

Why War? Parallel with Freud's Reply to Einstein's Query

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Summary

'War' is stereotypically a state of open and declared, hostile armed conflict between states or nations. Politically, war may be considered as a tool of the government, and a sensible apparatus of national policy, based on the expenses and advantages of warfare. According to some scholars, war and peace are the ways to achieve a regulatory compromise between manifestations of human mentality, and the influence of the external environment through natural selection. On the other hand, for the past hundred years, medicine and society have shown a growing interest in combat reactions, and the focus has shifted from an organic one towards a psychological and psychiatric perspective. Like many other pacifist scholars, war was the concern of Einstein, who asked Freud regarding any cognitive strategy for protecting manhood from the threat of war, especially when some psychological obstacles and impulses seem to be involved, which may not be easily measurable or manageable by politicians. In the present article, war has been descriptively reevaluated to explore its perceived cultural – historical aspects, disregard to usual political doctrines or rationalizations.

Keywords: Warfare; War; Battlefield; Antiwar; Pacifism; Geopolitical conflict; Political Hegemony; Shell Shock; Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Introduction

'War' is defined as a state of declared and open, antagonistic armed battle between nations or states, or a period of such fight [1]. While some scholars believe that war is not between man and man, but between State and State, others believe that battles are mere symptoms of the underlying belligerent nature of the universe, and war is the father of all things because all animals are perpetually at war with each other [2]. So, maybe, war could be defined as any active struggle or hostility between living beings, opposing forces or contradictory principles [3]. On the other hand, as stated by some scholars, the problem of war and peace originates in the constructions of mentality [4]. Accordingly, war and peace are ways to achieve a regulatory compromise between human mentality and the influence of the external environment through natural selection, and due to continuous inclination in mental space to create the most comfortable conditions for the full realization of the internal creative potentials, war has greater significance, and if there is no struggle, there is no life. The desire to change the world by every new generation, which should be different from the already established status quo, leads to violence, civil wars and revolutions [4]. Hence, based on Plato's idea of "About the unity of good and evil", Cicero's and Hegel's ideas of "War is a necessity of the world", Machiavelli's idea of "Equilibrium of power" and "The role of the ruler's personality in the destiny of the state"

the ontology of war can be expressed in scientific formulations, too and, therefore, only instructive skills can effectually modify them [5, 6]. In the present article, war as an important topic in political psychology, has been reevaluated, once more, to explore its doctrines, rationalizations and adversaries.

Background

Philosophy of War, in a few words

The philosophy of war is the area of philosophy dedicated to probing topics such as the reasons for war, the association between human nature and war, and the morals of war. On the other hand, certain aspects of the philosophy of war overlap with international relations, philosophy of history, philosophy of law and political philosophy [1]. In this regard, the philosophy of just war (righteous war) hypothesizes what features of war, like cause, proportionality and means, are defensible in line with morally acceptable values [6]. So, just war theory is grounded on four central measures, including: just authority (is it a legitimate act?) Just cause (is it at the moment an appropriate response?) Right intention (are its purposes in line with ethics?) Last resort (have all other solutions been attempted before resorting to war?) [9]. While in political philosophy war is emblematically compared to a game of strategy, it has at times been viewed as an outlet of aggressive instincts or an expression of a death wish, as nature's way of

ensuring the survival of the fittest, as a kind of silliness, or as a crime [10]. Also, while some intellectuals see war as something that is in no way under the influence of man's "free will", but is instead the result of irresistible global forces, many politicians may see war as a governmental instrument and a sensible tool of national strategy, based on assessed expenses and achievements of warfare. Therefore, tactics and strategy ought to be focused towards just one conclusion, that is on the road to triumph, and its aim should include improvement of national security and welfare and that the entire effort of the people ought to be organized in the service of the military objective; an outlook which is comparable to Machiavellianism [11, 12].

Warfare and Moral Code

As said by some academics, the morals of war consist of three main divisions: the realist, the pacifist, and the just war model. Realists usually believe that schemes of principles that monitor folks within societies cannot genuinely be applied to societies as a whole to manage the way they interact with other societies. Therefore, a state's drive in war is just to preserve its national security and benefits. Pacifism, on the other hand, believes that an ethical valuation of war is conceivable, and that war is every time found to be unprincipled [12]. The just war scheme, in consort with pacifism, believes that mores do apply to war. Nevertheless, not like pacifism, as said by the just war model, it is conceivable for a war to be ethically defensible if it is for the country's self-preservation, or it is aimed at ending uncivilized ruins of civil rights [13]. In any case, while the justified war may be just an illusion consistent with the traditional just war scheme, combatants must constantly differentiate between military points and citizens and purposely attack only military objectives, forecasted but accidental harms must be proportional to the achieved military benefit, and the least destructive weapons, if possible, must be used [14, 15].

Neuropsychiatry and Battleground

While, in the past hundred years, medicine and society have shown a growing interest in combat reactions, "Forward psychiatry" was developed during World War I for the management of shell shock, which relied on three doctrines: proximity to combat, immediacy, and expectation of recovery [16]. Gradually, the focus has shifted from an organic one towards a psychological and psychiatric perspective, and sociocultural, economic and political forces turned earlier Shell shock into present Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) [17]. However, the psychological consequences and sequence of events that follow any specific war is not automatically generalizable to other conflicts [18, 19]. On the other hand, though within the military culture, "succumbing" to psychological problems of war is seen as a failure, a weakness, and as evidence of an innate deficiency of the right staff, the perception of stigmatization can be reduced by providing more mental health services in primary care clinics [20, 21]. With the increasing use of high explosives in modern combat, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has become a common problem for troops,

which, in addition to medical problems, may produce persistent symptoms such as headache, memory impairment, and behavioral changes. Though later and in spite of a paucity of neuropathology studies investigating the effects of high explosives on the human brain and further investigation into a possible organic cause for these symptoms has been discontinued, recent studies have revealed that athletes with repeated head trauma can develop chronic traumatic encephalopathy [21]. Similarly, there is some evidence that comorbid PTSD and TBI result in greater reports of post-concussion syndrome than either condition alone [22]. On the other hand, while involvement in warfare can have dramatic consequences for the mental health and well-being of military personnel, the success of screening for vulnerability of subjects has not been satisfying, and the results of treatment for chronic post-war syndromes are equivocal. Though inventive proposals for a population-based approach, fixed in primary care settings, instead of specialty-based care, have been proposed it is not without serious uncertainties regarding the veracity of diagnosis of PTSD or helpfulness of related therapies doubts which probably have more influence outside the psychiatric profession than within it [23-28]. Anyhow, although modern crisis care owes its existence to 'forward psychiatry', war, too, has also changed psychiatric concepts due to cultural, philosophical and monetary factors [29, 30]. While the dilemma of either serving the demands of war or the individual is a common feature among military psychiatrists, during the last decades there has been a convergence between military psychiatry and clinical psychiatry [31]. In spite of remarkable advances, attempts at preventing psychiatric injury, by primary screening or later debriefing, have been disappointing, because, while traditional psychiatric injury is predictable, proportionate and can, in theory, be managed, war traumas are unanticipated, confusing and hard to manage. However, the experiences of civilians in wartime or the military show that people are not intrinsically risk-averse, if they can comprehend any valued purpose in advance of accepting risk [24].

Freud's Reply to Einstein's Query Re War, Briefly

In a historical query, Albert Einstein asked Sigmund Freud, is there any way of protecting manhood from the threat of war, especially when there are certain psychological obstacles which are not easily measurable or manageable by politicians. As stated by him, while setting up an international legislative and judicial body for settling global conflicts was supposed to be a simple way of dealing with the administrative aspect of the problem, the ill-success of all the efforts made during the forgoing years to reach this objective could leave no room to doubt that strong psychological factors were at work, which had paralyzed those exertions, and craving for power is a major hindrance against the aforesaid hope, especially when the ruling class of every nation has unlimited control over the institutes and media. So, is it possible to control man's lust for animosity and annihilation, as innate instincts, in specifically uncultured masses, to make humans immune against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness? Freud replied to Einstein's query by

remarking that though right and violence seem to us as the exact opposite, conflicts of interest and opinion among men are settled by the use of violence.

In the beginning, in a small human group, it was superior muscular power which decided who possessed things or whose drive should succeed. Though, through evolution, intellectual superiority and equipment began to replace physical muscular power, the ultimate purpose of the contest remained the same - one side or the other was to be required to abandon his right or his protest due to the harm imposed on him and by the crippling of his power. That purpose was most absolutely achieved if the conqueror's vehemence eradicated his opponent forever - that is, killed him, and so deterring others from following his way, though since the foe could be employed in performing beneficial services, sometimes the defeater's ferocity was contented with subjugating him instead of slaying him. But, the said scheme was transformed throughout evolution, because the superior power of a single individual could be neutralized by the union of several weak ones. Viciousness could be cracked by joining together, and the authority of those who were unified now embodied law in contrast to the strength of the single person. Nevertheless, it is still fierceness, ready to be directed against any person who fights it. The only genuine dissimilarity lies in the fact that what succeeds is no longer the strength of an individual but that of a community, which must be a stable and lasting one. But, from its very commencement, the community includes features of uneven strength and soon, as a result of battle and subjugation, it also comes to include winners and defeated, who turn into rulers and slaves. Since the laws are made by and for the governing participants and find little room for the privileges of those in subjugation, revolt and civil confrontation follow, which may end in the formation of a fresh rule of law. Therefore, maybe the violent solution of conflicts of interest is not avoidable even inside a community. Accordingly, we may see that a community is held together by two things: the compelling force of violence because the law often cannot do without the support of violence, and the emotive bonds (identifications) between its fellows. According to Freud's hypothesis, human instincts are of only two kinds: those which seek to preserve and unite and those which seek to destroy and kill (the aggressive or destructive instinct), and the phenomena of life arise from the parallel or reciprocally contrasting action of both. Therefore, when human beings are provoked to war they may have a whole number of motives for fighting - some honorable and some immoral, some which are openly stated and others which are never cited. However, a lust for violence and demolition is certainly among them, and while the idealistic motives had pushed themselves forward in consciousness, the destructive ones gave them an unconscious reinforcement. The organism preserves its own life by destroying an extraneous one. So, logically, while there is no use in trying to get rid of men's violent feelings, anything that inspires the growth of emotional connections between men must operate against war. Also, more care should be taken to educate an upper layer of men with independent minds, resistant against

terrorization and in search of truth, who had subordinated their instinctual life to the dictatorship of reason, though maybe that is merely a Utopian expectation. On the other hand, why many scholars and peacemakers rebel so aggressively against war and don't accept it as another of the many painful calamities of life? Maybe, because everybody has a right to his own life, because war puts an end to human lives that are full of hope, because it coerces them against their will to kill other men, and for the reason that it extinguishes valuable material objects which have been created by the labors of humanity. On the other hand, so long as there are realms and states that are prepared for the ruthless destruction of others, those others must be armed for war. Anyhow, since war opposes the mental evolution imposed on us by the process of civilization, we are bound to rebel against it. How long shall we have to wait before the rest of mankind become pacifists too? Nobody knows. But, whatsoever promotes the growth of civilization works simultaneously against war [32].

Discussion

While, from outside, war is usually mixed with a remarkable amount of excitement, especially as a topic for people who have never experienced that, it always produces dreadfulness, hopelessness, helplessness, and disgust in vulnerable folks who have survived inside the battle zone. For battalions it is like gambling, which may end in losing their lives, a game that is catalyzed by fight or flight. In fact, no civilization has ever survived, through history, without experiencing war, whether locally, as a civil war, or outwardly, against exterior enemies. On the other hand, struggle is essentially part of our life, which starts after birth for the acquisition of sustenance by a newborn, followed by sibling's rivalries for attainment of better rewards, colleague's competitions for achievement of superior positions or earnings, and folks' competition for gaining better mates, bigger houses, nicer cars or more welfares. Even breathing needs effort, existing demands energy, and survival requires shelter. So, persisting is not guaranteed and free of cost. Amid the said process, creatures with better tools, healthier nutrition and more safety have a higher chance for survival. Accordingly, governments, as the official representatives of their nations, based on the internal parameters and external measures, decide to fight, compromise or give away with respect to required resources which are not limitless or are not at all times available. Therefore, they try to acquire political hegemony through economic and military development, which expedites achievement of the said objectives [33]. Though it does not seem that the structure of a political system has any significant role in starting or continuing a war, especially in the contemporary era, philosophical considerations of an administrative system may provoke or motivate fervent, inexperienced or idealist politicians to start lethal conflicts, which, sooner or later, after inflicting a lot of not inevitable harms and fatalities, will be terminated by the necessities of real world; a course, which may exterminate the said dreamy and antagonistic systems, as well. Political dogma, though it may, sometimes, play a role as a protecting factor, if it

remains constantly inflexible, may turn, from one hand, external antagonisms into internal conflicts, like autoimmune diseases, which kill the host by its own defending elements, and, on the other hand, turn some miscalculations into tragic complications [34]. Though currently the concepts of nationality, homeland, patriotism, and xenophobia, are experiencing severe challenges from globalization perspectives, anyhow, it seems that, still, a sociobiological or Neo-Darwinian perspective governs the public drive for defending their territories. Philosophy, too, without considering nationalistic issues or resorting to chauvinistic mottos, even though provisionally or tactically, does not seem to be so lucky for achievement of its expected victory. Anyhow, patriotism, as well, is not devoid of sociocultural aspects, which may adjust jingoism in line with individual beliefs, a tune that may range between extremism and moderation, dogmatism and openness, racism and tolerance. War started parallel to the creation of the world, when, in line with holy assumptions, Satan violated Deity's vetoes and Cain killed Abel. So, it parallels natural life, like an instinct, which has been called by Freud the death instinct, contrary to life instinct or Eros. As has been mentioned before, the said opposite instincts regulate survival, which is reigned by Darwinian natural selection, too. Accordingly, the better, stronger and cleverer creatures will dominate others. The submissive, oblivious, and unwise creatures, as well, experience more risk of harm or annihilation. Therefore, competing for the achievement of a superior situation in the world is a necessary stipulation for creatures, if they want to survive longer, be healthier or stress-free. Unfortunately, it seems that war does not recognize goodness or badness on the battlefield, and, so, it runs as a conflict between loser and winner. On the other hand, in addition to worldly advantages for the vanquisher, its cultural values and judgements, as well, may turn into an epitome for losers. As is evident, war between kingdoms has different dimensions, including economic, cultural, political and armed. While the last style of struggle is the most recognized one, it is usually the last alternative, which is preceded before by other styles of confrontation. So, while unarmed warfare may seem to be less tragic than equipped war, it may deteriorate the nemesis more callously and painstakingly than fortified war, because equipped battles usually take place only in war zones, while the other ones are operating limitlessly. War will certainly happen if the encountered combatants wish it simultaneously; it may happen if the said desire is not concurrent; it will never happen if the said antagonists do not wish it. Therefore, disregard for superficial threats or pretended axioms, obscured inclinations will formulate a future state of affairs. War is per se a monstrous act. So, expecting a moral code from warfare is comparable to expecting cleanliness from dirtiness. Ethnic cleansing, which is usually identified as a criminal act by peace-loving activists or international jurists, though it is undoubtedly an abysmal maneuver, its occurrence may not be astonishing, because, historically and reflexively, the first demand of every conqueror usually comprised merciless annihilation of overwhelmed rulers and their kinsfolks, for saving themselves and their blood

relatives from possible revenge or sabotage by survived lineages. Accordingly, a compassionate victor might only jeopardize earlier successes, existing power and upcoming desires by his incongruous clemency, except when assuring measures or diplomacy could guarantee a kind of coexistence or symbiosis between defeater and defeated. On the other hand, the expense of victory is not at all times less significant than charges of defeat. The war, also, has its specific political economy, independent from a country's political economy, which is being formulated and implemented by the administration [35]. If the ensuing achievements or spoils of war, after supposed victory, does not deserve its monetary inevitability, it is comparable to a veiled failure. This may explain why, through history, the dominant kingdoms have customarily preferred to compromise with each other or weaker territories, instead of never-ending campaigns or expansionism. Anyway, the most important thing with respect to war is prevention of war by any means, because after initiation of war, the rest of dreadful processes ensue autonomously. Thus, it is very similar to known health strategies, where primary prevention is far better than secondary or tertiary prevention. During the present globalization era, any war is like a damaged part of a working device, which, though it is local, may cause huge global impairment. Anyhow, as stated by some scholars, while the social milieu does not alleviate personal and group aggression but aggravates it, and the state boundaries, often, do not match up with the margins of loci of civilization, educational technologies and scholastic policy are essential elements that may help to manage a society by handling its emotional state and awareness, remake the structure of a society and reorientation of the functions of its important components. If attitudes should throw away collective aggression, mania of militaristic or heroic morality and ethnic selfishness, the instructive system should teach the rising generations to find the answer to the question "How does my life help to remove the causes of war?" [5].

Conclusion

War is a problem solving strategy, though the worst one, which may act in due course as a cultural catalyzer or civilization changer, as well; though sometimes there is no convincing rationalization for initiation of war; similar to crimes of serial killers, who kill without any understandable reason, or un-understandable delusions of schizophrenic patients. While politicians are expected to use every available policy to avoid or defer any kind of war, inept politicians may precipitate avoidable wars by their thoughtless plans. War is not eradicable, in contrast to the wishes of peace-loving activists, it is not limited to capitalism on behalf of imperialistic drives, in contrast to the beliefs of Marxist thinkers, and it is not directed by Satan, in contrast to diviners. It results stereotypically from jeopardizing of safety or survival. Though it is not eradicable, because it is the outcome of an inevitable and endless back-and-forth between power, jeopardy, and being, it is alterable, deferrable, manageable or stoppable by joint pacific efforts, supportive peaceable organizations, and cooperative diplomatic strategies. While issues like motherland, nation-state, and ideology may act

as explicit and valuable epitomes, vengeance, hate and anger may act as concealed promoters that fade inexhaustibly the conjectural borders between good and evil.

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