

## HOW TO SUCCEED

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### *1. What is victory?*

Victory is essential. Until recently—and to a very large extent, still—to call someone an “historian” *simpliciter* was to say that she dealt above all with accounts of political and military matters. This is certainly true of the fathers of Greek history, Herodotus and Thucydides, with their works centered on the Persian-Greek Wars and the Athenian-Peloponnesian Wars respectively.<sup>1</sup> It would be just as difficult to make sense of, say, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, without some account of the First and Second World Wars, the Cold War and the political maneuverings these each involved. But one of the defining features of politics and war is that they are characterized by success and failure, by victory and defeat. Both politics and war would have little point if there were not at least some sense in which one could end up a winner—which generally entails that someone else has

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<sup>1</sup> This is not, of course, to deny that Herodotus takes economic, cultural and religious matters quite seriously as well—though Thucydides is more of a “purist” in this respect. The other major source of Western historiography, the Hebrew Bible, relates so seriously to matters of war and peace that, for all the differences, success and failure are essential here as well.

become a loser. If there is nothing at stake which can be won or lost, we would not even say that the issue is one of politics or war in the first place. So regardless of what account we may give of the relation of victory-oriented history to other possible approaches, it is hard to imagine a satisfying account of collective human life which does not take the reality and significance of victory for granted.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing the importance of victory, however, is far easier than giving a good explication of it. To restrict ourselves henceforth to the (seemingly) clearer military case, we take it as evident that Napoleon, not Wellington, was defeated at Waterloo; that Meade, not Lee, was victorious at Gettysburg. But we also know that many military outcomes are nowhere near so clear-cut, and for a variety of reasons. At a minimum, there is always the possibility of a draw, whether due to stalemate, changed conditions or just mutual exhaustion. But there are also much deeper ambiguities at work. What, exactly, decided campaigns such as the First World War or Vietnam? Did Russia win or lose the former? This depends, among other things, on what one makes of the fall of the Romanovs and the rise of the Bolsheviks. Did the United States lose or win the latter? This depends, among other things, on what one makes of decolonization in general, of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and of the later dissolution of the Communist Bloc. Once we take into account not only the fog of war but also the frequently murky and contradictory character of peace, it begins to become problematic how victory is possible at all.

This paper examines and rejects naïve realist and conventionalist accounts of victory, and offers instead a Platonic, psycho-ontological approach: success and victory arise from the temporal structures of agency and accompany all human action. Plato proposes in the *Republic* a psychology in which the “victory-loving” (*philonikos*)

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<sup>2</sup> Even the hardest-core *Longue Durée* historians would want to have some account of, for example, the European colonizations of the Western Hemisphere. This seems hard to do without some account of “events” and who won them.

competitive spirit (*thumos*) is one of the three basic elements of the psyche, along with reason and appetites. On this account, even when reasoned beliefs and appetitive desires are sufficient for explaining how action is set into motion, the “friction” of reality can always cause deeds to go astray; there thus remains the additional psychological function of monitoring action and keeping it on track. The role of spirit or *thumos* is to “defend” one’s plans against the vicissitudes of a resisting reality, tracking at each moment the match or mismatch between aims and results, and striving to preserve the fit between them. Recognizing this function, and so taking seriously the Platonic tripartite soul, gives us a richer moral psychology and a better theory of action, which in turn have implications for both ethics and empirical work on cognition. It also allows us to see how spirited self-monitoring and self-correction form the psychological foundation of ontologically real success and victory.

## 2. Naïve realism fails

Naïve realism gets little traction on military victory. Experience with games like chess or capture-the-flag, or the (historically unusual) case of the Allied victory in the Second World War might lead one to imagine that war has a clear and distinct objective: capture your enemy’s capital. Clearly, this often serves as a sufficient condition (though rarely a necessary one), but history yields plenty of counter-examples. The War of 1812, for example, certainly does not count as an American defeat despite the capture and burning of Washington DC. Simple-minded “capture-the-flag” realism would also guarantee that France both won and lost the Second World War (which result, if accepted as true, could easily lead to a general skepticism about victory).

A slightly more sophisticated realism might look for battlefield results, such as conquering territory and inflicting casualties. Here

the ready counter-example is the First World War. Germany inflicted far more casualties on France and England alone (not counting Russia) than she suffered. Moreover, at the time of the Armistice, no Allied forces were even on German soil, not to mention occupying Berlin. But the German leadership was nevertheless so convinced it had been defeated by the so-called Hundred Days Offensive of 1918 that it sued for peace in every direction, eventually leading to Armistice and Versailles.

Even though the kind of realism about victory that emphasizes combat results is clearly insufficient, it is surprisingly widely held. Indeed, after the First World War, the myth spread that the German army, since it had neither been shattered to pieces nor forced to cede large tracts of German territory, could not have been actually defeated; it therefore must have been “stabbed in the back” from the home front (probably by such miscreants as Socialists and Jews). The popularity of this fiction rested precisely on belief in a naïve realism about victory. Large parts of the German public simply could not accept the thought that defeat can arise from anything but direct conquest and military destruction. False beliefs about victory not only are quite widespread (apparently) but can also have serious political consequences.<sup>3</sup>

There are better realisms that still fail. One might look at military practice and judge victory accordingly. War-fighting seems to be all about raising and training troops, getting them into the field, engaging with the enemy, and compelling his forces to retreat, surrender or suffer destruction. The victor, it would seem, must be the one who did this best. The emphasis then falls, not just on results in the field—conquests and casualties—but on fighting power and

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<sup>3</sup> False beliefs about victory may account for widespread popular acceptance of the stab-in-the-back myth, but they are still insufficient to account for the promulgation of the myth by military men such as Ludendorff, who should have known better. This issue is beyond the scope of the present essay, however.

military ability. It was apparently the Allies’ superior and growing war-fighting ability—including armored tanks and American manpower—that led to German capitulation in 1918.

There are various problems with this position. In the first place, such military abilities are rarely as “clear and distinct” as a naïve realist should want them to be.<sup>4</sup> Worse, even if they were, they would still be insufficient to the purpose, and would admit of counter-examples. There is no dimension of war-fighting power—manpower reserves, weaponry, mobility and deployment, command and control, intelligence, supply, strategic resources and capabilities, etc.—on which American forces in Vietnam during the 1960s did not enjoy a distinct advantage. Indeed, head-to-head engagements between the US Army and the PAVN almost always proved this superiority.<sup>5</sup> But it is far from obvious that this superiority was sufficient to constitute victory. Indeed, ongoing persistence in the face of such American superiority served, unto itself, as a form of *Vietnamese* victory.

These are certainly not the only accounts available to the naïve realist. Still, these analyses suggest that no clear and distinct set of positive facts is likely to be enough to constitute victory, and naïve realism in this area will probably turn out as a failure. Less naïve realisms will be considered below.

### 3. *Conventionalism fails*

Naïve realist accounts of victory thus run into serious difficulties, but conventionalist accounts fair little better. Conflict seems, on its face, an unpromising area to get things done by agreement, since

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<sup>4</sup> In the dictum (Mao’s?) that power is mass times cohesion, there is no “clear and distinct” way to measure cohesion other than hindsight or tautology.

<sup>5</sup> Summers 1982, 1.

disagreement seems a pre-condition for real hostilities; fighting without a dispute is sport, not conflict. Still, the matter is more tricky than that, since actual conflicts are very frequently concluded by treaties or other agreements. The claim that will be advanced is that some conflicts are manifestly *not* settled by convention, and that where hostilities *are* concluded by agreement, this agreement expresses the victory but does not constitute it. Agreement is only possible because one side has already won.

Before considering the problems with conventionalism about victory, let us note that there are many reasons such a position seems tempting. In the first place, recent military conflicts have tended to conclude by agreement. In general, cessation of hostilities—be its expression a new alliance, a peace treaty, an armistice, a cease-fire, a momentary truce or some kind of tacitly-accepted *modus vivendi*—seems intimately tied up with some meeting of the minds, however minimal. Often, the identity of the victor is clearly enshrined in the terms of these agreements. What could be a clearer statement of victory and defeat than who cedes territory, who allows passage, who pays indemnities?<sup>6</sup> It is tempting to think that there is nothing to victory besides this agreement.

Agreements can play many other roles in war as well. Conventions can govern the initiation of hostilities, as well as their conduct and resolution. Often, the exigencies of conflict put these conventions to the test: attacks are initiated without declaration of war, neutral territories are violated, prisoners are executed, guerillas fight without uniforms, civilians become deliberate targets and ambulances are used to transport weapons. But these lapses just show the extent to which even military hostilities are governed by conventions of various kinds. New conventions can even arise in the midst of war, such as the “live-and-let-live” policy that came into existence during

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<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, however, the terms of the treaty are carefully arranged precisely to *avoid* explicitly pointing out who is the victor. Saving face also has a role here.

some of the trench-fighting of the First World War.<sup>7</sup> If conventions can play such an important role in the conduct of war, it is not absurd to imagine that they can play a similar role in its conclusion.

One version of the conventionalist view of victory is offered by a thinker no less than Carl von Clausewitz.<sup>8</sup> At the outset of *On War* he insists that war is always fought for a reason, in the last analysis a *political* reason, so that (famously) “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.”<sup>9</sup> But his own depiction of the nature of war, offered in place of a definition, leads to self-contradictory conclusions:

I shall not begin by expounding a pedantic, literary definition of war, but go straight to the heart of the matter, to the duel. War is nothing but a duel on a large scale. Countless duels go to make up a war, but a picture of it as a whole can be formed by imagining a pair of wrestlers. Each tries through physical force to compel the other do his will; his *immediate* aim is to *throw* his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance.

*War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.* (1.1, 75)

Victory is success in this compulsion of wills. If so, and the willingness of our enemy to do our will constitutes victory, then it is only a verbal dispute whether this “meeting of the minds” should be labeled conventionalism or something else. No one wins until both sides agree who the victor is, that is, until one side capitulates.

But let us take Clausewitz’s comparison at its face meaning. Is the aim of the duelist to compel the other to do one’s will? Perhaps this would be true if there were no difference between dueling and wrestling (which Clausewitz too readily assimilates). But cannot the aim of duelist be to *kill* his opponent? The loser of duel can lose

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<sup>7</sup> Famously discussed by Axelrod 1984, 73–87.

<sup>8</sup> The present discussion is not meant as an adequate treatment of Clausewitz’s thought. At issue, rather, is the particular view and argument for which he here serves as a clear and authoritative spokesman.

<sup>9</sup> Clausewitz 1976 [1832], 87, 1.1. Subsequent parenthetical references are to book, chapter and page numbers of this edition.

without capitulating, without agreeing to anything, merely by being killed. It seems that the point of the duel is precisely that neither party is prepared to do the other's will, so that the only reconciliation possible is the death of one party or the other. One can choose to duel precisely so that, even in defeat, one does *not* accommodate the other's will—death being, in the relevant sense, preferable to such a “meeting of the minds.” Of course, a duel is itself a conventional creation; war, however, seems not to be.<sup>10</sup>

If this is so, then Clausewitz's political definition of war seems to have led him astray. Because he takes war to be a means to some political end, there can never really be a need to fight if only the enemy will concede whatever it is that underlies the *casus belli*. The real aim of war is always somewhere in the realm of policy, and the compulsion of the opposing will is a means to this policy. “Throwing” the enemy on the battlefield is thus only a means to a means of achieving some policy.

Unfortunately, some wars are duels to the death, and politics can formulate destruction as an aim in itself. There was no agreement or convention through which Carthage agreed that Rome was the victor of the Third Punic War. By the end of the war in 146 BCE, there was no Carthage to express any opinion on the matter. The only opinion that counted, ultimately, was that said to have been expressed so insistently by Cato the Elder. Conventionalism similarly gets no traction on the defeat of Judea after the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, or on the fall of Troy too, whenever it was that the Achaeans sacked it. Annihilation of the enemy pretty much guarantees that he is the loser, regardless of his opinions about same.<sup>11</sup> Death, perhaps not surprisingly, is the god of the battlefield.

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<sup>10</sup> War, or something very like it, seems to exist even in the chimpanzee world. See Goodall 2000, 98–111.

<sup>11</sup> Nietzsche's speculation that the spread of Christianity to Rome is a form of Judaic revenge does not obviate the point. It is only after one is defeated that one seeks revenge.

These counter-examples show the unimportance of neither agreements in war in general, nor of victory through convention (such as surrender) in particular. Rather, they show that conventionalism about victory cannot be the whole story. Put another way, even if most wars end when one side capitulates (to some greater lesser degree), this begs the question for the reasons. *Why* did the loser capitulate? The candidate reason to be pursued below is that that side was *already losing*.

One might object that all the above examples are ancient. Perhaps the style of warfare has changed since Antiquity, and we no longer expect that conquest by an enemy army always leads to utter obliteration. In reply to this objection, we can note, first off, that such changes cannot alter anything essential about the character of victory, since a successful theory of victory must account for ancient examples as well. So what is going on in the modern period? Perhaps the changes in question point to the possibility of conventionally instituting a conventional simulacrum of victory (which convention only holds good, of course, only as long as it is not violated).<sup>12</sup> Surrender, for example, can be accepted by convention as a proxy for death. But, like other conventions, this one can often be flouted in war with impunity.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the fate during the Second World War of Nanking and the Ukraine—as well as that of Nagasaki and Dresden, for that matter—should give us pause before asserting how far we have really come in changing the fundamental character of military victory.

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<sup>12</sup> The ancient world also knew of conventional victory. In the *Iliad*, for example, both sides are willing to let the war be settled by a duel between Paris and Menelaus. But when the Trojans do not abide by the consequences of Paris' defeat, the convention breaks down and the pre-existing, realist victory returns to the forefront.

<sup>13</sup> As a recent example, no Jewish surrender would have been accepted by the SS as a proxy for death. Surrender here was rather just the prelude for the real thing.

There is another problem. The duel to the death seems to raise the possibility of an even deeper skepticism. We might think that death in combat is the clearest kind of “natural” defeat. After all, when one participant is killed in a duel, it is not merely due to convention that the other is the victor. Or is it? Might it not be that, since there is no party opposite to accept the reality of defeat, there is actually only victory in such a duel because third-party on-lookers agree that there is?

This kind of radical conventionalism can be made to apply to war as well. An historian could plausibly argue that, for example, the Vietnam War was actually an American *victory* because of its role in deterring Soviet adventurism, supporting the doctrine of containment, and thus leading to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. What are we to make of such a claim? That, rather than the victors writing history, it is actually the *historians* who crown the victors? If this is right, then only some kind of conventional agreement among third parties—historians being only the most (potentially) distant observers—determines what is and is not military success.

This radical version shares the flaws of the other conventionalisms. In each case, there is already some set of pre-existing facts which are given beyond the scope of the relevant agreement or disagreement. No interpretation of success or failure in Vietnam can evade accounting for the departure of US forces from Saigon in April 1975 and the subsequent arrival of PAVN forces. No “stab-in-the-back” theory of the First World War can avoid an explanation of the Second Battle of the Marne and the subsequent series of German retreats. Surely facts of this sort are susceptible to varying—even wildly varying—interpretations. But their very existence raises the possibility that it is the reality of victory or defeat *in the facts themselves* which third parties subsequently *discover* and to which they react, rather than that victory is constituted by some conventional agreement long afterwards.

The prior existence of military facts, as important as it is for third parties, is even more immediately relevant for the actual belligerents. These facts are what can lead the parties to change their minds and come to an agreement before one side or the other is destroyed. Since there had to be some disagreement before hostilities began, we need to invoke facts—usually on the battlefield—to explain any later meeting of the minds. Surely we do not believe that one side or other just needed more time: “Now that we’ve discussed it further amongst ourselves, we’ve concluded that your claim to Alsace-Lorraine is perfectly legitimate. Sorry for taking so long to get back to you.” Of course history is over-determined, but even if there were such deliberations it seems unlikely that the reality of conflict would have no impact on them. If nothing else, the price paid for every moment of ongoing warfare is an incentive for hastening the deliberations.

Victory, of some kind or degree, makes agreement possible rather than the other way around. Agreements reached at the end of hostilities gain whatever staying power they have from a shared sense of who has *already* had the better of preceding fighting. Neither belligerent is likely to change his mind, suing for peace or altering demands, until the expected costs of continuing the conflict exceed the expected gains. But here is the point: bringing the enemy to this sort of pessimistic cost-benefit analysis just *is* a form of victory.

Luttwak gives a contrapositive version of this argument in his provocative 1999 essay “Give War a Chance.” Until war is carried to the point of sufficient exhaustion or suffering, Luttwak argues, neither side has the incentive to make concessions that could bring about a more-lasting peace: “Hopes of military success must fade for accommodation to become more attractive than further combat” (36). He applies this lesson specifically to the ironically destructive effects of some of the “peace-making” initiatives in the Balkans during the 1990s.

The Dayton accords [of 1995] ... have condemned Bosnia to remain divided into three rival armed camps, with combat suspended

momentarily but a state of hostility prolonged indefinitely. Since no side is threatened by defeat and loss, none has a sufficient incentive to negotiate a lasting settlement [and so] the dominant priority is to prepare for future war rather than to reconstruct devastated economies and ravaged societies. Uninterrupted war would certainly have caused further suffering and led to an unjust outcome from one perspective or another, but it would also have led to a more stable situation.... Peace takes hold only when war is truly over. (37–8)

This insight can be stated abstractly. War, like any human action, has not only causes but reasons, and thus cannot truly end without a change in those reasons. Now there are many ways in which one can bring about a change in another's actions by changing the other's reasons. Military conflict, as Clausewitz insists, is often precisely the attempt to change another's reasons through force and the threat of force. Whatever the facts are which succeed in changing the opponent's reasons, these facts are the ones that constitute the victory. Victory is not the mere changing of another's mind—and the agreements or conventions to which this can lead—but rather the facts in the world that constitute the *reason* for the other's change of mind.

The outstanding question is then what kinds of facts these can be. If both conventionalism and naïve realism have been ruled out, we must be seeking something other than simple positive facts. The facts we will now examine concern the unfolding of human action through time, as obstacles are met and overcome—or not.

#### 4. Friction

In addition to dealing with many obviously military topics, such as marching and attacking, fortifying and utilizing terrain, *On War* also confronts central ethical and theoretical problems whose significance goes far beyond the battlefield. Among this work's central theoretical innovations is the concept of *friction*, which, though it surely applies

to warfare, is more properly to be thought of as part of the general theory of human action. This problematic concept, Clausewitz writes, is “a force that theory can never quite define,” since it “is the only concept that corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper” (1.7, 120, 119). *Friction is the theoretical name for the gap between theory and reality*. One way of putting this is to distinguish conceptual simplicity from ease of achievement: “Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war” (1.7, 119).

Instead of definitions, Clausewitz offers examples and metaphors. The frustrated traveler, for example, shows how friction can arise in the most seemingly innocuous of activities:

Imagine a traveler who late in the day decides to cover two more stages before nightfall. Only four or five hours more, on a paved highway with relays of horses: it should be an easy trip. But at the next station he finds no fresh horses, or only poor ones; the country grows hilly, the road bad, night falls, and finally after many difficulties he is only too glad to reach a resting place with any kind of primitive accommodation. It is much the same in war. Countless minor incidents—the kind you can never really foresee—combine to lower the general level of performance, so that one always falls far short of the intended goal. Iron will-power can overcome this friction; it pulverizes every obstacle, but of course, it wears down the machine as well. (1.7, 119)

The particulars of travel change with time and place, but the threat of unforeseen delays from quirks of weather, people and machinery remains familiar—even before we re-read the *Odyssey*.

But, of course, the vulnerability of our intended actions to unforeseen obstacles is not restricted to travel. Since we have neither overcome chance nor achieved omniscience, activity in the real world is always subject to the unforeseen, the unforeseeable. We are in practice always at risk of falling short of our aims. Thus, in the presence of friction, it is insufficient merely to set out to act; success

in action demands something more, what Clausewitz here calls *will-power* (Plato's terminology will be discussed below). The more complex and large-scale the action, the more points of contact there are for the unpredictable to insert itself and impede things, creating more and more friction. Even the simplest things can become difficult:

This tremendous friction, which cannot, as in mechanics, be reduced to a few points, is everywhere in contact with chance, and brings about effects that cannot be measured, just because they are largely due to chance. One, for example, is the weather. Fog can prevent the enemy from being seen in time, a gun from firing when it should, a report from reaching the commanding officer. Rain can prevent a battalion from arriving, make another late by keeping it not three but eight hours on the march, ruin a cavalry charge by bogging the horses down in mud, etc. (1.7, 120)

Friction is the general term for all the different reasons that explain the gap between outcome and intention, between real action and action "on paper." We need only imagine Clausewitz's stage-coach journeyer subjected to adverse weather to see him confronting difficulties similar to those Clausewitz describes on the battlefield: in the fog he might miss a fork in the road, and then in the rain slide off the pavement, only to get stuck in the mud. Part of Clausewitz's point is that warfare quantitatively magnifies a general feature of action, and this even before we consider the active interference of the enemy's hostile will. The first conflict is between human will-power and the world's impersonal friction.

As a metaphor for the difference between war in theory and in reality, Clausewitz compares peacetime military exercises to the laughable spectacle of teaching someone to swim while on dry land:

Action in war is like movement in a resistant element. Just as the simplest and most natural of movements, walking, cannot easily be performed in water, so in war it is difficult for normal efforts to achieve even moderate results. A genuine theorist is like a swimming teacher, who makes his pupils practice motions on land that are meant

to be performed in water. To those who are not thinking of swimming the motions will appear grotesque and exaggerated. By the same token, theorists who have never swum, or who have not learned to generalize from experience, are impractical and even ridiculous: they teach only what is already common knowledge: how to walk. (1.7, 120)

Though Clausewitz's explicit aim is to distinguish the unique properties of war, the logic of his argument is general. Where there is resistance, "the simple and most natural of movements" will become difficult and can lead to failure, while the movements that are more likely to succeed "will appear grotesque and exaggerated" if we do not keep in mind the resistance of the surrounding medium. This caution applies not just to military drill, but to all the complex and nit-picking routines, in whatever field of endeavor, that express the learning of long, often bitter, experience: the sterilization and layout of surgical implements, the lengthy ritual that prepares an airplane for take-off, the tedious scales that every musician practices, even the arcane practice of double-entry bookkeeping. Where unforeseen changes can make the obvious become difficult or even disastrous, appropriate preparation will have all the elegance of practicing swimming on dry land. And even the best-prepared will need to remain on their guard to get to the end successfully.

##### 5. *Monitoring action through time*

The problems Clausewitz addresses under the rubric of friction are certainly not unfamiliar in the philosophy of action. O'Shaughnessy, for example, has offered reasons—some Clausewitzian in spirit, others more radical—for seeing all action as open and perpetually susceptible to unforeseen errors and interference.<sup>14</sup> These and related arguments can lead to questions such as whether *acting* is a success-

<sup>14</sup> O'Shaughnessy 1973, 365–366.

verb, or *trying* ubiquitous. For present purposes, let us attempt to side-step such linguistic and metaphysical concerns.

Action that is not an armchair exercise is fallible, but some actions are more—and differently—fallible than others. Some actions, like some missiles, can be called “ballistic” in that they must be aimed as well as possible in advance and once “launched” they will either hit or miss on their own. One cannot intervene mid-course on their behalf, and should any obstacles or resistance crop up, there is no longer anything one can do. Actual missiles (like a thrown baseball) or missives (sent email or a published book) are the clearest examples of this type of action. Other actions, by contrast, can be “guided” while still “in flight” and unforeseen deviations from the right trajectory can be corrected in real time. Locomotion, either by foot or by car, serves as an easy paradigm. When friction—either of the literal, mechanical kind, or of the more abstract Clausewitzian variety—begins to affect such actions, one who notices this can push to set things back on track. For present purposes, these latter, “guided” actions enjoy a logical priority, since most of what is done in the “ballistic” case is just an attempt to foresee what one would do if guidance were still possible. Indeed, “ballistic” actions are (in practice) limited to those endeavors in which friction is sufficiently minimal.

Fallible, friction-subject action therefore requires a “guidance system,” the core of which is temporally-extended monitoring of a rather sophisticated and sensitive kind. Action which is not “fire-and-forget” unfolds through an extended time period. Not incidentally, most of the aims of action are also in some way extended.<sup>15</sup> Some actions, such as bodily movements and locomotion, are spatially extended, while others permit of what may be called a logical articulation: completing the steps of a recipe, editing the chapters of a

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<sup>15</sup> If a goal is truly atomic, then action that aims at it has a ballistic character—unless, of course, it is the kind of aim at which one cannot fail.

manuscript or simply getting to the end of the sentence.<sup>16</sup> For such extended actions, one can speak of proportional progress toward completion.<sup>17</sup> This proportion undergoes some degree of incremental change at each moment of time, depending on how quickly or slowly one is progressing. But just as one can have in mind the end-state or goal sought, so one can also have a time-relative sense of how far one should have gotten by now, or of how much progress one expected in the recent stretch of time.<sup>18</sup> The comparison of one’s expectation of progress with the actual results yields a measure of comparative incremental progress, a measure that serves as the foundation of moment-by-moment self-monitoring.<sup>19</sup>

Just as the simplest actions are bodily movements, so the simplest kind of self-monitoring is based on our proprioceptive and vestibular senses. These senses allow us to perceive directly the position of our

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<sup>16</sup> Both spatially- and logically-extended actions are, of course, *also* temporally extended. Some actions, however, seem to be “degenerate” in that they are typified *only* by a temporal articulation, such as holding one’s breath for thirty seconds or waiting somewhere for fifteen minutes. Though I do not believe such temporal actions are inherently more complicated, they do lead to some confusion in the present context; their proportional progress is not measured by something like a speed (progress per time) but rather by a pure temporal “exchange rate,” e.g. a measure of how many seconds per minute. Ordinarily, of course, this is trivial: 60 seconds per minute. But occasionally there are problems with the temporal exchange rate that are fascinating and complex, as perhaps hinted by Kipling’s famous couplet: “If you can fill the unforgiving minute/with sixty seconds’ worth of distance run.” A fuller accounting of temporal exchange rates is beyond the scope of the present undertaking.

<sup>17</sup> There are many ways to gauge this proportional progress—by distance, by effort, by time, by likelihood of success, etc. Especially for logically articulated actions, the correct way to assess proportional progress tends to be controversial. The task of properly assigning credit to parts for their contributions to the success of the whole will resurface in the discussion of the battlefield below. I leave open the extent of the class of actions for which such a proportional progress to completion can be defined.

<sup>18</sup> These different measures are useful in different circumstances. See note 17 above.

<sup>19</sup> This is just a normalized time derivative.

body and limbs, so that, for example, we can touch our nose with our eyes closed. During the course of such motions, we perceive our comparative incremental progress transparently. As long as things are going well, our perception indicates precisely this, and if something does *not* go as it should, this fact immediately presents itself. If we have misjudged the rise of a stair, we do not need to look at our foot to see that it is out of place, nor do we need to feel any pain from stubbing our toe. The sense that things are “off” is imminent in the unsuccessfully-completed movement itself, and we directly perceive that our foot has not moved as intended. Correcting such a blunder might be achieved fastest by looking, but even in the dark we can grope our way up the stairs using only our proprioceptive skills (together with some trial and error).

The human nervous system employs lower-level self-monitoring of which we are rarely conscious. Motor-reflex loops at the level of the spinal cord prevent or diminish all kinds of self-defeating motions by coordinating the flexing and relaxing of muscles and by using immediate sensory input. Until robots incorporated feedback circuits similar to those in the spinal cord, they did not “know” to stop pushing on their arms even when they encountered an obstacle impeding their path.<sup>20</sup> Even more familiar, we know how quickly our hand jumps away from a hot stove without our explicit thought or decision—as it were, “by itself.” Our motions are surrounded by a halo of counterfactuals, so that when something goes wrong the damage can be minimized.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Princeton robotics colloquium, spring 1987.

<sup>21</sup> Wittgenstein sarcastically suggests that the kinesthetic feelings accompanying action might be all there is to the will (2009 [1953], 169, §621). He leaves out (among other things) this self-monitoring, which though founded on those kinesthetic feelings, is ultimately distinct from them. This function is more closely connected to what Clausewitz calls *willpower* than to any voluntarist doctrine of the *will*.

Ongoing self-monitoring as the basis for timely self-correction reappears on many levels of our activity. Just above the neural processes which are nearly inaccessible to consciousness are the acquired motor skills that can be called our “mother tongue,” such as chewing and walking. If we pause for a moment to consider the damage that can arise from errors in either of these activities—presumably we all know what it is to gag or to trip—we see how vital the imperative to self-correction must be. Our lives literally depend on getting these actions right, and on correcting any mistakes in a timely fashion.

As we move to higher and more complex levels of activity, the acquisition of skills depends critically on learning to sense deviations *as* deviations, and to feel immediately how to correct errors. The development of expertise in just about any field—shooting a basket, playing the guitar, driving a car, making a sales-pitch, writing an essay—follows a trajectory from the rote application of rules to a finely-nuanced sense of fitness and appropriateness.<sup>22</sup> The shift from explicit and deliberate monitoring to absorption in the task itself and unselfconsciously sensing how well things are going typifies the highest stage of expertise.<sup>23</sup>

Since most of us are not merely experts of day-to-day life, but masters as well, our self-monitoring is generally transparent and silent. As fully functional adults, we do not usually pay attention to our proprioceptive sensations as such, nor to our ability to balance on two feet, nor even to such delicate context-dependent social skills such as how far away to stand from a recently-met colleague at an academic reception. Rather, we position and move our bodies immediately and transparently. When we really know what we are about, the actual pace of progress coincides with our expectations at

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<sup>22</sup> Dreyfus S. E. & Dreyfus H. L. 1980, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1980, 12–14. The possibility of higher stages is considered in Dreyfus 2008.

every moment (almost), so that our everyday actions are smooth and error-free, nearly frictionless.<sup>24</sup> Such daily “smooth sailing” is actually the norm for adults, and our monitoring of comparative incremental progress is thus silent; it has nothing to say other than “things are going OK.”

“How are you?” “Fine, and yourself?”

In general, we are “absorbed” in doing things successfully without explicitly paying any attention to this fact.<sup>25</sup>

Our mastery of everyday activities, and consequent absorption in them, tempts us to forget our silent monitoring. So, for example, Wittgenstein rightly insists that, ordinarily, I do not *try* to raise my arm.<sup>26</sup> But all this means is that I do not expect any friction, and generally do not experience any. My self-monitoring is so silent that I need not be at all aware of it, and can pay attention to other matters, performing my bodily movements with effortless absorption. If it turns out that (unbeknownst to me) my sleeve is actually caught on a nail, and I do not succeed in raising my arm, then it now *becomes* correct to say that, though I did not raise my arm, I did indeed *try* to raise it.<sup>27</sup> The meaningfulness of *trying* is part of the new context that arises with the reality of friction, as is the immediate kinesthetic perception of what has gone wrong. But that which makes it possible for me to notice the resistance and (perhaps) respond in time to

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<sup>24</sup> The accuracy of our basic skills is of a very high order. Since I live on a third-floor walk-up with 49 stairs, if my stair-walking skills were no better than 99% accurate, I would be stumbling once a day. But even my four-year-old does far better than that.

<sup>25</sup> The term “absorption” in the context comes from Heidegger 1962 [1927], 80, §12. For an account of the ways in which friction and failure move one from absorption to explicit reflection, see 102–107, §16.

<sup>26</sup> Wittgenstein 2009, 170, §622.

<sup>27</sup> Schroeder 2001, 214 points out how talk of trying *becomes* appropriate once the possibility of difficulties is raised. This does not mean that such talk was already meaningful before.

prevent damage to my sleeve—rather than just raising my arm and then remarking “O goodness, what was that tearing sound?”—this is my ongoing self-monitoring, and this is not brought about by the new situation. Its results—perceiving how things are *not* on track—are themselves exactly what’s new.

Everyday actions *can*, and every now and then, *do*, go wrong. We can trip on our stairs or on our tongues, we can burn our lips (in various senses), and then, the very moment that things go wrong, we are immediately and almost instantly aware of this fact. We become aware of deviations in a maximally timely manner because we are, in at least some sense, always looking out for them.<sup>28</sup>

### 6. *Plato on How to Succeed*

The aim of all this self-monitoring is simple: success. Action which is subject to friction, and is therefore liable to being thrown off track, can only succeed if such friction is met by timely, often vigorous, intervention. Our monitoring of comparative incremental progress serves not only as a friction *detector*, but also points us to what has gone wrong, and in what way. It highlights deviations in a conspicuous manner and thus enables corrective reactions of maximal timeliness.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The usual objections to unconscious mental processes—of say, a Freudian variety—do not apply here, for two reasons. First, there is a robust and reliable correlation between errors in action and their detection. If we fail to notice ourselves committing an error, we usually take this failure to be what needs explanation, rather than our previous success in noticing other errors. Second, there is nothing *in principle* unconscious about such self-monitoring. In fact, it is only when we become masters of a skill that we can become absorbed in it. We can generally *choose* to pay attention to how well we are performing any skill, though usually at the price of deteriorating performance.

<sup>29</sup> This really only works straightforwardly for tasks whose error surface is linearizable, or effectively a manifold. Most logically articulated tasks lack this

The importance of speed here must not be underrated. We need merely consider the damage we featherless bipeds can suffer by falling to see how swiftly we need to be able to recover our balance, and thence to be reminded of how well we in fact *do* recover (most of the time). The same goes for actions as simple as chewing and as sophisticated as flying an airplane. The least deviations from the proper trajectory can generate terrible consequences with blinding rapidity, and our ability to succeed depends on detecting, understanding and responding to such deviations as fast, if not faster.

Successful correction of deviant action often requires resources in addition to awareness and speed, such as bodily force, mental focus and emotional energy. Even if errors are identified and understood in a timely fashion, recovery from them can depend on mustering the power to overcome the unforeseen obstacle or friction. This mustering may be as minimal as putting one's second hand onto the steering wheel, or it may be so all-inclusive as to demand every muscle in the body. It may also require mustering mental efforts, such as steeling one's determination, narrowing one's focus and ignoring other concerns. Mental resources are especially important in the case of logically articulated actions, since here the map from detected error to proper compensatory reaction is not always straightforward. In some cases, the powers mustered may also have an affective or emotional edge. Sometimes, success requires making clear to others—and oneself—the degree of one's concern, optimism, upset, determination or anger.<sup>30</sup>

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feature, and so require a more sophisticated translation from error detection to guiding corrective action.

<sup>30</sup> The interpersonal aspect of success in action is fabulously complex. Just as an indication of this, success may require inspiring others to work harder, it may require apologizing, and it may require intimidating others into backing down. Clearly, success then requires both finding the right words and finding the right tone in which to convey them. A fuller analysis of these matters is eminently desirable.

In many cases, there are no clear borderlines between the different elements of response, since overcoming a single obstacle may require an overall muster of all these resources. There is then little point in distinguishing between the specific contributions of the increase in pulse rate and muscular tension, the focusing of attention and other mental energies and the short, decisive tone in speech, attitude and movement. Frequently, one musters this whole interconnected bundle of powers together, and there is even a single physiological channel “built in,” designed to activate all these at once: adrenaline. Though this stress channel is important for many kinds of interventions, it is surely not definitive. Indeed, in some very important cases, the endocrine reaction is simply too slow. In the case of car accidents, for example, the heart-pounding and hand-quivering usually sets in *after* all the action is already over. Whatever success one may have in correcting the errors in such a case, the resources mustered will need to be the fastest ones, primarily those of perception and skill already discussed above. The less time there is, the more sensitive and “tuned in” we need to be.

There is thus a systematic unity to the complex of heightened states and mustered abilities that is essential to success. Every action depends on its own associated skill set, but pretty much regardless of the specific action, and of one's level of skill, the process of self-monitoring and self-correction has a uniform structure. Except to the rank beginner who has no idea what one is trying to achieve, one's comparative incremental progress constantly forms the basis for a sense of whether things are going well or are “on track.” For most of us most of the time, things go well and we have no sense of deviation, opposition or friction. But whenever something unexpected comes up—the bus fails to arrive on time, we trip on a stair, the key won't turn, the proposal refuses to get written—then we sense that something is wrong, and (to a greater degree as our skill increases) just what is wrong and what would set things right. All of this we are potentially aware of in a transparent way. Similarly, the resources

needed to cope with difficulties are mustered from us immediately and transparently. We don't need to think "Focus on balance" to catch ourselves before we fall; we don't need to decide to get angry at the abusive bureaucrat (it is often—though not always—useful to decide *not* to get angry); and we don't choose to push more blood to our brains and muscles as we leap to snatch a wayward child away from traffic. The capacities we have for overcoming obstacles are mustered as part of our coping with the task at hand. In extreme cases, like life-threatening emergencies, we may even cause damage to ourselves without realizing it; our "mustering" capacity at the extreme includes the brain's ability to knock out the pain sensations that usually prevent us from hurting ourselves.<sup>31</sup>

Here is an example of this success-seeking complex at work. In a large organization, important documents may have to undergo a lengthy process before they are complete. If I know that (say) the proposal is due by a certain time, but also know that it needs to be approved, proofread and laid out by then, that I can feel that things are already not "on track" when part two is taking longer to draft than I feel it should. My "sense" that things are not going well may be capable of rational articulation—it should be so-and-so many words, it must touch on the following three points, etc.—but at first my sense has the character of a direct perception (if I am experienced enough to know what I am doing). Often, even before the perception is articulable at all, my sense of comparative incremental progress has already detected friction and begun to muster resources for getting things back on track. My affect changes and I begin to feel and act stressed. I become more focused, my heart rate goes up, I get more "edgy," both impatient with myself and a little snappish toward my colleagues. The perception of failure (partial, hopefully temporary) is

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<sup>31</sup> This is closely related Clausewitz's point quoted above that, even where willpower succeeds in pulverizing obstacles and overcoming friction, the military machine is itself worn down and damaged by precisely this tenacity.

grounded in ongoing self-monitoring, and it gears me immediately, often unconsciously, for reaction and attempted recovery. I need to push harder to get back "on track." I am now fighting for victory.

What is the name of this systematic unity, the psychic complex that aims at success through self-monitoring, self-mustering and self-correcting? It seems to have no one name in English, but Plato identifies it as a coherent part of the psyche and calls it, in Greek, *thumos*. In the *Republic* and elsewhere Plato suggests that the best account of the living, acting human psyche recognizes three main divisions: not only calculating reason and bodily appetite but also fighting *thumos*—for which *spirit* is a traditional, if confusing, translation.<sup>32</sup> The core feature of *thumos*—just like the complex we've been examining—is its *philonikia*, love of victory (compare to reason's *philosophia* or love of wisdom).<sup>33</sup> Ideally, Plato claims, one's *thumos* is like a well-trained puppy: keen of senses, fast in the chase, strong and determined in confrontation, gentle and friendly when all is well (375a–e).<sup>34</sup> It doesn't matter what the obstacle or opponent is; all serious attempts to succeed share this family resemblance: canine.

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<sup>32</sup> Plato presents the tripartite soul through a variety of images. In the *Phaedrus*, the three parts are compared to a charioteer (reason) struggling to drive two horses, one white and noble (*thumos*), the other black, monstrous and misshapen (lust and appetite). In the *Timaeus*, the comparison is physiological: reason resides in the head, *thumos* in the lungs and heart of the thorax, and the appetites in the abdomen. In the *Republic*, of course, the comparison is to a polis, with its economic workers, military guardians and philosopher-kings. The tripartite soul in general and the role of *thumos* within it in particular are still poorly understood. The best works so far are Cooper 1984, Hobbs 2001 and Burnyeat 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Slings 2003, 581b. Subsequent parenthetical references are to Stephanus numbers of this edition, translations from which are my own.

<sup>34</sup> The *Republic* has much to say about how one's *thumos* can come to be ideally configured, and about the many ways in which it can go wrong. Instead of like a guard-dog, one can end up like a wild lion, like a coiled snake or like a wheedling ape. *Republic* 590a–b.

The primary virtue of *thumos* Plato calls *andreia*—usually translated as *courage*, *manliness* or *fortitude*. Of this, Plato provides an analysis in terms that fit well with the foregoing analysis. *Andreia*, the *Republic* suggests, depends on “preserving one’s opinions” or “saving one’s expectations,” regardless of the various obstacles and pressures that would push one away from these previously articulated goals.<sup>35</sup> At every moment, one’s comparative incremental progress is a measure of how well one’s opinions are or are not being preserved. Making sure that things stay “on track” can be described somewhat poetically as “rescuing” one’s goals from whatever friction might threaten them. Indeed, if we take the most extreme cases, such as those on the battlefield, there arises the most serious threat to an agent’s success: that the one will turn into one’s own worst enemy. Instead of preserving one’s opinions about (say) how a brave and loyal soldier should behave—“Charge that hill!”—one might *not* preserve one’s opinions and instead just *change one’s mind*: “No way I’m going out there.” This is perhaps the hardest case for *andreia* and here is how Plato glosses it:

The city then displays *andreia* through a part of itself, because of that part’s having a power of the sort that preserves through everything the opinion about the dreadful, that it is the same and of the same kind such as the lawmaker transmitted in their education. Or don’t you call that *andreia*? —I do not, he said, completely understand what you said, but say again.

Preservation of some kind, I mean, said I, is what *andreia* is. —What kind of preservation?

That of the opinion as to what and what kinds of things are dreadful which has come about due to the law through education. By

<sup>35</sup> *Sôtêrian ... tês doxês*, *Republic* 429c. *Doxa* is generally used to mean *opinion* or even *belief*, but can also be used to mean *expectation*. In this context there is little room for distinguishing the two, since at most we have opinions of what is expected to be terrible. The locution “saving the opinions” can be profitably compared to that of “saving the phenomena” (which appears first in Simplicius).

preservation through everything I meant preserving it when one is in pains, pleasures, desires, and fears and not discarding it. (429b–d)

In the continuation, education is compared to the careful preparation and dying of wool, so that its distinctive color cannot be washed out by those most powerful cleansers, pain and pleasure.<sup>36</sup> Ideally, *thumos* is what keeps us “true blue” under even the most powerful stresses. Without it, there is no way to win through extreme circumstances.

Most of the time, of course, we do not experience stresses so extreme. But the complex of monitoring, mustering and correcting, for all its adaptability and flexibility, retains its functional shape across the gamut of challenges we face. When we are trying to succeed, we are using Platonic *thumos*.

On Plato’s account, of course, *thumos* is only part of a bigger story. In fact, the psychological and ethical ideal at the core of the *Republic* is the integration and harmonization of all the aspects of the psyche, so that a person is united in effective action and “becomes, from many, one.”<sup>37</sup> Ideally, Plato sees reason and *thumos* working together to guard against all the ways things can go wrong, especially those that we do to ourselves. If our reason can integrate effectively with *thumos* and the perceptual, emotional and physiological resources it musters, then it doesn’t seem so far-fetched to take the self-integration of the acting person as a real possibility and goal.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Republic* 429d–430b. Earlier, at 412e–414a, Plato carefully distinguishes the various ways in which one can change one’s mind. The analysis is consistent with the present one.

<sup>37</sup> *Hena genomenon ek pollôn*. *Republic* 443e.

<sup>38</sup> A version of this psycho-ethical goal is defended in Korsgaard 1999 and 2009. In outline this picture is not too far from Plato’s, but since the account of *thumos* in particular is insufficient, Korsgaard’s “self-constitution” view as a whole is more Kantian than Platonic.

### 7. *Real Victory*

Since action is goal-oriented in a “resistant” world, it is always subject to success or failure. This has two consequences. First, success and victory cannot exist in a mind-independent reality, since they can only be defined and experienced in terms of agents’ goals. No agents, no victory. Second, the various dimensions of *thumos* reactions, ranging from desperation and dependence to determination and on to exhilaration, can only arise through a comparison of aims with outcomes, with what actually happens in a friction-generating, potentially surprising world. No world, no victory.

Thus *thumos*, like reason, requires both mind and world. The respective “directions of fit,” however, are opposed. Reason loves truth, and is more than happy to change one’s opinions and expectations to conform with the dictates of reality. *Thumos*, by contrast, loves victory, and is more than happy to change reality to conform with the dictates of one’s opinions and expectations. It is clear that, as an ethical matter, the Platonic goal of harmonizing these tendencies is by no means simple.

Returning to our initial question concerning military outcomes, these are founded on *thumos* and its operations, and thus share its mind-world orientation. Even a brief firefight is composed of a great many individual orders and actions, and each of these plays out through time with its own record of comparative incremental progress. Who shoots first, who reaches cover, who sneaks by unseen, whose weapon malfunctions—all these questions are answered in real time with varying degrees of perceived success on the part of the agents (or patients). Ongoing self-monitoring, self-mustering and self-correction means that *for every person, every moment is a little piece of real victory or defeat*.

The winning and losing of battles and wars are as real, and founded on the same kinds of facts, as the success and failure of

individual agents and soldiers. Just as larger actions are built out of smaller ones, and larger military units are built up out of smaller ones, so the success of large military actions is built up out of the real success and failure of its constituent parts, all the way down to the split-seconds of each individual soldier. The *thumos*-facts of monitoring, mustering and correcting are not, however, simple positive facts of the sort the naïve realist wants, since they depend essentially on the plans and goals of the agents in question. They cannot exist in some so-called “mind-independent reality.” But these facts are also not simply conventional, because, once a goal is determined, success or failure in its implementation is a matter of real outcomes, results which are neither truly subjective nor fully subject to later reinterpretation. The functioning of *thumos* in the human psyche is what makes success and failure, victory and defeat, a real thing.

For ascertaining the psycho-ontological status of victory, it may be that little more needs to be said; for justice to the phenomena, however, this is insufficient, since the composition of smaller pieces of victory into larger ones is the very opposite of straightforward. In the first instance, military action is so dense and complex that any composition requires an extremely fine-grained interweaving. One way to illustrate this complexity is to reverse an Aristotelian metaphor.. In the final chapter of his *Posterior Analytics* (2.19), Aristotle compares his empirical epistemology to a certain kind of military situation. Since the first principles of scientific demonstration are by definition not subject to proof, one can only grasp them in direct apprehension. But this apprehension, he explains, is based on a finely-layered basis of prior knowledge: from many sensations, there comes memory; from many memories, experience; and a trained mind can discern the inner unity in this experience, and thus come to understand the relevant first scientific principle. This complex epistemological process he compares to a military success: “As in a battle, when a rout has occurred, first one man makes a stand, then

another does, and then another, until a position of strength is reached.”<sup>39</sup> The way that individual soldiers, each one staking his life on courage and resistance, can “add up” into a single military force capable of reversing a rout—this is supposed to explain how sensation can accumulate and eventually “add up” to scientific definitions and laws.

Perhaps this image helped military men grasp the difficulties of epistemology, but we can run it in reverse, hoping to assist epistemologists to grasp the complexities of warfare. The suggestion is then that military victory is built up from the self-monitoring of one man and then the next and then the next. But the principle of integration of these many fragments of monitored time into a military outcome, is no less rich and complex than the (still hotly disputed) connection between sensation and our understanding of first principles. There are many intermediary levels, maybe even hypotheses, deductions, refutations, and indeterminacies. War is no simpler than science.

Actual, there is at least one sense in which war is even more complex than science: the entire field of conflict is driven by a logic which contains an essential element of contradiction and paradox. We all know of the Pyrrhic victory which wins the battle and loses the war, or of the paradoxical adage “if you seek peace, prepare war.” But in military affairs, one thing turns into its opposite on a regular basis, often quite intentionally, as detailed in Luttwak’s classic *Strategy* (1987):

Consider an ordinary tactical choice, of the sort frequently made in war. To move toward its objective, an advancing force can choose between two roads, one good and one bad, the first broad, direct, and well paved, the second narrow, circuitous, and unpaved. Only in the paradoxical realm of strategy would the choice arise at all, because it is only in war that a bad road can be good *precisely because it is bad* and may therefore be less strongly defended or even left unguarded by the

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<sup>39</sup> Barnes 1993, 73 (100a12–15).

enemy. Equally, the good road can be bad precisely because it is the much better road, whose use by the advancing force is more likely to be anticipated and opposed. In this case, the paradoxical logic of strategy reaches the extreme of a full reversal.<sup>40</sup>

As far as we can tell, the natural world does actively avoid our efforts to understand it. Not so our enemies, who want nothing less than to deceive us as to their intentions and abilities. This active deception is essential to whole realm of conflict and makes the cumulative outcomes of conflict so much more baffling and complex than even epistemology (with apologies to colleagues).

So does the paradoxical logic of strategy threaten the suggested reality of victory? Ultimately, I think it does not, for the simple reason that even if paradoxical, this is still a logic. Real inputs—success and failure, moment by moment—together with systematic logic—even if of the paradoxical sort “victory here yields defeat there; defeat now yields victory later”—will still yield give rise to real results. It may be impossible to predict outcomes under such constraints, but in this the military realm is no worse off than other, more mundane but equally incalculable fields. Indeed, who thought that predicting warfare was any more tractable than, say, weather prediction?

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<sup>40</sup> Luttwak 1987, 3.

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