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War. Catastrphe and Disaster

I believe that catastrophic vigor is best perceived in the context of war: not Nature but men in Nature and human nature are the main agents of catastrophe and especially of heritage and cultural catastrophe through war.

Strictly speaking, it is useless to make any consideration about a possible dichotomy between “art”, as an intellectual and cultural expression, on the one hand, and “war” on the other, understood as a fatality in which the face of barbarism. In fact, art is associated with all human activities, in the same way that war is inscribed, therefore, and also, as one of the unavoidable dimensions of the human – and in contrast, dimensions of dehumanization inhuman, in the determining field of biopolitics. Therefore, if we assume ourselves as agents of culture in the field of arts, architecture and heritage, it will be useful to attend to a diagnosis, which already affects “our” time in an irrefragable way.

It is worth saying that the anathematization of war - especially in the so-called West - took place from the 18th century onwards with late-Enlightenment and revolutionary (or post-revolutionary) ideologies - war began to be considered as a lesser evil until the 20th century. In my opinion, it is only in the nineteenth century context that this anathematization will take place, with concrete ideological support, based on the massive tragic results of the Great War and, above



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all, with the Second World War and its procession of incredible inequities. And it is, above all, from the 19th century onwards with photography, and especially in the 20th century with cinema, - after those two terrible episodes -, that art, in a conscious way, established itself as an eventual focus of resistance and criticism to warmongering, illustrating it, reporting it and demonstrating its cruelty. It is at this point that we find what we can call a constellation of "art against war" more or less militantly taken up by several artists and concomitantly shaped by "patrimonialism" and heritage ideology.

However, this reality cannot hide another, still in force in the 20th century – and apparently in the 21st century – which is the fact that art also follows war as its exaltation and sublimation. Let us not lose sight, therefore, of the interest "on" objects of art and heritage in general, in their relationship with war.

In the same way, a typology could be used that addresses the theme of war, whether as a reality, or as a metaphor or metonymy. But¹⁾ that was recorded, at least openly, until the 18th century².

Naturally, in the field of war objects, other fields are thus discovered, which stem from an ontological consequence, or a phenomenological dimension³.

But other wars cannot be left aside⁴.

Among these, loss looms large in importance, which unfortunately gives war a second catastrophist aura that never hurts to remember. Thus, I keep in mind

1 We would thus have an art and architecture(s) of war (which results, objectively, from the crossing of artistic genres with military practices), very close to military iconography (which, often, unintentionally serves as a source and document), a art and architecture for war (which is structured as propaganda, related to commissions that extol warrior feats). And art against war, which came from an ideological context only evident from the 19th century onwards..

2 We suggest, even so, a kind of outline, a guide, for an approach to the objects of war and their effects, starting only from the moment of maximum developments in pyroballistics. We will thus have several fields of work depending on the various stages of "realization" of the war:

- a. Military architecture and military urbanism (17th-18th century) – pyroballistic evolution: static fortresses (bulwarks, ravelins; horny works, nets), terraces and undergrounds; external breastplates; outer forts
- b. Transitional military architecture/design and urbanism, late 19th century: the great lines of defense; integration of static architecture and moving architecture; the great land batteries and warships;
- c. Military architecture and design of the 1st World War: the "trench war" (1914-1918): biological weapons; the first armored vehicles and aerial warfare;
- d. Military design: the impasse "between wars"; research; the growth of aerial warfare
- e. and. Military architecture: reinforced protection – new bunkers and new static defensive lines: the end of trenches and entrenchment camps
- f. 1st stage of the Second World War - Informal military architecture: Urban War; War of movement; aerial warfare; long-range bombing;
- g. 2nd stage of the Second World War – "carpet bomb"; "dam busters" air supremacy; flaks (anti-aircraft); the spotlights; tracer bullets; massive bombs;
- h. 3rd stage: the radar; the night flight; recognition and target acquisition via infrared;
- i. 4th stage: globalizing annihilation: the atomic bomb;
- j. 5th stage: the "defeat of war"; the balance of fear
- k. Cold War: the balance of permanent fear: new strategies; secrecy and development of the military industries; high-tech; export of military hi-tech to consumer electronics.
- l. Portable warfare/terrorism: autonomous and individualization of the act of war: terror
- m. War without "contact"/contactless/i-phone: drones and super-drones; precision missiles; stratospheric missiles: "star wars".

3 i) War as virile heroization; ii) War as a tragic lament; iii) the War in the Visual Arts; iv) Uniforms, more uniforms, flags and banners: from the butler to the tailor (the Hugo Boss case); iv) War and Fashion; v) Heraldry, symbols and emblems; vi) The Cinema of War: from drama to propaganda; vii) Magazines, magazines and newspapers; viii) Revolutions of perception: War as cinema; ix) Cinema and technologies of War; x) War and gender; xi) War of "occultism"/esotericism/mythical geography; drone warfare...

4 a) Oil War; b) Bank war; c) Water War; d) Grain war; e) Gas War; f) Cyber wars; g) The War of the Walls: the persistence and invention of "walls" h) Social networks at war l) War of Refugees (again: the persistence and invention of "walls"); j) War and Science: from phrenology to Nazi experimentalism; the HAARP project.

several heritage disasters resulting from war and “terrorism” – it is worth remembering these other sites of dread and fear, of death and suffering: Auschwitz (and the topography of death, or death as an industry), Roben Island, Bamyán, Twin Towers, Vukovar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Beirut in the civil war, Syria – (Erbil, Palmyra, Dura-Europos), Iraq (Nineveh, Khorsabad) – Beirut again, with the mega-catastrophe of the port in a city already fractional – southern Ukraine (up to Odessa), border Israel, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank... .

What is certain is that at the end of the day, we have to admit: every time a building is demolished (imploded, for example; or bombed) there is a spectacle that is “mediatizable, antinomic, the result of a violent, tribal, but human (?) act. with a very clear objective; assume a war of identity with the aim of neutralizing architecture, erasing heritage (patrimicide), destroying culture...

Some of these places merited memorials, commemorative buildings; other places (and respective events) were “museumized” (the monuments to the Shoah by Peter Eisenmann or Daniel Libeskind, in Berlin; the Nazi Documentation Center, by Georg Scheel Wetzl, in Munich)...

Among the most poignant exercises of affection and remembrance reconciliation are also the – as someone has called them – “architectural novels” – by W.G. Sebald (1944-2001) who rethinks the post-war period in devastated Germany and leads us to reflect on less conventional building structures and the spectral movement of people in this process based on a witnessable life experience.

And it is here in these places that this dialectic between History and Memory is understood; between Oblivion and Remembrance: between catastrophe and human redemption, between the costs of a dangerous humanity - which puts itself in danger - and which takes time to resolve problems such as isolation (the pandemic), or refugees, or victims of inclemency of nature, in this moment of unsustainability.

That all this and more of what is to come always becomes current, as the present moment confirms to us, that is what is unsettling.