

HISTORY AND CAUSES OF WAR

War has been an exponentially increasing scourge throughout human history. According to the World Health Organisation, around 200 million people lost their lives due to collective violence in the 20th century. Today war threatens our species.

Traumatology was spawned by wars to a large extent. Its greatest challenge is to understand its progenitor and prevent its destructiveness in the future.

We will first examine past approaches to the history and causes of war. This will be followed by a perspective that combines history and causes of war in a meaningful way.

Past Approaches to History of War

Wars, kings, and empires have been markers of history. Wars were depicted as glorious ways of kings made their mark on the progress of history.

Wars could be designated by their features: conquests, such as by Alexander the Great and Napoleon; invasions by barbarians such as by the Goths and Vandals; religious wars such as the Crusades and the 30 Years War; colonial wars; and wars of independence. Internal wars included revolutions and civil wars. External wars occurred between states.

History of wars could specialise on weapons and tactics of fighting: from chariots in the early empires to infantry and phalanx in Roman times, followed by cavalry in the times of the knights, then archery, muskets, artillery, fortifications and sieges, trench warfare, machine guns, tanks, blitzkriegs, nuclear weapons.

Another specialty has involved customs and rituals of fighting: contests between champions, mutual agreement on battlefield and rules such as prohibition of use of feathers on arrows (decreasing their accuracy), preservation of prisoners, not harming non-combatants, etc. Other specialties included examination of just and unjust wars, lawfulness and lawlessness of war, biographies of leaders, and more recently studies of atrocities, terrorism, and genocide.

History has acknowledged the ordinary soldier only recently. Keegan (1976) described their motivations in different periods of history. At the battle of Agincourt in 1415 ordinary soldiers were mostly serfs and peasants and their motivations were loot and taking prisoners for ransom- their only hopes of improving their stations. In 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo, soldiers' main motivations were danger of surrender, loyalty to officers, and a sense of honour. In the battle of Somme in 1916, line after line of men rose from their trenches to be machine-gunned down. Their motivation was a sense of mission, patriotism, credulity, obedience, group conformity, and inevitability. World War Two studies indicated that soldiers fought for love – initially their family, king, and country. In combat they were motivated by love of their comrades and their leader.

The history of trauma and grief in war goes back a long way. They were already described in the Epic of Gilgamesh and in Homer's Iliad. They were called nostalgia in the American Civil War. But mental breakdown in huge numbers was recognised for the first time in the First World War as shell shock, and cardiac neuroses. That war also spawned for the first time stories such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria

Remarque and *Memories of an Infantry Officer* by Siegfried Sassoon that depicted not glory, but the devastation and pointlessness of war.

War trauma was repressed, then rediscovered in The Second World War as combat exhaustion, and was repressed and rediscovered again after The Vietnam War as post-traumatic stress disorder- PTSD. That is still the mainstream diagnosis in traumatology.

In summary, the history of wars was viewed from many different angles. However, each view confirmed the ubiquity of war. In very recent history, traumatology has depicted the dire physical, psychological, social, and moral consequences of war. It has initiated treatment for these consequences. However, the best treatment is prevention, and this requires understanding the causes of war.

Past Approaches to the Causes of War

As with history of war, the causes of war were also approached from different angles.

The ubiquity of war led to theories that war was part of human nature. The 17th century philosopher Thomas Hobbes maintained that the natural state of man was all fighting all. Similarly, Freud and the ethologist Lorenz saw war a result of innate aggressive instincts. Later analysts included greed, envy, and jealousy within innate aggression, and noted that aggressive feelings could be projected onto and into others, triggering their own aggressiveness.

Other philosophers also assumed war to be natural and inevitable, but did not share Hobbes's and Freud's moral despair. Carl von Clausewitz, a 19th century Prussian general turned philosopher saw war as a logical extension of diplomacy, whose goal was to exercise the virtues of will and dominion. The philosopher Hegel even believed that war was good for the moral health of a nation.

More recent theories have emphasised social factors as causes of war. Conservative views blamed the breakdown of hierarchies, law and order, and balance of power as causes of war. Liberal views countered that it was unjust hierarchies that provoked internal unrest, and who embarked on external wars as ways of maintaining their power. Balance of power was also no guarantee of peace, but could lead to repeated wars such as occurred between Russia and Turkey, and prolonged wars such as the 100 Years War. Balance of terror nearly led to nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union.

Liberal and especially radical philosophers saw economic inequality as cause of wars. Marx maintained that wars were part of historical evolution, and would end only when the proletariat finally wrested power. Some blamed capitalism, the military-industrial complex, and arms manufacturers as causes of war, though others pointed out that wars harm trade, and payments for arms may be lost as a result of war.

Many social theorists still see gross lack of resources, and/or inequalities in their distribution (especially if the inequalities were widening between social, ethnic, or religious groups) as causes of war.

Quincy Wright in *A Study of War* (1965) saw wars caused by complex reasons that included breakdowns of biological-psychological-cultural, socio-political, technological, and legal equilibria. It is obvious that a coherent theory of the history and the causes of war is required.

An Inclusive Perspective on the History and Causes of War

As a start to an inclusive framework of human aggressiveness that could culminate in war, Valent (1998a, b, www.paulvalent.com) explored three agonistic (aggressive) survival strategies *[SEE entry Survival Strategies] that humans shared with animals. The way these survival strategies radiated through the evolving brain and evolving society could help us to understand motivations to war.

The three agonistic survival strategies are hunting/obtaining resources (otherwise called goal achievement), competition/struggle, and defence/fight. Their evolution will be considered under animal, primitive, and civilized warfare. The other five non-conflictual survival strategies are not considered here.

Animal Warfare

Unicellular organisms already devour prey, compete for best access for food, and defend through encystment and attack through pseudopodia and poisons. Our own cells can devour, compete with, and kill foreign cells. In this sense it could be said that hunting, competition and fight, the three agonistic survival strategies exist in our most primitive structures.

Hunting, competition, and fight are ubiquitous in the animal kingdom. The last of these is most striking. The sociobiologist Wilson (1975) says, “The strongest evoker of aggressive response in animals is the sight of a stranger [of the same species], especially a territorial intruder.”

From ants to primates, nothing coheres a group and energises it to aggression as much as intrusion by strangers. Pavement ants may kill, dismember, and eat each other in territorial wars. Suspicion of foreigners (the “xenophobia principle”) is ubiquitous among social animals.

Territorial intruders may in fact be dangerous. Lions and chimpanzees may kill neighbouring males, cannibalise them and their progeny, and impregnate their females.

We see that inter-species hunting and intra-species cannibalism, competition, and offensive-defensive wars already exist in animals.

Mitigating aggression are hierarchies and territories. Initial contests for dominance and formation of “pecking orders” obviate later intra-group struggles. Respect for territories prevents external wars.

Primitive Societies

Archeological findings indicate that our genetic forebears and our own species murdered, warred, and massacred each other wherever they were in the world (e.g., Keeley (1996). Indeed, attrition rates due to conflict among primitive people were comparable to our modern wars.

Let us look at the agonistic survival strategies among primitive societies more closely.

Hunting; Obtaining Resources

Primitive man hunted other species, though at times he hunted humans, like he would other animals. Cannibalism has been geographically ubiquitous, though cultures have varied and alternated between accepting and rejecting it. Human meat was sold in Batak markets in Indonesia in the 19th century.

Hunting mobilises ‘instrumental’ (assertive, cold) aggression toward a goal- in this case to kill in order to eat. Ethologists point out that Homo sapiens has been a hunter for 99% of his evolutionary history. The genetic substrate for hunting therefore must still manifest in the biological, social, and psychological aspects of our species. For instance it can be directed toward goals that provide food indirectly, such as work.

Competition/Struggle

Competition, as in other social animals, is two-fold: internal competition for dominance and external competition for resources. Internal competition is in part also for resources, as winners, as among animals, have first access to food, shelter, and females. However, hierarchies maintain peace, and the dominants pay for their privileges by leading in hunting and defending, and administering justice within the group. Revolutions against chiefs can occur as they age or if they do not perform their duties properly.

Competition between groups may manifest, especially in harsh environments, in open warfare for scarce resources such as waterholes and pastures. For instance the extent of fighting among Nuer tribes of the Nile was able to be gauged by the reading of the depth of the Nile whose floodings damaged the Nuers’ pastures. Similarly wars waged by the Iroquois League were associated with the scarcity of beaver.

Wars were typically raids in which food, cattle, camels, or territory were stolen. Women were another scarce resource due to preferential infanticide of girls and polygamous practices of dominant males. Abduction of women was one of the commonest causes of conflict.

Defence/Fight

Just as for 99% of human evolution humans were hunters, they were also prey. This meant that genetic fear of predators has also been shadowing our biological, social and psychological selves. Because the most dangerous predators and robbers were other humans, xenophobic fears of outsiders was common in hunter gatherer societies.

Warfare often started with the killing of a member of another group in the forest who was interpreted to be a threat. This could result in a revenge killing. Revenge killings and feuds could last over generations, or result in a genocidal action to rid the enemy once and for all.

Like in animals, territorial respect was a means of maintaining peace between groups, and akin to animals, intrusions into territory cohered a group into retaliatory aggression akin to fending off predators.

The aggression in defence is called hot, of “kill or be killed” nature. It could spread from revenge killings to total war.

Radiation of survival strategies into myths and symbols

Along with evolution of the brain, the human mind evolved capacities to think, imagine, create, and symbolise. Humans around the world created similar myths to explain death and catastrophes. Survival strategies were integral to this psychological expansion.

Killing of hunted animals became a sacred act. Some animals were elevated into totems. Similarly, enemies' brains and marrow, skulls and bones, became revered parts of the group.

Clans and tribes saw themselves as unique and superior. They were descendants from primal ancestors whose history embodied special magical circumstances. One's own dead were elevated into revered ancestors who protected and guided the group.

At the same time death and catastrophes were seen as willed- either as punishment by supernatural and ancestral forces, or by enemies who used magic. The former demanded sacrifice to appease the ancestors. The latter required counter-magic or elimination of the malevolent enemies.

Shamans were specialists in magic and myths, while chiefs were political heads. The two cooperated in times of war.

Thus far we see similarities in animals and early humans in their utilisation of agonistic survival strategies, though in humans they could be influenced by magical thought.

Civilised Societies

On top of the explosion of the human brain in the last half a million years, human mind and society have undergone an exponential explosion in the last 10,000 years, since the start of civilisation. Survival strategies still hold great sway in civilised societies, even if their radiations and symbolisations are not immediately obvious.

For simplicity in what follows, there will be an emphasis on Western civilisation. However, similar developments have occurred in other civilisations as well. Though penetration of survival strategies into new brain structures and their symbolisation most likely overlapped, for clarity they will be looked at separately.

Radiation of Hunting and Obtaining Resources in Civilised Societies

At the start of civilisation as we know it, development of agriculture and domestication of animals had three effects. First, there could be surplus and storage of food. Second, such storage became targets of raids by marauding clans especially when hunting conditions were poor. Third, for the newly civilized settlers labour replaced hunting and gathering to a large extent.

Labour was required to work the land, to build irrigation and dwellings, and to build walls to protect stores, animals, and women against raiders. While raids still resembled hunts, settlers' hunts extended to conquests of land and capture of slaves.

The Old Testament (e.g., *Numbers XXXI, 9-40*) describes variable degrees of raiding, looting, conquest, killing, and enslavement.

Raids and conquests have recurred throughout history. Similar to early raiders, Hun, Goth, Turkish, and Norse "barbarians" raided the rich empires. A well known such invasion was the sacking of Rome by the Vandals. On the other hand, the Babylonian,

Greek, Roman, Mongolian, and Chinese empires grew wealthy from conquest, loot, tributes, and labour of conquered people.

Loot and wealth were important motivations for the Crusades, even if the fourth Crusade resulted in the sacking of Constantinople, not Jerusalem. Spanish conquistadors of the 16th century robbed the indigenous South American population, especially of gold. English pirates in turn robbed the Spanish boats that returned with their loot. The next two centuries saw prominence of the slave trade. This was followed by a new wave of conquests of land and labour through colonization.

The Second World War still manifested typical features of territorial conquest, looting, killing, and slave labour. Slavery occurs even today, and includes trafficking of women and child slavery.

Radiation of Competition/Struggle in Civilized Societies

Destructive derivatives of competition can be seen in hierarchical struggles within states and jostlings between states that result in inter-state wars.

Intrastate competition and struggle.

In spite of great technological developments, advantages of high status have remained the same as in earlier times: first access to resources (which now could be inordinate wealth), favourable shelter (which was now palaces), access to women (king Solomon, like Shaka, had a thousand wives), respect (even in the 20th century the Japanese emperor and Prince Sihanouk were perceived as semi-divine), and power (which could be absolute).

Physical contests for alpha male positions gave way to more violent struggles. They included assassinations, such as of Alexander the Great's father Phillip and Julius Caesar, and to palace revolutions such as a spate in Russia in the 1700's. Some palace conflicts extended into civil wars, as in the War of the Roses (1455-1485). Coups d'état and putsches still occur, especially in unstable third world countries.

Hierarchical struggles also occur between rulers and the ruled, especially when rulers oppress, exploit, and enslave their own people. Revolutions have occurred since ancient times, such as the Assyrian peasant revolution, reflected much later in the European peasant revolutions in the 16th century. Kings such as Charles I in England and Louis XVI in France who manifested extremes of despotism and greed were executed in the English Revolution (1649) and in the French Revolution (1789) respectively. Revolutions against the ruling classes swept Europe in 1848 and Russia in its 1917 Revolution. Revolution against the Shah of Iran in 1979 and against the Marcos regime in the Philippines in 1986 are more recent examples. Unfortunately history has shown that the revolutionaries could be as dictatorial once in power as their forebears.

Inter-state competition and struggle

Inter-state wars have often served personal intrastate needs of kings. According to Herodotus (*Histories*, Book3, 134), Darius's wife Atossa had said to him, "[Thou] should[st] perform some noble achievement to prove to the Persians that it is a man who governs them." Darius consequently made war with the Greeks. Machiavelli too had

advised the prince to establish renown and prestige through war (*The Prince*, Chapter 21).

From Homeric Greece to medieval Europe kings saw it as their right to make wars against rivals, and their absolute power within their countries allowed them to give rein to their ambitions. When rivals and their allies approximated in their strength, prolonged or recurrent wars occurred. An example was the Hundred Years War (1336-1453) between England and France.

Colonialism results from wars between unequals, where a strong nation totally overwhelms a weaker one, exploits its territory and wealth, and treats its inhabitants as serfs and slaves. All empires, from the Assyrian to the British empire, established colonies.

Colonies enriched the ruling classes of the colonizers, and enhanced their prestige and status. The scramble for Africa by European countries in the late 19th century was fuelled by each one's competitive need to make a mark as a nation. Tens of millions of indigenous people died in the colonizations of the Americas, Africa, and Australia.

Analogous to revolutions, colonies have waged wars of independence. Babylonia revolted against Assyria in 720 BC, and each subsequent empire has known its rebellions. For instance, America rebelled against Britain (1775-1782) and Algeria against France (1954 to 1962). Unfortunately, as after revolutions, decolonisation without solid social structures and sufficient resources often led to oppressive regimes (such as Uganda under Idi Amin).

Newly independent peoples were also vulnerable to conflicts over land and resources. Conflicts are still occurring for diamonds in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for oil in Angola and southern Sudan, and for drugs in Colombia and Mexico. Ethnic and religious overlays can be added to resource and territorial quarrels, as have occurred between India and Pakistan, between Arabs and Jews, and in wars in Nigeria and Darfur.

Radiation of Fight/ Defence in Civilised Societies

Every country has a defence force. This implies that every country has visions of potential enemies who could intrude into its territory to kill, rape, and destroy. The propensity to xenophobic fears even in civilised societies may be a remnant of a lack for margin of error against predators in human evolutionary history.

Ways of producing a margin of security were either total elimination of enemies which was difficult, or incorporating them politically. The Greeks, the Romans and Alexander the Great's Macedonians, for example, conducted "defensive" wars that included defeat of neighbouring enemies. Empires, with increasing margins of safety at the centre have been built from such defensive wars. Incorporation and just treatment of former enemies could provide long-term stability as it did in the Roman empire. The European Union currently is also an incorporation of former enemies, and has resulted in peace between its members for sixty years.

Because, as was true in our historical and evolutionary pasts, nothing arouses and coheres a population behind its leader more than fear of attack by enemies, elites have manufactured external threats and wars to prop up and enhance their own power.

Bismarck manufactured wars in order to achieve his purpose of unifying Germany. Hitler claimed murder and rape of Germans as reason to attack Poland. In the 1990's the Serbian elite alleged atrocities and compounded them with reincarnations of past oppressors in order to hide a failing economy and to have excuses to attack Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Even when threats and displays of power are meant to be defensive deterrents, it is not surprising that they are seen as preludes to attacks by the other side. Cycles of threats can build up to pre-emptive attacks and full-scale war. Such mutual suspicion and build up resulted in the First World War and the Cold War.

Fighting defensive wars is meant to get rid of enemies. Another means is expulsion, called ethnic cleansing. For instance, Armenians were driven out of Turkey in 1917, Jews out of Germany in the 1930's, Germans out of eastern Europe after World War II, Palestinians out of Kuwait in 1990, and Croats, Bosnians and Kosovars were cleared by Serbs in the 1990s.

Extermination has been conceived as total riddance of enemies. Joshua's conquest of Jericho resulted in the massacre of all men, women, children, and animals, and the razing of the city (*Joshua* 6, 21-27). In current times, the term genocide stemmed from the Nazi view that all Jews and their genes had to be eliminated. This resulted in the deaths of six million Jews.

We saw that territorial respect could mitigate wars between neighbours. To stop the vicious internecine blood-letting of the 30 Years War, the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 re-established respect for the territorial integrity of states. Unfortunately the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference has given legal status to dictators to do as they liked within their borders while other nations stood by. Thus tens of millions of people were killed in Soviet Russia during the rule of Stalin, as well as in China during Mao's Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, internal genocides have occurred unhindered in Rwanda in 1994 and in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979.

Terrorism as a means of ridding enemies has been recognised since the French Revolution. State terrorism uses imprisonment, torture, executions, random "disappearances" and lately return of traumatised people into the community, to intimidate and eliminate its enemies. Groups that want to overthrow what they see as powerful oppressors may use spectacular atrocities such as 9/11 and suicide bombings to intimidate and break the morale of the populations of superior powers.

It is questionable whether defensive, offensive, or colonial wars necessarily provide buffers of security and prosperity. In fact world powers are frequently drained by numerous wars while small states such as Switzerland and the Scandinavian states can enjoy peace and prosperity. As with individuals, security and prosperity may depend more on subjective effort than on what can be grabbed or destroyed outside.

Wars for Symbols

Agonistic survival strategies as well as their restraining mechanisms such as territoriality and hierarchies that we share in our hind- and midbrains with animals, play out in ever more complex and symbolic ways with advent of civilisation.

Koestler (1974) reasoned that most of the recently evolved (fore)brain that dealt with higher mental functioning grew after birth when infants were susceptible to

brainwashing. Further, humans split reason and emotion and were therefore susceptible to imaginary creations and magical thinking as well as to confusions of symbols and reality. These two factors explained the unique irrationality of human destructiveness.

Valent (1998a, b) described three-dimensions through which survival strategies radiated in the human brain and mind. One dimension (process) included progression of tactics in which survival strategies played out. Another dimension (parameters) included social levels (individual, group, nation). The depth dimension contained the ladder of forebrain evolution: survival, moral judgements- virtue/guilt, esteem/shame, and fairness/injustice; ideals, values, and principles; dignity, honour, and rights; myths, religion, and ideology; awe, sacredness, and place in the universe; identity, existential meanings, and purpose. Breakdown on any rung could be perceived as a threat to the whole ladder.

The emotional/experiential and cognitive/intellectual valences of survival strategy radiations, Valent contended, reside in the right and left hemispheres of the brain respectively. The right hemisphere is the non-verbal, non-thinking, timeless, self-unaware half of the brain. The left hemisphere, the verbal, thinking, self-aware part of the brain, translates right brain feelings into left brain words and symbols. The latter may be complex such as codes of ethics and bibles. However at times of stress and trauma survival strategies and right brain functioning intensify and simple symbols like flags, anthems, or even just words like Motherland, democracy, Communism, can represent a whole ladder of meanings and purpose. At such times too, group formation and return to dependence and vulnerability to brainwashing and magical thinking increase.

Over time, symbols may have varying and fluctuating connections to their right brain sources. For instance a leader may be seen variably as a god to die for or a fallible human. An object may be perceived variably as having sacred and magical properties, or being just metal or wood. When the war is over, one is left to wonder at the folly of previous right brain dominance. "They were different times, a different world," people say.

Because it is hard for us to access our right brains, our self-understanding of our emotional/experiential roots and traumatic snags lags far behind our intellectual, self-aware left brain. Yet this apparently logical part of ourselves is unwittingly under the sway of its partner, making us act irrationally.

Symbols of Hunt/Obtaining Resources.

To this day combat units share certain features with hunting units. They are similar in numbers, organization, feelings of unity and loyalty, and tactics of hunting down quarries. Alexander the Great consciously used hunting tactics in his wars.

As in primitive societies, enemies to this day have been seen as subhuman- like animals that could be hunted and killed. Hitler clearly pronounced his enemies to be subhuman.

We saw that disasters were explained as punishment by the gods who had to be appeased with food. Sacrifices were often human, especially children. Imagination could run wild. In ancient Egypt and China, when god-kings died, their wives, concubines, guards, and servants were slaughtered in order to accompany them to the next world. The Aztecs created wars in order to be able to sacrifice tens of thousands of captives to the sun in order to provide it with the energy it required to battle darkness each night.

Symbols of Hierarchies and Competition/Struggle.

The first hierarchical status in life is helplessness in the face of god-like parents. Such god-likeness can be transferred later in life to authority and cult figures who are able to exact awe, unthinking obedience, and hypnotic-like submission of will. Such right brain submission, with its mythical elaborations, has been exacted in religion where a priestly hierarchy has direct contact with the divine.

Recent accounts of perpetrators, and psychological experiments such as by Zimbardo (2007), who assigned random prisoner and guard roles to university students, have demonstrated an innate capacity in ordinary humans for extremes of submission and causing harm under orders. Surrender of will and conscience is amplified in groups.

In civilised societies the powerful still vied for status, but status *symbols* became ever more important. Status symbols could be initially displays of skulls and trophies, later of property- land, animals, serfs, women, and wealth. Motivated by envy and jealousy, kings could vie for these symbols and go to war over them. Status symbols became more ephemeral, yet still powerful. Such symbols were honour, respect, dignity, and prestige. Kings could go to war, akin to duelling knights, if they felt insulted, denigrated or humiliated, in order to retrieve these symbols. Hitler saw the Second World War as a means to rectify Germany's humiliation in the First World War.

More complex symbolisations of self-esteem could interweave the personal and the political. For instance Shaka who founded the Zulu empire was driven by a need to overcome his humiliation as a product of incest and ridicule in his childhood for having a small penis. Hitler also may well have compounded his humiliation as a child with that of Germany.

Superiority in war has been often claimed by having right and God on one's side. Yet priests, like kings have oppressed and exploited their own, and been instrumental in promoting wars, motivated by lust for power and greed. The Reformation movement was in large part a revolt against church corruption.

Radiation and Symbols of Defence/Fight.

Perhaps no other survival strategy is as prone to catastrophic symbolisations as this one. Symbols of fear relate to atavistic predators. They may be enhanced by more recent traumatic situations.

Fear of "the other" is still ubiquitous, as manifested by frequent suspicion of neighbours and those of different racial, ethnic, historical, or religious origins. There is almost a need for a tangible enemy who can concretise fears and be blamed for misfortunes.

The "others" are imbued with features of atavistic predators. For instance, Hitler portrayed Jews simultaneously as parasites infesting Germany's body, as predators whose tentacles strangled the world, and as monsters who seduced German women and ate Aryan children. Hitler also blamed Jews for Germany's defeat in World War One.

Displays of power that are meant to deter evil enemies are masses of soldiers marching as one symbolising a single big body. Display of weapons has ranged from spears to nuclear missiles. They symbolise, "Don't mess with me!" Capacity and willingness to kill is symbolised by skulls, scalps, and body counts. An external example

was the King of Dahomey who in the 1800's ordered massacres of thousands of prisoners, then mutilating their genitals and throwing their heads to the population to eat.

With advent of civilisation, more abstract symbols became ever more important to cohere large masses of people. Concepts of tribe, race and nation, each with myths of common origin and family, and virtues of defence and loyalty became important.

So did religion, and its secular equivalent, ideology. Both offered to resolve survival issues while promising to fulfil every rung on the ladder of mental evolution. The only proviso was that sacred wars or wars of destiny had to be fought against non-believers.

Religions and ideologies, preached and propagandised into vulnerable submissive right brains of subjects under stress were particularly prone to distillations into simple symbols such as flags, crosses, and labels such as Catholic, Protestant, communist, etc.

Wars for symbols can be especially vicious because their right brain emotional valence, which includes existential meaning and purpose (felt to be more precious than life), is not available for left brain analysis. Hence we have events like the Crusades, the Inquisition, the 30 Year War (1618-1648) between Catholics and Protestants that destroyed the bulk of the German population, and movements of millions of soldiers to kill millions of people whom they do not know thousands of miles away, as Tolstoy observed in *War and Peace* with regard to the Napoleonic wars.

Discussion and Conclusion

The history of war is connected to survival necessities and the history of human evolution. Three agonistic (aggressive) survival strategies were traced from their animal origins to their manifestations in modern civilisation. Each survival strategy radiated along evolutionary rungs in the two lobes of the brain and across society.

The world today is a museum of wars in which are displayed features from the simplest struggle for resources to the most complex interplays of symbolic personal and national motivations. It is important to "diagnose" and lay bare which survival strategies are evoked by whom using which symbols to relate to which survival necessities in the present or in the past. In other words, survival strategies, their radiations, symbolisations, and interactions across the two sides of our brains can help us to trace and make sense of otherwise irrational sources of wars.

We now live in a potentially resource-full world, in which wars for goods and status are not necessary for our survival, and defensive wars are irrational and dangerous. There were no survival benefits from the two World Wars. The Cold War nearly annihilated us, and future wars may well do so. Wars today are extant and irrational.

We are in a state well known to traumatology: where past traumas both reverberate with our evolutionary past and project into our present, and where symbols trigger the whole process.

Traumatology faces the challenge of breaking the thrall of our traumatic evolutionary and environmental pasts, which reproduce those pasts in ever more dangerous forms when no longer necessary.

As in trauma therapy generally, we need to understand our past threats and traumas and put them into current perspectives. In the process, we need to bring survival

strategy radiations in our right brains into left brain awareness. Owning our minds, we can then mould our future histories and narratives.

That is the aim of traumatology.

Paul Valent

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