

ART ON TIMES OF WAR

1. INTRODUCTION

And when the seven thunders
uttered with their voices, I was
about to write; but heard a voice
from heaven saying to me: hide
what the seven thunders have said,
and do not write this.

Revelation of John the Theologian
10:4

On the fog of the misunderstanding of the truth, the choking with the will begin. We can use the above sentence in order to generalize the terms *werra* (Frankish–German), *bellum* (Latin) and *polemos* (Greek), whose meanings hints in the draw of fighting. On the early stage of the beginning of all the times, this fog has blinded in the driving (i.e. conscious) between the movement of the natural human being and the actions of the man, making many generations believe that the human psychology is not based in any *summum bonum* but in some *summum malum*, as Thomas Hobbes does on his book *Leviathan* [Ho]. If we take, at least, some part of this as a fact, without the man can alienate himself and his children, we can say that Rousseau is right when says “War is constituted by a relation between things, and not between persons. . . War then is a relation, not between man and man, but between State and State. . .”. Thus, he introduces, for the first time ever, on his book *The social contract* [Ro], the foundations of the philosophy of war and expand the Just–War Theory developed by St. Augustine.¹

On this work, Rousseau talks about:

- Book I. The first societies and how the strongest become enough strong when he is guided by the righteous.
- Book II. Sovereignty, being nothing less than the exercise of the general will, and the right of life and death.
- Book III. The constituent principle in the various forms of government than can be distinguished according to the number of the members composing them: Democracy, Aristocracy and Monarchy.

¹Just–War Theory, <http://www.justwartheory.com/>

- Book IV. How as long as several men in assembly regard themselves as a single body, they have only a single will which is concerned with their common preservation and general well-being.

Later, Clausewitz made of his work *On war* [Cl] the most influential in the philosophy of war, where explore and analyze the phenomenon of war in its tangible, physical, and psychological manifestations, and combines observations on strategy with questions about human nature and the purpose of war. Since this book deserve to be read and analyzed fully, we focus on [Cl, Book §II].

2. ON THE THEORY OF WAR

On first sight, this term could be indicate the design, production, and use of weapons, the construction of fortifications and entrenchments, the internal organization of the army, and the mechanism of its movements constituted the substance of this knowledge and skill. However, Clausewitz goes beyond, even if we *only* sum up the tactics, the free use of the given means, the reflections on the events, limitation of material factors (e.g. numerical superiority) and one ingenious mind, these attempts are not enough on war and actually could become useless without a correct analyze of the human being. In fact, we can exclude the genius from the rule and the theory **must not** change.

2.1. **Problems facing theory when moral factors are involved.** We quote the following sentence from the book:

“Theory becomes infinitely more difficult as soon as it touches the realm of moral values. Architects and painters know precisely what they are about as long as they deal with material phenomena. Mechanical and optical structures are not subject to dispute. But when they come to the aesthetics of their work, when they aim at a particular effect on the mind or on the senses, the rules dissolve into nothing but vague ideas.”

Not matter what activity the mankind is currently performing, even in military activity, is never directed against material force alone but over all past and potential activities where the mankind has be involved and will be. Therefore, the moral factor over all that activities, become an ocean of possibilities to be protected or to take advantages against themselves. Furthermore, Clausewitz talks about the principal problems in formulating a theory of the conduct of war and take a look more closely at the major characteristics of military activity.

- I. **Moral forces and effects:** Modern wars are seldom fought without hatred between nations, this serves more or less as a substitute for hatred between individuals. Then, in considering emotions that have been aroused by hostility and danger as being peculiar to war. Envy and generosity, pride and humility, wrath

and compassion, all may appear as effective forces in this great drama.

II. **Positive reaction:** . Here we are not concerned with the problem of calculating such reactions, that is really part of the already mentioned problem of calculating psychological forces, but rather with the fact that the very nature of interaction is bound to make it unpredictable. The effect that any measure will have on the enemy is the most singular factor among all the particulars of action.

III. **Uncertainty of all information:** All action takes place, so to speak, in a kind of Book Two On the Theory of War twilight, which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seem grotesque and larger than they really are. Whatever is hidden from full view in this feeble light has to be guessed at by talent, or simply left to chance. So once again for lack of objective knowledge one has to trust to talent or to luck.

2.2. **Knowledge must become capability.** This point may be trivial, but what kind of knowledge do we use in favor for us and against others? Knowledge must be so absorbed into the mind that it almost ceases to exist in a separate, objective way. One more times, this is not only refers to activities just made from a state but the knowledge of that state has developed in a particular part of its history. In the field of strategy, therefore, even more than in tactics, theory will be content with the simple consideration of material and psychological factors, especially where it embraces the highest of achievements.

3. PHILOSOPHY OF ART INTO PHILOSOPHY OF WAR

According to Shapiro [Sh], the arts can contribute to how the effects of contemporary wars are to be understood. The recent wars are playing roles in how radically changing will be in the future, Shapiro gives the following example:

Because... your fellow-Sarajevans knew you as well as you knew them. If you somehow vanished, your fellow-citizens could have reconstructed you from their collective memory and the gossip that had accrued over the years. Your sense of who you were, your deepest identity, was determined by your position in a human network, whose physical corollary was the architecture of the city. Chicago, on the other hand, was built not for people to come together but for them to be safely apart. Size, power, and the need for privacy seemed to be the dominant element of its architecture.

The above example make us asking ourselves questions related to:

- **How the just destroyed city will be reconstructed after the recently war?** Definetely, a *smart* city will be careful in not building with the same easy-entries to the enemies as before, they will rethink in how to use the free space for this, but this takes time, and indeed other cities could be taking a look about how the processes is going in order to take advantage next time that could be hold a war, or review books about architecture of the zone to get some ideas.
- **How do we analyze the emotions of the people after a war on their arts?** Depending in how the people do feel about the recent events, they will translate their emotions into their arts, the way they will write, paint, build, etc. If this feelings remain with a thirst for revenge, could we analyze a possible future attack?

3.1. **Architecture as knowledge already builded.** Following the teachings of Chapter 2, we focus on a knowledge already builded, The Architecture, for this, we begin quoting *The Manifesto* by Lebbeus Woods (1993):

Architecture and war are not incompatible.

Architecture is war.

War is architecture.

*I am at war with my time, with history,
with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms.*

*I am one of millions who do not fit in,
who have no home, no family,
no doctrine, nor firm place to call my own,
no known beginning or end,
no 'sacred and primordial site'.*

*I declare war on all icons and finalities,
on all histories that would chain me with my own falseness,
my own pitiful fears.*

*I know only moments, and lifetimes that are as moments,
and forms that appear with infinite strength, then 'melt into air'.*

*I am an architect, a constructor of worlds,
a sensualist who worships the flesh, the melody, a silhouette against
the darkening sky.*

I cannot know your name. Nor can you know mine.

Tomorrow, we begin together the construction of a city.

Lebbeus Woods have written many articles on this [Wo92, Wo93]², which help to develop other branches of philosophy³ and ensure that the architecture is a political act, by nature. It has to do with the relationships between people and how they decide to change their conditions of living. In one analyze of the Manifesto quoted above, this video⁴ made the following claim about the work *War and Architecture*:

This was then my response to the emergency situation in Sarajevo. At that time, the city was under constant terrorist attack, which in the West was perceived as a siege, so if it was an ordinary war, which it was not. Snipers turned the streets into a deadly shooting gallery, and the artillerymen turned ordinary buildings in which people worked and lived, into burning deadly traps. It was clear that architecture was part of this – killing thousands of innocent men, women, and children - and I had a strong feeling that as long as the attacks continue (and lasted more than three years), architecture could be part of the solution to the task of getting out of the established of the situation.

Without the help of architects, people built temporary walls to protect themselves from snipers and repaired their homes with improvised tools.

*I decided that although these impromptu constructions coped more or less effectively with their tasks, nevertheless, they created a degraded environment, which, ultimately, was the goal of the terrorists. To survive and frustrate the plans of the enemies, to show the futility of attacks on culture, people need a sense of order in the world, deliberately invented or designed. Residents of Sarajevo demonstrated this need for how they dressed: when they lacked water, heat or light, they always remained in clean ironed clothes, women always with neatly laid hair, appearing completely out of place in those parts of the city where they were visible if not with artillery positions on the surrounding hills, then with sniper positions in the city, like actors from the movie *Alain Resnice*. Impressed by all this, as well as by a series of drawings of the defensive structures that Michelangelo made for Florence, I thought about how to repair the damaged houses and offices in such a way as to express the desire of the inhabitants and to protect them from cold, rain and snow. These were the most modest objects from metal sheets, wood and even cardboard. and give protection from cold, rain and snow.*

One of the principles I applied at the beginning meant that the form of each of the materials found should be changed. Most of all I wanted to avoid turning this small scale architecture into a "garbage sculpture" or a collage of debris. The intention is important, even on the smallest scale, and my intention in Sarajevo was to consciously change that world; the transformation of the ruins and remains of battered houses into a new type of architecture, a unique Sarajevo architecture, into something that city

residents could be proud of. The same goal was to establish some basic rules for reconstruction, while taking into account the enormous task of rebuilding the destroyed city, which will begin after the terrorists are defeated

3.2. Example. Before the World War II, *The 1937 Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*⁵ was held in Paris, France. Pavilions were decorated and designed by artists and architects. In [Figure 1](#), we see how the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany monoliths which faced one another across the newly created Jardins du Trocadéro, as the Eiffel Tower across the Seine provided the backdrop. It was an uncovered competition by Hitler and Stalin where both of them were involved in architecture before the war.

The german architect Albert Speer had designed between 1933 and 1934 the plans and many of the buildings for the Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg; and he conceived too the ‘cathedral of light’, comprised of 130 anti-aircraft searchlights shone into the night sky, which became the visual emblem of the Nuremberg Rallies.

Speer extended the concept of **ruin value**, the idea that buildings should be designed with a view to their deterioration and eventual collapse, so that the ruins they ultimately leave behind retain aesthetic and symbolic value. In Speer’s memoir, *Inside the Third Reich*, he explained his theory:

Hitler liked to say that the purpose of his building was to transmit his time and its spirit to posterity. Ultimately all that remained to remind men of the great epochs of history was their monumental architecture, he would philosophize [...] Naturally, a new national consciousness could not be awakened by architecture alone. But when after a long spell of inertia a sense of national grandeur was born anew, the monuments of men’s ancestors were the most impressive exhortations. Today, for example, Mussolini could point to the buildings of the Roman Empire as symbolising the heroic spirit of Rome. Thus he could fire his nation with the idea of a modern empire. Our architectural works should also speak to the conscience of a future Germany centuries from now.

²The draws of those works can be seen on: https://monoskop.org/images/5/5b/Lebbeus_Woods_Architect_2014.pdf

³Could architectural drawings save us from philosophical bankruptcy? <https://goo.gl/Fz7kvN>

⁴<http://anastasis.me/archives/2017/09/05/8611?lang=ru>

⁴https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4kJKu_kEic&t=3654s

⁵Art and Architecture Towards Political Crises, <https://culturedarm.com/1937-paris-international-exposition/>



FIGURE 1.



FIGURE 2. The Nazi German and Soviet Union pavilions at the 1937 Paris International Exposition

REFERENCES

- [Cl] Von Clausewitz, Carl. *On war*. Jazzybee Verlag, 1940.
- [Ho] Hobben, Thomas. *Leviathan (1668)*. Indianapolis, Hackett 1994.
- [Ro] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The social contract*. The social contract and other later political writings **2**, 1997: 39-152.
- [Sh] Shapiro, Michael J. *Go west, go east: War's exilic subjects*. Security Dialogue **44:4**, pages 315-329, 2013.
- [Wo92] Woods, Lebbeus. *Anarchitecture: Architecture is a political act*. Vol. **22** St Martins Press, 1992.
- [Wo93] Woods, Lebbeus. *War and Architecture: Pamphlet Architecture 15*. Pamphlet Architecture **15**, 1993.