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Docile Bodies and Constant Minds

In the twentieth century, the best social theoretical writings on the topic of the modern individual's adaptability to society have provided compelling descriptions of conformity with strong warnings about the dangers of assimilation. Any genealogy of what may be termed the "secure individual" must consequently stand under suspicion of ignoring these descriptions and warnings. However, the main treatment of the topic of individual adaptability in this book will not occur in this section, but rather in Parts Two and Three. Rather than "mass" individuality, "outer directedness," "one dimensionality," or the "decline of the individual," the focus will be precisely on the new lack of longer and broader career pathways to conform to and on the present impossibility of self-assimilation into forms of company loyalty. Adaptability will be criticized not in relation to standardization, but in relation to destandardization and the powerful insecurity that it can bring with it for individuals.

Michel Foucault is of course well known for his own discussion of docility. The famous discussion in *Discipline and Punish* equals, if not surpasses, any analysis of conformity or any genealogy of decline in individuality in this century. While a summary of this discussion is presented in the first section of this chapter, it is not intended as the key to the understanding of adaptability as it is spoken of later. Rather, docility is but a first step on the path which Foucault himself takes towards contemporary forms of self-conduct, or technologies of the self,

undertaken in light of larger strategies of governmentality or, as in this study, in response to economic reengineering, downsizing, and lean production.

Foucault's later writings on governmentality are a more important resource than the discussion of docile bodies both for understanding contemporary programs of social security and for grasping the different emphases of adaptability as flexibility in this study. Indeed the first steps of the genealogical path that is traced in Part One are the steps from the treatment of docile bodies in *Discipline and Punish* to the introduction of mechanisms of security in the lectures on governmentality. In these lectures Foucault deals with technologies of the self that contact with the technologies of domination from his earlier work:

> I think that if one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization, [one] has to take into account . . . the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself . . . and conversely, [one] has to take into account the points where the technologies of the self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination. The contact point, where the way individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves, is what we can call, I think, government.[1]

The notion of a "contact point" between technologies of domination and technologies of the self establishes a process of correlation between individual conduct and larger social practices. This process of correlation plays a crucial and determining role in the present section devoted to the genealogical study of the secure individual and also in a later pivotal argument on the best way to interpret the requirement of flexibility on the part of individual employees in the contemporary workplace.

In the second part of this chapter, a contact point is sought for Foucault's emphasis upon military technologies of domination by way of Gerhard Oestreich's treatment of the modern military army and the Neo-stoic attitude of constancy in *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*. Oestreich claims of the influence of the important Neo-stoic thinker Justus Lipsius upon Maurice of Orange and his cousins John and William Louis that it led to the institution of the standing army. Of this new institution he writes that its "incorporation into the activities of the state was what first created the early modern state

with its concentration of power at the centre."[2] Crucial to this development is, according to Oestreich, a twofold achievement of Lipsius encompassing both the technologies of discipline and an individual ethics of constancy: "Lipsius performs two great services for the military: he gives it a comprehensive concept of discipline which can serve as a basis for reform, and he sets up the Roman Stoic ethic as the morality and ideology of the new army."[3]

For Lipsius, "Neostoicism meant the moral and spiritual arming of the individual and the community."[4] Under the conditions of religious confessional warfare immediately surrounding Lipsius, the choices facing the individual are either to fight in the war or to attempt to flee elsewhere. The moral and spiritual arming comes from the strengthening of the inner resolve to fight. As Oestreich explains,

> One must be a different person, not in a different place. Everybody carries the war with him, carries it within him. Constancy is required before all else; only in fight can one be victorious, not in flight. The watchword is "resist," not "yield," "fight," not "flight."[5]

This Neo-stoic ethic of constancy will be presented as a technology of self that contacts with the practices of domination of Foucault's docile bodies. Later on it will also be related to the modern demands for flexibility and the need for a quite different kind of individual technology of the self. An irony of this later argument is that it will call into question whether "fight" is the recipe for victory in the modern workplace and will point instead to the very prominent role that yielding and abandonment play on today's economic "battlefields."

Docile Bodies

Long after the writing of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault made the retrospective comment, "Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power."[6] Nowhere is this insistance more obvious or more brilliantly executed than in the chapter, "docile bodies." The chapter begins with a historical comparison between the heroic "*homme de guerre*" of the early seventeenth century and a well-trained *militaire* of the late eighteenth century. The obvious difference in the compari-

son is to be attributed to a "birth" very similar to the "birth of the asylum" in *Madness and Civilization* and itself at work in the "birth of the prison"; namely, "the birth of meticulous military and political tactics by which the control of bodies and individual forces was exercised."[7] Military discipline "is no longer a mere means of preventing looting, desertion or failure to obey orders among the troops; it has become a basic technique to enable the army to exist, not as an assembled crowd, but as a unity that derives from this very unity an increase in its forces."[8]

The anonymous "Ordonnance du 1er janvier 1766" indicates several of the ways in which the traditional actions of the *homme de guerre* are broken down and rearranged. If earlier soldiers marched in file to the beat of the drum, the Ordonnance introduces "a collective and obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside"[9] in the form of four kinds of steps with correspondingly different rhythms. It then continues this "instrumental coding of the body" (D&P, 153) by specifying the three stages employed by the soldier in raising his rifle. Foucault comments on this coding, which is termed a "*manoeuvre*":

> It consists of a breakdown of the total gesture into two parallel series: that of the parts of the body to be used (right hand, left hand, different fingers of the hand, knee, eye, elbow, etc.) and that of the parts of the object manipulated (barrel, notch, hammer, screw, etc.); then the two sets of parts are correlated together according to a number of simple gestures (rest, bend); lastly, it fixes the canonical succession in which each of these correlations occupies a particular place. . . . Over the whole surface of contact between the body and the object it handles, power is introduced, fastening them to one another. It constitutes a body-weapon, body-tool, body-machine complex.[10]

The Ordonnance directions for raising the rifle were soon outstripped by Prussian regulations that stipulated six stages for bringing the weapon to one's foot, four for extending it and thirteen for raising it to the shoulder. This development shows the "positive economy" of discipline, both its general expansiveness and its particular relationship to time, how it extracts from time ever more available moments and ever more available forces.

The twenty-three "elementary" movements of the Prussian procedure are incorporated into one military exercise. The con-

stant and regular repetition of the exercise produces regular physical movements as long as one does "not pass to another activity until the first has been completely mastered."[11] Exercise is "that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated."[12] The graduated aspect of the exercise can be elegantly achieved through a "disciplinary polyphony of exercises," which begins with the directive to

> lay down for each individual, according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him; common exercises have a differing role and each difference involves specific exercises. At the end of each series others begin, branch off and subdivide in turn. Thus each individual is caught up in a temporal series which specifically defines his level or his rank.[13]

In order to indicate the level or rank of the soldier, space must be used as effectively as the broken down and rearranged employment of time. Rather than a polyphony of movement, what is required, at least initially, is an orderly grid:

> it is necessary to define beforehand the nature of the elements to be used; to find individuals who fit the definition proposed; to place them in the ordered space; to parallel the distribution of functions in the structure of space in which they will operate. Consequently, all the space within a confined area must be ordered; there should be no waste, no gaps, no free margins; nothing should escape.[14]

However, for the space to serve the important disciplinary effect of ranking, it is also necessary for the individuals to be placed in ordered spaces that do not hold them in fixed positions, but allow them to circulate in a network of relations with other individuals. Foucault's primary example here is an educational one, the early Jesuit college, but the example comes replete with military trappings:

> the classes, which might comprise up to two or three hundred pupils, were subdivided into groups of ten; each of these groups, with its "decurion," was placed in a camp, Roman or Carthaginian; each "decury" had its counterpart in the opposing camp. The general form was that of war and rivalry; work, apprenticeship and classification were carried out in the form

of the joust, through the confrontation of two armies; the contribution of each pupil was inscribed in this general duel; it contributed to the victory or the defeat of a whole camp; and the pupils were assigned a place that corresponded to the function of each individual and to his value as a combatant in the unitary group of his "decury." It should be observed moreover that this Roman comedy made it possible to link, to the binary exercises of rivalry, a spatial disposition inspired by the legion, with rank, hierarchy, pyramidal supervision.[15]

Of course, serious military tactics had changed immensely from earlier times of the joust. In fact, they had even changed a great deal from immediately previous times through the invention of the rifle and its superiority over the musket. This invention "made it possible to exploit fire-power at an individual level; and, conversely, it turned every soldier into a possible target, requiring by the same token greater mobility; it involved therefore the disappearance of a technique of masses in favor of an art that distributed units and men along extended, relatively flexible, mobile lines."[16] The military unit became "no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it,"[17] but "a sort of machine with many parts, moving in relation to one another, in order to arrive at a configuration and to obtain a specific result."[18]

The particular movements of the soldier had to be controlled both in relation to other movements of the soldier and in relation to other particular movements from other members of the unit. This kind of control requires, in the most memorable phrase of this chapter on discipline in *Discipline and Punish*, "docile bodies." The increase in the economy and efficiency of the movements of the soldiers produces an increase in their "aptitude" or "capacity" to do battle, but this increase in aptitude that occurs when aptitudes are combined and coordinated with one another is dissociated from any earlier signification that the bodily movements might have had.[19] As Foucault writes of discipline in general and of military tactics in particular, "In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection."[20] The body accomplished through the techniques of domination military training is the body of a *militaire*, a dis-

ciplined soldier, quite different from the earlier *homme de guerre* both in terms of increased military aptitude and equally increased docility.

Constant Minds

One of the main subjects of the essays by Gerhard Oestreich in *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* is the formation of the first modern army in the Netherlands. In his account of this important new formation, he points toward the presence of an ethics of constancy that accompanies and indeed guides the exercise of military discipline: "At the heart of Dutch thinking on military reorganization is the disciplined professional soldier, led by an equally well trained and ethically sound professional officer."[21] This ethics of constancy is evident in both the commands and actions of the trained and ethical professional officer and, as will be seen later, also in the directives of the trained state official as well.

For Oestreich the development of the modern army begins with the recovery of ancient military procedures by humanistic philologists: the "'politico-technical literature of the humanists was supposed to bring together all the ancient works in a gigantic filing system as it were, so that they might be immediately accessible at any time."[22] However, the truly central figure in advancing this development is Justus Lipsius and, of his many writings, the military treatises rank among the most important. What Lipsius did was to call for a "military ethics" of "action, constancy, self-control and obedience" to be "treated as an equally important ingredient of reform."[23] This military ethic "appealed to the commanders and their officers, for here was an answer to the burning question of the moment—how to establish and maintain good order and military discipline in the unruly armies of the day."[24]

Oestreich writes that Lipsius had a higher aim in mind than the purely military program in writing his treatises. At stake was the "moral regeneration of the rude soldiery" without which "there is no lasting obedience among the troops." Consonant with the treatment of military discipline by Foucault, Lipsius advocates the drill of daily weapon-practice, marching and the digging of fortifications,[25] regulations to order marching, military camp, and battle, and a system of severe punishment for misdeeds and promotion and honors for brav-

ery and good conduct. However, Lipsius also adds a fourth element, *coerctio* or self-discipline to the other elements of discipline: exercise *(exercitium)*, order *(ordo)*, and example *(exemplum)*.[26]

According to this further element, obedience is not merely a requirement of military discipline, but also something "that befits a man, a virtue."[27] It is demanded by Lipsius from within the context of civil unrest and the very real and immediate danger of religious war. The Neo-stoicism of Lipsius is developed from the standpoint of a non-confessional mode of individual ethic in the face of this religiously charged and perilous situation. He carries over the art of living of the Greek and Roman Stoa from the *vita civilis* to the *vita militaris*. The most central virtue, from a triad including patience and firmness, is that of constancy.

The choices of the individual are, according to Lipsius's dialogue on constancy, to flee from the danger of bloody combat or to endure it and fight. What constancy requires is not to flee one's country but rather one's emotions of fear and danger. The crucial virtue of constancy is defined as "the proper and immovable strength of the mind that is neither elated nor downcast by outward or fortuitous circumstances."[28]

Lipsius poses the questions: "Should one not let one's hands rest in one's lap if the *mala publica* [poverty, exile, death] are determined by an ineluctable fate? Should one exert oneself in any way for the community?"[29] However, the wise interlocutor in the dialogue responds that if

> something is to happen in the world, man must first fulfill certain conditions. . . . If fate wants the unstable, sinking ship of state to be saved, it also wants men to fight for it and defend it. . . . Whether the country totters or falls, decays or perishes, the good citizen *(bonus civis)* must retain his *constantia*.[30]

Oestreich writes of this "exceedingly severe, controlled manliness in the Stoic mould" that it "was not for nothing that this philosophy appealed to men who were determined on resistance in the religious wars, and especially to soldiers."[31] The "famous Lipsian style, with its terse, laconic, peremptory language and its abundance of military similes and metaphors, was bound to captivate the select circle of officers educated in

the classics, a class which was so important in this warlike age."[32] Lipsius

> revives the classical picture of the ideal commander. He should carry the lance at the head of his men and share in all their tribulations. He should set an example and not simply issue orders. The ideal commander is tireless in making his dispositions, controlled in danger, wise and swift in execution, blameless and irreproachable, moderate in all things, of proven loyalty and faith, favoured by fortune, and amiable towards everyone.[33]

The ideal officer fulfills Lipsius' new casting of the Promethean myth by breaking through the chains of his fear and the fear of his unit. As Oestreich explains, "The allusion to the freeing of Prometheus bound to the rock incorporates the two elements which together consitute the aim of the *Constantia*—the renewal of the self by self-liberation and active participation in political society."[34] Indeed such self-liberation and active participation were not limited to Promethean achievements on the battlefield, but extended to inside state offices as well. State bureaucrats were "the servants of the state in the broadest sense of the work, the absolutist society, rational in conduct, disiplined and accustomed to commanding and obeying." This absolutist society "supplied the personnel for the proliferating state bodies and the ever-increasing army—both under the leadership of the monarch." The upper bureaucracy educated in the law" and "the upper ranks of the officer corps, scienti-fically trained to arms" constituted, together with their rank and file, "the sitting army of officials and the standing army of soldiers."[35]

Oestreich writes of Lipsius' ideal of Neostoic constancy that it "was so in tune with the political spirit of the age that agreement was soon achieved between his anthropology and the form of the state."[36] It "was not just the army that was put through its paces on the parade ground: the same rigour prevailed in administrative, economic, moral and spiritual spheres as well."[37] The modern state, according to Oestreich, "emerged based on order, power, unity, authority, discipline and obedience."[38]

In Part Two of this study, a quite different form of economic "spirit of the age" will be interrogated in regard to a

possibly quite different anthropology. Rather than the "public evils" of "poverty, exile, and death," a quite different assemblage of apparently "lesser" and "private" evils will come to the fore. Rather than poverty, permanent or semi-permanent un- or underemployment will loom as the evil to be avoided at all costs. The modern "planning office" must also deal if not with exile, then with unstable childrearing and financial conditions including the possibilities of absent fathering and the lack of child support. Finally, rather than the tragedy of an early death, the miseries of a prolonged, underfunded, and lonely retirement must be avoided by prudential action in the present.

An analysis of these "evils" in Part Three will even go so far as to call into question the Neo-stoic ethic of **constancy** which not only was valid for Lipsius' time but remains familiar to us up to the present day. A modern "ethics" of **flexibility**, it will be argued, may require above all an inner resolve not to fight and continue, but rather to abandon and flee. If this argument is at all persuasive, we will be faced with options for which there is no Stoic or Neo-stoic ethic to draw upon and with even lesser prospects for developing a "Post-stoic" ethic to cope with our predicament.