Turner, Bryan. “Warrior Charisma and the Spiritualization of Violence”, Body *and Society*. 9: 4 (2003) 93–108

In modern history, the American Civil War produced horrific casualties as a consequence of mechanized warfare. By contrast, the loss of American troops in skirmishes in Afghanistan caused national consternation in the American popular press. Modern expectations about emotional detachment and professionalism are accompanied by stringent everyday norms about discipline, time management and attention to work. The civilizing process involves the spread of norms that foster self-control, management and restraint, but within the framework of the nation-state that has a monopoly of violence. Modern societies have access to means of mass destruction in which millions of people could be killed dispassionately. The gas chambers were technological means to kill efficiently, but there is also an argument that they were introduced because the guards in the concentration camp could not manage emotionally with more direct hands-on methods of killing. It was because the guards were civilized in Elias’ sense that they had to be protected from the stress of killing. Hannah Arendt’s famous account of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* records how Adolf Eichmann was proud of the fact that he was not an *inere Schweinhund* but somebody who was fulfilling a higher calling. Eichmann was a *Gottglaubigers* – a man of conscience and duty (Arendt, 1963). What has changed in our emotional responses to mechanized killing? Because there has been a degree of political democratization, military leaders are subject to a level of public scrutiny, and they cannot afford high casualty rates. Unlike the charismatic Napoleon Bonaparte, they have a professional duty to look after their men. In this respect, the transformation of public opinion after Vietnam was a crucial turning point in the conduct of modern wars. Second, the carnage of the Second World War and the genocide of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, the disabled, Armenians, and the mentally ill was an important and direct cause of human rights legislation. Human rights legislation has been effective, despite many exceptions, as a moral and legal restraint on violent behaviour in both civil and international wars. Finally, the recognition of civilian populations as victims of war has been an important modern development. Elias noted that, with the growth of court society, there were clear expectations about the proper behaviour of Christian knights in warfare, including how women and children were to be treated, but these norms of civility did not extend to the peasantry. Since the Second World War, individuals have had standing in international law, and can make claims for reparation. Human rights culture has accompanied the erosion of the strong Westphalian doctrine of sovereignty and the enhancement of the status of the individual as a victim of war between states. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Allies remained committed to the traditional legal view that only states were the legitimate subject of international law. This new emphasis on the victim status of individuals has been the underpinning of the rise of reparations – of making good again (*Wiedergutmachung*).

A central aspect of Foucault’s social theory was the recognition that in the western tradition acquiring knowledge, recognition moral truths, and developing the self required a government of the body. Put simply, body training is a critical method for training the self (Foucault, 1997). These various practices amounted to techniques of the self. In particular, the warrior self is dependent on specific modes of body transformation through discipline. Don Levine (1991) has shown how the martial arts as a form of body training were linked to a specific educational regime. We might conclude from this discussion that the production of the self cannot be achieved without a corporeal pedagogy; in short, characterology requires a specific form of embodiment to achieve its effects.