putting into motion) of troops for war; on the other, the continual assembling of forces into the classificatory table upon which the order of modern society depends, the state becoming a machine fed by the realised *kinetics* of the population ..

Mobilization and the assembly of forces

PREPARATIONS

The three 'Inquisitions'

- Medieval/Papal Inquisition (1231-circa.1400)
Pope Gregory IX, Pope Innocent IV
- Roman Inquisition (1542-circa.1600)
Pope Paul III, Pope Paul IV, Pope Pius V
- Spanish Inquisition (1468-1834)
Pope Sixtus IV

Tomás de Torquemada (1420-1489)

Dominican friar, first Grand Inquisitor for the Spanish Inquisition

INNOVATORS

Justus Lipsius ¹ (1547-1606)	Dutch <i>statitican</i> , philologist <i>Politicorum libri sex</i> (1589) manual of military/moral reform <i>De militia romana</i> (1595-6)
Maurice of Orange ² (1567-1625)	Student of Lipsius
Gustavus II Adolfus (1594-1632)	King of Sweden (1611-1632) considered himself a student of Maurice of Orange
J.C. Lunig	<i>Corpus Juris Militaris</i> (1723)
Frederick William I (1688-1740)	King of Prussia (1713-1740)
Frederick II (the Great) (1712-1786)	King of Prussia (1740-1786) soldier-king/philosopher-king ³
Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)	The ‘Newton of Detail’
Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831)	The ‘Philosopher of War’

FLASHPOINTS

Above and beyond the intrigues of the Renaissance city-states, the discovery of the New World in 1492, and the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII in 1494, the following events would serve as testimony to the general tumult of the age: a series of Anglo-Spanish Wars (1585-1604, 1625, 1655-1658), a series of Anglo-French Wars (1511-1514, 1543-1546, 1557-1558, 1562-1564, 1625-1629), a series of Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652-1654, 1665-1667, 1672-1674), a series of Franco-Spanish War (1595-1598, 1648-1659, 1719-1720), the Franco-Dutch War (1672-1679), the Habsburg-Valois Wars (1494-1559), the fall of Rome to France (1501), Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses nailed to the door of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg (1517), the German Peasant Wars (1524-1525), the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598), the St. Bartholomew’s Eve Massacre (1572), the Spanish Armada (1588), the Revolt of the Netherlands (1567-1648), the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the Revolt of Catalonia (1640-1652), the Revolt of Portugal (1640-1668), the

¹leading figure of the ‘Netherlands movement: key state-bureaucrat in the early modern period, many of the same concerns as police science, but unlike them, also concerned with warring, and armies. “From Lipsius was can trace .. the line of development to modern political science and the theory of the state.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 5)

² is it a surprise that Maurice’s chief military engineer was a mathematician? (Simon Stevin) Maurice and Stevin established the first military drill in modern Europe.

³ ‘The Chief Servant of the State’ (self-professed), patron of Voltaire, La Mettrie, Maupertuis (French astronomer) among others. Frederick was an important literary and philosophical critic in his own right. Frederick was the quintessential ‘enlightened despot’, liberlizing the press, legislating for religious ‘toleration’, patronizing the arts, and establishing the parameters of both the decentralization of powers, and later the system of constant surveillance, that would come to define ‘modern bureaucracy’. Frederick’s works include *Anti-Machiavel* (1740, published 1767: an important reformulation of Machiavelli’s civil philosophy), *History of My Time* (1740-45), and *Political Testament* (1768).

English Civil War (1642-1646), the Frondes (1648-1653), the War of Devolution (1667-1678), the Glorious Revolution (1688), the War of the League of Augsburg or Nine Years War (1689-1697), and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713).

of particular importance:

Thirty Years War (1618-48) - the melting pot into which the whole of continental Europe was thrown: the juridical state emerged as the dominant politico-economic/military form

War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48) - Frederick II's first major engagement, spilling over from the Silesian Wars (1740-42, 1744-45)

The French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1795/9) - the motor of society set loose (especially the Terror, 1793-4)⁴

The Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) - beyond 'the discovery of society'; the birth and use of national fevour

From 'the gaze' to the command

- *Much of Foucault's The Birth of the Clinic is concerned with the disciplinary coding of bodies through medical the gaze. This gaze - as we have seen already - develops first and foremost in the calculus of modern scientism, and the development of the anatomical and pathological sciences, but later migrates into the realm of statistics, and political arithmetic.⁵ From here developed what Foucault termed 'anatomo-politics' (a form of power that intervenes in the specific movements, gestures and energies of bodies). The broader transition - the development of a form of power that intervenes at the level of the population as a whole (biopower). The military is no exception here, indeed, it is exemplary.*
- *So there are two processes with which in this session we need to be concerned: first, the form of power that took the immiserated and drifting masses of diseased, unclean, uneducated, often 'morally degenerate', individuals, and gave them order ... effected its power upon their bodies ..*

*".. it is always the body that is at issue - the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission .. pwer relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest in it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs." (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 25)*

⁴ in the words of Goethe: "From this place and time forth commences a new era of world history and you can all say that you were present at its birth." (to Prussian troops at the battle of Valmy, 1792).

⁵ Ian Hacking (*The Taming of Chance*, and his essay in *The Foucault Effect* ..).

*imagined them moving in a certain direction, at a certain and predictable speed, with certain and predictable energies, and with a morale, a force, and ultimately a will strong enough to 'overrun' all enemies in the name of the state. We find here a form of power concerned with **detail**⁶:*

*" .. a History of Detail in the eighteenth century, presided over by Jean Baptiste de la Salle, touching on Leibniz and Buffon, via Frederick II, covering pedagogy, medicine, military tactics and economic, should bring us, at the end of the century, to the man who dreamt of being another Newton, not the Newton of the immensities of the heavens and the planetary masses, but a Newton of the 'small bodies', small movements, small actions .. " (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 141)*

We find a form of power concerned with mechanics: these statesmen were engineers, and technicians of the movements, aptitudes, and desires of men ..

- *The second process is concerned with **channelling**. The aims of the state have to be served: the energies discovered in the people ripped from the land - combined, multiplied, put into motion and action - had to be regularised. The whole space of power/knowledge within which these motions would become possible had to be developed, refined and perfected to the dreams of high art and science. What we are talking about here is the mobilization of the population 'en masse'. The whole of society would - in important respects - be modelled on the 'society constantly at war'. The perception of warring had to be created within the remit of an overall policy that invested in bodies through and through. The whole of society would have to stand hand-in-hand with the military machine that becomes the guarantor of peace. Such a revolution in thinking from the classical to the modern age .. Populations become the 'targets' in a double sense: both of a form of power that invests in life (facilitative), and in doing so demands that the lives of whole societies are wagered on its very principles ("the free peoples of the world, fighting for the right to life, liberty and democracy") ..*
- *An unprecedented level of coordination would become necessary: the entire resources of the state would be mobilised to defend 'society'. The age of 'die totale mobil-machung' (total mobilization) was upon us ...*
- *How do these transformations coexist with all of the other impulses working together in the modern epoch? How central is war to modern society? Are science, pathology, anatomy, law, penal coding, economic tables (etc) preconditions for the war machine, or are they consequences? Is a 'science of man' the dream of the military mind, or is the military victory the distant desire of a humanity wont to look deep with men's souls?*

⁶ what Foucault would call 'microphysics' ..

The genealogy of militarism

- *Runs hand in hand with the social and political transformations we have already begun to chart (the codification of unreason/vagrancy, the development of scientific method, medical science and penal regularity ..)*
- *Though what would emerge in continental Europe was unprecedented (in scale and precision), the models adopted had a much longer heritage. The Dutch - at the height of their hegemony - began the ball rolling:*

“The end of the sixteenth century [sees] the start of a scientific approach to warfare. In this field the Dutch army reforms probably afford the best instance of the systematic investigation of certain questions raised in classical times and its application to the urgent tasks for the present. With a view to the systematic training of the troops, a task not attempted before, the Dutch reformers studied the ancient drill procedures; for army organization they studied that of the Romans; they also studied the moral basis for the efficiency of the ancient armies and produced the new Dutch articles of war, following the model of the Roman *disciplina militaris*. The result was the much admired army of the House of Orange, which became a model throughout Europe.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 4)

- *Above all, the Dutch integrated what was emerging as the ‘human sciences’ into the military machine itself⁷*

“The ‘politico-technical’ literature of the humanists was supposed to bring together all the ancient works in a gigantic filing system as it were, so that they might be immediately accessible at any time. The intention was to make it possible to study any problem which occurred and for which there was yet no immediate modern ‘business procedure’ and no possible solution by modern methods. The philologists were, so to speak, the resourceful and knowledgeable filing-clerks and archivists who dug out older forgotten ‘procedures’. Sitting at their desks, they were at first figures of fun, but it was from their work, and from the simulation of Caesar’s orders of march and battle with the help of lead soldiers, that the new European army arose. The scientific approach to warfare had begun. The scientific study of fortifications became a university discipline under Simon Stevens, the celebrated military engineer. This was the first example in modern times of institutionalised collaboration between academics and the general staff.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 79)

⁷ making clear for everyone concerned the bind between knowledge and power.

- *From the very beginning this collaboration was more than simply the exchange of ideas as to how to run the military: it also informed the wider organization of society itself. The key figure who marks the transition from the medieval to the early modern epoch is **Justus Lipsius**:*

“Apart .. from the military organization and the arts of war proper, Lipsius had called for military ethics to be treated as an equally important ingredient of reform; these also did not remain merely on paper. The Neostoic philosophy of action, constancy, self-control and obedience instantly appealed to the commanders and their officers, for here was an answer to the burning question of the moment - how to establish and maintain good order and military discipline in the unruly armies of the day.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 79)

- **the military becomes the testing ground of social order**

“The concept of discipline was discussed during the sixteenth century in much narrower terms. Lipsius broadened and strengthened it by adding the first two elements, exercise and order. Discipline was a central issue of the times in political, secular and church life. All the civil and church ordinances which proliferated at the end of the sixteenth century centre upon the establishment of discipline. The articles of war too, which lay down rule for military life and are closely related to the civil and ecclesiastical ordinances, are directed chiefly against cursing, swearing, drinking, gormandizing and whoring. Daily weapon-practice, marching and the digging of fortifications keep the soldiers from idleness, which is the beginning of all vices. Here we have a justification for a lasting feature of the modern army, namely systematic exercise or drill.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 53)

“Lipsius was the first to go beyond [a] narrow concept of discipline by complementing it with exercise, order and self-discipline. Obedience and silence also come under Stoic virtue of *modestia*: *Parentia decet militem. Non inquisitio au retractatio*. The soldier must do what he is ordered to do. Obedience is seen as *decorum*, as something which becomes the soldier, and this is in keeping with Cicero’s teaching about duty, though here applied to a military quality. This makes obedience not simply a requirement of all military discipline: it is something that befits a man, a virtue.” (Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state*, p. 54)

- *The key pivot in the transition from the classical to modern epoch is Frederick the Great. Above all Frederick understood the principles of ‘efficiency’ (of controlling movements in space and time). We return to the question of administration later in the course when we deal with the genealogy of bureaucracy, but it is essentially his efficiency in this field that is the precondition to his military success - although in that*

field, he was also an innovator ..

- *Efficiency = speed*
Speed = productionism
Productionism = war

“Hagen⁸ tried to make the core bureaucracy an efficient, technically qualified collection of specialists in economic planning and development. He could establish his mining department and his construction department as loci of even more ambitious attempts to harness the entire economy of the realm and to force feed it, guide it, regiment it to achieve the goals of the contemporary cameralists: the achievement of the higher standard of living for the subjects of the king and the backdrop of a taxation base which could support Prussia’s status as a great European power. How modern appear these goals!” (Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials*, p. 276)

- *In the words of Walter Dorn:*

“The chief merit of this system was its rapidity.” (Walter L. Dorn, ‘The Prussian Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, p. 412)

- *The efficiency established here mirrors Frederick’s military reforms⁹ In Frederick’s own words: “Our wars must be short and active.” The first characteristic that set Frederick apart was his demand for instant information and keenness to take rapid decisions. He also understood the power of “motion” in warfare ..*

“He enjoined his men to advance on the enemy with long strides, fire a good volley into his face, and then as rapidly as possible shove the bayonet into his ribs .. At the beginning of the Seven Year’s War he even had his men shoulder their muskets during the advance, and forbade all firing in order to get them more quickly to the enemy.” (Gerhard Ritter, ‘Frederician Warfare’, in: *Frederick the Great: A Profile*, p. 115)

- *The strategy was one of ‘rapid, massive volley’, adaptive to the battlefield, but whose principles had been instilled in his men by training:*

“ .. drill .. served to give his troops the mobility and precision that enabled them to carry out any maneuver in any direction .. [Frederick] proved himself in the rapid exploitation of the changing aspects of

⁸ Ludwig Von Haven, dreamer of the ‘bureaucratic commonwealth’, official of Frederick II. See: *Frederick the Great, General Principles of War* (1748)

⁹ Frederick introduced horse artillery, thereby increasing the overall mobility of the attack.

combat, in his rich inventiveness, and in the pre-emptiveness and decisiveness of his leadership.” (Gerhard Ritter, ‘Frederician Warfare’, in: *Frederick the Great: A Profile*, p. 118)

- *It is Bonaparte who makes the jump between the ‘clockwork armies’ of Frederick II, to the motorized armies of the modern age:*

“The rapidity of Bonaparte’s movements and the suddenness of his blows were without precedent .. Bonaparte from the first meant to realise Guibert’s dream of an army that should strike like a thunderbolt.” (Spencer Wilkinson, ‘The Rise of General Bonaparte’, in: *The Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IX: Napoleon*, p. 141)

The genealogy of modern society: the function of militarism

- *Social discipline as the precondition for war*

“The masses are uniformly conditioned and trained for discipline in order that their optimum of physical and psychic power in attack may be rationally calculated.” (Max Weber, ‘The Meaning of Discipline’, in: *From Max Weber*, p. 254)

“It was discipline and not gun powder which initiated the transformation. The Dutch army under Maurice of the House of Orange was one of the first modern disciplined armies. It was shorn of all status privileges; and thus, for example, the previously effective refusal of the mercenaries to do rampart work (*opera servitia*) became ineffective. Cromwell’s victories – despite the fierce bravery of the Cavaliers – were due to sober and rational Puritan discipline. His ‘Ironsides’ – the ‘men of conscience’ – trotted forward in firmly closed formation, at the same time calmly firing, and, then, thrusting, brought about a successful attack.” (Max Weber, ‘The Origins of Discipline in War’, *From Max Weber*, pp. 256-57)

- *The emergence of the ‘citizen-soldier’*

“[t]he army of the absolute states was the first great institution which not only devised rational methods for creating uniform mass behaviour artificially by means of military discipline and other devices for overcoming fear, but also used these methods for educating large masses of men (who were taken for the most part from the lowest classes) to act, and if possible to think, in the way prescribed.” (Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction*, p. 255)

“By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine

required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit; in short, one has 'got rid of the peasant' and given him 'the air of the soldier'.. ” (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 135)

- *Indeed, the emergence of a whole social order*

“ .. through the establishing of standing armies, which in turn was closely connected with the suppression of the feudal and aristocratic opposition, with the politics of mercantile economics and the newly acquired opportunities for taxation. Within the States this caused a sharper differentiation between the conditions of peace and war. The State now became more strictly policed, and this caused the general security of the population to increase. The division between the professional armies and the military calling on the one hand, and the peaceful subjects on the other hand, became more rigid; this happened by compulsory recruiting, for even then the recruited men were changed into professional soldiers. Even in the relations between States, this ambiguity between peace and war began to diminish; the rights of neutrals were better respected, though still not completely so.” (Freidrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p. 413)

The control of movements

- *The substantive argument that I want to introduce is hidden in Foucault's Discipline and Punish: the issue of the control of the time horizon of the imagination of a whole epoch. It seems to me that there is a crucial transition here from simply controlling the circulating masses (once the streets have been cleared, sleused, and [where necessary] rebuilt), to producing mobility - both in the military and in the administration .. and this was realised in military drill: the preparation for the wars which developed for the first time in the eighteenth century - first and foremost with the genius of Frederick II - and became fully institutionalised in the military blueprint of Calr von Clausewitz. What was being imagined was a whole system of social training .. but training for the moment of release: the full discharge of kinetic energy in the fury of war:*

“Bring the weapon forward. In three stages. Raise the rifle with the right hand, bring it close to the body so as to hold it perpendicular with the right knee, the end of the barrel at eye level, grasping it by striking it with the right hand, the arm held close to the body at waist height. At the second stage, bring the rifle in front of you with the left hand, the barrel in the middle between the two eyes, vertical, the right hand grasping it as the small of the butt, the arm outstretched, the trigger-guard resting on the first finger, the left hand at the height of the notch, the thumb lying along the barrel against the moulding. At

the third stage, let go of the rifle with the left hand, which falls along the thigh, raising the rifle with the right hand, the lock outwards and opposite the chest, the right arm half flexed, the elbow close to the body, the thumb lying against the lock, resting against the first screw, the hammer resting on the first finger, the barrel perpendicular.” (Ordinance du 1^{er} janvier, 1766 ..., titre XI, article 2, quoted in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 153)

- *none of this would have been possible without the training of bodies (demanding already a reformulation of the power relations (and modalities) left over from the age of great monarchs (the long sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).*
- *and beyond simply power acting on bodies, there is also the multiple ways in which power has invested in minds, and the space of knowledge more generally in our societies (for example the educational/merit system). The pressures borne by the individual are an important part of his/her ‘assemblance’ and ‘facilitation’ ..*

“Today, the certificate of education becomes what the test of ancestors has been in the past, at least where the nobility has remained powerful: a prerequisite for equality of birth, a qualification for canonship, and for state office.” (Max Weber, ‘The “Rationalization” of Education and Training’, in: *From Max Weber*, p. 241)¹⁰

- *in bureaucratization was found a form of power that invests - makes mobile rather than immobile, assembles rather than disassembles, differentiates at one and the same time as it homogenizes: gets each and all to look to their own talents, while instilling the incentive system in work and in life (and also producing specialists/technicians .. new models of the statistician)*
- *The increasing refinements in the relationship between the praxis of the truth-image (science, technical knowledge, looking inside bodies) and the praxis of life-administration (the whole panoply of codes, regulations, ordinances to effect that knowledge upon bodies) doubtless acted as an elemental force in the appearance of the manifold disciplinary schemata of the Post-Renaissance state. On the one hand, these innovations in the capacity to codify the natural and human worlds served both to substantiate and circumscribe specialized areas of theoretical knowledge and practical expertise, while, on the other, they also functioned as an effective means of implanting a psycho-physical regimen into the body of the ‘socius’.*
- *On the control of movement (and Foucault’s concept of power-as-facilitator), urbanist*

¹⁰ the ‘court’ system (as well as the wider system of etiquette and manners) works within this same space of knowledge: cf. the film *Ridicule*, as an example of the development of *meritocracy*, and the ways in which the rationalization of education and *moral* training passed on the responsibilities of welfare to the industrious individual. Weber’s essay is important in describing the development of a ‘value system’ based upon certification of ‘effort’ and ‘knowledge’. ‘Education’ over the modern period as a whole, very much fits in to the general theme of *making people mobile*, and assembling (or channelling) the (productive/destructive) forces inherent within them .. See: Ian Hunter, ‘Assembling the School’, in: Andrew Barry (et.al., Eds.) *Foucault and Political Reason*, pp. 143-166.

and military strategist Paul Virilio has similar insights:

“The State’s political power ... is only secondarily ‘power organised by one class to oppress another’. More materially, it is the polis, the police, in other words highway surveillance, insofar as, since the dawn of the bourgeois revolution, the political discourse has been no more than a series of more or less conscious repetitions of the old communal poliorcetics, confusing social order with the control of traffic (of people, of goods), and revolution, revolt, with traffic jams, illegal parking, multiple crashes, collisions.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 14)

- *The need to keep the population in perpetual motion is one of the most fascinating and important transformations of the modern epoch*¹¹

“‘Propaganda must be made directly by words and images, not by writing,’ states Goebbels, who was himself a great promoter of audiovisuals in Germany. Reading implies time for reflection, a slowing-down that destroys the mass’s dynamic efficiency.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 5)

- *Yet the power control the time-horizon of the population is not a new discovery*

“Once the telegraph was invented, followed by the telephone and radio, [these] limitations on effecting long-distance control were abolished. Theoretically, any spot on earth can now be in instant oral communication with every other spot, and instant visual transactions anywhere are only a short distance behind. An almost equal acceleration in speed has taken place in transporting the human body: the winged messengers that once carried commands from heaven to earth are in effect now available at any airport; and in a short while transportation at a speed of Mach II should enable our up-to-date angels to appear at any point on the planet in less than half a day. Power, speed, and control have been the chief marks of absolute monarchs in all ages: the doing away with previous limitations in these areas is the common theme that unites the ancient and the modern megamachine.” (Lewis Mumford, *The Pentagon of Power*, p. 259)

¹¹ developing ironically as the ‘grid’ of the state is established (through advances in geography and cartography) to facilitate movement (and of course ‘surveillance’). Virilio is the only thinker in the postwar period to link all of these elements (power/surveillance, speed/power, urbanism/mobility) together with the military. His contribution in social and political theory is truly unique .. yet he’s never read.

The rationality/nationality of war: the bureaucratization of violence

“The essence of war is violence and moderation in war is imbecility.”
(Lord Macauley, 1831)

- *With Clausewitz we see ‘national war’ fully emerged. The full destructive force of the nation - of the people - ‘ought’ to be mobilised for the military objective.*
- *It is Napoleon who inaugurates the modern world of warfare (and indeed the state more broadly):*

“ .. the man who dreamt of being another Newton, not the Newton of the immensities of the heavens and the planetary masses, but a Newton of the ‘small bodies’, small movements, small actions; to the man who replied to monge’s remark, ‘there was only one world to discover’: ‘What do I hear? But the world of details, who has never dreamt of that other world? I have believed in it ever since I was fifteen. I was concerned with it then, and this memory lives within me, as an obsession never to be abandoned .. That other world is the most important of all that I flatter myself I have discovered: when I think of it, my heart aches .. Napoleon did not discover this world, but we know he set out to organise it; and he wished to arrange around him a mechanism of power that would enable him to see the smallest event that occurred in the state he governed; he intended, by means of the rigorous discipline that he imposed, ‘to embrace the whole of this vast machine without the slightest detail escaping his attention. A meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men, emerge through the classical age bearing with them a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data. And from such trifles, no doubt, the man of modern humanism was born.” (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 141)

From the fortress to the levee en masse

- *One man stands out, once again: Napoleon Bonaparte. No other man had effected such military victories, and there was a reason for it: no other man had been able to mobilise the military with such precision and swiftness. Napoleon knew it: the modern world he had inaugurated on 18 Brumaire (November 09, 1799) - when he rode triumphant into Paris - was a world of **speed; of trained bodies in motion.** ‘Dromocratic’ society was emerging as the destiny of all societies, as Bonaparte showed with utter devastation on the battlefields of Austerlitz¹² and Jena.¹³*

¹² December, 1805: the effective defeat of the ‘Third Coalition’, despite Trafalgar.

¹³ October, 1806: the defeat of Frederick William II: a defeat so utterly devastating for the German morale, leading directly to figures like Fichte developing the notion of *volk*, of organic patriotism that would so dominate German politics from this period on (e.g., *Addresses to the German People*).

“From now on, general safety can come only from the masses in their entirety reaching speed. Napoleon expresses it clearly: ‘Aptitude for war is aptitude for movement,’ and he specifies that one must evaluate the strength of the army ‘as in mechanics, by its mass multiplied by its speed.’” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 22)

- *Soon men would be running toward bullets!*

“The mathematician Carnot and the doctor Poumies were not mistaken: the revolutionary song is a kinetic energy that pushes the masses toward the battlefields, toward the kind of Assault that Shakespeare had already described as ‘Death killing Death’. And that is in fact what it is all about, since one had to charge the enemy artillery, and the only way was for the infantryman to rush toward the cannons, to kill its servants on the spot. But to reach them, he had an extremely limited amount of time: the time it took the enemy artillery to reload. As soon as the shot had been fired, therefore, the infantryman had to rush toward the enemy cannons. His life then depended on his running speed; if he was too slow, he died literally disintegrated point blank by the firing end ...” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, pp. 21-2)

- *The whole of the 19thC becomes a battle for time:*

“Everything in this new warfare becomes a question of time won by man over the fatal projectiles toward which his path throws him. Speed is Time saved in the most absolute sense of the word, since it becomes human Time directly torn from Death - whence those macabre emblems of decimation worn down through history by the Assault troops, in other words the rapid troops (black uniforms and flags, death’s heads, by the uhlan, the SS, etc.).” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 22)

“The generals were soon screaming by the millions for those ‘automotive forts,’ the new technical object that so perfectly realised a strategic philosophy obsessed by Frederick the Great’s dictum: ‘To win is to advance!’” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 55)

- *Indeed the whole history of the Western world is established in the back of its domination of time, through the eradication of space (speed/rapidity):*

“Western man has appeared superior and dominant, despite inferior demographics, because he appeared *more rapid*. In colonial genocide or ethnocide, he was the *survivor* because he was in fact *super-quick* (*sur-vif*). The French word *vif*, ‘lively,’ incorporates at least three meanings: swiftness, speed (*vitesse*), likened to violence - sudden force, abrupt edge (*vive force, arete vive*), etc. - and to life (*vie*) itself: to be quick means to stay alive (*etre vif, c’est etre en vie*)!” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 47)

“Speed is the hope of the West; it is speed that supports the armies’ morale. What ‘makes war convenient’ is transportation, and the armoured car, able to go over ever kind of terrain, erases the obstacles. With it earth no longer exists ... It offers a whole new geometry to speed, to violence.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 55)

- *Nothing less than a new type of violence was emerging*
- *Increasingly - as speed takes over in the 19thC - populations become the targets of military intervention (the military applications demand this; it is the index of their success¹⁴)*

“These first attempts at penetration, clandestine ‘invasion’ of the social corpus, had, as we saw, a specific aim: exploitation by the armed forces of the nation’s raw potential (its industrial, economic, demographic, cultural, scientific, political and moral capabilities). Since then, social penetration has been linked to the dizzying evolution of military penetration techniques; each vehicular advance erases a distinction between the army and civilisation.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 106)

- *For Virilio we have all - via the development of the military machine - become ‘vehicles’ within an order of speed.*

“Let’s make no mistake: whether it’s the drop-outs, the beat generation, automobile drivers, migrant workers, tourists, olympic champions or travel agents, the military-industrial democracies have made every social category, without distinction, into unknown soldiers of the order of speeds - speeds whose hierarchy is controlled more and more each day by the State (headquarters), from the pedestrian to the rocket, from the metabolic to the technological.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 119-120)

- *From drag racing to the narcotics and hallucinogens of the rave culture, our basic movements - our application within time and space - has its roots in the scientific military state that emerged in early modern Western Europe¹⁵:*

“The excitement of the speed or distance record is that of assault. This countdown in time and space, the very principle of athletic

¹⁴ the best examples are the machine gun and the V-2 bomber, both of which revolutionised the technicalities of attack. The first demanded more bodies (leading in large part to the unprecedented loss of life in the 1st World War), and the second eradicated the distinctions between the battlefield and the zone of peace (its objective from its inception was the penetration of civilian defences).

¹⁵ See also: Lewis Mumford, *The Pentagon of Power: The Myth of the Machine, Vol II* (Harcourt, 1971). Mumford terms our societies ‘megatechnic’.

performance, is but the theatricalization of the race toward its ‘absolute greatness’, of that military charge that begins as a slow and geometric march, and continues as an increasingly powerful acceleration of the body meant to give the final surge.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 116)

- *Supersonic flights from nowhere to nowhere .. internet surfing, from nowhere to nowhere (‘Where do you want to go today?’, Microsoft):*

“ .. train, car, jet, telephone, television .. our whole life passes by in the prosthesis of accelerated voyages, of which we are no longer conscious .. ” (Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, p. 61)

- *Have we reached the final limit? The final violence? How does contemporary ‘governmentality’ function? Is war exterior to the state? Is violence finally autonomous?*

“After the time of the State’s political relativity as nonconducting medium, we are faced with the no-time of the politics of relativity. The *full discharge* feared by Clausewitz has come about with the State of Emergency. The violence of speed has become both the location and the law, the world’s destiny and its destination.” (Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, p. 150-151)

In conclusion ..

- *The significance of the birth and development of the modern military is that it mirrors the wholesale mobilization of modern society in the age of industry and production. Foucault was aware of this, as is Virilio, as was Oestreich, Lewis Mumford, Martin Heidegger, Otto Hintze, Karl Jaspers, Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler, Max Weber, Friedrich Meinecke, along with many, many others. It’s curious not only that their scholarship is oftentimes overlooked, but that the basic argument is lost in the shadows.*
- *Let us formulate it thus: in military training we see the tactics and the strategies employed, written, brought to action for the wholesale obliteration and reconstruction of bodies and minds; a form of discipline and disciplinary investment that would become the model and testing ground for the organization, regularization and securitization of whole societies. Might we seek to reconstruct the political history of morals through a political history of the coding and training of bodies? Beneath this disciplinary investment - this same “power/knowledge”, do we not see the real politics of security, and the means - **the political technology** - by which to achieve it?*