

Ulterior Motives and Moral Injury in War

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Introduction

Suppose our government leaders sincerely state that they have the military aim of halting the ongoing genocide of an ethnic minority in a foreign country, which will require toppling the autocratic regime in power there. Once the regime is overthrown, the subsequent democratically elected government will ally with ours, thereby providing financiers from our country economic access to lucrative natural resources. They, in turn, will help fund our leaders' reelection campaigns. Anticipating all this, our leaders consequently intend to halt the ongoing genocide only as a means – albeit a felicitous one – to furthering their own political ambitions. Indeed, absent those self-serving benefits, our government would not authorize intervening in the genocide. Yet our leaders falsely indicate to us that what motivates them is the fact that stopping the genocide is the humanitarian thing to do.

This is just one example of an *ulterior motive*. It is a common refrain among soldiers fighting in anything less than an obviously defensive war, that their government leaders have this sort of ulterior motive, in which the leaders authorize ostensibly humanitarian aims solely or mostly for mercenary rather than moral reasons. I think soldiers often correctly attribute such ulterior motives to their leaders, especially in countries less restrained in their resort to military force.

My issue in this chapter is not with whether ulterior motives affect the *jus ad bellum* status of wars. I suspect that at least sometimes they don't – and those are the cases I'll be focusing on here.¹ Rather, my concern is with whether, and if so, how the ulterior motives leaders harbor might lend to the moral injury of soldiers who take themselves to be fighting for the right reasons. According to the argument I develop here, civilian and military leaders, by virtue of their practical authority over combatants serving in the military, confer upon those combatants a particular *purpose*. The ulterior motives that the leaders harbor constitutively determine the

content of the purpose they confer. So long as a combatant remains under the practical authority of her leaders, there is nothing she can do to divest herself of the specific purpose conferred upon her. Though the war and her conduct in it are just by hypothesis, her sense of integrity might demand more: that she helps kill only for scrupulous purposes. It might be impossible to reconcile the demands of integrity with the cynical purpose that her self-serving, career-minded, opportunistic leaders confer upon her. This failure to justify *to herself* the carnage she helps cause can exacerbate the severity of any psychological trauma she suffers.

But first, consider some preliminaries regarding the concept of “ulterior motives”. I begin with *motives*. For expository convenience, I will understand *motives* in terms of *motivating reasons*. Though such a move is controversial, I doubt that anything substantive turns on this assumption, given the aims of this chapter. So, returning to the aforementioned example, the government leaders have selfish motives in that the reasons they take themselves to have in favor of halting the genocide are, by their own lights, wholly instrumental to achieving the reasons they take themselves to have in favor of furthering their political ambitions.

What makes a motive “ulterior”? I do not here develop a comprehensive account of ulterior motives. Suffice it to say that an ulterior motive is one particular way of intentionally misrepresenting the reasons for one’s action. So, for example, a motive to achieve some aim ϕ is ulterior if the agent takes herself to be acting on one set of reasons for ϕ (typically self-regard reasons), while insincerely indicating to others that she takes herself to be acting on another set of reasons in favor of ϕ (typically other-regarding). So, suppose the only political benefits the aforementioned government leaders anticipate is the increase in favorability ratings at home resulting from a successful humanitarian military operation. If this serves as the motivation in favor of authorizing military force, then this would count as an ulterior motive.

But what of mixed cases? Suppose the government leaders authorize military force necessary to stop the genocide partly for humanitarian reasons and partly to further their own political ambitions. Here, the government still has an ulterior motive, though it does not serve as the sole basis for halting the genocide. In this case, the leaders recognize that stopping the genocide is a choiceworthy aim in itself, in addition to whatever self-serving political benefits it confers. For purposes of this chapter, we can resolve these cases by running a counterfactual test: would the government leaders still authorize military force to stop the genocide if they knew beforehand that doing so would do nothing to either advance or hinder their political ambitions? I will focus on cases where the answer is “no”. That is, I will focus on cases where ulterior motives in favor of ϕ are sufficiently important that absent those motives, the agent would not pursue ϕ . (This test,

like most counterfactual tests, is merely heuristic; it's not hard to imagine cases of overdetermination, or cases of deviant causal chains, in which an agent with an ulterior motive will continue to pursue ϕ even if that motive is absent. I set these cases aside).

Having presented a brief but, I hope, serviceable account of ulterior motives, I turn to any analysis of their relevance to moral injury in war. I start in the next Section, "Conferring Purposes Upon Soldiers," by elucidating the sense in which the motivations of civilian and military leaders constitutively determine the purpose conferred upon the combatants they order to fight. Next, in the Section titled "Ulterior Motives and Integrity", I argue that a combatant's integrity might demand that she help kill only in furtherance of scrupulous purposes. So, when leaders confer upon such combatants the purpose of killing in furtherance of their own political ambitions, the combatants violate their integrity in a fundamental way, which can result in moral injury. In the "Criticisms" Section that follows, I consider objections to this view. I offer summative remarks in "Conclusion."

Conferring Purposes Upon Soldiers

A government's ulterior motives with respect to a war can result in the moral injury of its combatants fighting in that war – even if the war is just and the combatants violate no one's rights in the course of fighting the war. To understand why, it's necessary to elucidate the relationship between a government's leadership and the combatants who fight at their behest. And to do this, we need to investigate how practical agency functions at the most basic level. This is because I allege that aspects of rational agency, normally wrapped up in a single agent, are "distributed" between the leaders and their subordinates, which ultimately explains the sense in which combatants act at the behest of their leaders.

Our practical agency can be understood, at the broadest level of generalization, in terms of its *deliberative* and *executory* functions. An agent exercises its deliberative agency in the course of determining what to do. And that agent exercises its executory agency in implementing that choice. At that point, the agent shifts from the deliberative mode to the executory mode, by implementing through conduct the practical reasons the agent takes there to be in favor of the selected option. This process just describes what it standardly means to decide what to do and then act accordingly.

Normally, the deliberative and executory functions of agency are embedded in a single agent. That is, normally, an agent – call her "A" – deliberates by assessing the options available to her, and A undertakes the selected option. In some cases, though, she might "outsource" the

executory functions of her practical agency to another agent – call her “B”. This happens when A assigns to B the role of implementing the practical reasons A takes there to be. Assuming B agrees to that role, the practical reasons A takes there to be now have the function of guiding B’s conduct. Concomitantly, B’s conduct now has the function of implementing the practical reasons A takes there to be. A and B have thereby established a division of *agential* labor in that A qualifies as the “deliberator” and B qualifies as the “executor”. By establishing this division of agential labor, A and B effectively trade their deliberative and executory functions, so that A has the function of evaluating and selecting among options for B, and B has the function of implementing that option for A.²

But how exactly does A come to serve as B’s deliberator, and how does B come to serve as A’s executor? A and B establish a division of agential labor when A comes to have *practical authority* over B. But what is it for one person to have practical authority over another? In standard cases of decision-making, I decide whether to undertake some salient conduct ϕ (understood broadly enough to include not just actions but omissions) by evaluating the reasons for and against it. But suppose I believe that you have the authority to issue commands to me pertaining to ϕ . In such a case, the pros and cons of ϕ itself no longer determine the reason I take myself to have for or against ϕ . Instead, I take you to have a practical claim over me with respect to what I should do about ϕ . H. L. A. Hart points out that regardless of the differences in what authorities require of us, they all present us with the same practical reason to comply: the very fact that they have authority over us (Hart 1990, 101).³

So, if I take you to have authority over me, then I take myself to have a reason to do what you say, because you say it (at least within the domain of conduct in which you have authority). But, in addition, your practical claim against me that I do ϕ provides me with what I take to be a reason for excluding from my deliberations certain reasons against ϕ . The zone of exclusion will vary with the nature of the authority in question.⁴ If ϕ is morally wrongful, you lack *moral* authority over me that I comply with your command that I commit it. But you will nonetheless retain *practical* authority over me that I comply.

The first-order reason to comply with your authoritative command, combined with the second-order reason to exclude certain competing considerations, yields what Joseph Raz calls a “protected reason” (Raz 1977; 1990, 35–84).⁵ The upshot is that if we take you to have practical authority over me when it comes to ϕ , your commands pertaining to ϕ will provide me with a protected reason to comply, as far as we’re concerned. Put differently, your command pertaining to ϕ settles the matter for me. Consider, now, the following version of a well-known philosophical example.

Strategic Bomber

A captain in the air force orders a pilot to drop a bomb on a munitions factory. Doing so will cripple an enemy's bomb-making capabilities which will help end the unjust war that the enemy is waging. But the ensuing explosion will also collaterally kill dozens of civilians in a nearby village. Given the moral costs and benefits, bombing the factory is morally permissible. But when the captain issues the order, he harbors the inimical intention of murdering the villagers. The pilot does as she is ordered with the permissible intention of destroying the munitions factory.

The pilot will of course have his own motivating reasons – the practical reasons he takes there to be – which his conduct will have the function of implementing. Some might be lofty. He might take there to be reasons to help win the war in which he is fighting. Others might be prosaic. He might want to complete his tour of duty and return home. The pilot recognizes though that the captain has practical authority over him, by virtue of their mutual participation in the military. As a result, the captain's order to drop the bomb is supposed to *settle the matter* for the pilot as to what he is practically supposed to do and why he is supposed to do it.

The practical reasons the captain takes there for dropping the bomb have the function of guiding the pilot's conduct; concomitantly, the pilot's conduct has the function of implementing the practical reasons the captain takes there to be. This is in keeping with the division of agential labor in which the captain serves as deliberator and the pilot serves as executor. An upshot is that in morally evaluating what *the pilot* has done, we must repair to *the captain's* motivating reasons. This is because the pilot's conduct had the function of enacting the captain's motivating reasons. Thus, such reasons will be included among those by which we evaluate what the pilot has done.

Presumably, the pilot and his victims have, at the most fundamental level, equal moral standing in that they are mutually accountable to one another as moral agents. This suggests any given innocent victim of the bombing is entitled to demand an explanation from the pilot – an explanation revealing the role that her rights and welfare played, if any, in the decision to drop the bombs. This means repairing to the practical reasons *the captain* took there to be in favor of the bombing, since the captain served as deliberator and the pilot served as executor. This is because the protected reasons that the pilot takes herself to have will refer anaphorically to the reasons that the captain takes there to be. So, describing the pilot's conduct requires adverting to the captain's motivating reasons. This determines the *purpose* of the pilot's conduct.

In contrast to the pilot's motivating reasons, the pilot's *purpose* might be introspectively opaque to him. This is because it's the captain rather than the pilot that determines the content of the pilot's purpose. Suppose, then, the captain's motivating reasons – the practical reasons determining the purpose of the pilot's conduct – are morally problematic, in that the captain wanted the villagers killed. This means it was therefore the pilot's *purpose* to kill the villagers, even if the pilot had no such intention and did not know that the captain possessed that aim. And if the pilot suspects that her superiors do indeed harbor inimical purposes, the concomitant purpose conferred upon her can be a source of moral injury – or so I will argue.

I have presented an account explicating the sense in which combatants have purposes attributed to them by their commanding officers. These purposes, though they might remain introspectively opaque to the combatants who harbor them, are nonetheless integral to describing fully what they have done. In the same way that the captain's motivating reasons constitutively determine the pilot's purpose in conducting the bombing, the motivating reasons of the civilian and military leaders who authorize the war in the first place constitutively determine the purpose of the combatants ordered to wage that war.⁶

An upshot is that regardless of what reasons the combatants take there to be in favor of what they do – regardless of what their own personal motivations might be in favor of fighting – the combatants are, in addition, saddled with the purpose that the leadership confers upon them. As we saw, this is in virtue of their status as combatants in a hierarchical command structure in which they serve as executors and the leadership as deliberators. The basis for their status as such is “externalist” – it lies in their social role as combatants.⁷ Save for ending her military service, there is nothing any given combatant can do to unilaterally amend or otherwise divest herself of the specific purpose her leaders have conferred upon her, no matter how much she might vociferously disagree with and reject that purpose.

Recall the case with which we began, in which leaders authorize military action to put a stop to a genocide. Take a particular combatant fighting in that war. Call her “Soldier”. So long as Soldier follows orders, she acts according to the purpose conferred upon her, which by hypothesis is ultimately to promote her leader's political ambitions by helping provide financiers access to lucrative natural resources. Whatever other purposes the combatant might take herself to have and which are derived from her own private aims – e.g., to help stop the genocide for its own sake – will have to co-exist alongside the purposes conferred upon her and constitutively determined by the private aims of her leaders. She can no more unilaterally amend the purpose conferred upon her by her superiors than can the pilot in Strategic Bomber.

In what follows, I explain how the purpose conferred upon Soldier can be incompatible with the demands of her integrity, even if the war and her conduct in it are morally permissible.

Ulterior Motives and Integrity

Given the account I have presented so far, when Soldier kills others in the war her leaders authorized, she cannot ingenuously and correctly aver that her purposes were all virtuous, even if those killings were justified. In addition to her personal reasons for killing, which might be morally unimpeachable, she has the purpose of killing in order to advance the political ambitions of her leaders. As we have seen, there is nothing she can do or so say to exorcize that purpose conferred upon her, so long as she remains under the practical authority of her leaders. And she remains under their practical authority so long as she serves in the military. An upshot is that when reckoning morally with what she has done in the war, she is forced to confront the unpleasant fact that she possessed a morally unscrupulous purpose.

To be clear, the claim here is not merely that there is a basis for Soldier to feel agent-regret. Take for example a case belonging to Jeff McMahan in which, unbeknown to you, a terrorist rigs your cellphone so that it sets off a bomb killing innocents on the other side of town the next time you answer a call (McMahan 2005). Of course, it makes sense to feel agent-regret for having been used as a means to a nefarious end. But you can ingenuously and correctly deny that it was your purpose to do so. Because the terrorist has no practical authority over you, the terrorist's purpose doesn't become yours. This is in contrast to Soldier whose purpose was indeed conferred upon him by her superior officer.

On this view, the cynical and self-serving ulterior motives of leaders half a world away can have decidedly personal consequences for the combatants enacting those motives. Given the purpose conferred upon Soldier, and given the harms she commits over the course of the war, it can be psychologically and morally difficult for Soldier to regard herself as acting with integrity. After all, regardless of how scrupulous her own motives might be, she knows or has good reason to suspect that she is purposed with killing to enrich her self-serving leaders.

So, suppose Soldier attempts to explain to herself, or to her victims, why she participated in a presumptively objectionable activity: killing. That is, suppose she holds herself or is otherwise held by others to account for her conduct in the war. In providing an explanation, she might cite her own personal reasons for helping kill others. But this explanation will remain crucially incomplete if she neglects citing the cynical, self-serving purpose conferred upon her by her leadership.

Recall that I do not claim that such a purpose makes it impermissible to fight and kill in the war. The enemy combatants perpetrating the genocide might be morally liable to be killed even in furtherance of self-serving aims (though not, I believe, in furtherance of manifestly evil aims). Rather, the point is that the purpose the leaders confer upon Soldier might be antithetical to her self-regard as someone who is willing to inflict grievous harms *only* to prevent such harms. Reconciling this principled stance with the purpose conferred upon her requires impossible moral and psychological contortions – at least if and when she learns of her superior’s ulterior motives. The result is that Soldier might come to see herself as morally diminished in an important way for participating in that war, even though the war as well as her conduct in it are morally permissible.

To better explicate this phenomenon, I will repair to a canonical discussion of *integrity*. In Bernard Williams’ famous example, a pacifist named “George” is offered a job manufacturing chemical weapons (Smart and Williams 1973, 97–99). Refusing this opportunity will not only leave his family impoverished but will also result in greater harm overall since a more zealous applicant will take the job, and he will be producing chemical weapons in greater quantities. Yet if George takes the job, he would be contributing to an end he personally finds morally abhorrent.

In discussing this example, Williams is concerned less about what George should do and more about how he should deliberate about what to do. There is something morally perverse, Williams suggests, about expecting George to treat the violation of his deepest commitments as an entry in the costs-column of a Utilitarian balance sheet. To do so would be “to alienate him in a real sense from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions” (Smart and Williams 1973, 116–17). This would be an “attack” on his integrity, insofar as integrity prohibits acting in a way contrary to our deepest convictions. This is because our deepest convictions, Williams says, “will characteristically be what gives one’s life some meaning, and gives one some reason for living it” (Williams 1995, 169–70).

I suggest, though, that the attack on George’s integrity is more fundamental than Williams realizes. The attacks consist not only in requiring him to contribute to an end he regards morally abhorrent. The attack on George’s integrity also consists in requiring him to accept the *purpose* of contributing to that end. As Sophie-Grace Chappell puts it, “[a]n agent’s integrity, in Williams’ sense, is his ability to originate actions, to further his own initiatives, purposes or concerns, and thus to be something more than a conduit for the furtherance of others’ initiatives, purposes or concerns...” (Chappell 2018). Though Williams was addressing the “initia-tives, purposes, or concerns” deriving from the impersonal point of view

that Utilitarianism demands, his point can nonetheless be generalized. For George, “*his* projects and *his* decisions have to be seen as the actions and decisions which flow from the projects and attitudes with which he is most closely identified” (Smart and Williams 1973, 116–17, emphasis in original).

We can now appreciate the sense in which George is in a position similar to Soldier. By taking on jobs in which they serve as executors and in which their superiors serve as deliberators, they have relegated themselves to the role of “a conduit” in furtherance of “initiatives, purposes, or concerns” antithetical to their own. Their superiors, after all, confer upon them protected reasons to comply with their instructions. So long as they act according to their roles, George and Soldier are supposed to refrain from weighing the pros and cons of fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. They are thereby ceding deliberation regarding a critical issue to unscrupulous opportunists. Their deepest moral convictions demand the opposite: that they grant their tasks precisely the sort of critical moral deliberation that their role as executor prohibits. This is, in and of itself, a violation of their integrity quite apart from whether they end up causally contributing to unjust ends.

To be clear, Soldier’s decision to serve in the military, and thereby serve as a “conduit” for another’s “projects and decisions”, does not *necessarily* undermine her sense of integrity. Civilian and military leaders often enough authorize a resort to war for reasons consistent with their combatants’ views regarding the military’s fundamental purpose. In such cases, the leaders’ practical reasons – which constitutively determine the purpose they confer upon Soldier – are compatible with her integrity’s demands. The problem occurs when Soldier serves as a conduit for *corrupt* projects and decisions.

Soldier’s integrity, then, demands that she serves as a conduit only for scrupulous projects and decisions. If her superior possesses unscrupulous aims, and Soldier suspects as much, acting in accordance with those aims violates her integrity’s demands. But why should Soldier’s integrity be so demanding? Isn’t such a standard quixotic? I do not believe so. It is difficult even in the morally best circumstances for a combatant to react with anything but moral horror at the abject misery and death of war, and at having directly contributed to such carnage. The worse the harms, the higher the standard that must be met to reconcile those harms with integrity’s demands. And when that standard is not met – when Soldier’s sense of integrity is violated – she cannot justify to herself her contribution to that carnage. And this can affect the severity of any resulting psychological trauma she suffers.

I do not claim that all combatants suffer thusly. Many might be unphased by the horror of war. And among those who are indeed psychologically

traumatized, there will be some for whom diminished self-regard resulting from violating the demands of integrity will have little effect on the severity of that trauma. And there will be still others who are psychologically traumatized, and for whom diminished self-regard would indeed exacerbate such trauma, but who find nothing especially problematic about acting on the cynical and self-serving purpose that their leaders conferred upon them. But I suspect that for many if not most soldiers, their ability to morally reconcile what they do in war with the demands of integrity significantly exacerbates the severity of the psychological trauma they suffer. And I suspect that for many if not most soldiers, their integrity demands that they kill solely for legitimate reasons, and not to advance or enrich the political ambitions of their leaders.⁸

Criticisms

Here, I turn to two criticisms. They both suggest that Soldier should not hold herself accountable for the ulterior motives of her leaders. The first does so by alleging that absent control over her leaders' motivations, Soldier should not hold herself to account for implementing such motivations. The second does so by alleging the motivations have only first-personal and not third-personal moral relevance. Both of these criticisms, I argue, fail.

According to the first criticism, Soldier cannot be held to account for the problematic motivations of her leaders at least in part because she has no influence over those motivations. Though it is true that Soldier is *enacting* the self-serving motivations of her leaders, that should play no role whatsoever in Soldier's moral evaluation of herself. Rather, such an evaluation should be based solely on her own actions and on her own motivations, all of which by hypothesis are morally beyond reproach. On this view, the leaders' ulterior motives do not reflect badly on Soldier's character – rather, only on their own.

This criticism is, at first, compelling. After all, it is uncontroversially true that Soldier cannot be held accountable for the fact that her leaders have the motivations that they do. But the resulting purpose conferred upon Soldier can still compromise her integrity. To see why, it's helpful to repair once again to Bernard Williams's canonical examples in his discussion of integrity – but this time, to Jim rather than George. In this classical example, the protagonist, in order to save nine innocents, must compromise his commitment to pacifism by killing an innocent who would have been killed anyway. The moral here (contrary to many an undergraduate essay) is *not* that Jim acted wrongly. Indeed, Jim probably did the right thing. Rather, the point is that in doing the right thing, he was forced to violate the demands of his integrity.

Though certainly not a pacifist, Soldier is in a somewhat analogous situation. Suppose Soldier knows or suspects that her superiors have ulterior motives. Yet she has a moral commitment to participate in killing for scrupulous reasons only. Helping put a stop to the genocide is one such reason. Advancing the ambitions of her political leaders is not. *Yet she cannot do one without simultaneously doing the other.* So, in order to do what is right – to help put a stop to the genocide – she must enact the corrupt purpose conferred upon her. That is, she must violate the demands of her integrity.

The point here, then, is this. Even though Soldier has no control over her leader's ulterior motives, and thus over the purpose conferred upon her, she does indeed have control over whether she obeys their commands. Suppose she, like Jim, chooses to do as commanded, on the grounds that it is what morality ultimately requires: it is better to act according to the unscrupulous purpose her leaders conferred upon her than it is to refrain from helping put a stop to the genocide. She must, then, like Jim, set aside as best she can her integrity's demands in order to do what is morally required of her. And this, again, is a source of moral injury. According to Nancy Sherman, "moral injury"

refers to experiences of serious inner conflict arising from what one takes to be grievous moral transgressions that can overwhelm one's sense of goodness and humanity. The sense of transgression can arise from (real or apparent) transgressive commissions and omissions perpetrated by oneself or others, or from bearing witness to the intense human suffering and detritus that is a part of the grotesquerie of war and its aftermath. In some cases, the moral injury has less to do with specific (real or apparent) transgressive acts than with a generalized sense of falling short of moral and normative standards befitting good persons and good soldiers.

(Sherman 2015, 8)

On this account, it is clear that acting in a way that violates the demands of one's own integrity can serve as a source of moral injury.

This takes us to the second possible criticism which alleges that motivations are only first-personally and not third-personally morally relevant to conduct (Nagel 1989, 175–79). By hypothesis, Soldier does the right thing by participating in the war. Though her leaders' motivations are morally problematic, Soldier's aren't. If motivations are morally relevant only from an agent-centered standpoint, then the leaders' unscrupulous motivations should not affect our moral evaluation of Soldier or of what she does. At best, it should affect our moral evaluation of what the leaders bring about via Soldier.

But why believe that motivations are only first-personally morally relevant? Consider this case:

Poisoning

You have the option of preventing a culpable poisoner from surreptitiously poisoning a random innocent, where the poison will cause that innocent 10 hours of extreme pain (which the victim will mistakenly attribute to having eaten spoiled food). Alternatively, you have the option of preventing a non-culpable poisoner from accidentally poisoning a different random innocent, where the poison will cause that innocent 11 hours of extreme pain (which the victim will mistakenly attribute to having eaten spoiled food).

Given you can stop only one of the two poisoners, which one should you pick? Presumably, the second; the fact that the first is acting according to bad motivations should play no role in who you stop. Rather, the total amount of harm inflicted has (arguably) lexical priority. This is not to say motivations are morally irrelevant. Rather, it is to say that motivations give moral reason only to their bearers.

On this view, though it is incumbent upon the leaders to act solely out of the right sort of motivation, that requirement is wholly first-personal in that no one else has the responsibility to ensure that they adopt those motivations. So even if Soldier, by participating in the war, helps achieve the leaders' ulterior motives, she is on the hook solely for her own motives – not for those belonging to her leaders. As a result, Soldier has no reason to think that her actions violate her commitment to killing only for scrupulous reasons; this is because she is not accountable for the reasons that the leaders attach to her conduct.

But this argument fails, even if it is correct in its surmise that motivations are relevant only from a first-person standpoint. To see why, consider again a terror-bomber whose motive is to target innocent villagers, in contrast to a strategic bomber who collaterally kills the villagers as a side-effect of harboring the motive to destroy a munitions factory. If different conduct were necessary to kill the civilians, the terror-bomber, unlike the strategic bomber, would alter his behavior accordingly. Thomas Nagel points out that in this case, the agent “tracks” the harm through modal space. If the conditions for causing the harm were to change, his actions would change accordingly. This systematic counterfactual interdependence between his agency and the harm connects him to it in a morally egregious way, Nagel suggests (1989, 175–88). This standard counterfactual description of an ordinary intention is supposed to help show why motivations are morally relevant, at least from a first-personal standpoint.

Similarly, Soldier does not just happen to enact the leaders' practical reasons. Instead, it is quite literally her function to do so. Recall that Soldier and her leaders have established a division of agential labor in which the leaders count as the deliberators and Soldier counts as an executor. In accordance with this division of agential labor, the leaders establish the purpose of Soldier's conduct with respect to her role in the war. Soldier has, then, the function of enacting the practical reasons the leaders take there to be. Though Soldier might disavow the leader's practical reasons, Soldier's conduct still counterfactually depends on the leader's practical reasons in a systematic way: where the leaders' reasons change, Soldier's purpose ipso facto changes as well.

The counterfactual sensitivity that Soldier's conduct bears to the leaders' ends is the same counterfactual sensitivity that an agent's actions bear toward her own ends. Similar to how, in ordinary cases, an intention disposes you to change your actions (within limits) in ways instrumental to achieving its object, Soldier's relationship to the leader disposes Soldier to change her actions in ways instrumental to achieving the object of the leaders' intentions. This is because the reasons the leader takes there to be constitutively determine the purpose of the soldier's conduct.

So, if we think that intentions are first-personally relevant because they counterfactually relate the individual to an end in a systemic way, then we should also think that the leaders' reasons are morally relevant to Soldier's actions. This should come as no surprise. Recall that Soldier and her leaders have established a division of agential labor in which the deliberative and executory aspects of agency are distributed among them. There is a sense, then, in which they together constitute a locus of agency. The argument that motivations have only first-personal relevance will, if anything, help strengthen rather than weaken the claim that the leaders' ulterior motives are relevant to Soldier's integrity.

So even if she is herself free of ulterior motives, and even if she makes the correct decision by fighting in the war, and even if motivations are in general morally relevant only first-personally, Soldier *still* violates the demands of her integrity by killing in part for the purpose of advancing her leader's political ambitions. And this, as I have indicated, can serve as a cause of moral injury.

Conclusion

If what I have argued is correct, the ulterior motives of civilian and military leaders authorizing a just war can lend to the moral injury of the combatants tasked with fighting in that war, even if the combatants are morally permitted to so fight. We often hear soldiers suggest that their leaders are waging war ultimately for political gain. This is not just an offhanded

cynical remark from jaded combatants. It is often an accurate observation, the truth of which can be a source of moral injury in war.

Notes

- 1 For arguments against the relevance of the “right intention” criterion for *jus ad bellum*, see McMahan (2005) and Frowe (2014).
- 2 For a more complete discussion, see chapters 2 and 3 of Bazargan-Forward (2022).
- 3 For helpful discussion, see Shapiro (2002), Owens (2008), and Westlund (2011).
- 4 For helpful discussion, see Shapiro (2002, 406–07) and Owens (2008).
- 5 See also Hinchman (2003), Sciaraffa (2009, 248), and Ferrero (2010, 8).
- 6 What about cases where multiple persons comprise the leadership? How do we determine the content of the purpose they collectively confer in such cases? We need a judgment-aggregating decision-procedure to answer this question, which is beyond the purview of this chapter. For more on judgment aggregation in the context of shared decision-making, see List (2005).
- 7 For a related, externalist analysis of combatancy as a social role, see Benjani and Statman (2019, 124–126).
- 8 This seems borne out in the extensive work Nancy Sherman has done on this subject. See in particular Sherman (2015).

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