

WAR: A PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCERN?

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PREFACE

First of all I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you some thoughts I have on the dynamics of war, and to be able to have your comments later which will help me in my experience.

It is not for me to define psychoanalysis and its concerns, but I would like to present to you the evolution of a way of thought about war, which for me, anyway, became inextricably interwoven with thinking about the psychodynamics of my patients. You may find variable degrees of congruence between what I shall present and your psychoanalytic concerns.

I found that my concerns about war could not be hived off from other concerns. In other words, the more I looked at war, in spite of the magnitude of suffering which resulted from it, the less did it appear as some monolithic external monster. Not only were there many kinds of wars, but aspects of wars seemed quite connected to the non-monster, even admired aspects of humans. Inevitably, I was led to think about human nature. Indeed, it seems that all theories of war include a philosophy of human nature. So in this presentation I will touch on views of human nature, and I will touch on how study of war and also other traumas had helped me see patients in a slightly different light.

What I propose to do now is to briefly review the psychoanalytic literature on war. Then I would like to present some thoughts of mine derived from studies of soldiers, wars and of humans under stress. Lastly, I'll suggest how I think psychoanalytic thinking may be particularly germane to the elucidation of the nature of wars.

PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS

You will note that theories of war are extrapolations from psychoanalytic theories of the times. In particular, they reflect views on where reside the central problems of humans, in their nature or in their environment. When it comes to war, most psychoanalytic literature sides with the view that the problem is internal to human nature. However, other views are also present.

I. WAR AS PART OF HUMAN NATURE

This view of war is represented by Freud and Klein in the death instinct, Oedipal theories, and applications of the paranoid and depressive positions.

Death (destructive, aggressive) instinct

FREUD developed his theories of war after he had abandoned his environmental

or traumatic theories of neuroses. Thus the main brunt of Freud's view of war was the release of an innate instinct. In *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), he explained the cruelties of the First World War as a "temporary satisfaction of the instincts." (p.285). His view of human nature stated, "... judged by our unconscious wishful impulses, we ourselves are, like primeval man a gang of murderers," (p.297). In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud still maintained, "Man is a wolf to man ... savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien." (p.111-112).

In 1920 in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud introduced the concept of death instinct, in order to explain two cunundrums-traumatic neuroses, and aggression sadism and masochism. The death instinct explained the need to return to trauma, and masochism. Sadism and aggression was the death instinct turned outward to preserve the self.

Freud was not interested in war thereafter. He was irritated by having to interrupt work to answer Einstein's open letter "Why War?" (Einstein and Freud, 1932). His answer held nothing new. "... instincts are only of two kinds ... Eros or sexual ... [and] instinct of hatred and destruction." (p.209).

These views persisted and were reflected after the Second World War by Glover (1946) and Strachey (1957).

KLEIN was the other main proponent of a primary death instinct, which she said was present from birth. Klein said, "I hold that anxiety arises from the operation of the death instinct ..." (1946, p.4), and she held the death instinct to be the prime source of anxiety. Thus the baby discharges its death instinct into the breast, which becomes persecuting as the death instinct may be reabsorbed. The death instinct which remains in the infant is discharged outward as aggression (Segal, 1975, p.25). Envy of the breast gives special impetus to the death instinct (Klein, 1957, p.183).

Through concepts of good and bad projections, Klein maintained the duality of instincts and their hydrostatic nature. Good and bad implied moral judgement, and the primacy of the death instinct continued Freud's pessimism on views of human nature.

COMMENTS ON DEATH INSTINCT. I believe that the death instinct theory of destructiveness extrapolated to war is like a foreclosed argument. A dislikable symptom or social phenomenon is said to be explained by calling it by a different name - death instinct.

It is even arguable whether it is clinically tenable. It seems to me that aggression in patients can always be analyzed as meaningful in terms of needs of life, not death.

Glover (1946) said that understanding war neurotics is essential to understanding war. Yet, to my knowledge, the death instinct was not derived from analysis of war neurotics, nor soldiers, nor dying patients. Observations on these groups do not corroborate the death instinct. For instance Spiegel (1944) noted that soldiers fought more out of love than hate, and more for somebody than against somebody. Killing and self-sacrifice were incidental to needs of survival, whether of oneself or others. Protecting those one loves may mean killing

others. As for dying patients, I have noted elsewhere that dying patients are also very preoccupied with life issues and meanings. At the same time, acceptance of death is not an internally directed death instinct at last catching up with its aim, but an achievement of maturity (Valent, 1978).

Intellectually the death instinct stems from 19th century notions of hydrostatics, entropy and reductionism where the smallest part (like biochemistry, brain centre, etc.) determines the whole. It is satisfying because it is a foreclosed and self-fulfilling theory. Seeing war as a normal determinist part of human nature allows us to ignore it.

Not surprisingly, few constructive suggestions have come from this theory. Lifting sexual repressions to tilt against the death instinct was one suggestion. Widescale psychoanalysis was another.

The Oedipal struggle

As Money-Kyrle (1937) noted, this was the next psychoanalytic theory of war causation after the pure drive theories. Actually, in *Totem and Taboo* Freud (1912) described a purpose after all for the aggression of the gang of murderers - that is the killing of the primal father. In general, the Oedipal theory of war holds that various people and symbols in war represent the people and symbols in the Oedipal struggle.

Thus the enemy may be imbued with one's own hidden Oedipal desires. The fear of enemies raping mothers and sisters is a potent spur to going to war (to kill one's projected desires), while raping enemy mothers and sisters (acting out one's desires with impunity) is one reward of war. Similarly, referring to racial riots in the U.S., West (1976) suggested that the Negro represented hidden incestuous desires. It was the black man, not oneself, whose big penis was desirous of ravishing one's mothers and sisters. Hitler saw the Jewish penis as very successful in seducing German women.

In this theory the fear of castration is also played out. Lasswell (1965) suggested that the fear of the enemy is castration anxiety. Hitler used the lie that Poles had castrated German soldiers as one excuse to invade Poland. War allows enemy soldiers to be castrated, and thus to avoid one's own castration anxieties.

Money-Kyrle (1951) suggested that the Oedipal father may be split - the good father being one's leader, while the punishing father being the enemy leader.

Freud, and Strachey (1957) among many have suggested that weapons are phallic symbols. On the other hand, mother may be symbolized by territory (motherland). Lacombe (1963) attempted an Oedipal type analysis of the 1956 Suez War. He suggested that the Suez Canal represented mother's breast, and the French, English and Israelis were the rival brothers fighting for it. While this kind of analysis may be far fetched, the relevance of Oedipal conflicts in leaders may be more valid.

The Oedipal conflicts of leaders played out in politics may contribute to war. Shaka who founded the Zulu empire last century was the product of an incest taboo marriage (Ritter, 1987). He and his mother were exiled because of this. In exile, Shaka was over-close to his mother, and stayed so all his life. Shaka had been taunted about the size of his penis in the place of exile. As a

successful leader, he had daily public baths, were his penis could be duly admired. His conquests, at least to some extent further proved his manhood. He slew his taunters, and those who had derided his mother. He elevated his mother to a kind of goddess, and proffered her the choicest parts of war loot. After his mother died, he forbade sex, fertility and drinking of milk, on pain of death. He lined up his warriors naked, and enticed them with naked women. Any who showed a sign of erection were slain on the spot, on the grounds that they did not show proper mourning for his (and their) mother. His excesses after his mother died led to Shaka's assassination.

Little (1988) describes how Ronald Reagan was closely attached to his mother. She introduced him to acting, and they played married couples in church plays. Reagan saw his father as a weak alcoholic.

His autobiography "Where is the Rest of Me?" takes its name from what he saw as the ultimate line from his acting career. In the book on which this second rate movie is based, the father and daughter have an incestuous relationship. In the film Reagan woos the daughter and the father cuts off his legs. When he wakes up in hospital he cries out, "Where is the rest of me?" We may speculate that Reagan's concern for missiles and being a great warrior against the Evil Empire were a way of trying to get the rest of him back. But we must be careful of simple one to one transpositions from Oedipal conflicts to leaders and war. For instance Reagan was the first leader to enter agreements on destruction of missiles.

COMMENT Oedipal conflicts seem to add some colour and meaning to aspects of war. But like with the death instinct, it is too hazardous to attribute cause of war to it.

Furthermore, it is possible that some social aspects of the Oedipus complex have survival value for the group. Sociobiology (Wilson, 1975) shows us that the primal horde (Freud 1912) has some validity among some higher primates like the baboons. The dominant male in these groups has greater sexual access and fertility, associated with higher testosterone levels. This enables the best genes to be propagated in the breeding community. This male also has greater access to food, shelter and comforts. The submissive adolescents are peripheral males with low testosterone and fertility. These adolescents also do much of the fighting against predators and other groups. They have higher mortality rates. It is interesting to speculate whether low testosterone levels, low fertility and high mortality resulting from submission to the dominant male is in part the biological basis of castration anxiety.

The dominant male also has duties to the group. He directs them to food through his greater wisdom. He distributes the food. He keeps order in the group and metes out justice. And he may lead the defence against predators or other groups. He is like leaders of bands and absolute monarchs have been till recent times.

When the dominant baboon fails to be an asset to the group, he can be replaced, often by a coalition of peripheral males. This may be the equivalent of killing of the primal father. An equivalent to this occurs in combat groups, when it is felt that the father of the group is more dangerous than the danger from which he is supposed to protect. The killing of group leaders occurred frequently in the First World War and Vietnam. On a larger scale, kings may be killed if

they bleed their sons too much. This occurred with Shaka, and in other revolutions like the French Revolution or more recently with the Shah of Iran, and with Marcos in the Philippines.

Object relations theories

These are propounded by Money-Kyrle (1937, 1951), Jacques (1955), Fornari (1975), and Segal in a paper delivered at the inauguration of the International Psychoanalysts against Nuclear Weapons in Hamburg in 1985 (Segal, 1987).

These writers draw on the Kleinian theory of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In the paranoid-schizoid position the death instinct is initially channelled to part objects like the nipple or breast. The latter become extended in time to mother as a whole, the stranger, the strange group and the strange nation. The paranoid-schizoid position has characteristic defences - denial, splitting, projective identification, and projection. These defences lead to denial of murderousness in oneself. One's own side is seen as good, the others are murderous.

According to this theory, persecutory anxieties are played out concretely in war. It becomes a relief to be able to fight real enemies instead of internal persecutors. The only reason war is not a psychotic illness equivalent is that there are real enemies.

War may not only serve as a defence against paranoid anxieties. It may also serve as a defence against anxieties of the depressive position. Guilt for killing loved ones, sorrow, mourning and need for reparation are all avoided by a regression to the paranoid position. Translating this into politics means that finding external enemies is a relief from having to deal with severe internal problems which need repairing or mourning.

Apart from the intrapsychically determined aspects of this theory (harking back to the death instinct), its insights, I believe, have become incorporated among students of conflict and war.

It is well accepted that when there is internal strife or depression it is tempting to make external wars. Blainey (1977) noted that between 1823 and 1937 at least 31 wars (the majority of them sizeable wars) were preceded by serious disturbances in one of the fighting nations. More recently, the Second World War was preceded by a great Depression. Even in quite recent times Americans, internally burdened by the lost Vietnam War, impotent with a prolonged hostage crisis, and with President Carter sharing with the people the difficulties of government, were restored in their morale by Reagan who saw the world simply, won a war in Grenada, and silenced a terrorist leader in Lybia by dropping bombs on him. Similarly, Thatcher's war with Argentina spurred her popularity.

The black and white view of neighbours who may also serve as enemies is well accepted, too. Neighbouring tribes and nations are often traditional enemies. On some small islands small populations may be divided into two hostile factions. In recent times we saw the Tamals and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka at war, and the Indians and Fijians in Fiji. The implication is that these enemy neighbours are used as the rationale or the scapegoats to explain internal problems for which there seem no solutions.

COMMENT We must be wary here too, of making this a universal principle of war, because not all wars are preceded by internal strife, and not all neighbours are hostile. However, what is realized fairly widely now, is that once countries enter a paranoid framework, they tend to think of each other in primitive splits, and deny their own contribution to a spiralling cycle of reciprocated paranoia. This is the psychology of Cold Wars and arms races.

Methods of dealing with this paranoid tendency include as Lasswell (1965) suggested, "political (psycho)analysis", where distortions are corrected publicly. Secondly, the vicious spiral may be reversed by well publicised acts of friendship and invitations to trust. There is a whole science developing in this area, and it has been applied in the first Detente between the U.S. and Russia in the time of Kennedy, and currently in possibly a new Detente.

Groups

To some people groups crystallize, and enact the inner instincts of destructiveness. Freud (1921) prefaced his study of group psychology with LeBon's and McDougall's views of groups as persecutory packs. From LeBon to Segal (1987), it is said that the most primitive instincts and the most primitive psychotic anxieties are bound and expressed in groups. Even the intense love among group members serves only the better execution of hateful aggression to the outside.

Aspects of groups which are seen to lead to destructiveness, are the dissolution of personal boundaries, conscience, will, judgement and freedom. The group is dominated by the will of its leader, often portrayed as fanatical and narcissistic, if not actually psychotic.

Bion (1961), though he acknowledges the positive aspects of the work group, nevertheless stresses the lack of rational thinking ability of the basic assumption groups fuelled by Fight-Flight paranoia or dependency needs which are always present in groups. The later Tavistock groups seem to have confirmed this, and also that larger groups generate more affect and a tendency to irrationality.

COMMENT Groups may seem antithetical to those who treasure individuality and autonomy. But groups have allowed man to survive hostile predators and harsh environments through the greater power and flexibility of groups relative to the otherwise vulnerable individual human. For groups to function effectively, individuals have to give up their autonomy. It is not groups which are bad in themselves, but how they may be abused.

Groups, like soldiers, politicians, and so on have to be studied in their own right.

2. THE HUMAN CONDITION

This is an intermediate position between human nature being the cause of war, as against external events being the cause.

This position is exemplified by Koestler (1974), Fromm (1977) and Blomfield (1987). These authors point out that human infants are the most vulnerable species for the longest time, and therefore are most impressionable and prone to needs of symbiosis and attachment. They are later prone to be politically

impressionable and exploited, and to attach themselves to false symbols.

Bill Blomfield notes the huge discrepancy which generates conflict between a physically self-contained baby but a psychologically still parasitic one.

It does indeed seem quite probable that the inordinate suggestibility and obedience which humans can exhibit is related to the long period of helplessness and need for others' guidance to survive. Such obedience can be exploited by parents and leaders.

3. WAR DERIVED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES

Firstly, death or danger from the outside may be denied as much if not more than death and danger from the inside. We may speculate that there is a history of denial of trauma in psychoanalysis.

Denial

Lifton (1967), who sixteen years after it was dropped, was the first person to make detailed psychological observations on the effects of the atom bomb on its victims, stated that people were interested in things in inverse proportion to their magnitude. Lifton called this kind of denial or dissociation psychic numbing. It may be this numbing which explains how little war has been studied. Hanna Segal (1987), in "Silence is the Real Crime", exhorts psychoanalysts to deny or be numb no longer.

Denial is now recognized by peace movements as a defence against the enormity of potential terror. They see it as dangerous in leaders and in those who control nuclear weapons, and they see it in the general apathy of those potentially affected by nuclear weapons. Peace movements did break through mass apathy especially in Europe at the time of the MX and Cruise missile deployments. It seems very likely that they contributed to the current nuclear cutbacks.

Breaking through denial without some hope of effective action, on the other hand, can backlash. The exhorter, who may detail the number of times each member of the audience and the world at large may be incinerated, may feel better for having given himself some personal psychotherapy, but the audience sinks deeper into apathy and despair.

Joel Kovel (1983) in his book *Against the State of Nuclear Terror*, analyzes denial mechanisms against nuclear terror. He says that psychoanalysts also deny this external terror by placing its source inside the mind, an area where they have power. However, this prevents anything from which politics can be built (p.54). Psychoanalysts avoid social dynamics and thereby avoid confrontation with power. They treat individual minds, leading comfortable lives. Politicians pursue power without the burden of psychological analysis of their actions. This suits both parties.

Unfortunately socially aware psychoanalysts like Fromm and Kovel also fail to deliver political solutions. They imply that war stems from the social consequences of industrialization and capitalism which has led to alienation, boredom and impersonal technocracies. Their solutions sound more like pleas to go back to some ideal of nature than political programs.

COMMENT It is war as an external danger which produced denial and numbing. It is perceived that one is helpless in the face of an overwhelming danger. Yet, like in psychological illnesses, exploring the danger shows logic and hope, and means of action. Ignoring the issue perpetuates it (Valent, 1982).

Aggression as a way of dealing with danger

Trauma and denial may not only apply to the horrors of mass adult holocausts, but to individual trauma, especially of early infancy. If we think of the high infant mortality (including infanticide) till recent times, and the frequency of early deprivations and separations, we see that infants, throughout man's history on this planet, have had to face much real danger in their early lives. Recent explorations of borderline cases have shown that much psychological illness, even of the most primitive type is influenced by mother-child interactions. Likierman (1987) suggests that the alternative to the death instinct view of aggression is that aggression (or anger in her paper) is an adaptive response to traumatic situations, and this can apply from birth.

This implies an alternative view of human nature. The infant's anger and by extrapolation human aggression are primarily means to survive, not to kill. This leaves room for the possibility of a variety of angers in traumatic situations, like anger of frustration when thwarted by external resistance, or the protest which Bowlby (1973) described as part of separation from mother. Each type of anger may attempt to rectify particular situations of danger.

Klein (1973) too, actually noted that it was not being gratified, being in pain or discomfort which led to hatred and aggression, while the opposite led to love. It is then a jump to make these responses internally derived.

COMMENT Personally, I think the nature-nurture, or internal-external source of aggression controversy is unnecessary. Obviously people have the capacity for greatest loves and hates, strivings and griefs, competition and cooperation. But they do not feel and practise them blindly. Circumstances evoke these capacities, though there may be a tendency to fulfill the initiated response. But to contend that external stimuli evoke these responses, involves vulnerability outside oneself, and politics. Freud abandoned his heat when he abandoned saying that adults abused and exploited their children. There is a natural reluctance to enter politics again.

And yet it seems to be common sense to extend Winnicott's statement that there is no baby without a mother, to say that there is no baby and mother without ever-expanding circles of the world impinging on both.

There is much to be said for external causes of war. In primitive societies war was common when water or food was scarce. Scarce food was a serious contributor to more modern wars too, like the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Second World War. Obtaining or defending essential resources has been a common *raison d'être* for war. The reason why war is largely extant now is because its bases are soluble, though this is often not perceived to be so.

We see that the wisdom of psychoanalysts has contributed to knowledge of aspects of war. It has not elucidated it, nor given yet cogent means of dealing with it. I would like to now describe to you some of my own journey in the field, and return to psychoanalysis at the end of the talk.

A PERSONAL VIEW

My initial contact with war was as a child in the Second World War. I desired to overcome the war through knowledge and make good my impotence. I hope the desire has lost most of its neurotic drive.

Perhaps my greatest asset has been to observe, and ask questions. I asked Germans in Germany what they felt about their war. I asked Israelis in Israel what they felt about their wars. I talked to soldiers, and civilian victims. I also talked to many in acute traumatic situations - those who were dying in hospital, the acutely bereaved, and those in acute shock from accident or illness. And I learnt a lot when I saw and followed up victims of the Ash Wednesday bushfires (Valent, 1984). I can't tell you the whole progression of my thoughts, but I'll give you some hallmarks of observations, and then some formulations.

Traumatic situations

I was struck how in danger people's responses are usually as adaptive as circumstances allow. Even emotions or actions which at first sight appear mad or bad, on closer examination have meaning in terms of survival for self or others. Further, in traumatic situations emotions emerge in primitive nakedness and intensity. I'll just mention a few from the bushfires.

From the first evening, for about a week, the community of Mt. Macedon was divided into two, those who were homeless, and those who were guilty for having homes. The survivor guilt was so unbearable that some wished their houses had burnt down. However, guilt was appeased when they gave shelter to those who were homeless, so the guilt was adaptive.

Some who were burnt out and lost all their possessions complained that they were greedy, for instance they accumulated three frying pans. I could also see envy spring up with splits in the community. Envy was around others getting more than they. The extra resources accumulated through greed were exchanged for other resources or future favours. The envious clamour led to more equitable sharing of resources. Again, these emotions in context, were adaptive.

More pertinently perhaps, anger and even rage were common. On analysis, anger was always directed at those who interfered with survival during the fires, or with equitable distribution of resources after the fires.

It was interesting to take these observations back to my patients. I did find that greed was a result of deprivation. At its ultimate, it made sense to me that an infant receiving too little or irregular supplies of milk, would stock up on it beyond current needs for future provision, like the adult did with the three frying pans. Envy, I felt, was not to destroy the breast as such, but the relationship where the breast gives more to others (or to itself), at the expense of the infant. It wants to preserve the breast which gives, and destroy the breast which gives elsewhere.

Is this applicable to war? You see how for me there is a dialectic between traumatic social situations, individual reconstructions in therapy, and observations about war. In any case, the looting of others' resources has been a common goal of war. The greed of nations and their envy has always been explained in terms of economic necessities, with the vision of hunger not far from the surface. For instance the piracy encouraged by Elizabeth I was underpinned by widespread starvation at home. Envy of Spain and her growing power based on the gold she had plundered from the Americas was also a motive for the piracy of that gold. Colonial wars were motivated by greed, interspersed with wars of envy between rival colonial powers. For an individual, too, for long periods in history war was possibly the only way a starving man could establish financial security. Nevertheless, beneath the greed deprivation was not far from the surface.

When I talked to Germans about the Second World War, they always answered in terms of the economic hardships, verging on starvation for many, which no previous government to Hitler's could remedy. Many did believe that the Jews were draining them of their wealth, and that their plunder and destruction would restore their own resources.

A view of human nature

You may have noticed by now that my view of human nature gives it more credit than blind meaningless forces of hate and love. I do not deny that humans can kill with zest and sadism (see later). Nevertheless, I found that normal people were willing to die or create, kill or sacrifice themselves, according to the meaning these acts held for them. These meanings were themselves subsumed by purpose of life, which I would like to suggest is to live and grow, and help others live and grow according to the life cycle.

There are some basic strategies for maintaining life in times of stress. They are Rescue, which includes protection and provision for the weaker. Attachment is a means for the weaker to be protected and nourished. Assertiveness is the application of power to certain goals like obtaining resources. Roll with the Punches is adapting to necessities, even giving up goals and people. There are Fight and Flight, and Competition and Cooperation which includes creation of new life and new resources. Each of these strategies has its characteristic emotions, anxieties, guilts, morality and ideology. It also has its own angers and aggression.

Conflicts on all levels including international arise, when it is perceived that some capacity to fulfill life is hindered by others. This may or may not be a correct perception. In any case, one or more of the strategies of survival are evoked according to the circumstances. Rescue was the perceived national need in the case of Britain in the Falklands War. Entry into Korea and Vietnam, to rescue these countries from Communism was a major motivating force for the U.S. Competition with a rival power, who may appropriate the world's resources were also factors. So was Fight in the sense that it was Vietnam today, and according to the domino theory, the U.S. tomorrow. Fight, where one fights for one's life, was the dominant perception in the Second World War, though it was preceded by Rolling with the Punches and surrender at the time of Munich. Attachment to a powerful ally is a common national survival strategy, as is Cooperation with allies. We have already mentioned Assertiveness as a perceived need to obtain or defend resources, as say in colonial wars.

Many factors of history and current circumstances, group factors and individual factors of leaders, contribute to outbreak of war. Perceived need for war as strategies of survival often overlap (Rescue, Fight, and so on), but clever propaganda may stimulate them all. Further factors contribute to the nature of specific wars - colonial wars, wars of independence, feudal wars, genocidal wars, and so on.

Like in the evolution of individuals, there is a history of evolution of mankind. For instance there has been evolution from dominant males of a troop to democratic governments. Slavery and colonialism have given way to more sophisticated economic exploitation. Unfortunately, we have also evolved from spears to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Yet, as in individuals too, the more complex views and actions, are often spurred by the earlier, often unconscious perceptions and emotions.

Cruelties of war

If, as mentioned above, soldiers go to war more to preserve the lives of those they love than out of hatred, what can we make of the undoubted cruelties which occur in war? In part this is the result of indifference to those with whom we do not identify. If they get killed in the process of pursuing an essential goal, it is views with the philosophy of the deaths of bacteria in the service of preserving health in ourselves and those we love. Killing here is an incidental process. The atom bomb was dropped in order to save masses of American lives. That Japanese were killed were incidental.

Each war has its particular flavour of injustice and cruelties. Just like with individuals, it is cruel to exploit the weak who are in our charge. It is immoral to press the weak into supporting one or other superpower, surrender a weak member of a group to predators, betray allies, and so on. But it is the apparently capricious killing of innocent victims which arouses the greatest horror, and is used as evidence for man's brutal nature.

I suggest that it is the Fight strategy which comes into play here, evoked by the perception that one is faced by a malignant enemy, like a fierce predator of old. Actually images of predators are common in this perception of enemies.

Confronted with such enemies the initial adaptive part of the Fight response may be to increase one's strength (basis for arms races) and to threaten potential aggressors. The aim is to deter attack. Next, if the enemy pounces and wounds, revenge brings retaliation according to the talion principle. This is common in primitive wars, feuds, and wars of "punishment". The aim is to deter further attacks. So far the wars are "clean", according to rules.

Hatred and the desire to totally eradicate others arise when one feels that the enemy is pervasive, malevolent, powerful and difficult to pinpoint and overcome effectively. This is the so called atrocity-producing situation. It is also when scapegoats are sought and persecuted. Analysis of the My Lai massacre showed such a situation (Lifton, 1973). That was also the situation when Churchill ordered bombing of German civilians. It is in this situation that the mechanisms of the paranoid-schizoid position prevail. What is hard to understand because here splitting, projection and reciprocal paranoia are very active, is that somewhere along the line the persecutors feel themselves persecuted and are fighting for their lives, as they see it.

The madness of war

As I see it, it is not paranoia or killing as such which are mad, because sometimes they are adaptive for survival. For instance fighting Hitler was not mad. Rather, it is wrong perceptions and actions for the reality of current situations which is irrational. I think this is the essence of the irrationality of psychological illnesses, too.

For instance, irrationality may arise from a need to find an external cause for the terror of vulnerability, say when epidemics or starvation occur. This is not so much externalization of the death instinct, as trying to overcome death by magical means. Hence the next tribe may be accused of sorcery.

There may be fixed perceptions from past traumas. Thus Truman and Kennedy saw the necessity to enter the Korean and Vietnam Wars in terms of the Second World War. There were to be no more Munichs for the next Hitler. Communism, unlike Nazism, was going to be contained before the dominoes started to fall. The Israelis see the Nazis behind the Arabs, and the Arabs their past colonial masters behind the Israelis.

When under threat, there is a tendency to see the situation not only in terms of past experience, but also in terms of earlier evolutionary experience. It is here that attitudes of defending against and hunting animals may be reflected in attitudes of dehumanization of enemies, or seeing them as monsters (Valent, "Why War?" Revisited, Aust J Psychotherapy 1987).

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND ELUCIDATION OF WAR

Even though Oedipal and object relation theories help with some aspects in the understanding of war, I do not believe that it is current analytic theory which holds the greatest promise in elucidating the causes of war, though it may in the future. On the other hand, I wonder whether without a psychoanalytic stance such elucidation will ever take place.

Such a stance eschews the desire for a patient to fit a reductionist theory of ailment. It is similarly best to approach the study of war without preconceived notions. In the psychoanalytic stance it is also best to eschew desire of a certain preconceived outcome, or to ally oneself with a particular split in the patient, deemed good. Similarly, I do not believe that the particular strength of psychoanalysts is in forming part of a political lobby. Rather in dispassionately, neutrally, without judgement, analyzing the various political fragments and splits, and allowing them to be assessed in terms of reality. For instance, it may be necessary to have as much empathy with soldiers and the military-industrial complex, as with the peace movement. I think it is only a psychoanalytic stance which can withhold (contain) the polarizations, and also the attacks and idealizations which are likely to come the way of the analyzer. It is this stance which can also use one's inner reactions as a tool for understanding rather than as a motive for polarized action.

The analytic stance puts observation before theory. It understands that all cases are different, even if patterns emerge. The same with wars. Thus the revolutions against the Shah of Iran and Marcos resemble the French Revolution. The Middle Eastern wars resemble the feudal and religious wars of old. In fact, like patients, the world is a museum of the relics of all past wars. But to offer

effective interpretations, there is a necessity to know individual histories, significant figures, cultures, traumas, conflicts, strengths and weaknesses and systemic relationships of the parties in conflict, and how they all relate to the present. Thus what is needed in wars and potential conflicts is not ex cathedra statements on human nature, even if they be correct. There is a need for sympathetic yet rational immersion into specific problems, with clarifying interpretations delivered in an understandable and significant manner.

Analytic inclusiveness of all aspects of human nature, and all stages of its evolution is a valuable tool. The respect accorded to symptoms as having components from all these stages is applicable to wars. The respect accorded to symptoms as having meaning in terms of human purpose and values is essential. The knowledge that there are human foibles, terror, and possibly real difficulties in giving up symptoms is applicable to wars. Implied in all the above is the psychoanalytic capacity to make the unconscious conscious.

Lastly, the psychoanalytic stance does not expect quick results, but does not waver from patient application to the task. It does not seek glory, but it is aware of its power, even though pronouncements may take a long time to percolate to significant junctions of the mind where they take effect.

Maybe a word about practical efficacy. Like with interpretations, there is nothing more powerful in history than an idea which has come of time and is expressed in the correct way. It is ideas, individuals and small groups which have had greatest effects on history.

Analytic integrity, neutrality and non-judgement may be more effective means of presenting ideas when the time is ripe, than the usual polarized arguments. But psychoanalysis must adapt its techniques to politics, in order to be heard. Psychoanalysis has done this before, and had indeed influenced the current culture through its ideas.

In conclusion, whether War is a psychoanalytic concern is beyond my brief to answer. What I would say is that analysis of wars requires very much the stance that psychoanalysis employs. But psychoanalysts becoming involved in the area must adapt to the task, and be prepared to adapt their psychoanalytic thinking as well. I think it makes for a health creative dialectic, but one that creates challenges and anxiety. From my own experience all I can say is that it has been worth it for me.

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