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Theory of war and Russia's war in Ukraine 2013–2023

Why is it easier to recognise Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 as war in comparison to the fighting in Donbas that begun in the spring of 2014? The simplest answer to the question can be found in our way of understanding war as large-scale interstate violence to disarm our opponents, as envisaged in the earlier works of Carl von Clausewitz. Until 2022, the war in Ukraine was considered too limited, and because of its politics, ambiguous. This resulted in the passivity of Western countries. Theoretically, attempts were made to add prefixes to war to distinguish it from the "traditional" war described above. However, Clausewitz's unfinished theory is contradictory: war can be understood to constitute both violence and politics. Clausewitz's later theory allows an understanding of war as a broader and more political phenomenon. The modern concept of strategy – which focuses on the relationship between goals, means and ways – also derives from Clausewitz. Clausewitz's theory emphasises war as a political instrument. His theory consists of concepts that form an analytical framework which can be used to understand, and ultimately win, wars. Various concepts of war are used in a chronological analysis of the situation in Ukraine, which spans from the end of 2013 to early 2023.

Natalya Bekhta

"We" and the Language of War. On the Poetry of Serhiy Zhadan

The essay focuses on we-discourse as a cross-generic phenomenon, broader than we-narration in prose fiction, and examines how Serhiy Zhadan's recent work constructs a "we" of the society shaken by war. Infinitive structures and impersonal imperatives of his new poems create a syntactical possibility of a collective subject position initially open to anyone. While this openness eventually fills, the poems' first-person plural nevertheless avoids reproducing the antagonistic reference of "us" versus "them," inherent in communal ethos, and thus points to a potential for an alternative construction of solidarity.