

originality are not so easily divorced. Students are apt to learn more from “D” papers they struggle to write than any “A” paper they purchase, or steal.

They might also learn to appreciate the intimate proprietary relationship between writers and their own carefully chosen words. Plagiarism is a parasitic offense, whether or not it’s intentionally or even tangibly harmful. Unlike

imitation (properly acknowledged), it is not a form of flattery, any more than stalking is an expression of respectful admiration. Why does plagiarism generate such hostility? It is essentially a hostile act—of impersonation, not homage.

WENDY KAMINER, a lawyer and writer, is the author most recently of *Free for All: Defending Liberty in America Today* (2002).

A Warhorse of a Different Color

Reviewed by Andrew J. Bacevich

NEARLY TWO DECADES AGO, FRANCIS Fukuyama undertook to describe the nature of politics after “the end of history.” Now British general Sir Rupert Smith has set himself a similar task: to define the role of arms and armies now that war is obsolete. According to Smith, a new military paradigm has emerged, and *The Utility of Force* is his effort to identify and distill its essence.

Though Smith served for 40 years as an officer in the British army, the biographical note appended to *The Utility of Force* carefully avoids identifying him as a soldier. Instead, it describes him as “one of the most senior international practitioners in the use of force.” This nebulous characterization is a tip-off to both the virtues and the defects of the book as a whole. In his assessments of the present-day role of military officers and the complex nature of contemporary armed conflict, Smith argues with considerable effectiveness that old verities about war and warriors no longer stand up to careful scrutiny. But the new verities he offers in their place do more to obfuscate than to clarify.

The Utility of Force defies easy categorization. Smith laces his account with references to personal experiences in Africa, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, and the Persian Gulf (he commanded the UK Armored Division during Operation Desert Storm), but the result is not

really a memoir. Neither does the book qualify as history, though its first third recounts the evolution of war since the French Revolution. Instead, it is a lengthy—and at times repetitive—meditation on the ambiguous and shifting relationship between armed force and politics in our times.

THE UTILITY OF FORCE:

The Art of War in the Modern World.

By Rupert Smith. Knopf. 448 pp. \$30

The opening sentence makes the essential point: “War no longer exists.” Conflicts and confrontations persist, but the traditional conception of war as a collision of armies in which one side emerges victorious is no longer meaningful. Of this Smith is quite certain. The old model, which he describes as “interstate industrial war,” had “ceased to be a practical proposition with the invention of the atomic bomb.” During the decades that followed the bombing of Hiroshima, a host of conflicts in places ranging from French Indochina to the West Bank illustrated its limits. America’s defeat in Vietnam was only the most prominent example. Time and again, attempts by machine-age armies to impose their will on irregular forces supported by a sympathetic population failed. Smith himself commanded the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia throughout 1995, and left persuaded that the old paradigm of war was

not only obsolete but even pernicious.

Nonetheless, other events during the postwar decades—above all the several Arab-Israeli wars—sustained the illusion that this old paradigm had not yet breathed its last. The exploits of Israeli generals such as Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, and Ariel Sharon seemed to reinforce the tradition of heroic leadership that produced decisive battlefield victories, exemplified by such World War II commanders as German field marshal Erwin Rommel and U.S. general George S. Patton. As a consequence, Western soldiers, politicians, and publics clung to their belief that the best guarantee of security lay in putting the right mix of tanks and fighter-bombers into the hands of warrior-generals. But this was an illusion, as even the Israelis eventually learned at the hands of Hezbollah and Hamas.

According to Smith, the aftermath of the Cold War fully “unmasked the new paradigm that had long been lurking.” In this new form of armed conflict—in Bosnia and Kosovo, Somalia and Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan—“political and military activities are constantly intermingled throughout.” Whereas the hallmark of generalship had once been the orchestration of a climactic battle or campaign, it was no longer possible for “a single massive event of military decision” to produce “a conclusive political result.” In one instance after another, Western armies deploying into these zones of disorder found that decision itself had become a chimera. Once begun, conflicts sputtered on indefinitely.

Old-fashioned war had been waged in the material world, with the intent of dealing death and destruction. In Smith’s view, the new mode of conflict tends toward the psychological. The aim is not to defeat your enemy—that’s probably impossible—but to change the way he and his supporters think. Ordnance matters less than ideas, firepower less than information, combatants less than the noncombatant population for whose allegiance both sides compete. In short, Smith argues, getting the hang of “war amongst the people” will require Western armies to aban-

don the outdated dogmas of interstate industrial war and embrace a radically different set of principles. The name of the game is no longer to win but to influence.

No American witnessing the way that President George W. Bush and his generals have bungled the Iraq war can deny that our leaders, civilian and military alike, will have to get a lot smarter if the U.S. armed services are to persuade the Islamic world to embrace the blessings of democracy. Oblivious to history, the civilians who conceived of Operation Iraqi Freedom launched their war in utter disregard of the realities that defined the nation they presumed to liberate. Confident of the invincibility of U.S. forces, the unimaginative generals who directed that campaign failed to anticipate that decisively toppling Saddam Hussein might mark not the end of their task, but its beginning.

Clearly, fresh thinking is needed. Still, there are at least two problems with Smith’s new paradigm.

First, “war amongst the people” is not especially new, as any historically literate British officer should appreciate. The American war of independence that began in April 1775 and concluded in October 1781 was nothing if not an example of “war amongst the people.” Whatever the importance of battles such as Saratoga and Yorktown, the outcome of the war turned ultimately on whether the inhabitants of the 13 colonies saw themselves as British or American. Through a combination of political and military action—including methods that today would fall under the rubric of terrorism—the homegrown revolutionaries proved more effective in tipping the balance of opinion than the representatives of the Crown.

Second, the obituary that Smith writes for the old model is almost certainly premature. After all, though Operation Iraqi Freedom evolved into

The aim of war now is not to defeat your enemy—that’s probably impossible—but to change the way he and his supporters think.

a “war amongst the people,” it began in 2003 as an interstate industrial war. A resumption of hostilities on the Korean peninsula or a showdown between India and Pakistan, neither of which would come as a complete surprise, would likely resemble the interstate wars of the 20th century.

Smith would have us believe that war is no longer A; it has instead become B. Yet history suggests that war is both A and B—not to

mention C, D, E, and F. Carl von Clausewitz had it right: War is a chameleon. Based on circumstance, it changes its appearance, even as its essential nature remains fixed. International practitioners in the use of force should remember this. So too should soldiers.

ANDREW J. BACEVICH is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University and the author, most recently, of *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (2005).

National Inquirers

Reviewed by Michael Kammen

HOW TO COUNT AMERICANS ACCURATELY has been a contentious question ever since the first federal census was undertaken in 1790. A century ago, foundations and commissions began to support more focused surveys, usually with an eye to policy, such as tenement housing reform in New York City. During the 1920s and '30s, with the development of quantitative methods in the social sciences, new sorts of ambitious, intensive surveys emerged. Social science was coming of age at the same time as Americans' sense of themselves as a mass public, and Sarah Igo argues that the new statistics helped shape this national identity.

Igo, who teaches history at the University of Pennsylvania, examines three influential case studies of this new social research. Robert and Helen Lynd lived for many months in Muncie, Indiana, as they scrutinized everything from attendance at women's clubs to library usage to produce their *Middletown* studies, published in 1929 and 1937. George Gallup and Elmo Roper began polling the opinions of the American public in 1935. And Alfred Kinsey and his staff conducted thousands of personal interviews with people about their sexual histories to publish reports on the sexual behavior of American men and women, in 1948 and 1953, respectively.

These landmark investigations were widely praised at the time, even as critics noted their flaws. The Lynds excluded African Americans, for

example. Gallup and other pollsters wrongly predicted that Dewey would trump Truman in the presidential election of 1948. Prominent statisticians faulted Kinsey's sampling techniques, and moralists resisted certain of his findings, such as surprisingly high rates of homosexual contact for men and premarital sex for women.

As a historian, Igo is particularly attuned to the changes over time that these studies signaled. She points out, for example, that the *Middletown* volumes differed from previous case studies in that they were not designed to analyze and solve a social problem. The Lynds' objective was simply to aggregate detailed information about the lifestyles and preferences of “normal” Americans. As one enthusiastic clergyman told his congregation at the time, “For once we have had the searchlight of social science turned upon a typical American town. . . . We've had so many studies of the abnormal. We've heard so much about the defective, delinquent, and dependent.”

So much for the Jukes and the Kallikaks. Tell us about people like us—the mainstream. To that end, one of Alfred Kinsey's most aggressively pursued goals was to expand Americans' sense of what qualified as “normal” sex. Whatever the defects of his research suggested by later studies and by biog-

THE AVERAGED AMERICAN:

Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public.

By Sarah E. Igo. Harvard Univ. Press. 398 pp. \$35