

War as a Complex Reality: Comparative Analysis of the Studies on war and peace by Clausewitz and Pitirim Sorokin

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Война как сложная реальность: Сравнительный анализ исследований по вопросам войны и мира, проведенных Клаузевицем и Питиримом Сорокиным.

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Abstract. Carl von Clausewitz is a prominent military theorist in history, whose achievements are comparable to the contributions (on war issues) of the famous ancient thinker Sun Tzu and modern outstanding theorist of the sociocultural dynamic processes and the researcher of the war/peace issues – Russian-American scholar Pitirim Sorokin. Clausewitz’s famous treatise *On War* sought to investigate the nature of war; and how to realize best the preparatory efforts and the result of achieving victory on the battlefield. Herein, he introduced the famous notion of “trinity”. The latter becomes the subject matter for the given research and its comparative analysis with Sorokin's dynamic *triadological* approach that includes the study of war and peace issues. The results obtained in this research could serve a deeper comprehension of the present-day concerns related to the phenomenon of “hybrid warfare”. In general, the author hopes that the findings will facilitate the identification of social and cultural forces able to break vicious cycles leading to war and related calamities.

Keywords: Carl von Clausewitz, Pitirim Sorokin, War and Peace Studies, Triadicity, Tragic Dualism, Hybrid Warfare.

Резюме. Карл фон Клаузевиц – выдающийся военный теоретик в истории, достижения которого сопоставимы с теоретическими работами (по вопросам войны) знаменитого античного мыслителя Сунь Цзы и современного выдающегося теоретика социокультурных динамических процессов, а также исследователя вопросов войны/мира – российско-американского ученого Питирима Сорокина. Знаменитый трактат Клаузевица «О войне» был призван исследовать природу войны, а также то, как наилучшим образом реализовать подготовительные усилия и результат достижения победы на поле боя. В своей теории, он ввел знаменитое понятие «троичности». Последнее становится предметом данного исследования – в

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его сравнительном анализе с динамическим триадологическим подходом Сорокина, включающим также и изучение проблем войны и мира. Полученные в этом исследовании результаты могли бы послужить более глубокому осмыслению современных проблем, связанных с феноменом «гибридной войны». В целом, автор надеется, что полученные результаты будут способствовать выявлению социальных и культурных сил, способных разорвать порочный круг, ведущий к войне и связанным с ней бедствиям.

Ключевые слова: Карл фон Клаузевиц, Питирим Сорокин, исследования войны и мира, триадичность, трагический дуализм, гибридная война.

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Заключение

Introduction

War has remained a perennial aspect to humanity's existence. It is one of the four horsemen spoken of in the Book of Revelations in the Bible. In terms of the modern theoretical study of war, two names stand high in world culture : of Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) and Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968). So far, however, there are (while dealing with war issues) no profound attempts that aim at realizing the profound comparative analysis of these two great military minds. The primary focus for this foundational engagement between the two great theorists' centers over the triadic issue (of Trinity, Triadicity, Triadology), thus dealing with Triadic logic in action. The Trinity concept itself has been a subject of considerable controversy and debate among scholars. This is often due to the many manners in which the exact nature of the Trinity and Clausewitz's intent behind the theoretical construct are misunderstood. This paper will argue that Clausewitz's intent was to present war as a triadic integral reality. For this purpose, considerable engagement with Clausewitz's scholarship, as well as broadening the insight into his original texts seems as an absolutely essential endeavor. Striving to discern Clausewitz's original meanings, the author mainly seeks for a proper platform for the initiation of an Integral theory of war, thereby finding out the basic elements that could synthesize Clausewitz's foundations with the works of Sun Tzu and Pitirim Sorokin.

In this, Sun Tzu is critically important as he provides a non-European perspective on war that helps complement Clausewitz in the endeavor of formulating an integral theory of war. Although there is an abundance of commentaries trying to compare the two theorists, the judgment of Michael I. Handel can be given that “the logic and rational direction of war are universal and there is no such thing as an exclusively ‘Western’ or ‘Eastern’ approach to politics and strategy....”². Therefore, this paper focuses both on the matters that concern with military strategies (or how best to win wars or battles); and, equally (or even with preference) – addressing the nature or ontology of war as a socio-cultural phenomenon; which is more aligned with the growing field of the sociology of war. The latter fully corresponds to the scientific activities of Pitirim Sorokin, which has the biocosmological essence and pioneering significance in the sociocultural field of research.³

² Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*. Third and revised edition. London and Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001. Pg. 3.

³ *Man and society in calamity; the effects of war, revolution, famine, pestilence upon human mind, behavior, social organization, and cultural life*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968. Warfare was also addressed in his multi-volume magnum opus *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. New York, Bedminster Press, 1962.

1. Clausewitz and Aristotle

In regard to Aristotle's *OrganonKosmology*⁴ a number of extrapolations can be made concerning the relationship of Clausewitz and Aristotle. There is no evidence that Clausewitz even read Aristotle, and he never learned Greek in his lifetime. Most of the philosophical tradition Clausewitz was immersed in was the German Idealism that was prevalent in his lifetime, more specifically an indirect learning of Kantian philosophy.⁵ Engagement with Clausewitz from Aristotelian scholars has been very few as well. The general consensus appears to be that in terms of ethics Aristotle and Clausewitz belong to differing traditions.⁶

When addressing Clausewitz-based scholarship, the references to Aristotle can also be rather scattered and passing as well. The French philosopher Raymond Aron wrote one of the most famous philosophical works addressing Clausewitz, however Aristotle is only mentioned once in the entire text concerning a minor analogy between Clausewitz's theoretical analyses on offensive strategy to Aristotle's analysis on the nature of tyrannical government.⁷ The German military historian Karl Linnebach elevated Clausewitz's work to the stature of Aristotle's work in philosophy.⁸ The Scottish social theorist Walter Bryce Gallie stressed the sophistication of Clausewitz's work, so much so that he speculated that Aristotle would greatly appreciate it.⁹ So there are at least some references to a certain affinity between Aristotle and Clausewitz, if not exactly a direct compatibility.

In a generalized sense, it can be argued that Clausewitz and Aristotle have a certain affinity when it comes to their general approach to human realities. Peter Paret, perhaps the leading Clausewitz scholar in the world, explained: "The reality Clausewitz wanted to understand was not the abstract reality of pure reason but the actual physical, intellectual, and psychological components of political and military existence."¹⁰ This

⁴ In the practice of the Biocosmological Association, the notion of Aristotle's *OrganonKosmology* is accepted; the latter, in essence, means that Aristotle's *organon* (*organikon*) has the universal significance, meaning the "tool" ("function"), and that this relates universally to every thing of the real world (cosmos); see: Khroutski K.S. (2016). "Reinstating Aristotle's comprehensive *OrganonKosmology* and the genuine language of his organicist naturalism archetype" *Biocosmology – neo-Aristotelism* Vol. 6, Nos. 3&4 (Summer/Autumn 2016): pp. 394–413.

⁵ Email correspondence with Peter Paret, Sep 30, 2015.

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Second Edition. University of Notre Dame Press; 1984. Pg. 10 and Christian Smith's *To Flourish or Destruct: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failure, and Evil*. University of Chicago Press; 2015. Pg.10

⁷ Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*. Simon & Schuster, 1986. Pg. 237.

⁸ Hew Strachen, "Clausewitz and the Dialectics of War" in *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe. Oxford University Press; 2007. Pg. 29

⁹ Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to On War*. University Press of Kansas; 2008. Pp. 66-77, 68.

¹⁰ Peter Paret, "Clausewitz" in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Edited by Peter Paret. Princeton University Press; 1986. Pg. 194.

focus on the actual existing reality of politics and military affairs does suggest a certain affinity with the concerns of Aristotle. In contrast to Plato, who focused on the purely abstract realm of the Ideas, Aristotle took the approach of seeking out to deeply investigate already existing reality in all its multifaceted dimensions. As Jacques Maritain explained, “Aristotle’s mind was at once extremely practical and extremely metaphysical. A rigorous logician, but also a keen-sighted realist, he gladly respected the demands of the actual...”¹¹

Why is there such a great necessity for a proper Biocosmological theory of war, and with it an engagement with Clausewitz? With proliferation of the on-going crises around the world (Ukraine, Syria, and elsewhere) has led to a considerable revival in interest and debate concerning the relevance of Clausewitz’s theories in general.¹² Furthermore there has been a growth of research concerning the sociological and culturological nature of warfare which has created a new relevance for the writings of Pitirim Sorokin on the matter. Biocosmology cannot afford to miss out on this important development in scholarship regarding warfare that has exploded within the past few decades or so. This presents a vital opportunity for Biocosmology to expand in new directions, as well as make an important imprint in an emerging field as well.

2. Brief Biographical Outline: The Intellectual Influences on Carl von Clausewitz

Carl von Clausewitz was born to lower Prussian nobility and came of age in the turmoil of the French Revolution that would later engulf the whole of Europe in two decades of war; from the Fall of the Bastille in 1789 to the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. Alongside shaking the Old Order of Europe to its foundations, it also coincided with a remarkable outburst of intellectual energy in varying fields. The ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment were becoming stale, and a new age of Idealism that “sought to overcome the division between rationalism and empiricism”¹³ of the previous era was emerging. The German speaking world became the intellectual center-piece of this new intellectual phenomenon; with domineering figures such as Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, among many others.

¹¹ Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy*. Translated by E.I. Watkin. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944. Pg. 89.

¹² Titles that summarize the complex issue of Clausewitz’s relevance to contemporary warfare include:

Clausewitz in the twenty-first century ed. by Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe. Oxford University Press, 2007. *Clausewitz and Contemporary War* by Antulio J. Echevarria II. Oxford University Press, 2007.

¹³ Colin McQuillan, “German Idealism”. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/germidea/> Accessed 5/25/2020.

Clausewitz's first experience of combat came in 1792, at the age of 12, when the Prussian Army invaded Revolutionary France. By age 21 in 1801, Clausewitz was attending the Prussian War Academy. It was in this environment the young Clausewitz was exposed to the many intellectual currents in the German-speaking world, most notably the lectures of Professor Johann Gottfried Kiesewetter on the Idealist philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Clausewitz was also introduced to the legacy of the Italian political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, and the young officer expressed a strong admiration for his work. It was also at this time he studied the major military theorists of the day, but already was uncovering certain deficiencies within them.¹⁴ Clausewitz became determined to write a major treatise on the subject, and this was the initial inspiration for the eventual writing of *On War*. During his studies at the War Academy, Clausewitz met the man who would become his mentor, General Gerhard von Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst's influence and support would prove critical for the young Clausewitz. As biographer Donald Stoker has argued, "It is too great a stretch to say that without Scharnhorst there would be no Clausewitz, but Clausewitz might not have gone as far as he did in his thinking without the influence of his mentor."¹⁵

In 1806, Prussia was decisively defeated by Napoleon at the Battles of Jena-Auerstadt. This sent shock waves throughout the German-speaking world, since the Prussian army had the reputation of being one of the most effective forces in Europe. Its heyday under Frederick the Great was over, and Prussia was reduced to a satellite state of the Napoleonic Empire. Many Prussian officers, including Clausewitz, were devastated but determined to rebuild Prussia's military strength. This led to the Prussian Reform Movement led by Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Hermann von Boyen, and August Neidhardt von Gneisenau.

In disgust over the growing alliance between Prussia and Napoleonic France, Clausewitz resigned his commission. He eventually found service with the Russian Army during the decisive 1812 Russian Campaign (which would later garner him a place in Leo Tolstoy's epic novel *War and Peace*). Clausewitz would eventually find himself involved in many of the major campaigns of the later stages of the Napoleonic Wars.

Following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, Clausewitz was appointed head of the War College in 1818. It was a post Clausewitz would hold for the rest of his life until his death in 1831. It was during this period that Clausewitz would write numerous historical studies of various campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars,¹⁶ as well as his

¹⁴ Donald Stoker. *Clausewitz: His Life and Work*. Oxford University Press; 2014, pg.32.

¹⁵ Ibid. pg. 30.

¹⁶ Only recently have these works come to the wider attention of scholars. One recent example is his *Napoleon's 1796 Italian Campaign* that was published in 2018 by University Press of Kansas and translated by Nicholas Murray and Christopher Pringle.

magnum opus *On War*. To achieve the latter task of writing a full treatise concerning the underlining nature of war, Clausewitz mustered the full weight of his intellectual learning and prowess. As Clausewitz explained, “It was my ambition to write a book that would not be forgotten after two or three years, and that possibly might be picked up more than once by those interested in the subject.”¹⁷

Clausewitz conducted extensive reading and research into not only the legacy of leading military theorists of his day, but he also was deeply interested in the major intellectual currents of the day. He conducted numerous correspondences with many of the greatest poets and intellectuals of the early nineteenth century.¹⁸ Perhaps his most prominent rival as a military theorist at the time was the French general Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779–1869), a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars like Clausewitz. The impact of Jomini on military theory, especially in the nineteenth-century, cannot be overestimated. He was a very prolific writer, authoring numerous historical studies of the various campaigns of Napoleon. Aside from serving under Napoleon early in his career, de Jomini was a highly sought-after military advisor, serving for example under Czar Nicholas I of Russia. His major work in the field of military theory was his multi-volume *Summary of the Art of War*. Jomini still operated within the major framework of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, that sought a precise “geometric” approach to war that amounted to discovering its underlining principles and laws. For Jomini, “*the art of war has existed in all time*, and strategy especially was the same under Caesar as under Napoleon.”¹⁹

It was this type of approach that Clausewitz had rejected, and large part of the writing of *On War* was to seek how a more thorough approach to the study of war that comprehended war’s complex and historical nature. It should be quickly noted that many of Clausewitz’s criticisms of Jomini were unfair and many commentators have ever since exaggerated the differences between the two theorists.²⁰

Clausewitz died November 16, 1831. The tragedy was that he died before he was able to complete his masterwork. It was the task of his widow Marie von Clausewitz to edit the manuscript before having it published a year later in 1832. For decades it

¹⁷ Cited in Donald Stoker, pg. 263.

¹⁸ Vanya Eftimova Bellinger, “What a Letter from Clausewitz tells us about the Prussian master and his world”, *War on the Rocks*. <https://warontherocks.com/2015/08/warchives-what-a-letter-from-clausewitz-tells-us-about-the-prussian-master-and-his-world/> Accessed 5/26/2020.

¹⁹ “Preface to Jomini’s *Summary of the Art of War*”. Translated by Major O.F. Winship and Lieut. E.E. McLean. New York: Putnam, 1854.
<https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Jomini/JOMINESS.htm> Accessed 5/29/2020.

²⁰ An incredibly good summary of this issue, including the actual intellectual interactions between the two thinkers, is Christopher Bassford’s “Jomini and Clausewitz: Their Interactions.” At <https://www.clausewitzstudies.org/readings/Bassford/Jomini/JOMINIX.htm> Accessed 5/29/2020.

largely remained an obscure text, although Jomini did read an early edition and even commented on it.²¹ It was not until the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), with the major French defeat, that Clausewitz began to come into prominence and was translated in numerous languages. The history of Clausewitz's impact on military thought since his death is beyond the scope of this paper, but this brief background will at least assist the reader in better understanding Clausewitz's intellectual background. This will hopefully help in avoiding the most common misunderstandings concerning *On War*, some of which will be addressed below.

3. Clausewitz's Trinity Explained

So, what exactly is the Trinity that Clausewitz so famously formulated? Although Clausewitz mentions it elsewhere in *On War*, its main formulation comes in Chapter One of Book One which deals with the question "What is War?" Due to the common misunderstandings as to its exact nature; it might prove helpful to cite directly more extensively from *On War*, i.e. from the section where Clausewitz thoroughly outlines the Trinity at the heart of war:

War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.

These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be useless.

Our task therefore is to develop a theory that maintains a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets.²²

²¹ "Preface to Jomini's *Summary of the Art of War*".

²² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Alfred A. Knopf: New York and Toronto. 1976. Pg. 89.

There are several implications and points to discern from this extended citation. First, Clausewitz gives an analogy of the nature of war to that of a chameleon. This suggests that Clausewitz sought to distinguish between the underlining nature of war that remains the same throughout all history, and those elements that adapt and change. This was the main purpose behind his theoretical distinction between *Absolute* and *Real* forms of war that he articulated upon in Book Eight of *On War*. As Peter Paret explains:

Underlining his arguments even at this early stage is the interplay between the observable present and hypotheses concerning timeless phenomena of war, which are discovered by historical study, common sense, and logic.²³

With full awareness of the contrast between the two thinkers, a certain *affinity* can be discerned with what Aristotle hoped to achieve when he sought the golden mean between the extreme permanence argued by Parmenides and the state of constant flux as articulated by Heraclitus. Aristotle sought to acknowledge both the permanence of certain underlining realities with the readily observable change that occurs. In explaining Aristotle's position Mortimer Adler notes, "In every change, there must be something permanent – something that persists or remains the same while becoming different in one respect or another."²⁴

Clausewitz is seeking to do a similar task, to investigate what is most permanent about the nature of war and what elements change the most through the means of a Triadic framework. Admittedly, Clausewitz's choice of words to underpin this Triadic framework is a bit confusing. To help clarify this, Christopher Bassford and Edward J. Villacres have proposed reading the Trinity as being comprised of *non-rational*, *irrational*, and *rational* factors.²⁵ There are several advantages for this, mainly that it does certainly clear up any major misunderstandings as to the exact meanings of the terms used for the Trinity. Furthermore, for Biocosmological purposes this corresponds far more to an Integral understanding of not just war, but even human affairs as a whole as stipulated by Sorokin's Triadic framework of three forms of cognition of senses, rationality, and intuition.²⁶

Another parallel to Sorokin's framework is that how the three main forms of human cognition can manifest itself as the predominant force in different socio-cultural

²³ Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*. Pg. 191

²⁴ Mortimer Adler, *Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy*. Simon and Schuster, 1997. Pg. 32.

²⁵ Christopher Bassford and Edward J. Villacres, "Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity", <https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Trinity/TRININTR.htm> Accessed 6/20/2020.

²⁶ Pitirim Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*. Oneworld Publications; 2nd Revised edition, 1992. Pg. 87.

dynamics of *Sensate*, *Ideational*, and *Idealistic* forms. Much in the same way, Clausewitz argues that each of the primary pillars of the Trinity can manifest themselves in secondary forms of *people*, *army*, and the *state*. Thomas Waldman, a scholar who has done extensive work on Clausewitz's Trinity, has even suggested a tertiary level is implied as well. His framework of the Trinity (an effective trinity of the trinity) would operate as such:

- Primary Trinity: passion, chance, and policy.
- Secondary Trinity: people, army, and state.
- Tertiary Trinity: Context.²⁷

Waldman further elaborates on the multiplicity and complex nature of context. He makes the argument for varying dimensions of context as follows:

1. Politics
2. Culture
3. Law and ethics
4. Economics
5. Technology
6. Geography²⁸

There are even strong parallels to the five criteria of war listed by Sun Tzu:

1. “*Tao*” – the force that helps align the people's wishes to support military action by rulers.
2. Climate
3. Terrain
4. Command
5. Regulation²⁹

Since both theorists were dealing with the same phenomenon of war that occurs across differing contexts by necessity, this potential convergence should not be surprising. It could be propositioned that the criteria of *Regulation* correspond roughly to *Policy*, whilst *Terrain* and *Climate* would fall under *Chance*. *Tao* could also refer to elements of the Passions as well. The correspondences of course are not exact, as Sun Tzu is operating from a different intellectual tradition from Clausewitz. Despite this, this would further stipulate that the two theorists need not be held in opposition to each other, but rather very much compliment one another's works.

²⁷ Thomas Waldman, *War, Clausewitz and the Trinity*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013. Pg.7.

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 61–70.

²⁹ *The Book of War: Sun-Tzu's "The Art of War" & Karl Von Clausewitz's "On War"*. Modern Library; 2000. Pg. 73.

Another point made by Clausewitz concerning the Trinity was remarking that each pillar was akin to “*three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another.*” This may suggest a certain parallel to the kinds of fluctuations Pitirim Sorokin noted in regard to the three main supersystems of culture (*Sensate, Ideational, Idealistic*), which as he argued almost amounted to “three main systems of truth”— each with their own systems of law as well.³⁰ Clausewitz further argues that in order to properly understand war’s nature, one must understand each of the three pillars as functioning together as opposed to in isolation. At the very introduction to his treatise, Clausewitz stresses this point: “But in war more than in any other subject we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must always be thought of together.”³¹ As with the triadic fluctuations between the three main supersystems of culture, the trinitarian fluctuations of war are a very fluid and dynamic process. There is no static or “arbitrary” relationship between them in a given context (the kinds outlined above by Waldman). For example: Janeen Klinger has argued that in the context of 18th century warfare (such as the Seven Years’ War), the proportions of the Trinity present would be akin to Policy (Rationality) in the predominant position with Chance (Non-Rationality) in a secondary position, and with Passions (Irrationality) in the tertiary and weakest position.³²

As can be discerned from this brief overview, Clausewitz’s Trinitarian model has much versatility to its application to analyzing the complex fluctuations that occur in war across different time frames and contexts, much like the fluctuations of socio-cultural dynamics as articulated by Sorokin. So, in no manner can Clausewitz be accused of formulating a “static” type model of war, and, in fact, he warned heavily against such an endeavor. Unfortunately, this is often misunderstood by many critics of the Trinitarian model. This will be a brief overview of such criticisms.

Perhaps the most prominent critic of Clausewitz’s model is the prolific military historian Martin Van Creveld. In his 1991 book *The Transformation of War*, Creveld sought to outline the transition from modern warfare (exemplified by the two world wars, 1914–1945) to what is commonly referred to as “low-intensity conflicts”. Creveld devoted an entire chapter concerning “Trinitarian War” as the predominant form of war for the modern period, yet was now obsolete. This was based on Creveld’s interpretation of the Trinity being based around the *state, army, and people* as opposed to *passion, chance, and policy*. As Van Creveld explained: “The Clausewitzian Universe rests on the assumption that war is made predominantly by states or, to be

³⁰ Pitirim Sorokin, *Crisis of Our Age*. Pg. 67, 121–127.

³¹ Clausewitz, *On War*. Pg. 75.

³² Janeen Klinger, “The Social Science of Clausewitz”, *Parameters*, US Army War College Quarterly, Spring 2006, Vol 36, No. 1. Pg. 86.

exact, by governments.”³³ The state, as Creveld argues is largely a product of the modern period and thus restricts Clausewitz to this period as well.

This is a gross misinterpretation of the Trinity in action. As noted in the extensive citation above from Clausewitz, the state is merely the manifestation of one element of the Trinity – namely rationality and thus policy. Clausewitz’s references to the state certainly reflects the social and historical context in which he wrote, but that does not mean his analysis is restricted to such circumstances. Michael I. Handel has correctly noted that in any given context war is often conducted by some governing authority.³⁴ This might mean a modern nation-state as Clausewitz was most familiar with, but it could also refer to a revolutionary party organization running an insurgency such as the case with Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party during the Chinese Civil War (1927–1949).³⁵ Even with the recent turn towards “Hybrid Warfare”, theorists such as Frank Hoffman have argued that it “can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors.”³⁶ So in no way has Clausewitz’s Trinity been proven obsolete, even when referring to the secondary form.³⁷

Having helped further clarify the exact nature of the Trinitarian framework that Clausewitz articulated; the task now is to help formulate it into a Biocosmological paradigm.

4. Towards a Comprehensive Analysis of War

The potential Biocosmological relevance of Clausewitz’s Trinity is very apparent, and very much is a decent starting point towards the development of a Biocosmological analysis of war. A few major themes for such an analysis would be:

- War is a complex reality – with three fluctuating principles governing *Rationality*, *Non-Rationality*, and *Irrationality* that must be understood

³³ Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz*. Free Press: New York and Toronto, 1991. Pg. 49.

³⁴ Handel, Michael I. *Masters of War*, pp. 401–404.

³⁵ Mao Zedong highlighted this issue: “[T]he responsibility for leading China’s revolutionary war inevitably falls on the shoulders of the Chinese Communist Party. In this era, any revolutionary war will definitely end in defeat if it lacks, or runs counter to, the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party.” *Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War*, 1936. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_12.htm Accessed 6/19/2020.

³⁶ Frank Hoffman. *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid War*. Arlington: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007. https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf Accessed 6/19/2020.

³⁷ Another extensive refutation of Creveld is Bart Schuurman’s “Clausewitz and the ‘new wars’ scholars”. *Parameters*, Spring 2010, pp. 89–100.

together. Thus, a comprehensive approach is best suited to the analysis of war.

- Western and Eastern theories of war complement one another and thus are not mutually exclusive. Building upon a comparative analysis of Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Sorokin; each with their own theoretical emphases and insights.
- War is a major cause and effect of social and cultural *disintegration*, whilst peace is a major cause of social and cultural *integration*. The process of *disintegration* helps condition the intensity of war, while the process of *integration* conditions the strength of peace (or at least helps minimize violence).
- The critical factor is to build and maintain the forces leading to a more lasting peace, primarily through love.

By understanding these basic principles, a multifaceted analysis of war can take shape. War is extraordinarily complex, and there are numerous nuances to it. Nevertheless, this paper will attempt to provide a basic outline of such. While Clausewitz has been the main subject thus far of this paper, this section will concentrate on Pitirim Sorokin.

5. Brief Introduction to Pitirim Sorokin's Theories of War

War was a persistent subject that Pitirim Sorokin often addressed in many of his works, no doubt influenced by the fact his life work coincided with the great crises of the 20th century. He was a personal witness to the catastrophic effects of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution in his homeland, which almost cost him his life. As Sorokin explained about his experiences: "I have lived through six imprisonments; and I have had the unforgettable experience of being condemned to death and, daily during six weeks, expecting execution by a Communist firing squad. I know what it means to be damned; to be banished, and to lose one's brothers and friends in a political struggle."³⁸

Upon arriving in the United States and writing his major work *Social and Cultural Dynamics* between 1937 and 1941, the crisis of World War II was well underway. This deeply affected Sorokin, who made it his life mission to understand the grave effects of wars and revolutions upon human societies. Sorokin understood the major crises of his time as a result of the unfolding of social and cultural dynamics, more specifically the overripening of the dominant Sensate mode of culture that had predominated modernity since the 1500s. This overripening of the dominant cultural dynamic led to what Sorokin described as "Tragic Dualism," when, due to the inherent contradictions

³⁸ Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Sociology of My Mental Life," in Philip J. Allen, ed., *Pitirim A. Sorokin in Review: The American Sociological Forum*, (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1963), pp. 4-36 at <https://pitirimsorokin.com/tag/pitirim-a-sorokin-sociology-of-my-mental-life/> Accessed 12/20/2020.

within it, a socio-cultural system begins to disintegrate into chaos. The great contradictions of Sensate modernity were so great and numerous, Sorokin insisted they could not be fully listed. At the heart of this chaos was the contrast between the two metaphysical beliefs that both glorified man as the center of the universe but also degraded the universe as a mere accident of natural forces at the same time. This had widespread social and cultural consequences.³⁹

This chaos ultimately would lead to the development of a new socio-cultural system, yet in the meantime wars and other crises would still be prevalent. Sorokin's own explanation of this process is worth citing at length:

Periods of transition from one fundamental form of culture and society to another – when the old socio-cultural edifice is crumbling and no new structure has yet been erected, when socio-cultural values have become almost completely ‘atomized’ and the clash of values of different persons and groups utterly irreconcilable – inevitably produce a struggle of utmost intensity, marked by the widest diversity of forms. Within a society, it assumes, in addition to the other conflicts, the form of an increase of crime and brutal punishments, and especially of an explosion of riots, revolts and revolutions. Within a set of societies it manifests itself in an explosion of international wars. The greater and more profound the transition, the more violent the outburst of revolutions, wars, and crime and punishment...⁴⁰

This is the framework through which Sorokin interpreted the waves of revolutions and world wars that erupted throughout the 20th century. It should be noted that Sorokin did not argue that wars were only restricted to such periods of transitions, and he did note the shifting nature of warfare due to the change in socio-cultural dynamics. Ideational wars for example tend to be more religious in nature whilst Sensate wars tend to be more about economic and geopolitical power.⁴¹ Rather it is the intensity of conflicts that is more greatly affected by such periods of transition. To take an example: One can compare the common “cabinet wars” of the 18th century (when the Sensate ethos of the Enlightenment was of a more integrated kind) to the ferocity of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars (when arguably the Sensate culture of modernity began its transition to an overripe phase).

The former form of war was common but had fairly limited social effects; whilst the latter had widespread social consequences and proved to be a harbinger to later events. Sorokin was very adamant that the crisis he was witnessing could not be settled

³⁹ Crisis pg. 196

⁴⁰ Crisis, pg. 169

⁴¹ Pitirim Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics Vol. 3*. The Bedminster Press: 1937. P. 373

through normal political means, but rather had to be solved through a fundamental shift in human perspective. As he stressed:

[S]o long as the transition period lasts, and until the advent of a new ideational or idealistic society and culture, war will continue to maintain its dominant role in human relationships. Even if an armistice were to be signed tomorrow, it would represent merely an interlude, to be followed by an even more terrible and catastrophic Armageddon.⁴²

In his later research in the 1950s and 1960s, Sorokin further expanded upon the fundamental shift in human consciousness that was needed in order to build a lasting peace for humanity. To achieve this aim, *love* understood in the wider Classical sense was needed in order to counteract the destructive effects of *hatred* in causing not only wars but other forms of social violence.⁴³ As noted, this is love understood in the Classical sense as a supraconscious force that entails a deeper appreciation of the dignity of human persons as reflective of “perfect truth and blameless beauty” as Sorokin explained.⁴⁴ This is quite a contrast to the common sentimentalist form of late Sensate popular culture, rather Sorokin was referring more towards a deeper Integral truth. Sorokin gave a very stern warning about the utter necessity of love being the force for man’s true future:

Mankind is confronted by a stern dilemma: either to continue its predatory policies of individual and tribal selfishness that lead it to its inevitable doom, or to embark upon the policies of universal solidarity that brings humanity to the aspired for heaven on the earth. It is up to everyone of us which of the two roads we prefer to choose.⁴⁵

It is this choice for humanity that will be contemplated further in this paper.

6. Comprehensive Approach to War: A few comments

A few comments are needed to establish the necessity for a *comprehensive* approach to the subject of war. Clausewitz constantly stressed this aspect of the study of war, and that one could not understand war without understanding this:

But in war, as in life generally, all parts of a whole are interconnected and thus the effects produced, however small their cause, must influence all

⁴² Crisis, pg. 178

⁴³ William Eckhardt (1983) “Pioneers of peace research III: Pitirim A. Sorokin: Apostle of love” in *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, 10:2, pg. 167.

⁴⁴ Eckhardt, pg. 173.

⁴⁵ Cited in Eckhardt, pg. 173.

subsequent military operations and modify their final outcome to some degree, however slight. In the same way, every means must influence even the ultimate purpose.⁴⁶

A related issue is the notion that war is a synthesis of *material (Sensate)* and *immaterial (Ideational)* forces, which Clausewitz argues “form an organic whole which, unlike a metal alloy, is inseparable by chemical processes.”⁴⁷

To regard war as both *Ideational* and *Sensate* would also contrast with the constant temptation found in many contemporary military analysis of focusing exclusively on *Sensate* properties of war, most notably technology.⁴⁸ Technology no doubt is an especially important component for the execution of war, but the more important aspect to war are the human and intangible elements. Although operating from a materialist Marxist perspective, Mao Zedong articulated this point rather well:

This is the so-called theory that “weapons decide everything”, which constitutes a mechanical approach to the question of war and a subjective and one-sided view. Our view is opposed to this; we see not only weapons but also people. Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people.⁴⁹

Clausewitz famously argued, “war is simply a continuation of political discourse, with the addition of other means.”⁵⁰ Clausewitz was not alone in stressing this close relationship of war to politics. Even Sun Tzu opens his *Art of War* with this statement: “War is a vital matter of state. It is the field on which life or death is determined and the road that leads to either survival or ruin, and must be examined with the greatest care.”⁵¹

It seems there is a general agreement between the East and West about the underlining political and human-centric nature of war. This is important to establish since war’s synthetic nature is a mirror contrast to that of peace. As Sorokin noted,

⁴⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*. Pg. 158

⁴⁷ Ibid. pg. 184.

⁴⁸ A good example of this was the debate over “Revolution in Military Affairs” (RMA) that the U.S. military conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s that stressed that new advanced technology would play a critical role in changing the fundamental nature of war. A recent assessment of this debate is Michael E. O’Hanlon’s “A retrospective on the so-called revolution in military affairs, 2000-2020” at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/a-retrospective-on-the-so-called-revolution-in-military-affairs-2000-2020/> Accessed 6/24/2020.

⁴⁹ Cited in Handel, pg. 6.

⁵⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*. Pg.605

⁵¹ *The Book of War: Sun-Tzu's "The Art of War" & Karl Von Clausewitz's "On War"*. Pg. 73

mere armistices do not create a lasting peace since a deeper underlining social and cultural mentality is necessary. This is built upon a foundation of love.

In regard to the peculiar strengths of each of the major scholars on war, a reasonable conclusion can be established:

- Carl von Clausewitz's greatest strength is investigating the nature of war.
- Sun Tzu's greatest strength is investigating how best to fight wars.
- Pitirim Sorokin's greatest strength is investigating the underlying reasons and social consequences of wars.

7. War and Peace: Disintegration and Integration

It should be noted that Pitirim Sorokin, remarkably, did not engage with Clausewitz's work in great depth (he only made one direct reference to Clausewitz in regard to emotions in war⁵²). This can be in part attributed to the fact that Sorokin's research had a vastly different emphasis as compared to that of Clausewitz. Whilst Clausewitz was primarily interested in understanding the nature of war (which is the great strength of his work), Sorokin by contrast was more interested in researching the destructive consequences of war on different societies, with the intent of building the foundations for more lasting peace. Of course, as mentioned earlier, Sorokin did not mean peace in the Kantian (Sensate) sense but rather through the force of a more integrated socio-cultural system (preferably of the more Ideational and/or Idealistic kind) built upon the Integral truths of *love* (as well as "compassion, sympathy, mercy, benevolence, reverence, friendship, Eros, Agape, the Golden Rule, mutual aid, cooperation"⁵³) that would help at the very least bring the intensity of conflicts to a reasonable minimum.

Aristotle stressed that human activities are divided between those that come out of necessity and those which have virtue in themselves. In this regard Aristotle stressed that "[w]ar must be regarded as only a means to peace."⁵⁴ So thus, war should only be regarded as a mere necessity (and a last resort) whilst peace is a virtue in itself. Although Sorokin did believe in the abolition of arms⁵⁵, this need not contradict his logic of seeking a deeper peace through the transformative power of love, even in a context when arms are largely utilized in the cause of preserving the peace, as well as

⁵² Pitirim Sorokin, *Man and Society in Calamity: The Effects of War, Revolution, Famine, Pestilence Upon Human Mind, Behavior, Social Organization and Cultural Life*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968. pg. 23.

⁵³ Cited in Eckhardt, pg. 173.

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*. Edited and translated by Ernest Barker. Oxford University Press; 1962. Pg. 317.

⁵⁵ Eckhardt, pg. 174.

in the case of legitimate use of self-defense. This would be possible through the growth of virtue and love that can more clearly define the legitimate distinction between self-defense as a last resort and aggressive war-mongering.

The example of Morihei Ueshiba (1883–1969), founder of the martial art Aikido, may have best exemplified this perspective. Having witnessed the horrors of war firsthand while serving in the Imperial Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, as well as seeing the destructive effects of World War II on his nation, Ueshiba became a strong advocate for peace and the strengthening of love between peoples of the world. While inspired by the traditional warrior ethos of *Bushido*, he always emphasized that the true purpose of such was peace and not destruction:

The Way of the Warrior has been misunderstood. It is not a means to kill and destroy others...To smash, injure, or destroy is the worst thing a human being can do. The real Way of a Warrior is to prevent such slaughter – it is the Art of Peace, the power of love.⁵⁶

This has considerable parallels to the chivalric concepts found in the Classical-Christian tradition of protecting the weak, the innocent, and never seeking out fights but always fighting in self-defense when necessary. This has also been expanded into the intellectual tradition of Just War theory. An argument can reasonably be made that the Ideational/Idealistic traditions of heroic virtues found in both the East and West can form a foundation for humanity to better seek out the paths of peace and legitimate self-defense. That is the great endeavor that all humanity is faced with at the present moment.

8. A Few Comments on “Hybrid Warfare”

Another critical factor that would be highly relevant concerning the comparative analysis of Sorokin and Clausewitz would be dealing with the currently emerging epoch of “Hybrid Warfare”. Although an extensive analysis of the phenomenon is beyond the scope of this paper⁵⁷, it should suffice to make a few pertinent remarks demonstrating the current relevance of Clausewitz from a Biocosmological perspective.

Aligned with socio-cultural dynamics are the epochs centered around the concept of *military revolutions*, which are able to “recast society and the state as well as military

⁵⁶ Cited in Winfried Wagner’s *AiKiDô: The Trinity of Conflict Transformation*. Springer: 2015. pg. 223.

⁵⁷ For a more extensive analysis of ‘hybrid warfare’ see Satkiewicz, Stephen T. (2020). “Civilizational Dynamics of “Hybrid Warfare”, *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 83 : No. 83 , Article 17. Pp. 150-163.

organizations.”⁵⁸ As articulated above, the primary factors driving the nature of warfare and its evolution are more social, cultural, and human in nature. Clausewitz himself argued this point: “Very few of the new manifestations in war can be ascribed to new inventions or new departures in ideas. They result mainly from the transformation of society and the new social conditions.”⁵⁹

Although there is much debate over the conceptualization (including whether it can be applied to non-European contexts⁶⁰), scholars seem to agree upon five major military revolutions that have affected Western warfare:

1. Rise of the modern state in the seventeenth century (1600s).
2. The French Revolution and the rise of mass warfare (1789–1815).
3. Industrial Revolution and advancements in organization and technology (1800s)
4. “Total War” in World Wars I and II (1914–1945).
5. The Cold War and Nuclear Deterrence (1945–1990).⁶¹

For the purposes of this paper, the list could be expanded to include two more epochs:

- The Post-Cold War era (1990–2010)
- Hybrid Warfare (2010–today).

The first of the epochs concerns the immediate period following the end of the Cold War. This was marked by the rise of unconventional forms of warfare against the overwhelming military dominance of the NATO alliance. To simplify, it was largely an era of state versus non-state actors in military conflicts. Since around 2010, the current epoch is one of “*hybrid warfare*” in which state and non-state actors may not only fight one another, but in differing contexts can even assist one another for wider geopolitical aims. It can also mean the blurring of the lines between military and non-military means for achieving such goals.⁶² This is the basic summary of the concept, although it should be stressed that there is still considerable on-going debate concerning the exact nature of this phenomenon. The nature of this debate, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

Nevertheless, it is important to at least briefly outline how the current state of hybrid warfare could relate to the general theoretical outline of this paper. The Trinity outlined by Clausewitz still applies to this particular context, especially if one focuses

⁵⁸ Williamson Murray and MacGregor Knox, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*. Cambridge University Press; 2001. Pg. 7.

⁵⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*. Pg. 515.

⁶⁰ One scholarly work that does argue for Asian military revolutions is Peter A. Lorge’s *The Asian Military Revolution: From Gunpowder to the Bomb (New Approaches to Asian History)*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁶¹ *Dynamics of Military Revolution*, pg. 6.

⁶² Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid War*.

on the primary form of Policy, Chance, and Passions. The secondary form of state, army, and people would still be applicable too, but would have to be modified to suit present-day conditions. The modern state may have lost its monopoly on the use of violence (with the rise of non-state actors able to act independently for their own war aims), but that does not mean the state is irrelevant to present-day conditions. That is far from the case and the state is still a vitally important player in hybrid wars.

Returning to the formulations of Janeen Klinger for inspiration; it may be possible to argue that the epoch of hybrid warfare would be one governed by Chance being in the predominant position with Policy and Passions in equal but subordinate positions. Due to the state's lack of monopoly over the waging of war, and state and non-state actors both being involved; it would not be prudent to assess rational policy as being in the predominant position. This is not to negate the political nature of war, that factor still remains. Rather the overall rational policy aims of a state are not the overriding factor in an age of hybrid warfare. The passions are not necessarily an overriding factor either in hybrid warfare. Depending on the context, the involvement of the people or public opinion might even be minimized, especially so in the NATO-based countries. Rather, the predominant feature of hybrid warfare seems to be its chaotic nature with no one faction having overall command of the situation. Even the clear-cut distinction between "war" and "peace" becomes blurred in a hybrid warfare context, almost in a *yin-yang* type dynamic. It is for these reasons that it is proposed that *non-rational* factors of chance and probability would be the predominant force in a Trinitarian analysis of hybrid warfare. This ultimately is related to the further overripening of the dominant Sensate culture of modernity, which has almost reached critical mass in the area of "chaotic syncretism". This is reflected in the very nature of "hybrid warfare" which is itself a chaotic synthesis of varying forms of warfare and actors all operating at once to achieve their goals.

The subject of "hybrid warfare" is indeed extraordinarily complex, and as mentioned above on-going debate over its exact nature is occurring among scholars. This section has hopefully provided a few comments about how an Integral analysis of this phenomenon might proceed based on the overall theoretical outlines provided in this paper. In such a scenario, the Integral approach would be most suitable to help scholars gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to provide a foundation for the comprehensive study of war, through the intellectual engagement of Pitirim Sorokin's pioneering work with the legacy of the classic military theorist Carl von Clausewitz against the backdrop of other military theory classics. Clausewitz's Trinitarian framework for understanding the

basic nature of war provides many possible critical insights. Christopher Bassford's description of the Trinity is most revealing on this issue:

Clausewitz's Trinity is all-inclusive and universal, comprising the subjective and the objective; the unilateral and multilateral; the intellectual, the emotional, and the physical components that comprise the phenomenon of war in any human construct. Indeed, through the subtraction of a few adjectives that narrow its scope to war, it can easily be made to encompass all of human experience.⁶³

This demonstrates that Clausewitz was aware of the issue of Triadicity as it would apply to the subject of war and its underlining nature. Nevertheless, despite these intriguing parallels, it is also equally important not to confuse this with the framework of Sorokin's Triadological approach. In terms of general intellectual style, they are operating from quite different premises. Sorokin was operating from the basic tradition of Aristotle's *Organon Kosmology*, with its fundamentally dynamic nature. Clausewitz could more correctly fall more into the Platonic Dualist style of thought, even with his acknowledgement of Triadicity.⁶⁴

Debates concerning the nature and meaning of Clausewitz have lasted for two hundred years ever since his death. This paper does not pretend to be the most definitive word on the topic, but rather intends to be an invitation to further research into this grave matter. War has been a consistent reality in our world for thousands of years. During that time, scholars have sought to understand its nature. The current relevance of such inquiry should be apparent with the reality of on-going conflicts happening around the world, connected as they often are with the phenomenon of "hybrid warfare". Only by such understanding it and how it applies to our current situation is it possible to figure out a potential future ahead for humanity. Hopefully, this paper has demonstrated that this would be a very fruitful endeavor.

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⁶³ Christopher Bassford, "Tip-Toe Through the Trinity: The Strange Persistence of Trinitarian Warfare." <https://www.clausewitz.com/mobile/trinity8.htm> Accessed: 6/14/2018.

⁶⁴ Konstantin Khroutski, "Reinstating Aristotle's comprehensive Organon Kosmology and the genuine language of his Organicist naturalism archetype". *Biocosmology – Neo-Aristotelism*. Vol. 6, Nos. 3&4, Summer/Autumn 2016, pp. 394-413. <https://biocosmology.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Konstantin-S.-KHROUTSKI.pdf> Accessed 1/18/2020.

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