Dulce Et Decorum Est Pro Jus Mori:
The New Lie

by

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The first fundamental premise of this paper is that war is a scourge on humanity – every time a war is waged humanity loses too many of its brethren in an act, most tragically, of human making. World peace is a worthy telos and humanity, en masse, should strive for it to the utmost. Given that this is probably a very popular idea, one wonders why large violent conflict seems so prevalent and accessible. If the vast majority of people, in their heart of hearts, want war to end, yet it has not ended, there are only two (broad) explanations. One is that war is inevitable due to human nature or systemic factors in the political world (neither of which I accept); the other is that there are obstacles to the institutionalization of world peace, but the obstacles are surmountable, and have not yet been surmounted for one reason or another. It is the argument of this paper that anything that works to legitimate war as an acceptable policy works against the striving for that telos. Just War, it is argued, both as an idea and as the idea made manifest in the world, serves to legitimate some wars in the eyes of the soldiers who fight it, the politicians to deliberate over it and the populace that allows it. (In fact, more oddly, Just War discourse deems some war participants “just” in their actions while other participants engaged in the very same war as “unjust.”) As such, Just War has some pernicious and immoral qualities in and of itself.

This paper makes the argument that what I will call the Just War discourse (which I will define later) constitutes more than a mere theory but a political stance, and it is a stance that will one day need to be delegitimated in sake of striving towards the telos of world peace. This paper attempts to make steps in that direction.

The paper begins with a very brief accounting of what I am terming the Just War discourse in order to establish exactly that which I am arguing against. The following section argues that war and justice cannot be associated so amicably. The intuition about Just War is that the “just” aspect of Just War exonerates or makes acceptable the engagement in the “war” aspect. My argument is that, rather than justice washing war morally clean, war negates justice. The section preceding tries to show that this claim of mutual exclusiveness might well bear out in the world when we consider both narrations of history concerning justice and war and, moreso, the way the moral lines drawn around war often seem arbitrary and superimposed. The last section of substantial critique attempts to illustrate how Just War is associated with an urge to defeat war through rationalization; however, rationalization provides no more incentive to abolish war, and

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1 There is a much more indepth discussion of war later in the paper, but for now let us consider war as large scale violent conflicts of both the interstate and intrastate kind (so, state-to-state wars, civil wars, genocides, coups d’etat, etc.)
2 Of course, in saying so I am blowing off a huge amount of very important literature, including the entire neo-realist school.
perhaps even less in the way that both it and the Just War discourse work to mask war – brutal, tragic, diabolical - in a “veil of civility.”

The paper will finish with a (too brief) consideration of how I answer the question of humanitarian intervention and how a pacifist ethic provides moral requirements that lead us towards the telos of peace in a way Just War ethics cannot.

II  The Just War Discourse

The story of just war doctrine seems to be a story of three factors dancing with each other: humanitarian concerns; desire for rule of law; and political authority’s tendency to war. Humanitarian concerns spur on a desire to limit – but not abolish – war through a higher rule of law.

History generally ascribes the idea of war conventions based on “justice” as arising amongst Greeks or Romans. Cicero argued that war is not acceptable unless waged for just retribution or self defence, that reason and human nature were prone to peace and that there should exist a code of conduct between nations. The early cult of Christianity had been remarkably pacifist until Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire – at which point the philosophies of religion and state merged. Since war was not going to be given up as a policy option by the Roman empire, a compromise was struck by St. Augustine in The City of God where he argues that war and pacifism can be reconciled if war is waged in the name of peace. “’We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace,’” he wrote. “Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to the prosperity of peace” (Augustine). Approximately nine hundred years later, Thomas Aquinas established a complete just war theory. Nonetheless, wars from the Crusades to those of the Reformation engulfed Christendom, despite the Church’s policy of God-based just war. So it turned to the would-be secularists, precursors to the Enlightenment, to argue for a taming of the fires of war through moral strictures. Grotius re-emphasized rule of law as a means of making war manageable. “I saw in the whole Christian world a license of fighting at which even barbarous nations might blush. Wars were begun on trifling pretexts or none at all, and carried on without any reverence for law, Divine or human. A declaration of war seemed to let loose every crime” (Grotius)

Currently, there is no set agreement on what it means to wage a “just” war. Different countries argue different cases for why their war is “just” and different authors prescribe different theories on the moral map of war (though international laws and conventions make certain aspects of just war doctrine more obvious). Modern theorists attempting to articulate just war include most notably Michael Walzer (2000) and Paul
Ramsey (1968). Modern texts on just war emphasize international law, war conventions and war crimes. While the body of international law, reflecting the international climate and previous days through the inertia of institutionalism, focuses strongly on sovereignty and the denial of sovereignty as a war crime, arguments for just war have increasingly cited the protection of human rights (such as in the interventions of the 1990s or the US currently in Iraq).

Modern just war doctrine attempts to reveal moral boundaries regarding two fields of war: the cause for entering war (jus ad bellum) and the actions taken during the actual waging of war (jus in bello).

Walzer gives as the only just cause to enter war the defense against “aggression,” which he defines as actions intercepting not just the peace of a people but their “rights” as well. Mark Evans gives broader criteria: self defense or defense of others; correcting injustice; re-establishing a just social order; or establishing peace (Evans, 2004). The uncertainty in determining when many of these criteria or crossed, or which criteria to go by, will be considered later.

In jus in bello, international conventions such as the Geneva convention and national “rules of engagement” are established to ensure: “the amount of force used be proportionate to the end sought by war” (Evans, 2004); and distinctions between civilians and combatants so that innocent civilians are never intended military targets.

Obviously there has never been a war where any of these moral regulations were certainly determined, recognized as such, and maintained. There has never been a war that has not resulted in the death of civilians. It could be suggested that considerations of the actual occurrences in real world war need not enter the discussion of this paper; that the paper should limit itself to a critique of only just war ideas, their premises and the validity of their inherent logic.

However, as Machiavelli warned, “…the man who neglects the real to study the ideal will learn how to accomplish his ruin, not his salvation” (Machiavelli, The Prince). I am interested in the possibility of delegitimating justifications for real wars – not in an academic analysis of some particular text. Besides the fact that there is no one definitive articulation of just war logic, an attack on one text or logical formulation does little to dissuade the actual force of the just war doctrine in the real world. Moral ideas concerning war will create situations in the real world as humans act in accordance with their learned moral convictions. These actions affect the shape of the material world. This author is concerned with the space where ideas merge into material realities. As such, I
am terming the subject of my critique the Just War discourse, following a Foucaudian understanding of the term “discourse.”

III War is Evil

Just War is an attempt to compromise between loyalty to humanitarian sentiments (or perhaps only rule of law) and the expectation that war must remain a policy option for certain actors. War is considered legitimate, then, when it is associated with justice, as associations to justice bring appeasement to both people’s humanitarian sentiments and desire for rule by law. I wish to argue in this section that war cannot be associated with justice as such; that war is, in fact, “evil,” if by evil we mean the absence of all things “good” or just.

Let’s start by considering four broad grounds upon which wars may be legitimated in the minds of people: appeals to God (crusades and jihads); appeals to domestic self-interest (empire, colonialism, national glory, resource plundering); hatred or vengeance; or morality (Just War). For the most part, the first three have been officially de-legitimated in the international realm as bases for war (though it is most likely some form of domestic self-interest still accounts for much of the globe’s wars, de facto).

The discourse of Just War tells us when it is right or wrong to enter into a war (jus ad bellum) and which actions in war are right or wrong (jus in bello). A crucial contention for Just War would be that the framework of making moral discriminations – where some actions can be deemed “just” and others “unjust” – exists in war no less than in any other social context. Judgements regarding what is just or unjust in war may differ from judgements regarding other social contexts, but the framework of moral discrimination will exist in the war context as in others. (By contrast, the amoral vision of

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3 As opposed to theorists that use the term discourse in specific reference to language. Foucault’s usage of the term is quite different. It signifies everything from the base and pure ideas to the institutional practices aligned with them. So, a discourse of “just war” will include: statements about justice in war; rules and behaviour expectations regarding which ideas will be considered in the discourse and which will be excluded; real world events that appear to illustrate just war statements (the “subject” of the discourse); systems of authority regarding just war and the knowledge of just war; and practices within the institution of war that arise from the influence of the preceding factors. Defining my paper’s subject of critique as such, I feel it will be valid to consider real world situations as critiques for the entire practice of Just War.

4 However, a paper less limited should consider “God” as a prevalent basis for war in the world today. Though it no longer stands as a legitimate reason to war in the West, jihad seems to be alive amongst certain actors in the East. Astute students of theoretical international relations – whose interests should rightly be in not just the West but the globe - should not dismiss the arguments from religious fundamentalist theory. See Roxanne L. Euben, “Comparative Political Theory: An Islamic Fundamentalist Critique of Reason,” Journal of Politics, vol. 59, no. 1, p 28. Were this paper not focused on Just War, it would include the fundamentalist bases for war legitimation and argue against them.
war, held by certain Realist thinkers, Clausewitz, Mao-Tse Tung and General Sherman, who declared “war is hell”).

For this contention to be so, it must be that whatever condition allows for the framework of this kind of morality must be present equally in the contexts of war and non-war. If this contention was not correct, it would work to discredit the theory aspect of Just War. But before we can evaluate whether this contention is correct, we need to first determine where the ability to morally discriminate comes from.

I will set ideas on the foundations of morality into two broad categories. One category sees morality rooted in some objective space outside of and primary to the human being, such as a space of God’s Law or Natural law. The other is a space of social association where particular obligations to all members of that association are recognized. In writing on politics, this space is often posed as the space of political association.

We see in this first category the narratives of theology, obviously, but also in Locke and other Natural Law proponents. I would argue that for our purposes Kant fits here as well.⁵

We see in this second category the likes of Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Rawls and perhaps even Habermas. With Aristotle we see morality and the ability to seek the Good as the “political” aspect of humanity’s nature as political animals, impelling us to band together in a polis. In both Hobbes and Rousseau there is explicit mention that morality simply does not come into play until after the social contract. Hobbes tells us that naturally, the signification of what is a virtue and what is a vice is subject to “the nature, disposition and interest of the speaker… For one man calleth Wisdome what another man calleth feare; and one cruelty, another justice…” (Hobbes, 1988, book I ch. IV, p 18). [Needs quote from later in the book where the Leviathan establishes morality through law] Rousseau tells us that “The passing from the state of nature to the civil society produces a remarkable change in man; it puts justice as a rule of conduct in the place of instinct, and gives his actions the moral quality they previously lacked” (Rousseau, 1987, book I ch. VIII, p. 64) In Rawls we see a commitment to the moral formulation of “justice as fairness” in the public realm, born of rational calculation of individual interest behind the “veil of ignorance” in a theoretical move that resembles the classic social contract. The foundation of morality, then, is this mutual association. In

⁵ Though Kant argues against the ability of a finite subject (by which I mean a human individual) to really know the objective, Kant still believes that the capacity of reason is the same within us all (that is, humans are not only imbued with instrumental reason) and that this similar reason guides all human’s who follow it correctly to the same moral conclusions. Thus we see the moral laws of humankind are actually set, if not outside of us, certainly prior to us. With Kant the moral laws exist to be discovered by a faculty of reason that guides us –the effect is similar enough for the purposes of this paper to submit Kant into the set that sees morality as stemming from something objective, outside of and prior to human association.
terms of the classical liberals, this association is generally considered a juridico-political social contract between free and equal individuals. However, I am going to frame the idea of an initial association in a different way. I’m going to say that morality (as regards relations amongst each other) is born out of an association of each member recognizing in each other a humanness deemed worthy enough to warrant equal obligations.⁶

Of these two categories, I will dismiss the credibility of the first. Revelation of God’s law as a legitimate basis for serious impositions into the life of another (as war should be considered) has been delegitimized across most of the political globe. Appeals to Natural Law or Kantian moral imperatives through a pure and unbiased reason have not been so delegitimized. However, this author does so by taking seriously the criticisms of authors sometimes broadly lumped together as “postmoderns” on this issue. Particularly, the criticisms of Adorno and Foucault are pertinent. Adorno argued that reason can only be instrumental reason, and is always utilized, whether the utilizer realizes it or not, in the service some subjective intent or principle. Reason for both Adorno and Foucault is set in social context, so that different contexts can maintain different valid reasons. (Adorno; Schoolman, 1997; McCarthy, 1990). Sometimes maligned in the literature, this part of the “postmodern” critique need not be seen as anything new. As an attack on certainty regading epistemology, it only mimics the stance of Pyrrho and other ancient Sceptics – who merit as much credibility and consideration as Aristotle, Plato and other Greeks of the age. If the reader still feels these authors lack credibility, we can look to Thomas Kuhn’s assessment of science. In Kuhn, the theories and findings of science are only ever as “true” as the consensus of the scientific community decides they are. If truths outside of consensus don’t exist in the “hard” sciences, they certainly are not likely to exist in the “soft” investigations into morality (Kuhn, 1962). On the grounds of these critiques, argued thoroughly and extensively in the literature, I assert that the notion of a morality prior to the obligations formed in human association made knowable through the faculty of reason is too problematic to further consider.⁷

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⁶ I suspect that the social contract could still fit into this notion (though very soon in the paper I think we move away from the social contract.) There is some sense in all of these liberal authors, however, even Hobbes, that the individuals involved must recognize the other members of human beings of a certain capacity bestowing upon them a worthiness of being treated with equal measure under the compact. Prima facie in Hobbes it seems to be only respect for the fact that each human has the capacity to kill the other. However, there must be more to it, for the compact is not entered into with tigers or other living threats. Thus there is something about a human’s capacity to reason, desire to live in peace, etc., that we recognize as human in each other and worthy of compacting with, even under Hobbes.

⁷ Again, there is another argument I would prefer to make with this paper but cannot as it has not yet been developed. In denying objective moral imperatives knowable through reason I do not wish to claim that
This leaves us with morality embedded in some form of human association, with the liberal social contract as a starting example (but not an example we will stay with for very long). The problem with the social contract formulation of this political association is that it implies no moral obligation to human beings outside of the juridic contract. If my argument was that war is an amoral hell by virtue of it existing outside the bounds of the social contract, I would have only re-exhumed Hobbes. However, reiterating Hobbes will not be my argument on two grounds: a) I will assert that “war” is something different than the pre-juridical Hobbesian state of nature and that moral associations are formed outside of the juridic compact, even in what Hobbes might have considered a state of nature; b) that where the classical theorists’ state of nature was amoral, war, I will argue, is immoral.

First, let us assume that the classical liberals were wrong to posit a state of nature. Let us say that humankind has never been in a pre-political state; that this association of human recognition from whence stems determinations of justice has always been (though arguably at different levels of complexity through different points in history). Whenever humans have dealings with each other where they recognize at least some degree (and the degree can change over time and place) of mutual humanness in each other and respect that humanness, the humans are engaging in some form of mutual association that we can consider moral and political.\(^8\) Obligations stem from this association. It is required for this association that a person recognize mutual humanness in other members to feel the others are worthy of entering into such an association with. As such, we can imagine forms of morality in the compact of a liberal democracy, in a Native Canadian tribe circa 1200AD, in the relations between two such tribes, or in relations between states in the contemporary international realm. In all of these instances, there is a mutual recognition of at least some base level of equally shared humanness, as discussed in footnote 6, that obligates each actor to some form of behaviour; the obligation from which we can consider morality.

Notice, however, that the association does not rely upon a contract entered into voluntarily. The association is created with the moment of recognition, and that recognition is more an involuntary act of the inner psyche than a wilful one. In this moment of recognition, even between only two people, there comes into play some

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\(^8\) “Political” associations will be considered more as moral ties than mere juridical ties. In the liberal literature, political is more often associated with juridical bounds and morality only in regards to a national public space. For now I prefer not to limit the term “political” as such.
determining of how to react to the Other and how not react to the Other. Of course in making such a decision a person will have her own self-interest in mind. But since we recognize something like ourselves in the Other, there is concern for the Other as well, and so this determination cannot be based solely on self-interest or pragmatism. These determinations – judgements based on mixtures of concern for self and concern for others (which grow even more complicated the more deeply the people interact) are moral.

The most basic recognition an individual must have to enter this association is that the lives of the others in this association are sacred and not to be ended by any act of the individual’s will. For it is at base required for entry into this association, as explained above, that a member recognize a basic humanness in all other members; and while it may not be possible to identify that which makes a person human, it is certain that stealing one’s life takes it away. That is, stealing one’s property may not steal one’s humanness; stealing one’s food, one’s liver, degrading one with verbal abuse or relieving one of his innocence may or may not steal one’s humanity. But certainly killing a person steals whatever in them makes them human. As such, it is impossible to kill a person while recognizing the humanness in them. To kill, a man must feel the morituri are devoid of whatever aspect in himself makes him worthy of life (for if he recognizes that attribute which “justifies” his life in the Other, the presence of that very same attribute would “justify” the life of that Other).  

Now we draw closer to why war is a hell devoid of moral discriminations. As where Hobbes characterized the pre-social contract state as a state of “warre,” I have not, since I’ve been able to consider almost all spheres of life some form of human association where moral discriminations will arise. War, however, is different. Just War advocates are wrong to presume that war shares the same framework of moral discriminations as non-war contexts. Let me start to explain why with a quick consideration of what war is.

War is the institutionalization of dehumanizing human beings to the point that individuals can see it fit and proper to kill each other for the sake of other goals. The institutionalization aspect is important here. Rather than a spontaneous, temporary eruption of violence from an individual or small group, war is an institution in itself – an

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9 Studies by Leo Kuper have shown that before a genocide or systematic killing can occur a campaign of dehumanizing the target must prepare the would-be killers. Military training dehumanizes the Other by impressing upon soldiers the notion that enemy soldiers are to be considered targets, not men.

10 Theorists often frame the question of a state’s right to transform citizens into soldiers and send them to war as such: “by what legitimacy does the state ask a man to potentially die for his country?” But this is the wrong question. The question should be “by what legitimacy does the state ask a man to potentially kill for his country.” As General Patton famously expressed, “The object of war is not to die for your country, but to make the other bastard die for his.”
institution that requires: premeditation; rational decision-making; funding; planning; massive violence; maintenance of war industries (such as weapons-makers and the military); the systematic training of soldiers to dehumanize the enemy in their minds and kill the enemy with their hands; and the maintenance of legitimacy – which in democratic societies requires maintaining public sympathy for the war. Public sympathy requires that a dehumanization of the “enemy” occur in the minds of the domestic citizens – often achieved by distancing the humanness of the dying from the domestic public, since the public is not trained in military camps to dehumanize the enemy.\textsuperscript{11}

Like in non-war, war is very much an association. There is no way to fight a war without an enemy. Often when I have thought of war I have imagined two warriors clinging to each other like ensnarled lovers as they tumble into some psychotic abyss. War is like this for all involved. They are engaged with each other – more profoundly and deeply perhaps than in most other contexts, as a misreading of the Other in this context could result in death. However, \textit{unlike} non-war associations, war – and only war – is an association from which stems the pure \textit{lack} of recognition of what is human in the Other. Here, then, is a critical difference between war and non-war spheres of action. As was discussed earlier, the killing (especially the systematic, institutionalized killing) of other human beings demands that the killer ceases to recognize in the “enemy” the humanness that gives his own life worth. War, as the rationally maintained, institutionalized association of this dehumanization, is \textit{unlike} that association of recognition we discussed earlier; and so the contention that we began this chapter with – that slipping into war does not effect the basic moral framework of being about to discriminate between just and unjust acts – is incorrect. As where non-war associations require at least the basic recognition of the Other’s humanness (and therefore worthiness of life), the war association requires the exact opposite.

So if war is not a state of determining between just acts and unjust acts, does that necessarily make it amoral? My answer is no. I would concede that there is no limit in war except the limits of force, as Clausewitz proposed. I might also concede that “War is hell,” as Sherman proposed. But the nature of war is that of an institution which has as its constitutive attribute the brutal cessation of human life on a mass scale, and I feel we can judge the context on a whole as immoral for it. That is to say, my argumentation so far has revealed that moral discriminations regarding war cannot be made; that is, we cannot

\textsuperscript{11} Failure to control factors that remind the domestic public of a human connection with the dying results in war protest- such as in the case of the Vietnam war when television newscasts, not yet controlled by the military, led to growing sympathy for the dying (presumably of both sides of the war) in America.
say some acts in war are just and proper while others are unjust and improper. However, that is only to say that there is a standard of strict moral equivalency embedded within the context of war. There is no utilitarian ethics in my argument, and I see no reason why drawing limitations so that 20 people die one day as where 40 died the day before should be seen as a moral improvement. If you had been one of the 20 to die, praising the army for having only killed 20 that day would seem quite meaningless. The way I have framed this argument, I believe, strongly implies that the act of killing another is of such strong and negative consequences that everything that works to uphold that context where mass killing is promoted and sought after (war) shares in the moral weight of that action. From the standpoint of all other moral associations (all non-war contexts), since it is apparent that killing is the strictest and most extreme form of negation of recognition of the humanness of another, we can judge that there is nothing more immoral than killing. If all other moral judgements rest on this recognition and this recognition is wiped out entirely by killing then the avoidance of killing should be the base moral principle upon which we live. Note then that each person is compelled morally to act as to always avoid war, and do everything in her power to avoid slipping into war. Thus all acts in war are deemed equivalent in immorality.

Obviously, these statements lead the author to adopt some form of pacifist ethic, and I (briefly) revisit this ethic at the end of the paper.

IV Of Synthesis and the Two

In the last section I argued that war is always immoral and without discrimination between “just” and “unjust.” There is a way in which we can look at war and say “but Western is obviously wrong. We look to the Geneva Convention; we look to the US rules of engagement in Vietnam; we look at an international force invading Afghanistan as retributive measures after Sept. 11th. They constitute, along with other “arguments and judgements” of the Just War discourse set into practice, what Walzer calls the “moral reality of war” (Walzer 2001, p 15).

However, there is another way of looking at the phenomena. If war is always immoral, as I have argued, then Just War discourse does not describe the “moral reality of war,” but is superimposed upon an immoral landscape for some purpose. That purpose is the legitimation of war, and we will go into this thought in greater detail in section V. For now, let us just consider that, if we look and find that Walzer’s map of “moral reality” does not quite fit the practices of the Just War discourse as neatly as he suspects it does, we can add evidence to the conclusion of the previous section – that justice and war simply do not go together.

Allow me to establish our argument with a metaphor.
In a series of lectures given by Michel Foucault in the mid 1970s, the iconic professor concerned himself with the question “is politics actually the continuation of war by other means?” By war, he was referring to general contest in society – a much broader definition of war than we are interested in here. But what is of interest to us is his contrasting of two large discourses he finds running through Western civilization’s history.

One is a discourse where society is held together by the attributes of peace, justice, truth, philosophy and civility. Quite the opposite of warring barbarians, in this discourse civilization is a rule of law by which people live in relative peace with one another. Discrepancies are dealt with in a civilized manner; by getting to the truth through the faculties of philosophy and reason. Factions in society that perhaps used to war have now been reconciled in civility and just rule of law. In a Hobbesian world, once two groups start screaming at each other there is no means by which to reconcile them except through might - the dominant voice will win out. But in this discourse, reason and civility consider the arguments of the competing factions and make wise judgements that do not reflect the interests of one group, since reason is above partisanship and in the interest of all. A third, unbiased arbiter seems important to this discourse - be it reason or a wise judge – to preside over not the result of war between groups in society but the reconciliation of these groups in a law that reflects the needs of all. I am going to refer to this discourse as the narrative of Synthesis.

The other is a discourse of contest and war, where society is perpetually rend asunder by competing groups that have no recourse to an unbiased third party arbitrator because there is no such arbitrator. But not only is there no such arbitrator, there cannot be such an arbitrator - for all actors, arguments, knowledge and claims to truth exist within this body of social contestation. “Right, peace, and laws were born in the blood and mud of battles… This does not mean, however, that society, the law and the State are like armistices that put an end to wars, or that they are the products of definitive victories. Law is not pacification, for beneath the law, war continues to rage in all the mechanisms of power, even in the most regular” (Foucault, 2003) Power of arbitration is always in the service of one of the sides in the contest. Juridical power is not a reconciliation that brings peace and determinations of justice – it necessarily benefits the group that holds its power and disadvantages the group that has less recourse to it. Foucault writes “…it is a discourse in which truth functions exclusively as a weapon that is used to win an exclusively partisan victory;” and later, “the State apparatus, the law and the power structures… are the instruments our enemies are using to pursue and subjugate us.” This discourse is the metaphor of hegemony and counter-hegemony, or perennial war between
authority and rebel. It is Hobbes saying “what one calleth cruelty, another man just” (Hobbes, 1988) I call this discourse the narrative of the Two.

Now, Foucault does not suggest that at one point in history Synthesis ruled some land, but that peace fell in favour of the recalcitrant disagreement of the Two, only to revert to Synthesis again, etc. The point here is that the discourses are stories we tell ourselves to interpret history. The same events in history could be believed by one person to reflect the narrative of Synthesis metaphor while another the narrative of the Two. But notice that the two cannot be reconciled, and if the same person explained the same events in history with appeal to both metaphors he would be incoherent. My purpose with these metaphors is to suggest that advocates tell themselves that Just War discourse shapes war into something that fits the metaphor of Synthesis; however, I argue the “perennial competition” aspect of war cannot be surmounted by a reconciliatory unbiased arbitrator in the world of international society and so the landscape of modern war – “just” or otherwise - actually more closely resembles the metaphor of the Two.

A quote by Kant shows us how implicit in the idea of the narrative of Synthesis is the defeat of the narrative of the Two through utilization of a non-partisan arbitrator (in this case, criticism).

Without the control of criticism, reason is, as it were, in a state of nature, and can only establish its claims and assertions by war. Criticism, on the contrary, deciding all questions according to the fundamental laws of its own institution, secures to us the peace of law and order, and enable us to discuss all differences in the more tranquil manner of a legal process. In the former case, disputes are ended by victory, which both sides may claim and which is followed by a hollow armistice; in the latter, by a sentence, which, as it strikes at the root of all speculative differences, ensures to all concerned a lasting peace. (italics are mine) (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason)

Just War discourse very much requires something like the rule of just and unbiased law. Wars between self-interested actors can only end in victory, and a promise from the vanquished to return to fight some new day (the hollow armistice) – resulting in not peace but perennial war as in the narrative of the Two. In Just War however, war is instigated by one self-interested actor, who has committed the “crime” of aggression (see Walzer, 2000). The offending army has not offended only the defending nation – it has offended Justice in its committing of a crime, and the just army fights not just for self defense, but for the higher cause of justice itself. The war a just army brings upon the unjust, then, is not retaliation, vengeance or pragmatism any more than a police action is; it is a sentencing, objectively deserved or at least required.

This image certainly suggests a world of international law – and of course ours is one of international law. But is it an unbiased rule of law? The first thing we need note
with Just War is that judgements about the rightness or wrongness of violent actions need to be determined. Who makes these determinations? Who delivers the facts upon which the determinations will be made? It is assumed by both juridical systems and the Just War discourse that the facts of the case can be known, the truth can be discerned and accurate judgement can be made. In the international realm, these determinations are often made by states that have a great stake in the outcomes of these decisions, and that bias makes suspect the ability for judgement to be accurate and discerning.

We have recently seen this in the case of the US going into Iraq. The US administration has consistently legitimated its war to the American people in terms of justice. Iraq represented an aggression waiting to happen and a tyrannical state that offended the just rule of law. Information regarding Iraq’s level of threat to the world was presented to the UN by the US and eventually found to be highly suspect.

The case of Iraq brings us to wonder how “aggression” is determined if not by self-interested measures. The first issue we can take with the determination of aggression is obviously a level of hypocrisy. Walzer defines aggression as the stealing away of an environment of “peace-with-rights.” The destruction of the World Trade Towers certainly appeared to be an aggressive act. But 10 years before, in the Gulf war, the US killed just over 3,000 citizens in bombing raids in Iraq. According to the moral strictures of just war, citizens are not legitimate targets. The tragic deaths on Sept. 11th were deemed crime enough to launch at least one war and arguably two wars upon areas of the Middle East. But the “only 3,000 killed” by smart bombs in the Gulf War was hailed by the West as a laudable, almost humanitarian achievement. Advanced bombing technology had almost certainly accounted for what was seen as a relatively small number of civilian casualties (Thomas, 2001).

There is the question, then, of why some acts are seen as aggression but similar acts are not. If US involvement in Iraq is “just” (as the argument goes) based on Iraq’s threat of having Weapons of Mass Destruction, why has the US not urged engagement with Korea for the same crime? If the war is “just” based on Hussien’s tyrannical denial of human rights to Iraqis, why did the powerful West not intervened in other innumerable, arguably more dire cases, such as the Sudan or Sierra Leone? If the international community does not see the current US war on Iraq as legitimate according to international law, why have they not launched a just war against the US as criminals who have committed acts of aggression against a sovereign nation?

It becomes apparent that in determining criminal aggression, much more than an unbiased faculty of criticism is at work here. National self-interest and military
hegemony play enormous roles in determining which actor is deemed a criminal and which is left unabated to engage in similar acts.

Furthermore, facts used to determine aggression are always locked into a narrow temporal moment. Sept. 11th violence was seen by most of the world as an unprovoked act of aggression committed in one sharp morning. However, from the other side of the war – the terrorists’ side – their act of “aggression” was nothing more than just retribution against the US for past grievances the US had committed against them. While the argument is not so easy to make with characters as unsympathetic as the killers of al-Qaeda, it is easier to see perhaps in relation to Israel-Palestine (a conflict both sides feel justified in waging and since 9/11 Israel has justified through the Just War language of “just State / unjust terrorists”).

In basing the right to war upon justice, we set wars in the context not of vengeance, glory or righteousness, but deserved retribution and perhaps the prevention of future crimes. The war acts, then, carry a sense of karmic balancing. Each side in the Israeli-Palestinian debacle believes its violent attacks upon the other just. When Israel kills four Palestinians, Israel sees it as retribution for some past crime. Palestine, however, sees it not as retribution but as a fresh new attack, and feels the sense to retaliate. And visa versa. Locked in a narrow temporal vantage-point, each attack looks like a crime of aggression. However, increasing the temporal vantage-point still does us no good, for there can be no determination of who “started” the vicious circle of violence. This Middle Eastern conflict can be seen as a microcosm for larger wars, particularly those that involve occupation, as the US/Iraq situation does. What we have here is the narrative of the Two, where there can be no reconciliation in law because no third party arbitrator is seen as legitimate enough to defeat the vicious circle. Law and power structures will always be seen by a significant amount of players in the conflict as instruments against them, and each violent action proves not a just sentencing but one side’s temporary victory, followed by a maddeningly short hollow armistice.

Furthermore I’d like to consider for a moment what I call the “Batman critique.” In Batman comics, an inordinate amount of Batman’s villains are actually inadvertently created by unforeseen actions taken by the Dark Knight while defending innocents from some other supercriminal.12 The idea was publicly discussed after Sept. 11th with reference to the phenomena of “blowback.” Blowback occurs when military actions of one country lead to unforeseen consequences that eventually come back to haunt them. In

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12 What I mean by “created” is that Batman’s actions - out of his control perhaps, but nonetheless precipitated by him - actually transform some ordinary person into a super-villian. For example, while fighting a group of mobsters, Batman accidentally knocks a man into a vat of acid. That mobster stumbles out of the acid as the psychotically homicidal Joker.
the case of Sept. 11th, it was that the US had trained Osama bin Laden in how to kill in the service of a Cold War proxy war. The question here is, if Batman’s actions are responsible for the creation of these villains, is he culpable in their crimes of aggression?

The problem with the metaphor of war as juridical justice is that the arena in which determinations about the morality of war take place just isn’t juridical enough. The brief considerations above – scant few compared to what could be offered – suggest that Walzer’s “moral reality of war” is not so easily determinable. But if the argument becomes that these wars have not been just, but they could have been had the international world been shaped more along the lines of the juridical model (say a world juridical government and a working constabulary force), then I have not argued well. Such an argument leaves open the possibility that Just War discourse could legitimate wars if the system-writ-large were just tweaked and perfected. In fact, such an argument would argue for Just War discourse – suggesting that these problems would not arise were justice a stronger factor in war. I would therefore be seemingly defeating my own argument.

But that has not been the argument. The point of this section has been to question whether there can be a definitive discernment of just and unjust in the international context as Just War discourse requires there to be. If there cannot be (and I argue there cannot) we need to re-evaluate why we feel the Just War discourse carries enough credibility to legitimate the brutality of war.

My argument here is that there is something inherent to the characters of war and justice that make them mutually exclusive, and so there cannot be moral discernment in the war of the type claimed by Just War discourse. Justice, by its nature, needs to be above self-interest in its determinations. War, by its nature, is a violent conflict between at least two self-interested sides where reconciliation is not an option.13 War occurs within a context of self-interested actors and hegemonic military powers. War is simply not conducive to the arena of law. Police actions may be, but police actions are very different than war – despite the analogies ubiquitous throughout the 1990s of the US as “global supercop.” Unlike in police actions, states engaged in the war also make determinations on the “justice” of the war. This violates the very fundamental difference between the narrative of Synthesis and of the Two. In the narrative of the Two, “the law and the power structures… are the instruments our enemies are using to pursue and subjugate us.” The process by which the “justness” of war actions is determined is made

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13 It cannot be said, either, that the reconciliation between warring groups is the end of war. War is never ended in reconciliation, but victory, to use Kant’s term. Reconciliation - in the sense of Synthesis and not a hollow armistice - may happen latter in time, but it does so in the context of non-war, after the flames have turned to less then embers.
suspect by the lack of non-partisanship - and until there is a system of international law unbiased enough to serve the human population equally and not the interests of powerful actors, it always will be.

In the previous section of this paper it was argued that war is always immoral and nothing within its context can be determined “just” or “good.” In this section I have suggested that the nature of war in the world simply cannot co-exist with the nature of justice, in the same way the narrative of the Two and the narrative of Synthesis cannot be simultaneously used to explain history. The two arguments work to further delegitimate Just War discourse as a method of justifying war.

V Rationality and the Veil of Civility

I have so far argued that war is always immoral. I have also argued that, as such, the characteristics of “justice” and “war” are incompatible with each other. So why is it, then, that the Geneva Convention, rules of engagement, and books such as Walzer’s or Rawls’s The Law of Peoples persist? Why is it that “our leaders feel the need to offer moral justifications for the wars they wage?” (Evans, 2003). If not to explain the “moral reality of war,” what use does Just War still serve?

As I have suggested throughout this paper, Just War discourse represents a tactic of legitimation aimed at whoever wars need to be legitimated by (politicians, military men and, in democracies, the sovereign “people”) in order for said wars to continue. Militarized actors wish to maintain war as a policy option, but need to appease certain loyalties towards humanitarian sentiments and the rule of law held within the population which legitimates war and allows it to function. We have scratched the surface with section IV of how civilians still die, wars are still waged for selfish and hegemonic reasons and humanitarian crises (usually themselves wars) go unintercepted. Wars that are deemed “just” are no less engaged in all the aspects that make war offensive. The real work of Just War discourse is done in justify the otherwise unjustifiable; it exists less to ease the suffering of the enemy and more to allow the civilians back home to sleep at night.

All this suggests that somebody must be aware of other reasons for waging war but veils they’re true reasons by citing “justice.” This sounds conspiratorial, but it need not conjure visions of a cabal of evil generals plotting Just War propaganda to consciously manipulate an unsuspecting public (though this might very well sometimes be the case). It is more likely that there is something inside each one of us that wants to believe war can be made more humane. We tell ourselves that war is just to appease our conscience; soldiers tell themselves war is just as part of the process of stealing their psyches to go through with the horrors of institutionalized killing; politicians waging the
war from their offices back home, to keep from going mad with guilt – to exonerate their actions in their own minds - seek refuge in the comfort that the war, while horrible, is somehow just.\textsuperscript{14} I do not doubt most people who advocate Just War truly believe in the justness of some wars. In this sense they are duped; not malicious or manipulative.\textsuperscript{15}

I have argued that war is immoral. I would also argue that deep inside most people naturally recognize as such, and long for a world without war. Since almost everybody, given the free choice, would choose peace over war, factors in the world have to convince a human being that it is good to allow a certain war. The most pernicious aspect of Just War discourse is that it serves a function war could not exist without. They could not give a war if nobody came. Every war comes equipped with stories regarding why people should come and fight in it – and each story is complicit in the ensuing horrors. The argument of this section is that those who propagate Just War discourse propagate the possibility for war by masking it in a veil of civility and rationality.

There is a popular narrative about human nature that I call the “Heart of Darkness” theory. In this narrative every human has at the atavistic core of his being “an immense heart of darkness” (Conrad) This inner atavism is from whence stems all the brutal irrationalities humans tend to engage in, such as killing, cannibalism, rape and all manner of bad things. Humans restrain themselves from these ugly desires, the narrative goes, through the constraining forces of civility. Civility makes us mannered and moral. Without the higher context of civility to constrain us, we revert first to ignorant savages, like American Indians in Locke; then barbarians; then finally we grow drunk and psychotic on our own inner evil. I take this narrative from Conrad’s book and the movie \textit{Apocalypse Now} which stemmed from it, but Hobbes tells this story as well; where reason and the civil compact tame the dangerous passions. It is in the Kant-like narrative of Synthesis (reason = justice = peace). Robert McNamara tells it in \textit{The Fog of War}. We should not be so naïve, McNamara explained, as to ever expect abolition of war because “humans are not entirely rational.” The tragedy that makes war inevitable is two-fold. One, humans can’t help but occasionally side-step our rationality; and two, even when humans are being rational, we can’t be perfectly rational because we can’t have perfect information and so cannot make the perfectly rational decisions.

\textsuperscript{14} A poignant look at a struggle of this sort is offered by Errol Morris’s documentary on Robert McNamara, \textit{The Fog of War}. It is telling that some military men, such as General LeMay in \textit{The Fog of War}, do not feel a moral struggle regarding their war actions – and fittingly, they do not appeal to language of Just War morality in war. LeMay seemed perfectly happy to accept war as a place of no limits to brutality except the limits of force, while McNamara’s conscience demanded some form of restraint to war.

\textsuperscript{15} “The greatest trick the Devil ever played was convincing the world that he didn’t exist” (The Usual Suspects, 1996)
It seems ironic, then, that the story of McNamara’s involvement with the Vietnam war is one where he worked to rationalize war and make it more efficient. McNamara did not rationalize himself out of a war, he rationalized himself through a war. The result of his rationality was not to relieve the world of war but just to make war more exact and, arguably, deadly. Advancing technology is an aspect of the rationalization of war, and yet it is advancing technology that has made war increasingly catastrophic throughout history.¹⁶

The rationalization of war speaks to the very character of war as an institution. I have maintained throughout this paper that war is different than outbursts of passion from an individual or small group of people. War is not spawned from a spontaneous, temporary internal hatred for the Other. As Arendt said, this kind of hatred cannot be maintained, and the evil which undergoes a systematic organization of death is more banal. It is, in fact, in modern times, founded in passionless, rational institutions.¹⁷ War is an institution that must be consciously and premeditatively maintained over extended periods of time. This requires a certain amount of bureaucracy and industry, a certain degree of professionalism and a means by which to forget that the final result of this institution is nothing but carnage and death.

We see Just War discourse add to the rational, bureaucratic aspect of war in three senses: legal/rational authority, which we have already seen with Just War’s (problematic) model of war as international judicial action; industry/bureaucratization; and rationalization in the sense of “excusing” or “finding reasons for” - as in the way a person will rationalize a bad act to himself to feel better about it.

Regarding the industrialization of war, we might think that a war discourse that demands less civilian causalities would demand less capacity to make war. Just War discourse has amounted to the opposite, however. Whenever a military voluntarily limits itself to the constraints of jus in bello, it runs the risk of the enemy taking advantage of the situation in a way that they could not without jus in bello. In guerrilla warfare, says Walzer, “the advantages the guerrilla seeks depend upon the scruples of their enemies.” Since it has never been shown that an army, if it begins to loose the war, will either continue to fight for the “just cause” or restrain from resorting to more brutal tactics, the maintenance of a just war requires the “just” army simply dominate the “aggressor” to the

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¹⁶ Smart bombs are a notable exception in terms of uncontrolled civilian casualties.
¹⁷ Even when we think of genocides, the cases where what I am suggesting might seem probably most problematic, we see the need for rationally maintained campaigns of hatred. See Kuper. Hannah Arendt, in fact, wrote The Banality of Evil regarding the Holocaust.
point where it can win even by abiding by *jus in bello* rules.\footnote{Says Walzer of Vietnam, “The bombing and strafing of peasant villages was a common tactic of the American forces. It is a matter of special interest to us that it was permitted by the U.S. Army’s “rules of engagement” worked out, so it was said, to isolate the guerrillas and minimize civilian casualties.” A good example of both how the rules of *jus in bello* are subject to context, and how acts are rationalized in the institution of war to give the appearance of justice.} The US military has expanded to such an extent that it now has a conscious goal of being able to put down any insurgency anywhere in the world if need be. The US military has proclaimed itself – if not aloud then within its own institutional walls – the army of global justice. This has meant preparing for any event and having the capacity to defeat any enemy. (Der Derian, 2001). The obligation to limit civilian casualties has resulted in advances in and a serious reliance on air power – distancing warriors from the consequences of their war antic (this point returns a few paragraphs later). The US military expands not only in firepower but also in communications technology (keeping a vigilant eye over the world’s information) and scope of interest (as it comes to see the entire globe as its jurisdiction) (Der Derian, 2001).

The problem with this expansion, despite the claims that the military is put to use for universal interests (Powell, 2004), massive military power is actually concentrated within one State, subject to national-interests and fallacies as it is. This makes the project of developing a global sized military loyal to the metaphor of the Synthesis appear, *de facto*, as a hegemonic project befitting the narrative of the Two. Moreover, the Just War discourse begins to privilege the US military as legitimate over all others as the military that is most capable of waging a so-called “just war.” This threatens to give the US military more licence in the world than other forces; a scary proposition for those who would like to trade in a Hobbesian account of the international world for a Kantian one, considering this gives the most licence to the actor with the most might. Again, in the US’s decision to invade Iraq we wonder why they could do so without any meaningful obstruction from the international community even though several members of the community were clearly convinced the action was not just.

The final way in which Just War works to rationalize war - “rationalize” in the sense of explain something to one’s self to the point of felling justified in it - may be the most pernicious of all Just War’s attributes.

There is a way that rationalization works to drain the humanness out of an activity. Protest and resistance to war requires that individuals feel some obligation to those dying in the war. Obligation requires, as I have argued, recognition of humanness in the Other. Advancing industry, bureaucratization and the banality of the institution desensitize us to the humanity – or should I say the anti-humanity – of war. The most
vituperative critique of this phenomena I have so far encountered is Baudrillard, who rails against the way the Gulf War was made into a CNN “soap opera” for Westerners to “enjoy” (in the same sense fans are titillated by intense drama. Had Baudrillard been writing now I’m sure he would have likened it to a reality t.v. show, where audiences are even more drawn in because the action is “real.”) Baudrillard’s argument in *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* is often misunderstood. He never argued that there was not a bloody and terrible event in the sands of Iraq and Kuwait. He argued that this terrible event in the sands of Kuwait was only one small aspect of an otherwise flamboyant global carnival of the communications revolution. The result was to reduce the bloodletting to a video game, and desensitize humanity completely to the war carnage. There has been a realization that distance from the suffering of others in war lessens resistance to war action (Baudrillard, 1995).

The Heart of Darkness narrative spins a tale by which the ability to kill arises from some primal, visceral beast lurking menacingly beneath the human rationality of every one of us. The actual experience of war in modern times has suggested that the ability to kill (in war, at least) is spawned by rational institutions which wash from our minds the prime, visceral, human aspects of actors involved. Stories abound where the experience of meeting the enemy face to face snaps the soldier out of his anti-human training. Timothy McVeigh, notorious Oklahoma bomber, had a disillusioning experience during the Gulf War. “When you’re on the ground,” says McVeigh, “and you’re not in the rear of the action, you’re right up front, and you realize that the people fighting are no different from you. They’ve got a wife and kids at home, they’ve got a family. They don’t wan to be out there. And you don’t want to be there… When we took most of the surrendering Iraqis the first day and saw how badly they had been treated and learn that the Republican Guard was behind them not to back them up but to make them hold in position, it completely changed your view of the war. I was taken aback by what I had been told. We all thought… these people are terrible, every single one of them. You get [to Iraq] and you realize two things, they’re not so terrible and how is this helping my country?” (Time magazine, 2004).

The “just” aspect of Just War exacerbates the desensitizing effect. When we think about war, we think of it in terms of the Heart of Darkness. The enemy is usually more creature-like, more barbaric – they have strange customs and wear odd headgear. We know there’s some sort of bloodletting ensuing, somewhere in the world – but there must be some way in which our wars are correct and unquestionable because they are “just.” Justice is not a self-interested endeavour, we remind ourselves, but a universal ideal
represented in the higher aspects of humanity.\textsuperscript{19} Also, the demand for limited civilian casualties has given rise to the notion that the US military is capable of fighting “clean” wars. Baudrillard makes constant mockery of the myth of bloodless wars, perpetuated by censored newscasts of bombs dropping on buildings and no blood to be found. It suggests that war can be turned from, in the terms of Rappaport, a “fight” to a “game” (Rappaport, 1997). People feel more comfortable with the idea of a game than a fight, and resistance to war is lessened as the Just War discourse floats a gossamer thin, but apparently opaque, \textit{veil of civility} over the entire gory experience. But the veil of civility is itself only a lie and an offence. It is as Kurtz ranted near his death in \textit{Apocalypse Now}: the young fighter pilots are expected to bomb huge swaths of land with napalm, but are reprimanded for writing expletives on their cockpit because the words are “obscene.” It reminds me of a gang of brute teenagers who would beat their opponent to near death, but stop short of certain unseemly gestures like kicking in the testicles or pulling hair. All the aspects that make war brutal and immoral still exist in a just war – yet Just War discourse allows war to appear in our minds as something sometimes noble. This is the new lie of war.

\textbf{VI  Interventions, Appeasements and a Pacifist Ethic}

In all I’ve said it becomes apparent I am advocating a pacifist political stance where war is always a tragedy\textsuperscript{20} – regardless of intentions or outcomes, anyone who engages in war becomes immersed in a context of evil.

It could be charged that I have so far been naïvely absolutist about these matters; that my attitude throughout this paper has been to consider what actions would best lead us to a very far away telos of world peace, when often executive decisions need to be made about immediate crises that demand violent military interception as the lesser of two evils. What about the mistakes, it should be charged against me, of not intervening in Rwanda or of Chamberlain’s appeasement? Events such as these are emblematic of a deeply significant criticism every pacifist has to face: what if an “innocent” was about to

\textsuperscript{19} for such arguments, see Rawls, ; Powell, 2004.

\textsuperscript{20} Similar to the Nietschian sense of tragedy in that no matter how good, noble or righteous the player may be, the context of the situation leads the player to an unavoidable moral staining; different from Nietzsche’s sense in that with Nietzsche tragedy is an unavoidable confrontation with what is greater than our selves. I am optimistic that the tragedy of war is of humanity’s own making and not too great for humanity to surmount through collective will.
be murdered and only killing the murderer could stop it? The dilemma is such that action breaks the pacifist’s sanctity of life principle, but so does inaction.\(^\text{21}\)

In Just War discourse, with violent action founded upon an appeal to justice, the actor may intervene to save the innocent, feel morally correct in doing so and be done with the entire affair. The moral issue reaches its end and no more moral action is required. Under the strictest pacifism, the actor is morally compelled to not act in violence – allowing the innocent to die.\(^\text{22}\) I do not wish to condone this inaction. I say in such a case the actor must choose to stop the aggressor, but realize he cannot consider himself less of a killer than the would-be killer would have been. An astute reader may now charge that the only difference I advocate from just war discourse, then, is that the actor must feel “like a killer,” but that in all other consequences the effect is the same. Contrarily, I feel an ethic that cannot legitimate such acts as “just” does demand more difference of consequence.

With just war, if an actor is just in his war participation and feels the outcome was just, ethics demands no more of him – except maybe further retributive punitive measures (i.e., war crimes trials).

With the pacifist ethic, all actors have ethical obligations to both themselves and all others involved as equal victims of a tragedy. These obligations stretch way beyond the temporal moment of war itself.\(^\text{23}\) For example, Doyle writes that “Liberalism\(^\text{24}\)…” in the international world “carries with it three legacies: peace among Liberal [states], imprudent vehemence toward non-Liberals and complaisance toward the future.” Of this complaisance, he writes, “following the exhaustion of wars, representative legislatures may become reluctant to undertake international commitments... Purely domestic concerns seem to take priority” (Doyle, 1997). The logic of Just War discourse does not directly lead to complaisance, but it does not counteract it either – and if we are to reach our telos of world peace humans will need ethical incentives to counteract their temptations to such acts as Doyle’s “complaisance” and “imprudent vehemence.” The pacifist ethic whereby war is an unthinkable, hellish tragedy would include such ethical incentives.

\(^{21}\) In the international realm, this dilemma is analogous to the one presented by calls for a humanitarian intervention – say, for example, the Rwandan genocide, or an interception of Nazi Germany’s military march across Europe.

\(^{22}\) I have taken the hard case and assumed only killing the would-be murder would stop him. However, in any other example, an attempt at Gandhian nonviolent resistance would be advocated rather than violent defense of the innocent.

\(^{23}\) As such the Marshal Plan, for example, might be seen not as a pragmatic way to ensure Germany didn’t rise up in anger again twenty years down the road, but rather a requirement of compassion and empathy. Such post-war aid is noticeably absent in current Afghanistan, for example.

\(^{24}\) Just War discourse can unproblematically be directly associated with a Liberal international program.
This pacifist ethic demands all involved work hard to ensure that such a tragedy could never happen again. Notice the tremendous emphasis placed on avoidance of war. Since there is no way to engage in a war without ethical stain, wrong-doing is avoided only through preventative measures. Notice also that even though one individual may be determined to avoid war at all cost, she may be drawn into it through the actions of others. Thus the preventative efforts need be universal. This may prove impossible at the level of individual or small scale violence, but at the level of war I believe it is achievable. However, the global political climate as currently maintained obviously allows (quite easily) for war – apparent since war is so prevalent; and so the ethic I am advocating as an alternative to Just War would demand a radical reorganization of world institutions out of meaningful and serious concern for war prevention.25

This last point may, in fact, be what this paper ultimately boils down to. The Just War discourse does not compel us to move towards the telos of a world without war as the pacifist ethic I would like to propose does. Certainly, because just war does not compel us towards the telos, it does not logically follow that it also constrains us from taking other methods towards world peace. However, I have also argued that in its encouragement of maintaining vast military institutions for the purposes of what will be seen as judicial, “punitive” military actions, and in the way the waging of just war desensitizes us to war, diminishing resistance to war, just war actually does constitute some measure of obstacle towards the telos of world peace. Therefore, a delegitimation of just war discourse in favour of a more pacifist ethic and a vision of war as tragedy would be preferred for the good of the world.

Epilogue

Buddha, Jesus, Leo Tolstoy, Jane Addams, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Wilfred Owen, Bertrand Russell, A.J. Muste, Martin Luther King, John Lennon, Ron Kovic, Buckminster Fuller, Baudrillard… For centuries our promethean figures (promethean in the sense of forward-looking) have admonished us about the utter depravity of war. Yet, for centuries, just as it would be realized that whatever reason bade bloody war had never been good reason enough, some other reason would spring forth to make war legitimate again. After the Western world had finally rejected war in the name of God, it soon latched onto war in the name of country. After the collective bloodletting of World War

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25 Such a re-organization would be a topic for a whole other paper in itself, if not a book. Certainly institutions that existed only for the purpose of waging war (such as world militaries) would need to disappear. This would require a fundamental shift in the practice of politics as we know it, since all political systems rely on their military force for ultimate root power. It is likely that such a re-organization could not occur without a serious disciplining of the world population into pacifist behaviours via education and constant socialization, right from birth. Needless to say, pages could be filled with just the initial ruminations on the subject.
If the West arguably purged war for country, only to cling more tightly to the notion of war for justice. In 1918, Wilfred Owen - a young British poet who died in a trench just seven days before Armistice Day - wrote that, had we been witness to the hellish realities of war, we “would not tell with such high zest / To children ardent for some desperate glory / The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori.” “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” is a line from Horace that translates as “it is sweet and honourable to die for one’s country.” Changing the line to “dulce et decorum est pro jus mori” changes nothing. It is not the fact of country, God or justice that matters. War by any allowance is still war. If the Just War discourse persists, one day the world will see yet another war so awesome in its brutality as to remind us that it is the “war” part of the equation that matters, not the “justice” part; that the “war” part of the equation occults “justice” like a moon eclipsing the sun.