

Expanding The History Of The Just War: The Ethics Of War In Ancient Egypt**Dr. Jakir Hussain****Assistant Professor****Department Of History****Babu ShobhaRam Govt Arts College****Alwar****Rajasthan****(Received:15September2024/Revised:25September2024/Accepted:10 October2024/Published:24October2024)****Abstract**

Violence against adversaries was a legitimate form of retaliation for Egypt's perceived or actual injuries. ²⁴ This idea of self-defense was often extended to cover hostile conflicts fought outside of Egypt. This article provides the first thorough examination of the ethics of war in ancient Egypt, which deepens our understanding of the historical evolution of just war theory. We can discern an ancient Egyptian just war theory because of the close association that Egyptian culture had with justice and battle. The pharaohs of Egypt asserted that they alone possessed the rightful authority and the justification for war.

By showing that just war theory evolved outside of Europe and existed many centuries before the arrival of Christianity or even the emergence of Greco-Roman theology, it challenges the conventional history of the just war tradition. Ideals like justice, honesty, fairness, mercy, kindness, and generosity that are reflected in these biographies are a reflection of ma'at, the fundamental conception of the universe's cosmic and social order as established by the creator deity. When it came to morality and ethics, the monarch was crucial. It further contends that the emergence of ius in bello standards in Egyptian warfare was impeded by the prepotentius ad bellum concept that was developed in ancient Egypt and was based on universal and absolutist claims to justice. I argue that analogous developments in several later Western and Near Eastern just war and holy war philosophies are prefigured by this evolution.

Keywords: International Relations, History, Ancient Egypt, Just War Theory, Ethics Of War

Introduction

The theory of just war (Latin: bellum iustum)^{[1][2]} is a teaching, likewise alluded to as a practice, of military morals that means to guarantee that a conflict is ethically reasonable

through a progression of measures, which must all be met for a conflict to be viewed as. Military leaders, theologians, ethicists, and policymakers have all studied it. There are two groups of criteria: *jus in bello* (the "right conduct in war") and *jus ad bellum* (the "right to go to war"). There have been calls to include a third category of just war theory—*jus post bellum*—that addresses the morality of post-war settlement and reconstruction. The first group of criteria addresses the morality of going to war, and the second group addresses the moral conduct within war.^[3] The idea behind the just war theory is that, while war is terrible, it doesn't always have to be the worst option if the right people behave. Opponents of the just war theory may adhere to a stricter pacifist standard (proposing that there has never been and cannot ever be a justifiable basis for war) or a more permissive nationalist standard (proposing that a war need only to serve a nation's interests to be justifiable). The just war theory presents a justifiable means of war with justice being an objective of armed conflict.^[4] Important responsibilities, undesirable outcomes, or Philosophers frequently argue that if someone is forced to fight, they do not need to be plagued by guilt. Some philosophers praise the virtues of the soldier while also expressing their fear of war.^[5] Others, like Rousseau, advocate for rebellion against oppressive power. The "just war tradition," or historical body of rules or agreements that have been used in various wars throughout history, is the subject of the historical aspect. In the twenty-first century, there has been significant debate between traditional just war theorists, who largely support the existing law of war and develop arguments to support it, and revisionists, who reject many traditional assumptions, although not necessarily advocating a change in the law.^{[7][8]} The just war tradition also looks at the writings of various philosophers and lawyers throughout history and examines both their philosophical visions of war's ethical limits and whether their thoughts have contributed to the body of conventions that have evolved

Ancient Egypt

According to a 2017 study, the just war tradition can be traced all the way back to Ancient Egypt.^[9] The pharaoh as a divine office and executor of the will of the gods, the cosmological role of Egypt, and the superiority of the Egyptian state and population over all other states and people were the three main ideas that Egyptian ethics of war typically revolved around. Political theology in Egypt held that the pharaoh was the only one who could justly start a war and claimed to be carrying out the will of the gods. "I was nursed to be a conqueror...his [Atum's] son and his protector, he gave me to conquer what he conquered," Senusret I claimed during the Twelfth Dynasty. Later pharaohs also believed that being Amun-Re's son

gave them the authority to wage war on the god's behalf. Prior to launching campaigns, pharaohs were believed to receive their war orders from the deities by visiting temples. "I went north because I was strong (enough) to attack the Asiatics through the command of Amon, the just of counsels," Kamose claimed, for instance. "provides an unequivocal statement of the pharaoh's divine mandate to wage war on his enemies," according to the stele that Thutmose III erected at the Temple of Amun in Karnak. The use of just war aided in the justification of these efforts as the New Kingdom progressed and Egypt's territorial ambitions grew. The general rule of Maat, implying request and equity, was integral to the Egyptian thought of simply war and its capacity to ensure Egypt for all intents and purposes no restrictions on what it could take, do, or use to ensure the desires of the state.^[9]

The Ethics And Morality Of The Ancient Egyptians

Profound quality and Morals are continuously intriguing authentic points. To our cutting edge minds, what is fundamentally moral and moral once in a while appears to be moderately clear, for example, not cheating or taking, striving to make money, and so on., in any case, even today in certain social orders, that isn't generally so self-evident. However, the majority of ancient societies undoubtedly had some sort of code of conduct. In ancient Egypt, one needed a basic understanding of the word "ma'at" to comprehend morality and ethics. The ethical concepts of "truth," "order," and "cosmic balance" were Ma'at.^[3] A goddess named Ma'at also personified these tenets. This goddess was thought to have an impact on every aspect of the ancient Egyptian land because she represented the divine harmony and balance of the universe. It is important to note that the Egyptian people had an obligation to uphold ma'at by obeying the king, particularly in the most ancient times, which undoubtedly contributed to the early state's formation. The concept of what the Egyptians considered to be righteous behavior can be deduced from a variety of written sources, particularly autobiographies and texts that we now refer to as wisdom literature. Although there probably never existed a theoretical framework that specifically addressed these issues in ancient Egypt, the concept of what the Egyptians considered to be righteous behavior can be deduced from these sources^[5]. We need to be aware that these kinds of texts, especially those that are meant to be preserved for future generations, do not always provide us with what we would consider to be the absolute truth. They were much of the time written to furnish their divine beings with a resume of sorts, setting out the great and fine deeds of the essayist, frequently in burial places, as day of atonement drew closer. However, they do reveal the perception of the ideal, despite the fact that this ideal was not always realized.^[6] Our earliest source of

ethical principles comes from autobiographies. They appear to be written for the descendants of the tomb owner and mostly date from the 5th Dynasty onward. For instance, Nefer-seshem-re, a government official, tells us that:

I have left my city and come down from my province because I have done what is right (ma'at) for its lord, satisfied him with what he loves, spoken well and done well, and when I was able, saved the weak from the hands of someone stronger than him;

I provided the hungry with bread, the naked with clothing, and the boatless with a landing spot.^[5] I honored my father, pleased my mother, and nurtured their children; I buried him without a son; I built a boat for him without a boat.

It has been said that the advanced Christian Book of scriptures can be summarized in two sentences. Admire God. Love other people. Obviously these principles are not new to that text, as most Egyptians cherished their divine beings, and the old Egyptian clearly trusted that paying special attention to his neighbors was a high point in his life. Denials of misconduct are included in other earlier texts that are contemporaneous with Nefer-seshem-re. "Never did I take the property of any person," for instance; Never did I say something terrible regarding anybody to the ruler (or) to an overlord since I wanted that I may be respected before the god"; and "Never did I do anything evil against any person," which are all well-known ethical guidelines to the majority of people in the contemporary world. The goals communicated in such memoirs, including equity, genuineness, decency, leniency, graciousness and liberality, mirror the focal idea of ma'at, the enormous and social request of the universe as laid out by the maker god.^[6]



When it came to morality and ethics, the king was a crucial figure. Keep in mind that the pharaoh was regarded as an earthly god and was ultimately responsible for interpreting the concept of ma'at for the living. At the point when Nefer-seshem-re records that "having done ma'at for its master, having fulfilled him with that which he wants", he is alluding to the ruler

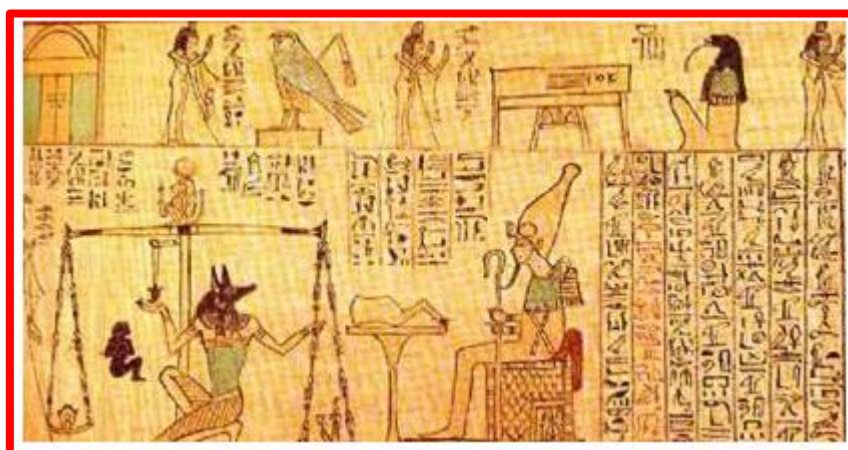
who decides and maintains ma'at. However, a person's fate after death was determined by how well they met ma'at, the living king's standard. "An offering which the king grants" serves as the opening line of the standard funeral prayer. However the idea of ma'at went through certain alterations over the long run, similar moral and virtues communicated in the Old Realm texts keep on showing up in later collections of memoirs and different texts.^[4] Notwithstanding, insight writing from the Primary Transitional Period and Center Realm appears to demonstrate a debilitating of the ruler's impact over ma'at, connecting it all the more straightforwardly with the maker god. For instance, in the Narrative of the Persuasive Worker, which dates to about the ninth or tenth Tradition, we track down the line, "Do ma'at for the ruler of ma'at" however here a divine being is gathered as opposed to the lord. When the peasant asserts that his expounding on ma'at "have issued from the mouth of Re himself," the issue is clarified further along in this text. In another texts, referred to us as the Prescience of Neferti, we are informed that the sun god Re maintains ma'at, and that assuming problem wins, it is on the grounds that this god has not made his presence felt.^[8] The failure of the rulers at the end of the Old Kingdom, which led to the First Intermediate Period, may be linked to this shift in emphasis from the king to the god. Through the end of the pharaonic era, the king maintained a central role in the upkeep of ma'at. He did so, however, as the god's earthly representative. Despite this, the king was prone to error, and when dishevel did occur, the king was frequently blamed for not performing this duty.

Therefore, morals and ethics had an impact not only on the individual but also on the nation as a whole in the afterlife. In addition, despite the fact that each individual was accountable for their own actions, it would appear that general turmoil suggested either that the gods were not present or that the king was not performing his duties. The wisdom text shows an attempt to reestablish the rule of ma'at in the Middle Kingdom, following the transition from the disorder of the First Intermediate Period. It includes a type of writing called "Complaints," which complains about a situation that has affected the social hierarchy. "Behold, he who had nothing is now a possessor of riches... Behold, noble ladies [now travel] on rafts," for instance, is a quote from the Admonitions of Ipuwer. The breakdown of ma'at was thought to be the cause of this social disorder. As a result, it is also stated in this document that "Behold, offices are broken into, and their records stolen...; Behold, the great council chamber is invaded, the laws of the chamber are thrown out, men walk on them in the streets, and beggars tear them up in the lanes."^[8]

The term "isfet," which is usually translated as "sin" or "wrong," is the most common term used to describe the opposite value of ma'at. The Pyramid Texts are the first to use the term. Kha-kheper-re-soneb complains that "Ma'at has been cast out while isfet is in the counsel chamber," and Tutankhamun is said to have "drove out isfet throughout the two lands, M'at being established in her place" after (or at the end of) the Amarna Period. The declaration of innocence begins in Book of the Dead chapter 125: "Oh wide of movements, who comes from Heliopolis, I have not done isfet."^[3]

However, since ma'at's basic meaning is "truth," its common antonym is grg, which means "lie." Accordingly, the apes that sit at the bow of Re's boat in Book of the Dead chapter 126 are "ones who live from ma'at, who digest ma'at, whose ears are free of lies (grg), whose abomination is isfet; [The deceased asks, "Remove my wrong (isfet) and drive out my evil (dwt)."] It is essential to note that, despite the fact that isfet is used to encompass "wrong," there was no concept of "general sin" in ancient Egypt—a barrier between humans and the gods caused by human nature. However there may be an almighty lord of old Egypt, as Amun appears to have been considered during the New Realm, "sin" and "wrong" were not restricted to people.^[2]

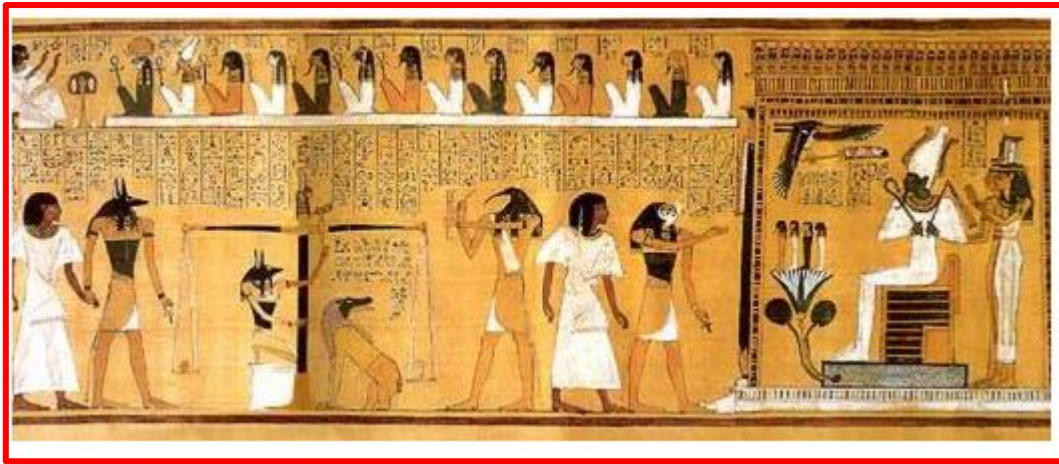
At least theoretically, the ancient Egyptians believed that it was possible to live without isfet. Obviously, great Egyptians endeavored to follow the method of ma'at, for in doing so they would flourish and society would work without a hitch, while the people who violated were ill-fated to programmed disappointment. They discovered what behavior was compatible with ma'at in wisdom literature's teachings and instructions, but it was also the king's responsibility to uphold ma'at and subdue isfet. However, there were times when the wicked would actually benefit from their actions, and as a result, the final assessment of a person occurred not in his life but in the afterlife, when the wicked would ultimately be held accountable for their actions.^[8]



The ancient Egyptian soul being weighed in the afterlife

It is interesting to note that the purpose of chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead is to give the dead the tools they need to face the final judgment and even use powerful magic when they need it the most. The way that the departed basically endeavored to utilize sorcery to beat their inadequacies doesn't lessen the reality with which they saw their moral and moral way of behaving, nor would it be advisable for one consequently make the inference that they were prepared to utilize deceptive means to arrive at their ideal objective. The more likely explanation is that, despite their best efforts to live sin-free lives, they still had a similar outlook on life to our own.^[9]

Textual evidence becomes increasingly clear during the New Kingdom that people could not always live up to their ideals. In the Instructions of Merikare, for instance, there is indirect evidence of royal officials who ought to uphold ma'at abusing their positions. "Make great your officials, that they keep your laws," says this text. A proper man is one who does not lack, and a rich man is not partial. A poor man who says, "Would that I had!" does not speak justly. isn't standing up. He favors those who reward or bribe him and is partial to those he likes.^[3] The way that Egyptians overall and those authorities explicitly who were answerable for keeping up with ma'at were frail is better confirmed from enduring letters and records from the laborers town at Deir el-Medina on the West Bank at Thebes (current Luxor). At the end of the 18th Dynasty, these texts provide evidence of the spread of corruption and a breakdown in standards. Truth be told, during the nineteenth Tradition, one papyrus contains a considerable rundown of criminal allegations against a head of laborers at Deir el-Medina who is denounced, among different charges, of having gotten his situation by paying off the vizier. The last vizier who heard these charges evidently himself was at fault for bad behavior, for he was excused by the ruler. In a papyrus dating to the mid twentieth Tradition, enormous scope misappropriation and unfortunate behavior were confirmed against the faculty of the sanctuary of Khnum at Massive, including one anonymous cleric. We shouldn't be shocked by any of this. It is not new to us in the modern world that people are not sinless as a whole and that power corruption and greed have always existed.^[6]



Judgment of the deceased in the Hall of Justice from the 19th Dynasty Book of the Dead of Hunefer

Ius Ad bellum Authority

All through the old Close to East there was a common idea that heavenly authority was interceded through the figure of the ruler. Egypt was fairly odd in that, from the Early Dynastic period (c. 3100-2686 BCE), Egyptian rulers expected a considerably more prominent power, being viewed as a specialist of the divine beings as a heavenly well as a figure office and achieved a semi divine status.^[8] The pharaoh's office's divine aspects remained closely linked to his martial duties. Senusret I, who lived from 1965 to 1920 BCE, stated: I was breast fed to be a victor... his [Atum] child and his defender, he gave me to overcome what he won".^[9] Beginning in the Middle Kingdom, Egyptian pharaohs developed a special bond with the high god Amun-Re. The pharaoh, as the son of Amun-Re, possessed unquestionable authority to wage war, both on his own authority as a quasi-divine being and on behalf of Amun-Re, whose support was tacit. This expanded upon previous royal ideology. "No king felt the need to justify such action" during the Old Kingdom because the terrestrial "son of Horus"'s authority to act without consequence against Egypt's neighbors was so axiomatic (Redford 1995:165). According to Bernadette Menu's interpretation of the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts (2003, p. 53), "a way for the king to fulfil his obligations with regard to his subjects, and a validation of his functions, regarding his status as a god-king," war is presented as self-legitimizing.^[10] To reaffirm his relationship with the divine beings and to underscore the heavenly authorization of military endeavors, pharaohs visited faction habitats - particularly Karnak - before setting out on crusades. Here the pharaoh would 'get' orders from the god(s).^[11] For instance, Pharaoh Kamose (1555-1550 BCE) expressed that: "I went north because I was strong enough to attack the Asiatic people under Amon's command. [12] Pharaoh Merneptah (1213-1203 BCE) emphasized Egypt's divine protection:

Any attempt to harm her people will fail. Every god's eye is on her despoiler, and it will end all its enemies. 13 By virtue of their divine origin, the gods and the pharaoh's interests and authority were essentially inseparable. At the temple of Amun (Karnak), Thutmose III (1456-1427 BCE) built a stela that made it clear that the pharaoh's divine mandate was to fight his enemies:

I [Amun] gave you fearlessness and triumph over all terrains...

The rulers of all terrains are accumulated in your grip...

I chained Nubia's Bowmen by 10,000 thousands,

The northerners a hundred thousand prisoners.

In order to crush the rebels and traitors, I made your enemies fall under your feet.

You are in charge of both the Western and Eastern parts of the earth, which I bestowed upon you.

The political theology of Thutmose III held that a divine grant of universal sovereignty over all lands and peoples provided the authority to wage war. "The earliest record of nationalist imperialism and divinely mandated universal empire," according to Black (2009, p. 24). As a result, any threat or challenge to the Egyptian monarchy was viewed as a rebellion. The Egyptian concept of universal authority legitimized the state's military actions while simultaneously delegitimizing those of enemy peoples because it made all enemies, internal and external, rebels. As we will see, Egypt understood that it justified any offensive war as a defensive action to restore the natural political order (Shaw 1991, p. 7). Egyptian texts and iconography all reiterate this idea of divine jurisdiction and sovereignty. It demonstrates the crucial connection that exists in Egyptian culture between legitimate warfare and authority. The unique cosmological status of his kingdom and the pharaoh's divine office both gave him the authority to wage war.^[9] The universal politico-theological principle of justice and order was seen in Egypt as a terrestrial manifestation: Ma'at. Ma'at, a female deity, appears as a principle of right action early in Egyptian history. However, the creative harmony of Ma'at was believed to be perpetually threatened by the destructive forces of chaos (Isfet), which the Egyptians identified terrestrially as foreign peoples beyond their realm as well as criminal and rebellious elements within it. This crucial attribute made Egypt and the Egyptians superior to all other lands and peoples. The fundamental contrast between justice and order and injustice and chaos was inevitably reflected in the conflict between peace and war.^[12] The literature of ancient Egypt reveals a profound hostility toward "barbaric" foreigners and the danger they posed to civilized society. This hostility is especially evident in prophetic

"lament" poetry, which is thought to have been written in the Middle Kingdom but is only found in copies written in the New Kingdom: Indeed, the things of happiness have been destroyed, and those feeding Syrians who travel throughout the land have reduced the land to a state of agony. Foes have emerged in the East! Egypt is now home to Asians; a safe fortress is lacking...I will show you the land in fiasco, what shouldn't occur, occurring: Ma'at could only be restored by the return of a true king: "Armies of war will be used, and the land will be in chaos."^[11] Asiatic people will succumb to his slaughter and Libyan people will succumb to his flame. The Walls of the Ruler will be constructed, and rebels are a part of his rage and malcontents are a part of his awesomeness. Asiatics will not be allowed to enter Egypt. Truth will be put back where it belongs and Chaos will be driven out.

Conclusions

When taken as a whole, it is clear that the ancient Egyptian concept of righteous war was based on a well-established ethical framework and that considerations of justice were fundamental. On the other hand, we must conclude that the term "enemy rights" did not appear at all in the Egyptian language or the way war was waged. We have seen that treating foes with outrageous brutality was regularizing. As a combatant or as a prisoner of war, death on the battlefield was to be expected, and rank provided little protection against it. It was common practice to mutilate enemy corpses for both monitoring and administrative reasons. There is no evidence that tactics or weapons are being restricted. All foe property was a genuine objective, to be seized as goods or obliterated as a component of a politico-military procedure to diminish foe assets and incur spectacular exhibition terrorizing. Property and people were not meaningfully differentiated between combatants and non-combatants. Children and women were certain to be enslaved on a massive scale and lacked immunity. In conclusion, almost nothing appears to be associated with an ancient Egyptian *ius in bello* tradition. However, the growth of a very potent *ius ad bellum* tradition was the direct cause of the absence of an *ius in bello* tradition. Egypt's indispensable cosmological job as a safe-haven and gatekeeper of Ma'at in the midst of an ocean of confusion (Isfet) was a strong strict and political teleology whereupon to lay out a morals of war. Wars fought to protect this one-of-a-kind haven of truth and order were naturally fair. Egyptian imperial philosophy advanced the unequivocal power of the semi divine pharaoh to take up arms. Egyptian disdain for the 'insidious outsider' supplied the state with an uncontested authenticity to advocate for itself, responsively or proactively, against brutality. Enemies, both internal and external, were branded as rebels and evildoers.

References

- [1].Justenhoven, H. G. (2021). The Concept of Just War in Christianity. *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 43-91.
- [2].Polish, D. F. (2021). Just War in Jewish Thought. *The Concept of Just War in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 5, 1.
- [3].Braun, C. N. (2020). James Turner Johnson and the Roman Catholic Just War Tradition. *Responsibility and Restraint: James Turner Johnson and the Just War Tradition*, 125-157.
- [4].Padden, H. (2023). On the coherence of a duty to surrender with just war theory and the laws of war (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- [5].Devereux, A. W. (2020). *The Other Side of Empire: Just War in the Mediterranean and the Rise of Early Modern Spain*. Cornell University Press.
- [6].Hadžić, F. (2023). Governing The International Wars; Theory, Legislation, Human Rights, Critical Human Security, And Ethics. *Equinox Journal of Economics Business and Political Studies*, 10(2), 160-193.
- [7].O'Driscoll, C. (2020). No substitute for victory? Why just war theorists can't win. *European Journal of International Relations*, 26(1), 187-208.
- [8].Wright, W. J. (2023). A (Brief) History of War and Its Limits. In *Norm Clusters of Non-State Armed Groups: Mapping and Understanding the Limits of Warfare as Understood by Non-State Armed Groups* (pp. 97-134). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- [9].Cox, R. (2021). Approaches to pre-modern war and ethics: some comparative and multi-disciplinary perspectives. *Global Intellectual History*, 6(5), 592-613.
- [10]. Hawley, M. C. (2023). Can Just Wars Be Fought Proportionately? A Critique of In Bello Proportionality. *Journal of Military Ethics*, 22(2), 89-102.
- [11]. Stanar, D. (2023). 'Green proportionality': in bello Ecology in Just War Theory. In *Military Ethics and the Changing Nature of Warfare* (pp. 79-91). Brill Nijhoff.
- [12]. Traven, D. (2021). *Law and Sentiment in International Politics: Ethics, Emotions, and the Evolution of the Laws of War*. Cambridge University Press.