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"Why War?" is at least as relevant a question today as when Einstein asked Freud to explain it in 1932. This paper re-examines the question. It looks at Freud's approach to the problem over his lifetime, as well as at other psychoanalytic contributions. Social aspects of war are examined, especially the nature of groups. Biological and ethological aspects of man, as well as specifically human characteristics which contribute to war are also examined. The various characteristics of man are woven together and are seen in the light of analogous aspects of man as he developed in his natural evolutionary environment. In this environment he was both a hunter and a hunted animal. This perspective is used to review the myth of the primal father, oral aggression and cannibalism. It is suggested that underlying sexual taboos, oral taboos are relevant to the study of war.

War has been such a ubiquitous and constant feature of man's history on earth that it is tempting to accept it as "just nature", "evil", "just normal", like one used to accept the plague, or now we accept illness, disasters of nature, or death. There does seem to be something inevitable in the regular recurrence of the phenomenon of war.

Some hopefully point to the possibility that wars may not be inevitable. For instance, Lasswell² mentions nine cultures which had not had recent war. Nevertheless, he notes that such cultures are few, and they enjoyed certain peculiarities. These cultures were too weak to have waged war and yet their specific circumstances also enabled them not to be annihilated. Sometimes the same culture that had been peaceful for a long time in different circumstances does wage war. The Eskimoes are one example. Though he does not mention them, the Jews are another.

There is a puzzle about war. Firstly, it is a man-made disaster. Secondly, it is peculiar only to man in its vast deadliness to conspecifics (ie. to members of the same species). Thirdly, it causes untold misery which is not offset by whatever gains are achieved. It is almost as if some aberrant peculiarity had developed in our species in the course of evolution.

In the course of this paper we will look at some "rational" theories of war in the literature, then examine some biological, and social considerations in war, then look at some psychoanalytic contributions. This will be followed by a look at some aspects which are peculiar to humans, and lastly there will be some tentative conclusions which may be a step to further conceptualizations for the future.

Many theories are somewhat time-specific and relate to conclusions drawn from contemporary wars. For instance, in dynastic times it was thought that the will of absolute monarchs led to wars. Colonial exploitation for the sake of plunder of weaker nations was held as motivation in the colonial eras. Diversions from internal problems, building up of states through the cohesion necessary in wartime, arms races fuelled by greedy munitions manufacturers have all held vogue. The First World War fuelled the accident theory of war where war occurs in spite of everyone's wishes. Some think a Third World War may occur in a similar accidental way.

Blainey³ reviews some of these "rational" causes critically. The will of monarchs may influence events, but they have to have the men and circumstances where there is the will and the capacity to have their commands obeyed. Arms races have always existed and weapons providers have always had a flourishing trade because of willing consumers. Wars, too, are not accidents. Rather, they have a history with a clear lead up to hostilities.

Instability in a country prior to war does seem to be a relevant factor. Blainey notes that between 1823 and 1937 at least 31 wars (the majority of sizable wars in that period) were preceded by serious disturbances in one of the fighting nations. Death of a powerful leader may also be a precedent, as neighbours may feel that the bereaved country is weak. There was an expectation by the world that Russia might invade Yugoslavia when Tito died. Iraq invaded Iran after the Shah of Iran was deposed. Religious, economic, personal and national ideologies and fanaticisms have also been put forward as causes of war.

Blainey concludes that wars occur when two nations think simultaneously that they can impose their will through power on the other. However, he does not offer an explanation as to why they should wish to do so. The imposition of power, along with colonialism, munitions manufacturers, accidents, religious fanaticism, economic fanaticism, personal or national fanaticisms, change like chameleons as proposed causes of war. None explains the essence of war as a ubiquitous phenomenon.

Conscious rational considerations seem to provide the manifest reasons for war, and the framework for specific wars. For instance most wars occur in spring to autumn when the climate allows for wars. History provides the local culture and setting for specific wars. But as often occurs in dreams, the latent motivations for wars are harder to discover.

Biological considerations

a. *Ethology and Evolution.* The beginnings of civilization as we know it

started about 10,000 years ago. For millions of years prior to that man evolved as a terrestrial hunter and gatherer in an environment where he was also the hunted. The environment in which man developed was extremely harsh for prolonged periods. To survive, man evolved cunning (intelligence), weapons and social co-operation.

Some say that our intelligence and our society are so advanced that even if there were an initial link between our species and the man of the savannahs and jungles, it is too tenuous to take into account. Mind and society are so plastic and man can learn so readily as to not be ruled by some supposed archaic representation of history in a primitive part of the brain. To answer this contention we can say that no doubt we can learn and rechannel our actions, but we have not been able to learn about war yet, nor to rechannel society away from it. If ethology and evolution have some clues to our actions which we cannot understand, it is worth pursuing these disciplines further⁴⁻⁷.

Properties of hunters: Man shares some features with some predator species like wolves and prairie dogs and other social hunter species. It is notable that human hunters and core combat groups also share certain features. Both groups consist of young males with weapons, consist of small homogenous groups of around a dozen individuals, and have killing as their aim.

Properties of the hunted: We still have innate fears of the dark and of noises in the dark. From imagining dangerous animals attacking us it is a short step to imagining armed men doing so. Security is achieved by alertness, personal strength to fight (in humans aided by weapons) or flight, and group living where some keep guard while the rest can feel relatively more secure.

Two further features are shared by humans and animals which link survival and war.

Territoriality: Territory enables animals and humans to keep an area secure for hunting and gathering food, and secure from predators. Nations are very sensitive to territorial intrusions, and battles are fought over territory.

Hierarchy: Many animal species organize their societies in hierarchies or pecking orders. This maintains internal equilibrium as well as an organized front to external dangers. Most human groups establish pecking orders, and this is nowhere more evident than in hunting groups, and fighting groups like the army. In a way, the whole world can be viewed as a society which strives to achieve its own pecking order. In fact, without naming it, Blainey³ assumes that it is the upset in a current pecking order which is the cause of war. There is most peace, according to him, when all nations agree on their relative strengths. However, when a strong

nation weakens (or is perceived to weaken), or other nations feel themselves stronger, new pecking orders may emerge through the process of contest, that is war.

We must pay attention once more to those cautioning against simple transpositions from the animal kingdom to human behaviour. Animals after all hunt animals of other species, while man kills those of his own species. Animals decide their hierarchies through ritual submission and dominance. Humans kill to establish that dominance in wars. Thus though there are tantalizing similarities between man and hunting species, and hunting and war, there are also gaps in the analogies. Could the gap be the same gap as the one which has been hinted at in the form of a taboo which psychoanalysis had not fully uncovered? Is this taboo connected to origins of wars? We shall return to these questions later.

b. *Physiology.* This must be the connecting link in individuals between their biological makeup and their psychology and sociology. Such physiology has sometimes been subsumed in the instinct theory of behaviour.

Charles Darwin in *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*⁸ describes how when man is threatened and when he perceives that he can overcome the threat, he develops the feelings of hatred, indignation and rage. If the source of the threat is seen as all-powerful, hatred turns to terror.

This is the precursor of the Fight-Flight reaction mediated by the sympathetic nervous system, and it was described by Cannon in his *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear, and Rage*⁹. In the chapter on the Fighting Emotions he sees rage and fear as counterparts. "We both fear and wish to kill anything that may kill us." It is the specific perception at the moment of danger which will determine whether fight or flight will be the response to the source of danger.

We may start to reconcile the "gang of murderers" view of man, and the anxiety-riddled species man is at other times. Man has the potential for both responses or strategies for survival, and which is chosen depends on the perceptions of the circumstances at the time. Indeed there may be other strategies to choose from, and even mixtures of strategies, so that no particular response is mandatory in a time of crisis.

It is of interest to note Cannon's description of the fight response. Apart from the sympathetic nervous system arousal, there is the fearful countenance which tells the opponent of one's rage. The posture indicates strength and readiness to use it. Internal affects are excitement, a feeling of power, with anger fuelling perceptions of omnipotence, which may lead to euphoria. Danger here, then, adds to a sense of augmented strength and more intense sense of being alive. Here we have people

ready to do battle, confident of themselves and victory over the source of danger.

In clinical practice this mood may be viewed with suspicion and even called manic, with the implication that the person is minimizing his problems. Perhaps such a mood is often inappropriate for the problems of modern man; but it may be highly appropriate if the purpose is for men to engage in battle with a powerful animal, or with each other.

Sociological Considerations

Canetti¹⁰ notes that there is nothing man fears more than being touched by the unknown (a possible predator). On the other hand the firm pressure of a crowd to which one belongs gives the feeling of an expanded self-body and a sense of security.

The basic unit of crowds, we may call the pack. Ethologically this relates back to hunting groups like among wolves and dogs. In both hunting and fighting packs we find ten to twenty males. Such a group is large enough to be able to afford to lose one or two members without disintegrating, yet it is small enough for members to know each other intimately and to coordinate skills like an expanded body. Leadership groups, committees and sports teams all seem to function best in similar cohesive groups comprised of similar numbers. This intimate number forms cells or nuclei for bigger groups with which men identify. This process may be spawned from "grass roots" from below, or from political leadership from above.

High morale groups of young fighting males may sacrifice themselves for the group's goal. Personal sacrifice for the sake of the community makes evolutionary sense if the community hunts or is being hunted by powerful animals. These days this powerful animal is another group of men. This occurs in wars.

At this stage we may enquire a little further into the perceptions which lead to the assertive group response. The fight response we have noted is only one way to react to perceived danger. We saw flight as an alternative. People may flee internally into religions, and socially comfort themselves through false beliefs. They may also surrender themselves to the invading force.

Groups form when individuals first forming them perceive greater safety for themselves and their families by joining forces to overcome suffering or danger. This may depend on circumstances. For instance Raven and Rubin¹¹ contrast responses in two communities to the murder of one of their members. In each case there was the danger that other members could be murdered next. In the rural community a posse was formed and a group of men lynched three other men who were supposed (wrongly) to

be the murderers. In the other case people in an apartment building watching a woman being murdered felt more isolated in their various apartments, and felt more secure by "not getting mixed up in it". In their circumstances it seemed safer to be withdrawn, inconspicuous, separate and silent. On a national scale the options to threat seem similar as for individuals and communities. The point is that whether as individuals, in communities or in nations, humans have a number of options to engage in for their survival. It is the assertive response with which we are concerned.

There are certain characteristics of assertive groups which it behoves us to examine at this stage, and then see how they fit in with the overall developing thesis of the meaning of war. Freud comes back into eminence here with his powerful insights on groups detailed in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*¹². These insights will be a fulcrum for the following aspects found in assertive groups (like hunting and combat groups).

1. Identity and self-image. A person who enters a group like a combat group undergoes a gross change in personality both in regard to identification with others, and within himself. His civilian self may seem incongruous in combat, just like his army self may be incongruous on return home from the front.

In a high morale combat unit the soldier lavishes all his love (libido) on to group members. It is for them and their ideals for which he fights and dies if need be. They are the only things which make sense to him. The leader is the acme of this meaningfulness and love. The individual's identity is in his group, his self-image is reflected from the group. His own self is unimportant in comparison to the group, and indeed he is immortal as long as the group lives. The love for the group knows no bounds. It is in this context that it is said that "There is no greater love than between fighting men," or that "War brings out the best in men."^{13 14} The combat soldier not only destroys intensely, he loves intensely. Such love is akin to the symbiotic love between mother and child. A soldier in harmony with his group at the pitch of battle knows no bounds to his sense of self and the components of self like self-worth, confidence and love.

2. Cohesiveness really springs from the above aspects. The blurring of individual identities makes for the cohesiveness. A group in danger must be cohesive. It cannot afford unreliable members. There are strong pressures for conformity from outside. Punishment, shame and guilt are extreme in combat groups, as are recognition and emotional rewards for doing the right things. There is another imperative inner need as well; for it is better to hunt with the pack than to be isolated and exposed to the enemy.

3. Power. Numbers give power. The sound of many stamping feet must

have reassured primitive man who compared his own impact with big animals. The sound of drums and men marching as one big body still gives a sense of power. Identification with this big body gives individuals a sense of power equal to the new big body. Such a sense of power is accompanied by the excitement, elation and exultation typical of a fight or a hunt where the group is full of confidence. Indeed at beginnings of wars leaders always anticipate a quick victory. Battles in fact lasted in the past approximately the duration of challenging hunts. If all goes well for the soldier, his ability to kill and survive may seem to him to confirm his omnipotence.

4. Suggestibility. An army would not function without strict obedience. Though civilian individuals may be horrified at soldiers obeying orders to kill, conformity to respected superior persons is surprisingly high at any time (conformity to the superego whether external or internalized is usual). In the classic experiments of Asch¹⁵ where seven stooges all gave the wrong answer to a task of matching lines of the same length, 32% of the naive subjects yielded through adjusting their perceptions, their judgement, or their social behaviour, in order not to differ from the majority. In Milgram's¹⁶ experiments subjects administered what they thought were electric shocks to stooges, up to the highest, most dangerous voltages possible on the stooge panel. Similarly, hypnotised subjects could be made to pick up "venomous" snakes and throw what they thought was concentrated acid at people. Those who simulated hypnosis and controls did these acts at almost the same rate as the hypnotised subjects. All these acts were done at the suggestions of senior respected university personnel, and often with gross internal conflict.

The suggestion stemming from role assignments is powerful. In Zimbardo's¹⁷ experiment subjects were divided into prisoners and guards. The experiment had to be called off because the parts were lived out too vividly.

What Freud and others might decry as the fragility of the superego in groups, or the propensity to hypnotic or hypnotic-like suggestions, may not be fragility so much as the superego's fickleness, or using non-judgemental words, its adaptability to accept values which at any particular time seem to serve survival best. This is no different to the development of a conscience under parental suggestions, and the child accepting values which help it survive in the family. Obeying commands which have power and prestige to back them is almost instinctive, and, we must remember, often life-saving.

People in groups do not give up their conscience. In fact they usually acquire an even more severe one, as seen in the army, in cults, gangs, religious groups, etc. Sometimes new consciences are adopted at the point of a gun like in the army, in prisoner camps or as happened to Patty Hearst with her captors. In such severe situations there is identifica-

tion with the aggressor and acceptance of his values. This is popularly known as the Stockholm Syndrome.

It gives us pause for thought, that it is the normal citizen who can be swayed the most. It is he who makes up the bulks of armies. Those whose consciences are not well formed in the first place, cannot transfer loyalties in a reliable manner.

When under threat people need rules and search for them assiduously. For instance the ill or those in a disaster or those approaching the frontline crave rules to follow to achieve a semblance of security. After the Hiroshima bomb people walked in long lines following each other aimlessly, but to them it seemed to give a rule to hang on to in total chaos. Any new group spends much of its initial time in making up rules of the group.

If a leader emerges in a time of chaos and helplessness, and seems to provide answers with confidence, plus has ability to coerce, the temptation to follow his rules or orders may be irresistible. We saw this in Hitler's Germany.

5. Dehumanization of the out-group. In proportion to the positive self-image at which the assertive group arrives, the target of aggression is the exact opposite. If the enemy is perceived as a hunted animal, his stereotype is coloured by contempt, denigration, he is seen as a kind of subhuman, animal vermin that has to be killed for the group's own good. If the enemy is feared his animal image is that of a predator who has already killed and wounded members of the group. Here the enemy is hated, feared, seen as the devil incarnate and desperate supreme effort must be exerted to eliminate him. In either case the enemy is not seen as a fellow human; rather in terms of past relationships man has had with animals.

These basic images are refined into moral and religious ideological terms. In each case the good is in one's own side, the bad in the enemy's.

6. The question of regression. It is considered that the ego regresses in war, because when one looks back on it one marvels at how simplistic slogans were accepted as gospel, ignorant people's pronouncements were seen as wise, and how rash, cruel, and stupid actions were undertaken with utter conviction of divine purpose. The simplistic splits, paranoias and euphorias appear as psychotic in the light of peace.

Janis¹⁸ in *Victims of Groupthink* examines the disasters like the Bay of Pigs fiasco, attack of North Korea and the escalation of the Vietnam War where the cohesive, confident, highly esteemed attitudes of ruling groups were not justified by reality. On the combat group perspective the charge of the Light Brigade, the charges in Gallipoli and on the Somme seem to be asking for a psychiatric diagnosis.

And yet the ability to form groups has helped man to survive. Also, love, loyalty, and perseverance in the face of deprivation; courage, altruism, and mechanical skills of combat soldiers all seem to rate high on ego achievement, rather than regression. Certainly some relationships in combat groups reflect early adolescent and family ones, but so do most adult relationships, and in the army they are channelled perhaps more than anywhere else to ego goals. Lastly, it is easy to point the finger of pathology if we are not involved. But what rational solution do we have to the confrontation between the superpowers, in which we too are involved? The more we are involved in aggressive confrontations, the more rational they seem from our side's point of view. Actually at times not to fight may seem pathological. The fantasies associated with appeasement of Hitler could be seen as more psychotic or regressive than fighting a war against him.

It seems, then that fighting and wars are no more pathological or regressive on a social level, than, say, anger or anxiety are on an individual level. It is in the maladaptiveness or the inappropriateness of war as a strategy or response of survival in the specific circumstances which are current, that adaptiveness or "pathology" or senselessness of war may be sought. Regression is a judgemental term, and does not explain anything.

To summarise thus far, we have seen that humans have the biological and social potential to respond to other groups of humans similarly as to hunted animals, or animals who hunt humans. Man's potential to form groups to fight, the sense of fulfillment in such fighting groups, obedience to the leader and ideology, sense of power or terror vis a vis the opponent, the dehumanization ("animalization") of the enemy, all subserve such a response.

Psychoanalytic Considerations

What has psychoanalysis contributed to the latent content relating to wars? Generally, psychoanalytically oriented theorists have taken inordinately little notice of questions relating to war. One reason may be that they tend to deal with individual rather than large group aggression and thus war does not reach the consulting room. Another reason is the assumption that war is normal or innate, so there is nothing pathological to treat.

Some extrapolated from their patients who were noted to use actual external war for personal neurotic ends, thus explaining war as a type of personal neurosis acted out on a large scale¹⁹. Oedipal conflicts with search for male identity as a soldier, symbols of leaders as fathers, of territories as mothers, seemed to be symbols in war used by neurotics to try to resolve their problems^{20 21}. Yet this cannot be a full answer to latent causation of war, because the bulk of a fighting army is not comprised of

neurotics, at least not severe ones²². In fact the armed forces take great care to weed out neurotics because they feel that they do not make good fighters. It must be admitted that it is normal people who do most of the wartime killing²³.

To answer this observation, it was put forward that humans have an innate basic instinct for which civilization is but a thin veneer, but which comes into its own in wartime. This is the main brunt of the Freudian view of war (also reflected in early analytic writings on war by others like Glover²⁴ and Strachey²⁵).

Thus in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death"²⁶ Freud maintains a pessimistic view of man at his core. How else could the cruelties of the war (First World War) be explained? Freud stated that war "grant[s] a temporary satisfaction of the instincts" (p.285) which had been held in check. The picture of man is that of a lusting beast whose destructive instincts are just held back by culture which would punish him if he transgressed against her. However, these repressed instincts want to break through and gain satisfaction whenever given a chance. Put at its ultimate, "judged by our unconscious wishful impulses, we ourselves are, like primeval man a gang of murderers." (p.297)

In *Civilization and its Discontents*²⁷, Freud sees man's neurosis, or discontent as due to the suppression by civilization of these destructive (as well as sexual) instincts.

In *Totem and Taboo*²⁸ the primitive aggression is seen in terms of the Oedipal theory, where the aggressive instinct's prime mode of expression is in the killing of the primal father. It seems that the gang of murderers do have a purpose after all, that is to kill the primal father, for possession of the mother. Back in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" Freud stated that the taboo "Thou Shalt not kill" applies at its source to the desire to kill those whom we intensely love and hate at the same time. Murderous aggression then makes sense in the context of the family. But whenever Freud looked at wider society in wartime, he had to fall back on more wanton and unbridled instincts. In the same work he noted the power of the aggressive instincts in relation to the civilised mind. This was manifested in the fact that even the best intellects in the warring countries became quite illogical and unreachable by reason. Freud no doubt also looked back at his own euphoric patriotism at the beginning of the First World War²⁹, at which time he said, "All my libido is given to Austro-Hungary."³⁰

Finally in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" Freud acknowledged ignorance as to the question of why large groups of people should hate each other. Nor was he aware of the psychology of combatants, nor had he analyzed a combat war neurotic. Certainly his Oedipal theory explained much social behaviour, but its explanation for

the causes of war cannot be complete. The killing of the primal father may be part of the explanation of war. But if there is a deeper taboo involved in the social manifestation of war, Freud could not put his finger on it.

It seems that if it had not been for Albert Einstein's faith that the greatest psychologist on earth could enlighten the world on the causes of war, Freud would not have touched the subject again. He was actually irritated that his contemporary research had to be interrupted to answer this question, asked in an open letter "Why War?" by Einstein under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1932.

Freud answered the question again in terms of the strengths of instincts. He said, "...instincts are of only two kinds:...Eros or sexual...[and] instinct of hatred and destruction." (p.209). The only addition to Freud's thoughts of almost twenty years before was the concept of the death instinct.

He explained in "Why War?" that this instinct is present in every creature, striving to bring it to ruin and to bring life back into inorganic matter. To stay alive, the death instinct is turned outward as the destructive instinct.

Freud produced the death instinct theory in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"³¹ for three reasons.

1. To help explain why traumatic dreams recurred without the latent content giving any pleasure, as one would expect from other dreams. From this Freud postulated the omnipresent necessity to repeat and return to a prior state, i.e. the inorganic state (rather than the traumatic state, which to the author makes more sense).
2. To help explain aggression, sadism and masochism.
3. To enable him to maintain his dualistic notion of instincts as cause of neurosis. The death instinct was to be the opposite to Eros or libido.

There are definite problems with the primary death or aggressive instinct theories. Observations of the dying themselves do not indicate a retraction of destruction into themselves³². If they are angry, it is because their Eros is thwarted. On the other hand many die peacefully with little show of external or internal aggression. Clinical cases do not lead to uncovering a death instinct—not in our hospital work with physically ill patients, and not in our psychotherapeutic work. All destructive impulses eventually lead back to Eros. In other words death fantasies and actions of a destructive or self-destructive nature if analysed, lead to either a thwarting in the quest for love or life, or to an achievement of these goals albeit possibly in perverse ways. We always ask why this person is aggressive, and we find reasons. Thus aggression is secondary, not primary.

The concept of the necessity of a certain amount of aggressive discharge in order to survive is also not substantiated by observation. I shall attempt to illustrate this with a homely example. My dog has a generally lovable disposition. However, she is aggressive at times, for instance when she meets other dogs. As soon as the dog arousing the aggression is out of sight, my dog returns to her usual nature, and may remain placid for weeks on end if no dog comes into her orbit. There is no spontaneous buildup of aggression necessary to be discharged. But a specific stimulus may provoke aggressivity. The same may be observed in humans, who may be placid for long periods of time, until a particular event provokes their aggression.

In fact it is questionable whether calling an affect like aggressivity an instinct is particularly helpful. It seems to convert a manifestation into an immutable law, which prevents it being investigated further. What we can say is that men are capable of being peaceful, or to kill in groups. What determines the particular choice is unclear yet. But "the gang of murderers" is not a hydrostatic principle.

The earlier psychoanalytic theories leave us with a sense of dissatisfaction. "Why War?" has to be revisited.

We may paraphrase Klein^{33 34} and say that humans are involved in the dialectics of war and peace as soon as they are born. Babies quickly split the world into good and bad. They try to ally themselves with and take in the good (like the good breast), and dissociate themselves from (put out, excrete) and destroy and eliminate the bad (like the bad breast). The breast in this sense, we may say, is the first happy hunting ground, and the first battlefield. As the child's capacities for perception develop, it notes that mother is the source of both abundant provision of all needs, as well as their deprivor. At the same stage of development it comes to appreciate others, strangers. The split now is between the good mother and the bad stranger³⁵. For some time father and siblings are to some extent bad strangers. When the child appreciates families his own family becomes the good representative, and others become suspect. With further development, one's own group, school, town, nation and group of nations become the good allies and what is outside this expanded boundary is suspect. Without full assimilation of the dual relationship toward those on whom we depend, with increasing civilization the negative aspects of ambivalent relationships are able to be projected further and further afield. The Kleinian view is incorporated into a view on war by analysts like Jacques³⁶ and Fornari³⁷. This conceptualization may explain the frequency of external wars when there is turmoil within a country, and enjoins nations to consider their internal problems (struggle with the depressive position) rather than fight an outside enemy (paranoid position) when their (mother) land is imperfect.

We may postulate that the tendency for splitting good and bad is a

biological essential, for in the natural environment it is imperative to be able to separate nutritious food, security, allies, (good) from poison, danger, enemies (bad). Yet the original ambivalence is not totally split off from its origins. The hunted and killed animal is propitiated and appeased, made a friend of, and its soul preserved, thus maintaining some connection to the nurturing good breast. This explains why what is eaten is not only dehumanized, but also rehumanized. We know that primitive man and children can identify closely with the inanimate and more so with animals. It is interesting to hypothesize that the gathering of food among hunter gatherers and the hunting of small animals who present no danger is linked psychologically with seeking out and gathering in of the breast. Hunting and being hunted in relation to large animals is represented psychologically by the early oral aggressive fantasies, whether active or passive, also first experienced in relation to the breast.

We may discern the seeds of war in the individual's earliest development. For instance, the feeling of power associated with the feeling of euphoria and omnipotence (manic defence) which a baby may feel through the alliance with or control of the good breast, along with the feeling of contempt for the bad breast which is seen purely as a resource to be exploited, may be the precursors of the feelings of hunters while they hunt, and later of soldiers who hunt their dehumanized enemies. Alternately, the baby may feel itself persecuted by superior forces. In such a case the baby perceives the breast as dangerous and predating. In such a case the baby has fantasies consistent with every effort to eliminate the bad breast. Representing the latter situation, to survive it has to kill. It may use biting, poisoning, scooping, tearing, to eliminate the hated persecutor. This is the precursor to the all-out response to the predating enemy. Whether with a hostile mother, or later in hunting or war, these responses may be life-preserving in certain circumstances.

We may further postulate that as the child develops and becomes socialized into the hunting society, similarly ambivalent relationships develop with respect to the father. Here emerge what we recognize as oedipal relationships. The connection between the earlier oral and later Oedipal relationship I think is in part portrayed by Freud in Totem and Taboo²⁸. In this myth the band of brothers killed and ate the primal father, then elevated him to the totem position of the clan. There he was protected except when he was feasted on again through the totem on special ritual occasions.

In our evolutionary past, the killing of a large and dangerous animal required a band of men, the "band of brothers". The biological and psychological possibility here is for the band of brothers to ally with the (primal) father and under his leadership to defeat the animal. In this case one could say that the negative aspects of the ambivalence to father were projected on to the animal. However, we hypothesize that the band of brothers may kill the leader/father in circumstances where he is more

dangerous to them than the predator animal. This may occur when his powers of leadership and hunting are failing and he endangers the whole group with his actions. Freud in Group Psychology¹² identifies the primal father with leaders like of the army and church. Indeed, the equivalent of killing of the primal father in the army was the frequent killing of officers by their men in the First World War and the Vietnam War, when these men considered that their officers were endangering their lives more than the enemy. It is possible that Christ was also killed because he was seen as dangerous to the group. His flesh and blood are still consumed in special rituals.

The ambivalence is bidirectional. Potential primal fathers are always around to threaten offspring. They may not only lead dangerously in hunt or combat. They may get rid of their sons by sending them to the dangerous activities without the fathers going themselves. Fathers may also be dangerous when competing for scarce resources (oral as well as sexual ones). Fathers may take the lion's share of available food and territory, and push their children out. In circumstances of scarcity, infants are not only conceived less, tend to become aborted and to die when born, but may be actively left to die or be killed. The compliment may be returned not only to officers in war. In some cultures the old who are too burdensome are left to be eaten by wild animals. The father/child competition in the political field may be seen when greedy rulers who have amassed resources are killed by the starving masses in order to establish equal distribution of resources among "the band of brothers". The French Revolution, with its pact of liberty, equality and fraternity, is an analogous example of this process. Whether the dangerous and competitive father is eaten himself, is symbolically eaten, is thrown to the wolves to be eaten, or his resources are eaten, varies according to circumstances.

Just like the ambivalence to the hunted animal is preserved after its death, the ambivalence to the dangerous predator and the primal father is retained after death. Ghost-like images of ancestors, totems and gods representing powerful father images need to be appeased and propitiated. Nevertheless, let us remember that in most cases sons identify with their fathers and come to hunt together.

Thus we see analogous biological, psychological and social components of war as the human develops in his evolutionary history and as this is repeated in each individual in his personal history. These components make sense when it is considered how they have helped survival of our species.

But basically they do not explain war yet. This is because we have not shown that men at war hunt each other. We also do not understand why war as we know it is by and large a specifically human phenomenon. Let us look, then, at what are specifically human characteristics.

Specifically Human Characteristics

It may be instructive to see in what way man differs from every other animal. Arthur Koestler in his essay *The Urge to Self-Destruction*²³ considers the following to be purely human characteristics.

1. *Human sacrifice*. This concept was known in biblical times. Abraham too was prepared to kill his son for God. However, human sacrifice was ubiquitous from prehistoric dawn to pre-Columbian civilizations, and in some cases to the beginnings of this century.

2. *Weakness of the inhibitory forces against killing of con-specifics*. The ethological theory is that such inhibitory forces did not need to develop while man was an ape in the trees, was a non-carnivore, and had little natural capacity to kill those of his species.

3. *Intraspecific warfare*. This refers to the ubiquity and frequency of war.

4. *Knowledge of mortality*. Not only is man committed in his first knowledge to knowing good and bad (later to be designated as evil), but he also knows sooner than he would care to about life and death. His strong affects of helplessness which were experienced over a long time of early helplessness become connected with feelings of grief for those lost, and knowledge that he himself will die. As with all helplessness and anxiety this one is defended against as much as possible.

Killing of others is one such defence. It appears to give the ultimate power over the question of life and death. Yet it also frightens because death becomes that much more real. More killing may need to be done to reassure against death. In the past sacrifices regulated the amount of killing done, and were also used to appease gods from inflicting death. Today the media provide us with a constant stream of death to reassure us that we are alive.

5. *Disparity between rational development and primitive emotional motivation*. Koestler notes that language and symbols are most developed in the human species. Language and symbols are learnt early. Therefore they become imbued with the early feelings and experiences associated with their learning. That is, as well as the real object, words come to also represent the person teaching the symbol, and the state of one's self at the time when one first came into contact with the word or symbol. Similar complex "imprinting" occurs later in life in periods of severe stress.

Symbols can be added to symbols, obscuring the original meaning, yet a residue of the early emotions attached to the original symbol remains. Thus early emotions for instance those pertaining to mother may attach

themselves to ambiguous symbols like flags, anthems, oaths or loyalty, motherland, honour, democracy etc.

6. *Being on top*. We may add to Koestler's list of specifically human characteristics the fact that man is now the only animal who has no natural predators to fear, because he has eliminated them all. Yet he has inbuilt all the characteristics which have brought him to the top. The only animal on whom he can project his innate fears with any conviction, and whom he can eliminate now is other men.

Like a ruler who has successfully eliminated his enemies looks around at other rulers who may threaten him, man has finally established himself on top of the pecking order in the animal kingdom, but looks around for other top dogs who may threaten him.

Koestler's 'diagnosis' of these purely human 'symptoms' lies in man's specific evolutionary and biological development.

From the evolutionary point of view Koestler notes that the thinking cap of the brain has developed only in the last half million years, an unparallelled feat in evolution. However, this thinking cap or neocortex sits uncomfortably on an emotional brain (limbic system) which evolved in the reptilian era, and has not developed since then. This latter relatively simple brain is swayed by simple emotions, but these motivate and direct the modern brain. This explains how the most crude misperceptions may occur under emotional sway. To summarize this point Koestler says that evolution left a few loose screws between the hypothalamus and the neocortex.

From the biological point of view, no other species of animal is so dependent for so long on its parents as the human animal. In parallel with his extra mental capacities, to a large extent already present in childhood, man's prolonged state of helplessness remains indelibly imprinted in his mind. So is his capacity to reexperience his early traumatic states, as well as ways of dealing with them. The baby's most potent way to deal with distress is through the agency of big people, in infancy the parents. Later this dependency is felt to the group. The group provides security and appeases deprivation.

Koestler notes that it is this devotion to groups, rather than aggression to individuals which is the carrier of most violence. "...the trouble with our species is not an overdose of self-asserting aggression, but an excess of self-transcendent devotion...individual crimes committed for selfish motives play a quite insignificant role in the human tragedy compared with the numbers massacred in unselfish love of one's tribe, nation, dynasty, church or ideology." We have already noted hunters' and soldiers' dependence and love of their groups. The prime motivation to flight of soldiers in battle is preservation of their group.

Although we may sense that all the above factors may be drawn together into some cohesive theory, there are still two further related factors we need to consider in order to bridge the apparent senselessness of major mutual killings with some rational or at least understandable motivation. These factors may also be considered to be specifically human, or at least are accentuated in humans. Therefore we will further add them to Koestler's list.

7. *Ability to break 'natural laws' and taboos.* Much of human creativity is the ability to extend natural biological boundaries and limitations. As Balint³⁸ pointed out with respect to fairground vehicles which defy everyday sense of secure mobility, once anxiety is overcome, careering 'dangerously' is accompanied by a thrill. Similarly, flying, mountain climbing, diving, driving dangerously and so on may be thrilling activities. A similar sense of thrill may be experienced when internal laws are broken. These may be socially conditioned laws, but they may also have biological underpinnings.

Going over the boundaries of the biologically secure does not mean that man has weak inhibitory reflexes. For instance man has strong inhibitions against immersion in water or not being supported in air. But he can overcome these inhibitions in certain circumstances.

It seems that killing con-specifics (fellow humans) is similarly socially and biologically inhibited after all. Even in battle only a minority pull the trigger to kill enemies³⁹. Yet in certain psychological and social states (like in danger, under strong suggestion, under the influence of alcohol which diminishes the anxiety of breaking taboos, or in a crowd), killing is a thrilling activity. As with other thrilling activities, repetition of killing as in war may become everyday. Yet, as may happen with other challenges to taboos, persisting anxiety and guilt may lead to a neurosis.

8. *The ultimate taboo—Cannibalism* I suggest that this taboo is vital force underpinning the taboo on the study of war. We may not wish to remember that not only human sacrifice was a common custom persisting to almost our present day, but so was cannibalism. Cannibalism was ubiquitous, though not necessarily practised by every tribe. Its acceptance and its horrified rejection and taboo against it seemed to be sporadically divided among tribes inhabiting similar areas.

As against the exploitation of the human body for direct food, its exploitation for increasing one's food supplies, resources and wealth in more or less indirect ways persists even today. Slavery is still in living memory. Servitude which may be little distinguished from slavery is common in many countries. Economic exploitation of some for the sake of the wealth of others is quite common and can be manipulated ever more subtly now through measures using increased social sophistication. However, even in this century Germans not only utilised slave labour, but plundered and exploited human bodies directly, like using bones for soap.

Documentation of actual cannibalism is hard to come by, but there is anecdotal evidence of ritual drinking of human blood among the SS. Ritual drinking of the blood of the innocent of one's own group by the enemy, is a common accusation, and was levelled by the Germans against the Jews. There is also anecdotal evidence of cannibalism among victims, in conditions of famine like in the Thirty Years War, and more recently in concentration camps.

The story "Alive"⁴⁰ tells of how some survivors of a crashed airplane in the Andes survived by eating the flesh of others who died. Indeed the ability of man to draw on the most nourishing source of food at times of greatest deprivation (as must have happened not infrequently in the Ice Ages) has placed cannibalism as a potent means of survival of the species. Cannibalism is also potentially the most potent source of destruction of the species and hence the strong inhibitory forces which make cannibalism the ultimate taboo.

Cannibalism is not a specifically human phenomenon. It occurs in animals, ranging from insects through the vertebrates to chimpanzees⁴. It is not a common phenomenon, but seems to occur at times of competition for scarce resources like food. The young of another group are the first victims, then adults of other groups, and finally members of one's own group who are relatively disposable.

It is of more than passing interest that psychoanalysis has accepted the term cannibalism since it was used by Freud and Abraham. It refers to the fantasy of orally incorporating the body of the mother or the father. Loving identification and murderous devouring are the ambivalent aspects of cannibalism which are part of the baby's fantasy. We have already discussed the devouring aspects of the fantasy both in infants and in primitive man. Cannibalism extends the possibility of the identity of the hunted and predating object being man. Our discussion may bridge these fantasies with evolutionary facts. Infanticide has been till quite recently the major method of keeping down populations when harsh conditions prevailed. Different reports estimate between 10 and 50% of births could lead to infanticide⁴¹. In this case life and death struggle between baby and mother is not a preposterous fantasy.

There may be indirect evidence of the potential to cannibalism in some imperative social niceties. These signal the safety of the other person and the innocence of one's motivations. A handshake and smile indicate that the hand is innocuous and the teeth are not about to bite. Offering of food and communal partaking of it is a very common ceremony on most social occasions. It indicates a sense of safety, community and solidarity for the participants in the communal eating. It is clear that the source of food is outside the group and thus the group members are safe. This is institutionalised in the religious custom of communion.

On the other hand, being the victim of the devouring process may explain the nature of the ultimate fears of humans—the loss of body boundaries, disintegration, and annihilation, all of which occur when one is devoured.

Discussion

We may now see that what has been described above fits into three parts. The initial theories of war which were presented represent the conscious, observable phenomena of war. The biological, social and psychological aspects of war are the tools with which war is waged and they are in part conscious and in part unconscious. The last part involves the underlying motivations to war and their components are unconscious.

Conscious motivations. Sociological factors which have been observed as leading to war include prior social unrest, famine, disease, leadership upheaval, and need to establish identity and territory for a group. Conscious psychological observations have been in the nature of horror that humans seem to kill each other for no observable benefit. The conclusion drawn from these observations has been an angry despairing one, namely that man is innately bad, the “gang of murderers” concept.

The clues from these observations are that indeed at certain historical times and circumstances human groups fight each other. All the sociological predispositions may be divided into one of two types. In one type people are restless because of difficulties in deriving security within the group and they turn to external enemies to solve the problems. In the other type groups have either become vulnerable and are prey to takeover by enemies, or they see themselves as vulnerable and do what they feel is necessary to achieve security. These theories seem to contribute to the proximate historical causes of specific wars, but are insufficient to help explain the phenomenon. The psychological theory of innate murderousness is a tautology and is also insufficient as a general theory.

Biological, psychological and social tools. Man’s biological potential to become aroused, and angry, and his ability to use his body to fight indicates nothing more than such ability. One cannot say that the capacity is itself a cause (the hydrostatic theory), though a certain type of physical fulfillment may be experienced in combat.

The same may be said for the human psychological capacities to split, project, have omnipotent fantasies and so on. These capacities are used extensively in war, but are not the cause of war. The potential may not be utilized for prolonged periods, or may be utilized but not in war.

The same again may be said for the social aspects of war. The ability to form groups, obey leaders, fear not for personal consequences but identify with the group, distinguish clearly between friend and foe and see the

latter as less than human are all necessary tools if human groups are to hunt, or fight and kill other groups, but, again, capacities are not necessarily realized in action.

The biological, psychological and social manifestations discussed are analogous to each other and are subsumed for the same purpose. For instance the socially powerful group, the psychological sense of power and the physiological readiness to fight are all part of the same attitude directed to the same purpose. The biological, psychological and social components are tools which enable wars to be fought. But they are all only capacities and means, not motivators.

Unconscious primitive psychohistorical motivations. These stem from the meaning and the purpose for which the capacities to fight developed. Man evolved his fighting capacities in order to be able to hunt and to protect himself against predators. To civilized man this past is frightening and it is repressed.

In this past when man felt threatened with a depletion of resources he tried to gain them. He did so by gathering them or by hunting. If he felt deprived of resources by others he will fight them in a competitive way for the same resources, or if need be plunder the possessor of the resources for them. In modern civilization much hunting and gathering is done indirectly through work, but just like deprivation and hunger are never potentially far away, so more primitive methods of gaining food do not lie far under the surface. We all know that we cannot bear hunger for long, and that if civilized distributions of supplies are not maintained, the more primitive methods may surface extremely quickly. In the anarchy or “jungle mentality” of nations, fighting of the hunting nature may occur in order to ensure essential resources, materials and trade. In the world of surplus other men and communities of men hold wealth which is worth plundering more than any short term hunting. Enslaving or killing without eating is sufficient here. But when the chips are really down, as happened for long periods in our evolution, man himself may be competitively eliminated, or even hunted for food.

On the other hand, fear of predators supplies the deeper meaning of the fear of enemies, representing the fear from outside. It is difficult to conceive that predators and the hunted are other men. Jules Henry⁴² provides us with a link through the following thought process of the Kapingang Indians in the threatening jungles of Brazil, where outside groups were seen as competitors for scarce resources and potential mortal threats.

“Everything outside threatens. This is my lu [the threatening world], my doom. My body is in constant danger of destruction and I must take action against that threat. Contemplating action I feel guilt. Feeling guilt I project: ‘The other person fears me

because he knows what is in my mind. He fears me and therefore wishes to destroy me.' This is my lu. I must take action to prevent it. I take action and feel guilt." (p.446)

The Kaingang then throws his spear at the furtive shadow. If he misses the attacked person will have cause for his hostility which was no doubt already a mirror image of the first Indian's, he will take revenge. If we was killed, his family will take revenge. To prevent this, the victim's family needs to be killed pre-emptively. In this way, the Kaingang Indians have become nearly extinct.

In my view, it is but a short step from wanting all predators dead to wanting all human enemies dead. And yet, in this example man was set on man because of competition for scarce resources, and the threatening jungle. Possibly in a savannah with lots of food and wide territory, human groups would not see each other exactly the same way. Hence human predation depends on circumstances.

The potential for predated-on perceptions and attitudes may be rooted not only in man's prolonged dependence in infancy in which he is vulnerable to predation if the family is not supportive, but also due to the fact that man has been vulnerable for a prolonged period (till recently), to natural predators.

Innate cannibalistic fears may be due to a coalescence of natural vulnerability to outside predators, including humans, and family design. There is the possibility of infants being predated (at least killed, or allowed to die) within the family at times of great adversity, and later the possibility of the tables being reversed by adult sons on the father when hunting needs demands it, as described earlier. The worst fantasies relating to parents and the outside world were not far from reality, especially if we consider the high rate of natural infant mortality to the present day, and the discoveries recently of the high incidence of child battering and abuse even in civilized societies.

However, the major acts of cannibalism, we may assume, occurred exogamously. Dehumanization of the enemy may have been a psychological defence allowing hunting of the enemy as an animal, or indeed he was at one time of another Homo species, say, Neanderthal man⁷. It is possible that the ability to see humans outside one's group, clan or tribe in dehumanized ways, as objects to hunt or defend against, allowed cannibalism to occur outside the family and clan, and helped survival of the fittest in the adverse situations of our prehistory. Psychoanalysis has always acknowledged the extreme ambivalences in the closest relationships. What is suggested here, is that the negative part is not due to a "death instinct" but due to real hazardous situations into which babies were (and still are) born into at times.

When Lonie⁴³ poignantly quoted Freud's "new motto"—"What have they done to you, poor child?", we may extend this question to all our traumatized vulnerable human past, where humans attacked other more vulnerable humans, in order to survive.

It is important to be able to think scientifically about war, even if we need to contemplate very unpleasant aspects of being human⁴⁴. Application of the three-pronged approach may be made to present day war situations. The superpower arms race and confrontation with potential for a nuclear war on the conscious level is competition between capitalism and communism. This may be seen as the remnant of the historical confrontation over scarce resources where Marx saw the French Revolution as a step to the rectification of the exploitation of the poor of the industrial revolution. But the roots of the present confrontation make much more sense seeing the superpowers as each waiting for the fatal thrust of the spear from the other, as the Kaingang Indians did in the Brazilian jungles, or as two animals might circle each other while fearing a predator attack from the other. First strike, second strike, preemptive strike by nuclear weapons fit very much into this picture. The physical, psychological and social tools and arrangements used are secondary to this primary attitude.

Of course, like all situations there are cultural sets which in part reverberate with old traditions, and in part are uniquely new. For instance, on the one hand the presidents of the two superpowers parade like two gladiators or knights in front of the world, who, like David and Goliath will determine the fate of their respective peoples. Alternately, the two countries' military cabinets are in confrontation like two combat groups. Or the leading nuclear scientists are pitted against each other in similar ways. It is these relatively small groups which are mobilised for war which engage most attention. The rest of the world looks on as the onlookers did at Agincourt or Waterloo, as if their peacetime activities would be only marginally affected by the spectacle of the battle. What is new is that the looking is done by television, and that the onlookers will be showered with death the same way (or more so) than the protagonists.

Different recent conflicts may be viewed from our theoretical viewpoint. Whatever the causes of the recent Israeli wars may be seen consciously, it is my impression that the Israelis see their adversaries to a large extent as Nazi predators wishing to hunt Jews out of existence.

On the other hand, the Persian Gulf unrest⁴⁵, and the recent overthrows of wealthy autocratic rulers in Iran and the Philippines are reminiscent of the French Revolution where the oppressed poor people wanted their share of bread (and meat). Here the analogy is of the band of brothers deposing the primal father.

What then are the few loose screws in our evolution which Koestler men-

tions²³? Actually till say 20,000 years ago our evolution was most adaptive. The problem is that in recent times our civilization has developed at such a rate that on the one hand we are too close to our primeval fears, and on the other hand too far away from them. We are too close in that the fears still dominate us when in external reality we might more profitably turn to cooperating with our "enemy" than hound him or fight him off. This is because today for the first time we may provide sufficient for all if we set our minds to it. On the other hand we are too far away from our fears to recognise them and deal with them. Like phobic neurotics we have symbolised our fears and removed their source from consciousness. Securing of food and provision (obtaining wealth) has become more and more symbolic, as has provision of security against predators. Wholesale killing on battlefields has become removed from meaning. Hunting in its naked form has both allowed the killing meaning and purpose, and has allowed inhibitory reflexes their full and adaptive expression if this was appropriate. Today we are prepared to fight for symbols of security too easily, because we do not understand our basic fears sufficiently. Like neurotics, we do not want to understand these basic fears because we are ashamed and horrified of them and fear their power.

Conclusion

Some rational conscious reasons of war were reviewed and it was suggested that though pointing in the right direction they were insufficient as a conceptual framework for the causation of war. Biological, psychological and social aspects of war were examined, and it was noted that they were well adapted and necessary for the strategy of fighting wars, if that strategy was chosen in a crisis situation. However, these aspects were tools of wars rather than causes. The deeper causes were to be found in the hunting and hunted potential of man, and in the ultimate taboo which man is capable of breaking, cannibalism. This does not make man evil. Rather, he is the most adaptable and creative animal, most opportunistic but also most loving. Above all he has known how to survive, till now. Approaches to the solution of war must take into account the rational aspects, the tools of war, and also the deeper unconscious motivations.

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