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Embodying the military: Uniforms

ABSTRACT

It is difficult to disentangle masculinity from military uniforms. Amid the shifting notions of gender in the late eighteenth century, this article argues that 'techniques of the body' were employed by the military, contributing to what became the hegemonic shape of the modern male body. Framing the work within the theories of Marcel Mauss this article uses the case study of Beau Brummell to argue that this dandy based his dress on something more than the vestimentary surface. Brummell's story is rare for a male in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: his life was described through his dress practices. Traditionally, when fashion is discussed, it is through women's fashion, although this is rapidly shifting. Very little writing on military uniforms is about embodied practice. Dressing is an embodied activity located in specified temporal, spatial and hierarchical relations. This article addresses this gap.

KEYWORDS

masculinity
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Beau Brummell

INTRODUCTION

Why is it difficult to disentangle masculinity from military uniforms, or indeed, the majority of uniforms worn today? This article argues that military uniforms contributed to what became the hegemonic shape of the modern male body. Very little writing on military uniforms is about embodied practice. Dressing is an embodied activity located in specified temporal, spatial and hierarchical relations. This article addresses this gap.

Framing the work within the theories of Marcel Mauss, through his ‘techniques of the body’, the article examines how these techniques last beyond the career of a person dressed in a military uniform, and continues to be absorbed into the body of one’s civilian identity. The constant and repetitive physical training in the military becomes ‘second nature’ when under threat, and is carried over – or at least traces of that training remain within the body – beyond the military context. The stance and gait of soldiers is just one indicator of such traces. We may even consider taste as a trace as well. Military uniforms are exemplary of the combination of dress with specific culturally contingent body movements that are associated with military culture. These are constituent to what is termed as ‘dress practices’.

To set the scene this article begins with an account of Beau Brummell, the original dandy. This examination of Brummell’s ascetic masculinity is used as a foil to the spectacularly dressed military officer of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to help understand how dress is something more than a vestimentary surface. Brummell’s story is rare for a male in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: his life was described through his dress practices. Traditionally, when fashion is discussed, it is generally through women’s fashion, although this is rapidly shifting. Brummell also used his training in the military to underwrite the masculinity he sought and achieved. Seeking to create interest through the erotic potential of uniform, the attitude he sought in civilian life was that of detachment, ‘disinterestedness’ and what would now be termed as ‘coolness’. He pared back the decorative notions of uniform to style an understated fashion, pointing towards his heightened sense of the necessary techniques of the body that was lived out in the military habitus.

After establishing a theoretic framework, the article goes on to explore the interactions between the crenellated surfaces of the military uniforms, the form of the body, and its social and psychological relationships. By peeling back the layers to examine these symbiotic relationships, the article explores the context of military training, tailoring and shaping of the body in what is known as the Military Enlightenment.

Finally the article then examines how it was not only the aesthetic appeal, but the performative functions of the military uniform that was used as a recruitment device to seduce men into service. Brummell himself used dress and morning performances of dressing to recruit followers, followers who were critical indeed in supporting his continued membership to the elite class.

BEAU BRUMMELL

‘Beau’ Brummell has a popular reputation based on leadership in fashion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, his fastidious attention to clothes for which he is mainly associated, was only part of the story. He was devoted to the management of impressions and his behaviour was a device for evoking and controlling the effects he had on others, as well as him benefitting from them. Brummell is an exemplary example of ‘bubble up/trickle down’ theory put forward by Ted Polhemus (1994). The original and long standing ‘trickle down’ theory by Thorstein Veblen in 1899 argued that fashion was derived from the display of conspicuous consumption by the elite and upper classes, eventually trickling down to the lower classes (Veblen 1931). Polhemus countered this by highlighting that street fashions and lower-class dress can also be used by taste makers and fashion stylists, bubbling up to be re-interpreted as haute couture for the catwalk, or on Rotten Row

as in Brummell's case. Brummell emulated the style of the English country gentleman: dark coat, usually blue; buff waistcoat; rising breeches and riding boots. This simple dress had been adopted by American and French revolutionaries (Kelly 2005:18), but in the clubs of London it was read as fashion rather than politics.

Beau Brummell was born George Brummell in 1778 in London. His grandfather was valet and his father, Billy Brummell, was secretary and right-hand man to Lord North. Billy Brummell, as one of the rising civil servants, had grown prosperous and managed to send his sons to Eton. There, George acquired the initial nickname of 'Buck' Brummell. Ian Kelly suggests that this was due to either his habit of taking uncommon care of his sports kit on rain days, or the combination of his personality and background (2005: 80). 'Beau' was used later.

After the death of both parents by 1794, George at the age of 15 went on to Oxford University. He only stayed a few months. He managed to convince the chief executor of his father's will with the proposition of using his extensive inheritance to buy an army commission. At 16 years old he took up the rank of cornetcy in the glamorous Tenth Light Dragoons, the Prince of Wales's own regiment. The cornet's role was aesthetic: to look good on horseback while bearing the standard.

However, it was not just a case of dressing the part for Brummell. The physical body had to perform authentically if he was to be accepted within the small aristocratic circle. He had to, more than walk and talk, but perform a particular class.

Here in the army, he not only met the heir to the throne, George, the Prince of Wales, who was in his early thirties, but as a member of the military Brummell began to circulate within the same aristocratic social circle. The numbers of the 'tight elite' English aristocracy was small and it was a closed circle that generally rejected those who were not born within. The Prince, however, was taken with the slight handsome figure who rode with aplomb when Brummell condescended to parade with his regiment, if he was not in attendance to the Prince (Mollo 1997: 16).

Brummell was required to purchase the alarmingly expensive uniform of the Tenth Light Dragoons. It was dark blue, with pale yellow facings and silver-thread braiding. It also consisted of a blue sleeveless 'upper jacket' or 'shell' with braided epaulettes, cut long on the body and worn over a sleeved under-jacket. Both items were 'frogged and looped' or embroidered with horizontal braidings in white satin, and were decorated with real silver tassels and 'Elliot' balls. The upper- and under-jackets were lined in silk. The head-dress was a large 'Tarleton' helmet: a peaked leather skull, with a leopard-skin turban fastened with large silver Prince of Wales feathers fastened on the left side and surmounted, from front to rear, by a black fur crest (Kelly 2005: 125; Mollo 1997: 9). This spectacular uniform could be seen as a passport to the elite class, as long as Brummell 'performed' the uniform.

However, after experiencing daily army life and spending money on the increasingly expensive costs of new uniforms with each promotion, Brummell realized the military lifestyle was not what he wanted to pursue, nor what he wanted to spend his inheritance on. After resigning his commission he entered full-time into the London society, where Brummell's 'performance' was in growing demand. Here he acquired the nickname 'Beau' Brummell. He devised bodily-dress practices that were based on that of the military, and were just as meticulous. Brummell employed the same military tailors to

comply with his exacting demands. Dressed in tailored jackets, breeches and white shirts with elaborate neckties, he set his sights on continuing to mix in the same tight social world as the Prince of Wales.

With his inheritance, Brummell established a modest London address from which he sorted out of everyday into society. He had no paid occupation. Brummell relied on situation, scenes and encounters. His daily routine consisted of morning levees attended by followers, his famous entrances and exits at exclusive clubs, private balls and entertainments, soirees, fashionable promenades, racetracks, private gambling and elegant salons. His intellect, wit and humour were appreciated. These activities alone did not give him, or others from wealthy mercantilist families, access to all of the English elite. It was Brummell's preoccupation with the body, perceiving that the ceremony of style was what separated the aristocracy from other classes. He used his insight to transgress class.

Performing was costly. Brummell's extravagant lifestyle and gambling debts mounted to such an extent that he was forced to leave England for France in 1816. He slipped away quietly as he could no longer maintain the position he had constructed for himself in London society. He lived in Calais where he did not require a passport, interrupting the trail that creditors might follow. In 1822, while in Calais, Brummell wrote *Male and Female Costume*. It was a history and an aesthetic study of Greek, Roman and British costume. However, it was not published until 1922.

Brummell has been described as asexual and as never forming a conventional sexual relationship. This is somewhat untrue as he unfortunately contracted syphilis. There is no record of when this occurred. However, from the contemporary descriptions on his death certificate, it has been pieced together indicating that when he died he had been suffering from tertiary syphilis, which suggests he contracted the disease in the prime of his London days (Kelly 2005: 10).

Brummell appeared to live on the surface of experience. Arguably his life was regulated by surfaces. His inner moral life appeared to be irrelevant to his life lived out in front of his audience (Smith 1974: 723). It is for his management of impressions, the perfection of every aspect of his behaviour and dress, the manipulation of social settings with ultimate subtlety and with sublimity, that he is remembered. Rising up from the upper middle class to a life of high aestheticism and decadence, he created the concept or cult of the dandy which continues till today.

MARCEL MAUSS: SURFACE AND FORM

In the nineteenth century, as civilian male dress headed towards sartorial austerity, military dress became more flamboyant. The codification and regulation of this flamboyance stamped military-dress practices with military authority. Much energy was expended on what became almost a 'science' of measuring widths of ribbons, arrangements of medals, lengths of feathers, specific dyes for the uniform colours, and so on. The silver braided epaulettes, the frogging and looping, the real silver tassels and 'Elliot' balls of Brummell's uniform were precisely regulated. The frivolities that came to be associated with female dress were couched in such a way to give the uniform a masculine imprimatur. This was paralleled in the calculation of marching steps to attain efficiency, yet became stylized perambulation. After all, it was the period of the Military Enlightenment where the nexus of science and aesthetics came to

the fore (Lynn 2003: 111). Adhering to military-dress practices was a necessary obedience. Codes of behaviour on dress practices were gazetted and published. There was no improvisation. The script was to be adhered to. This was the official code of military masculinity and deviance was punishable.

Indeed, in the world of civilian masculine-dress practices, Brummell's followers also adhered to his dress code. Deviance was also punishable, but by social conventions, such as his cutting wit.

The surface of military dress might be considered a veneer. However, the military uniform is not just the imposition of dress, but the acquisition and the long-term implications of, what Marcel Mauss calls, 'techniques of the body' (Mauss 1973: 70–87). Generally Mauss has been credited with coining *habitus*; however, it was originally a medical phrase used to describe the outward appearance of the face and the body in relation to the person's internal state of health or illness (Probyn 2005: 57). A simple example would be a blush, where the colour of the skin changes in relation to the psychological state of a person. Mauss took this relationship of the psychological and the biological further by adding the sociological effects. His term 'techniques of the body' encompasses this conflation. The body is trained to move in ways that are culturally contingent: the 'natural' is cultural.

Military uniforms are exemplary of the combination of dress with specific culturally contingent body movements that are associated with military culture. For Brummell, his performance also had to appear 'natural' within the aristocratic society. For the military, prestigious imitation of the elite to produce specialized techniques of display and comportment are intrinsically tied up with constructions of gender, class and nationalism. Although there are a range of masculinities in the military, from the lower rankings with their menacing swagger to officers riding with assurance and self-composure, there is a preference for a particular 'heroic' masculinity and this is produced through specific discourses by constraint and construction. The military dress and associated techniques of the body are gendered and interact at various 'levels of power, knowledge and different realms such as social, political, aesthetic and psychological forms of knowledge' (Craik 1994: 4). The highly structured military ensure that 'bodies are "worn" through technologies of movement, restraint, precise gesturing and continual adjustments according to the dynamics of the *habitus*' (4).

Mauss used an example of the way in which soldiers are taught to march. As a soldier himself in World War I, Mauss observed men of the Worcestershire Regiment marching to music played by a French band of drummers and buglers. The combination became problematic. The learned rhythm produced by the French did not match the learned gait of the English march. The unsuccessful marriage of acculturated bodies and music eventually caused the band to be dispensed with (Mauss 1973: 72).

As an officer, others determined Brummell's activities. He was introduced to a universe of order, prescription and ideas that absolutely ruled his life, even under the patronage of the Prince. The constant drilling and military education ensured that his body performed a particular masculinity and that his body reacted in a determined gendered way. These were, and still are, necessary to function successfully within the military. The constant and repetitive military training became 'second nature', and traces carried over, remaining within Brummell's civilian body. This was not just in the military context. The stance and gait of soldiers is just one indicator of such traces. These techniques of the body could last beyond the career dressed in a uniform, and continued to

be absorbed into one's civilian identity, as it was with Brummell as he made his precisely timed entrances and exits. Military uniforms are exemplary of the combination of dress with specific culturally contingent body movements that are associated with military culture. These form what is termed as 'dress practices'.

Michel Foucault defines the propensity of repetition and control as a signifier of modernity. His insights into the way in which bodies are subject to power and are discursively constituted, are crucial when thinking of the military uniforms and the behaviours associated with them. Military institutions have ultimate control of representation, determining the bodies and enforcing power through dress (Foucault 1997: 113). Foucault's exploration of the 'panoptican' viewpoint can be carried through the military uniforms. The military body is always subject to the gaze through both external and internal self-surveillance. As the military moved towards formal institutional architecture of the nineteenth century, the bodily practices of those who entered became part of the capillary-like operations of power which worked to render bodies docile and obedient (Foucault 1997: 135–69).

TAILORING TO FIT THE MILITARY

In the late eighteenth century, the army, when not accommodated in camps, was billeted out in public houses and inns. Tim Fulford points to the presence of the army in the British countryside: 'The military was in residence for the first time, and its dress was anything but uniform. The red, blue and green coats shone in dazzling variety, identifying the wearers not as individuals but as members of different regiments' (Fulford 2002: 154). The army was on display: it welcomed surveillance and demanded self-surveillance of its members.

For the Tenth Light Dragoons, public houses and inns were not for them. In 1778, Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, the Duke of Devonshire, organized a voluntary militia in his locality as there was a perceived threat that the French might invade England. France had entered the American War of Independence on the Rebels' side. An army camp had been set up at Coxheath in Kent. Over 15,000 soldiers had been assembled there, along with the 'flower of nobility' (Foreman 1998: 63). They were the centre of attention by the press. Transport was available to take members of the public out to inspect the proceedings of the performance on the parade ground, the officers inspecting their men and the participants inspecting the audience.

In 1793, the Tenth Light Dragoons were accommodated in camps such as those at Coxheath, but the Prince's 'tent', along with a marquee that was 'one of the most elegant ever made in Britain', was set out at Shoreham, close by the Prince's beloved Brighton Pavilion. They were surveyed by the public with the Prince always conspicuous 'in the honorable garb of his regiment, looking both the Soldier and the Prince' (Mollo 1997: 13–14). In 1794, when Brummell joined them, the 16-year-old was 'adorned in the rich uniform of the Tenth, which his slight but handsome figure was well calculated to show off' (Mollo 1997: 15).

The elite officer uniforms had indeed begun to flower extravagantly. Exaggerating specific areas of the body was not new in fashion, although it tends to be associated with female dress. J.C. Flugel's theory of the shifting erogenous zones whereby specific attention to various parts of the body, such as the backless dress, also affected men's dress (Flugel 1950 [1930]: 33–38). For example, the stiffened and padded doublet, of the sixteenth century,

swelled into the peascod belly. The codpiece of the same era exemplified this trend. The sexual significance of this large swollen form is apparent (Vincent 2003: 32). Uniforms of the eighteenth-century army also continued to draw attentions to various parts of the body in order to indicate the contemporary attitude to what constituted the masculine form. The jacket of the Hussar uniform with braid and frogging attracted much attention to the upper body. Brummell's civilian uniform of tight white pants showed every lump and bump of the male genitals.

The torso appears to have been the most important site in the military uniform in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The medals were attached to the chest. Jackets of uniforms were often padded to enhance the chest. As well corsets were used to refine the shape and restrict expansive upper bodies. David Kunzle is one of the few writers to discuss the use of corsets for men. He describes an eighteenth-century English 'stay', type of corset, which reached from the hips up to the armpits and was fitted with shoulder straps so as to enhance the shoulders (Kunzle 2006). This corset could exaggerate the preferred male shape, broadening shoulders with the help of epaulettes, tapering the stomach down to narrow hips. George, the Prince of Wales, having run to fat early in life, was corseted in a 'Bastille of Whalebone' (Kelly 2005: 121).

Along with the fashion for male corsets in the military, which was widespread in the nineteenth century with dandyism at its height (Kunzle 2006: 82–89; Myerly 1996: 26), was the tight neck stock. This device was to bring a healthy 'flush' to the soldiers' faces. The hefty Prince of Wales had begun to use the neck stock in order to follow Beau Brummell's pioneering fashion of the highest of collars and complicated neckties. The Prince used the hidden stock to reshape his 'ruffle of chins' as did other Brummell 'recruits' (Kelly 2005: 121).

Undoubtedly, the constant drills involving loading and reloading built up shoulder muscles, just as Mauss notes that the body is trained to move in ways that are culturally contingent: 'natural' is cultural. For elite aristocratic officers who did not participate in such strenuous activities, the epaulettes exaggerated the width of the shoulders of the physically unworked bodies. By emulating a muscular physique, the impression that big shoulders gave was one that became associated with masculinity and strength. The epaulettes had derived to protect the shoulders from glancing blows; however, they became naturalized to assume a masculine trait, as I argue, the modern hegemonic shape.

The headwear was one of the more flamboyant articles of officers' dress. The head can physically and metaphorically carry much weight; yet, it is the most vulnerable part of the body. The amount of space taken up by the dressed head indicates power. The head appears to be a vital site for indicating power. It was not only hairstyling through wigs, but the flamboyant headgear that developed and accentuated the appearance of power. The use of the 'Tarleton helmet' was based on a Roman helmet with the black tuft attracting attention as it bobbed about while the rider paraded on his horse.

On the outer surface of the uniform, it was the French style which the military tailors across Europe keenly followed. However, it was the advances in the tailoring techniques developed by the English that were sought after throughout Europe. British tailors developed skillful systematic measurement, cut and manipulation of cloth which ensured the perfect fit, precise shaping and concealing of human imperfections, assisting in showing off the figure to the best masculine advantage.

Hence, once Brummell left the army in 1798, he headed straight back to the military tailors who served to produce his new wardrobe as he circulated among the urban elite. Breward details the history of tailoring in 'Manliness, Modernity and the Shaping of Male Clothing' from the nineteenth century (Breward 2001: 166). However, the history of tailoring perhaps needs to begin a century earlier. Large quantities of military uniforms had been made from at least the second half of the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly the introduction of standardized measuring and cutting techniques from the 1820s was essential to mass production of clothing, but officers' uniforms were for a limited group. And this group had already understood and constructed an identity and style much earlier.

Brummell's interest in the neoclassical extended to his dress, as his unpublished work on Greek, Roman and British dress testifies. His own youthful body needed neither extra padding nor corsets. His sartorial values included restraint, 'naturalness' and simplicity. His palette tended towards blue, buff, brown and white – the whitest of shirts. Dr Henry Wampen, a German mathematician who also wrote books on tailoring in this period, considered the platonic ideals of beauty and the appreciation of the naked male body. When Wampen was a young student, he measured Greek statues as an interest in the discourse on the scientific basis of the Grecian ideal of beauty. Bringing his two interests together he wrote on tailoring for the male body (Breward 2001: 168–69). Wampen and Brummell were not the only ones to be interested in the classical body.

MILITARY ENLIGHTENMENT

No matter what the individual components of uniform were, the emphasis was on enhancing the male body to a contemporary ideal. Paul Fussell dated this attention to the consciously shaping of the body through uniforms to the eighteenth century, when archeological excavations in Herculaneum and Pompeii revealed nude masculine sculptural forms involved in conflict. These bodies stood as 'representative' of the male body (Fussell 2002: 15). Beau Brummell's sketchbook shows this link and his interest between the classical and contemporary fashion. He juxtaposed a classical statue with an illustration of a dandy.

The official reawakening of Herculaneum and Pompeii was in 1748. This was not due to a thirst for knowledge of the past but to gain political prestige at that time. The Bourbon kings were ruling and living in Naples at the time of the rediscovery of classical sculpture and architecture through archeological digs. Although the French did not plunder objects to send back to France, Charles of Bourbon was keen to establish a kingdom in Naples with cultural institutions worthy of international recognition. He did this through building an opera house and theatres for dance. Displaying treasure and loot from successful excavations enhanced these cultural endeavours in 1748. This put Naples, as well as Rome, on the Grand Tour itinerary. Writers and artists such as Winkelmann, Goethe, Vigée Le Brun, Joshua Reynolds and George Stubbs, travelled to Italy to study the classical period. As well, for young wealthy men the Grand Tour was considered necessary for their education. However, Brummell did not set off on a Tour, but he kept abreast of the latest ideas on the body through publications and through his tailors.

Winkelmann, through his study of classical sculpture, proposed two ideas that were central to the eighteenth-century view of the body. The first

notion was the concept of an ideal art that was more perfect than nature, and the second was the beauty of the male nude. He wrote of the importance of improving the body through physical exercises in the gymnasium. These activities shaped the bodies of the Greek youth to give that 'great and manly contour which the Greek masters imparted to their statues with no vague outlines or superfluous accretions'. The gymnasia were seen as schools of art, where philosophers and artists viewed and considered these bodies at work (Irwin 1997: 28–29).

In residence in London, Brummell's morning levees, like the gymnasia, were a spectator activity. Not with philosophers and artists looking on, but contemporary male fashionistas who were under Brummell's instruction attended these daily sessions. Through the military, ideas on health and cleanliness were disseminated and reinforced by encounters of close living. The body, as well as the uniforms, was to be kept clean. Cleanliness was one of Brummell's insistencies. He not only bathed first in milk, then in hot water, but everyday and *all* of his body (Kelly 2005: 161). His cleaning and preening were a performance for his followers known as the 'Dandiacal body'; this group included the aristocracy, which arrived at his townhouse each day to learn how to manage the masculine body. Roche notes that modernity was expressed through the capacity to not only rotate garments more frequently, but to demonstrate access to water in which to wash the body (Roche 1994: 168).

Adherents to the Military Enlightenment included military tacticians and modernizers who were also looking to the classical period for ideas quite early in the seventeenth century. However, these ideas peaked during the neoclassic period, around the time of Brummell's army life. Movement in formations had been a feature of Greek and Roman military tactics. Alexander the Great developed a professionalized style of war using soldiers who were directed with predetermined tactics rather than allowing unrestrained brute force. Using this background, Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange (d.1625), developed what is known as 'close-order' drill to improve tactical efficiency suitable for automatic response when in battle. Maurice looked to Greek and Roman texts to explore ways in which soldiers moved together in unison while performing more modern complex actions of loading, aiming and firing guns. This was practised over and over when the opportunity arose, so that movements were 'second nature'. His soldiers became highly successful in battle. Down-time from action was then spent drilling and practising maneuvers, rather than waiting for the next engagement of hostilities to present itself. Soldiers' bodies were enhanced by this constant engagement.

Attention to bodies increased in the military. Treatises on drills and formations were developed throughout Europe over the seventeenth century (McNeill 1995: 131). Johann of Nassau commissioned an artist, Jacob de Gheyn, to make engravings of each posture of the new exercises. These were subsequently published as a book and translated into English, German and Russian. This indirect means – printed matter – of passing on information required interpretation. Hendrix demonstrates that the British used this information combined with a sense of their own style. If progressive orchestrated movements did not look graceful, they were abandoned or new configurations were introduced (Hendrix 2005: 210).

Like the British, a cultural style of marching evolved by the Prussians has lasted to the present day. As noted earlier, Marcel Mauss had also picked this up in his observations of French and British soldiers in World War I

1. It was not only humans, but also the horses that were trained to work on strict command. The horses were taught to dance and pirouette. Horses as technology needed also to be relied upon. Myerly (1996: 16).

(Mauss 1973). The Prussians took the synchronization of movement even further under Frederick the Great through the devising of the 'goose-step'. It was promoted as an efficient marching step and efficiency in movement became the hallmark of the Prussian army. This now has become associated with political ideals as fascist armies also adopted this style. Dress and bodies are entangled, as Brummell demonstrated.

Drilling commands were to be shouted or drummed out as the prints of de Gheyn indicated. Drumming was used to indicate commands on the noisy battlefield. Keeping in time together was essential for success in battle. Troops were trained to remain silent during attack, not only to hear the commands of the officers, but it was also believed that silence allowed control of the body and preserved order (Lynn 2003: 155). Goldstein writes of having to overcome biological functions of fear and terror associated with combat by a variety of cultural means in order to participate successfully in warfare. Constant and loud drumbeat staved off fear (Goldstein 2001). This was a concern of the followers of the Military Enlightenment in preparation for battle. John Lynn notes that Frederick the Great developed a culture of forbearance, a learned response to chaos and danger, through drilling (Lynn 2003: 155).

For the lower ranks the intent of training the body was to get rid of the 'peasant', replacing it with the air and grace of military personnel. These soldiers, who were from disparate walks of life, were trained incessantly through drills, and developed what McNeill terms as 'muscular bonding'. McNeill explores the euphoric fellow-feeling of groups moving together using big muscles, keeping time, marching, chanting, singing or shouting rhythmically. What started out as a process to get soldiers to perform with unthinking readiness and to obey on command, he asserts, brought about social cohesion and *esprit de corps*.¹ *Esprit de corps* is often attributed to the uniform itself. McNeill argues it is a bodily practice, the interaction between the dress and the body (McNeill 1995).

During the Military Enlightenment, these programs of drill became what Foucault calls 'instrumental coding of the body', that is body-weapon, body-tool and a body-machine complex (Foucault 1997: 193). Control over the military equipment, also required a controlled mind and body at all times when involved in battle. The machine was to become an extension of the entire body; the combination is a complex apparatus (Mentges 2000: 37).

Like the uniforms themselves, aesthetic flourishes in movements appeared (Macaraeg 2007: 41–64). Macaraeg argues that once the function is efficient, decorative flourishes indicate social status. Behaviour such as an automatic salute to those dressed in high-ranking uniforms, the clicking of the heels, the goose-step march and the purposeful gait of a soldier, all began as controlling the body's reactions and alignment of institutional framework, yet become stylized behaviour. So it is with such bodily control, Brummell could then perform a particular class and gender without the decorative flourishes.

Uniforms are an organizational tool and were used to make power visible and tangible. Witnessing and repeatedly performing civic and military rituals promoted what David Kertzer terms 'schematic thinking' (Kertzer 1988: 79–82). Defining people's identity through ingraining these military performances led to devotion of abstract entities such as the nation or a willingness to die for this unseen identity. The brilliance of the ritual display garnered much attention, appealed to the emotions, and attempted to underpin political support through showcasing what was to become modern male masculinity through a conduit such as Beau Brummell.

RECRUITMENT

In a century where massive changes in the material world and the boundaries of class were becoming a little unclear at the edges, distinction was continually recreated and reinvented. The distinction between the military and civilians was an important recruitment device. For Brummell, once out of the army, his dress practices further emphasized this distinction. Creating a desire to imitate and seduce men to enter the militia had to become tangible. Shaping the body also went towards constructing an identity, which was an identifiable finished product. It was recognizable and the imagery's appeal was used to recruit those who aspired to heroic masculinity.

The 'long eighteenth century' for Britain was a series of wars that required enormous amounts of labour and skilled workers. Between one in seven and one in eight men of appropriate age were recruited under George III, the Prince of Wales's father. This tallied up to half a million people (Conway 1997: 1180). Such numbers put a strain on the remaining employment. Recruitment was by conscription, naval impressments and by volunteerism. Recruiters themselves were induced to mobilize men of the local parishes through various means, such as learning to handle firearms and more sophisticated fighting skills other than fisticuffs on the streets. Officers, such as Brummell, were encouraged through other means: the uniform.

The aesthetic appeal of uniforms was used as a recruiting device. Potential recruits and volunteers were attracted to the military by men dressed in the most flamboyant uniforms. This was a tactic frequently used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Myerly 1996: 53–66). It was common for free labourers to hang about the fairs and markets in the hope of finding work. The military recruiters would take advantage of this arrangement and dressed in the finest uniforms, luring recruits by the accompanying military music. For these ordinary men, the uniform could symbolize the potential for a far more exciting life and power that was not attainable in civilian life.

It was not only the lower ranks, who were the brawn and labour of the military, which were needed. Officers with independent financial support were essential and provided economic support for the nation through the purchasing of commissions. Theatrically outfitting a number of men by a captain who had the resources was perhaps a little unusual, but not unheard of. For example, the captain of the *Harlequin* dressed his crew in harlequin costumes (Allon 2004; Dickens 1957) and in Charles Robinson's unpublished work, a magazine cutting noted that the officer in command of HMS *Tulip*, dressed the ship's company in green with an imitation tulip flower reversed on their caps (Robinson n.d: 508).

The most glamorous, and expensive, regiments were the cavalry, as Brummell had noted. It was not only working with horses that was an attraction, it was the potential for social mobility as well. Brummell paid an expensive commission to enter the cavalry unit, which was drawn from members of the aristocracy, as well as sons from wealthy mercantile families. The army provided social mobility.

Attracting men and luring them to believe that they could one day be the dashing figures on parade was one of the roles of the military dress. The recruits required a willingness to accept or reformulate their own individual identity. Manliness was enhanced by the dress practices of uniforms. The gaps and idiosyncrasies of the individual body could be hidden by the tailoring of the military dress. Headgear could increase the height of the soldier.

Padding or corsetry could enhance the torso. The trained body with its gait, postures and gestures added to the attraction for some. The military uniform was a technology for civility. The masculinity projected by the uniform was both seductive to some, as well as intimidating. Either way these acculturated techniques of the body, demanded surveillance of the wearer of the military uniform, both from within and without. Brummell learned to manage his body in this way, and his comments derived from his surveillance were valued by his followers.

Warriors have often clothed themselves in striking costume, such as the Tenth Light Dragoons uniform. Some regiments retained the look of the 'savage'. For some recruits the attraction was the intimidation that the dress could elicit. This notion of intimidation was taken up by Brummell, in basing his civilian 'uniform' on military-dress practices and body techniques. He cultivated and encouraged in his followers a look of what Bourdieu called 'disinterestedness' (Bourdieu 2006: 55–56). For the soldier, the attention to detail, the cleanliness, the inspection and the marching, were all done with eyes staring into the distance. The supposed disinterestedness by the individual was relieved of the potential violence in the name of the institution or the military bureaucracy.

Gabriele Mentges explores a similar concept of disinterestedness in 'coolness' in the military as a sensual experience of the body, dress and its materials; all relating it to the construction of gender. The word 'cool' is very much from the twentieth century, as Mentges describes in the etymological origin of the word. The translation of *Lässigkeit*, the quasi-equivalent of 'cool', also translates to the French *nonchalance*, which was used throughout the courtesy books of the eighteenth century. Although leaping ahead to the twentieth century, Mentges in discussing the World War I fighter pilot, Manfred van Richthofen, the Red Baron, claims that the 'relaxed manner' earned him undivided admiration, yet 'was a provocation to and disruption of Prussian discipline in the German army' (Mentges 2000: 27–47). There appear to be many similarities between Brummell and Richthofen: it is the heroic masculine qualities acting as a, perhaps unintentional, recruitment device by those who offered their undivided admiration.

The military uniform was a combination of specific techniques of the body, sometimes intangible qualities, such as coolness, with the dress that was attractive to many men. The uniform as a recruitment device indicates that the masculine gaze upon the military body was high on the agenda. Alison Mathews David questions who is the audience or the gaze on the uniformed body, arguing that the mirror was high on the list (David 2003: 3–38).

CONCLUSION: FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN FASHION

The dress practices associated with the uniform spread; more so when the men left the militia, as indicated through Brummell. Just as recruitment drew from far and wide, the ripple effects of their military education were disseminated to civilians throughout the country as they travelled or returned home. The masculinities and the dress practices that they had learned were broadcast.

One of the key roles of elite fashion was the display of conspicuous consumption. The dress of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century military displayed enough decorations to make a haberdasher's heart soar. Although there was a range of masculinities in the military there was a preference for a particular heroic masculinity, dressed in finery, displaying the country's

wealth and moving theatrically as the members of the military performed. Brummell demonstrated 'wealth' through pared dress practices. It was an attention to subtle know-how and 'distinction' through embodied dress practices learned and re-interpreted from the military. These included the whiteness of his shirts and neckties, the cost of yards of linen and the maintaining of cleanliness through associated laundry. The pale leather gloves could not be cleaned easily therefore had to be replaced frequently. The cost of hiring a manservant, such as Brummell's Robinson, was indispensable to the dressing process, and such attention to the body and clothing could only be done with the aid of a servant. Brummell understood the importance of the expensive military tailor's skills in bespoke padding and sculpting of the woollen jackets to enhance muscularity. The tight white stocking fabric or soft leather trousers imitated the classical male sculptures showing every bump and indicated a knowledge of culture and the erotic potential of the fashion. These were costly and individually tailored. The wealth Brummell displayed was more complex yet subtle.

This article has argued that Beau Brummell embodied military-dress practices, and it has followed the multi-directional percolating of male fashion from Brummell imitating the elite of the military, to have the elite mimic his dress practices, and furthermore by the dissemination of the notion of fashion through a devoted group of followers in Brummell's hey-day. For a man who left behind very little imagery of himself, imagery which is essential to the modern sense of the dandy, Brummell's influence in male dress is fascinating. Obviously he was not the sole cause of sober male dress, for what Harvey calls the 'men in black' of the nineteenth century (Harvey 1997). It was Brummell's masculinity, produced by constraint and construction through emulation, physical exercise and specific discourses, and displayed in very specific temporal, spatial and hierarchical relations, that modern hegemonic masculinity can be traced through this genealogy.

This article demonstrates that the focus on the dynamics of *habitus*, how dress practices are embedded in wider structural frameworks of power, knowledge and technologies, and how fashion is more than the surface of clothes. Brummell's performance of gender was an embodiment of military-dress practices.

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Shanghai Street Style

By Toni Johnson-Woods and Vicki Karaminas

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Stunning street-level look at the trends shaping Shanghai's fashion scene

Although fashion fixtures and A-list celebrities pack the front rows at the biggest, most glamorous shows at fashion week, the most creative attire is often found not on the catwalks or inside the auditoriums but on the streets. Nowhere is this more evident than in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, where a vintage Vivienne Westwood frock pairs perfectly with a chic puffer, and neon-brights elevate distressed denim to veritable haute couture. Shanghai Street Style showcases this remarkable diversity by bringing together more than 100 full-colour images. Alongside the photographs are short pieces of critical commentary, shedding light on the city's changing culture and how this is expressed through the clothing choices of ordinary city-dwellers going about their daily routines.

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