



See [Stricom](#) for the source of this image!

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ENGL 293C, Fri 230-320, Spring 2002,
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War is the continuation of politics by others means.
– Karl von Clausewitz

The mass nature of wartime death is useful in many ways. It serves as spectacle, as diversion from the real movements of the War. It provides raw material to be recorded into History, so that children may be taught History as a sequence of violence, battle after battle, and be more prepared for the adult world. Best of all, mass death's a stimulus to just ordinary folks, little fellows, to try 'n' grab a piece of that Pie while they're still here to gobble it up. The true war is a celebration of markets. Organic markets, carefully styled "black" by the professionals.

- Thomas Pynchon

Consider this: the US Marines use an adapted version of Doom as a training simulation. The notion that first person shooter game maps the experience of combat is part of a convergence of media simulation and military logistics. This course presents two possible approaches to the inextricability of war and simulation: 1) First, the military subject: relays between representation and warfare, disciplining the individual body as national body via the language of machinery and networks, national identity as already military identity. Second, simulation space as military space: the military-entertainment complex, media technologies as military (financed, programmed, applied), the logistical construction of the sensorium as militarized perception, 21st information war.

"War is the father of all things," wrote the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Indeed, it seems that we can not conceive of culture without war. The history of a nation, for example, is a history of wars: begun in revolution, sustained in defense and aggression,



culminating in overthrow, commandeered by generals, and so on. History is a trajectory of warfare. This also means: civilization is another name for military operations. Let us say that war plays a crucial role for any conceptualization of culture, acting as a kind of dynamic or "rhetorical provocation" for history to come about. War is the gold standard of culture. Culture loves war as the backdrop against which it thinks itself, and cultural theorists love war as the internal workings of their object of study. War is a way of producing the literal contents of history, "history as such." Yet can we be so sure that we know what war is? For example, and on the one hand, it seems that war is contained as an exception within the political situation. A war must be declared from the normative state of peace and serves certain clear historical and political agendas. On the other hand, there can be any number of undeclared wars (the current war in Afghanistan, of course, but also the recent UN action in Kosovo, and so on) or internal actions following the rhetoric of war (the war on drugs, the war on poverty, and so on). Given the enormous so-called defense budget and the constant massive global deployment of US military forces, it is unclear whether we are ever not in a state of undeclared war.

The cultural affinity for war assumes a particular form in American culture *and* is particularly American. America perfected the mobilization and automation of war technologies, and it may be that American history and the notion of an American identity are inseparable from militarized culture (after all, our government declares our role today is to be "global policemen"). The specific institutions and histories of militarization in America involve the disciplinary production of soldier's body and the warrior's personality. The military is about creating "a few good men." The militarized body-identity is both natural and national. In question is the extent to which notions of American identity, particularly American masculinity, are necessarily military. At the same time, it is necessary to ask what possibilities there are for other bodies and identities. For example: if the soldier's body is inevitably male, at least until quite recently, women nonetheless play a central role in the mechanism throughout its history. The task of this course is to examine specific, historically contingent relays creating militarized bodies/identities. These range from the physical training of the nineteenth century army to recent computer-simulation systems.

War and technology are inseparable. Every attempt to describe the history of technology or to define technology "itself" inevitably turns to a history of war. "Every new technology necessitates a new war," wrote Marshall McLuhan. By extension, war is no more than a side effect of the research, testing, and development of technologies. This also means: technologies inscribe war. In cultural artifacts we find the writing and imaging of war. This course is specifically concerned with these media as *evidence*, with the production of history in the inscribed traces of war. The point is neither to glorify war nor to vilify it – both reactions leave the role of war unexamined – but to understand the centrality of war to our basic concepts of culture and

history, and to examine specific military histories in the institutions of American culture.

Materials Stephen Crane, *Red Badge of Courage*
 Paul Virilio, *The Virilio Reader*
Doom II (get at Walmart, online, etc.)
 Electronic Reserve [ER, [here](#)],
 WWW links



Grading Attendance, Class Participation, 40%
 2 pp Response Paper, 20%
 4 pp Response Paper, 40%

Date	Topic	Read/Watch/Play/Write
1/18	Introduction	"World Trade Center Removed from Flight Simulator" , Microsoft Patch
1/25	War at the Origin: Hobbes/Virilio	Virilio, "Is the Author Dead?," "Military Space"
2/1	The Red Badge	Crane, <i>Red Badge of Courage</i> *
2/8	The Red Badge, cont.	Crane, <i>Red Badge of Courage</i> *. Sandy will distribute notes on Foucault, "Docile Bodies" and "Panopticism"
2/15	Militarization and American Masculinity	Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life". Handout from 1911 <i>Boy Scout Manual</i> (in-class).
2/22		By today: watch <i>Full Metal Jacket</i>. Read Virilio, "The State of Emergency." Also, look at excerpts from Boy Scout Founder Ernest Thompson Seton's "The Woodcraft Manual" [read Preface and chapter I] and compare to

		<u>current Boy Scout description</u>
3/1		Read Virilio, "A Traveling Shot Over Eighty Years." Continue to discuss <i>Full Metal Jacket</i> . Excerpts from other films.
3/8		de Landa, "Economics, Computers, and the War Machine", Virilio, "The Vision Machine." Discuss response paper.
3/15	No class - Sandy in Amsterdam	2 pp response paper due by email to charles.baldwin@mail.wvu.edu
3/22	Simulation and War	Lenoir, "All But War is Simulation" [<i>Configurations</i> 8: 3, on Project Muse database, available online here].
3/29		Spring Break
4/5		Meet in Armstrong 203. Play Close Combat for today! Download demo. And read: Sterling, "War is Virtual Hell", "The Sims Take on Al Queda," "Trying to Improve Training. Army Turns to Hollywood", * * *
4/12		Meet in Armstrong 203. Play Doom II for today! and read Virilio, "Desert Screen,", Marine Doom links: Wired Article , USMC Page , Forbes Article , Cybernetic.co Page .
4/19		No class. Play Marine Doom.
4/26		Read: Virilio, "The Art of the Motor," * Discuss final essay.
5/3		<u>Survival Research Labs</u> . Watch SRL Videos. Discuss essay.
5/7		4 pp response paper due, to Sandy's mailbox or via email to charles.baldwin@mail.wvu.edu



See [SRL](#) for the source of this image!

