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A Mind Under Arms

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Ballyvaughn, Ireland
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The conference held at Ballyvaughn, Ireland, in August 1987 was the beginning of an on-going international intellectual interchange on topics related to the discourse of peace and security and international society. It will include annual meetings, the second to be held in summer 1988, again in Ballyvaughn. Sponsored by the University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, the conferences are intended to foster general inquiry into these scholarly topics and to stimulate research and teaching that incorporates these perspectives at University of California campuses. This year's series of working papers comprises the writings which seventeen authors submitted to their colleague-participants in preparation for the 1987 conference. Some have been updated somewhat before publication here. Some have been published elsewhere and are reissued here by permission. The Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation hopes that these working papers will help to interest even more scholars in pursuing these lines of thought.

James M. Skelly
Series Editor

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Clausewitz: A Mind Under Arms

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War, as Clausewitz asserts in one place, is different from anything else. Thus, however much it may change within itself from one era to another, its essential character remains distinct from every other pursuit of man.

--Bernard Brodie

War is nothing but the continuation of Politik by other means.

--Clausewitz

Strategy, like policy, is an accordion word.

--Caspar Weinberger

We can hardly speak about nuclear deterrence without invoking Carl von Clausewitz. Indeed, we hear his assertion, "War is politics by other means," ring through seminar rooms, auditoriums and meetings, charging policy talk with zest, a liveliness, a sign that we have come, now, to the heart of what matters. Clausewitz's maxim, like a fetish object--not feathers and bone and fur, but something sleek and civilized--sends shivers throughout the corporate body. Heads nod, impromptu comments collide, murmurs of assent ripple around the room, confirming common cause. But why? Why is "Clausewitz" a name to conjure with? A man who distilled his strategic theories from eighteenth-century wars fought with cannon and grapeshot, whose concern about civil-military relations was shaped by a late-lingering feudal system of independent princedoms and a Prussia not yet unified under a constitution? What can we expect to learn from a man living in a largely two-class social structure where the majors and the generals were the land-owning aristocrats' eldest sons? Such stunning incongruities in historical situations invite us to search elsewhere than the realm of positive fact to account for Clausewitz's influence today. Ultimately we shall find that On War is a rich discursive resource,
scripting both a frame of reference and the social identities attending it. Together such resources provide much of the power presently shaping the national security state.¹

1. Two Readings: The Struggle Over the Signifier

His historical reputation accounts for part of the shiver. For nearly a century, Count Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), who rose to Major General in the Prussian army shortly after Napoleon conquered Prussia (1806), has borne an unhappy reputation in the Anglo-American world. Held to be the author of war's most brutal tactics, Clausewitz, through the first decade of the nuclear age, occupied a role parallel to Machiavelli's in humanist literature.² He has been accounted author of the Blitzkrieg, of the "bloody Prussianism" that inaugurated the First World War, of all war's ghastliest forms of brutality. He is the "Mahdi of mass and mutual destruction" and the advocate of "total war."³ Perhaps worse, he is widely read and liked by military theorists in the Soviet bloc, a readership which, being associated with his work, has further prejudiced it in the west.

Determined to expunge such unsavory epithets and associations, however, some American scholars began during World War Two the labors that would ultimately redeem the name "Clausewitz," rendering it fit to represent American postwar national security thinking. Now "Clausewitz" would signify a different kind of power. Exhuming Clausewitz afresh during efforts to learn from our wartime enemy, these scholars proclaimed that Clausewitz's work had been much maligned: Not only could we learn from him, but we could learn a lot.⁴ Within about 20 years, by 1960, much professional thinking about national security was traceable to Clausewitz. This is true as well for professional thinking about corporate strategy, business and finance. Interest in Clausewitz continues, and in 1976 a new translation of On War by Michael Howard and Peter Paret made the text accessible in a modern American register.⁵

Thanks to this group of security-minded scholars, we now know that the maligned author of "total war" theories was actually a liberal social reformer whose reorganization of the Prussian military laid the foundation for constitutional democracy. He is admired among students of political theory and international relations as a political realist, a brilliant adaptor of Machiavelli, and the truly great theorist of national strategy. It is largely as a treatise on war's principles that American defense intellectuals have turned to On War. And particularly, they have turned to it for help in discovering principles of restraint: restraint of war's violence, restraint on military prerogative. They have also found in Clausewitz a pattern of thought that helps them strategize, and a model of the state that justifies the desire for enormous state power.⁶ All this is summarized in the maxim: "War is nothing but the continuation of Politik by other means."
This epigrammatic statement requires some brief exposition before we lay out the historical background of On War.

Above all, it must be pointed out that the German word, Politik, meant "state policy." There is no exact equivalent today. Foreign policy, national policy, security policy are the closest, and "politics" which to Americans and Europeans generally implies domestic politics, is the least satisfactory, for in dealing largely with international issues, "national policy" is not a matter for civil politics to decide. More and more, security policy seems to be retreating away from civil influence. In many respects, the intranslatability of Politik into American terms is the heart of many problems in bringing Clausewitz to American foreign policy.

Out of context, the maxim is meaningless. The statement is like an empty cup, a house awaiting landscape and decor, a wishing well: People want to put their own meanings into it.7 The struggle to define the phrase has gone on now for over a hundred years, and it continues still. Let us capsulize the quarrel. The statement, "War is the continuation of national policy" to one mind has a benign and helpful meaning. It means that ideally, policy governs war. Policy can control wars and militaries, making war more rational, more civil. It means that war should be subordinated to "policy," that civilians should determine war's purposes and military power's uses. It simply means that military power and activity are the instrument or "means" to implement foreign policy. It means, then, that war is not a process sovereign unto itself, outside law or science, any more than the military should exist as a social body outside law or civilian scrutiny.8

To another mind, however, the statement has a benign appearance only when looked at superficially.9 In fact, it masks malign effects. The statement posits an ideal which cannot be fulfilled, and by not acknowledging this impossibility, it obscures the real nature of both war, military power, policy, and their relationship. Moreover, the statement implies—or reveals—that action between policy and war occurs in two directions: If war "continues" policy, then policies also script wars. In the benign reading, this is supposed to mean that policies impose limits on war's violence. But the second, or critical reading holds that it may be more accurate to say that wars fulfill policies. To the degree that a policy is aggressive or intransigent, to that degree will a war become policy's expression. National policies, not simply inevitable and mechanical struggles for power in a reified "international environment," produce wars. Moreover, as policy becomes increasingly "strategic," it is as if war backs up—or policy races ahead anticipating war—and foreign policy becomes waged, a new kind of war. Strategy suborns policy.10

What security intellectuals find in Clausewitz's larger body of work is like this maxim—either they are seeing much less than the work actually says, or they find much more than they are saying. Since his society, its institutions, and the international environment were different from ours, the meanings of his work differ, too. Our situation today is incommensurate with Clausewitz's analysis of war, state power, and state policy unless we conform our state to the
2. Prussia's Problem: Getting More Power

The problem that concerned Clausewitz was the relative strength of the Prussian state. Napoleon defeated the Prussian army in 1806, and for some eight years and more, proud Prussians lived subjected to France. Clausewitz, together with a handful of reform-minded officers, understood that the army had to be reorganized if Prussia was to restore and expand its power in European affairs. Reorganization, however, would be painful to the military, cutting into their abundant political and social prerogatives, and painful to the non-military people as well, for they would become the new barrier limiting military privilege.

In 1804, two years before the Prussian defeat at Jena, Clausewitz had recognized the debilitated condition the Prussian army and Prussia's vulnerability to a mighty force like Napoleon's. Clausewitz saw the solution as essentially to enliven the martial spirit throughout all of Prussia among civilians and military officers alike, the latter of whom tended to regard their work as part gentleman's past time, part loyalty to their king and friend. Clausewitz admired Napoleon's solution to the perennial problem of inadequate military force. Napoleon had mobilized the entire French nation, giving him in effect an army 30 million strong. A similar nationalistic fervor in Prussia would do more than ensure military strength. In itself, popular enthusiasm for using military force could deter other nations' aggressive designs. Clausewitz wanted Prussia known as a militaristic state, wanted it to be intimidating and feared. These hopes were amply fulfilled, as Prussia's historical reputation attests.

Acquiring this intimidating power required efforts in two general areas: within political and educational processes, and within the military itself. Clausewitz put it this way:

The two wellsprings, which we must clear again so that the warlike spirit will return to us and make us feared among our neighbors... [are] civil conditions, which are a matter of political arrangements and of education; [and] the appropriate use of military potential, for which the art of war is responsible.11

The "two wellsprings" reflect the two general categories of social analysis Clausewitz continually employs—civil and military. Increasing Prussia's martial spirit, and hence her political power and her power position, requires actions in both domains. This section will follow the first of these two wellsprings, looking at how and why civil conditions had to be changed. A later section will examine how Clausewitz's art of war helped manage military potential more effectively.

The reforms Clausewitz recommended and helped to implement took place in generally six areas: (1) Universal conscription repopulated the army, which, in 1804, had been composed
of more than half foreign mercenaries.\(^{12}\) (2) The schools were geared to instill an appreciation of military service and national spirit. (3) The army, formerly independent of governmental control, was forced to heel to policy formulations and for this, a new cabinet ministry post was added for the army’s chief of staff. (4) Clausewitz’s writings provided a systematic analysis of war and a theory of strategy, both aimed at efficient use of military potential. (5) The officer class, formerly open to aristocrats alone, was revitalized by opening it to talented members of the bourgeoisie. (6) Both in exchange for this privilege and in order to effect it, the bourgeois were encouraged to identify with the state and to devote themselves to it.

In enfranchising more of the people, these military reforms followed a pattern of democratization congenial to liberal political, social, and educational reformers. At the same time, the reforms would effect a more efficient military while diminishing its political autonomy—that is, diminishing the autonomy of the Junkers, the aristocratic officer class, both by diluting the professional officers’ ranks with commoners and by subjecting the whole new composition to more governmental control. But the dilution exacted a social price: The very educational changes necessary to make military life appear more attractive to the commoner also meant that military values had to be more broadly disseminated throughout society. This broader dissemination was necessary as well to stimulate the martial spirit in those who would swell the soldiers’ ranks, and in the noncombatants whose military enthusiasm would paint Prussia’s face ferocious.

These reforms, however, were less congenial to the conservative groups in Prussian society who objected to their immediate loss of autonomy and prerogative. Conflict between liberal and conservative groups galvanized specifically around the issue of a constitution. The liberals strove repeatedly in 1807, 1819, 1848, 1866, and finally 1871 to institute a constitutional democracy, while conservatives battled for continued sovereignty for the crown.\(^{13}\) Thus, Clausewitz, in his influential position as aide to Scharnhorst, the new chief of staff, and as theorist of strategy in the military academy, is rightly credited with devoting much of his life to laying the foundation of constitutional democracy.

When Clausewitz proclaimed in his own time and political context that “war is but a continuation of politik,” he clearly meant to be defining the relation of the military to the civil government under the terms of the reformers’ program. That is, to a substantial extent, both On War and Clausewitz’s other writings can, and should, be read as deliberate attempts to shape and articulate a political philosophy for Prussia that would follow the lines of liberal democratic reforms. And yet the matter is not so simple, for democratization was primarily a means; it was not an end in itself. The end was the increase of Prussian power. Creating a stronger state and a more efficient military required, first above all, more human devotion to the military project. Such devotion could only be secured by making state interests personal.
interests to more people. Nationalism, disseminated in the schools, would secure this
dedication of energy. Nationalism requires enfranchisement, or at least its semblance. With
enfranchisement, nationalism taught the otherwise faceless man to see his portrait drawn in
Prussia's map. Prussian power gifted him with democratic freedoms. His willingness to fight and
to die guaranteed this power. His life, now, was sovereign.

If, on the other hand, greater personal independence, self-reliance, and individual
autonomy had been likely to weaken the military or further erode national strength or potential
unification, Clausewitz could hardly have supported them. As Peter Paret points out, "changing
the character of the state and increasing its power were mutually dependent parts of the same
process" (1976, p. 183). That is, democratization did not take precedence over state power as
a national goal. You can't increase state power without changing a state's character. The
converse, though, is not true-- there are many ways to change a state's character, but few of
them will also increase its power.

Clausewitz's maxim, then, "War is the continuation of Politik by other means," read in the
terms of Clausewitz's own time and the historical problem he confronted, signified Clausewitz's
desire to restructure the cabinet. Institutional restructuring made a place for an unwilling military
to become subject to the cabinet's decision-making process. And greater civilian
enfranchisement, which increased the numbers of the non-aristocrats having military authority
and made state interests their interests, provided further pressures on the military to submit to
cabinet control.

In Clausewitz's time, military autonomy led to inefficient military operations and a lack of
martial spirit. Hence, Prussian destructive capability was inadequate to defend Prussia against
another Napoleon, and the want of spirit left bluff and saber rattling unavailable as ploys in
international negotiations. But our problem today is the same in only a few respects. We too
suffer the problem of excess military autonomy. For this reason, it appears to many that
Clausewitz's admonition to the military, to get them henceforth under civilian advice, should
apply just as well today.

However, the analogy with Prussia, as conceived by some of our security intellectuals, in
1806 is superficial. Today, military autonomy has led to an overadequate destructive capability.
It has led to a disproportionate percentage of national wealth being devoted to weaponry that
can't be practically used. Spurred by a hegemonic foreign policy, military commitments around
the globe have required an ever-increasing percentage of this wealth. Military research is
siphoning off an ever-larger percentage of scientists and engineers, increasing the commitment
of civilians to military projects. It would seem that our situation resembles in many respects the
one that Clausewitz was aiming to get: Abundant power, growing power.
But still, even if Clausewitz’s solutions were somehow applicable today, what would it mean today to constrain the military more tightly under civilian policy? Today the problem is to enjoin the civil government to aggressively take the reigns of the military chariot. The legislature’s reluctance to use its curbing powers—powers which a democratic constitution has long conferred—is intimately involved with voters’ dependence on defense-related jobs. And at the same time, President Reagan’s willingness to extend the powers of the executive, increasing the civil government’s complicity with and submission to military concerns, serves the interests of those defense-related industries’ directors—a conservative social group which in fact shares much in common with Prussia’s conservative Junker landowners and later industrialists. The problem that we should address is the atrophy of civil powers long ago constitutionally guaranteed.

Such inconsistencies between situations to which the same rule supposedly applies make it dramatically necessary to ask our Clausewitz enthusiasts what they imagine they are doing. They seem to believe that Clausewitz has a solution to our problem of growing military influence. And yet they do not seem to ask how Clausewitz’s maxim relates to the postwar foreign policy and theory of international relations that has required such extensive military commitments in the first place. In looking to Clausewitz, they seem blinded to the important dissimilarities between the Prussian and the American states, and between the values held or engineered within these states. It is hard to avoid drawing the conclusion that the new national security state is, consciously or unconsciously, being modeled upon a much-admired Prussia. Why else would they pronounce Clausewitz’s hallowed lines without admitting their anachronistic and mischievous nature?

3. The Structure of Society and War’s Figuration

Setting Clausewitz within the historical context of his own time and his own project—increasing Prussia’s power—has revealed incongruities between our situation and his, showing one reason why Clausewitz’s thinking about the state, the military, and especially war can have only limited applicability today. Unless, that is, we want to construct a society along the lines of Prussia, with its centralized and authoritarian form of government, its high valuation of military things, and its nationalistic fervor. Similarly, Clausewitz’s thinking about war—the ways he conceives of war, represents it, and analyzes it—are part of his own historical and social situation. In particular, Clausewitz can be said to typify intellectual efforts within his own milieu in bringing together two strains of thought: A mechanistic, scientific model of the world, and a teleological, religious model of the human psyche. Both Kant and Hegel achieved this synthesis, though on a more complex and systematic level of thought.
Clausewitz treats war in the rationalistic manner of Newton's or Liebniz's treatment of cosmology. This quasi-scientific treatment tends to confirm the current belief that war can be studied scientifically, because rational principles underlie its dynamics. For Clausewitz, war was a process of nature, subject to laws like those of physics governing motion, force, and mass. We see this first model operating in many ways throughout Clausewitz's analyses of war. It appears in Clausewitz's remarkable image of war as a "strange trinity." (The second model, the teleological one that works with means and ends, will be discussed in the fourth section, on the art of war.) War is a "strange trinity" of "tendencies," which "appear as so many lawgivers" all of which the theorist must take into account. The first principle is that war's "essential nature" is violence, comprising the human passions of hate and animosity. The second is that war is probabilistic, uncertain, imponderable. The third, that war's function is to be "a political tool."

Here is the first part of the passage:

War is . . . also, when regarded as a whole, in relation to the tendencies predominating in it, a strange trinity, composed of the original violence of its essence, the hate and enmity which are to be regarded as a blind, natural impulse, of the play of probabilities and chance, which make it a free activity of the emotions, and of the subordinate character of a political tool, through which it belongs to
the province of pure intelligence. (I, 1, 28; p. 27)

Each of these has both a personified attribute and a location in the hierarchy of real Prussian society. War's nature, quintessential human violence, is a blind, natural instinct exhibited in the masses' passionate national hatreds. War as a probabilistic domain has its analog in the soul's voluntaristic nature; it concerns the General and his army, being a matter of strategy and courage. War's function as a tool of state policy bespeaks its rational aspect and concerns the government since Politik is "the intelligence of the personified state" (I, 1, 26; p. 17):

The first of these three sides is more particularly the concern of the people, the second that of the commander and his army, the third that of the government. The passions which are to blaze up in war must be already present in the peoples concerned; the scope that the play of courage and talent will get in the realm of the probabilities of chance depends on the character of the commander and the army; the political objects, however, are the concern of the government alone. (I, 1, 28; p. 18)

The dynamism of war occurs through the interactivity of its three aspects: The people's passionate hatred of the adversary fuels the military's store of violence; this is true when the soldiers are drawn from these passionate masses rather than being composed of largely foreign mercenaries. The commander manages this violent force through combats strategically arranged, and at the same time tries to stimulate the maximum output of force. All is guided by the government's intelligence, the war's political purpose, which is not the business of the military to adjudicate.
This tripartite figuration of war reflects the social divisions of Prussian society. As well, it incorporates the changes that Clausewitz's military reforms tried to institute. The old "body politic" of Prussia only consisted of two parts, the government and the military. Of these two, the military generally had the higher percentage of powerful aristocrats, reflecting both the feudal structure lingering in the largely agricultural economy, and the greater numbers of urban bourgeoisie who were making their way into governmental service.

The new Prussia was to consist of three interdependent parts: Head, heart, and body. Each is dignified with its own unique virtue—intelligence, insight/resolution, and physical strength. However, though each part has a role equally necessary to the whole, their voices are not equal in power. Rather, they are arranged in a hierarchy with governmental reason holding ultimate authority. The military will is subordinate to reason, for reason must always rule over will, but the will commands the extremities subordinate to it—the "arms," that outer, lower, well-muscled, and nearly insentient part. The "arms," being both the most indoctrinated, the least educated, and the most dependent, can only employ their force at the behest of the "higher" powers.

Thus, identification with the state provided the social control that pressed middle and lower class energies into social service. The terms of Aristotelian faculty psychology—Reason—Will—Passion—provide an image of integration and harmony that both effects this repression and rationalizes it. In reality, Clausewitz's figure for the new Prussian society and the new Prussian war machine would permit the energies of people to be more efficiently husbanded for national military purposes. And Prussia would be thereby strengthened.

In the name of the people, war has been naturalized. War has become a matter of people's "natural" animosities to neighboring nations. Such animosities make wars inevitable. And the converse is also true, the staging of a war is impossible without these animosities, for, as above, "the passions which are to blaze up in war must be already present in the peoples concerned." However, that the people of all nations perennially misplace these animosities or neglect them altogether, needing the state and the educational system to remind them of where their true enemy lives—the very situation that called for a new educational system—seems to be a contradiction escaping Clausewitz's notice.18

This tripartite image of war, one of Clausewitz's analytical frameworks, employs the categories the people, the military, the state. These three categories could be called war's logos in the way they comprehensively structure war both as a concept and as a dynamic process. They constitute war's logic, the rationality or law-abiding nature Clausewitz believes inherent in war.

They could also be called war's topoi, its "topics." Around such topoi, the means of rhetorical invention—that classical armamentorium of tropes and schemes, the creative
resources of language--construct webs of meaning. These webs have the illusion of the true, the real, the permanent. Thus, after Clausewitz has written On War, the people, the military, the state each have elaborately delineated identities, relationships, and interacting roles to play in the scene of war. The frame of reference from which neo-Clausewitzians understand "man," "the state," and "war" will be set.

And yet, there was no absolute or inexorable reason to adopt these three as categories for analyzing war. He might have chosen domestic economic conditions, trade relations, ethnographic complexity, or any of many other factors related to an analysis of war's causes or dynamics. But he chose these three specifically because of his own historical situation and perspective: He needed a stronger military and the way to achieve this depended on generating more military power. This preoccupation, together with his own role as a military officer, as an intellectual, as the bourgeois son of a Lutheran minister, and as the professional dependent of one of the powerful military reformers, made these categories somewhat inevitable. They chose him, we might say. For Clausewitz, they would have appeared as the "natural" way to think about the problem.

We need to look more closely at the way Clausewitz puts flesh on these categories, how he conceives and articulates his soldiers, officers, strategists, and state. The remainder of this subsection will elaborate upon Clausewitz's conception of the state and its relation to the people. The next subsection will deal with his conception of the soldiers, in part through their relationship with the officers. Section four, on the arts of war, will begin the discussion of the strategist, by far the most important topic of the whole of On War. Clausewitz's greatest invention is the strategist: War's genius and a new man.

3a. War's Topoi: The State

The state, because its internal organization determines its character, is key to engineering more military power. Clausewitz believed that for Prussians to see the state as "a heroic autonomous being in the political world" would do much toward vitalizing martial spirit (Paret, 1976, p. 119). Indeed, the state is the "Unmoved Mover," the secular image of God, as we shall see later. Such an image accorded well with Clausewitz's pietistic Lutheran background.

In the first place, the pietist aimed to devote his energies and self wholly to God. In the second place, selfless service to the state was a step in this direction. The state was God's means to educate and improve man, and it often figured in the image of God. And yet for Clausewitz, as Peter Paret points out, the state was not "the realization of an ethical idea, which is what it was for Hegel." It was rather "a historical reality whose first duty is to maintain itself" (Paret, 1976, p. 438). Nevertheless, as for Hegel, Clausewitz's idea of the state had god-like
attributes, and, through identification with it, the individual could participate in these attributes, conceiving himself in their terms—an autonomous, integrated, and transcendent being. In helping the state perform its duty, one lived at the level of historical reality. He became a part of destiny's tides. He lived an heroic adventure as a whole man.

What best enables the state to perform its first duty, to survive? Machiavelli made this obvious to Clausewitz: The state must have a strong position relative to other states. It must be militarily powerful. And military prowess needs practice:

> A nation may hope to have a firm position in the political world only if national character and habituation to war mutually support each other in constant reciprocal action. (III, 6, p. 135)

Only war nurtures warriors, and warriors are best fathered, schooled, judged and governed by practiced warriors.

The state skilled at military power will be careful to encourage one quality in particular, boldness. Just as victory is "the first born son of war" (as we will see later), so boldness is another of war's progeny:

> The spirit of boldness may be an army, either because it is in the people, or because it has been created in a successful war conducted by bold generals. . . . Nowadays there is hardly any other means of educating the spirit of a people in this respect than war alone and that under bold leadership. Only this can counteract that effeminacy of feeling and that inclination to seek the enjoyment of comfort which drag down a people in conditions of increasing prosperity and heightened commercial activity. (p. 135)

The oppositions, boldness/effeminacy, firm/soft, high/low, mean that if a nation is rich, it had better have a bold military. If it is soft and pleasure-indulgent rather than bold, it will be "dragged down"—to military weakness and a less "firm" position among other nations.

A nation habituated to war thereby trains the national character in kind, and maintains (or expands) the national treasure at the same time. The more of this habituation the better. In fact, Clausewitz recommends a state that trims its other activities so that it can focus on war:

> But the fewer different activities a people has, and the more the military activity predominates in it, the more prevalent in that people must military genius also be found to be. (I, 3, p. 31)

Besides focusing its political and educational institutions on the goal of producing good warriors and a fearsome face, a state must also circumscribe diplomatic activities. Clausewitz explains how too much diplomacy and too little real war led, in the late Renaissance, to a "restricted, shriveled-up form of war." War became like a regularly played game, relatively trivial because "it was only diplomacy somewhat intensified, a more forceful way of negotiating, in which battles and sieges were the diplomatic notes." (VIII, 3, B, p. 58) When war is "only diplomacy," the decision by arms becomes robbed of its potency. War is no longer that "strange trinity" of lawgivers acting as the final arbiter of right and sovereignty.
One of the unhappy consequences of a state with too much diplomacy and too little war—that is, the "shriveled-up form of war," above—is that thereby is stunted the development of distinguished generals who, with proper wars to fight, might have shown true genius:

... distinguished generals and kings, like Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII and Frederick the Great, at the head of armies no less distinguished, could not emerge more prominently from the mass of things in general—that even these men were obliged to be content to remain at the general level of moderate achievement is to be attributed to the balance of power in Europe. (VIII, 3, B, p. 580)

And unless the talent has a chance to develop, only "moderate achievement" at best can be expected of the next generation. To be strong, nations must be habituated to war and must narrow their activities to focus on martial ones.

Clausewitz has been narrating the history of warfare and of civil-military relations up to the French Revolution. The Revolution called forth the participation of the people, and after it was won, Bonaparte effectively led an army of some 30 million. This was "absolute war" for the first time in history. Such a resource and scope of violence means that Bonaparte's failure to conquer all of Europe lay in mistakes, not in the amount of force he had available. These mistakes Clausewitz corrects in his many analyses of war strategy. This leaves the key elements of this history which all go to prove that mobilization of full national feeling is the "new" kind of war, and as such, is the key to national power:

After everything had been perfected by the hand of Bonaparte, this military power, based on the strength of the whole nation, marched shattering over Europe with such confidence and certainty that wherever it only encountered the old-fashioned armies the result was never even for a moment doubtful. (VIII, 3, B, p. 582-83)

Clausewitz analyzes the longer narrative of which this is a part. He finds that first of all, war "has assumed quite a new nature, or rather it has approached much nearer to its real nature, to its absolute perfection." This quality of absoluteness is an attribute of force:

The means then called forth had no visible limit, the limit lost itself in the energy and enthusiasm of the governments and their subjects. By the extent of the means and the wide field of possible results, as well as by the powerful excitement of feeling, energy in the conduct of war was immensely increased; the object of its action was the overthrow of the foe; and not until the enemy lay powerless on the ground was it supposed to be possible to stop and to come to any understanding with respect to the mutual objects of the contest. (p. 583)

The passage continues. Without pausing to excoriate effete diplomacy, since war itself has had the last word, Clausewitz draws the lesson:

Thus, the primitive violence of war, freed from all conventional restrictions, broke loose with all its natural force. The cause was the participation of the people in this great affair of state, and this participation arose partly from the effects of the French Revolution on the internal affairs of countries, partly from the threatening attitude of the French toward all nations. (p. 583)
The passage summarizes all of Clausewitz’s views on war: The people, in participating in an affair of state, brought with them their natural violence. Human violence is more like a river in a spring flood than like a volcano or an earthquake. Like a river, human violence can be channelled and focussed. This is the source of energy to tap and control if one wants to ensure the survival of the state, garnering a firm position in world politics. The lesson of the French Revolution is precisely this. If only the participation of the people could be always mobilized, unlimited force would be at the generals’ disposal. Only a state in which the people identify with national interests could provide such potential force. And only a state keen on engineering—particularly hydraulics or other forms of focussed energy—would know how to make the most of human energy.

3b. War’s Topoi: Soldiers and Officers

An army is a “dynamic system of forces,” which generals command something like engineering projects. The forces they command are largely composed of “moral force”—what we today might call the fighting spirit of the men. Clausewitz identifies two primary sources for it. One, as we have already seen, is the nature of the society itself and the value society places on military power. Related to this is the political fervor that civil societies generate in differing degrees. Once new soldiers enter into military training their “military virtue”—their courage, boldness, loyalty to their commanding officer, and submissiveness to discipline—is cultivated. But these specialized virtues still depend on moral force.

In the hierarchy of martial virtues, the quality of “boldness” has a special standing. At worst a wild impulsive madness, at best it is a “noble buoyance, with which the human soul raises itself above the most formidable dangers” (III, 6, p. 132). Boldness is a kind of courage shared by every member of the army’s ranks, each according to his own duties. “From the camp follower and the drummer boy up to the general, it is the noblest of virtues, the true steel which gives the weapon its edge and luster” (III, 6, p. 132). Boldness is the sharpened edge of moral force, and moral force is the weapon which makes a man a good soldier. How Clausewitz admires boldness. He says it is a truly “creative power”; strong and mighty, it conquers its enemy, Hesitation. “Happy the army in which an untimely boldness frequently manifests itself. It is an exhuberant growth but it indicates a rich soil” (III, 6, p. 133).

Cultivating boldness in the “masses” of soldiers does not threaten chaos or mutiny within the army. This is because the military organizational structures and disciplinary practices are designed to control boldness.

... the great mass is bound to a higher will by the framework and organization of the order of battle and of the service, and therefore is guided by an intelligent power which is not its own. Boldness is therefore here only like a spring held
The organizational structures, established by the military institution itself and engineered for specific conflicts by the war plan, contain, compress, aim, and ultimately release these energies. The soldiers' energies are like a great spring, controlled by the field officers; when things go well, the officers have no problem controlling and channelling this great resource of energy to accord with the map of strategy. But on the other hand, the officers must be alert for two specific problems involved in managing this force. One problem is having too much, the other is having too little. The first means outright rebellion:

It is only where boldness rebels against obedience, when it forsakes with contempt a definitely higher authority, that it must be repressed as a dangerous evil, not on its own account but on account of the act of disobedience, for there is nothing in war which is of greater importance than obedience. (III, 6, p. 133; my italics)

We are thus reminded that the military is an authoritarian organizational structure. Later, in considering what it means for the strategist to cultivate "a mind under arms," this structure will have specific relevance. Thus, the first problem in managing boldness is to repress its most exhuberant manifestation, rebellion against authority, disobedience.

The other problem in managing boldness involves a _deficit_ of energy. Sometimes when the spring is released, the machine doesn't give out with enough force. It holds back, it resists. This predicament is common. Its inevitability calls for special qualities in the commanders:

But as soon as difficulties arise--and this can never fail to happen when great results are to be achieved--then things no longer move on of themselves like a well-oiled machine, but the machine itself begins to offer resistance, and to overcome this, the commander must have great force of will. (I, 3, p. 36)

This "resistance" is not seen as rebellion or disobedience. Rather, it is seen as a consequence of the soldiers' natural moral deficiencies, deficiencies which leave them dependent on the officers' greater moral endowments. It is because of this natural disparity of moral ability that officers must have "great force of will."

One way the commander can maintain his force of will when the war machinery opposes it is to reify the men: They are but a machine, whose operation is the commander's task. Nay, the men are still less: They are only parts in the machine, parts that are continually replaced with "fresh reserves." The men are but "forces," physical forces whose deaths and dismemberment commanders can euphemise as "dissolution." Just as the men's spiritual dissolution will increase proportionally to friends' bodies suffering physical dissolution, so will the commander's problems increase accordingly:

By this resistance we...[mean] the general impression of the dissolution of all physical and moral forces and the heartrending sight of the bloody sacrifice which the commander has to contend with in himself, and then in all others who directly or indirectly transfer to him their impressions, feelings, anxieties, and efforts. (I, 3, p. 36)
It is responsibility for victory that calls for these enormous acts of will. The commander may never judge that the "bloody sacrifice" is not worth the flame. He must move in one direction only, toward the fulfillment of the war plan, and this means learning to view "heartrending sights" of carnage and pain in such a way that he does not lose his equilibrium or his dedication to achieving his goal. Upon the commanding officer, the spiritual state of the entire unit depends:

As the forces in one individual after another die away and can no longer be excited and maintained by his own will, the whole inertia of the mass gradually rests its weight on the will of the commander. By the spark in his breast, by the light of his spirit, the spark of purpose, the light of hope, must be kindled afresh in all others. Only in so far as he is equal to this, does he control the masses and remain their master. When this ceases and his own courage is no longer strong enough to revive the courage of all others, then the masses drag him down to them into the lower region of animal nature which shrinks from danger and knows not shame. (pp. 36-7)

The commander's superior spiritual powers coupled with the soldiers' dependency on those powers make the commander a kind of torchbearer, a source of the fire sustaining war's "forces." The commander must keep his men fighting, or he has failed to enact his distinctive quality--the torchbearer--the quality that maintains his distinction from the soldiers and the masses of people. The fear of being "dragged down," of becoming like "them," of foraging in the "lower region of animal nature," is a strong incentive, fanning his own courage and sense of purpose. For the officer, the fear of behaving like the men--morally deficient, bestial without distinction from the herd--is a pungent incentive to carry out his role. The commander must keep an imaginative distance from his men. He must sustain images of their inherent differences such that his sympathy with them never develops into a bond of intimacy or identification: This would threaten the military mission, for he might "hesitate" in his purpose, and in doing that, he tarnishes his self-image, and risks his social identity in risking a lost battle. (The discussion of the strategist from section 5 on will discuss other aspects of the identification process.)

Clausewitz's own sympathies in the last-quoted passage are with the commander, not with the men. It is the commander who receives the "impressions," who witnesses the "bloody sacrifice." The commander's eyes and soul are suffering, he is doing the "contending" as he struggles largely against "hesitation," his worst enemy. True--grief, sickness, fear, fatigue may tempt him to hesitate, but the moral struggle he undergoes is precisely against succumbing to such temptations. To hesitate is to lose one's equilibrium, and maintaining equilibrium--the ability to think clearly, judge well, and stay on track--is the officer's central duty.

It is no wonder that the commander, spared the rigors and risks of battle himself, must reserve his physical energy and develop his moral energies and intellectual abilities as acutely as possible: He tends a flock of dependents, child-like, animal-like, near-savages lacking his
well-developed self-reliance and strength of character. They often need infusions of his
superior moral strength lest they crawl cowardly into the underbrush or cut tail and run. The
poor commander. It is difficult enough, God knows, to witness all that carnage oneself; but also
to have to bear the corporate burden of every dispirited body whose forces he
commands—who would want such responsibility? The officers, clearly glad not to wallow in the
lower regions of animal nature nor be limited to the ferocious barbarism of the semi-civilized,
must take on such responsibility as the price of freedom, psychic and social, and as the price of
honor, recognition, and prestige.

There is one more distinction, one more difference worth preserving, for which officers
might have been willing to pay the price of bearing an inhumane responsibility. In officers, the
equivalent to what was "boldness" in the soldiers is called "resolution" or "resolve." Since
resolution will consume the discussion in part 5, it will be enough to define it briefly here.
Resolution is related to decisiveness. It is the tenacity by which the officer holds to a course of
action without hesitating. It is "the forceful support of that higher calculation which genius, with
its instinctive judgment, has run through with lightning speed, and but consciously, when it
makes its choice." Boldness in the soldiers is a kind of impetuous daring. But in the officers,
transformed into resolution and "directed by a predominating intelligence, [it] is the stamp of the
hero." Resolution is the power that fends off hesitation and doubt.

Clausewitz contrasts the resolute officer bold in military action to the "ordinary man." The
one is the man of action dwelling in reality, whose empirical knowledge affords him the better
basis for decision-making and decisiveness alike. The other is the ordinary man:

The ordinary man, not to speak of the weak and irresolute, arrives at a correct
result in so far as such is possible without living experience, while pursuing, at
most, an imaginary activity in his study, far away from danger and responsibility.
Let danger and responsibility surround him from every direction, and he loses
his perspective and if he retains this in any measure by the influence of others,
still he would lose his power of decision, because in that point no one can help
him. (I, 3, p. 134)

Thanks to the rigors of "danger and responsibility," the military officer has practiced being
decisive under pressure and has thereby developed the archetypal quality of military genius,
resolution. The government bureaucrat, the financier, the clerk, the philosopher, "not to speak
of the weak and irresolute," have had no real opportunity to develop this trait. The converse--
what the experienced military man is able to be, or likely to be, if forced into ordinary life--
Clausewitz does not exposit for us.

The high praise accorded to boldness and resolution should remind us that virtues in
one domain of human activity are often vices in other domains. Oliver North's epithet, "an
American hero," touts the quality of boldness, uncritically applied to political decision-making.
Lieutenant Colonel North and General Secord showed civilians what the military character looks
like when situated in a context different from the one which trained them and which taught them what "reality" is. Their characters appeared differently to those sympathetic with a military frame of reference than to those less sympathetic. It is precisely sympathy with that frame or lack of sympathy with it that divided the civilian community about whether North was a hero or not.

4. The Art of War

As we saw earlier, Clausewitz unclogged the first wellspring of enhanced martial spirit, a nation's "civil conditions," by supporting an educational program to help people better appreciate the nature of the state and the role of the military in it. The officer class was revitalized by being opened to the bourgeoisie, while universal conscription, better working conditions, and better training were aimed to encourage more and better soldiers. The other wellspring, the appropriate use of this improved military potential, required an improved handbook on the arts of war. To this task, Clausewitz actively dedicated more than 12 years to writing about the principles elucidated in *On War.*

As Werner Hahlweg, editor of the 14th, 15th, and 16th editions of Clausewitz's great work, says, *On War* is primarily a kind of *Bildungsgang,* an "education of the spirit" for the military strategist. As such a work, it represents a kind of guidebook for the soul. In this psychological map, the military and political still exist in two distinct but interrelated domains in the outside world, while the inside world of the strategist integrates and harmonizes the two.

To find out both how this fascinating process works and how Clausewitz teaches us to see as a strategist sees—from his perspective and through his frame of reference—we need to look at the key conceptual elements of Clausewitz's analysis of war. Then we will understand why it was so important that the strategic vantage point be located at the state level rather than at the popular, domestic, level—the level from which the participants in a representative democracy like ours may either criticize state power or aspire to participate in it. We will also see how the strategic perspective represents a merging of military and political thinking about power.

4a. The Terms of War

First of all, consistent with his primary categories, civil and military, Clausewitz divides "reality" into two parts: The realm of *Politik* and the realm of war. The second realm, war, consists of four main terms. The first term is the military aim (*Ziel*). It is generalizable as "disarming the adversary, destroying/annihilating the enemy's forces." The second term is battle or combat (*Kampf*). Battle is the form, or shape, that physical force takes in action. It is the means to attain the military aim. Battle is meaningful in war only if won or lost; a stalemate is not meaningful.
The third term is force/violence (Gewalt), the substance or material of battle. It consists of two forms, 1) "physical force," which means the troops, arms, and material, and 2) "moral force," which consists in "military genius" for officers and in "military virtue" for soldiers. Physical force depends on moral force. War's fourth major term is strategy, the overall plan of a war. Strategy connects war as a means to achieve policy's end.

The division into the realm of Politik and the realm of war shows how war and Politik are related. The fundamental relationship between them, we are told, is of ends to means. Employing Kant's categories of ethical analysis Clausewitz stresses that the realm of Politik, the social/political/ethical realm, is a realm of ends. (Policy and its goals relevant to war may, by implication, be subjected to ethical analysis, though Clausewitz does not speak to this point.) The government employs war instrumentally, as a means to attain goals established by state policy. War, in thus serving the political ends established by the cabinet, is a continuation of Politik. The political purpose (Zweck) is the operative term representing the realm of Politik. Political purposes are generalizable as "compelling an adversary to do our will." They include defending one's political existence, assisting allies, expanding one's territory, and the like. By definition, these are political, not military goals.

The other domain, the realm of war, is entirely instrumental, entirely outside the realm of ends, and hence, not subject to ethical analysis or strictures. Its nature is physical force, which is the "other means" by which Politik is "continued." This amassed force is a physical process amenable to scientific analysis. This physical, forceful nature means that while war is subject to no moral law—in fact it participates in a ghastly inversion of morality that Clausewitz calls the "law of the extreme" or the "law of annihilation"—at the same time war is still lawful in following principles of mass and force. Its logic, or logos, recall, is the "strange trinity" of lawgivers. Thus, it is amenable to scientific analysis.

In a second way, war follows principles akin to natural laws governing mass, force, and motion. Laws of cause and effect seem to Clausewitz to be inherent in the nature of war, giving war a logical structure that can serve as a rational guide to mapping out strategy. Within the realm of war, everything is a means: Each maneuver is a means to the end of winning a particular battle, and each individual battle is a means to the overall end of winning the war; the Ziel, an end within its own domain, is also but a means in the context of the larger role war plays in the policy process. Thus, understanding war is essentially a matter of studying ways, means, instruments, tools, what they do and how they work, how to use them efficiently to effect particular ends. Such thinking requires keeping the ends always in mind—the ends of the war, a battle, a maneuver; but only as an object to which to apply the means. That is, the ends are a way to make sense of the means, to make them meaningful. In the context of war, the ends are of no account on their own.
Clausewitz is enamored of this means/ends pattern, and readers of Clausewitz, too, tend to be fascinated by it to the point of blindness. Its constant motion, framing an action now as a means with respect to x, then as an end with respect to y, seems to dizzy readers. They forget to ask obvious questions, for instance, about the asymmetry of the realms of means and ends: If war, the means by which Politik brings about its ends, consists in hierarchies of interpenetrating means/ends relationships, why is Politik an absolute in and of itself, exempt from similar internal hierarchies? Surely it makes sense to conceive of the realm of Politik as having its own penultimate range of ends and their corresponding means. Is "political survival" the final end, and not the "the good life"? Surely political survival is the means to get whatever desirables policymakers have agreed on as national goals. But Clausewitz, though he wants the "rationality" of the political goal to preside over and moderate the chaos and brutality of its means, offers no criteria for assessing alternative rationalities that might preside in policy-making. Whatever assures a state's firm power position is what must be done--that principal alone is the much-touted basis upon which Politik employs its military instrument.

Devotees of Clausewitz make exactly the same mistake: In shortening their perspective to embrace only the "means" of Politik, they beg the most important question, to what ultimate end? To answer "to the end of policy," as Clausewitz does, is absurdly circular—an utterly unsatisfactory response. "Policy" in fact serves many ends and may bring about many varied consequences which need to be considered as ends, sought or unsought. Contentiousness and wrangling over unacknowledged ends—how much wealth should we seek, in what form, at whose cost, which interest groups shall be educated or fed with it, how will one policy affect executive power and another affect legislative, what will be the costs to civil society of one policy or another, and whatever else are the specific questions about the acquisition, distribution, and preservation of things deemed desirable—these questions sit at the more fundamental level of the relation between military power and foreign policy. This is the upper level bypassed and obscured by Clausewitz's means/ends formulation.

This scheme, whether Clausewitz intended it or would have supported it, has the effect of legitimating state authority. In the end, On War conveys the sense that Politik, the "rationality of the personified state," is right because it is right. It is the oracle, the pinnacle of truth to be obeyed because it is the pinnacle. It is the Unmoved Mover, the final cause. Such an assumption can only be made in an authoritarian system, and it must foster an authoritarian set of values.

Clausewitz's means/end analysis is actually based upon a mistake. He has confused war's processes with his representation of those processes. He has taken the means/end structure which he finds usefully illuminates some things about war and has mistaken it for a structure inherent in "the nature" of war, a structure that allegedly makes war a rational process.
subject to scientific investigation. This means/ends pattern in the world of language is a species of synecdoche, the trope describing hierarchical and teleological relationships and generally answering to whole/part, general/particular kinds of relationships. It is important to recognize synecdoche as the dominant structuring trope, rather than metonomy, metaphor, or irony, because each of these makes its own peculiar claim to knowledge and carves out a special shape to reality. Metaphor, for instance, is preoccupied with relations of identity and analogy, metonomy with relations of contiguity in space and time, and irony with relations of contradiction or inversion. Synecdoche is concerned with overlap. While in a strict form, synecdoche can be clearly illustrated by a zoological or botanical classificatory ladder, in its more varied manifestations it is much less precise, and can be a very slippery way to talk.23

The slipperiness of a synecdochal construction is beautifully illustrated by Clausewitz's ends/means analysis which we have just been examining. Clausewitz insists that authority flows only in one direction, from the top down, and that similarly, the means enact their cumulative service to only that one ultimate cause, Politik. But whatever Clausewitz wants to insist, the rhetorical structure he is working in insists otherwise: Energies flow both ways in synecdochal representations; a thing can be both figure and ground, and it can't be held still merely by fiat. Our minds simply do this with synecdoche. Our minds set the structure in motion, make it oscillate much as our eyes do when we look at purple juxtaposed with yellow, or green with red. In other words, the ends and the means are a dynamic system, each animating the other. They can't be kept discrete. This interanimation is dramatically illustrated by the ambiguity of the term "strategic" in Clausewitz: Do "strategic" goals stop with the military goal, or do they include Politik? Obviously, the term is limited to military goals in one context but expanded to policy goals in another. Both "policy" and "strategy" are thus accordian terms, as Caspar Weinberger has observed. Such ambiguities are unavoidable in synecdochal figurations. This slippery figure can both make military goals seem like ends in themselves, and can conceal that very fact. Clausewitz's ends/means way of conceiving the relationship between war and policy hopelessly muddles the boundary between civil and military domains.

4b. Strategy

Before Clausewitz, and even during his own time, "strategy" referred to "all military movements out of the enemy's cannon range or range of vision, and "tactics" to "all movements within this range" (Paret 1986, 190). Thus, "strategy" in its earlier use was derived from a concrete, perceptual experience. A "strategic zone" bore a sense of safety from enemy fire and of invisibility, a place protected against the enemy's prying eye, a hedge against his foreknowledge about, and anticipation of, one's movements. "Strategy" referred to military operations that took place in a zone of comparative security.
Clausewitz was the first theorist to write about "strategy" in the military sense it has today: "The theory of using battle for the purposes of the war." Strategy becomes the overarching plan showing how battles relate to the war's final goal, while "tactics" focus on the activities of particular battles (Paret 1986, 190). This represents a revolutionary change.

Before Clausewitz, strategy and tactics were distinguished not on the basis of their functional relationship, as Clausewitz has done, but instead on the basis of their spatial relationship. After Clausewitz, the term "strategy" referred to a landscape far exceeding a commander's field of vision. The new strategic landscape is imaginary, abstracted away from personal experience and extended throughout the entire theater of the war (or its potential theater). It is as if the commander's observation platform had been moved several thousand yards straight up. The new kind of strategy could only be conceived as if from a radically different vantage point, an overview. And the time frame changed as well. Now the strategist could imagine the whole war happening almost simultaneously. An epistemological shift had occurred. Now "strategy" could develop the extended senses it has today as the integrating of a complex set of variables into an overarching plan to achieve some particular goal. And a "strategist" could develop, someone who sees the entire war whole. The strategist's psychic structure and epistemological approach are suggestive of the Kantian "transcendental ego." Abstracted from life's physical constraints, from the limitations of the personal perspective, the strategist is the one who knows the whole story because he wrote it. He is a figure of power.

Strategizing, as he continually reminds us, is Clausewitz's project. He wanted to develop a particular way of thinking about wars--abstract, overarching, impersonal, goal-directed--in order that one may more reliably win them. It is the defense intellectuals' need for a way of thinking about nuclear deterrence--alleged to be a way to achieve the prevention of nuclear wars and the control of war's violence--that makes them so fond of Clausewitz (or so they think).24

5. A Mind Under Arms

Strategy is wrought by the commander-in-chief, who confers on the one hand with political leaders in the cabinet and on the other with commanding officers. The strategist ideally thus comprehends both the terms of Politik and the terms of war in his war plan. Successfully achieving state goals when war is the means depends upon his "genius"--upon his comprehensive insight (Einsicht) and his resolution (Entschlossenheit)--powers of the mind wholly absent in the troops. How to cultivate such qualities is the implicit subject of the whole of On War. The subject engages Clausewitz's most creative energies.

Having "resolution" requires "a mind under arms." When Clausewitz maps the psychological process by which resolution is acquired, he speaks in martial terms. Here is an outline of this process. His soul or psyche--Clausewitz uses both Seele and Geist--consists of
two main faculties, Reason (Verstand) and a combined Will and Feeling (Willen and Gefuehl).
(The other faculty in classical representations of the psyche, the imagination, has only a limited role in the military psyche, that of picturing unseen geophysical features.) Within the reasoning faculty is a special gift strategists share with geniuses in any art. It is Einsicht, a form of insight that in a twinkling provides a comprehensive understanding of complex problems. When Mozart, for example, described his experience of writing symphonies in a single, unrevised draft, he said he waited until he would hear the whole symphony with all its voices, as it were, all at once. Then he would suspend it before his mind's eye like a tapestry while he inscribed it in musical notation.25

Such is the insight of the Genie, the born genius. The born strategist is one of these. He, too, grasps both the whole problem and its solution at a single glance. Thereafter, insight acts as a kind of gyroscope, keeping the psyche balanced in the midst of the ensuing strife by focussing on the long-range goal and its comprehensive solution. Having perceived the solution, that is, mapped out the strategy from a flash of wholistic insight, the psyche must now depend on Resolution to keep it true to the original insight. For Wavering (das Schwanken) and Hesitating (das Zaudern) are its two great enemies. Here is the sequence by which Resolution is achieved and maintained.

1) Reason alerts the Will to the "necessity"—i.e., the reasonableness, given the particular circumstances—for strong resolution.

2) Courage (Mut), a specific power of the Will, then enlists a particular fear, the Fear of Wavering, to conquer (besiegen) all the other fears that may assault (bestuermen) one's fixity of purpose.

3) Reason and courage then "take hands." The synthesis, the result of their integration, is Resolution.

4) The maintenance of Resolution through the continual assaults that Doubts and Fears make on the soul means that Courage effectively "supports reason," as if in its arms. Reason is upheld by the strength of Courage, and Resolution thereby defeats (niederkaempft) Doubt.

The function Resolution serves, then, is to maintain the balance of the psyche, its poise, its harmony and unity with its long-range purpose. Under war's conditions, nearly everything assaults this balance—strong feelings of any kind, wild impulses, fatigue, failing to keep one's distance, becoming too distant. Resolution makes it possible to be unmoved by such circumstances. It keeps our eye on the war plan, keeps us faithful to its long-range vision of the path (the way, the means) to the ultimate goal. In overriding the imperatives which a present crisis seems to press upon us, Resolution prevents us from acting on the basis of immediate experience. Difficult though it is to achieve, Resolution is absolutely necessary to a well-fought war.
Well-practiced Resolution is the only help one has in negotiating the "fog of war." In war, one fights constantly against resistance of every conceivable kind. "Enormous friction" prevents one's will from easily having its way. Everything from the weather to misjudged terrain to mistimed supply deliveries works against the best laid plans:

Action in war is movement in a resistant medium. Just as a man immersed in water is unable to perform with ease and regularity even the most natural and simplest of movements, that of walking, so in war, with ordinary powers one cannot keep even the line of mediocrity. (I, 7, p. 54)

What is normal in war then is a sense of relative powerlessness, ineffectiveness and inefficiency, as though one were trying to swim upstream or walk through a deep river. Ordinary powers are insufficient. One needs the superordinate powers of the military genius.

Part of the friction is the novelty which characterizes every war. Each war "is in consequence an unexplored sea, full of rocks which the mind of the commander may sense but which he has never seen with his eyes and round which he now must steer in dark night," (p. 54). A chief part of what is required in a good commander is experience with this friction, the "fog of war," in which everything seems like it must be the wrong thing to be doing because it is so difficult. And everything mocks one's usual powers.

No one can teach Resolution. It is more an aesthetic sense, an inner "feel" for how one keeps one's bearings in such a daunting, hostile--I am tempted to say "unnatural"--environment. Indeed, Clausewitz emphasizes the aspect of Gefeuhl, indicating that what he sees as unteachable qualities explains why Resolution must come from an innate knack. By the same reasoning, he illustrates why the "great" generals seem to be born with the arts of strategy flowing in their blood--for with them the arts of winning are like second nature. As a way of developing this subject, having a "feel" for the right strategy, let us first consider the "feeling" of winning and losing.

Victory and defeat do not occur as sharply delineated events. Rather, their approach is recognized as a subjectively felt process. Just as friction is the normal condition in war, so a sense of inefficiency is the normal subjective experience:

... particularly therefore in a case where the destruction of the enemy's force is the principal object, the decision lies in that moment when the victor ceases to feel himself in a state of disintegration, that is, of a certain inefficiency. (IV, 7, p. 190)

A feeling of increased efficiency marks the process of winning. The normal subjective state in war is to feel oneself in a state of disintegration.

If a sense of increased power and efficiency marks impending victory, the losing side, on the other hand, may know it is losing by certain other signs. If the leading officers become dispirited about how their own battles are going, if one's troops seem to be "melting away" more
quickly, which can be seen "in the slow and less tumultuous course of our battles," if ground has been lost rather than held or gained (IV, 9, p. 200). Other ways to tell that one is losing have to do with numbers, speed, efficiency: if the loss of batteries is greatly unequal relative to the other side; if one's battalions are being overthrown "while those of the enemy everywhere form impenetrable masses"; when repeated assaults are scattered "by well-directed volleys of grape and case"; if the line of retreat begins to be endangered. All are based on subjective perception and judgment, from the perspective of one on the ground during a land battle--an anachronistic epistemology today, but the examples illustrate what Clausewitz means by the subjective feel of winning and losing.

In the same way that the fear of being "dragged down to the lowest animal nature," the fear of shame and degradation, was the most powerful incentive keeping the officers joined to their duty to inspire the troops, so it seems that the fear of losing serves the strategist as such an incentive. Clausewitz gives far more attention to describing the horrors of losing than the pleasures of winning. Here is a narration of these horrors:

The first thing which perhaps overpowers the imagination--and we may say, also the intellect--in a lost battle is the dwindling of the masses; the loss of ground . . . then the disorganized original formation, the confusion of the troops, the dangers of the retreat, which, with few exceptions are always present in a greater or less degree; and finally the retreat itself which mostly takes place at night . . .

These are all images of disintegration: Being overpowered, dwindling, loss, disorganization, confusion, a nighttime retreat. But the worst is still to come. With the losing side retreat comes the winners in pursuit. The pursuit's purpose is to increase the enemy's disorganization, weaken his morale, and subject him to "a constant admission of being obliged to obey the decree of the enemy" (IV, 12, p. 218). During the pursuit "trophies" are taken--men, weapons, supplies, anything of use or value. The ultimate disintegration of one's powers is to have one's forces be in total subjection as trophies of the enemy. Clausewitz frames this from the commander's point of view:

The feeling of being defeated . . . is aggravated by the horrible idea of being forced to leave in the enemy's hands so many brave comrades, whose worth we never rightly appreciated till this very battle . . .

The final insult is that in losing, one has been declared inferior:

It is the evident truth that the enemy is superior to us . . . We have, perhaps, suspected it before, but for lack of everything more real have had to set against it hope in chance, reliance on fortune and providence or bold daring. Now, all this has proved inadequate, and the stern truth faces us harshly and imperiously. (IV, 10, pp. 204-205)

To be proved inferior to the enemy means that one would have to let in a torrent of doubt about one's judgments, for how could one have been so certain of a strategy which failed? The value
of resolution would be cast into question. If only to affirm this central principle, one is impelled to flee defeat at any cost. Clausewitz does not take his reflections this far.

The psychic effect on the vanquished is much more profound than on the victor. The loser "sinks much further below the original line of equilibrium than the victor rises above it" (IV, 10, p. 203). While victory is a tonic, a stimulant to strength and activity (203) a swelling of "self-reliance" (206), defeat is a total prostration, "a real apoplectic stroke" (206). Losing is worse than winning is wonderful.

The fundamental incentive in war, then, appears to be a negative one: To avoid being the loser, one is obliged to try to win. To be sure, victory is sweet on its own terms. It provides those heady feelings of emerging out of fog and into full light, becoming more efficient, more powerful, more effective, more integrated. It bestows inflation and euphoria. But more important—and probably sufficient unto itself—is the motive of escaping all the misery, oppression, fear, despondency, increased vulnerability and decreased freedom that defeat entails. War is a flight from defeat. It is a struggle against gravity, time, and one's humanity.

Perhaps an explanation for this curious negative motivation is found, at least in part, in this assumption: "All war presupposes human weakness, and against that it is directed." (IV, 10, p. 207) Given an enemy assuming this, one becomes as strong as possible in the flight away from defeat. The object one flees then becomes one's own weaknesses relative to the enemy's, just as nations flee weakness, seeking a strong position relative to their neighbors. By definition in this binary logic—this zero-sum logic where no middle ground is possible, and one side's victory is another side's vanquishment—any new strength on the enemy's part may create a new weakness on ours. If all life were conceived as war, one would have vast incentive to thwart another's strength wherever it imposed itself. Merely to avoid being the vanquished, one would have to cultivate that heady feeling of integration and power—simply as a barometer of one's distance from being the trophy of another. In a zero-sum world, to resist domination one must predominate. "Resolution"—the militarized mind faithful to its goal whatever the circumstances, unmuddled by doubt or reflection, superior to the moment and its manifold importunings—resolution is the name for the psychic discipline providing the power alleged to save us. But such psychic arrangements do not exist without objective social and institutional embodiments; they both reflect and perpetuate institutional roles and relationships. If the powers of the militarized mind "save" us at all, they do so by pressing others' powers into our service.

The mind under arms has no alternative but to be conscriptive: It sees others only as pawns or as players, the weak or the strong, and it sees any player as a potential enemy whose strengths should make one wary. Thus, under the Clausewitzian system one perceives a zero-sum world, a model which may in fact help maintain all the rest of those binary oppositions which
have so wearied us. It may be that the binary world is the warrior’s world, and the warrior’s mind perpetuates that most atavistic way of thinking.

6. The Theorist vs. The Man of Action: Resolution Without War

This analysis of the subjective feeling of winning has illustrated how Clausewitz’s "mind under arms subjectively experiences the battlefield." Clausewitz himself unwittingly illustrates how “a mind under arms” conquers fear. Clausewitz constructs an exemplary drama in his own text, showing how Resolution overcomes fear at one’s own writing desk.

When at the beginning of his final book On War, Clausewitz finally approaches the topic of strategy proper, he confesses to feeling intimidated, to approaching the awesome subject with diffidence or fear (Scheue). He says that theorizing about strategy and doing it are so vastly different that, at this very moment of beginning his theoretical analysis, dread has overwhelmed him. He expresses the fear that theory, at least in his hands, cannot do justice to strategy and that therefore his labor will be futile; or worse, it will bring down contempt on theory in general and on this would-be theorist in particular--contempt from the Strategic Genius. Resolution, however, will conquer his fear.

We watch here a lively drama in the present tense and direct address. Clausewitz’s imagination is the setting; the conflict is between psychic forces: Martial valor and human fear. In this inner theater, Clausewitz plays a man of some talent but of ordinary human stature confronting the larger-than-life figure of the Great Strategist-General. The Strategist, or Commanding General, distilled from Clausewitz’s own reflections on military genius--Alexander, Frederick, Napoleon--towers over Clausewitz’s awed reflections, enormously powerful and attractive. Indeed, these brilliant men were each a born Genie, an original creative genius like Michaelangelo, Shakespeare, Goethe. Their intuitive knowledge of strategy makes it more a matter of feeling than of intellect with these god-like beings; in comparison, the theorist must struggle with the painstaking deliberateness of the verbal intellect.

This contrast between the superiority of the Genie’s feeling and the plodding verbal consciousness of theory constitutes the conflict. This conflict needs elaboration, for it is not really so simple. The Theorist wants to describe and analyze in words the Strategist’s art; but he also wants the Strategist to approve what he does. That is, he wants his work to meet some standard, the judgement of which is up to the Strategist. However, he cannot enact the first desire without the risk that the Strategist will not comply with the second. The Theorist thus faces the predicament of a zero-sum game. It is a game which no one has specifically invited or commanded him to play, a game in which, if he elects to play it, he plays against a silent, inexorable authority holding all the power of the yea and nay. It is exactly the kind of win/lose
contest without possibility of compromise or stalemate as Clausewitz figures war to be. It is no
wonder the Theorist approaches this situation with diffidence, overwhelmed by dread!

Once he determines to play, the contest turns out to be between his own resolution and
his fears. His fears of not measuring up therefore test the fundamental martial virtue of
"resolution" or "determination"—the hallmark of the military genius. Clausewitz here stands
alone on a battlefield where he confronts Fear and Dread. His weapon is his conviction that the
shining armor of Resolution is invincible.

Let us observe this engaging performance, this dramatization of Clausewitz's own desire
and fear as he stands poised at the moment of his great undertaking, to match the Great
General, whom he fears and admires more than any other man, in an arena he has chosen for
himself. Here, Clausewitz introduces his most important chapter:

In these chapters, which are to deal with the problem as a whole,
is contained the very essence of strategy, in its most comprehensive and
important features. We enter this innermost part of its domain, where all other
threads meet, not without some diffidence.

Indeed, this diffidence is amply justified.

On the one hand, we see how extremely simple the operations of war
appear. We hear and read how the greatest generals speak of it in the plainest
and simplest manner, how on their lips the regulating and managing of this
ponderous machine, with its hundred thousand parts, seems just as if it were
only a question of their own persons, so that the whole tremendous act of war is
individualized into a kind of duel. We find the motives of their action explained
now by a few simple ideas, now by the impulse of some emotion. We see the
easy, sure, we might almost say, indifferent manner in which they treat the subject.
(VIII, 1, par. 3-5, pp. 567-68).

The great generals make strategy sound so simple that hearing them, one would think they
were describing some individual contest they were about to play—a sword duel, a wrestling
match, a chess game. The Commander's astonishing ease of action results from his having
incorporated the military machinery—that is, knowledge about the process, its concepts and
terms—into his very personality where it becomes second nature to him. The Commander
commands (and epitomizes) the army's forces, just as his genius commands (and epitomizes)
his psychic forces.

In contrast to this compactness of expression, this practiced, confident skill, this poise
and sheer artfulness, how clumsy and time-consuming is the Theorist's medium! How
embarrassing, how presumptuous. His own medium, expository language, seems shabby and
wholly inadequate next to the Commanding General's magnified eminence. He continues:

And now see, on the other hand, the immense number of circumstances
which present themselves for consideration to the investigating mind; the
long, often indefinite distances into which the threads of the subject spin
out and the number of combinations which lie before us. If we reflect that
it is the duty of theory to embrace all this systematically, that is, with clearness
and comprehensiveness, and always to trace the action back to the necessity
of a sufficient cause, then there comes upon us an overpowering dread of being dragged down to a pedantic dogmatism, to crawl about in the lower regions of clumsy conceptions, where we shall never meet the great general, with his easy coup d’oeil. (cont., p. 568)

What labor, first to discern all that complexity, to keep reins on its orderliness, and yet still to have to lay it all out in an interesting way!

At the point that Clausewitz recognizes the "overpowering dread of being dragged down," the syntax--phrase after phrase listing insuperable tasks--has made us feel the density of the obstacles he confronts. The toil alone would justify hesitating, but the risk of doing all this without inspiration's help, consigned to crawl around "in the lower regions of clumsy conceptions" where "we will never meet the great general," that is doom indeed. To be cast away from the company of the inspired--this is what Clausewitz, as Theorist, fears. To be thus cast out is surely analagous to the fate awaiting the officer who hesitates or is cowardly or weak, and as a consequence, is "dragged down" by the troops to the lower regions of animal nature, where he will never again know honor or prestige.

Clausewitz himself has experienced the special kind of inspiration he now seeks and despairs of; in no other way could he write so well about it. And for no other reason could he fear its abandonment of him now, at the moment of entering the innermost sanctum of the genius of war. Indeed, his familiarity with the role inspiration plays in writing, as well as in war, has led him to produce here a version of a classical literary device, the "invocation to the muses," a prayer for inspiration with which the classical epic poets like Homer and Virgil and those who wished to locate their work in their tradition--Dante, Milton--would beseech the heavenly Muses to inspire their heroic verse. Clausewitz, himself a writer of heroic prose, lacking the benefits of the poet's faith, stumbles these few moments under the weight of his unaided humanity. Desiring the same gifts that the Muses bestow on the creative imagination and having in fact found these gifts in Genie in any field, Clausewitz's theory of genius deprives him of the mechanism that in poetic lore invites the ministrations of inspiration. Naturally enough, instead of turning to the poetic tradition to help get beyond fear's cold grasp, he instead turns to the military tradition whose discipline has subjected his soul to other means for overcoming fear. But to these military means Clausewitz has brought an understanding influenced by aesthetic theory, and, apparently, by popular story forms in addition.

Thus, we watch him enact a sequence of mental events that invoke his warrior's training in the terms of his aesthetic knowledge. These mental acts not only melt away his fears but "inspire" him in exactly the way he wants. It appears that he runs through the sequence unconsciously. First he brings to mind again the essence of the great general: His easy intuitive grasp of the right action (coup d'oeil), his spiritual freedom (Freiheit der Seele):

And on the other hand, this easy coup d'oeil of the general, this simple way
of thinking, this personification of the whole action of war, is so absolutely the very essence of every sound conduct of war, that in no other than this broad way is it possible to conceive that freedom of the mind which is indispensable if the mind is to dominate events, and not to be over-powered by them.

(VIII, 1, p. 568)

This "personification of the whole action of war," this embodying of it in persons utterly identified with it, is the very secret of successful war and brilliant leadership. Only personalities shaped this way can achieve the objectivity or detachment which allows them "to dominate events, and not be over-powered by them." They in whom the principles of war have become second nature dominate both events and self thereby--and Clausewitz seems at this moment to recall this, and to recall at the same time that he is, after all, one of these people. He calls upon the first principle of resolution, to trust one's original flash of insight, and sets himself back on his original path:

With some fear we proceed again; we can only do so by pursuing the way which we have prescribed for ourselves from the beginning.

His foray into doubt and fear is now done with. He is back on the right path. His first step onto this path of "proceeding" positively ahead is to affirm the value of theory by describing its usefulness:

Theory serves to throw a clear light on the mass of objects, that the mind may the more easily find its bearings; theory serves to pull up the weeds which error has sown everywhere;

Theory in effect assists Einsicht by intensifying its powers, metaphorized as illumination. With this "clear light" in hand, the intellect (Verstand) is then able to see "the relations of things to each other and separate the important from the trifling." Theory, in helping the powers of insight, also helps bring about the mind's liberation:

[Theory] gives the mind a glance into the mass of objects and their relations, and then dismisses it again into the higher regions of action, there to act according to the measure of its natural gifts, with the combined energy of the whole of those forces, and to grasp the true and the right, as one single clear idea, which, driven forth under the united pressure of all these forces, would seem to be rather a product of feeling than of thought. (VIII, 7, p. 568)

Now that the light has been discovered and intensified, the mind is free. The Freiheit der Seele has been attained, and the intellect can move more freely through the geography of the interior landscape. It is free also in the sense of being able to realize its full nature, unhampered by the bonds of dread or the "darkness" of anxiety or other limiting human emotions. Now aided by Einsicht the intellect soars upward to truth and victory, whereas on its own it was cast down to inadequacy. Theory has been redeemed; it is the lamp of genius, genius' guiding light. It is a liberating force freeing the mind from the prison of partial functioning and enslavement to the immediate. It helps genius see things whole.

Having attained the state of inspiration of which he earlier despaired, the Theorist--
thinking very much like a creative artist and like a brilliant general—is ready, at last, to begin his work. Recalling his own knowledge about the nature of Genius has freed him from the crippling awareness of his limitations, from self-injuring comparisons with the idealized Commanding General. He has returned to his best self again, a warrior-intellectual, his own version of Commanding General, in command at last of himself, his mind properly under arms.

Before continuing any further in this subject we must add one more dimension to the dramatic elements of Clausewitz’s approach to the strategist’s soul.

This last dimension is called by literary theorist Rene Girard “mediated desire.” Girard begins one of his books by citing a passage from Cervantes’ Don Quixote. The passage and Girard’s subsequent discussion of it repeat a startling number of the ideas and patterns we just saw in Clausewitz’s dramatic struggle. In this passage, Quixote is addressing Sancho as Clausewitz addressed his readers; Quixote is discussing the idealized figure, Amadis of Gaul, the representation of the ideal knight, the man whom he most admires and whose qualities he wishes to emulate. Given the similarity of both situation and subject matter, Cervantes might as well be representing, in a fictional context, Clausewitz describing the idealized General of Generals to us. Because we need Girard’s concept of “mediated desire,” it will be useful to set out the entire excerpt from Cervantes:

“I want you to know, Sancho, that the famous Amadis of Gaul was one of the most perfect knight errants. But what am I saying, one of the most perfect? I should say the only, the first, the unique, the master and lord of all those who existed in the world... I think... that, when a painter wants to become famous for his art he tries to imitate the originals of the best masters he knows; the same rule applies to most important jobs or exercises which contribute to the embellishment of republics; thus the man who wishes to be known as careful and patient should and does imitate Ulysses, in whose person and works Homer paints for us a vivid portrait of carefulness and patience, just as Virgil shows us in the person of Aeneas the valor of a pious son and the wisdom of a valiant captain; and it is understood that they depict them not as they are but as they should be, to provide an example of virtue for centuries to come. In the same way Amadis was the pole, the star, the sun for brave and amorous knights, and we others who fight under the banner of love and chivalry should imitate him. Thus, my friend Sancho, I reckon that whoever imitates him best will come closest to perfect chivalry.”

(Girard, p. 1)

Girard raises some related issues about the Cervantes passage, pointing out how it represents an even deeper kind of education: Discipleship, the close patterning of oneself upon a particular model. This close patterning Quixote calls “imitation,” and undertakes it in the belief that “whoever imitates him best will come closest to perfect chivalry.” Clausewitz’s interest in analyzing the soul of the strategic Genie and describing it to us comes out of his interest in exactly the same process: He does it so that those who are interested can either imitate or help to promote—hold up the lamp to—the intuition and resolution that constitutes martial perfection.
And such "perfect chivalry" as Quixote conceives Amadis to represent resembles another version of the perfect genius that the distilled qualities of Napoleon, Frederick, and Alexander represent. The fundamental difference is the source of such perfection, the means of acquiring them. For Quixote, the means is imitation, while Clausewitz is ambivalent: At one moment, these qualities are inborn, at another they can be encouraged by a society organized closely around martial activities. But, as Hahlweg notes, the overall effect of On War is to describe and make reproducible the qualities of character that make a strategist.

Cervantes is not asking us to take all this straight and seriously; much meaning here is modified by irony, as the way Quixote's naive assumption that one is as one appears to be contrasts with Cervantes' setting up the passage so that the reader will notice Quixote's superficiality. But at the same time, Cervantes offers us an opportunity to observe the dramatic action occurring between the Quixote and his audience, Sancho, whose knowledge about Quixote (as ours about Clausewitz) also modified the meaning of Quixote's rapturous expostulations about Amadis. As Quixote expresses to Sancho his high admiration for Amadis, he is not merely emoting, he is representing something for Sancho's moral edification, whom Quixote perceives as standing in a disciple's relationship to himself. This is what Girard says about Quixote's action here:

Don Quixote has surrendered to Amadis the individual's fundamental prerogative: he no longer chooses the objects of his own desire--Amadis must choose for him. The disciple pursues objects which are determined for him, or at least seem to be determined for him, by the model of all chivalry. (Girard, pp. 1-2)

What Quixote imitates in Amadis is Amadis' desires, his desires for the chivalric virtues, for a reputation for purity, honor, behavior fitting of a chevalier, a noble horse, noble bearing, a fine lance and a knightly armored suit, a nature that wins one's will with ladies. Amadis is thus the mediator of Quixote's desires. And Quixote ever commends such desires to Sancho, whose responses provide us an ironic, skeptical vantage point.

Girard's argument is not that all desire is mediated in this way. He carefully distinguishes between desire which is self-chosen and that which is mediated. Mediated desire occurs out of an unconscious, uncontrollable identification with another. This distinction establishes two categories for literary analysis: Desire according to oneself and desire according to the Other.27

How is this relevant to Clausewitz? Clausewitz' discipleship to the ghosts of Alexander, Frederick the Great, Napoleon and to the living Schamhorst and Gneisenau bears some resemblance to mediated desire, or "desire according to the other." The emulation of desire may occur when one is entering, or trying to enter, a community different from his or her family community. Quixote was born a poor squire himself, and studied chivalric ways in books and other sources of knightly lore. He became a "knight errant" sheerly through his own efforts at
imitation. Clausewitz—if we dare compare the real to the fictional warrior—born the relatively poor son of a Lutheran minister, was thrust into military combat at age 13. Once a military career chose him, he was obliged to learn how to be a military officer. What better way than to study the lives of the great generals? In the passage from On War quoted at length above, we saw Clausewitz confronting fear in the manner of his great models, and carrying on his task just as these great strategists have taught him to do: By cultivating a mind under arms.

The Commander’s sole desire must be a fixity of purpose, a strength of resolve, because only it can give him that power to dominate events rather than being dominated by them—which, as a warrior, he had better desire. Able to dominate external events, he is also able to dominate his own internal fears and doubts, thereby enabling himself to stay in combat and to preserve an inner balance in the midst of such duress. Thus he desires that “Freiheit der Seele” or independence of mind which keeps him from being swayed by the force of events or contingencies, by an Other, whether the other is the enemy on the field or a part of the self which we exclude from our sense of self. This is the heart of Strategy’s discipleship, and if either Girard or Cervantes is right, then Clausewitz must have desired such independence of mind and resolute determination. He must also have wanted a General’s identity, a perspective from the elite point of view, and he certainly has found desirable the sense of integration and power that accompanies winning a concrete battle, a political battle, or an internal battle against one’s fears. But perhaps more than anything else, he desires not to be “dragged down,” becoming a trophy, a replacement part, an animal, an outcast. He wants to avoid being one whose energies are husbanded, who is used by the state as a tool (Werkzeug) of policy. He wants not to be dominated, even if he must dominate to avoid it. And most importantly, he is absolutely, unequivocally recommending to those who would be strategists that they desire and cultivate these qualities.

Just as generations of children have learned about what men desire from hearing and reading about the lives of great war heroes, since Clausewitz they have been able, should they choose or should it be chosen for them, to pattern their lives also on the desires of strategists. Clausewitz, no war hero but a new man, a military intellectual, serves as the Amadis for a new code of chivalry. As Machiavelli before him, then Bismarck later, Clausewitz—advisor to princes—shows us how to wage policy like the best of generals.

7. Conclusion

Listen to Raymond Aron, writing in 1976, express his qualified admiration for Clausewitz and remind us of this already lost new chivalric world that Clausewitz represents. Aron’s concluding chapter of his book, Clausewitz, begins by quoting Anatol Rapoport on Clausewitz:
Thus in Clausewitz patriotism, liberty, and identification with the power of the State were all parts of a harmonious self. Clausewitz had no need to resort to sophistry or self-deception, nor to erect a barrier between his intellect and his humanity. Clausewitz was a whole man. He may have worshipped an evil deity, but he revered it with his whole being. In short, in retrospect we can see him as a sinister but noble figure in the unfolding of a tragedy.\textsuperscript{28}

Aron then comments on Clausewitz via Rapoport's remark:

> Nowadays, anyone reflecting on war and strategy raises a barrier between his intelligence and his humanity. I am sure it is no different with the neo-Clausewitzians of Moscow and Peking. (p. 400)

Not only nuclear weapons, but both world wars have erased the romanticism of war that was still possible in Clausewitz' time. And since the advent of nuclear weapons, to reflect on war and strategy in the terms of professional strategists, one must "raise a barrier between his intelligence and his humanity": The breach is even more radical now. But Aron fails to notice that Clausewitz has taught strategists how to raise that barrier. Resolution--being convinced of the goodness of one's end--does it. The means must be suffered for the sake of the end, no matter how brutal or brutalizing.

But the romanticism lingers, and today's knights on quest, today's Napoleons mobilizing the nation are the apostles of deterrence. As E. P. Thompson put it in 1981:

> Deterrence is not a stationary state, it is a degenerative state. Deterrence has repressed the export of violence toward the opposing bloc, but in doing so the repressed power of the state has turned back upon its own author. The repressed violence has backed up and worked its way into the economy, the polity, the ideology, and the culture of the opposing powers. This is the deep structure of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{29}

For all his concern about language, Thompson lost sight of this dimension somewhere in his hydraulic metaphor. The "deep structure of the Cold War" has come about because more and more, people are conceiving politics, and policy, in the terms of war. They are doing this because "strategizing" has come to be a method for gaining power over a competitor--for "dominating and not being dominated"--in any field or contest. Clausewitz, and those scholars and intellectuals who brought Clausewitz to the policy debate about nuclear weapons, has helped this along by mediating for us an attractive figure of a man with a mind under arms: Himself. He has shown us that keeping one's eye on the Zweck, the ultimate goal, is the way to remain untouched by the people or events that are part of the means.

Clausewitz's own genius was, as Rapoport reminds us, both of a rare quality and of another time and society, the like of which does not exist today. To these first two barriers between most of us and Clausewitz we must add, as Aron has, the barrier that nuclear weapons have imposed. When we look at all these differences, we must ask again what it is that Clausewitz can possibly offer us, and what it is that the typical professional student of Clausewitz, whom Raymond Aron calls an "uncareful reader," learns from this book. Clausewitz
has devotees: To what are they devoted if not to acquiring a mind under arms? What war do they fight if not life itself?

This is to say that Bernard Brodie, quoted in the epigraph on page 1, like Clausewitz, is wrong: war is not "different from everything else." When one has acquired a mind under arms, war hardly can be said to remain "distinct from every other pursuit of man." To the contrary, when the mind is under arms, war shapes and gives meaning to every one of our pursuits. Most all of life's activities can be figured and waged as war, and analyzed through a military frame of reference. We wage our policies.

If you were fighting a war, which role would you select: officer or soldier? But you are an intellectual—could you be in the military at all? Better to be Clausewitz, Machiavelli, Bismarck—a state-level advisor to kings and generals, a shaper of policy, practicing the heroism of scholarship, which, like policy, is too often waged as war.
Notes

1. The methods of analysis herein reflect my training as a literary scholar. My approach might be characterized by an analogy to political realism: I am interested in the effects of people's words, in how words make some difference in a social domain or an individual life, rather than in what they claim to mean. This is a pragmatic, rather than semantic, approach to language, focusing on its active function more than its information-conveying function, seeing it more as drama, less as philosophy, theory, or thought. I am interested specifically in the drama of desire and prohibition, in the domain of "will," impulse, desire, motivation, and in how words often rationalize and mask desire while at the same time enacting, enabling, and reproducing it.

The present paper tries to get at the origins of "strategic thinking," which needed historically both a frame of reference and a set of social roles for its enactment. This is the first chapter of a full-length genealogy of strategic discourse.


The "Machiavel" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English drama was always the villain or a villainous type. He represented a soulless, amoral character who would sacrifice anything for personal advancement. He was cynical about the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, a thoroughgoing pragmatist and advocate of Realpolitik, possessed of a keen intellect which he cunningly employed in pursuing wealth, prestige, or other forms of power. The Machiavel was typically attractive in his physique, eloquence, and savoir-faire. Shakespeare's Marc Antony in Julius Caesar is perhaps the best known example. Milton's urbane Satan in Paradise Lost and Goethe's brilliant, headstrong, impenitent Faust both descend from this tradition.

3. These are largely the sentiments of Anglo-American liberals especially prior to World War II, here represented by Colonel Basil Henry Liddell Hart's The Ghost of Napoleon (1933), a scathing condemnation of what Liddell Hart sees as the Clausewitzian tradition's responsibility for World War I's excess. Another condemnation of this tradition is Anatol Rapoport in both his Strategy and Conscience (1964) and his introduction to the Penguin On War (1968). Clausewitz's influence on Soviet military thinking is summarized by Raymond L. Garthoff in his Soviet Military Doctrine (1953).

4. Edward Mead Earle in 1943 published a collection of essays by various scholars called Makers of Modern Strategy. The essay on Clausewitz therein, by Hans Rothfels, and those on Moltke and Delbrueck, by Hajo Holborn and Gordon Craig, respectively, deal with the legacy of Clausewitz in later Prussian and German military thinking.

The same year, Modern Library issued a new translation of On War by O. J. Matthijs Jolles of the Institute of Military Studies at the University of Chicago. Jolles's translation was only the second in English. The first (by Col. J. J. Graham) was published in 1874, re-edited by F. N. Maude in 1908. The Modern Library edition made the text widely available during the war and postwar period. Several more translations have appeared since, especially in abridged and composite forms like Living Thoughts of Clausewitz, ed. by Col. Joseph I. Greene (1946), and War, Politics and Power, trans. and ed. by Edward M. Collins (1962). I have quoted and cited page references to the Jolles translation in the present manuscript.

5. Both Graham's and Jolles's translations were soon discovered to have been based on the corrupt German 2nd edition. An authoritative German text was not restored until Werner Hahlweg's edition of 1952 (16th ed.); in 1976, Princeton published the first English translation based on Hahlweg's restored text. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, the translators and editors, justify their translation of it on the grounds of the "hundreds" of errors in the text upon which all other English editions are based. But Howard and Paret exaggerate the extent to which these
alterations affect the translations, in which both context and the good sense of the translators generally keep faith with the original meanings. See Appendix for further discussion.

6. Postwar strategists and scholars strongly admiring Clausewitz have included Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, Robert Osgood, Raymond Aron (French), Tom Schelling, Henry Kissinger, Michael Howard (British), and recently a group of younger analysts writing in the professional strategic and policy journals. Clausewitz's followers have been influential largely in articulating a political philosophy of deterrence, which has had wide influence on international relations theory. An unusually lucid discussion of Clausewitz's political applicability today is M. Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Question* (1979).

7. This is simply one of the ways people use language. Phrases like "the struggle over the signifier" are common in semiotic analysis, which sees the struggle of different groups to appropriate meanings of politically potent language as simply a typical political activity.

8. This is generally the view of the moderate defense intellectuals, as well as political realists both liberal and conservative.

9. This second reading generally is the view held by liberals and radicals critical of nuclear deterrence. Anatol Rapoport has a lucid summary of the terms of this debate, where this second reading of the maxim "extends legitimacy" to war and to military power--i.e., to deterrence. (See his "Concluding Remarks," 1968, pp. 411-414.)

10. Here I am not referring to the historical situation in Prussia and Germany, when Moltke's interpretation of Clausewitz was used to justify greater military autonomy, and strategy indeed did suborn policy. I am interested in the social and political dimension of Clausewitz's influence, not the strictly military strategic debate. For the latter, see Hajo Halborn, "Moltke and Schlieffen," in Earle, ed., or Halberg's commentary to *Vom Kriege*, pp. 51-167, esp. 51-59 on Moltke. Also Howard, "The Influence of Clausewitz." Raymond Aron is also helpful on the military strategic debate, in his *Clausewitz*, pp. 61-87. He summarizes the debate in terms of what he sees as a logical conflict inherent in Clausewitz:

    If the destruction of enemy armed forces remains valid as a prime, if not exclusive, objective, what becomes of the subordination of the war plan to the intelligence of the head of state? If the priority of destruction becomes logical in the sense that it is derived from the definition of war as such, separated from its origins and ends, it loses the praxological implications that have usually been given to it.

    Towards which side of this alternative does Clausewitz himself incline? The interpreters of the Treatise are themselves divided, too, into two schools, one of which is predominant at the time of victories while the other emerges only after defeats--not to mention, of course, those who have not even understood the question, inevitably the greatest number (p. 87).


12. On the military and social reforms, see Holborn, Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, and Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*. The statistic on mercenaries is from Craig, p. 23.

13. Clausewitz's relationship to constitutional reform is discussed generally by Craig, and in detail by Paret, *op. cit.*. Historical discussions of the constitutional struggle in Prussia appear in most detail in histories of the age of Bismarck.

14. For Prussian social structure, see James Aho, *German Realpolitik*, ch. 2.

15. John Gaddis, in a recent article in *International Security* (Spring, 1986, pp. 99-142) argues that if we see the nuclear age not as "the cold war" but as "the long peace," we will recognize that nuclear deterrence has in fact "worked," that it is responsible for the longest peace since
"the age of Metternich and Bismarck." While romanticizing that peace, he neglects to mention that Bismarck's peace is due not only to Bismarck's own genius in shaping and directing foreign policy, but also to Schamhorst's reform of the General Staff, and to Clausewitz's theories of war and strategy as interpreted by Helmut von Moltke, Bismarck's chief of staff. Nor does he mention that this peace was purchased at the expense of Denmark (Schleswig and Holstein) and Austria. Nor perhaps the most salient matter, the price of militarizing the society by means of educational indoctrination. Also The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System (1987).

16. See the article on Christian Wolf in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy for the relevance of both the Newtonian and Aristotelian models in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Prussian culture.

17. This image of the "strange trinity" has elicited much commentary. Raymond Aron takes it as one of three equally abstract "definitions" of war, which he sees as being in conflict with one another. Peter Paret "cannot refrain from pointing to the obvious parallel between the trinity of Id, Ego, and Superego, and Clausewitz's trinity of Violence, Creativity, and Reason--with the army, the expression of creative genius operating in the realm of the imponderable, reconciling the demands of violence and of reason in war." Clausewitz and the State, p. 370. Note how the image takes for granted the "healthy" or "redeemed" soul, already having attained to the virtue or internal harmony that some Christians spend their lives pursuing. For the origins of this model of the soul, see Aristotle, De Anima.

18. Michael Shapiro has argued that Clausewitz essentially got away with murder in implicitly assigning to the masses of people the motivation for wars. In his essay, "Representing World Politics," he says: "Certainly anyone with more than a storybook familiarity with the course of events in the Thirty Years War, the historical event that inspired much of Clausewitz's theorizing, would resist Clausewitz's narrative. At a minimum, the enmity of the populations involved, to the extent that they had any unified and articulate effect toward the states engaged in the war, was epiphenominal to the strategic machinations of leadership in both the militaries and governments . . . " p. 11.

19. Clausewitz seems to have believed that one could have this much potential force without having to use it, and that the "practice" that armies need to hone their skills could be done by means of wars of limited scope. This issue is the crux of the strategic debate around Clausewitz's work. See Raymond Aron, op. cit.

20. Clausewitz began writing On War in 1812, when he was appointed Superintendent of the Prussian War Academy. Many of the treatise's central ideas appeared earlier in his student paper, Strategie (1804). The work was interrupted several times, ultimately by Clausewitz's death from cholera in 1831 when he was 51 years old. Three years prior to his death, he took a post with an active regiment and at that time organized his papers. He included a note with the MS saying that only Book I, Chapter 1 was in the final, revised form to which he aspired for the remainder of the text. The unrevised state of the MS has greatly added to the controversies over its interpretation. On this see Michael Howard, "The Influence of Clausewitz," pp. 28-29.


22. Clausewitz has a repertoire of colorful synonyms he often substitutes for the Zweck: "The decision by arms," which is the "supreme law" (i.e., victory or defeat); "The law of the extreme"; "The law of annihilation"; and "The bloody conclusion of the crisis," which is the first-born son of war."

23. Hayden White's The Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) is the starting point for all recent discussions of the role of tropes in representations of reality. Also important are essays by Hans Kellner and by Wallace Martin in Diacritics 12 (1982), Wallace Martin, Recent Theories of Narrative (Ithaca: Cornell
24. It is largely their efforts and those of international relations theorists we can thank for the definition of "strategy" in the *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (first through ninth editions, 1973-1986):

> The science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war.

This definition extends greatly the military sense of "strategy," giving the term a broad political meaning having profound consequences for civil society. *Webster’s* has understood one implication for civil society of the saying, "War is a continuation of policy by other means," if peace also now continues policy. Such a thoroughgoing commitment of a nation’s resources to "policy," whether in peace or in war, gives policy a heavy responsibility. Does *Webster’s* reading imply that war (strategy) has suborned policy, or that policy has tamed war? Does it mean that policy controls everything? Or does it mean nothing?

Carl H. Builder, in *The Army in the Strategic Planning Process* (1987), surveys dictionary definitions in his introductory chapter, "What is Strategy?" Random House and American Heritage differ greatly from *Webster’s* in confining themselves to strictly military contexts: "The science or art of planning and directing large military movements and operations," and "The science and art of military command as applied to the overall planning and conduct of large-scale combat operations." Significantly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, adopts *Webster’s* definition: "The art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat."

In a footnote, Builder offers the following anecdote: "While discussing these definitions, a retired general noted that the JCS appeared to have taken their definition from *Webster’s*. Asked why the JCS found it necessary to interchange the words "science and art" and elaborate upon the other words, the general quickly replied, "That, of course, was the value added by the JCS." Builder, pp. 4-5. A little research to discover the author of *Webster’s* definition might prove interesting.


26. The journey metaphor provides coherence to this sequence, reminding us of heroic narratives and quest romance.

27. These categories remind us of David Reisman’s inner-directed and outer-directed types, or independent and dependent personalities. Major differences, of course, exist between Reisman’s social contexts and Girard’s textual-dramatic ones. Girard’s focus on the *desires* as the objects being selected and introjected is extremely important.

28. Aron, p. 400. Aron’s text, however, is garbled, no doubt due to the translation from English to French and then back to English, so I have supplied Rapoport’s original paragraph. "Introduction" to *On War*, p. 78.

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