

Outline of a Psychology of War*

By Jean Baechler

War is not a natural product of the human psyche, though the psyche seems to support it quite naturally. This contradiction can be resolved through defining war and its conceptual status. The following definition says it all : “War is a violent conflict between polities”. In such a quarrelsome, passionate and dissonant species as humankind, “violent conflict” is self-explanatory ; to have meaning, the previous assertion thus depends on how the term “polity” is defined. While in regard of violent conflict Homo sapiens does not differ from other anthropoids, human quarrels stand apart in terms of frequency and intensity, because the species attaches special significance to intense and insatiable passions – power, prestige and wealth – for which humans are prepared to fight. If we throw in the human capacity – unheard-of among other life forms – to disagree, stick to one’s positions and pursue one’s interests, one begins to identify the source of the human proneness to violent conflict : in order to carry the day, parties to any conflict are tempted to resort to violence, whether armed or bare-handed. Written into the species’ distinctive traits, such a natural bent turns into a survival issue if a final consideration is added, namely that freedom, or human indeterminacy, denies the species an innate control mechanism capable of curbing the expression of violence. All human conflicts threaten violence, and any violence is apt to degenerate into a fight to the death. Moreover, the human species is also gregarious, since nothing human can come about in solipsist isolation. The problem raised can thus be formulated as follows: how can humans live with others without deadly outcomes?

The solution does not reside in the abolition of conflict, since it is out of reach, but in peaceful conflict resolution – by which is meant “no resort to violence”. Such resolution is possible only if justice is factored in, in both Aristotelian senses of “rules of the game” (*nomos/lex*) and “law” (*dike/jus*), which gives “each man his due”, not only in the allocation of resources, but also in contractual practice, punishment and redress. Justice also implies equity, which consists in applying law in such fashion as to compensate for its rigidities through consideration of circumstances in the name of a superior justice. In brief, violent conflict involves its resolution as one of Man’s ends, and assigns it peace – or better, pacification – through justice as its means. Such a desired end, in turn, raises the issue of how it can be accomplished, one that is resolved through implementation of appropriate procedures for which the label “regime of ends” may be adopted.

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A polity is by nature and definition a social circle whose constitutive individuals and groupings assemble in quest of the conditions that make achievement of all of Man's ends possible. In order to succeed or not to fail in that quest, they must implement measures to inhibit fights to the death. In conceptual terms, a polity is a space where all inhabitants are subject to a process of pacification. Thereby, an external space is defined, where the absence of conflict resolution devices or procedures causes conflicts to degenerate into violence, and violence to escalate to struggle-to-the-death extremes. To sum up, if what we call "war" is a violent conflict between polities, then two social scenes are defined on which the human adventure can unfold: one, the polity, is premised on peace through justice; the other, exposed to war, can be labelled "transpolity". For a transpolity to become real and active, and for war to break out and impose itself, it is necessary, in the strongest sense, that there be at least two polities and that they maintain relations with each other.

Now, the human species lived through its early period – one that lasted tens of millennia – scattered into small-scale societies of predators, each prey to the anguished desire to avoid any relations with immediate neighbours, and succeeding by delimiting "no man's lands" between them. Each Palaeolithic clique was, in conceptual as well as in real terms, a polity, but there was no transpolity, hence no war. Indeed, while Palaeolithic archaeology brings to light traces of violent deaths by murder or hunting accidents, it does not reveal any evidence, however slight, of war, and ethnography bears out such absence among predator bands. War is a cultural product of the Neolithic Age,¹ together with agriculture, cattle-raising, differentiated political bodies, social stratification, writing, empires, and so on. At the other end of time, war could vanish from the human condition if humankind formed into a single world polity – unless it had to face polities from outer space.

It is thus established beyond any reasonable doubt that war is not a spontaneous expression of the human psyche, nor even of the kind of aggression that finds outlets in quarrels and conflicts, whether violent or subdued. Yet it is equally certain that humans and especially young males engage in war with relish and abandon, and that if deprived of it, they will seek substitutes, such as sports in any form for a start, whether through practice or cheering on athletes in agonistic fashion. The contradiction is resolved if we hypothesize that the human psyche is so structured that it has provided war, over more than tens of millennia, with the psychic resources it requires to impose itself and assume the misleading appearance of a natural phenomenon. A distinction within the human psyche of

¹ This assertion contradicts the stances adopted by such authors as Keeley or Otterbein, among others, who see war as a universal, timeless phenomenon or as predating the Neolithic Age by a substantial margin. The present writer finds Ferguson's detailed rebuttal of such theses and Guilaine's synthesis far more convincing. See: Lawrence Keeley, *War Before Civilization*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996; Keith Otterbein, *How War Began*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2004; Brian Ferguson, "Archeology, Cultural Anthropology, and the Origins and Intensifications of War", chap.13, in E.N. Arkush & M.W. Allen (eds.), *The Archeology of Warfare*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2006; and Jean Guilaine, "La genèse de la guerre", presented at a January 2013 conference in Paris on "Guerre et Politique": cf. www.canalacademie.com/ida10168-La-genese-de-la-guerre.html.

three departments – sensibility, intellect and will² – validates that hypothesis with a degree of certainty that is reinforced by the realization that it agrees with convincing Clausewitzian dictums.³ However, war is apt to vary, even if we stick to its most conventional image as a violent conflict between polities: polities can split and turn war into civil war; or again, war can pit extant, full-fledged polities against polities in the making. Three main criteria of differentiation are in order. The first is technological, and suggests that the psychology of war may vary according to whether it is waged with hand-crafted rudimentary weapons, fire-arms, or weapons systems made “smart” by electronics. The second is transpolitical, implying that psychic dispositions differ based on the number of players involved. Indeed, the logic of war changes altogether according as the polities involved over a transpolity are two, from five to seven, or more in number. The last criterion is cognitive, and rests on the ideology mobilized in the cause of war.

Sensibility and War

To start with, there is a need to reformulate a familiar thesis derived from the psychoanalytic tradition. This thesis asserts that war is a source of intense pleasure because it offers the opportunity to kill, rape, destroy, steal, pillage, etc., with total impunity. It assumes that humans have a natural and spontaneous tendency to perpetrate such excesses, and only refrain from them when censured by society and culture as well as by self-control. The postulate behind that assumption can be traced back to Hobbes at least, or more probably to a prevalent misinterpretation of original sin, explicitly regarded as second to a human nature that was originally good. Indeed, it seems biologically impossible for a gregarious species to ground its cohesion and the coherence of its groupings on a native enmity. As good sense suggests, reasoning demonstrates, and research confirms, cooperation and trust come first, but trust would be self-destructive if it did not secure means of reprisal in cases where it is wrongly granted and abused. Contrary to conventional wisdom, murder between fellow-humans is rare and statistically negligible on the scale of a polity. Experience also reveals that most humans have a horror of large-scale, cold-blooded murder, an occurrence that inflicts severe psychic wounds on them. In point of fact, only deranged sadists derive uncanny pleasure from atrocities and excesses. Yet, as ubiquitous documentary evidence shows, the latter undeniably exist.

The key to that phenomenon is to be sought elsewhere: not in the realm of instinct, emotion or sentiment, but in the passions common to all humans, though in variable degrees according to sex, age and above all temperament and personality. Such passions consist of ambition, pride, vanity, cupidity, avarice, envy, jealousy, hatred, etc., which are all likely to pit humans against one another in fights to the death whenever circumstances allow. Now, provided one considers the big picture and nuance is left out of account, circumstances are always less propitious *within* a polity than *between* polities. The most

² Cf. J. Baechler, *La nature humaine*, Paris, Hermann, 2009, Deuxième partie.

³ Cf. Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Part One, Book One, chapter 3: “Der kriegerische Genius”, Bonn, Dümmler Verlag, 1973.

direct way of proving this is to regard passions of the soul as data, leave their genesis to a different inquiry,⁴ and try to find their possible applications. It then appears that all of them operate and are deployed whenever any of three desirable goods is at stake : power, prestige and wealth. Such desires are not particular to the human species – they are widely shared in the animal kingdom, at least among mammals –, but they reach extreme heights of expression in humans. Let us take for granted and fully explained the seductions of those three social goods. It is hardly inconsequential for resolving the issue of violent conflict that all three are rare in the absolute. Power, defined as the capacity to impose one's will on others, is a scarce resource because it would disappear if it were available in infinite amounts, or if everyone enjoyed it in equal shares. Likewise, prestige derives from the scarcity of merit and its unequal distribution. As for riches, defined as the ratio between resources and needs, it is made rare by the fact that, whereas needs are under the influence of desires without natural limits as well as of endless emulations among desirers, the available resources in any given historical and cultural framework are always limited. Hence, it is clear that violent conflict between polities serves as a preferred outlet for human passions.

The passion for power is ambition : the quest for positions that make it possible to impose one's will on others. One can make others obey by resorting to one of three drivers. The first prevails when subjects calculate that it is in their best interest to obey those in the group who are judged competent to bring a common enterprise to a successful conclusion. Such a power of "direction" requires the ambitious to demonstrate to others who are at best prepared to obey temporarily and for limited ends only that they possess the necessary competence. Another driver is "authority", based on charisma and the consent of obedient others to act in deference to a superiority seen as instrumental in achieving an end that is recognized as a higher good. The last driver is fear of force : the power possessed by those who can resort to violence.

From the standpoint of the management of passions and the demands of ambition among human actors, direction and authority supply insufficient resources by reason of the conditions, limitations and controls they involve. Power only can seem to satisfy the passion and the rather unhappy (ethical, metaphysical) feeling which leads humans to seek satisfaction and easing of tension in the fearful enslavement of others. Within a polity, power encounters difficulties in achieving its desired ends unless it resorts to political and domestic tyranny. The former is rare as it implies conditions of possibility that are difficult to secure against regimes more likely based on direction and authority than otherwise. In any case, it benefits only one leader and his henchmen. Domestic tyrants, on the other hand, can freely multiply, but – unless there is a good deal of social disorganization – their victims can always appeal to their relatives, entourage and political authorities for redress. On the contrary, war satisfies ambition and the taste for power in a way that neither political nor domestic tyranny can ever do. Since over a transpolity relationships governed by direction or authority are non-existent, war is the only possible mode of exercising power

⁴ See J. Baechler, *op.cit.*, Troisième partie.

among polities. Moreover, it makes it possible to enjoy the gratifications of power not only individually and directly, but also – and more importantly – collectively and by proxy.

The passions of prestige are pride and vanity, the former based on real merits, the latter on illusions of merit. Prestige follows a definite logic of its own, derived from a three-way game. The most important element is a “value”, in the strict sense of an object valued by human actors and possibly giving rise to competitions that reveal their respective values. The logic is that of admiration, which draws together an admirable object, a chorus of admirers, and individuals admired for their capacity to approximate it closely. Occasions on which merit can be recognized are in ample supply in any society and culture, and so are opportunities to satisfy the passions that revolve around prestige. But war, once invented and waged, generates such opportunities in a fashion that is perhaps more tempting and certainly more widely distributed than usual. In war, one’s life is on the line – the highest stakes for a human gamble. Such a challenge is valued by the in-group since the polity’s security, survival, good name or grandeur hang in the balance. War thus offers the warriors a chance to compare their valour among themselves as devoted members acting in the cause of a polity’s common good, as well as against those on the other side whom they wish to conquer – the very aim of war. The value is victory. Prestige flows to those who have demonstrated their valour. The chorus, in which young women play a decisive role, is made up of the population assembled into a polity. Whereas prestige within a polity can only be bestowed on a small minority of deserving members, war makes it possible to share in the collective prestige accruing from victory over the enemy, as every member, all the way down to the most humble and obscure, is apt to feel aggrandized and elevated by it.

The passions of riches are avarice and cupidity. The resources that generate satisfaction of needs and desires are goods of nature or of human industry, but also production factors such as arable land and those who till it, or again women, who contribute to demographic growth, take care of household chores, are trophies in vanity contests, and cater for the warrior’s leisure requirements. War enables the victors to seize resources available to the vanquished – including active manpower. As is the case with prestige and power, the spoils of war can be distributed to individuals or the community itself, but in more apparent and direct fashion. As a rule, these spoils directly benefit those who fight and carry the day. One way or another, however, the wealth thus acquired percolates to society at large.

As soon as war enters human histories, it mobilizes everyone’s passions because it is impossible to opt out of it. Indeed, to renounce war is not an option: it would amount to declaring oneself defeated without a fight. This predicament cannot be avoided, and the only choice it leaves is between two strategies: beat the enemy or avoid defeat – win or take no chances on losing. However, over the long term (measured in millennia and centuries), all polities cannot possibly win, or avoid losing, all the time. There must needs be victors and vanquished, the latter destined for biological elimination, or more likely political extinction by absorption into the winners’ polity. No polity can anticipate the

outcome of the struggle, so that all need to engage in it with the best chances of success. All thus pressure their members and excite their martial zeal so as to mobilize all available energies through the mediation of passions. The passions attaching to the three rare goods need to be supplemented by envy and jealousy, born of and fed by enemy successes. They are also augmented by hatred, generated by suffering and humiliation. Such passions are not the product of war, nor do they explain it. They are natural fruits of the human psyche and of the issues that torment it ; they are at work in any polity, even the most pacified and just among them, but war gives occasion for their individual and (more importantly) collective expression.

Feeling plays a role here, with marked nuances if criteria of differentiation are taken into account. Until fire-arms were introduced and their murderous effects made themselves felt in the Europe of the 14th and 15th centuries, war was waged by combatants equipped with hand-held edged and pointed or, secondarily, ranged weapons. Swords, spears, axes, or clubs imply close physical contact between combatants, and impose the duel as the standard form of combat. Even collective movements, such as the Macedonian phalanx's favourite tactic, show similarities with collective duels against foes either already dispersed or to be dispersed in defeat and disorderly flight. Homeric warfare, as in the *Iliad*, supplies the keenest image of it, where battle amounts to a juxtaposition of duels. Duellists are physically close to one another and risk death, which excites and mobilizes extreme feelings, as fear combines with anger to generate a rage to kill and conquer. Such a configuration may lead to extremes of human savagery, but does not in and of itself imply that foes hate each other, and even less that the combat that pits one against the other be ideologically justified. Achilles and Hector find themselves locked in a fight to the death, yet they respect each other and could even have become friends had circumstances been different.

Fire-arms changed the picture entirely. The gunner who takes part in a barrage of artillery fire does not see the enemy, whom his senses may picture in a variety of abstract ways none of which ever equates with a direct personal experience. There are no doubt combat situations that intervene between the physical contact of a duel and firing from a distance, as when combatants aim at one another and are fully aware of who kills whom on the battlefield, just like the archers and crossbowmen of old – though even they were already driven to abstraction. The latter relates to sensibility in three typical ways. One amounts to a complete disconnect : a gunner in his battery or a bomber aircraft pilot may convince themselves that they perform a demanding task, one that requires certain skills, and not show any more emotion, sentiment or passion than would a worker operating a machine on the factory floor. Conversely, operators of death may experience intense pleasure, all the more complete as they know full well they are acting with impunity : a sadist may love to rain hell on others by pressing a button. The last possibility resides in hatred of the enemy, combatant or otherwise, though because foes are an abstraction, passionate enmity cannot be the product of personal experience : it requires resort to ideology, which alone can demonize others and turn them into legitimate targets.

Transpolitical systems have the potential to alter the expressions of sensibility in war. A unipolar configuration sets a hegemonic polity against others that are insignificant in terms of latent and actually mobilized power, or against foreign enemies who are alien to any form of political organization: the former situation is typical of relations between an empire and its tribal foes, whether they be domestic or from the periphery; the latter, less frequent case includes terrorist actions by small ideological groups. For a hegemonic power, such actions are more or less unpleasant nuisances which do not expose it to any risk in terms of the polity's survival. These nuisances raise a problem whose solutions range from a negotiated compromise to physical elimination pure and simple, a close equivalent of capital punishment for a convicted criminal. *Per se*, neither solution requires a pronounced mobilization of feeling: they can be treated like any more or less urgent and delicate current affairs issue.

A bipolar configuration pits two polities of comparable power status against each other. It is premised on a stable and durable balance between them, a mutual mistrust, and the permanent incentive for each to seize any opportunity to eliminate the other. It is a zero-sum, all-or-nothing game which can only result in conquest of one by the other and transformation of the transpolity into an imperial polity. Three- or four-cornered games follow the same logic of elimination of the enemy. The strategic situation is made so tense by the mutual threat of political annihilation that war mobilizes the strongest affects, and hatred of the enemy is very likely to take hold. Such hatred is abstract, in the sense that its target is not derived from any direct personal experience: it coincides with a collective – the Carthaginians rather than this or that Carthaginian. Yet it finds very concrete expressions in combative ardour and the magnitude of massacres and destructions. Hatred of the enemy can be direct and undisguised just as it can rely on ideological recitals and justifications: whereas the struggle to the death between Rome and Carthage did not produce any identifiable ideology on either side, the so-called Wars of Religion or the Cold War generated and consumed a lot of it.

Multipolar configurations are rare; they involve numerous polities over a transpolity, all of them more or less insignificant in terms of the power it would be necessary to secure and mobilize in order to subdue others. Such dispersion of power inhibits the definition of rules of engagement and renders the costs of coalition prohibitive. It is thus in each polity's interest to attack before it is attacked, a situation that generates a state of permanent hostility and savage wars, which over time will lead to the emergence of an ultimate victor and political unification of the transpolity. In all probability, this situation is most propitious for the fullest expression of the passions of war – ambition, pride, vanity, avarice, envy, jealousy, hatred all combined – and also the most intense, which spares the polities concerned any need for ideology.

The last configuration is oligopolar: it consists of five to seven polities, none of which is in a position to get the better of a coalition of all others. In such circumstances, the dominant strategy becomes defensive, i.e. meant to preserve the status quo and maintain the balance of power through a combination of mobilized war assets, changing

coalitions, and diplomacy. As a result, war tends to shed any emotional charge and to transform the soldier's trade into a profession among others. However, the existing balance can be disturbed, a crisis poorly managed, and the system locked in the spiral of a rise to extremes, as was the case in the Peloponnesian War or the First World War. Since fighting to the death is unnatural – alien to the logic at work – in these oligopolar configurations, war then becomes deliriously savage due to the license granted to passions ; it turns to ideology in order to mask its unnatural character and secure the appearance of a natural event.

The third and last criterion of differentiation is to be found in how the enemy is represented in violent conflicts between polities. Such representations are never completely absent, as there is a need to portray the enemy as hostile, and any perception necessarily includes a stylization of that which is perceived. Among enemies, representations may cover the widest possible range in terms of elaboration and impact. When foes know and recognize each other, the impact is minimal and elaboration remains incipient, as in recurring tribal wars, which are apt to turn into seasonal sports contests where lives, and not only reputations and honour, are at stake. At the other end of the spectrum, enemies explicitly define each other in purely ideological terms – through representations built into a system of thought that designates them as foes. Colonialists, imperialists, capitalists, communists, fascists are ideological constructs applied to abstract populations, made real in the process, who can then legitimately be put to death. Half-way between these extremes, concrete populations in concrete polities see concrete, though arbitrary, ideological labels applied to them in order to explain and justify war. Thus, the French were defined as representing “Frenchness” by the English, Spaniards, Germans, etc., and vice versa, all through the period when the concert of nations governed the oligopolar transpolity between 1648 and 1945.

Intellect and War

Intellect is defined as a psychic system of integrated operations that collect and process information to meet the needs of rationality and allow it to discharge its problem-solving function by means of action, production skills, and knowledge. This definition is based on a distinction between intellect as a psychic, and beyond neuronal, feature, and rationality as an anthropic, and beyond cultural, process. Such a distinction is unusual, so that any examination of the connections between intellect and war that purports to distinguish them from the more manifest connections between intellect and action, production skills and knowledge, is a delicate matter. The incidence of war on human affairs is so massive and decisive in this anthropic dimension and its cultural implications that, unless keen attention is paid to it, it is impossible to account for historical developments from the dawn of the Neolithic Age to the present. The special significance of war is explained in principle by the twin facts that it belongs in the political realm and that it is subject to the pressures of survival.

The political occupies a central place among humans, in the sense that every event in society has political repercussions through ongoing conflicts, the way power relationships are affected, and the competitions under way. Conversely, any development affecting the polity and its political regime affects society as a whole. Survival imposes insuperable constraints on polities. They cannot choose not to be part of a transpolity, nor can they decide to be part of it other than by trying to be top dog, or at least reach the standards of the strongest. On the scale of centuries and millennia, most will fail: experience over five to seven thousand years has shown that immense empires, in China, India, Anterior Asia, Amerindia, or in the Mediterranean, were the attractor that gave retrospective meaning to the chaos of innumerable wars between innumerable polities which led to their eventual coalescence. Meanwhile, each had to manage as best it could, for it was impossible to foresee who the ultimate victors would be, neither Qin, Mauryas, Achemenides, Rome, nor the Incas and the Aztecs.

Constraints found their way into human affairs through the attention paid to armaments and the organization of armed forces, which in turn, and in an even more decisive manner, required the development of schemes for the mobilization of all the resources indispensable for war. War and its decisive role can variously be seen to have produced the growing differentiation of political organs, tax systems, bureaucracy, and the quest for new resources through productivity gains – for instance, by means of irrigation –, or through conquest and colonization ; the same applies to the concentration of power in the direction of autocratic rule based on force, the enlistment of religion in the cause of legitimizing/ sanctifying power and of social cohesion/mobilization. These phenomena all stem from competitions and emulations that are fertile in hitherto unknown cognitions, productions and actions.

Related to the anthropic as well as to rationality, cognitive, productive and interactive operations allow one to probe both psyche and intelligence, and to identify plausible impacts of war on human intellect through unprecedented or more pressing requirements. A rustic thought experiment could start from the warless Palaeolithic situation and its modes of mobilizing intellect, then introduce the hypothesis of the invention of war, and examine the elements of change it brings to the picture. For now it is enough to test the reliability and effectiveness of that protocol when it comes to four operations of intellect– perception, memorization, decision-making and thought – as well as a comparison of big-game hunting and war, whose affinity is manifest.

Perception consists in transforming sensations into information. The information required by hunters – big-game hunting is always a collective enterprise, entailing anthropic issues of organization – obviously relates to the species, location, movements, reactions, etc., of the hunted. The sense activated most in the process is vision, which one needs to exercise if objects are to be seen, the big picture grasped, movements tracked, and spatial structure penetrated. The other senses are also mobilized, but take a backseat to it. Details matter little, for the crucial point is that all information thus collected give rise to an exhaustive account, and become an object of learning.

Palaeolithic bands move over a circumscribed area, of which they have a wide and detailed knowledge. They are thus fully familiar with their hunting grounds. For their part, the hunted animals, of whatever species, exhibit fixed, constant mores, which the hunters know in both depth and breadth. Derived from experience, such knowledge constitutes an empirical treasure handed down successive generations through education and instruction. Whether individually or collectively, everything is inventoried and leaves little room for unprecedented occurrences. No doubt, the game may escape or be missed, but such incidents are subject to known probabilities. Within that quasi-fixed and indefinitely replicated framework, perception can be perfectly effective, but its compass is narrow and unadjustable. War changes the equation entirely after a while, as none of the elements that need to be perceived – terrain, enemy, encounters, and engagements – are fixed any longer. That is because war, unlike hunting, does not pit an unprogrammed against a programmed, hence predictable species, but specimens of the same unprogrammed, thus normally unpredictable species against one another. The result must have been a broader perception and, more importantly, a more flexible and open attention span, even if it is hard to see where the documentation required to validate that hypothesis could be found.

The same leap may have affected memorization and memory. The information accumulated by hunters is in abundant supply, very reliable, easily retrieved, and always narrowly circumscribed for a given group of hunters. Warriors face a completely different situation. They must memorize anything of tactical interest to them and their foes, because they are engaged in a competition that is rich in surprises and dramatic events, from which lessons can be drawn. Such developments affect memory in several ways. It no longer serves only as a reservoir of information destined to inculcate habits, drilled reflexes and routines: it turns instead into an archive from which data can be retrieved when faced with a challenge. It must also become collective memory so as to enable the group to affirm a distinct identity from that of the enemy. It is fed by stories derived from war episodes and the legends attached to them over time. In exchange, it supplies the material required by any historiographical effort. Memory must also, and most significantly, record as much data as possible with a view to drawing lessons for the purpose of survival, whether in attack or defence. In brief, memorization and memory undergo a transformation in the direction of less automatic response and more reflexive mental activity.

It can be presumed that decision-making and especially reflection are the functions most affected by war. Decision-making is the intellectual operation which closes the sequence of prior operations. The psyche as a whole is in the service of action; it helps solve issues that emerge or are raised by humans. There comes a time when action is in order, which demands a decision, the step when will takes over from intellect. Hunting, in contrast, reduces decision-making to a routine that costs next to nothing. Indeed, what does the decision in that case involve? Assembling a team before it goes hunting. Everything here is pre-ordained: that activity is periodic, the team is familiar, no surprise threatens. Decisions have to be made all through the hunting party. The unexpected can be expected, which is why a hunting team always has a leader who is also the best and most experienced hunter: one who is apt to minimize the incidence of chance events. This requires the

intuitive ability to grasp situations at first glance, as well as decisiveness – qualities that combine natural gifts, training and experience. That is not the case in war, where parameter indeterminacy cannot be eliminated due to the protagonists' essential freedom, and the impossibility of predicting the enemy's decisions and moves with any certainty. Indeterminacy assumes unparalleled magnitude in that context as, given the variety of influences that can bear on the issue, the number of factors which need to be taken into account increases, and with them, so does the range of each parameter's values. This increased indeterminacy bears on the decision to go to war and to engage in battle just as it does on the chain of events during the course of both. Moreover, such a decision becomes serious and pressing since everyone's living conditions, the lives of fighters, and the survival of the polity are all at stake. Decision-making proves a delicate, daunting, and anguishing operation.

For support, the decision-maker must reflect. Human intellect comes in aid of war through a process of cerebralization, resulting in an increased capacity to reflect on itself, on its operations, and on the information to be processed. This constraint is irresistible, and its consequences are unavoidable. It can be argued that war played a defining role in humankind's rise to reflexivity. Reflection is a natural gift of the species, just as are the capacity to stand back and self-reflect, and, at a deeper level, to distinguish between the "I" and the "Me". Reflexivity is the implementation of the capacity to think. As with any human activity, it can give rise to variable developments and become the object of a specific and specialized application. War, no doubt, is not reflexivity's sole driver, but it may be the most powerful, along with religion, by reason of the urgent need to reduce indecision and of the sheer weight of the decisions to be made.

In order to characterize the three main stages war has gone through, it is necessary, under pain of failing entirely, to divide it into its component parts and, at a minimum, to distinguish between armaments, logistics, command, and troops. The war of movement waged by Frederick and Napoleon demands sharp minds and pushes the keenest intellect to its limits when it comes to collecting all the information that needs processing in order to arrive at the optimal decision. It is hardly surprising if the greatest captains in European history, Caesar, Frederick and Napoleon took reflexive thought on their campaigns to rare heights, and in the process produced landmarks in literature. Alexander would no doubt have shown them the way had he lived long enough. On the contrary, Homeric duel-battles and tribal warfare do not seem to require command vision, all the less so as under such circumstances such vision is hardly apparent. The intelligence required of commanders in the wars of the 17th and even more of the 18th centuries was compatible with the utter intellectual mediocrity of the rank and file, then recruited from the dregs of society and among deviants or criminals. Likewise, it is doubtful whether the lancers who manned the Macedonian phalanx or the Duke of Alba's *terceros* reached even average intellectual standards. In contrast, the so-called divisional system, which conceded the greatest autonomy of initiative and implementation of superior orders and assigned missions, can only function satisfactorily with well-trained officers and sergeants as well as troops capable of adjustment to changing circumstances. One way or another, to a greater or

lesser degree according to time and place, the military mind had to become more agile and flexible, a technological requirement that surely was related to the adoption of universal and mandatory education systems by European polities in the 19th century.

Such a convergence between educational standards and the requirements of the use of force reaches a peak in the contemporary period, with armaments whose degree of technological sophistication demands that they be handled by trained engineers. As a rule, the technical and, eventually, scientific standards attained by a cultural circle are correlated with the sophistication of weapons. But a further distinction needs to be made between arms development, which follows the logic of R & D, and the actual handling of weapons in battle. The greatest scientists were needed to develop the atom bomb, but it only took ordinary aircrews to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This gap became complete when logistics became autonomous, mostly as a branch of public administration. Until the 17th century, in Europe, supplies failed to exist as a separate department of military activity, and troops lived off the fat of the land, triggering food shortages and health disasters in fragile agrarian economies with only limited reserves. That same century saw the emergence and rise of administrative monarchies, which set up an effective organization of supplies, or conversely the need for a more effective logistic function may have led to the development of royal administrations. However that may be, cerebralization is undeniable even though measures to prove the point are hard to come by.

Clarifying the connections between intellect and transpolitical configurations may sound like an exceedingly difficult challenge. Yet it is possible to advance, in the guise of a heuristic conjecture, a thesis derived from Clausewitz's central intuition. It enabled him to grasp the logic of war as a violent duel that obeys a law of escalation to extremes, from which an argument was drawn to support "total war". But Clausewitz added to his law of war a decisive caveat, based on a series of reasons which make it possible to avoid a rise to extremes and turn war into a political instrument: if it is limited in its objectives, war can also be restricted in the means it resorts to, and rein in its native savagery. Hence, total war can be held to result from a loss of control over limited war and a failure of policy. This profound and adequate intuition was born of a philosophical reflection on war in Europe. Now, in modern history but also in ancient Greece, European war is governed by an oligopolar logic. In that view, the function of war is indeed to serve a defensive policy premised on preservation of the status quo and strategic balance, thus favouring its restriction and inhibiting uncontrolled escalation. But Europe's two Thirty-Year Wars, first in 1618-1648, but most significantly in 1914-1945, demonstrated that a tragic loss of control is always possible, and political failure is apt to end in total wars fought to the death. One is justified in enlarging this Clausewitzian thesis and in positing that whereas bi- and multipolar configurations, on account of their instability, feed escalations and total war, their oligopolar counterpart, barring accidents, favours limited war and place it in the service of maintaining or restoring balance. Such a thesis is plausible and may be correct.

Let us take this thesis as given. It is then possible to deduce how the oligopolar configuration has contributed to the development of intellect. Three such contributions

distinctly stand out. The need for balance must enhance cerebralization by means of the political engineering it entails, i.e. through resort to social/political science for the effective management of a polity. The search for equilibrium indeed implies that each player be at all times attentive to the balance of forces so as to achieve the degree of war asset mobilization required to play its part both effectively and constructively. Since passiveness is out of the question, the unfolding activity mobilizes all the resources of intellect. The second contribution stems from the fact that the game imposes a strict distinction between peacetime and wartime; the former, far from abolishing transpolitical relations, enhances them and entrusts conflict management to diplomacy, which as a result generates a steady stream of transpolitical law, or *jus gentium* as it used to be designated. Public and private international law is one of Europe's great original features, together with diplomacy as an instrument of policy offering an alternative to war. A case can be made that diplomacy and international law better enhance cerebralization than any struggle to the death. The last contribution is brought by the conduct of war should diplomacy fail to avert it. Such conduct must be measured and adjusted to policy and its definition of what is at stake. It should refrain from insinuations and the seductions of its inherent logic of escalation to extremes. This deliberate moderation lies most of all with will, but intellect equally plays a part in weighing stakes, assessing risks, and tailoring engagements.

Ideology, if its specific impact is to be assessed, can only exert a negative influence on intellect, and foster mindlessness as indeed ideology does in all circumstances and all expressions, for it basically consists in filling the gaps where rationality defaults, through resort to information that is at best non-rational, at worst downright irrational. War will not improve the status of ideology in terms of intellectual worth. A correlation can indeed be established between rise to extremes and appeal to ideology, and conversely, between limited war and ideological silence. The European oligopolar configuration, Greek as well as modern, proves the point. The *Iliad* reveals no injection of ideology between Trojans and Achaeans. Among the cities of ancient Greece, ideology appeared on the scene when polarization set in between Athens and Sparta, and surged during the Peloponnesian War, in the form of an imaginary and purely ideological opposition between "dorism" and "ionism". From 1648 and the end of the ideological, so-called "Wars of Religion" onwards, Europe witnessed a quasi-eclipse of ideology in relations among nation-polities until 1914 – notwithstanding the parenthesis of the 1792-1815 revolutionary relapse, due to French exaltation of revolutionary ideals and recourse to a war of annihilation.

The correlation can also be tested on stranger cases of a distant past, such as the European and Japanese feudal ages. In terms of transpolitical structure, these cases embody a multipolar configuration, in which a dusting of lordships, counties and principalities divide the transpolitical arena, each in no position to prevail, and all of them unable to define, or guarantee respect for, the rules of the game. War is in effect perpetual, but decisive battles are rare and do not spill much blood; escalation to extremes is slowed and moderated not by deliberation but by reason of weak resources. The ideological element in these small and scattered wars is non-existent or imperceptible. But that configuration will inexorably lead to the political coalescence and emergence of increasingly substantial and

powerful polities. As these polities began to appear, in the 14th and 15th centuries in Europe, in the 16th in Japan, wars became more brutal and bloody. With violence levels climbing several rungs of the ladder, came visible ideological developments, in the nation's cause in Europe – the symbolic value of Joan of Arc's epic is a case in point – and that of Confucianism under the Tokugawas' leadership.

The correlation exists even in the most archaic expressions of war, in tribal, segmented, or lineage-based societies. In these cases, social morphology consists of nested segments or dimensions ranging from extended families to tribal confederacies, distributed over four or five levels of integration, and so defined as to oppose subordinate segments formed into coalitions of broadly equivalent weight in terms of power. This organization makes management of conflict and violence possible by entrusting resolution to ad hoc coalitions of segments, each in charge of the problems that arise at a particular level. Violence is treated differently at each level. It is normally prohibited in the basic unit: the extended family. At higher levels, it gives rise to blood feuds, subject to elaborate and explicit rules, but increasingly less controlled as one moves up to coalitions that are distant or estranged from one another, to the point where finally savagery sets in between foreign strangers among whom coalition is out of the question. At that level, a rise to extremes is certain and duels can only translate into fights to the death. Resort to ideology closely parallels such fights; it reaches a climax when the largest cultural circle is equated with humankind and denies its enemies any human quality or cultural value; it is then permissible to massacre et enslave them as barbarians who speak onomatopoeic, bird-like gibberish.

Will and War

The human psyche is an integrated mechanism operating in the service of freedom, purpose and rationality: it delivers through the mediation of sensibility, which mobilizes energy; of intellect, which processes information; and of will, which places energy at the disposal of rational purposes. In this view of psychic functions, sensibility is indexed to purpose, intellect to rationality, and will to freedom. As free will is considered to distinguish humans from other living beings, it plays a decisive role in the psyche, one that makes it distinctively human – whereas sensibility and intellect give rise to instructive comparisons with other species, bringing to light countless gradations and nuances. On the other hand, will prevents animal ethology from applying to humans and erasing the threshold that separates humanity from other living species. What is more, it is significant that, contrary to the other two components, will does not materialize in distinctive neuronal form: it activates the cerebral and neuronal machinery as a whole. Its centrality and pre-eminence also express themselves through action. Pursuing the ends of Man by appropriate means, action plays a more eminent part than knowledge and production. Whereas the latter serve to answer questions and combine materials and forms, action mobilizes them in its service rather than the other way round. Because it activates its four fundamental operations – self-awareness, decision-making, effort and perseverance –, will is essential

for human action. It is also possible to show that war, through its operations as well as in the way it relates to freedom, exhibits profound and intelligible affinities with will.

Freedom as a concept implies choice, autonomy and rectitude, so that if the theory is correct, will exerts itself in the act of choosing by upholding autonomy and making the best choices in view of the objectives sought. One can therefore clearly identify how war calls upon will. Two collective actors are involved in that process : the polity and the military, the former made up of leaders and citizens (at least if the exemplary case of a democracy is considered), the latter of commanders and subordinates. War is without a doubt the gravest choice a polity, its leaders, and citizens can make. The reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, such a decision has life-and-death consequences: for the polity as a sovereign entity, whose defeat would sentence it to absorption into the victor's polity; for the leaders as such, condemned by defeat to political death and dishonour ; for the citizens, whose lives are at risk on the battlefield. On the other hand, actors are in no position to control the consequences of their choice, since war is a competition between free agents, one marked by countless chance events and surprises. War is also the most symbolic expression of autonomy, so much so that to the ancient Greeks, freedom above all meant the city's political sovereignty : as Pericles proclaimed and Thucydides wrote, "*happiness means freedom, and freedom means valour*". Launching into war is thus the supreme decision, and calls for consistent, in-depth deliberation among leaders, as well as for debates among the citizenry. Finally, it is vital for both deliberation and debates to produce the best outcome: a decision that is the most rational in terms of both adaptation to the context and justice. In such expressions of liberty on the occasion of war, it becomes apparent that political leaders play a strategic part and bear the heaviest responsibility, as their decision commits the polity and its citizens, whose respective fates hang in the balance because of it.

On the military side, the position with respect to freedom is even clearer. The commander-in-chief's role is pure action, since war operations are conducted in uniquely contingent circumstances. Every battle is singular. It is opportune and essential to muster all available military skills and mobilize all relevant resources. Yet none of these prudent precautions will reduce contingency to zero, nor do away with the need to improvise under conditions of utter uncertainty. The commander's freedom is exemplary, not only as choice, deliberation, relevance and rectitude, but also because it demonstrates that liberty is exercised despite the restraints that affect action. While such restraints limit the commander's manoeuvring room to a greater or lesser extent, they never abolish his freedom of action, or else a machine or automaton could substitute for him – an impossibility. Of course, like all human beings, commanders are fallible : they can make the wrong choice, yield to routine, overlook restraints, underestimate the enemy's capacities, in short prove unable to do the right thing, and drag polity, soldiers, and citizens into disaster. Historical chronicles are full of military disaster cases. As for the troops, they manifest their liberty by choosing to confront danger rather than flee, to follow orders rather than have it their own way, and to complement vague directives by means of initiative, through

behaviour that makes it clear they are not tin soldiers but human agents who are, even remotely, free to choose as best autonomy will allow.

Consideration of will's operations confirms these conclusions. War enhances the self-awareness of individuals – but the same is true of the polity. That is because its definition as a collective actor distinct from others similarly defined is a key dimension of its very concept as an area subject to a process of increasing pacification within its borders and a possible party to war outside. The phase transition between pacification and violence establishes it as a distinct unit in a transpolity. One can posit as a theorem that the more recurrent and/or threatening wars are, the more the polities concerned will become aware of themselves as sovereign entities. This access to self-awareness will concern the polity's members all the more intensely as they feel more is at stake for them personally in the war. When all members are mobilizable citizens, political self-awareness reaches a peak. From such a sequence a second theorem emerges: political self-awareness increases as a function of the democratization of political regimes and of the intensity of transpolitical relations. Royal annals bear witness to the fact that leaders everywhere hold military deeds as the best sources of honour, name recognition, and glory. On the soldiers' side, it is an established fact that military leaders frequently suffer from ego-inflation by reason of the responsibilities they assume and of the glory afforded them by success in war. As for the troops, the very fact that they come to confront death face to face provides them with a poignant opportunity to become self-aware if only because of the choice facing them: either hold their ground successfully in the face of danger, or seek personal survival in fleeing the enemy.

Decision-making and war have already revealed their close affinity when it comes to intellect. Will is apt to take over since decision-making goes through two stages: first when judgement is passed by intellect, then when will enters the scene. Decision-making has already emerged as an essential part of the conduct of war, in its political dimension – where the issue is whether or not to go to war – as well as in its military facet, where each and every move requires a decision, from the level of the commander-in-chief all the way down to that of troops in the field, throughout the period of time that separates the moments when peace breaks down and is finally restored. This insistent pervasiveness of decision-making will enhance all of the psychic dispositions that contribute to it. One is decisiveness – the ability to deliberate, assess the relative weight of factors and issues, and keep hesitancy within tolerable limits, so that the decision eventually reached proves best adapted to existing constraints, the circumstances that prevail, and the opportunities they offer. Decisiveness cannot be taught: it derives from natural gifts supplemented and developed by experience. Experience of war, given its urgency and the risks to life and limb it involves, is the most comprehensive contribution to a decision-enhancing culture in the sense that some milieus and circumstances help foster decisiveness better than others. A related disposition is the *coup d'oeil*: the intuitive sense of what is right in the midst of action, one that makes possible instant selection of which information to consider or ignore. That ability requires innate skills, and opportunities for the exercise of those skills in action, though it too can benefit from a social environment and culture that value it, as is

the case with all human dispositions and faculties. A final disposition, vision, deserves consideration, as it enables actors to grasp the big picture in any situation. Such ability is essential for political leaders, who indeed need a clear and distinct view of the geostrategic and diplomatic context, of the balance of forces, as well as of the distribution of costs and benefits. The same applies to military leaders, though with greater acuity, in a type of action characterized by contexts in perpetual flux. The ability to grasp the big picture also benefits from natural gifts, relevant experience and the right cultural environment.

Effort and its repetition through perseverance are operations of will supremely illustrated and taxed by war through the constraints and heavy consequences it entails. War's role is eminent on account of the competition among polities from which it derives. Bellicose competition, according to Clausewitz, is a case of violent interaction among belligerents, each driven by its obstinate intent to win or not to lose. Such dialectic is at the heart of any escalation to extremes ; it demands efforts and a degree of perseverance proportionally adjusted to the successive degrees reached in the process. As this escalation culminates in the killing stage, efforts and perseverance are a matter of life and death : no other collective human activity can tax them to that extent. This conclusion applies to both citizens and soldiers alike. Even under a democracy, the two categories are not to be confused since children, old people, and until recently (as long as muscular strength remained a factor in the balance of forces) women, had to be excluded from the total citizenry, with the result that the maximum proportion that could be mobilized was only about a quarter of the population. Though the efforts of soldiers are more apparent, civilians contribute to the war effort by reason of the resources they place at the disposal of troops and the support they provide for them. Conversely, it can be argued that political leaders and citizens are particularly responsible for perseverance, which determines the polity's capacity to meet outside challenges and seize the opportunities that arise. In that regard, Rome is perhaps the most extraordinary case of perseverance in all human histories, as its war efforts were steadily and unflinchingly maintained over a millennium. If Polybius is to be believed, the credit for it must go to the city's exemplary political regime, a mix of democratic, aristocratic and monarchical elements, though he noted that such an explanation fails to account for the supreme enigma of a polity's uninterrupted perseverance in its war efforts.

Applying the three above-mentioned criteria of differentiation to the linkages between will and war in terms of freedom and operations would probably yield rich issues and lessons – certainly too rich to be probed in any detail here. Suffice it to draw the outlines of what examining a configuration made up of fire, democracy, oligopolarity, ideology on the one hand, and of citizen perseverance on the other, would bring. Twentieth-century warfare – including the dissymmetrical wars of decolonization – could serve as the factual basis on which to measure and test the respective incidence of the four factors on perseverance. As a certain Col. Pétain proclaimed before 1914, “*fire kills!*”, a warning the General Staff failed to heed. For centuries, fire mostly killed soldiers on the battlefield. Battle was made more terrifying still by the so-called ‘line’ system where two armies faced each other in successive parallel lines moving under fire and grapeshot from

the other side. In order to maintain order in the ranks and avoid the chaos of panic and flight, it was necessary to subject the troops to rigorous drills and iron discipline under threat of the harshest sanctions, as well as firmly pattern the field lines by means of a corps of hardened, disciplined non-commissioned officers exposed to the same risks. The technological advances generated by science and their industrial applications – long-range artillery, aircraft, rockets – as well as the prolongation of the Great War deeply altered the equation by making civilians, just as much as combatants, the targets of increasingly murderous fire culminating in the two atom bombs of August 1945. Perseverance then is no longer that of soldiers in the field only, but also a demand placed on civilian populations who, in addition to their support of the war effort through toil and privations, now face devastating enemy fire. This raises the issue of how the populations manage to sustain effort, by mobilizing which psychic resources.

If the political regime is democratic, the matter becomes more urgent since in the common-sense view perseverance may be compromised by the possibility that the citizenry disavow its leaders and oust them from power on the promise of appeasement and peace. Enemies of democracy succumb to the fatal delusion that it harbours inherent weaknesses when it comes to foreign policy and war. This belief amounts to a mirage which confuses propensity to negotiate and compromise with renunciation of faith, and democratic dissent with an inability to reach effective decisions and act consistently. Such propensity and dissent are real enough. They are specific to freedom-based regimes where all opinions and interests can legitimately compete if they abide by the rules of the game, so as to produce solutions that are either middle-of-the-road or held by a majority to be the best possible options. Middle-of-the-road solutions are compromises, but as such can only apply to issues that permit averages, such as prices and market shares for instance, or more generally all private interests. On the contrary, anything that permits only one solution, or is liable to exclude several, defines an attractor to which dissent and debate converge through a mechanism of trials, failures and selection.

Dissent and debate are indeed how common interests are addressed, including the decision to go to war or not. Democracy does have a particular slant to external peace, for its *raison d'être* is to serve internal peace through justice. Yet while it is open to negotiations and compromise, it will not allow the crossing of thresholds beyond which it would come to contradict its fundamental principles as well as the ends of Man. The choice to go to war is made after all peaceful options have been exhausted, which provides a crucial psychic advantage, bolstered by the conviction that the war decided upon is a just one waged against an unjust enemy. Wars conducted by democracies benefit from their clear conscience – a decided advantage in terms of citizen perseverance. Furthermore, a democracy is always more efficient than a non-democracy, so that over time, provided the amounts of potential power on either side are comparable, it can assemble more resources in support of war. Now, before the advent of modern times, power differentials always worked against democracies because they flourished in primitive or small polities, and the more powerful polities never were democratic. The revolt of the United Provinces against Spain was the first sign of a turning of the tide in favour of liberal, pluralist regimes. But it

was not until the United States came into being and positively demonstrated the compatibility of democracy, if it adopts an appropriate federal organization, with a polity of gigantic proportions, that the picture was objectively turned upside down – except in the eyes of tyrants and fools.

A clear conscience and the conviction that the war being fought is just play crucial roles in maintaining perseverance and the war effort. This postulate is inversely confirmed by the weak (or short-lived) support brought by the citizenry to colonial or related wars. Imperialism is alien to democracy, which is founded on the principle that power is rooted in those who obey orders. Hence, no person can forcibly be imposed on a group premised on democratic values. Freedom not to enter a grouping is analytically part of the citizen concept. Extended to whole populations, such a principle translates into the “right of peoples to self-determination”. European imperialism in the 19th century chose to ignore that principle, owing (a) to the negligible cost of conquest, (b) to rivalry among European polities, (c) to vestigial traces of mercantilist thought which persuaded the imperial powers that the colonies would benefit from collective enrichment, as well as (d) to the ideology of Progress, which enabled them to mask the violation of a fundamental tenet. Soon after the colonies proved difficult to hold without resort to sheer force of arms, costs suddenly began to rise, while the advancement of free trade showed up the absurdities of mercantilism, and the myth of Progress went out of fashion after World War II. The wars waged in defence of colonization could count on no sustained legitimate support in the eyes of democratic citizens. They could not be held to be just, nor could they be seen as compatible with the dictates of conscience, so much so that after a while citizen perseverance was depressed, and wars that ought never to have been launched were finally lost.

European oligopolarity served to maintain citizen perseverance through the coincidence of nation and polity. The details are complex and intricate, but the main lines are clear enough. Had European history conformed to the proclivities of universal history, Europe would have coalesced into an empire governed along absolute hierocratic principles. In its place, contingent developments imposed a stable oligopolar configuration made up of principalities with moderately hierocratic regimes. The latter were liable to mutate into aristocratic or oligarchical regimes that could ultimately be democratized: that is by and large what basically happened through revolutions between 1564 – the start of the Dutch republic’s revolt – and 1848. A stable oligopolar system of stable polities raises a pressing problem, the more so as the extant regimes are the more moderate, and then become democratic: who belongs to which polity? A solution was gradually devised over the long term, between the 14th and the 19th centuries. It resides in the nation, supposed to hold together all individuals sharing a common past, a common present, and – to paraphrase Ernest Renan’s most appropriate dictum – a desire to be part of a common future. That solution implies imagining more or less legendary national histories, a plausibly viable reconciliation of common and particular interests within the political frameworks imposed by history and the balance of forces, and the reasonable expectation that this situation can be perpetuated into the future.

Yet it comes at the price of a pretence that consists in emphasizing a degree of cultural uniqueness amidst a variety of other, equally 'real' cultural pretences. The French, for instance, were required to identify as French and minimize, if not annihilate their other identities, whether European, provincial, regional, local, or even whatever family ties, occupational affiliations and religious faiths were theirs. Such emphasis on the political level for the purpose of defining a cultural identity is arbitrary, but it proved effective and durable since the transpolitical system pushed in that direction. In turn, it served to maintain war efforts and perseverance among nationals, especially after subjects were transformed into citizens, for then a strong sense of belonging to an organic unit whose destiny was also closely tied to theirs could be harnessed in the cause of war. This advantage in terms of war support cost Europeans disproportionately when limited war degenerated into total war. Indeed, for individual psyches to bear the burdens of extreme efforts and inflexible perseverance, total war demanded that national sentiment mutate into nationalism on the basis of ever greater doses of the most extravagant ideology. In a way, the total wars of the first half of the 20th century in Europe were a collective suicide in all dimensions, including intellect and civilization, by virtue of the mad arguments required to convince Europeans they had good reason to massacre one another to the last one of them by all available means!

Conclusion

An outline hardly calls for concluding remarks, except perhaps in the guise of an invitation and encouragement to develop it and fill in the spaces that it leaves empty. The present contribution could serve as a base for two very different social-scientific enterprises. One would be restricted to a psychology of war. It would have to be completed, at a minimum, by aspects deliberately omitted here that bear on the psychology of combatants in and after combat. The reason for the omission is that it has already produced an abundant literature, from the pioneering work of Ardant du Picq⁵ to contemporary treatments.⁶ The other would be much more ambitious: it would set as its aim a historical sociology of the human psyche. The contributions of war would occupy a substantial place, alongside – or perhaps more correctly, interwoven with – the contributions of all other departments of human activity in the various culture areas.

⁵ Charles Ardant du Picq, *Études sur le combat*, Paris, Éditions Ivrea, 1999 [1878].

⁶ For example, Richard Holmes, *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle*, New-York, The Free Press, 1989 (1st ed.: 1985).