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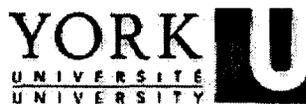


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Glendon Papers is an annual bilingual publication of undergraduate research essays by the students of the International Studies Programme at Glendon College, York University. We hope that this second volume will further demonstrate the value of research work at the undergraduate level, and continue to be an added incentive for strong research efforts by students enrolled in the Programme. We would like to thank the contributors for preparing their research essays for publication, and Professor Domenico Mazzeo for his vision and commitment to the continuation of this project.

Glendon Papers est une publication annuelle bilingue de travaux de recherche des étudiants de premier cycle du Programme d'études internationales du Collège universitaire Glendon. Dans ce deuxième volume, nous espérons continuer à montrer l'importance de la recherche au niveau du premier cycle et encourager les étudiants du Programme à entreprendre des efforts de recherche encore plus soutenus à l'avenir. Nous tenons à remercier les étudiants qui ont préparé les travaux pour la présente publication et le Professeur Domenico Mazzeo pour son engagement et persistance dans la poursuite de ce projet.

Janice Leung
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Editors

Voltaire's Conception of National and International Society

Lilly Lo Manto

Faced with the crumbling of their beloved Greek city-states, during the 4th century before our era, the Stoics used reason to explain their uncertain future in the huge global polis of the Macedonian empire. Two thousand years later, the economic, political and social turmoil brewing in France would foster the emergence of the French Enlightenment. Championed by the *philosophes*, this period would also look to reason to guide national and international security. Indeed, eighteenth century France was a society in ferment. After the death of Louis XIV, in 1715, the succeeding kings, Louis XV and XVI, found themselves periodically confronted, primarily by the *parlements*, with an increasing rejection of the absolutist claims and ministerial policies of the throne.¹ Like his Stoic forefathers, François Marie Arouet (1694-1778), otherwise known as "Voltaire", extolled the merits of reason and tolerance,² believing that the world would be a better place if men only behaved rationally.³ His primary focus was peace; how to obtain, preserve and propagate it. In order to comprehend Voltaire's conception of world peace, this essay will analyze what he believed to be its foundations, namely: the rights and roles of individuals based on their social class, and the role of an ideal state which would foster domestic harmony. According to Voltaire, the key to obtaining international peace stemmed from the relationship between the individual and the State. The relationship between the individual and the state, outlined in the Social Contract, could only succeed if man maintained his role and exercised his rights while the state assured him of his fundamental liberties. Fulfillment of the Social Contract meant that national security achieved by the state would contribute to greater international stability through the maintenance of a balance of power, the adoption of a commercial diplomacy, and the replacement of mercantilism with free trade. Consequently, in Voltaire's view the implementation of all these factors would lead to the avoidance of war between nations and to international harmony.

The Roles and Rights of the Individual

Voltaire believed that the creation of peace began at the local level with the individual's fulfillment and exercise of his respective roles and rights. Although he viewed man to be the primary unit of social organization, Voltaire did not regard all people as equal. In fact, the individuals constituting the monarchy, the property-owning class and the masses all had designated roles and rights associated with their social rank. Nonetheless, he maintained that all individuals share a limited number of rights and obligations. Among the most important of these shared rights is that of the individual's freedom to choose his homeland, a liberty he regarded as a natural right. Voltaire agreed with the Greek poet/dramatist Euripides that one's homeland is "wherever one feels happy and at ease," and that the pursuit of happiness may be fulfilled only through a sense of liberty and security. He believed that national affection depended both on the treatment the individual received in his native land and on the strength of his human ties, as

suggested by the following statement: “si vous aviez à vous plaindre de votre patrie, vous feriez très bien d’en accepter une autre.”⁴ Secondly, Voltaire advocated the right of legal equality for all men, regardless of their social position. In his work, *Essay on the Manners and Minds of Nations*, Voltaire distinguished this form of equality from others by stating, “this word does not mean the absurd and impossible equality by which servant and master...are lumped together on the same level; but the equality of the citizen before the laws he can count upon to defend the liberty of the weak against the ambition of the strong.”⁵

Among the roles he believed all citizens should fulfill in order to guarantee the well being of the nation, that of the ‘taxpayer’ was the most important. In fact, on the subject of taxation Voltaire insisted, “every social class owes its part to the state and has an obligation to fulfill its responsibilities.”⁶ He felt that individuals who were unable to pay their taxes due to misfortune, personal greed or religious interests and were subsequently unable to contribute to the welfare of their fellow man, suffered a material break in their bond with their nation. Voltaire also asserted that contribution to the welfare of humanity depended on an obligation to defend until death those laws that guaranteed all members the equal possession of the natural rights.⁷

He believed that uniting the bourgeois and workers would not protect the natural rights of masses, instead he stressed the duties of the monarchy, the governing few, to fulfill their obligations to the citizens. Ultimately, he looked upon the enlightenment of the sovereign as the most direct means of achieving national improvement.⁸ Voltaire defined this ideal leader as the *législateur de goût*, a view that emerged out of the political struggles and constitutional debates of the mid-eighteenth century, according to David A. Wisner. This ideal legislator would make or rebuild society through laws that would echo natural law; he would be expected to correct political and moral vice by restoring human conduct back to its natural moral standard and was to inspire his fellow citizens to obey his laws by convincing them that by so doing they would be happier, better and more free. In his historical works, Voltaire portrays Louis XIV and Peter the Great as great legislator kings.⁹ In *Henriade*, Henri IV is portrayed as the protector of the French people whose passion for his homeland overcame warfare and religious opposition. Voltaire praised Peter I, Czar of Russia for his achievements as an innovator, statesman, organizer and legislator.¹⁰ He placed the *philosophe* on the same level as the monarch, in terms of fulfilling the role of legislator. He believed that, by becoming spokesmen in general cultural matters, the *philosophes* could also legislate. He explains this idea in a letter to fellow *philosophe* Helvétius: “c’est l’intérêt du roy, c’est celui de l’état que les philosophes gouvernant la société... notre morale est meilleure que la leur, notre conduite plus respectable.”¹¹ Voltaire also saw the head of state as a free agent who needed to be enlightened. In 1726, during his banishment to England, Voltaire enlarged his conception of the role of monarch to include the legal guardian of the constitution. In 1740, in a letter to the Maréchal of Schullembourg he wrote that an ideal ruler would “abstain from conquest and political warfare” and that such an individual would make international peace his cardinal virtue. In the same year, Voltaire would find the incarnation of his ideal legislator in Prince Frederick, whose work, *Anti-Machiavelli*, expressed his views on the futility of war and the kingly duty of maintaining world harmony.¹²

Voltaire was well aware of the importance of the property owners, or the bourgeoisie, who were imposing their values on society with increasing force by using commerce and education as tools for societal change.¹³ He shared the opinion of many *philosophes* that those in

the merchant class were the most obvious promoters of national well-being.¹⁴ Voltaire concluded that France's economic growth was "due more to the work of financiers such as Jacques Coeur than to the hallucinations of the Maid of Orléans, Joan of Arc."¹⁵ He vehemently supported the education of the bourgeoisie who he viewed as a pivotal class in the social structure. Voltaire believed that the ownership of property bonded the owner to his country both economically and socially because, in his opinion, the owner had become a direct shareholder in the holdings of his community and of his nation. Voltaire felt that the property owner fulfilled his Social contract through either the cultivation of his land, or by servicing the communal life of the state, thus gaining within the social framework of the nation certain material benefits that would allow for a more effective means of pursuing his happiness. Therefore, the *philosophe's* conception of the property owner was that of an intellectually and ethically mature individual who could and should be granted a voice in the affairs of his community so that he may effectively contribute to its prosperity, security and stability.¹⁶

His conception of the ideal property-owner was modeled after the British merchant, Everard Faulkener, in whose home he had resided. In fact, Faulkener inspired his sarcastic phrase, "I do not know who is more useful to the state: a well-powdered *seigneur* who considers himself a noble in playing the role of a slave in the antechamber of a minister, or the merchant who, giving orders from Sural to Cariso, enriches his country and contributes to the welfare of the world."¹⁷ Voltaire's aristocratic prejudices afforded him the conviction that only an educated minority could maximize the well-being of the government.¹⁸

Contradictions in Voltaire's philosophy are most apparent with regards to the roles and rights of the poor. Firstly, he refers to the artisan, the worker and the destitute as 'the masses' instead of as individuals. Secondly, although Voltaire believed that all men possessed the faculty of reason,¹⁹ he had been known to remark cynically that had God not existed it would have been necessary to invent him for the masses.²⁰ This implies that, for Voltaire, 'the masses' lacked the ability to reason. God thus becomes, as he explained, a necessity for the maintenance of order. Voltaire expresses this thought by saying "Quel autre frein pouvait-on mettre à la cupidité... que l'idée d'un maître éternel que nous voit et que jugera jusqu'à nos plus secretes pensées."²¹ Indeed, he feared the anti-bourgeois sentiment of the unenlightened masses.²²

Amongst scholars there exists differing opinions of what Voltaire felt to be the rights and the role of the poor within society. For example, author Owen Aldridge explains that Voltaire protested against social injustice and crusaded against all forms of oppression and persecution.²³ On the other hand, author Harold J. Laski maintains that the *philosophe* felt that the perpetuation of the uninstructed masses was essential because he feared the social consequences of popular enlightenment. Laski supports his belief by citing a letter Voltaire wrote to Damilaville that explained that anyone who owned property and needed servants would think that leaving the masses uneducated was essential. He wanted the power of reason to extend from important citizens to the poorer masses gradually. Laski stresses that the changes Voltaire demanded, in particular the natural rights encompassing the liberty of person and property, freedom of speech and press, liberty to worship God in one's way and trial by jury, be reserved for the prosperous bourgeoisies.²⁴ Voltaire dismissed equality saying with resignation "on our miserable globe it is impossible for men living in society not to be divided into two classes, one the rich who command, the other the poor who serve."²⁵ In *The Philosophic Dictionary*, Voltaire explained

that social inequality was the outcome of man's painful struggle for survival and that social equality could only exist in a world where all individuals were free of wants and needs. He accepted men's dependence on other men and the resulting subordination that left 'the masses' with little to no rights to enjoy or productive societal roles to fulfill.²⁶

The Role of the State and Ideal Form of Government

The individual achieved his role and practiced his rights within the nation state, which, according to Voltaire was a human invention.²⁷ It was within this artificial entity that the Social Contract, a mutually beneficial relationship, that involved the exchange of rights and duties between the state and the citizen, was realized and domestic peace secured. If the Social Contract failed, the individual would find himself with no nation upon which to depend for the defense of his fundamental liberties. Voltaire went so far as to view the Social Contract as an ethical obligation between the state and the citizen.²⁸ He did not regard liberty as an attribute of human nature but as a gift of culture inseparable from civilized society.²⁹ The individual would only obtain liberty if he and the state fulfilled their mutual obligation towards one another. Ultimately, this political partnership would arrive through the voluntary will of the citizen. Therefore, membership into a nation was not an obligation but a choice each individual made, stemming from the bond of mutual fulfillments of rights and duties.³⁰

Voltaire explained: "On a une patrie sous un bon roi; on n'en a pas sous un méchant"; once the state violated the rights of its citizens, the Social Contract would be broken, security would be threatened, and the individuals would fail to have a homeland.³¹ The function of *la patrie*, according to him, was not to bestow national character but to assure the individual of his fundamental liberties.³² Thus, the state is of utmost importance to the individual because he relies on its political organization for his well-being and for the enjoyment of his rights. Consequently, laws must regulate political society.³³ These laws would preserve and guarantee all individuals, regardless of class, their rights as members of humanity.³⁴ Furthermore, the laws should protect what Voltaire thought to be among the most fundamental of natural rights, that of property. He believed that the nation was organized to shield the individual from any unnecessary physical harm, and to protect his private property.³⁵ These laws would be best implemented by a regime with some degree of popular sovereignty, through the decisive action of a leader.³⁶

The government was the vehicle by which the state fulfilled its part of the Social Contract; its task resided in restoring men to an equal footing with respect to the laws of the state. Its national policies would promote equal opportunity and would place the economic burden through taxation on those who were most capable of paying, thus rewarding ability, and fostering peace. In his work, *Thoughts on Government*, Voltaire maintained that "the best government would seem to be one under which all classes of men are equally protected by law" and, more specifically, entitled to trial by jury.³⁷ He thought he may have found this form of government in the English model, believing that the process that had started in Ancient Greece had been perfected in England.³⁸ In the British constitutional monarchy, Voltaire saw the closest approximation of how he believed a nation should protect the individual.³⁹ In fact, he was so drawn to the British checks and balance parliamentary system, that it gave him a standard by which to compare the functioning of government in his homeland.⁴⁰ However, Voltaire's

pessimism about human nature made him doubt the feasibility of popular self-government in France.⁴¹ Author Harold J. Laski explains that, even if Voltaire “sees no case against republicanism or democracy, he thinks men rarely worthy to govern themselves.”⁴² Owen A. Aldridge adds that although Voltaire “wanted governments to exercise reason and monarchies to foster learning, despite his occasional reference to ‘republican principles’, he had no conception of universal literacy and had not desire to see power in the hands of the people.”⁴³

Voltaire ultimately found a compromise in both enlightened despotism and constitutional monarchy⁴⁴ saying, in the opening pages of *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*: “il faut, pour qu’un Etat soit puissant, ou que le peuple ait une liberté fondée sur les lois, ou que l’autorité souveraine soit affermie sans contradiction.”⁴⁵ He praised China’s despotism as a model of a secular and human civilization, admiring both the efficiency of China’s laws, which ensured the protection of property and the peoples’ well-being, and what he saw as China’s humane and simple religion free of intolerance and superstition.⁴⁶ Particularly, Voltaire admired China’s political stability that preserved the state and stemmed from the regime’s despotic ability to secure blind obedience from its people.⁴⁷ Although he would remove the hereditary privileges of the aristocracy,⁴⁸ and a traditional justice-oriented model of the legislator and/or an enlightened despotism,⁴⁹ he adamantly believed that by providing the individual his rights and his well-being, the state guaranteed a secure, prosperous and harmonious environment.⁵⁰

Conception of International Society – Adoption and Maintenance of World Peace

Domestically stable states would provide an arena where the great discoveries of the laws of nature, which had taken place in the previous century, could be followed by a discovery of laws of social order that would make possible the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world. This conviction that the era of great change was approaching was primarily due to Voltaire’s belief in progress. He thought that progress would arrive through the growth of sciences, arts, morality, laws, commerce and industry. Voltaire viewed wars as one of the great obstacles to world progress, believing that if wars were abolished, the world would rapidly improve.⁵¹ He believed that the homeland would be best served not by the belligerent addition of new territories to her borders, but by a policy of peaceful cooperation with other members of the European family of nations. Indeed, Voltaire so ardently felt that the French, the English and the Austrians were all children of a common European heritage of laws, customs and ethical standards that the annexation of another nation by force was contrary to the author’s whole philosophy.⁵² However, he did not share the enlightened optimistic view of his day that war could be eliminated from earth.⁵³ Nonetheless, in his work, *L’A.B.C.*, Voltaire rejected Hobbes’ belief that the natural state of man is one of belligerence, saying “If the natural state of man were war, all men would slaughter one another...war is therefore not the essence of the human being.” He sees the problem as an educational one, believing that if man was educated his behaviour would radically change.⁵⁴

In *The Philosophic Dictionary*, Voltaire deemed wars of aggression to be the ‘epitome of all evils and the scourge of civilization’. He explained in the *Essay on the Manners and Minds of Nations* that material conquest could drain the victorious nation of both energy and resources.⁵⁵ Voltaire argues that a nation’s riches were defined by its labour and demography,

not by the simple quantity of precious metals it possessed within its borders; adding that to empower a nation, money should be distributed within the state for works of public utility instead of being wasted away on wars.⁵⁶

Having spent many years of his life with foreign and French diplomats, Voltaire held both a critical and constructive attitude to the study of foreign affairs. He maintained that foreign ministers and their rulers all too often followed their petty passions or megalomania for glory in the conduct of international relations.⁵⁷ He believed that a simple whim of a king or one of his favorite subjects would be enough to provoke the most bloody international conflicts.⁵⁸ In his work, *History of Charles XII*, Voltaire appealed directly to his king, using the historical figure of Charles XII as an example of the futility of military conquest. Later, he returned to this theme in *The Century of Louis XIV*, expressing the view that throughout the warring years France had been drained of its citizens and material resources.⁵⁹ He also professed skepticism towards the concept of war as a valid political instrument.⁶⁰ Subsequently, Voltaire became disgusted with those who supported the theory of preventive war, describing it as "this scourge and crime which includes all other scourges and crimes, this universal mania which desolates the world."⁶¹

According to Voltaire, the only just war was a defensive war, which he interpreted as a struggle for national survival against direct attack. Instead of preventative war, he urges that a state immediately adopt the diplomatic, social and military methods of its stronger neighbour. Since Voltaire viewed war to be inevitable, his answers to the threat of military assault lay in the military preparation of stockpiling arsenals and above all maintaining the balance of power. He was a great champion of the theory of the balance of power, even though he maintained that the conservation of an equal distribution of opposing forces was practically impossible on the continent. Therefore, Voltaire was shocked at the attempted destruction of Holland by Louis XIV; he viewed Holland as a useful member of the family of nations and thus felt the act to have gone completely against the interest of humanity.⁶²

Voltaire also attributed the lack of world peace to the moral autonomy that the nation-state had begun to assume by the eighteenth century, a reality he blamed on the diplomacy conducted during his time, which was mainly driven by mercantilist ambitions. His complaint was that the existing political-military diplomacy's goal of amassing wealth prevented the establishment of peace. Although Voltaire called for a commercial diplomacy that would replace this practice, he did recognize a need for formal diplomats and entertained hopes that an elite corps of international civil servants might guide foreign relations in the future. This would involve the recruitment of progressive ministers who would replace those few already scattered around the world representing princes and rulers.⁶³ Voltaire vehemently maintained that mercantilism was one of the greatest instigators of war and an obstacle to world peace. The reigning mercantilist view held that war and monetary wealth were closely interrelated, because a nation's monetary richness permitted the preparation of its army in an era when the military had become almost exclusively mercenary. Money permitted the creation of alliances with partners that would otherwise have no other reason to enter into conflict.⁶⁴ He was particularly interested in seeing the abolition of mercenary troops and standing armies as a step towards international peace and security.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Voltaire held certain mercantilist views, arguing that exports should exceed imports and that imports should be heavily taxed. He believed that the exportation of money to foreign powers was the economic factor that

impoverished a nation. Also, he approved of colonies when they functioned to supply the mother country with primary resources, thereby helping the citizens of the colonial power by supplying them with needed material that otherwise would have been purchased from abroad.⁶⁶

However, Voltaire recognized that the eighteenth century economic reality had outdistanced the legal and institutional framework of society, saying in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*: “we exhaust ourselves in money and manpower, so that we can go destroy each other at the extremities of Asia and America.” He insisted that free trade between domestically stable countries was among the best methods of developing world peace.⁶⁷ However, he believed free markets between nations and tariff reductions were an impossible realization in the eighteenth century, because he felt its functioning would require agreements between all powers to pursue similar policies. Open commerce was an important tool for the *rapprochement* between nations and a deterrent to hostility and aggression. A consequence of free trade would be to direct the efforts of various nations not at mutual destruction, but towards helping each other to secure wanted commodities that rendered life more pleasant. In his work, *The Century of Louis XV*, he expressed this belief by stating: “commerce should be the bond between nations. It should console the earth and not lead to the earth’s devastation.”⁶⁸ Forgetting the frequent Anglo-Dutch animosities over commerce, he pointed out Holland, Venice and England as examples of commercial interdependence that fostered a spirit of tolerance and peace. In fact, he insisted that England and Holland, like Venice, were “republics [where] toleration is the fruit of liberty and the origin of happiness and abundance.”⁶⁹

Lastly, despite his skepticism concerning the ineffective proposals for a uniform law of nations, Voltaire called for the development of international law to guide peaceful relations among states.⁷⁰ He believed in natural law as a way to govern all men with its basic principle “do what you would have others do unto you,”⁷¹ and felt that this should be logically extended to relations between nations.⁷² Voltaire understood that reason did not always govern all nations, at all times. He did, however, support reason as the norm to which all nations should aspire, and by which all national achievements can be assessed. Reason would allow for a Voltarian vision of international peace and world progress: the active collaboration of Europe’s nations that would create a partnership in science and subsequently a united effort to apply the knowledge to the welfare of mankind.⁷³

Conclusion

While in the twentieth century, international relations theory would become more preoccupied with the maintenance, adoption and propagation of peace; Voltaire had already recognized its importance in the eighteenth century. He maintained that international peace was impossible without first obtaining a domestic harmony through the realization of the Social Contract, the key to national security. This relationship that the individual shared with the state was a voluntary one, because the Social Contract entailed mutual benefits for both parties. Man fulfilled his obligations by maintaining his role in society and exercising his rights, which differed considerably according to social rank. Voltaire’s state was an artificial entity that existed solely to protect the individual’s natural rights. These liberties included protection of the person, property, trial by jury, freedom of speech, press and worship. He was most enthusiastic

about the English model of parliamentary government because, in his eyes, it aspired towards the common good of all its inhabitants. His proposed remedy for overcoming the chaos of French politics wavered between enlightened despotism and constitutional monarchy. For Voltaire, domestic stability would foster peace among sovereign European states that belonged to a common heritage of laws. He blamed war, the military-political diplomacy of his time, and the ever-increasing moral autonomy of states for the lack of international stability. All these factors were the results of mercantilist ambitions. While the concept of balance of power was championed as the principal method to create peace, the adoption of a new commercial diplomacy and an international system of laws could also help to maintain peace. Unfortunately, as we can see today, the replacement of mercantilism with free trade and the adoption of a liberal commercial diplomacy by international actors have not erased the reality of armed conflict. The question, therefore, remains: why do countries that enjoy internal harmony, practice democratic forms of government, and loudly preach 'governance through reason' still feel it necessary to engage in war?

Notes

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Contribution to International Relations Theory

Genevieve Blanchet

*To renounce one's freedom is to renounce one's condition as a man.*¹

The above statement by Rousseau expresses the ideological foundation upon which the Enlightenment was built. Undoubtedly a product of his time, Rousseau was a key contributor to the development of liberalism in the 18th century. His works, which mainly focus on political philosophy, have shaped the concept and practice of democracy as it exists today. Most importantly, Rousseau helped to open new doors to the study of political science by influencing the international aspect of this discipline. In today's global village, knowledge and understanding of society's political roots is critical, as it helps one to comprehend current trends in international relations. Furthermore, a thorough study and comprehension of mankind's political past may help to anticipate its future. Democracy is becoming increasingly prevalent worldwide; therefore, a clear understanding of its foundations is imperative in order for contemporary states to function effectively as international actors. This research essay seeks to outline Rousseau's contribution to international relations theory and to analyze its relevance to contemporary society.

Rousseau's Background and Influences

Born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1712, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was both a product of the century of the Enlightenment and one of its major exponents.² He established his reputation as a passionate, eloquent writer in 1749, after writing a prize-winning essay on the argument that the revival of the arts and sciences had done more to corrupt morals than to purify them.³ Throughout the course of his writing career he created many works, including *Discourse on the Origins of Equality*, a novel entitled *Julie ou la Nouvelle Heloise*, a treatise on education entitled *Emilie*, and his most famous political science oeuvre, *The Social Contract*. The aforementioned works were written between 1754 and 1761.⁴ Rousseau died an isolated and eccentric man in 1778, on the eve of the French Revolution.⁵

Rousseau was strongly influenced by prominent ancient and Renaissance writers such as Plutarch, Plato, Machiavelli and Montaigne. He also carefully read and analyzed the works of Hobbes and Locke, whose ideas he developed in his own theory of the Social Contract.⁶ However, he drew most of his inspiration from his close circle of friends, now known as the *philosophes*. He shared the Enlightenment thinkers' liberal aims to promote reason, equality, freedom from authoritarianism and above all, the importance of questioning everything. He worked alongside French philosopher Diderot and readily used the *Encyclopedie* as a means of propaganda in order to communicate his ideas.⁷ Although Rousseau had no formal education and maintained strong religious principles throughout his life,⁸ he still considered himself a voice of the Enlightenment and a man who "sometimes had common sense and loved the truth."⁹

Rousseau's Conception of Human Nature

Rousseau's views on the nature of man are a crucial element of his contributions to international relations theory. In order to understand how states interact at the international level, it is necessary to examine what lies at the center of every state, which is the individual. His conception of man's state of nature is that of freedom and natural goodness, however, man has the capacity to be both good and evil.¹⁰ Society corrupts man, and the source of this corruption rests in bad institutions that can be replaced with better ones.¹¹ To precisely define man's state of nature, Rousseau established three basic principles, introduced in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. The first principle argues that natural man was solitary, and had no permanent ties with others. Secondly, natural man had only two practical principles, self-love, demonstrated by greed, selfishness, and the pursuit of self-interest, and pity, demonstrated through compassion, admiration and love for others. Lastly, natural man was distinguished from animals chiefly because he possessed free will, and also because he had the capacity for self-improvement or perfectibility.¹² From these three central assumptions, Rousseau is then able to explain how society has corrupted natural man. He gathers his explanations under his 'Social Division of Labor Theory'. Rousseau begins by saying that through historical progress, natural man witnessed the establishment and distinction of families, as well as the introduction of the idea of owning property. It was at this point that natural man began to compare himself to other.¹³ Then the invention of new technology, such as agriculture and metallurgy, led men to become dependant on each other for resources and responsibilities; thus the division of labor was introduced. As a direct result of the division of labor and property, inequality between men was entrenched, and freedom became slavery. Man was divided into social classes determined by wealth and power, and therefore became compelled to achieve personal profit at the expense of others. Man's state of nature became a state of war due to this competition. Men could only regain their freedom by establishing a supreme power that would govern them, according to laws they had consented to.¹⁴ At the core of Rousseau's political philosophy is how this government is created. This requires an analysis of his conception of the nature of the state.

Rousseau's Conception of the Nature of the State

Rousseau was concerned with explaining the relationship between human nature and the nature of the state, which is at the root of his political philosophy. He states,

The passing from the state of nature to 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... We might also add that man acquires with civil society, moral freedom, which alone makes man the master of himself; for to be governed by appetite alone is slavery, while obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself is freedom.¹⁵

The latter part of this statement suggests the possibility of self-legislation; indeed, Rousseau was a firm believer in the democratic form of government. Rousseau's theory of the nature of the state is based on these two central ideas of self-legislation and democracy. The nature of the state, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, is a Social Contract, which is the only legitimate means of political authority.¹⁶ The Social Contract concerns itself primarily with the idea that in order to remain free in a political society, individuals must, above all, be at liberty to create their

own laws. These individuals formed the 'body politic' and their collective voice became the 'General Will,'¹⁷ thus they become the 'Sovereign.'¹⁸ Obviously, the 'body politic' had an obligation to obey their own laws in order to remain free.¹⁹ The 'general will' became a governing motive; this was the function of the political machine, which was designed to convert the 'General Will' into morally obligatory law.²⁰ The Social Contract, then, is a mutual agreement between the Sovereign and its government under which democracy can flourish.

To understand Rousseau's Social Contract, it is absolutely necessary to consider the respective natures of the general will and of the government. Simply defined, the general will is the agreement of interests between every member of a community.²¹ Paradoxically, it recognizes freedom as the supreme moral value.²² According to Rousseau, the general will "attempts to solve the problem of social organization, or how to get autonomous, self-enclosed individuals to cooperate in a society while still being free to pursue personal aims."²³ Thus, the general will is defined as the harmonization of individual and collective interests,²⁴ and to obey the general will is not a loss of freedom because individuals are ultimately obeying themselves.²⁵ When individuals obey the general will, they remain free and collectively fulfill their part of the Social contract.

The other component of the Social Contract is the political institution. Rousseau defines the state as "essentially the institutional expression of man's moral purpose," and not "a device by which men are enabled to control one another."²⁶ Most importantly, the members of the government implement the power delegated to them in the name of the Sovereign, so as to guarantee the freedom of the people governed.²⁷ Rousseau was also concerned with the preservation of equality within government, and firmly supported a balance of power between its branches, stating, "it is not good for the power that makes the laws to execute them."²⁸ In addition, it is crucial to understand that Rousseau fully endorsed direct democracy, with elections based on the principle that there should be as many votes in the Assembly as there are in the body politic.²⁹ He recognized that direct democracy could only function properly in small states, where people could easily assemble together on a periodical basis.³⁰ He was opposed to representative democracy on the assumption that it deprived the people of freedom of choice,

The idea of representation is modern, and derives its origin from the feudal government, a system absurd and iniquitous, that degrades human nature and dishonors the name of man.³¹

In relation to the role and functions of the government, Rousseau outlines many ideas similar to those of other political philosophers of his time, such as Montesquieu. As previously mentioned, the primary function of the state is to preserve man's state of nature, which is free and good, by respecting the Social Contract, thereby giving the state legitimate authority as well as securing man's freedom. There are three other main functions of the state, beginning with legislation. The state, through reception and interpretation of the General Will, is responsible for establishing laws, which are separated into four main categories: political (fundamental), civil, criminal and moral, the last being unofficial, but strictly upheld.³² The second function of the state is execution, that is, implementing laws in order to maintain civil and political liberty.³³ Lastly, the third function of the state is that of the tribunal, which can be compared to the judiciary. This last function exists largely to balance the two other branches and to provide security to the people by preserving laws.³⁴

When linking the role of the General Will to the role of the state, it is easy to understand the Social contract and accept it as a valid description of the nature of the state. Furthermore, a thorough comprehension of the nature of the state is of crucial importance when explaining the relationship between states. This leads us to an analysis of Rousseau's theory of international relations.

Rousseau's Contribution to International Relations Theory

Although the works of Rousseau did not focus explicitly on the study of international relations, it is evident from his writings that he recognized the importance of this subject.³⁵ Generally speaking, Rousseau had a pessimistic conception of international relations, because he viewed international society as being in a permanent state of insecurity and mutual antagonism, or more explicitly, a constant state of war.³⁶ This state of war, originated from the mutual dependence of naturally unequal states.³⁷ Interdependence breeds trade and competition, which subsequently causes inevitable discord. Rousseau clearly states this point in his work, *State of War*:

Political bodies have enough for their own preservation...but they have no fixed measure; their proper size is undefined, it can always grow bigger, it feels weak so long as there are others stronger than it. Its safety and preservation demand that it makes itself stronger than its neighbors.³⁸

Rousseau believed that war arose from the relationship between states, not between individuals.³⁹ Man is naturally peaceful and timid, and becomes a soldier only through the influence of his society.⁴⁰ Therefore, war is a product of society; armies did not exist until societies existed, with states organizing these armies and sending them to fight for the interests of the rulers.⁴¹ Furthermore, Rousseau maintains that international society in the state of war obeys only the law of the strongest.⁴² For this reason, he expresses his great distrust in foreign powers, and believes that relations with these powers only engender more dependence and division. He confirms this thought in his writings:

No one who depends on others, and lacks resources of his own, can ever be free. Alliances, treaties, gentlemen's agreements, such things may bind the weak to the strong, but never the strong to the weak.⁴³

He also claims that society in the state of war can never become good and legitimate, unless war is eliminated everywhere in the world. He articulates this pessimistic view in his work, *State of War*:

Permeated with [the] persuasive talk [of the philosophers], I lament the miseries of nature, admire the peace and justice established by the civil order, bless the wisdom of public institutions and console myself for being a man by looking upon myself as a citizen. Well-versed in my duties and happiness, I shut my book, leave the classroom, and I look around me. I see unfortunate nations groaning under yokes of iron, the human race crushed by a handful of oppressors, a starving crown overwhelmed by pain and hunger, whose blood and tears the rich drink in peace, and everywhere the strong armed against the weak with the formidable power of law.⁴⁴

Finally, Rousseau believes that perpetual peace can only be achieved at the price of revolution.⁴⁵

To understand Rousseau's solution for the establishment of perpetual peace, it is crucial to mention the contributions of Abbé de Saint-Pierre to the development of Rousseau's ideas. Abbé de Saint-Pierre was a writer who had studied international relations theory, and had come to the conclusion that peace could only be achieved through the integration of the European states into a confederation. After de Saint-Pierre's death, his friends and family searched for an eloquent scholar to edit his principal work, entitled *Project for Perpetual Peace*. Rousseau was chosen for this undertaking; however, the finished product became more his personal critique of de Saint-Pierre's ideas than an edited version of the original work.⁴⁶ Initially, Rousseau's analysis seems to recognize the potential effectiveness of a European Commonwealth. This federation would have to be established through revolution, specifically one state conquering the entire continent militarily.⁴⁷ The formation of a federal government that united these states would also be advantageous in some ways. Such a union would combine the advantages of large and small states, and would hold subjects, rulers and foreigners equally in check. Also, this Commonwealth would be powerful enough to hold supremacy of law, and could also intimidate neighboring non-member states from attacking.⁴⁸ It would have enough defensive force to protect itself if attacked, yet not enough offensive force to conquer.⁴⁹ This solution for perpetual peace seemed favorable, but Rousseau was hardly convinced. He claimed that this theory had an easy yet undeniably impossible conclusion because it did not take into account the diversity and inequality of the citizens involved.⁵⁰ Surely not everyone would be willing to give up both identity and property for the sake of the Commonwealth. Therefore, Rousseau set about developing his own vision of international society.

He proposed the establishment of a variety of federations, as a means of creating "islands of peace" within the state of war.⁵¹ Rousseau argues that the stability of such a system hinges on historically formed preconditions, and operates on balance of power dynamics. In Europe for example, the presence of the German body could make this system possible. Germany, because of its geographic position at the center of the European continent, its vast size, and its stable, internal balance of power politics, would be able to balance the rest of Europe.⁵² Here it is important to note that Rousseau was basing his assumptions on the European geopolitical situation of the late 1700s. He credited the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 as the foundation of an international system based on the balance of power, and acknowledged that the principle of the sovereignty of states is extremely important.⁵³ He further declared:

The powers of Europe constitute a kind of system, united by the same religion, international law and moral standards, by letters, by commerce and by a kind of equilibrium which is the inevitable outcome of all these ties. And although the rulers of individual states always act to extend their dominions, the balance still remains.⁵⁴

Although the balance of power system was effective in maintaining order, Rousseau still maintained that it did not abolish the state of war because peace could only be achieved if the European states relinquished their sovereignty and invested in a higher federal body.⁵⁵ Also, separated federations would make war less likely and fewer in between.⁵⁶ Realizing that war was inevitable in this alternate international system, he devised partial measures to limit the violence of war, and created an 'international law of war'. This law proposed two principles, the first of which was non-combatant immunity. Under this principle, professional armies would be abolished in favor of 'popular defense,' which advocates the use of guerrilla tactics and the avoidance of technological weapons. The second principle he recommends is the duty to spare

prisoners of war.⁵⁷ Clearly, Rousseau realizes that this alternate system has many flaws, but it is ultimately the one that best preserves the interests of the General Will of the international community. Rousseau's contributions to international relations theory seem very relevant, when analyzed in the context of the time period during which he lived. But are they still significant in today's global society?

Modern Applications of Rousseau's Contributions to International Relations Theory

Due to the historical evolution of international relations, one must wonder whether Rousseau's main ideas can explain the prevailing trends in contemporary international society. In his work, *A History of International Relations Theory*, Tobjorn Knutsen draws parallels between Rousseau's thoughts and the practice of international relations today. First, he argues that Rousseau would be considered a contemporary neo-isolationist. He would have preferred modern states to remain independent of each other as much as possible, because he believed that dependence was the source of all conflict. In situations of war, he would have probably opposed intervention to punish aggression or the formation of alliances to protect victims, even though he despised conquest. Furthermore, his distrust of the motives of rulers would have made him a critic of great-power interventionist policy, especially regarding the use of military force.⁵⁸ In relation to economic interdependence, he would have probably been opposed to free trade, again because of his neo-isolationist views and his social division of labor theory. For example, Rousseau would have probably supported unions against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as other unions fighting against economic imperialism.⁵⁹

Tobjorn Knutsen also points out that contemporary political societies correspond less and less to Rousseau's vision of international relations. His ideals of internal unity and independence of states are hardly applicable to today's global village. States are slowly losing control over their citizens because they are forced to simultaneously compete for their attention with smaller sub-national communities and larger multinational influences. As well, the mass media brings the global community closer together, by keeping individuals informed about the internal affairs of virtually every country in the world. Factors such as mass migration, religious movements, and even the activity of criminal organizations affect all parts of international society, bringing people together regardless of territorial borders. Contentious issues regarding visible minorities and refugees are also on the rise, which requires cross-border communication between states. Now more than ever, the international community cannot remain oblivious to the need for collaborative international relations. There is a growing awareness that the interdependence of states is becoming increasingly necessary for stability.

According to Tobjorn Knutsen, another contemporary force that Rousseau did not anticipate was the rise of humanitarian intervention. Obviously, this activism creates dependence and requires constant dialogue between states. The presence of humanitarian organizations such as Amnesty International and Doctors without Borders, to name a few, substantiates Rousseau's belief about the compassionate nature of man and his willingness to help alleviate the suffering of others. However, this new awareness of the plight of suffering peoples around the world, brought to attention by such organizations may also have an opposite effect on man's compassionate nature. People may become increasingly desensitized or too overwhelmed to feel that their activism would make any small difference at all, causing them to

turn their eyes away from problems presented before them (on CNN or BBC, for example), or refrain from actively questioning the policies of governments.⁶⁰

From a more long term and comprehensive perspective, one may even wonder whether observations, like those made by Knutsen, do not totally miss Rousseau's fundamental message: the centrality of the quest for equality and democracy in human relations. The national and social revolutions of the past two centuries attest to the accuracy of Rousseau's vision. So do the tragedies of uneven "interdependence" or the North-South gap as well as the persistent abuses of hegemonic power, including in the field of "humanitarian intervention". And could not the current trends towards collaborative federalism, administrative and fiscal decentralization, and new communication technologies also promote the resurgence of forms of more direct or "local" democracy?

Conclusion

The context of current international society is so different from the time of Rousseau's writings that one may be tempted to consider that his theories are no longer pertinent. However, by studying historical events and the ideas of authors writing in the past, mankind is perhaps better able to understand the present context they find themselves in, and also anticipate their future. Rousseau's theories have permitted man to learn much about his own nature, his political surroundings and his role within international society. For these reasons, Rousseau remains a chief contributor to the study of international relations theory. Indeed, his contribution to the subject of democracy is still relevant, since democracy still endures as a legitimate form of government. Further, the existing international system must be submitted to closer scrutiny. Is a balance of power international system, as established by the Treaty of Westphalia and supported by Rousseau, favorable to today's global village? Certainly, such a system is more legitimate than a polarized system, which encourages the dominance of hegemonic powers. Rousseau would have undoubtedly rejected a system based on hegemony, as such a system adversely affects man's freedom and equality in so many ways. When considering the hegemonic dominance of one power in the current international system, perhaps it is a good time to seriously re-evaluate Rousseau's passionate plea for the safe-guarding of the freedom and equality of individuals and nations.

Notes

¹ Hall, John C. Rousseau – Totalitarian or Liberal? New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. 99.

² Ibid, 11.

³ Ibid, 13.

⁴ Ibid, 14-15.

⁵ Ibid, 16.

⁶ Ibid, 18.

⁷ Ibid, 19.

⁸ Grimsley, Ronald. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983. 14.

⁹ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰ Hall, John C. Rousseau – Totalitarian or Liberal? New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. 22.

¹¹ Ibid, 28.

¹² Ibid, 34.

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- ¹³ Grimsley, Ronald. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983. 30.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 31.
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- ¹⁹ Ibid, 18.
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- ²³ Ibid, 251-252.
- ²⁴ Hall, John C. Rousseau – Totalitarian or Liberal? New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. 73.
- ²⁵ Ibid, 76.
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- ²⁸ Ibid, 59.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 15.
- ³⁰ Ibid, 59.
- ³¹ Ibid, 85.
- ³² Ibid, 48-49.
- ³³ Ibid, 51.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 108.
- ³⁵ Forsyth, M.G., H.M.A. Keens-Soper and P. Savigear, eds. The Theory of International Relations. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970. 127.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 129.
- ³⁷ Orwin, Clifford and Nathan Tarcov. The Legacy of Rousseau. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. 202.
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- ⁴¹ Knusten, Torbjorn L. A History of International Relations Theory. 2nd ed. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. 130.
- ⁴² Ibid, 133.
- ⁴³ Orwin, Clifford and Nathan Tarcov. The Legacy of Rousseau. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. 200.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 203.
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- ⁵² Knusten, Torbjorn L. A History of International Relations Theory. 2nd ed. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. 135.
- ⁵³ Ibid, 135-136.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, 134.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 136.
- ⁵⁶ Orwin, Clifford and Nathan Tarcov. The Legacy of Rousseau. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. 207.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, 207-208.
- ⁵⁸ Knusten, Torbjorn L. A History of International Relations Theory. 2nd ed. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. 215.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 216.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 218.

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Philosophie de la « société internationale » de Hobbes et Rousseau : Analyse comparative

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Les relations internationales concernent l'ensemble des liens, des rapports et des contacts entre les différentes entités étatiques et autres acteurs internationaux. Afin d'étudier la complexité de ces relations, plusieurs théories ont été mises de l'avant. Il est ainsi possible de distinguer au moins trois grandes écoles dans le domaine : le réalisme, le libéralisme et le marxisme. Ces trois écoles sont surtout élaborées au cours des XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Cependant, on trouve leurs origines beaucoup plus loin, chez les philosophes politiques des siècles passés. Nous pensons, entre autres, à Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Machiavel, Hobbes, Rousseau ou Smith. Chacun d'entre eux a construit sa propre conception de la nature humaine, de l'État et de la société internationale. Encore aujourd'hui, leurs écrits conservent toute leur pertinence et fournissent le cadre théorique des recherches actuelles dans le domaine des relations internationales.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), considéré comme le père du réalisme moderne, ainsi que Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) ont contribué à enrichir de façon considérable le domaine des relations internationales. Les œuvres de ces deux philosophes constituent aujourd'hui des références de base pour tout étudiant ou spécialiste en la matière. Ce présent travail de recherche a donc pour objectif de mettre en relief les théories des deux penseurs. Leur conception de la nature humaine et le concept d'état de nature seront le premier point de comparaison. Dans un deuxième temps, la notion de contrat social sera étudiée, en lien étroit avec la vision respective des deux auteurs sur l'État idéal. Finalement, la nature des relations entre États et l'origine de la guerre constitueront le troisième et dernier point de comparaison entre Hobbes et Rousseau.

La nature humaine

Depuis Hobbes, le recours à l'hypothèse de l'homme naturel et de l'état de nature pour expliquer l'origine de la société est un lien commun entre les philosophes politiques. L'état de nature chez Hobbes et chez Rousseau, toutefois, n'a ni la même définition ni la même fonction. Pour Rousseau, l'état de nature n'explique pas la création de la société civile. Selon Rousseau toujours, l'état de nature est un outil de référence; il représente le point de comparaison qui permet de connaître l'état social.

L'homme naturel

Hobbes et Rousseau s'opposent quant à leur conception de la nature de l'homme, ce qui a pour conséquence de faire diverger leur philosophie. Tout d'abord, Hobbes décrit l'homme comme un être de désir et de parole. Le désir est cet effort par lequel l'homme tend à rechercher ce qui contribue à la préservation de son être. L'homme est animé par une poursuite constante du plaisir. La félicité (le plaisir continu) ne consiste pas à avoir atteint le succès, mais à l'atteindre continuellement. Ainsi, l'homme est sans cesse en mouvement, sans cesse à la recherche de

satisfaction et de plaisirs nouveaux. Mais pour Hobbes, l'homme est aussi un être de parole, ce qui le distingue de l'animal. La communication est une puissance propre à l'homme, puissance qui émancipe sa constitution mentale.

Rousseau contredit vigoureusement ce dernier point. Selon lui, la parole est un attribut de l'homme en société, et non pas de l'homme naturel. L'une des principales critiques qu'il adresse à Hobbes est d'attribuer à l'homme naturel des caractères qui n'appartiennent qu'à l'homme social. En effet, selon Rousseau, Hobbes s'est basé sur l'homme en société pour décrire l'homme dans l'état de nature et est ainsi tombé dans une illusion rétrospective qui fausse sa conception de l'homme naturel. Ainsi, dans la théorie rousseauiste, ce qui distingue l'homme de l'animal n'est pas la parole mais la liberté. L'homme naturel est un être libre, tandis que l'animal est gouverné par son instinct.

Il existe aussi une autre différence fondamentale entre les deux conceptions. Chez Hobbes, l'homme naturel est un être égoïste, craintif et orgueilleux, en proie à son instinct de conservation et en lutte perpétuelle avec les autres. Chez Rousseau, l'homme naturel n'est pas craintif et vit en solitaire. Le principe de conservation de soi est tempéré par la faiblesse des passions de l'individu (pas ou peu de relations avec autrui) et par le sentiment de pitié qu'il éprouve. Alors que l'homme naturel de Hobbes est vil et intéressé, l'homme naturel de Rousseau est un être fondamentalement bon.¹

L'état de nature

L'homme dans l'état de nature de Hobbes a comme souci principal sa propre conservation. Il est aussi un agent libre, ce qui le pousse à faire tout ce que bon lui semble afin d'assurer sa préservation. Il en résulte un état de nature caractérisé par l'instabilité et la compétition féroce. En effet, selon Hobbes, ce qui définit les relations dans l'état de nature est la *double inquiétude*. D'abord, chaque homme est inquiet d'avoir à trouver constamment de nouveaux objets lui permettant de préserver son existence. Ensuite, chaque homme est inquiet des intentions d'autrui. La présence de l'autre introduit un facteur d'incertitude qui redouble l'inquiétude déjà présente au niveau individuel. Cette incertitude transforme l'inquiétude en crainte. Ainsi, les relations interhumaines sont minées par la défiance, la rivalité et la recherche de supériorité, d'où la célèbre formule de Hobbes : « l'homme est un loup pour l'homme ». De ce fait, l'état de nature chez Hobbes est un état de guerre perpétuelle.

Selon Rousseau, l'homme naturel n'est ni égoïste, ni sociable et est gouverné dans l'état de nature selon deux principes : l'amour de soi (similitude avec le désir; le principe de conservation de Hobbes) et la pitié. Dans cet état, l'inégalité entre les hommes est à peine sensible du fait qu'il n'y ait pas de dépendance entre eux. Chacun se suffit à soi-même et, donc, se soucie peu des autres. Ainsi, l'homme dans l'état de nature de Rousseau ne cherche à atteindre aucune supériorité par rapport à autrui du fait qu'il n'entretient aucune relation. Contrairement à l'état de nature défini par Hobbes, l'état de nature chez Rousseau est un état de bonheur et d'équilibre.

De l'état de nature à l'état social

Pour Hobbes, l'état de guerre caractéristique de l'état de nature explique la nécessité de créer l'état social. Les individus échappent à l'état de guerre permanent en remettant leur liberté et leurs droits à une autorité souveraine en échange de la sécurité et de la paix; ainsi se forge la société. Pour Rousseau, l'état de nature tel que le définit Hobbes a pour fonction de légitimer l'absolutisme existant. Selon lui, il n'y a rien dans l'état de nature qui indique qu'il faille en sortir; c'est un état de bonheur. Il explique que le mal est bien l'ouvrage de l'homme, mais des hommes en société et non pas de l'individu, tel que l'affirme Hobbes. Ainsi, la société pour Hobbes est un bien, puisqu'elle permet à l'homme de se sortir d'un état de guerre et d'insécurité. Pour Rousseau, la société est un mal, puisqu'elle corrompt l'homme naturellement bon en instaurant la notion de propriété et en créant chez lui de nouveaux besoins. ²

L'état social

Dans les philosophies de Hobbes et de Rousseau, l'état social n'a pas la même définition. Alors que Hobbes présente les bienfaits de la société sur les hommes, Rousseau, lui, en fait une critique sévère. Pour Hobbes, l'état social contrôle les passions des hommes et leur évite ainsi l'état de guerre permanent. Dans la conception rousseauiste, la société est à l'origine de la dégradation de l'homme; elle le déprave et le pervertit, elle a pour principal effet de transformer l'âme humaine.

Le contrat social

Parmi les philosophes du contrat social, nous retrouvons Thomas Hobbes, John Locke et Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hobbes est le premier à avoir élaboré une conception du contrat social, mais c'est Rousseau qui lui a donné sa forme la plus complète. Chez Hobbes comme chez Rousseau, le contrat social est une association entre les hommes afin de se donner des lois, créer la société et ainsi sortir de l'état de nature. L'état social est le résultat d'un accord entre les volontés des hommes; il est donc artificiel.

Il y a cependant une différence fondamentale entre les deux conceptions. La théorie de Hobbes énonce que les hommes font un pacte entre eux : ils sont donc les auteurs d'un vouloir politique. Toutefois, seul le souverain est l'acteur de ce vouloir politique. La loi devient donc l'expression de la volonté de celui qui dispose du droit de commander; la loi est un commandement. Le souverain est l'unique législateur, la seule source de légalité politique. Nous pouvons croire ici que Hobbes prône l'absolutisme. Pas tout à fait. Car en fait, chez Hobbes, le souverain doit agir au nom de ses sujets, et tous les commandements doivent être portés à leur connaissance : la raison de l'État est donc celle des particuliers. ³

Chez Rousseau, le passage de l'état de nature à l'état social est plus complexe que chez Hobbes. Dans la théorie de Hobbes, il n'y a que deux étapes : d'abord l'état de nature, ou l'état de guerre permanent, ensuite la société, ou l'État politique. La conception de Rousseau est différente : il y a d'abord l'état de nature stable, tel que décrit plus haut, puis, avant la création de l'état social proprement dit se trouve l'état de nature historique. Cet état de nature historique

c'est le commencement de la société, l'état de guerre. La notion de propriété apparaît avec la division du travail et le développement de la métallurgie et de l'agriculture. Ces progrès pour Rousseau sont un mal, car ils entraînent la formation de deux classes (riches et pauvres) liées entre elles par un rapport de domination et de servitude. De plus, la propriété anéantit l'égalité fondamentale et naturelle des hommes devant la jouissance des biens de la terre. Cette inégalité économique est sans légitimité naturelle. C'est donc la société, par l'établissement du droit de propriété, qui est responsable de la légitimation de cette inégalité. Le droit de propriété, les inégalités et ces rapports riches/pauvres, domination/servitude entraînent la comparaison entre les hommes, la création de besoins superflus et la compétition. C'est à ce stade, selon Rousseau, que la nature de l'homme se transforme et que l'homme devient dépendant de ses semblables (perte de sa liberté naturelle). Afin de se sortir de l'état de guerre engendré par le commencement de la société, Rousseau propose sa conception du contrat social. Selon lui, le seul fondement légitime du gouvernement est un contrat entre le peuple et les chefs.

Dans la conception rousseauiste, l'homme change de nature en passant de l'état de nature stable à l'état social. Il perd sa liberté naturelle, mais il peut en acquérir une nouvelle : *la liberté civile*. Celle-ci a toutefois pour condition de réalisation une société où la souveraineté appartient au peuple et où tout individu est soumis aux lois. Le contrat social de Rousseau est le seul contrat, selon lui, qui peut rendre légitime l'institution de la société. Pour lui, la théorie de Hobbes fonde la souveraineté sur un contrat d'assujettissement et défend le pouvoir dominant au lieu de chercher quelle forme de gouvernement peut être légitime. Pour Rousseau, le centre du contrat social est la *volonté générale* : tous participent à la formation de la loi et tous y sont soumis de la même façon. Le pouvoir politique réside donc essentiellement dans le peuple (contrairement à Hobbes qui le fait résider dans le *souverain* lui-même) et celui-ci exerce directement sa souveraineté. Le souverain et le peuple ne doivent former qu'une seule entité. Cette conception du contrat social fait de Rousseau le père de la démocratie directe moderne. Ainsi, opposant la nature de l'homme, faite pour la liberté, et les relations de domination constitutives des abus de l'état civil, Rousseau montre que seule une convention librement consentie peut fonder un gouvernement légitime. Cette convention, le contrat social, consiste en l'abandon de la liberté naturelle d'indépendance de l'homme dans l'état de nature pour la liberté civile, celle du citoyen dans l'État. ⁴

L'État idéal

Hobbes définit l'État comme suit : « une multitude d'hommes unis en une seule personne par un pouvoir commun, pour leur paix, leur défense et leur profit communs. »⁵ Ainsi, l'État, le *Léviathan*, a pour but la défense de la vie et des biens des individus. Cet État doit être doté du pouvoir et de droits susceptibles de lui permettre de remplir entièrement ses fonctions. La souveraineté du pouvoir politique doit être à la fois absolue et indivisible. Absolue au sens où elle doit être indépendante de tout autre pouvoir politique et au sens où elle dispose d'une puissance de contrainte à laquelle rien ni personne ne peut résister. Indivisible au sens où la souveraineté ne peut se partager entre différentes personnes ou différentes instances, sans se nier elle-même. Ces deux conditions du pouvoir étatique sont nécessaires, selon Hobbes, afin de maintenir l'ordre, d'assurer la sécurité des individus et d'éviter un retour à l'état de guerre, la guerre civile de l'Angleterre, son pays d'origine. ⁶

Pour sa part, Rousseau propose une conception quelque peu divergente de l'État idéal, basée sur l'expérience de sa ville natal : Genève. Selon lui, ce n'est pas la souveraineté de l'État qui est indivisible, mais bien la loi, c'est-à-dire, la *volonté générale*, la souveraineté du peuple. Rousseau affirme aussi que l'État idéal est un État démocratique et non pas absolutiste. La loi positive doit donc être celle du peuple réuni en un corps, et non pas celle du seul souverain : le droit et pouvoir de législation doivent être communs à tous les citoyens. De plus, l'État doit être de petite taille. Dans une petite république, le bien public est mieux senti, mieux connu et plus près de chaque citoyen. Finalement, l'État doit être souverain et indépendant face aux autres États.⁷

Les relations internationales

D'après leurs conceptions de la nature humaine, de la société civile et de l'État, Hobbes et Rousseau en viennent à élaborer une théorie sur les relations entre États et les origines de la guerre. Les deux auteurs arrivent au même constat en relations internationales : la guerre est un fait évident et permanent. Cependant, l'explication apportée par les deux philosophes diffère à tous égards. Selon Hobbes, la nature compétitive de l'homme constitue le point d'origine de l'état de guerre entre États. Pour Rousseau, l'origine de la guerre vient de la nature même de l'État, car l'individu lui-même n'est pas de nature guerrière.

L'impossible loi internationale

En approfondissant l'analyse de Machiavel sur l'état d'anarchie absolue des rapports internationaux, Hobbes s'impose en réaliste. Il fonde sa théorie des relations internationales selon la nature même de l'homme. Dans la société internationale règne l'état de nature, c'est-à-dire l'absence de *Léviathan* au-dessus des États. Les États vivent sans puissance commune ou autorité qui pourrait maintenir l'ordre international : dans les rapports entre États, il n'y a donc pas de contrat social. Il en résulte un état de guerre perpétuel de chacun contre chacun, comme dans l'état de nature entre les hommes. Les rois et les personnes qui détiennent l'autorité souveraine sont, à cause de leur indépendance et de leur autonomie, dans une continuelle suspicion face aux autres États souverains. En même temps, dans la conception de Hobbes, on ne peut remettre en cause l'indépendance et l'autonomie des États, dont le pouvoir souverain doit être absolu et indivisible afin d'assurer l'ordre et la sécurité à l'intérieur de chaque État. Cet aspect rend impossible la notion d'un *Léviathan* au-dessus de tous les États, ou l'existence d'une loi internationale. Cela irait contre le principe de souveraineté absolue et indivisible⁸

Dans la théorie de Rousseau, les États vivent ensemble comme les hommes vivaient dans l'état de nature historique, c'est-à-dire au commencement de la société. Dans la société civile, les relations de dépendance entre les hommes sont caractérisées par la notion de propriété. Au sein de la société internationale, selon Rousseau, les États sont dépendants entre eux par le biais des relations commerciales. Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, les relations de dépendance génèrent le conflit. Au niveau de la société civile, un contrat social est créé entre les hommes qui édifient des lois par le biais de la *volonté générale*. Au niveau de la société internationale cependant, la solution pour Rousseau n'est pas d'établir un contrat social entre les États et de créer une loi internationale. Selon lui, la loi internationale implique une notion d'universalité qu'il assimile à

l'empire : « Les mêmes lois ne peuvent convenir à tant de nations diverses qui ont des mœurs différentes, qui vivent sous des climats opposés et qui ne peuvent souffrir la même forme de gouvernement. »⁹ Ceci renvoie à l'idée qu'un État de petite taille est ce qu'il y a de meilleur pour assurer une loi juste pour tous. Dans un État de grande taille, il y a trop de divergences qui brouillent la *volonté générale*. Pour Rousseau, la loi doit être auto-législative et la loi internationale est inévitablement contradictoire avec ce principe d'auto-législation comme matrice de la *volonté générale* des individus. Pour une auto-législation juste et efficace, le peuple doit s'assembler constamment et les citoyens doivent se connaître. De plus, il ne doit y avoir entre les citoyens que de petites différences de richesse et de culture. Ces conditions ne sont évidemment réalisables que dans un État de petite taille. Rousseau en vient ainsi à la conclusion qu'une loi internationale englobant tous les États, créant ainsi un gigantesque État de droit, irait à l'encontre de la *volonté générale*. Il serait difficile, voire même impossible, de rassembler tous les citoyens, et les différences de fortune et de culture seraient considérables. Il en résulterait que la loi internationale serait une loi des États, et non plus une loi des individus à savoir la *volonté générale* des hommes. Pour Rousseau, il y a des limites sociales, géographiques et ethniques à l'auto-législation, et par là, des limites à la réalisation de la loi internationale. De ce fait, la généralisation du contrat social à la société internationale est, tout comme chez Hobbes, impossible. Les corps politiques au niveau international demeurent, dans la conception de Rousseau comme dans celle de Hobbes, à l'état de guerre.¹⁰

La guerre

Tel que cité plus haut, les États, dans les conceptions de Hobbes et de Rousseau, vivent entre eux dans un état de guerre permanent. Dans la société internationale de Hobbes, aucun principe ni aucune limitation ne vient régler les rapports entre les princes. Il en résulte inévitablement un état de suspicion, de rivalité et de compétition entre eux. Pour expliquer la guerre, Hobbes se réfère toujours à la nature humaine. Ainsi, il a établi trois principales causes de discorde dans la nature de l'homme : la compétition, la défiance et la gloire. Au niveau international, il reprend ces trois attributs et les transfère aux États. La compétition pousse les hommes (et les États) à s'attaquer en vue d'un gain, la défiance en vue d'assurer leur sécurité et la gloire en vue de se forger une réputation.

La guerre chez Hobbes se résume en une dynamique rationnelle d'accumulation de puissance entre les acteurs. Ainsi, les guerres internationales sont identiques aux guerres entre individus dans l'état de nature. La dynamique de l'accumulation de puissance des États est animée par la même crainte, le même souci que les individus : la sécurité. Ensuite, les États, tout comme les individus, ont le désir d'assurer leur conservation, d'assurer leur existence. Ils sont donc prêts à tout. Finalement, du fait de leur souveraineté, les États ont une liberté d'agir absolue, évidemment, tout comme les hommes dans l'état de nature. Les États peuvent faire tout ce qu'ils jugent favorable à leur intérêt. Ainsi, toute la théorie de Hobbes relative à la guerre est une transposition de l'état de nature individuel au niveau de la société internationale. Les États et les individus sont animés par une même dynamique : celle de la primauté des intérêts et de la recherche de supériorité.¹¹

Rousseau place au centre des relations internationales la compétition et la violence, tout comme le fait Hobbes. Cependant, Rousseau en propose une explication tout à fait différente.

En fait, la guerre ne s'explique pas par la nature de l'homme, car l'homme est fondamentalement bon et ne présente aucune caractéristique l'incitant à la guerre. Pour Hobbes, la compétition et la convoitise sont dans la nature même de l'homme, tandis que pour Rousseau, c'est en société que les besoins se multiplient et que l'homme cherche dans le superflu les conditions de son bonheur. C'est dans une telle situation que se développent la concurrence pour les mêmes biens et la lutte pour des objets sans importance. La cause de la guerre est donc sociale, et non pas naturelle. Rousseau voit plutôt dans la nature même de l'État social l'explication aux guerres internationales. Quand les hommes s'unissent pour devenir citoyens, les peuples entre eux deviennent ennemis, du fait de la particularité de leur *volonté générale* propre. Cette inimitié est même une condition intrinsèque du corps politique, selon Rousseau, car un groupe ne s'unit que par divergence par rapport à un autre groupe. Ainsi, les hommes sont à la fois dans l'état civil en tant que citoyens et dans l'état de guerre en tant que membres d'États différents. Cette situation profite aux Princes qui, sous prétexte de garantir la sécurité des citoyens, utilisent la force pour agir.

La guerre chez Rousseau a donc pour origine la nature de l'État. C'est ici que le philosophe aborde la notion de *relativité* de l'État. L'État est indéterminé, les dimensions de son territoire, de même que sa population évoluent dans le temps. Ses frontières étant indéfinies, tout autre État pourrait les modifier par une quelconque politique d'expansion. De plus, l'État dépend de tout ce qui l'entoure, il devient petit ou grand, faible ou fort, selon que son voisin s'affaiblit ou se renforce. En tant que corps relatif, l'État est dans une situation de comparaison permanente. Son identité indéfinie et précaire le pousse à se différencier constamment d'avec les autres États. Il s'ensuit que les États, dans la théorie de Rousseau, cherchent à imposer leur présence, leurs atouts et leurs richesses, tout comme le démontre Hobbes dans sa propre théorie.

Selon Rousseau, le recours à la passion afin d'agir sur la scène internationale est le propre des États. Et c'est ici que Rousseau se distance de Hobbes. Rappelons que chez Hobbes, la guerre est une dynamique strictement rationnelle des États, alors que chez Rousseau, l'État mobilise aussi les passions de sa population par son biais. Rousseau démontre tout de même en quoi la guerre, instrument de passions, devient un outil de l'État. En mobilisant des passions, la guerre lie de façon efficace les individus. Elle permet au corps politique de fonctionner et de maintenir son unité. Dans la lutte contre les autres, les États façonnent leur unité fragile, car artificielle, grâce à la mobilisation de leurs membres contre une menace extérieure. La guerre est inhérente à l'État. Aussi, Rousseau ne conçoit pas les États sans la guerre. Il faut toutefois préciser que, même s'il accepte la guerre comme un événement constant des relations internationales, Rousseau ne condamne pas moins ce phénomène. Selon lui, la guerre est l'effet même de l'état social cherchant à s'imposer et elle risque bien de conduire à la tyrannie.¹²

Conclusion

Thomas Hobbes et Jean-Jacques Rousseau ont tous deux élaboré des perspectives solides et complexes des relations internationales. Nous n'en n'avons étudié ici que les principaux aspects. Cette étude voulait mettre en relief les caractéristiques marquantes des deux perspectives et, ainsi, en faire ressortir les similarités et les différences. Évidemment, l'étude pourrait ultérieurement être poussée plus loin, en investigant, par exemple, sur les formes de

solution possibles face au problème des guerres internationales, telles que le plan de confédération proposé par Rousseau. Néanmoins, ce présent travail de recherche a permis de comprendre, de façon conjointe, deux perspectives de base dans le domaine des relations internationales.

Nous avons été surpris de découvrir que les deux philosophes définissent de façon complètement opposée la nature humaine et l'état de nature, mais qu'ils aboutissent tous deux à l'élaboration des visions similaires du contrat social et de la société internationale. S'inscrivant tous deux dans le courant réaliste, les deux auteurs reconnaissent l'état de guerre général entre les entités étatiques et réfutent tout projet de loi internationale. Hobbes pour ne pas porter atteinte au pouvoir suprême de l'État à l'intérieur de ses frontières, Rousseau pour ne pas dissoudre la *volonté générale* des hommes au sein d'une entité beaucoup trop vaste.

Thomas Hobbes et Jean-Jacques Rousseau demeurent aujourd'hui des auteurs clés dans le domaine des relations internationales et leurs études peuvent nous aider à mieux comprendre des phénomènes internationaux contemporains. Cependant, plusieurs inconnus restent concernant la gestion de l'ordre international, entre autres, la nécessité de savoir si celui-ci doit se baser sur le niveau individuel ou étatique ou les deux.

Notes

- ¹ Charles Zarka, Yves. Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne. (Paris : PUF, 1995), 49-51 et Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. (Paris, Nathan, 1998), 14-17, 26.
- ² Charles Zarka, Yves. Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne. (Paris : PUF, 1995), 52 et Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. (Paris, Nathan, 1998), 17-19, 27.
- ³ Charles Zarka, Yves. Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne. (Paris : PUF, 1995), 53-54, 146-147.
- ⁴ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. (Paris, Nathan, 1998) 19-20, 25-31.
- ⁵ Charles Zarka, Yves. Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne. (Paris : PUF, 1995), 53.
- ⁶ Ibid, et Huntzinger, Jacques. Introduction aux relations internationales. (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1987) 32-34.
- ⁷ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. (Paris, Nathan, 1998), 34 – 43 : *Dédicace à la République de Genève*.
- ⁸ Huntzinger, Jacques. Introduction aux relations internationales. (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1987) 32-34.
- ⁹ Joubert, Jean-Paul et Ramel. Rousseau et les relations internationales. (Montréal : Éditions de L'Harmattan, 2000), 20.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 20 –34.
- ¹¹ Charles Zarka, Yves. Hobbes et la pensée politique moderne. (Paris : PUF, 1995), 127-145.
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Gandhi's Concept of Nonviolence in International Relations

Emily Cohen

Gandhi was a brilliant man, a persuasive leader, and a humanitarian, passionately dedicated to his cause. Though much discussion of Gandhi since his death has focused on his efforts to free India from British rule, it is important to realize that Gandhi's philosophy extended far beyond national borders, inspiring movements around the world. This essay will deal with many facets of Gandhi's philosophies. First, it will discuss his unique concept of nonviolence, *Satyagraha*, and its applicability to the realm of international society. Next, it will discuss Gandhi's views on war and peace, and his criticisms of contemporary methods of achieving peace. Finally, it will discuss his blueprint for durable peace in the world and argue the relevance and influence of Gandhism in various settings in the past century and present today.

Satyagraha – Gandhi's Concept of Nonviolence

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind" - Gandhi

We must begin with a brief examination of Gandhi's life and the influences that shaped him early on, leading to the creation of his ideas of nonviolence. When Gandhi was nineteen years old, he moved to London, England to study law. He maintained his devotion to his Hindu ideals, living a modest, economical existence, and remaining a stalwart vegetarian. Gandhi proved early on in life to be a passionate and deeply principled individual. However, his activism as we know it truly began when he moved to apartheid South Africa in 1893, to provide legal assistance to an Indian businessman.¹ South Africa at this time was rife with racial prejudice; both the African and the Indian populations were living under oppressive conditions. Struck by the desperate situation of these people, Gandhi resolved to stay and fight against the unjust system of apartheid.² What began as a simple one-year stay turned into a twenty-year odyssey, where Gandhi's unique concepts of nonviolent resistance were developed and put into practice for the first time. The techniques Gandhi used in South Africa proved to be methods of resistance that he would advocate for the rest of his life.³

What is the true meaning of Gandhi's concept of 'nonviolence'? Nonviolence for Gandhi was far more than simply refusing to use arms or violence against an enemy – Gandhi's concept of nonviolence is expressed through the principle of *Satyagraha*, a term he used to represent a complex principle of commitment to nonviolence.⁴ The birth of this unique term took place in South Africa shortly after the first major act of civil disobedience led by Gandhi. On September 11, 1906 in Johannesburg, at a packed meeting, thousands of Indians took an oath refusing to submit to the "Indian Registration Ordinance", a humiliating law forcing all Indians over the age of eight to carry a registration form displaying their fingerprints as identification at all times.⁵ Commentators termed this mass disobedience "passive resistance", but Gandhi resented the "passive" implications of this term. He asked members of his journal, *Indian Opinion*, to come up with another term, and the expression *Satyagraha* was decided upon. This term meant,

literally translated, “soul force” or “truth force”.⁶ For Gandhi, it signified a principled and courageous form of nonviolent resistance or, as one scholar has put it, “the mighty power of the undaunted human spirit against the power of weapons or money.”⁷

However, Satyagraha is more than a simple definition. It is a principle with multiple dimensions, and we must examine its relation to the concepts of power, action, bravery and spirituality. To Gandhi, *Satyagraha* was a moral and effective way for the oppressed to seek justice. He purported that violence can only be quelled by nonviolence or resistance, and that retaliatory violence were never the answer. *Satyagraha* worked as a form of resistance because it was not an attempt to seek *power* over another; rather it is an attempt to *influence* others. It operated as a dialogue, and genuinely sought to achieve reconciliation between contesting parties. *Satyagraha* rests on the theory that a government only has power as long as its people “consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed”⁸. Therefore, the way to create political change is to not cooperate with the system “by withdrawing all the voluntary assistance possible and refusing all its so-called benefits.”⁹

It is important to note that Gandhi did not view nonviolence, expressed through *Satyagraha*, as a passive or cowardly action.¹⁰ Much of Gandhi’s philosophical inspiration came from the Bhagwad Gita, an ancient Hindu text, and as Gandhi was keen to quote, the Gita states “he who gives up action fails.”¹¹ Gandhi clearly articulated the *active* component of *Satyagraha* by stating:

I do justify entire non-violence and consider it possible in relations between man and man and nations and nations, but it is not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation, whose very nature is to increase wickedness.¹²

Further, Gandhi argued that it is far more difficult to practice *Satyagraha* than simply to retaliate. It takes great bravery to be willing to suffer and sacrifice oneself for a cause, rather than violently fighting back. Gandhi viewed fear as the greatest evil, as it impedes people from embracing the ideals of nonviolence. Indeed, Gandhi thought “justice could be secured by following one’s bounden duty to be fearless, by adhering to what one holds to be the truth.”¹³ As well, to practice *Satyagraha* one must learn to treat an enemy with kindness, and to return evil with love, which Gandhi recognized as being extremely difficult. As he states: “experience has taught me that civility is the most difficult part of *Satyagraha*. Civility does not here mean the mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good.”¹⁴ With all the challenges *Satyagraha* presents, and the great courage and self-discipline it requires, one may ask how Gandhi realistically expected people to adopt it on a massive scale. The answer lies in the final component of *Satyagraha*: an integral part of this principle is a spiritual rebirth and a commitment to seeking truth. *Satyagraha* requires personal revolution on an individual level and it is only through following one’s own vision of truth and detaching oneself from extraneous emotions that one can commit to a path of nonviolence.¹⁵ This detachment is laid out in the Bagwad Gita, which urges that one must go on working without expecting, longing for, or being attached to the fruits of one’s work. Gandhi made a direct connection between these sentiments and his cause, when he stated: “I deduce the

principle of *Satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance) from this: he who is free from such attachment will not kill the enemy but rather sacrifice himself.”¹⁶

War, Criticism and Contradiction

“War, with all its glorification of brute force is essentially a degrading thing. It demoralizes those who are trained for it. It brutalizes men of naturally gentle character. It outrages every beautiful canon of morality. Its path of glory is foul with passion and lust, and red with blood of murder. This is not the pathway to our goal.” - Gandhi

Now that we have discussed in detail the basic premises of Gandhi’s concept of *Satyagraha*, we can discuss the implications of this philosophy of nonviolence in the realm of international relations, especially in terms of war and peace. Gandhi, like a Realist, was primarily concerned with war in the international system. In fact, he “looked upon the problem of War as the most important problem which faced the contemporary world”¹⁷. Further, Gandhi didn’t accept distinctions between “just” and “unjust wars” – in his mind every war was unjust. As alluded to earlier, Gandhi was firmly of the opinion that “war is not a morally legitimate means of achieving anything permanent”.¹⁸ War was never a just means to attempt to create peace or to achieve a so-called noble goal. This contrasts the Marxist view that “every war should be judged by the historical ends it serves and that certain wars are justified insofar as they destroy extremely pernicious and reactionary institutions”.¹⁹ For Gandhi the ends never justified the means, and war was always an immoral means.

Gandhi took a broad approach in examining war. He insisted on examining and attacking the root causes of war and, in fact, stated: “all activities for stopping war must prove fruitless so long as the causes of war are not understood and radically dealt with”²⁰ And what are these causes he is referring to? Gandhi considered a world system built on inequality, racism and exploitation to be the cause of war. He saw the manifestation of this exploitation in the form of imperialism, and viewed imperialism and greed as two of the greatest enemies of peace.²¹ As Gandhi states “there can be no living harmony between races and nations unless the main cause is removed, namely exploitation of the weak by the strong.”²² Not surprisingly, Gandhi’s prescription for peace rests on attacking these root causes of war, not simply applying temporary remedies to a conflict. He strongly argued that peace is not just the absence of war; it is “the elimination or destruction of all kinds and forms of tyranny.”²³ Further, peace is never the end in itself; it is “a means to a nobler goal - that of a just world order”.²⁴ Yet, to eliminate greed and create equality in the world, the Marxist idea of banishing private property is not enough. For Gandhi the road to peace requires a spiritual revolution, harking back to the ideals of aloofness at the heart of *Satyagraha*. He contends that “to banish war we have to do more. We have to eradicate possessiveness and greed and lust and egotism from our own hearts.”²⁵

Gandhi was highly critical of the ability of peace treaties and international institutions to create peace. He saw many peace treaties as being punitive and vindictive. Peace created under these terms could not be sustained. As an example he pointed to the Treaty of Versailles, which punished Germany severely. Gandhi contended that the vindictive nature of this treaty actually led to WWII.²⁶ Just as peace treaties are often signed out of fear and distrust, Gandhi also perceived world organizations as being built upon a foundation of suspicion and fear of other nations. In Gandhi’s mind, to actually contribute to a lasting peace, an international body must be

“the manifestation of the natural urge of nations towards peace,”²⁷ it should not simply be created to protect one’s interests, or to end a war. Gandhi’s other main contention about international institutions was that they simply perpetuated an unjust world order and served the interests of a minority of powerful states. Gandhi criticized the League of Nations for wielding no real power and merely acting as a tool of Britain and France. As well, Gandhi was cynical of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. Signatories renounced war as an instrument of national policy, but Gandhi noted that they still continued to exploit and colonize nations around the world.²⁸ In his mind, it was ridiculous to renounce war, yet at the same time perpetuate a system that makes war inevitable.

Gandhi was also critical of Pacifist and anti-conscription movements’ approaches to achieving peace. In light of his conception of the causes of war, and the path to true peace, it is easy to understand his discontent. His problems with the Pacifist movement arise on two levels: one, on the issues they addressed, and two, on their mode of expression. Gandhi viewed the Pacifist movement as limited simply to an antiwar posture, based on the assumption that, by boycotting wars, they would be contributing to world peace.²⁹ Gandhi however viewed this as narrow-minded and criticized Pacifists for not attacking the real problem – an unjust, oppressive world order that caused war. On a second level, Gandhi went as far as to question the Pacifist movement’s commitment to the ideals of nonviolence. Gandhi perceived that many pacifists supported pacifism in a half-hearted way. They did so “with the mental reservation that when pacifism fails, arms might be used. With them, it was not nonviolence, but arms that were the ultimate sanctions.”³⁰ This is not the full spiritual commitment to nonviolence required by *Satyagraha*. Gandhi further criticizes the lack of action by many pacifists and those opposed to conscription. As alluded to in the first part of this essay, nonviolence for Gandhi was not simply being passive; it was an active form of disobedience. As Gandhi states: “Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-cooperation with the whole system that supports the state.”³¹

These criticisms lead us to a deeper appreciation of Gandhi’s principle of nonviolence. His criticism of pacifists shows us just how opposed he was to nonviolent resistance, when this was not accompanied by some sort of courageous action. These views touch on perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of Gandhi’s philosophy. Though Gandhi appeared to be a staunch believer of nonviolent action, he did actually condone violence in some specific cases during his lifetime. He in fact stated in an article he published in 1920 entitled “*The Doctrine of the Sword*” that, “I do believe that where there is only choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence.”³² According to one scholar, this statement seems to suggest that, in Gandhi’s complex rationale, “courage took precedence over fear, and violence over cowardice; justice became more than mere abstention from violence, and courage went far beyond mere participation in war.”³³

If we look for further evidence of Gandhi’s disdain for passivity and inaction, we find many examples where he seems to grudgingly accept violence as a last resort. Gandhi purported that those who are not trained in *Satyagraha* may use violence in self-defense, rather than simply submitting meekly. However, the person committing violence still has a responsibility - he must strive to evolve himself and others to a state where violence is no longer necessary.³⁴ Gandhi articulated this idea when he stated “he who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of

resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war, and yet whole-heartedly must try to free himself, his nation and the world from war.”³⁵ Further, Gandhi made it clear during World War II that although he still believed war to be wholly wrong, he felt that the Allied countries were fighting for a just cause, and therefore he would offer them his moral help and blessing. Around this same time, he also stated that he would “risk violence a thousand times than risk the emasculation of a whole race”.³⁶

Blueprint for a Durable World Peace

“Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the Godliness of human nature” - Gandhi

Although Gandhi was critical of the pacifist movement and of the international institutions of his time, he did believe that peace was possible. He believed that humanity’s urge for peace is innate and insatiable, and that humans have the potential to achieve peace. Gandhi was confident that “we can certainly realize our full destiny and dignity only if we educate and train ourselves to be able to refrain from retaliation.”³⁷ The peace that Gandhi aspired to create was a durable peace that would weather the ages. This peace must address the root causes of war and would be firmly based on the nonviolent principles of *Satyagraha*. For Gandhi the road to world peace began with a free India, and proceeded to include an attitude of internationalism, or even the promotion of a world government, and the absolute necessity of total worldwide disarmament.

Gandhi led a nonviolent campaign for the freedom of India not solely on the grounds of ceasing the oppression of the Indian people, but also because he believed that a free India would be a first step towards world peace. The freedom of the oppressed was essential to Gandhi and thus his “whole life became... a fight, a totally nonviolent fight, against imperialism, for that was in his thinking the only way to peace”.³⁸ For true peace to be possible, imperialism must end, and there must be a world system based on equality. But how could the oppressed be convinced to free themselves from their colonial powers without using violence? The answer, Gandhi was convinced, lay in India. If India could free itself through *Satyagraha*, it would serve as an example that nonviolent means of resistance are effective and would inspire others to fight nonviolently against imperialism. It was Gandhi’s hope that “a free India would be a haven of nonviolence and a beacon for peace in the world,”³⁹ setting the stage for peaceful revolution and eventually a just world order. Clearly the civil rights movement in the United States, which will be discussed in more detail in the latter section of this essay, is an example of a group of individuals using Gandhian principles as the basis for peaceful protest.⁴⁰

In addition to India becoming free and becoming a model of nonviolence, Gandhi prescribed three other important concepts in his blueprint for durable peace: internationalism, world government and disarmament. For Gandhi, nationalism was an essential prerequisite of internationalism. Gandhi considered it essential for countries to be self-sufficient, a concept he termed *Swadeshi*, before they could be equal and productive players in the international scene.⁴¹ Nationalism was not narrow or exclusive in Gandhi’s mind, nor inherently dangerous. It was greed and selfishness that caused nationalism to get out of hand and threaten international cooperation. In Gandhi’s world, healthy nationalism was essential in creating a spirit of

international understanding. Gandhi was not concerned that internationalism would threaten national identity, for he believed true internationalism only functions if nations maintain their individuality while working together.⁴²

The second component for peace was a world government, preceded by a world federation. The federation would be based on voluntary interdependence. The first step to further integration would be the freedom of exploited nations and once this was accomplished with India leading the way, a World State could replace the federation. The World State “takes its place in which all the states of the world are free and equal... no state has its military.”⁴³ It would be composed of one central governing body, and while it retained no permanent army, if required, it would have a police force during the transition period to complete the nonviolent evolution towards the World State.

The final component of his idealistic vision of world peace was total disarmament of all nations. Nations are armed out of fear and mistrust of each other. They would have to dispel this fear and discard their defensive persona. Gandhi realized that it would be difficult to start the process of disarmament and therefore argued that unilateral disarmament was necessary even if others do not follow. Gandhi was adamant in stating that, for the survival of the human race, nations must disarm even without the promise of reciprocity by other nations: “if even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth.”⁴⁴

In conclusion, for Gandhi a durable lasting peace could be built on a foundation of courage, nonviolence, initiative and trust. He believed a free India could lead the way to a just and equitable world system, where war would be obsolete.

Relevance of Gandhism

“Gandhi may die, but Gandhism will live for ever” - Gandhi

Though Gandhi died more than fifty years ago, his philosophical legacy lives on. He has influenced political thought in many ways, from dependency theory to conflict resolution.⁴⁵ Gandhian thought, during his lifetime and after his death, has served as an inspiration to nonviolent movements around the world, notably the civil rights movement in the United States. Furthermore, many of his ideas are relevant to specific issues facing international society today, such as the issue of self-determination and the evolving nature of international organizations.

Martin Luther King Jr.’s movement of civil disobedience in the United States, during the second half of the 20th century, was an excellent example of the successful application of Gandhian principles. Gandhi himself pointed out that the plight of African Americans had not been eased through violent conflict. Although slavery had been legally abolished after a long and bloody war, African Americans still lacked many basic rights. Gandhi offered prophetic advice, that King heeded: “There is no other way than the way of nonviolence – a way however, not of the weak and ignorant but of the strong and wise”.⁴⁶ Gandhi’s techniques and successes in South Africa and India made a profound impact upon King and he used the methods of *Satyagraha* as a template for fighting inequality in the United States.⁴⁷ King fused Gandhism and Christianity as

the ideological basis of his struggle, as he stated, "nonviolent resistance had emerged as the technique of the movement, while love stood as the regulating ideal. In other words, Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method."⁴⁸ Yet more than just using nonviolence rhetoric as a method to achieve an end, King remained true to the spirit of Gandhi's philosophy and insisted that nonviolence must be a way of life, not simply a weapon for desperate times.⁴⁹ The success of nonviolent resistance in the civil rights movement proved the universality of Gandhism and silenced critics who contended that it was not universally applicable.⁵⁰

The second area of contemporary relevance of Gandhi's views deals with self-determination. One of Gandhi's greatest philosophical contributions was his conceptual fusion of peace and freedom.⁵¹ For Gandhi, violence was not the path to freedom. In fact, Gandhi believed that quite the opposite was true: "the attainment of freedom must be in exact proportion to the attainment of nonviolence by that nation."⁵² This notion has important implications for the current world. The last century has seen the painful process of decolonization, when many national movements of self-determination were often accompanied by bloodshed.⁵³ This leads us to question whether freedom for an oppressed people can come without the devastating cost of violence, or whether peace and freedom are mutually exclusive. In the Middle East, the Palestinians and the Israelis are examples of groups that have and continue to employ violent means in their fight for national self-determination. In Canada, the *Front de la Libération de Québec (FLQ)* resorted to kidnapping and murder during the 1970s in their battle for Québec separation. What would Gandhi tell these groups? Gandhi's answer would most likely emphasize the supremacy of nonviolence as a form of resistance. He would contend that not only is it possible for people to free themselves without violence, but that a strong campaign of courageous nonviolence is the most effective means to attain freedom as the Indian case has proven. This lesson has deep implications for revolutionary movements around the world, and gives us hope that, perhaps, through the employment of Gandhian principles, we can achieve a just world, without the devastating cost of violence.

Finally we must examine the relevance of Gandhi's thought with respect to international organizations. Gandhi would likely be very critical of the United Nations (U.N.) in its present form today. He was a strong opponent of any international institution that perpetuated an unjust world order and inherent inequality. One could argue that the U.N., notably the Security Council and the right of veto of its five permanent members (the United States, China, Russia, France and Britain), only protects the national interests of powerful countries. Therefore, it ceases to be a force for justice in the world. Gandhi was skeptical of the ability of any world organization, built on such a foundation of inequality, to create peace in the world.⁵⁴ Indeed, the reality is that the world system today still consists of stark inequalities between nations, which perhaps contribute to the impotence of the U.N. or any international organization in eradicating all cases of war. Gandhi might also be very critical of the newly developing International Criminal Court (I.C.C.). Due to the fact that its success rests on state cooperation, Gandhi would be concerned with the I.C.C.'s ability to implement objective judgements effectively in a world where some states wield substantially more power than others. If a powerful state, such as the United States chose not to sign and ratify the treaty or to sign and ratify the treaty but not to respect the I.C.C.'s decisions, what power does the I.C.C. have to enforce its judgements?

Conclusion

As we can see, Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* is relevant not only to India and South Africa, but to the world over. Gandhi believed that peace was entirely possible, and could only be achieved through nonviolent means. Gandhi's philosophy did not die when he was assassinated. His legacy lives on, and his ideas still inspire movements and spark debates. With respect to some of the greatest questions facing the realm of international relations today, such as the implications of self-determination, and the questionable effectiveness of international institutions in addressing inequalities among nations, Gandhi's philosophy provides a challenging perspective.

Notes

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Contractarian Perspectives of International Society: An Analysis of John Rawls' Theory of Justice as Fairness

Patricia Di Brigida

Contractarianism developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during the Enlightenment. It was developed as a political theory to analyze the legitimacy of a government and the basis for political obligation of common people to such a government. In a climate where traditional beliefs were being questioned, credence in the divine right of kings was fading and political authority was beginning to be seen as analogous to human practices. Consequently, political legitimacy and obligation were to be dictated by the wills of the people, and not by God or by nature. Social contract theorists wanted an explanation for the existence of the state and the duty that people had afforded it. The contract would come to serve three purposes. It would explain the emergence of government, the people's obligation to it, and the limitations of such a government's power.¹ The author Will Kymlicka states "people would therefore agree to institute government, and cede certain powers to it, if governors agreed to use these powers to ensure security."² In a state of nature, all people are free and equal with no one person or entity holding any authority over others. In such a situation there is neither allegiance nor responsibility to others, resulting in a feeling of insecurity. Without government there is no control over people's actions and thus, no guarantee of personal safety. It is for this reason that people consented to government, and were then obligated to obey the laws that it had created.³

It is this idea of consent that was seen as a flaw in the theory because consent was never given by way of any real contract, therefore there were no commitments binding governments or citizens.⁴ Theorists then began looking for hypothetical consent. They did this by assuming an idealized situation where "people as they would be were they (for instance) perfectly rational and appropriately informed"⁵ would give consent under appropriate conditions. They fabricated a completely hypothetical situation to demonstrate how people and governments would come up with the basis for a political system. This consisted of rights and obligations of both the governing and the governed by way of a mutually agreed upon social contract. Once the theory took its focus off the reality of the situation, and placed it on the hypothetical, it seemed to be incomplete and quickly became replaced with other theories.

Thomas Hobbes' theory of mutual advantage morality was the idea that people would agree to abide by certain rules if they knew that others would also abide by them. The motivation for agreeing to these rules was not morality itself but the benefits gained by being moral.⁶ On the other hand, Immanuel Kant, through the social contract, focused upon the inherent moral character of people without having to fabricate a specific morality and also nullified the concept of unequal bargaining power. This is his theory of morality as impartiality.⁷ In the twentieth century there was a revival of the social contract theory. What had been introduced as a political theory during the Enlightenment period was presented as a moral theory in the twentieth century by several authors, notably John Rawls.

John Rawls' modern contractarian theory will be analyzed in this essay. His theory is founded on the morality of all parties concerned, who, being equal, must accept its principles. Thus, it takes the aspect of benefits being gained by all, as popularized by Hobbes and other social contract theorists, and combines it with Kant's influential conception of morality and the fairness of negotiations.

Conception of the State

The basic structure of society contains inequalities and these are represented by the various positions that people are born into. These positions are shaped by political, social and economic circumstances and are given varying degrees of importance with a preference being placed on some over others.⁸ This situation forces some people to unfairly begin their lives from a disadvantaged position. It is this initial inequality that John Rawls wishes to erase. His idea, in accordance with Platonian and Aristotelian conceptions of society, is that the basic structure of society should be justice itself, justice interpreted as fairness.

It is interesting to note that although the nature of the state is being discussed here, Rawls does not wish to support the idea that government is founded on contract. In keeping with the idea that modern contractarianism is a moral rather than a political theory, he rather wishes to emphasize the origin of the principles of justice. It is these principles that he hopes to derive from the negotiations of people, namely "the principles that free and rational persons concerned with furthering their own interests would accept an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their associations."⁹ The selection of these principles would be guided by feelings of uncertainty, "...principles are those a person would choose for the design of a society in which his enemy is to assign him his place."¹⁰ The principles formed in this original contract and based on the idea of fairness will be those that will guide future social co-operations and the establishment of representative governments.

If his focus is on fairness for all people, he then must decide how fairness can be implemented into the system. He does this by explaining the idea of the 'original position', which is similar to the concept of the state of nature in the sense that all people are considered equal with no common authority.¹¹ The original position is characterized by the fact that people, when occupying this position, hold very limited information about their personal make-up. They are ignorant of what their class and social status is as well as the amount of wealth they possess. They are also unaware of their level of intelligence and strength. Rawls refers to this lack of information as the 'veil of ignorance.'¹² Behind this veil people are forced to form the principles of justice based on complete fairness taking into account the interests of all members of society, because they represent any one of these members. If they do anything less, they themselves may suffer the injustices, "[T]he original position is, one might say, the appropriate initial status quo, and thus the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair."¹³ Clearly, people in the original position are thinking persons and thus moral, which he equates to being rational.¹⁴

Rawls believes that the problem that people may have with his contract view of justice as fairness is not with the idea of the initial situation. The problem may lie in accepting the set of principles that would be hypothetically agreed upon through the negotiations of people assuming

the initial positions.¹⁵ The first principle states that each person has an equal right to basic liberty, which includes political liberty; that is, the right to vote and to be eligible for public office as well as the freedom of speech and assembly. This basic liberty also includes liberty of conscience and freedom of thought, the right to possess property and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure. The second principle is that social and economic inequalities are legitimate but only when they are a) 'reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage,' and b) 'attached to positions and offices open to all'.¹⁶ The latter refers to the inequalities in the distribution of wealth and income, inequalities that are justified if they result in the benefit of all. He gives an example by suggesting that a system based on equality of all rights may be able to demonstrate the possibility for improvement and that a slight imbalance in perhaps organizational powers may be an advantage for all concerned. If this were the case, the circumstances would fall in line with the idea set out in the second principle, and "...injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all."¹⁷ In keeping with a basic tenet of contract theory, the knowledge that these slight inequalities would be to their advantage would make people willing to give up some liberties. The distribution of wealth and income must correspond with equal citizenship and equal opportunity.¹⁸ Although there may be slight inequalities, the opportunity to be the person in a position of advantage must be accessible to all members of society.

Starting with the ideas of the original position and the 'veil of ignorance,' Rawls thus established the above two principles of justice. These principles, which correspond to fairness, are seen as the basic structure of society. This basic structure must be able to sustain a certain institutions that espouse the ideals of fairness. Rawls describes five requirements that a constitutional democratic society should possess. These requirements are, firstly, equality of opportunity especially pertaining to education and training, to enable people to take part in debates that contribute to the making of social and economic policies. The second requirement is a decent distribution of wealth and income and the means by which to take advantage of one's basic freedoms listed earlier. Thirdly, the society must provide long-term security and employment to ensure participation in society. The fourth requirement is the assurance of basic health care for all. Lastly, elections must be publicly financed and there must be public access to information on policy matters, ensuring that all representatives are free from any specific interests and that citizens are well informed.¹⁹ If these requirements are fulfilled, the result will be Rawls' conception of a constitutional democratic well-ordered society. The success of such a society is not gauged by military terms, but rather by the attainment of political and social justice for all citizens, ensuring that their basic freedoms are protected and that they are attaining a decent level of income. Success is also evaluated in terms of the civic culture's ability to express itself freely.²⁰

As mentioned earlier, the contract theory was developed to explain not only the establishment or emergence of government but also to explain people's obligation to government. John Rawls explains this by stating that people have a natural duty, which is the duty of justice. This duty of justice compels people to be obligated to ideas, principles, institutions and societies that uphold justice, "...thus if the basic structure of society is just, as it is reasonable to expect in the circumstances, everyone has a natural duty to do his part in the existing scheme."²¹ Therefore, it is no longer a question of the existence of a hypothetical contract whereby people are obligated to the government. Once the basic structure of society and its institutions are just, based on principles developed from the original position, duty is

unconditional and consent, real or hypothetical, is not needed. People no longer take certain action solely motivated by the idea of what they will receive in return. They undertake certain actions because the foundations for fairness and equality have already been laid due to the establishment of just principles, "...in fact, once the full set of principles, a complete conception of right, is on hand, we can simply forget about the conception of original position and apply these principles as we would any others."²² Thus, in Rawls' view, the original contract lays down the principles of justice, but does not specify the components of a just government.

Concept of Man

Earlier philosophers would discuss their ideas of man by discussing what they believed to be the inherent natures of men. John Rawls seems to look at the characteristics of man from a different angle. It is not a question of whether man is inherently evil, bad, decent or good, rather he bases his perceptions of man on principles of morality. It is for this reason that Rawls' concept of the state is discussed prior to his concept of man, because his concept of a good man falls directly in line with what he views as a just society. He refers once again to the original position. The good person is endowed with rational feelings found in the original position and this good person must, to a higher degree than the average individual, possess a broad set of moral features that people would want to see reflected in each another. Thus, he sees goodness as rationality.²³ These features must be representative of a moral character based on the principles of justice and are manifested through good acts. These acts are carried out to advance the good of others. Here he stresses that there is no obligation to perform these good acts but that they are done based on the level of moral character of a particular rational person.²⁴ It is rational to act this way because each member assumes that all individuals will act on the principles of justice.²⁵

Rawls bases the characteristics of the bad man on the principles of justice as well. He defines the bad man as someone who has, as his priority, the attainment of excessive power and authority over others. This desire goes beyond the limits of what is acceptable by trying to achieve gains through unjust actions.²⁶ Rawls does not view all men as equally bad. He divides them by degrees of morally suspect character. The three levels of the bad man are the unjust man, the bad man and the evil man. The unjust man aspires to power and authority to achieve specific goals. These goals, such as the attainment of wealth and security are generally viewed as being legitimate when limits are placed on them. The bad man, like the unjust man, has a yearning for legitimate aims but in excessive amounts. He seeks the high esteem of others and a feeling of supremacy over others. What makes him worse than the unjust man is the dangerous way in which he seeks to achieve these ends. The evil man has a love of injustice and goes completely against what average people hold as just based on the principles established in the original contract. He offends the self-respect of others by gaining unjust rule and by placing them in humiliating and degrading positions of inferiority. He takes delight in this superiority over others.²⁷

According to Rawls, the good and the bad man stem from the structure of society within which they develop. If people are born, raised and develop mentally in a society where there exist just political and social institutions, it is likely that the moral character of the majority of

the individuals will also be enhanced.²⁸ In this case, the lack of moral features of the bad man, who does not extol the virtues of justice, covets more than what is actually sufficient for his existence and lack confidence in his self worth, will be easily distinguishable based on the established morality of the majority.²⁹ Rawls thus summarizes his conception of man:

...to say that human nature is good is to say that citizens, who grow up under reasonable and just-institutions that satisfy any of a family of reasonable liberal political conceptions of justice, will affirm those institutions and act to make sure their social world endures.³⁰

The structure of a just society, therefore, prevails because the characteristics that make it what it is are manifested in the actions and interactions of its citizens.

Conception of International Society

In keeping with the moral rather than political nature of his theory, Rawls feels that states in the existing international structure, in the Realist sense, are guided by a rational pursuit of interests. He wishes to differentiate between the abstract idea of the state and the more tangible concept of peoples. This enables him to focus on the moral character of these peoples.³¹

John Rawls categorizes the world's peoples into five groups. The first group he refers to are the liberal peoples. These peoples live in a constitutional democratic society that depicts the ideal of the society that was discussed earlier when dealing with Rawls' conception of the state. The second group is what he refers to as non-liberal yet decent peoples. This group comes from societies that possess basic institutions that meet a certain level of political justice. These first two groups are what he labels well-ordered societies. The third group consists of outlaw states that do not respect the rights of their citizens. The fourth are societies burdened by unfavourable conditions, specifically, a lack of human capital, required resources and technology. These burdens are a direct result of historical, social and economic circumstances that make it difficult for these people to establish a well-ordered society. The fifth group consists of societies that he defines as benevolent absolutisms, in which human rights are honored, but ordinary members of society are prohibited from taking on roles of decision-making.³²

Rawls uses again the concept of the original position, first, to develop the basic structure of a people' society, and, then, to establish a framework for a society of peoples. He differentiates between the two original positions by referring to the domestic use, as the first position, and the international use, as the second position. Once again, the second position, like the first, is to be a model of conditions under which peoples, or states, establish terms or principles that will guide the basic structure of the international society of peoples.³³ Again, the 'veil of ignorance' is used to deny peoples holding the original position information about the country they represent, information which could influence the establishment of terms. The participating parties do not know the size of their territory, the size of their population, their relative strength, their natural resources or their level of economic development. The only knowledge they have is that they are able to work within reasonable conditions to achieve a democratic structure.³⁴ What guides the participating representatives is what Rawls calls the criterion of reciprocity. The terms proposed for the cooperation of peoples in the international

system should be established with the understanding that these terms are fair terms, which free and equal people would accept as reasonable.³⁵ The only way they will be adhered to is if non-liberal decent people deem them as reasonable, just as liberal peoples will. If there is any doubt in the minds of the participants that the terms will not be seen as fair, then the criterion of reciprocity has not been followed. Reciprocity prevails only if each participant's rationality in terms of seeking interests includes reasonable terms to which all can agree.

In the second position peoples select from eight principles that form the Law of Peoples. The principles are as follows: 1) people possess freedom and independence, which are to be respected by other groups, 2) they are to observe treaties, 3) all peoples are equal and are parties to the agreements that bind them, 4) they are to observe a duty of non-intervention, 5) they have the right of self-defense but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense, 6) human rights must be honored, 7) certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war are to be observed, and 8) peoples are to assist others living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime. Rawls admits that these principles are only the basic ones and that they require more in-depth specifications. He also maintains that these eight principles are subject to the restrictions of the principle of sovereignty; namely: the right for a people to go to war in pursuit of state policies, and the autonomy of a people in dealing with its own citizens.³⁶ However, he does question the right of sovereignty in certain cases and this will be discussed later.

Once the principles are established, guidelines for setting up cooperative organizations can be determined. Rawls mentions three organizations in particular. Firstly, an organization that will ensure fair trade involving equal standards and a free and competitive market. Secondly, one that will resemble a cooperative banking system from which people will be able to borrow and finally, an organization that will resemble the United Nations, which he calls a Confederation of Peoples.³⁷ This is Rawls' version of Kant's *foedus pacificum*, which he refers to many times throughout his work. For this confederation to succeed it must adhere to certain conditions which come from the Law of Peoples. The political conception of justice must remain within the realm of the political, and moral, religious and philosophical doctrines must exist outside of the political sphere. Religious homogeneity is not a required element in order to live within the confines of a Law of Peoples. An interesting point is Rawls' idea that there can be varying degrees of allegiance to international law due to each peoples' differing sense of justice, but that it must be a *sufficient* level of allegiance. He calls this reasonable pluralism.³⁸ A true liberal society will show itself to be just when it can remain open by tolerating different societies.³⁹

Rawls raises the question of to what extent non-liberal peoples are to be tolerated with regards to liberal foreign policy? His answer is that liberal people should tolerate a non-liberal society or a decent society if its basic institutions satisfy certain conditions of justice in politics and it governs its citizens with reasonable and just laws.⁴⁰ If a liberal society cannot accept the differences that non-liberal societies present then it cannot define itself as liberal. Every society, provided it satisfies certain conditions, deserves its due respect. A lack of respect will result in harming the self-respect of these decent peoples. It would wound their 'proper patriotism', which is a pride in their own societies.⁴¹ To stress his point he discusses Rousseau's idea of

amour propre and how peoples desire respect and recognition of equality from others. Liberal peoples must be willing to grant this respect to decent peoples.⁴²

Rawls' ultimate goal is for all societies to become liberal societies, but does not endorse the idea of enforcing liberal doctrine on them. Liberal peoples should not be arrogant in thinking that decent societies cannot in their own way reform their structures. He is a proponent of self-determination and believes that liberal peoples should encourage decent peoples when striving for liberal structures.⁴³ This thinking harks back to Kant's idea of never imposing a certain people's will or ideology on others, rather allowing them the freedom of choice and the freedom to develop on their own. He is against paternalism because he feels that it only serves to stall development, leaving people without the empowering feeling of self-realization, stating: "liberal peoples must try to encourage decent peoples and not frustrate their vitality by coercively insisting that all societies be liberal."⁴⁴

This idea of refusing to act paternalistically is carried over to Rawls' notion of assistance. Well-ordered societies should *help* peoples in need, usually burdened societies, to manage their affairs allowing them to take part in public and civic life.⁴⁵ He points out three guidelines of assistance. One guideline is that peoples should be given the right of self-determination as explained above. A second guideline is the idea that the political culture of the society in need should be understood. Once this culture is recognized, well-ordered peoples should help to change it without using force. For example, sometimes the political culture of a particular burdened society places women in a position of inferiority. A change would come in the form of empowerment by way of providing them with education, employment and the right to vote. These new opportunities will provide them with alternatives to child bearing, which would decrease the birth rate and alleviate a major problem of overpopulation.⁴⁶ Another problem would be food crises, which Rawls feels arise not from a lack of food but from a lack of a proper distribution system.

Rawls states that "insisting on human rights will help prevent famines from developing and will exert pressure in the direction of effective governments in a well-ordered society."⁴⁷ A third guideline is that burdened societies need not become wealthy societies. They need only enough wealth to sustain their people. All peoples have a duty to reach a certain level of savings that will make it possible for them to establish just institutions for a democratic society and to provide all citizens with a worthwhile life. Once this level is reached, there is no longer a need to accumulate wealth, rather only a need to maintain it and assure resources for future use. Technology will need to be developed to preserve the earth's natural resources ensuring that its people will be sustained.⁴⁸ This economic structure is Rawls' ideal not only for assistance but also for his conception of a liberal state.

While the economic structure should give all peoples equal opportunities to achieve a decent standard of living, Rawls does not feel that the level of wealth of all peoples must be equal. A situation of inequality is not always unjust. There can exist a gap between different levels of wealth providing that the less advantaged of these peoples has enough means to become the beneficiaries of just institutions and a decent life. Once this goal has been reached there is no longer a need to narrow the gap. This is what Rawls refers to as distributive justice among peoples. Feelings of inferiority or a desire for more wealth are unjustified once societies have

reached this sufficient point.⁴⁹ Rawls does not believe in a global egalitarian principle, which he feels does not have a target goal. He feels that without a target there would forever be a funneling of funds from the wealthier societies to the less wealthy societies, which he finds unacceptable. Once levels of wealth are brought up to certain standards and maintained, the duty of assistance no longer applies, because the goal had been reached. Once a burdened society achieves just and democratic economic institutions, it then has the ability to make its own choices, including developing its own economic policies. If two societies start at the same level and, based on their economic policies, one becomes wealthier than the other, the wealthier state should not be obligated to send funds to the other. It is not reasonable for a society to ask for more than is necessary.⁵⁰

Non-Ideal Relations

John Rawls understands that not all societies will fall in line with liberal doctrine immediately and has allowed for the Law of Peoples to contain principles in dealing with non well-ordered peoples during times of war. Once peoples are engaged in war they are to be restricted by principles describing the accepted conduct of war. The principles are as follows:

1) The aim of the war is a just and lasting peace with the enemy. 2) Well-ordered peoples do not wage war against each other. War is only to be waged when non well-ordered peoples threaten the security and free institutions of well-ordered peoples. 3) People of the outlaw state are to be divided into three groups: the leaders and officials who instigated the war, the average soldiers who are not directly responsible and the civilian population who had absolutely no hand in bringing about the war. These divisions are made to protect the innocents even if they belong to the enemy society. 4) Well-ordered peoples must respect the human rights of those on the other side. 5) Well-ordered peoples must teach the content of human rights. This is important because they must, through their actions in dealing with enemy soldiers and civilians, lead by example by demonstrating the true meaning of the nature of human rights. This principle is most important for government leaders and officials because the decisions they make could affect the future structure of the international system. John Rawls is adamant about the extension of a universal set of human rights to all societies and to which all peoples would be obligated.⁵¹ In order to achieve this he is prepared to amend the principles of sovereignty. He does not feel that a state has the right to unrestricted autonomy within its borders, enabling a leader to treat his citizens in an unjust manner. The universal set of human rights would supercede this autonomy.⁵² 6) Practical means-end reasoning must have a restricted role in judging the appropriateness of an action. The ends do not always justify the means, especially if they are particularly costly and unjust. It would not be reasonable to destroy an enemy arms factory, if this would lead to killing a large number of civilians.⁵³

Once a war has been fought and peace has been established, an enemy society is not to be stripped completely of its ability to rebuild and reform itself. It is to be granted the means to establish a well-ordered society of its own.⁵⁴ Rawls claims that, when the internal structures of society are just, people are usually satisfied and there is no temptation to engage in war. Thus, in his view, the greater the number of constitutionally democratic societies, the fewer wars there will be.⁵⁵ This is a direct observance of the ideas expressed in Kant's *A Perpetual Peace*.

Conclusion

By presenting the basic tenets of his theory of justice as fairness, John Rawls has provided domestic society with a framework with which to build a constitutionally democratic system. He has also provided international society with a framework to devise a set of principles which will form the basis of a Law of Peoples. He has done this keeping the ideas of fairness, although not always equality, for all at the forefront. However, his notion of the original position behind a 'veil of ignorance' and the hypothetical nature of the conditions envisaged are quite difficult to accept. How can we imagine the existence of a person that is denied access to information, and whose ignorance could very well cause biases during negotiations? If a person does not have access to information, then he/she must be aware that differences in social, economic and political positions exist. This awareness must come from the fact that he/she has experienced these differences directly, advantageously or disadvantageously. In Rawls' conception, it is this lack of experience or information that will ensure that people will be as fair as possible when formulating principles of justice. How can a person be denied such specific information? Can he/she possibly forget what position in society he/she held and yet understand what position he/she did not want to hold? Thus, the original position does not appear to be viable.

As stated earlier, Rawls expects people to have difficulty in accepting some aspects of his theory. His response might be that the recognition of its moral features would be counted as a success, "...while realization is of course not unimportant, I believe that the very possibility of such a social order can itself reconcile us to the social world. That we think it is possible banishes dangers of resignation and cynicism."⁵⁶ At the same time, does not Rawls miss the whole point of morality, notably of Kantian morality, which is a matter of choice and responsibility, rather than rationality per se? And, from a more practical perspective, while Rawls' "Law of Peoples" adds little to the established principles of the United Nations Charter, does not his categorization of peoples into five groups lend itself to easy misinterpretations and abuses by race-conscious and power-hungry "liberal democracies"?

Notes

¹ Sayre-McCord, Geoffrey. "Contractarianism." The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory. Ed. Hugh Lafolette. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 248-249.

² Kymlicka, Will. "The Social Contract Theory." A Companion to Ethics. Ed. Peter Singer. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1991. 187.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sayre-McCord, Geoffrey. "Contractarianism." The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory. Ed. Hugh Lafolette. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 252.

⁶ Ibid, 260.

⁷ Kymlicka, Will. "The Social Contract Theory." A Companion to Ethics. Ed. Peter Singer. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1991.191.

⁸ Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1971. 7.

⁹ Ibid, 11.

¹⁰ Ibid, 152.

¹¹ Ibid, 12.

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- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 15.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 60.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 62.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 61.
- ¹⁹ Rawls, John. The Law of Peoples: with the Idea of Public Reason Revisited. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1999. 50.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 41.
- ²¹ Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1971. 115.
- ²² Ibid, 116.
- ²³ Ibid, 434 – 435.
- ²⁴ Ibid, 438.
- ²⁵ Ibid, 436.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 385.
- ²⁷ Ibid, 439.
- ²⁸ Rawls, John. The Law of Peoples: with The Idea of Public Reason Revisited. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1999. 7.
- ²⁹ Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge. Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1971. 144.
- ³⁰ Rawls, John. The Law of Peoples; with The Idea of Public Reason Revisited. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1999. 7.
- ³¹ Ibid, 27.
- ³² Ibid, 63-92.
- ³³ Ibid, 30.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 32.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 14, 35.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 37, 40.
- ³⁷ Ibid, 42.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 18.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 19.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, 59.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, 61.
- ⁴² Ibid, 34.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 61.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 62.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid, 111.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 110.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 109.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 107.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, 114.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, 117.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 181.
- ⁵² Ibid, 26-27.
- ⁵³ Ibid, 94-96
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, 97.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 8-9.

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