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“Most Distant and Most Dear”

Clausewitzian Conflicts in Kipling’s *Barrack-Room Ballads*

War acts as a great catalyst, a spark of destruction that sets into motion changes that ripple on for centuries. While war may inspire alterations of a greater nature—the shifting of powers in countries and governments, the halting of old ways and the introduction of the new, the end of empires, the passage between one era and its successor—there is a more minute and personal change that occurs before, during, and after war: that of the boy into a soldier, and of that surviving soldier into a man introduced back to society and relative normality.

In his 1832 work *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz scribes a decidedly different angle on the art of war. *On War*’s near-philosophical focus encompasses a more individual premise: the agents of war are not just vast troop movements; the focus is more precise.¹

The spirit and other moral qualities which animate an Army, a General, or Governments, public opinion in provinces in which a War is raging, the moral effect of a victory or of a defeat, are things which in themselves vary very much in their nature, and which also, according as they stand

¹ This is not to say that *On War* focuses on the individual soldier as a unit of consideration, but that the work strives to lean away from war as a subject spoken of in mere tactics and science. As a piece that leans more toward theory, its aim is reductive and may seem more individually applicable. For the sake of this study, the *individual* is examined more closely through the lens of Clausewitz’s work.

with regard to our object and our relations, may have an influence in different ways.²

War's influence and effect is undeniable. Like the political paradigm shifts and mass destruction that follow conflict, individual men are subject to similar alterations in their moral nature. To Clausewitz, a *soldier* and *citizen* must be one in the same³; a soldier-citizen must be *obedient* and an *individual*⁴; and finally, he must be able to function capably in times of intense *tension* and during other periods of long, uninterrupted *rest*⁵, all of which are ideals in vast opposition with one another. Logically, none of these pairs should be able to exist simultaneously, but a man must be many things at once during war—even if espousing these conflicting natures is detrimental to his humanity.

In closer examination of Rudyard Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads*, first published in 1892, these Clausewitzian conflicts work in concert. A soldier is a composite of various conflicts that, while they seem unlikely, allow him to better perform his duties with almost automatic efficiency. Where *On War* is a study of war, Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads* is a poetic treatise of the man at war with himself, struggling to justify the validity of his service while maintaining the foundation of his humanity. Men, especially those at war, cannot be boiled down to being one thing or another; they embody many traits, often in discordance with one another. Within even the first few pages of *Barrack-Room Ballads*, incongruous ideals are put side to side in the "Dedication: To T.A."

I have made for you a song,
And it may be right or wrong,
But only you can tell me if it's true;
I have tried for to explain
Both your pleasure and your pain,
And 'Thomas, here's my best respects to you!⁶

Right or wrong are no longer challenging comparisons; pleasure and pain come as a single soldierly package. Instead of being adverse to one another, they are

2 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited by Anatol Rapoport (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 251.

3 Ibid., 254-258.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 296-298.

6 Rudyard Kipling, *Barrack-Room Ballads* (Sioux Falls: NuVision Publications, 2008), 2.

combined factors in the description of a soldier's life as expressed through Kipling's poetry. The soldier and the citizen, the obedient and the individual, and the tense and the restful are a whole, supporting the theory that these Clausewitzian conflicts are not polarizing qualities, but complementary. Analyzing Clausewitz through the lens of Kipling, it is possible to view the soldier as a bearer of a "well-balanced mind" in which these expected conflicts have emboldened "strength of character."⁷ The Clausewitzian soldier is not a stark, black-and-white painting of man at war—he is a being reaching to discover his own identity through war, and Rudyard Kipling's poetry exemplifies this truth.

It may be questioned what Kipling's poetry, written half a century later, can do to prove the validity of Clausewitz's contradictions. Clausewitz himself, with his overbearing appreciation for the contrary, explains that "Everything is simple in War, but the simplest thing is difficult."⁸ Poetry often subscribes to a similar ideal, that it may be read for both surface-level understanding and then further for complex underlying analysis. *Barrack-Room Ballads*, by embodying these contradictions, is a perfectly-suited piece of literature with which to explore these Clausewitzian contradictions. Additionally, as Michael Handel of the United States Naval War College writes, "Apparent contradictions in [*On War*] should not cause the reader undue concern. In the first place, war's intrinsically human underpinnings mean that it is indeed fraught with unavoidable, genuine contradictions."⁹ That war is represented in abstractions is key to analyzing *On War*, and Kipling's work functions as a creative exemplification of Clausewitz's manifestation of war.

The designation between soldier and citizen does not seem one that is readily definable, but the differences in the two are vast. While all members of a military force are, for the most part, citizens of that force's governing country, citizens are not necessarily-- and not always capable of being—soldiers. "[P]ains may be taken to combine the soldier and the citizen in one and the same individual,"¹⁰ Clausewitz writes, which is a problematic duality in itself: a citizen, after all, nominally obeys laws of the province and provides services for his fellows, while a soldier is forced to shed the primary identity of a citizen and performs violent tasks that may very well shatter religious standards and emotional expectations. It might seem impossible that the two can co-exist—one being a peaceable, law-abiding being, the other shaped for both "effectual means of applying force" and "rude acts of

⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 147-150.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁹ Michael L. Handel, "Who is Afraid of Clausewitz: A Guide to the Perplexed," <http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Handel/Handlart.htm> (accessed 21 April 2013), 1997.

¹⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 254.

mere instinct”¹¹—but in Kipling’s “Tommy,” the contradictions are alive and have embittered the poem’s titular character.

Tommy Atkins expounds upon the civilian tendencies to discredit a soldier’s worth outside of his ability in combat. The poem thrives on its opposition. Tommy is not only a citizen, nor is he only a soldier—he exists as this Clausewitzian citizen-soldier, ejected from both the discipline of his military life and the peace of the civilian. Tommy expresses

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but ‘adn’t none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-’alls
But when it comes to fightin’, Lord! they’ll shove me in the stalls!¹²

“Tommy” elucidates the gaping disconnection between the whole soldier and the whole citizen, for the two exist in vastly separate emotional universes. It is Tommy’s struggle to socially reconcile the two that help realize the dual moral nature of the Clausewitzian citizen-soldier, and displays proof that it exists in the first place. The poem’s narrator lingers on a plane of existence somewhere between the two extremes, but does not truly belong to either. In becoming a soldier, he has willingly given up the rites of his citizenry, leaving behind his good “conduct”¹³ to take up arms. Because “single men in barricks don’t grow into plaster saints,”¹⁴ Tommy is left at a disadvantage: because the composure of a soldier is unique to the battlefield and military lifestyle, he is left an outcast in a civilian setting and exists devoid of comfort as either. As a citizen, Tommy is of less import than a drunken civilian; as a soldier, Mister Atkins finds his home amid combat “when the guns begin to shoot.”¹⁵ The result is Tommy Atkins, a combination of the two, a Clausewitzian contradiction embodied in poetry, shunned by his fellow Englishmen yet disconnected when apart from the battlefield. As a man with his feet in two

¹¹ Ibid., 103.

¹² Kipling, *Ballads*, 9.

¹³ Ibid. This is derived from the line “An’ if sometimes our conduct isn’t all your fancy paints,” which suggests a lack of refinement in the soldier, not because it is necessarily representative of a reduced humanity or displays any loss of self-composure, but because a lifestyle of soldiering naturally inures a man to otherwise undesirable actions. Misconduct might be seen as a coping mechanism, but not one that Tommy can safely or comfortably embody in a non-military setting without experiencing the judgment of his civilian peers.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. The name *Tommy* is used in the poem when he is being referred to as a civilian, while *Mister Atkins* becomes his military name.

socially-separate worlds, Tommy Atkins is defined by “his brutality, kindness, his independence, [and] his murderous discontent.”¹⁶ His military service has shaped him, made him distinct, but has put him at war with himself. Is he a soldier first, or a citizen? “Man,” Clausewitz writes, “with his incomplete organization is always below the line of absolute perfection, and thus these deficiencies...become a modifying principle.”¹⁷ The result is undefined, but the conflict is essential and very real. The identities of soldier and citizen are opponents in war. Atkins is not meant to resolve this dilemma. Following his presumed exposure to battle and death, he has become the archetype of rival concepts. He is not the lone example of this in Kipling’s *Barrack-Room Ballads*.

“Shillin’ a Day” represents this same clash, the result of a post-service re-acclimation of the narrator into a world which does not understand—or welcome—Clausewitzian contradictions. O’Kelly shares with the reader his vast wartime deployments, in which he

...heard the Revelly
from Birr to Bareilly, from Leeds to Lahore,
Hong-Kong and Peshawur
Lucknow and Etawah¹⁸

as well as his experiences, the “Black Death,” “sorrow and sickness,” riding “Hell-for-leather / Both squadrons together.”¹⁹ Despite O’Kelly’s vast resume of wartime plight, his return to the civilian world after conclusion of his service is greeted with mediocrity: he earns only the poem’s title’s ostensible “Shillin’ a Day,” a regrettable and even laughably meager amount for a grizzled, widely-traveled soldier who had once been a non-commissioned officer.

Like Tommy Atkins, O’Kelly’s military service and his status as a soldier are indelibly inked into him, and it is a smear that stains him with an inability to progressively function as a component of the non-military society. The poem illustrates a clear separation between the singular O’Kelly and the collective chorus of those civilians who see what has become of him after the war. Unlike those

16 Michael Lackey, “Kipling’s Poems,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 30, no. 3 (2007): 19.

17 Clausewitz, *On War*, 106.

18 Kipling, *Ballads*, 45. These various cities express the extent of O’Kelly’s travels while enlisted: Birr (Ireland), Bareilly (India), Leeds (England), Lahore (Pakistan), Hong-Kong (China), Peshawur (Pakistan), Lucknow (India), and Etawah (India).

19 *Ibid.*

same citizens in “Tommy,” who disdained Atkins for his duty, O’Kelly is pitied, apostrophized by an onlooking group who proclaim

Shillin’ a day
Bloomin’ good pay—
Lucky to touch it, a shillin’ a day!²⁰

as well as

Can’t do no better
Late Troop-Sergeant-Major an’—runs with a letter!
Think what ‘e’s been
Think what ‘e’s seen
Think of his pension an’—
Gawd save the queen!²¹

The mentalities which greet these two soldiers are disparate, but exemplify the same phenomenon: in “Tommy,” a lack of inclusion alienates the soldier; in “Shillin’ a Day,” they observe O’Kelly from a distance the way one might a decrepit animal. In being both soldier and citizen, each of these characters substantiate the presence of Clausewitz’s paradox, that a man may be both, but will invariably suffer the judgment and misunderstanding of his peers.

The ignorance that sets the Clausewitzian citizen-soldier apart from civilians is apparent in both poems, for it is not just thematically suggested, but formalistically pronounced. “Tommy”’s eight-line stanzas are split into two quatrains. The first four lines of each stanza are flush to the left margin and embody English disdain for an idle soldier, while the second quatrain is indented, displaying vivid counterbalance as that same public champions a soldier while he is actively at war. The pitying chorus in “Shillin’ a Day” is similarly offset, sectioned into its own designation on the page as if to clarify where the soldier stands alone from the whispering crowd.

In *On War*, Clausewitz also combines the individual and the obedient, whose identities are not regularly conflated; often, those who display obedience characteristically lack sovereignty. But it may be further realized through Kipling that the two can exist in the same being. “The whole retains the whole,” Clausewitz writes, “and as with glass too quickly cooled, a single crack breaks the whole

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

mass.²² Clausewitz stands by the unification of an armed force as a deciding factor in conflict. To ensure this unity, the individual unit—a single man—must be forgotten in the shadow of the force. With training and experience, he becomes a flexible component, a rubbery gasket that takes form as he must to complement the military. As such, he is subjected heavily to obedience, and it may seem that the individual spirit is ground into powder beneath the heel of discipline and military acclimatizing.²³

Clausewitz, though, still recognizes the integrity of the individual identity, designating some of the more specific traits that define the individual, including—but not limited to—boldness, genius, perseverance, smartness and good will.²⁴ The contradiction becomes quickly evident. Clausewitz himself states that a soldier must lose that impulse to unbridled activity and exercise of force which is characteristic in the individual, and must submit itself to demands of a higher kind, to obedience, order, rule, and method.²⁵

Yet, only a paragraph later, Clausewitz actively reconsiders this statement, if inadvertently, by admitting that soldiering

continues to be different and separate from the other pursuits which occupy the life of man. To be imbued with a sense of the spirit and nature of this business, to make use of, to rouse, to assimilate into the system the powers which should be active in it...is the military virtue of an Army in the individual.²⁶

22 Clausewitz, *On War*, 106.

23 For thousands of years, the dissolution of the single and absorption into the whole has been an essential component of a successful military organization. Modern studies cite this severing of the self as a significant contributing factor to the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers, which this paper will soon discuss. A recent study explains, "the starkest contrast between the civilian and military cultures is the importance placed on individualism versus collectivism, respectively...In order to function as an effective team and accomplish difficult and complex tasks, a collectivistic approach is required." Consult Walter E. Penk's *Treating PTSD in Military Personnel: A Clinical Handbook*, edited by Bret A. Moore, for further information.

24 Clausewitz, *On War*, 253-263. These highlighted qualities, which are often listed, are applicable to the individual in all levels of the military. Men who exhibit these traits may be soldiers, leaders, officers, or commanders, and generals.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

Military collectivism still elicits a certain amount of individuality, a tenacious internal value that not even Clausewitz can deny. Various poems in *Barrack-Room Ballads* engender the clash of obedience and the individual, proving that not even the greatest modes of discipline wholly wither a man's sense of self. They may, in fact, empower him to thrash back against establishment.

In "Cells," insubordination is the topic at hand, and the individual is set against military law, inspired by drink and raucous behavior to push back those who dictate his daily lifestyle. The narrating soldier of an unknown rank has struck his corporal, and the two are microcosms of the greater players in Clausewitz's conflict of obedience and the individual. The narrator is not a soldier protesting against collectivism with formal disdain, but an individual subject to boredom, displaying an inevitable upsurge of the natural human drive to be self-serving. Kipling writes, "But I've had my fun o' the Corporal's Guard: I've made the cinders fly / And I'm here in the Clink for a thundering drink / and blacking the Corporal's eye."²⁷

Obedience has not been entirely squeezed out of the narrator: he willingly accepts his punishment – time in the "Clink"—as if it is the most natural retort to his insubordination. He is not disillusioned by his military service—he has had his "fun" in the service—but answers the individual need to rebel, to strike out against the authority to which he is subject. The narrator's penchant for fighting is foolhardy, and Clausewitz embraces this audaciousness.

Even foolhardiness, that is boldness without an object, is not to be despised; in point of fact it is the same energy of [passion], only exercised... without any cooperation of the intelligent faculties. It is only when it strikes at the root of obedience, when it treats with contempt the orders of superior authority, that it must be repressed as a dangerous evil.²⁸

But the misbehavior on the part of the poem's actor is not destructive, at least to the administration of collectivism. Though "[t]hey'll stop [his] pay, they'll cut away the stripes [he] used to wear"²⁹, these are sanctioned punishments for striking a superior officer. The individualism is corrected, but not completely eliminated, for a man who is "drunk and resisting the Guard" may also be the same man who can be impassioned and resistant to death in the line of battle.

This is not the only poem in Kipling's *Ballads* that represents this synthesis. In "The Young British Soldier," the war between obedient collectivist and individualist

²⁷ Kipling, *Ballads*, 17.

²⁸ Clausewitz, *On War*, 259.

²⁹ Kipling, *Ballads*, 17.

is visualized in a piece that compacts the training of a soldier into a few basic stanzas. The poem serves as a manifesto of advice from a more experienced soldier—a recruiter, perhaps, or a higher-ranked official—to the younger ones. These proverbial *dos* and *don'ts* of soldiering introduce the reader to moments when the vision of the whole is meant to suffocate the viewpoint of the individual in the new recruit's mind. In the second stanza, the speaker states

Now all you recruities what's drafted to-day,
You shut up your rag-box an' 'hark to my lay
An' I'll sing you a soldier as far as I may:
A soldier what's fit for a soldier.
Fit, fit, fit for a soldier...³⁰

The colloquialism “recruities” establishes a distinct separation between the audience of soon-to-be soldiers and the one instructing them in the proper ways of military life. These myriad suggestions all serve to sever the urges of the young man and replace them with discipline fitting of an obedient, well-structured soldier. “First mind you steer clear o' the grog-sellers' huts,” he commands, and later, “Don't grouse like a woman nor crack on nor blind,”³¹ though these instructions function only as qualifiers: earlier-cited poems associate drinking with soldiering, and that being “handy and civil”—Kipling's poetic opposite of grouching and complaining—is not always ensured.

The poem quickly mutates from an outline of essential guidelines to a listing of requests, an unspoken understanding between recruiter and “recruity” that choices of the individual will sometimes outweigh even the sense of a soldier. “If you must marry, take care she is old—/ A troop-sergeant's widow's the nicest I'm told,” he suggests, while a stanza later: “If the wife should go wrong with a comrade, be loath / To shoot him when you catch'em—you'll sing, on my oath!”³² Simple phrases such as *if you must marry* and *be loath* do not inspire a necessity to follow the discipline of a military man, but only suggest it—the aspects of the individual within the soldier will dictate his ultimate decisions in these personal matters. No training, no order of command, and no rectification of the individual mindset can fully separate it from the soldier, and both Kipling and Clausewitz recognize this. Clausewitz explains:

³⁰ Ibid., 31

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

An Army which preserves its usual formations under the heaviest fire, which is never shaken by imaginary fears, and in the face of real danger disputes the ground inch by inch, which, proud in the feeling of its victories, never loses its sense of obedience.³³

Yet, a *sense* of disobedience is not indicative of the whole part. This *military virtue* is imperative to survival, but is not the only quality the soldier bears. The individual must also be present and reign in times where Clausewitz's military virtue cannot. "[Military] theory cannot banish the moral forces beyond its frontier, because the effects of the physical forces and moral are completely fused, and are not to be decomposed like a metal alloy by a chemical process."³⁴ With Kipling, as with reality, the concept of the individual is too strong, too galvanized to be demanufactured at the whim of military virtue. Thus, the contradiction is wholly visible, and furthermore innate to the man in war.

Finally, in identifying and labeling these conflicting ideas in Clausewitz, the third and most general directly refers to physical qualities of war, but may also represent a contradicting mentality in the soldier. *Tension* and *rest* are constantly struggling back and forth within him, the curse of actions versus inaction, and the connected responsibility of the reaction to said action.

Even when rest and inactivity must be achieved, there is and always will be an active constriction or pressure in the soldier. Tension and rest are what Clausewitz defines as "*the dynamic law of war*,"³⁵ which may apply to strategy, battle-movements, formations, and even *internal friction*.³⁶ It is this internal friction with which Kipling's *Ballads* are mostly concerned. The soldier exists in a perpetual state of discord, where the conflicting forces of tension and rest are constantly active upon him.

What comes of the soldier stretched between both tension and rest, tightly-wound preparation and soothing calm? He is, according to several of Kipling's poems, in a state of perpetual unrest, disconnected from his pace as a regular human and subject to varying degrees of impulse. In "Oonts," the very first stanza

33 Clausewitz, *On War*, 255.

34 *Ibid.*, 252.

35 *Ibid.*, 296.

36 *Ibid.* Clausewitz writes, "When this movement [the combat of opposing parties] has exhausted itself, either in the difficulties which had to be mastered, in overcoming its own internal friction, or through new resistant forces prepared by the acts of the enemy, then either a state of rest ...[or tension] takes place."

reflects the unnatural effect that undue rest has on soldiers in which “everything has been prepared and arranged for a great movement.”³⁷ Kipling writes:

Wot makes the soldier's 'eart to penk, wot makes 'im to perspire?
It isn't standin' up to charge nor lyin' down to fire;
But it's everlastin' waitin' on an everlastin' road
For the commissariat camel an' 'is commissariat load.³⁸

Waiting—equitable to boredom, inactivity, and unforgiving ennui—is a test of the soldier's battle-wearied patience. “Oonts” outlines the repetitive, taxing accompaniment of commissary delivery from one camp to the next. Waiting for a fickle, slowly-moving camel train frays the narrator to the edges. Rogers Ayers puts into numbers the laborious pace of the Arabian camel used by British forces in India.

The main load-carrying transport animals were elephants, mules, bullocks and camels. The camel could carry an average load of about 330lb (150kg) on level ground, which was about twice that of a mule or bullock, but only at about 2 to 2½ miles an hour, slower than marching troops. In hilly country, this was reduced to about 220lb (100kg) and 1 to 1½ miles per hour.³⁹

The intense dislike for the escort of rations and supplies comes as no surprise. In *On War*, Clausewitz describes the necessity for “equilibrium” between rest and tension; the two dynamics of war need to work in unison, for rest should come only as a necessary result of tension, and vice versa. In “Oonts”, this perfect balance between rest and tension is never struck. Each is subject to an extreme, and the soldier is caught in the center, definitive of Clausewitz's example that both must exist. Like with external conflict, internal friction is subject to the same conceptual fluctuations. “The state of tension must be imagined in different degrees of intensity,” Clausewitz explains, and because the two states of war are balanced, the

37 Ibid., 297. “Movement” in Clausewitz is indicative of a clash in battle, a strategic relocation for advantage in battle, or the active contest of war.

38 Kipling, *Ballads*, 21.

39 Roger Ayers, “Oonts' (Northern India Transport Train)”, *The Kipling Society*, http://www.kipling.org.uk/rg_oonts1.htm (accessed 23 April 2013). Kipling mentions the use of each of these animals in the poem. In the third verse: “The 'horse 'he knows above a bit, the bullock's but a fool, / The elephant's a gentleman, the battery-mule's a mule; / But the commissariat cam-u-el, when all is said an' done, / 'E's a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one.” As temperamental (devilish), as ungainly and naturally cumbersome (ostrich-like), and problematic (like the orphan-child) as the camel may be, he is still an animal of utility, much to the chagrin of the soldier.

“intensity” of periods of rest may change circumstantially.⁴⁰ The *Ballads* represent moments at the furthest spectrum of this dynamic, where battle becomes quick, desirable, and comfortable, and too much inactivity becomes a tepid hell.

“Route Marchin” displays a notably more positive examination of rest, less as an unforgivable decline of the self and more as a trough that inevitably leads to a Clausewitzian upswing: that the honor and business of battle grows nearer. This poem represents the rest of war at its most effective peak. “[W]e lights our pipes an’ sings,” Kipling writes, “An’ we talks about our rations an’ a lot of other things.”⁴¹ In this more positive state of rest, Clausewitz’s intended “equilibrium” is discovered. Veteran soldiers recognize the permanence of death and savor their more precious, less-important moments; this is tension and rest at its finest, in which the soldier is a well-trained extension of the Army, within which intensity is always met by a cunning hunger for relaxation.

The title of the poem implies the bustle, activity, and subsequent progress of the march it describes. When in route step, companies may drink from canteens, talk among one another, smoke their pipes, and amuse themselves; this is a drastic separation from the prescriptive sternness of timed steps and organized marches so customarily attributed to military movement. As the soldiers put their “best foot first,” one is reminded of Clausewitz’s understanding of a well-regulated state of rest, as “crisis is the real War and this state of equilibrium [rest] only its reflection.”⁴² Kipling’s route-stepping soldiers are doubtlessly prepared for their oncoming obstacles. Blistered feet, grousing greenhorns, and early reveilles are hardly a damper to these soldiers’ training. Tension and rest are sustained in rare equality, co-existing despite the incompatibility of the concepts as separate entities.

While these Clausewitzian contradictions are evident in Kipling’s *Barrack-Room Ballads*, it may be inquired what the importance of analyzing them in this way could be. To better understand the impact of these opposing elements as they coalesce, reflection on *On War* is again essential. Like war itself, the combination of these contradictions in the soldier represents the “shock of two hostile bodies in collision.”⁴³ When a man is both *soldier* and *citizen*, when he is subject to both *individualism* and *obedience*, and when he is capable of experiencing both *tension* and *rest* simultaneously, the dual presence will almost certainly produce

40 Clausewitz, *On War*, 297.

41 Kipling, *Ballads*, 43.

42 Clausewitz, *On War*, 298.

43 *Ibid.*, 104.

an extreme response.⁴⁴ The being, then, is inextricably modified by the adoption of this Clausewitzian model, often to the detriment of his conscience as he tries to shed the skin of a warring man. “The mind,” after all, “cannot stop short of an extreme, with a conflict of forces left to themselves, and obeying no other but their own inner laws.”⁴⁵

Each of the above-explained aggregations bring with them a backlash, an unanticipated result of the conjunction of two opposing forces. This exemplifies Clausewitz’s sixth definition of war, namely, a “*modification in the reality*.”⁴⁶ These composite elements, when combined, are an abstract advantage in times of war, but then become deficiencies external to war, and “these deficiencies, having influence on both sides, become a modifying principle.”⁴⁷ The world of the soldier is forever marred by his existence as an avatar of contradiction. Clausewitzian dualism sets him apart from the reality of the civilian world. In “Tommy,” the soldier-citizen is marked by war and outcast by the society that surrounds him; “Cells” demonstrates a recidivism of disobedience that, while it may be indicative of individualism, translates into an inability for the individual-obedient to function acceptably even in a peaceful world; and finally, “Route Marchin” inspires in the tensed-restful an idea that war *is* his only purpose, and that mundanity outside of combat only helps one bide their time until the next action is met. These syntheses and their results are reminiscent of the common qualities of post-traumatic stress disorder.

As far back as Homer, authors have explored post-traumatic stress disorder in their works.⁴⁸ Soldiers throughout literature cope with their post-battle anxiety in numerous ways: For example, Charlie Anders writes, “some experts think the *Iliad* is describing PTSD when Homer says Ajax went mad under Athena’s spell,

44 While Clausewitz speaks of “extreme” responses in a way that suggests he is discussing the mobilization of great forces and military powers, the philosophy is also applicable on an individual psychological level. The flexibility of the theory should be equally recognized, just as Clausewitz designates between actuality and abstraction in his theories of war.

45 *Ibid.*, 106.

46 *Ibid.*, 105.

47 *Ibid.*, 106.

48 Charlie Jane Anders, “From ‘Irritable Heart’ to ‘Shellshock’: How Post-Traumatic Stress Became a Disease,” <http://io9.com/5898560/from-irritable-heart-to-shellshock-how-post-traumatic-stress-became-a-disease> (accessed 28 April 2013), 4 April 2012. Anders’s article offers a cursory history of the terminology behind this recently-recognized disorder, which was scarcely considered in the times of Clausewitz or Kipling as anything but an ephemeral and temporary response to one’s involvement in war. The article surveys a series of literary pieces throughout history that may have—without overly labeling it—incorporated descriptions of symptoms often evidenced with PTSD.

slaughtering a herd of sheep that he thought were the enemy.⁴⁹ Likewise, the presence of post-traumatic stress disorder echoes in the poetry of the First World War and letters of soldiers sent home from the front. Though the definition is a recent one, the American Psychological Association describes post-traumatic stress disorder as

an anxiety problem that develops in some people after extremely traumatic events, such as combat, crime, an accident or natural disaster. People with PTSD may relive the event via intrusive memories, flashbacks and nightmares; avoid anything that reminds them of the trauma; and have anxious feelings they didn't have before that are so intense their lives are disrupted.⁵⁰

Post-traumatic stress disorder has caused turbulence in the lives of combat veterans for centuries, and in *Barrack-Room Ballads*, it is visible once more, an underlying symptom of the Clausewitzian contradictions. Its presence, however, offers significant proof of the duality in Clausewitz's philosophy: the contradictions in his writing are intentional, and Clausewitz envisions pawns of war as the quintessential personification of natures that otherwise cannot exist together in a single vessel. That a soldier must exhibit polarized natures for the sake of his survival is yet another contributing factor to post-traumatic stress disorder. The soldier is burned by both the physical and psychological terrors of war; likewise, he has, for months and years at time, gone against his moral nature as a citizen to be a soldier, has refuted individuality for collectivism, and so on.

In Daryl S. Paulson's *Haunted by Combat*, the author's modern recognition of PTSD may be reflectively linked to the poems in Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads*. "Many times," Paulson writes, "the problem is evident in the disjunction between the expectations of certain social settings and the behaviors spawned by the trauma."⁵¹ The post-deployment soldier, such as the titular "Tommy," experiences disassociation from those who have not shared his experiences. Likewise, the tendencies feed a soldier's need to act with sovereignty, causing him to commit acts that are reactive or potentially destructive, such as the striking of the Corporal in

49 Anders, "Shellshock."

50 "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder," *American Psychological Association*, <http://www.apa.org/topics/ptsd/> (accessed 28 April 2013).

51 Daryl S. Paulson and Stanley Krippner, *Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans Including Women, Reservists, and Those Coming Back from Iraq* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 3.

“Cells.”⁵² Additionally, the soldier might find it difficult to differentiate between times of vigor and relief, blurring night and day, waking and sleep, mixing them into one collective sequence that is ever-wanting for the tension of war, such as in “Oonts” and “Route Marchin’.” Clausewitz is vindicated in his misleading combination of polar opposites. As an affirmation of Clausewitzian contradiction, however, the soldier suffers. He is pinned between reliving his own traumas and experiencing “the harsh personal judgment and self-rebuke”⁵³ of a man who is effectively forced to live two lives, and becomes dysfunctional in a peaceful world as a result.

As Clausewitz declares, “If War is an *act* of force, it belongs necessarily also to the feelings. If it does not originate in the feelings, it *reacts*, more or less, upon them.”⁵⁴ Soldiers are war’s most immediate victims, the unwitting recipients of damage wrought psychologically, emotionally, and socially. While Clausewitz may not have been of an era that would have recognized the validity of post-war trauma, he was aware of it, if not for its medical significance, then for its expression of the unavoidable fallout of war.

War, no matter the time in which it is waged or the literature through which it is represented, is a heinous necessity. Clausewitz is as fascinated with its immutability as he is the enormity of its destruction. But like the contradictions of the soldier, war’s cataclysmic capabilities interfere with the ever-desired and relatively unattainable concept of peace and civility. War, despite being such an ugly matter, must exist. “*War therefore is an act of violence intended to compel our opponents to fulfil our will,*”⁵⁵ explains Clausewitz, inspiring the understanding that opponents will always be present, and that man—whether as a single being or as a collective unit—desires to proliferate his own beliefs and needs, forcing them upon those around him. In magnifying this, like with the conflict of war and peace, there is no question that Clausewitz’s contradictions within the philosophy of war not only do exist, but *must* exist. War is no minor strife; it is no singular battle the outcome of which may be quickly forgotten. It is scorched earth, destroyed towns, and razed cities. If these two qualities may co-exist—the desire to destroy and the desire to

52 Amanda Carpenter, “Military misconduct may be sign of PTSD,” *The Washington Times*, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jan/12/misconduct-may-be-symptom-of-stress-disorder/?page=all> (accessed 28 April 2013), 12 January 2010. In this article, which features highlights from a report filed by U.S. Navy doctors, it is stated that “misconduct... may indicate an unrecognized and unhealed line-of-duty stress injury that deserves expeditious medical evaluation, and when indicated, appropriate treatment.”

53 Paulson and Krippner, *Haunted*, 3.

54 Clausewitz, *On War*, 103.

55 *Ibid.*, 101

subsist at all costs—so might the Clausewitzian conflicts within the individual soldier. After all, in discussion of the mind, *On War* states:

Theory must also take into account the human element; it must accord a place to courage, to boldness, even to rashness. The Art of War has to deal with living and with moral forces,⁵⁶

for if it did not, then the results of war would be altogether insubstantial. War is an act of tragedy, and

the consequences...can never attain the absolute and positive. There is therefore everywhere a margin for the accidental, and just as much in the greatest things as in the smallest.⁵⁷

The contradictions are a recognition of this “margin for the accidental,” a necessary but vaguely unpredictable production of their very presence. In regards to emotional capacity, a man cannot normally be both soldier and citizen, but to Clausewitz, he must be both; a mind should have no room for both individuality and obedience, but in *On War*, conflation is essential; and finally, while it may not seem possible to be embroiled in tension and rest simultaneously, the soldier must learn how if for the value of his own life.

Kipling is surely not the only literature by which to gauge the existence of Clausewitzian contradictions, but as a reflection of these oppositions at work and what is left in their wake, his work is a prime example. By examining Clausewitz through Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads*, readers are given the opportunity to know, through verse, the intimate and fragile mind of a soldier. War is an act of attrition, a great punctuation to the meeting of frictional forces, and the men who wage it are imbued with this same havoc. Theories of war, like Clausewitz's, must adhere to the same fundamental ideas of contradiction, and must embrace them. Thus, *On War*'s contradictions are only a natural part of the basic anatomy of war, another representation of the scars it leaves, and because it is so natural for Clausewitz to assume they must exist, perhaps only a mind tempered by war—like Clausewitz's, like Tommy Atkins's, like Rudyard Kipling's—can fully accept their

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. This selection from Clausewitz's twenty-second definition of war, *How this [war] accords best with the human mind in general*, provides a basis for the idea that Clausewitz was aware of the effect and risk of war on the individual.

reality. War is not logical, nor are its components, and the literatures that exclaim, theorize, and reflect must always consider the damage done to the soldier waging it.

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