BRILL

JOURNAL OF PACIFISM AND NONVIOLENCE
(2025) 1–27

Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence

brill.com/jpn

Nicholas Rengger: A Pacifist Sensibility?[1]

Caroline Kennedy-Pipe | ORCID: 0000-0002-7162-5230
Professor, Department of International Relations, Politics and History, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK
c.m.kennedy-pipe@lboro.ac.uk

Received: 22 November 2024 | Accepted: 18 August 2025 |
Published online: 10 October 2025

Abstract

Nicholar Rengger was a figure of some importance in the field of International Relations. Known for his work on Just War Theory and International Order, this piece argues that Rengger should also be understood as a scholar increasingly convinced by and leaning towards a subtle form of pacifism. Galvanised by the Iraq War and the events which followed 9/11, he highlighted the mistakes and misteps taken by politicians seduced by the allure of easy victories and regime change.

Keywords

war – Just War – temptations – 9/11 – Rengger – pacifism – international relations

The late Nicholas Rengger died in 2018[2] before the Russian attempt to seize the capital of Ukraine and the subsequent years of bloody state-on-state war. He would have taken little satisfaction in this spectacle, despite a career in which he had always questioned the idea that war had retreated, that its nature could

1 I have chosen the phrase 'sensibility' because Rengger believed that that phrasing allowed him to transcend the divisions that plagued contemporary political thought at whatever level: 'right'/'left,' conservative'/'radical,' realist'/'liberal' and so on (Paipais, V. eds, 2022. p. 7).

2 Nicholas Rengger was born in 1959 and died in 2018. He held positions at the University of Strathclyde, the University of Leicester, the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, the University of Bristol, and the University of St Andrews.

Published with license by Koninklijke Brill BV | DOI:10.1163/27727882-BJA00054

be tamed or that the human condition had somehow progressed beyond killing (Rengger, 2013a). This darkness has been described elsewhere, but in this piece, I wish to trace another feature of his thought, that of a latent Pacifism. As the century unfolded under the weight of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I argue he was drawn to variations of that tradition and adopted a form of Pacifism, which was both 'subtle and persuasive' (Ferguson, 2023, 2502).

There are points in a scholastic career when the world gets in the way of 'detachment,' when something real in the world alters the academy. For some, the Vietnam War was that touchstone, transforming views of US behaviour both at home and abroad. While it was understood that a certain logic of the Cold War demanded nuclear deterrence, military interventions, and a reordering of the US state itself, the conflict in Indochina with its death toll, its abrogation of parts of international law, and defeat, brought about a questioning of that war, its conduct, and the integrity of American leaders of every stripe. Rengger wrote both to demur and agree with Michael Walzer, who regarded the war in Vietnam as his wake-up call, forever colouring his life as a public intellectual and scholar (Walzer, 2015, xxiii). For Rengger, Walzer was an enduring influence. I suggest that the events of 9/11 and all that followed in its trail provided Rengger with his wake-up call and a rich seam of material to oppose contemporary thinking on military intervention, and indeed war itself.[3]

Temptations

Much has been written on the events of 9/11, the decision to invade Afghanistan and Iraq, and the war on terror. This is understandable. Some characterised 9/11 as the moment when the 'world changed gears' (Fukuyama, 1992) and, in a similar vein, those who believed that the world had been turned upside down (Gaddis, 2004; Rengger, 2002; 2011). Scholars who had had little to say about terrorism scrambled to assert their credentials on that topic (Jackson, 2009). Rengger was not one of them. Rather, he continued to raise questions that had already shaped his career, including issues of world order, the Just War tradition, international law, and what political hubris inevitably brought in its wake. Yet there was something novel: although unease remained with the idea

3 The view that 9/11 marked a shift in Rengger's thinking is one endorsed by Ian Hall who has commented that '2001 clearly marks a watershed in his work: the end of the search for a contextual and casuistical cosmopolitanism', and the start of his 'dealing in darkness'. See Hall, I. 2022, 'A Dangerous Place to Be? Rengger, the English School, and International Disorder', in Paipais, V. eds. 97-114.

that war could be restrained or made more humane, threaded through were warnings against expanding war, and a profound impatience with politicians tempted by the allure of easy victories.

In an introduction to a special collection entitled 'The state of war,' Rengger set the tone for that edition using Rousseau's hellish vision which yoked politics, law, and war together, quoting from Rousseau:

> I open books on law and ethics and listen to the scholars and legal experts. Permeated with their persuasive talk… I admire the peace and justice established by the civil order, bless the wisdom of public institutions…well versed in my duties and happiness, I shut my book, leave the classroom, and look around me. I see unfortunate nations groaning under yokes of iron, the human race crushed by a handful of oppressors, a staring crowd overwhelmed with pain and hunger … and everywhere the strong armed against the weak with the power of law… I raise my eyes and look into the distance, I see fire and flames, the countryside deserted, towns pillaged…I hear a terrible sound: what an uproar. I draw near: I see a scene of murder, ten thousand butchered men, the dead piled in heaps, the dying trampled under horses' hooves, everywhere the face of death and agony…so this is the fruit of those peaceful institutions. Barbarous philosopher! Come and read us your book on the field of battle.
>
> RENGGER, 2008, 892

Connections between politics, law, and war had by 2008 become familiar Rengger terrain. One theme to which he repeatedly returned was the cruel business of war, its destruction, and its unchecked and unpredictable nature (Rengger, 2008). He believed that a reminder that war remained irredeemably ugly was necessary in the heady atmosphere provoked by 9/11.

Rengger disputed that much in the international system after the 9/11 assaults had fundamentally changed. He saw the Iraq War of 2003 as having been a long time in the making (Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger, 2006), the threat of terrorism as an established pattern of resistance and the prospect of the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by terrorist groups as 'vanishingly small' (Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger, 2006). He acknowledged, though, that he was swimming against a tide of opinion that held the world had become more dangerous, that the West was vulnerable as never before, and an expansion of thinking on the use of force was necessary (Jervis, 2016).

A preventive war strategy had been enunciated by the Bush Administration after 9/11. It was enshrined in the 2002 National Security Strategy but also elaborated in speeches made in the months which followed the

attacks on the homeland. It was made clear that the US would act 'preventively' if it were deemed to be in its interests to do so. In an address at West Point on 1 June, 2002, President Bush argued the US had to be ready to wage preventive war and to act 'against emerging threats before they are fully formed' (Bush, 2002) acknowledging that on September 11, America had felt its vulnerability, but the Nation would not wait to be attacked again (Jervis, 2016).

Rengger was taken aback by these developments and by the Bush Administration's rapid revocation of certain norms of war (Rengger, 2002), the prohibition on torture, for example. Those scholars[4] choosing to endorse and embellish the case for a 'legitimate' preventative war doctrine, troubled him. Philip Bobbitt, Allen Buchanan, Robert Keohane, and Michael Doyle, all figures Rengger admired, were in 2008 the subject of critique in an essay entitled, *The Greatest Treason? On the Subtle Temptations of Preventive War* (Rengger, 2008). He argued that the reasons provided for a preventive war stance were not sufficient to outweigh the problems inherent in such a position (Rengger, 2008, 954).

Yet for those convinced of imminent and novel dangers, something had to be done. Bobbitt in *Terror and Consent* (2008) argued that the international system which had evolved into a market state system had, along with developments in technology, generated a new dynamic of terror, with the potential for the possible uses of WMD so enlarged, that preventive war must be considered and 'the rule of law and strategic reality brought closer together'.

Buchanan and Keohane (2004) had already identified four established positions on war: the Just War blanket provision on the use of force, the legal status quo, the Realist defence of the national interest, and the expanded right of self-defence. In a new calamitous period, they argued that another perspective was needed, a fifth position. This they termed the Cosmopolitan Institutional view, predicated on a commitment to the human rights of all persons. Such a commitment, they argued, manifestly justified the permissibility of force to prevent 'presently occurring' massive violations of human rights: a position which had been widely accepted in the context of the Kosovo War of 1999 as 'illegal but justified.'[5]

4 Rengger was well known for believing that scholars should rise above the fray of day-to-day politics (Paipais, 2022). See also Rengger's comment in *Just War and International Order* that Chatham House was not really 'my kind of place' as it was too close to government and corporations (Rengger, 2013b, xvi).

5 The Independent International Commission on Kosovo (IICK) concluded that NATO's 1999 bombing campaign was 'illegal but justified'.

Rengger accepted that type of justification had been used in the Kosovo War, setting up the use of force when implemented to prevent massive violations of basic human rights. But what that had in turn set in train was a rapid evolution in thinking about the use of military force as applying not *just* to any possible harms, but importantly, when there may be a significant risk of 'sudden' (the possibility of surprise attacks dominated much of the political discourse after 9/11) serious harms on a massive scale.

Buchanan and Keohane conceded that there were risks, ones that Rengger appreciated (given his belief in the trickery of politicians), that self-interest could masquerade as a concern for the common good, and second, that a preventive doctrine might undermine the existing and beneficial norms that constrained the use of force.

It was Michael Doyle who elaborated at length on the need for these new norms and institutional settings. In his book, *Striking First* (2008) and in the Tanner lectures delivered in Princeton in 2006, he set out, no small task, to 'articulate the conditions under which preventive war is justified and to specify workable and useful criterion for the international community to guide, constrain and assess resort to preventive war' because what exists is inadequate. In short, to create a 'jurisprudence of prevention' (Macedo, 2008, xi-xxiv).

Rengger articulated a raft of objections to these attempts to justify and ground a doctrine of preventive war. The first was that attempts to expand the use of force were based, as we noted earlier, on the belief that the world had become more dangerous after 9/11. For Rengger, that view was mistaken, although he did not dispute that others believed that international politics had grown more treacherous. Neither did he dispute in general that there may very well be instances of action, taken to prevent an obvious wrong, that may be deemed as legitimate (Rengger, 2008; Rengger, 2013a).

In a second objection, though, he challenged the idea that it was possible to establish or refashion institutional settings through which applications for the use of force could be sanctioned. Short of the creation of a world state, he inquired, who or what would enforce such decisions? And even before that thorny enforcement issue, he asked what would occur if there was profound disagreement between states, as over the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Rengger made the point, not it must be said a novel one, that the UN Security Council, as constituted (however one might wish it were different), was a platform for sovereign states. The Security Council was not a substitute for state interests; it was a forum in which states exercised their rights, and 'sovereign powers, as we know, guard their sovereignty jealously' (Rengger, 2008, 954). How could there be a guarantee that states would not abuse institutional processes set up to establish the conditions for a preventive war? The record

was not a happy one. For Rengger, states (and politicians[6]) were at the very heart of the problem of war and any 'attempts to corral it .... end up being merely yet another excuse for the use of force, by somebody, for some reason, against someone else' (Rengger, 2008, 961; Lang Jr et al., 2006).

Expanding Just War

There was a deeper objection nestling in Rengger's mind to the attempts to refashion the norms for war. This was that even though scholars of considerable weight, such as Doyle, had made the case with detailed and admirable care for an expansion of the use of force, they had misread and then misused the Just War tradition. That tradition was not just intentionally restrictive on the use of force, but Rengger claimed (following Tony Coady, 2007) it was 'a lot closer to pacifism' than was usually held. Rengger added: 'and, ironically, to realism' (Rengger, 2008, 955).

'A lot closer to pacifism,' though. Rengger let that thought hang. Rather, he turned his attention to the misrepresentations of the Just War tradition in the conflation of a preventive war with a just war. He identified significant weaknesses: one lay in the discussion of 'Last Resort.'

For Rengger, those seeking to use the tradition as a framework for expanding the use of force after 9/11 had confused, in his words, 'elided', preventative *action* and preventive *force*. There were, he argued, crucial steps required by the Just War tradition before the actual use of force; other types of action, whether political, legal, economic, or diplomatic, had to be attempted. Because those steps were required, a preventive war could not itself be an action of last resort.

In any case, Rengger claimed the Just War tradition prohibited preventive war on two grounds. The first (familiar to any student of Pacifism) was because 'force should always be the tool of last resort, not only because it is intrinsically bad (because it must require killing) and second because of its unpredictability.' But let us dwell on that phrase, 'because it must require killing' (Rengger, 2008, 956).

That objection is 'swaddled' up in classic Rengger fashion with other thoughts. Rather than directly debate killing, he turned to what was for him more familiar and more comfortable turf, raising questions of epistemology

6 Michael Doyle is clear that part of why he proposed new institutional structures for decision making on preventive war was precisely because 'the discretion of politicians is rightly suspect, we as citizens need to propose the standards that our leaders should employ when they claim to protect us' (Doyle, 2008, 159).

and judgement. We should not, he argued, expect much of our reasoning, but we cannot simply replace it with a rationalist approach as outlined by Doyle.

Rengger pointed out that the advantage of current thinking on the use of force was that it required the certainty that harm had already occurred, not that it *might* occur. That '*might'* occur would surely test the judgement of any mortal; it was, though, in his view, preferable to any purely legalistic plea-based formula, which would inevitably lower the bar for war. He argued that 'we might be mistaken' that harms are on their way, 'but then, if we have taken preventive action, we have let the genie of war out of its bottle, and we will have the devil's own job to put it back' (Rengger, 2008, 957).

There may also, he argued, be perverse incentives to use/misuse institutional settings. Years before the current tragedy in Gaza, Rengger cited the Israel-Palestinian conflict as an example. Using a Doyle-type formulation, he pointed out that the Palestinians could surely plead their case that Israel presented an imminent, coming harm to their security and that there could be a huge loss of life if Israel were not to be eliminated; Israel could make a similar case against Palestine. How, he asked, could one weigh the 'legality' of either side's views in such a complex and intractable situation where on all sides, agreements are broken, feet are dragged, and high levels of mendacity are obvious in their dealings with one another and with outsiders as well? (2008, 955).

How indeed?

Checklists

The years of the Iraq War provoked a fruitful period of writing for Rengger.[7] One piece, worthy of comment, given my purpose, was his 2005 'The Judgement of War' (Rengger, 2005). Here he examined not just the decision-making

7 Rengger regarded himself as fortunate in his colleagues. He wrote that 'St Andrews is a very special place for anyone interested in the kinds of things I am interested in.' (Rengger, 2013b). xiv. He noted many workshops and activities enriching university life. He recalled events run by colleagues such as Anthony F. Lang, Jr and Amanda Beattie on 'Rethinking the Rules'. The discussions of that workshop became an edited collection in 2009, produced by Routledge. Rengger contributed a chapter entitled, *Inter arma, silent leges?* (Rengger, 2009). Rengger was also a supporter of the work of The Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV), which was located within the same building as the School of International Relations. Richard English recalled with affection the contribution made by Nick to the work of that centre, his avid attendance at seminars and his commitment to understanding terrorism in the contemporary world (Correspondence with Richard English, 14 April 2025). Rengger also gave one of the first lectures of the newly founded Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics in St Andrews in 2005. The title of his lecture was Moral Evil and International

for war by the Blair Government but the revival of the Just War tradition and its reinvention, or as Walzer would have it, its 'recapture' (Walzer, 2015, xxxi).

As noted above Walzer was a figure of considerable influence. He had, though, in Rengger's view, slipped from a grounding in an authentic Just War tradition to a more dubious position. So, quoting Walzer:

> Upon examination they reveal I believe a comprehensive view of war as a human activity and a more or less systematic moral doctrine which sometimes but not always overlaps with established legal doctrine.
>
> WALZER, XXV

In that sentiment, Rengger believed that Walzer had the correct impulse, thus:

> Walzer is quite right to say that the framework for moral thinking about war overlaps with, but is not reducible to, legal thinking about war and he is also quite right to say as he does a moment later, that the 'proper method of practical morality is caustic in character'.
>
> RENGGER, 2005, 149

The problem was that Walzer did not follow that thought through (it had been articulated in the introduction to the first edition of *Just and Unjust Wars,* 1977) but rested the bulk of his later arguments on a legalistic paradigm based purely around states and rights. For Rengger, that mistake was most obviously manifest in his discussion of the Supreme Emergency, which, in his view, effectively lifted all limits on the use of force and provided permission to override the constraints of the tradition (Rengger, 2005, 150; Rengger, 2009, 196-197).

Apart from the fact that the declaration of Supreme Emergency would surely be a political and contingent decision, who, he asked, should decide when the stakes are high enough? (Rengger, 2009, 200). Rengger also objected to the adoption of a rights-based language, which slotted the discussion into a modern political vocabulary that was entirely secular and foregrounded legal not moral, thinking (Rengger, 2005, 148-149). He argued that such interpretations of the Just War had reached, if not breached, the 'limits of its elasticity' (Rengger, 2002, 361). Clark (2017, 327) implied that Rengger raised that thought as a query, while I read it as a proclamation.

Indeed, scholars such as James Turner Johnson had encouraged, in Rengger's view, a tendency to think of the Just War tradition as a calculus – a tick list

Relations (Reported by The Mitre, February 15, 2005. The Mitre was a student newspaper at the University of St Andrews).

– which could be literally used to check off the different requirements for war, whether that be right intention, last resort and so on (Rengger, 2005, 151). Rengger was not somebody who clung to rules or checklists (Lang Jr, 2022; Lang Jr et al., 2006), and the overall effect for him was that Walzer and others presented the Just War as a mechanism for state-centric legalistic determination to assert, claim, and foretell whether an intervention was just or unjust. Turner commented in a good-natured riposte, at least I read it in that way, in a review of Rengger's *Just War and International Order,* that 'Readers will be disappointed who hope to find in Rengger's book one of the kinds of conceptions of just war that are often seen today – just war defined by a list of requirements to be applied in a checklist fashion' (Johnson, 2017, 515).

The appeal and danger of a checklist was nowhere clearer than in the British approach to thinking about the use of force around the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The tendency towards this permissive use of force, Rengger identified in the foreign policies of Tony Blair[8] and his endorsement of military action as evidenced in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and most fatefully in Iraq.[9] In major speeches, including 'The Doctrine of the International Community' given in Chicago in April 1999 (Prime Minister Blair, 1999) and a speech justifying the Iraq intervention in Sedgefield in 2004 (Prime Minister Blair, 2004), Mr Blair outlined his thinking. In Chicago, the British Prime Minister argued, the 'most pressing problem …is to identify the circumstances in which we should get actively involved in other people's conflicts'. There were, in his view, five considerations (another checklist) which should form the framework for intervention; as Rengger commented acidly, 'he seems to want to intervene everywhere, to lace the weight of the tradition to secure justice rather than prevent injustice' (Rengger, 2005).[10]

Equally dangerous was the 'imperial' temptation to assert the need or right for a state to intervene in the affairs of others. Although openly scathing of the British Government and its rush to war in Iraq, Rengger was particularly

8 Rengger had a close working relationship with Alex Danchev, who became a colleague in the School of IR at St Andrews. Indeed, they exchanged emails on a variety of academic interests (see Richard Whatmore, 2022). When Rengger was editor of the *Review of International Studies* (2006-2010), he published Danchev's 'Tony Blair's Vietnam' (Danchev, 2007). This piece was a scathing assessment of Blair and the Iraq War.

9 During his first six years in office, Mr Blair ordered British troops into combat five times, more than any other post-war British Prime Minister.

10 Rengger certainly read the Chicago speech as one engendering the use of force. Lawrence Freedman, who drafted parts of that speech, disagrees and points to the caveats littered throughout the speech, which urged careful and calculated thought before the use of military force (see Freedman, 2017, pp. 107-124).

critical of the wider war against terror and its justifications for the abrogation of certain norms; here, he took specific exception to views espoused by Jean Bethke Elshtain (Elshtain, 2003).

He believed that Elshtain had abandoned her scholastic moorings after the attacks of 9/11, becoming beguiled by a view of America as a Shining City on a Hill. Rengger was withering of her general defence of the War on Terror, of certain torture techniques, and her depiction of the US as the ultimate arbiter and dispenser of goodness in the world. This was, in his view, an imperial and unwelcome project, agreeing with John Milbank's view that the War on Terror was both a response to the assault on the US homeland and an opportunity for the Bush administration to reshape international politics (Rengger, 2013b).

In defence of Elshtain, it has been observed that Rengger somewhat misinterpreted her views after 9/11. Chris Brown (2020, 617) for example, accused him in general of the 'burning' of a multitude of strawmen, while Cian O'Driscoll admiring Rengger's aplomb, gave Elshtain a sympathetic hearing (O'Driscoll, 2007, 489). Others noted that Elshtain had merely endorsed the view that states had an obligation to defend against terrorism (not in itself an uncommon or outrageous idea) and that America had the responsibility to use its powers to this end: a thought that many could 'get on board with' (Johnson, 2017, 515).

It was unusual for Rengger, as in the interchanges over Elshtain, to pick a fight over differences of interpretation, of understanding; usually for him, the conversation was the thing (Paipais, 2022). Yet his mood had grown sombre after 9/11, and he had developed an impatience with (in his view) grandiose visions for changing the world through the mechanism of war (Hall, 2022, 112).

Rengger conceded that such discussions were inevitable given that military intervention and the use of force was one of the most important themes in contemporary politics. Yet still a warning:

> It is of course right to try to rethink how we might understand and confront these tendencies in our world that threaten the possibility of lives lived free from artificially imposed fear or oppression. But to do so by opening the door to more permissive uses of force when so many of the tendencies in the international system are already pushing in that direction, and to weaken the restraints, however limited, however partial of traditions of thought such as the just war tradition is surely to risk succumbing to the greatest treason. Perhaps better, as Augustine would doubtless counsel, to resist temptation.
>
> RENGGER, 2008, 961

Illusions

The temptation to reshape the world, Rengger believed, arose because politicians and scholars thought that the international system could be rendered more peaceable, and this would surely happen if certain types of regimes were eradicated. At least part of the justification for invading first Afghanistan, and then Iraq, has been that unsavoury and dangerous tyrannies needed root and branch reform and to be made democratic. That agenda, despite the manifest failure in Iraq, endured into the Obama years with the interventions to not only upend President Assad in Syria but to remove General Gaddafi and refashion Libya. These attempts resulted, as 'we now know'[11], in civil wars of considerable ferocity.[12]

Rengger mused throughout this period on the presumed relationship between regime type and proclivity to war. He acknowledged that this was no modern conceit but that the search for peace had a venerable lineage rooted in part in Enlightenment thought, which held that the problem of war was solvable if there could be a movement away from the political and social forces which encouraged it. Immanuel Kant had, in a series of essays published during the 1780s and 1790s, outlined an account of human progress, suggesting that (properly) republican states would have little to go to war over, if history (providence) created just such a situation in which more states would indeed become republican. In the meantime, if states were to survive in a world in which not all states were republics, then in all probability wars would have to be fought (Rengger, 2016).

Kant had dismissed international lawyers such as Grotius as 'miserable comforters'. This was because in the quest to regulate the modes and conduct of fighting in war, they had lost focus on the primary purpose, which was the fundamental reconstitution of a political community that tolerated the use of force in the first place. While Rengger certainly had sympathy with the idea of lawyers and those who sought to disguise the essential nature of war as 'miserable comforters', he was not at all convinced that the world could be changed: this was clear in his analysis of the Democratic Peace thesis and its propo-

11 John Lewis Gaddis used the phrase '*We Now Know*' to explain how with more access to archives and knowing how the Cold War had ended, we might rethink that period (see Gaddis, 1997).

12 In what I term early Rengger thought, that is before 9/11, he had not been opposed to using the Just War tradition as a remedy for resolving certain types of conflict. Indeed, in an article for the then just founded journal *Civil Wars* he argued in thinking about sub state war 'that the just war tradition can help us here…many of them predate the state and so dealing with non-state aspects of conflict is hardly a problem' (Rengger, 1998, 48).

nents. That school of thought held that there was 'a clear and unambiguous relationship between a political regime and its manner of acting in the world' (Rengger, 2016, 49).

'Of course,' Rengger wrote that:

> If it is the case that the royal road to international peace runs through the establishment of liberal democratic societies then there is an obvious logic in seeking to create as many democracies as possible, even imposing them.
>
> RENGGER, 2016, 51

But he did not believe this: rather, in a commentary on peace (rather unusual for him), he agreed with his former St Andrews colleague, Oliver Richmond, that whatever the hopes,

> The later Liberal peace model failed to live up to much of this agenda and reduced peace to practices, norms, and preferences of a relatively small group of northern states.
>
> RICHMOND, 2016

These 'liberal' democracies, given their character, were likely to be *more* war-prone rather than the reverse (Rengger, 2013a, 62). The proclivity to war was also encouraged by the adoption of advanced technologies (such as drones), promising easy victories and a vision of 'humane warfare' which was likely to make war more inhumane than ever before' (Rengger, 2012; Rengger, 2013a, 62).[13]

A Growing Pacifist Sensibility?

I have made the case that Rengger was hostile to aspects of thinking about modern war, preventive war, the distortion (in his view) of the Just War tradition, of the Democratic Peace thesis, and the idea of humane war (Rengger, 2013a, 62; Coker, 2001). But critique is not conviction, and so how, indeed, can the leap be made from intellectual hostility, scholarly fencing over the nature of war, to a position as a latent Pacifist?

13 In this view, he was influenced by his friend Christopher Coker, his book Humane Warfare (2001) and their conversations on contemporary politics.

Here, Chris Brown makes an interesting observation about Rengger. In what was an affectionate but critical piece, according to Brown, Rengger's writings on intervention and just war illustrated that:

> He is of course right (and hardly unusual) in pointing out that interventions often fail and indeed can make things worse; difficult to find anyone who would disagree nowadays. But what conclusion ought to be drawn from this? His seems to be 'don't ever intervene'.
>
> BROWN, 2020, 619

Brown had elsewhere noted that Rengger, over the years of their conversations and indeed in the disagreements that the two had enjoyed, had never endorsed the use of military force on any occasion (Brown, 2020b, 619). This is, I think, correct. Rengger came to the position, after 9/11, 'don't ever intervene'. (I have recorded elsewhere the one occasion when Rengger approved, if obliquely, of an intervention, this though before 9/11 (Kennedy-Pipe, 2022; Rengger, 1998)).

Paipais, a considerable authority on Rengger's thought, disagrees and holds that Rengger did concede that force might on occasion be necessary (Paipais, 2020). Maybe so, but in the years before his death (in 2018), it is difficult to find any positive endorsement of the business of war and easier to find a growing interest in peace. Clark has pointed out that debates over war usually meant a position of either humanising or abolishing war (Clark, 2017, 327). Rengger did not believe that war could be humanised (Rengger, 2013b, 62) nor that it could be abolished. So, the question is, where did that leave him?

In the following sections, I suggest that Rengger's sustained opposition to the unchecked use of military force indicated a deepening Pacifist sentiment accompanied by his long-standing attraction to theologically infused explanations of how international affairs might be rethought.

Compromises

While aware of the complexity, the variations, the traditions of Pacifist thought (Rengger, 2016), Rengger wrote that, in the main, Pacifism was a minority position, and this was because, in his view, it offered answers to extremely tough questions that most people, and most societies, would not be prepared to con-

cede. He rested that view on Grady Scott Davis's (1992) suggestion that a pacifist must accept three particular 'goods' to surrender:

> The first, and last, of these is my person, which I cannot defend against attack: the second of these are my family and friends, whom again I cannot defend: and finally, I cannot take up arms against an unjust political order, no matter what the circumstance.
>
> RENGGER, 2016, 46

Rengger believed that Davis was correct, that:

> pacifism, properly understood, must accept these three conditions, and recognize in doing so, that it is surrendering all hope of political success in the conventional sense. The substantive point Davis is making here is simple enough, but I think very profound.
>
> RENGGER, 2016

This is an absolutist position and at first glance a peculiar one for Rengger to occupy; he habitually abhorred any extreme (Paipais, 2022), usually searching and finding positions that somehow were based in context, judgement and here I would add compromise, perhaps even a fudge: this not always to the satisfaction of fellow scholars (Boucher, 2014; Johnson, 2017; Brown, 2020; O'Sullivan & Dingli, 2022). Johnson, for example, in a review of *Just War and International Order*, asserted that 'I suggest though, that Rengger owes his readers more ….. an alternative conception of Politics and Political order' (Johnson, 2017, 516).

But as was usual with Rengger, there was no endpoint, no actual declaration of position: he could not, would not, did not, follow Davis on his interpretation of what constitutes Pacifism, rather:

> I certainly want to suggest that he is right to say that adopting a pacifist stance precludes the possibility of using force to achieve a rightfully desired goal – the protection of the innocent, the defence of the weak and so on. There are things that our general moral world would sanction as unquestionably good, other things being equal, and unless there is some very powerful overriding reason why such a renunciation should be adopted, to allow the weak to be unprotected or the innocent defiled would, almost universally I think, be considered a profound moral wrong.
>
> RENGGER, 2016, 46

Rengger suggests:

> that what thinking about the philosophy of peace perhaps reveals most clearly is the requirement to prepare for peace; to be aware of the conditions that might favour it, or, indeed, of those that might obstruct it, and have responses to such conditions in mind. Peace may not always be attainable, and sometimes (I agree with Augustine) might not be preferable, but for the most part, for most of us, most of the time, it will be, and so we should think long and hard about its context and its prospect.
>
> RENGGER, 2016, 53

In a fascinating account, Kate Schick places Rengger as caught between a rejection of utopian visions and a tragic resignation to the world in all its imperfection (Schick, 2022). He was opposed to the 'building of ever more sophisticated castles in the air' (Rengger, 2017, 3) and an acceptance that sometimes, even if rarely, force may just be a lesser evil (Rengger, 2013b). This formulation would seem to position Rengger comfortably within the bounds of what may be termed Realist Pacifism.

There is, at first glance, much to recommend such a designation. Jeremy Moses, who has written with considerable insight on Realist Pacifism, has described it as a space in which variants of Realism and Pacifism might converse, to engage in a creative theoretical act (Moses, 2018). Such a thought would certainly have appealed to Rengger who notably enjoyed civil conversation as a vehicle of illumination if not resolution. As Paipais has memorably written of Rengger's delight in conversation, it was a:

> practical manifestation of what he meant by the need to promote civility in world politics, namely value toleration, generosity of spirt and forbearance over ideological fanaticism, the force of persuasion over the persuasion of force, reasonable disagreement over violent confrontation, and the delight of conversation – often for the sake of it – over the shallowness of dogmatism.
>
> PAIPAIS, 2022, 19

There is also a cautious endorsement of a project not just to converse but to create an account of what may be possible. Mantena (quoted in Moses) produced an idea of what Realist Pacifism might yield:

> As the starting point of politics and political theorizing, the realist call to attend closely to dynamics of power, conflict, and domination can be mobilized on behalf of privileged and progressive politics. This seems to

> enable another realism that can navigate a way out of its traditional impasses. A transformed realism that need not begin and end in conservatism, moral equivocation, or pure instrumentalism.
>
> MANTENA, 2012, 436 in MOSES, 2018, 56

Could the traditional impasses be overcome (Rengger, 2017)? How could this be achieved, given the nature of the state and its tenacious guardianship of sovereignty and power? And as I go on to examine what Rengger saw, *regrettably* (my emphasis), was a world inhabited by extreme projects both political and religious.

In his opposition to the state, its ubiquitous use of violence and its dishonest politicians, Rengger occupied a position familiar to contemporary interpretations of the Pacifist tradition. This held that scholars and practitioners of a liberal disposition had conceded too readily to the rationalizations of state violence on offer, even if made on the grounds of humanitarian intervention, peace enforcement or human rights (Christoyannopoulos, 2022, 66). Rengger had written with sustained passion in rejecting that bundle of rationalisations for war: Paipais in this vein noted Rengger's lament of the unchallenged dominance of state sovereignty … which 'impoverished our ethical horizons and bred disaster, moral hypocrisy, and barbarism' (Paipais, 2022, 16).

In his final years, unease with state dominance, moral hypocrisy, and the barbarism of war saw Rengger embracing, not just elements of Pacifist thought, but what scholars of theology might offer on issues of war and peace.

On Theology and International Relations: World Politics beyond the Empty Sky[14]

Rengger had throughout his career written and spoken of the study of theology as important (Rengger, 2013b). I noted earlier his input into the creation of a Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics at his University.[15] He believed that to understand International Relations, 'the one grounding to which some would turn, was an explicitly theological one,' although noting that thought was one that many conventional academic theorists of human rights did not countenance. Rengger agreed with both Stephen Clark and John Milbank that

14 This subheading was the title of Rengger (2013b).

15 I am grateful to Professor John Anderson of the School of International Relations, St Andrews University for his recollections of the founding of the centre (Email correspondence, 20 April 2025).

it is not clear why this should be so (Rengger, 2013b). If Rengger could not directly answer that thought, Milbank provided an explanation of why theology had been sidelined:

> this was that colleagues in the academic world would probably consider theology or any other mode of religious reflection as none other than a fantasizing about the void … In secular terms they should not exist.
>
> RENGGER, 2013b, 150

I will return to the void, but Rengger profoundly disagreed that theology was not important to an appreciation of International Relations. In this respect, Milbank was a figure of considerable fascination. Rengger wrote of him that, 'he is a theologian' and:

> moreover, he is among the most consistently interesting and provocative theologians writing today … and one who has consistently said, from his earliest theological essays to the present, that Theology must assert its own role as the 'Queen of Sciences' or fade to nothing.
>
> RENGGER, 2013b, 150

Rengger concurred that:

> Empty secular power and arbitrary theocratic power, in their secret complicity show us no way forward.
> For Niebuhr and for Elshtain, we have to work with the grain of the world order, we have to understand that states are what we have to work with and that the world they make, while of course imperfect, is the only one we have. And we can expect of at least hope that we can help then make it a better world. But Milbank does not see the world order like this at all.
>
> RENGGER, 2017, 153

Instead, Rengger suggests that:

> we need to consider again the biblical and Platonic-Aristotelean metaphysical legacy common to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and, as for Milbank, the international challenges of our time are inseparable without a fully realised Christian metaphysical realism.
>
> RENGGER, 2017,153

Rengger approved of the Millbank stress on the utility of theological understandings of the world separate from any easy accommodation to the modern state (Rengger, 2017), quoted thus:

> The Christian principles of polity stand totally opposed to any idea of the nation-state as the ultimate unit and rather favour at once the natural pre-given region on the one hand and the universal human cosmopolis on the other. Likewise, they oppose the manipulative politics of human rights and propose instead the distribution of specific liberties, offices and duties to certain individuals and groups in certain circumstances according to the discernment of what is specifically desirable and has a tendency to connect human solidarity.
>
> RENGGER, 2017, 139

Rengger's suspicion of state power was in no small part why he was disappointed with Elshtain after 9/11: that she had been duped not just by the idea of American exceptionalism, blind to the 'real' agenda of the Bush administration and had endorsed a troubling project in attempts to wed devotion to God with an allegiance to the sovereign state of America: Elshtain had ceded to one state, one sovereign, the power to act in the world in an unlimited way (Rengger, 2017, 136-138).

For Elshtain, true international politics is defined as the equal claim of all persons to (have) coercive force deployed on their behalf if they are victims of one of the many horrors attendant upon radical political instability and in this less than perfect ideal world, absent an international body that could act as a guarantor (and we are absent it) then:

> As the world's superpower/America bears the responsibility to help guarantee international stability, whether much of the world wants it or not.
>
> RENGGER, 2017, 140- 141

He lingers on the phrase – 'whether much of the world wants it or not.' That surely could not be squared with the notion of a more limited sovereignty, a theme which Rengger claimed had characterised her earlier work (Rengger, 2017, 141). The ultimate ambiguity of Elshtain's position after 9/11, or so it seemed to Rengger, was that 'she wants both to assert the value of God's sovereignty without giving up on the sovereignty of the state' (Rengger, 2017, 140).

This, for Rengger, pace Milbank was a provocation. The point of talking about sovereignty and attempts to 'combine God's sovereignty with that of the

state was that it raised the question of who or what is sovereign, 'if push comes to shove' (Rengger, 2017, 140). God or state?

Milbank's theologically infused reading of International Relations, the state, God as sovereign and an alternative conception of world order was illuminating. Rengger noted with approval that:

> Several of the essays in the Future of Love emphasise, albeit briefly or en passant, a conception of world order that is highly diffuse: filled with local, regional, corporate (in the original and non-capitalist sense) bodies where the sense of authority is filtered through the notion of gift.[16]

One query is whether that admiration and defence of religiously infused thinking colouring his meditations on war point towards a form of Christian Pacifism. Here, I suggest it is worth reading Rengger through not just Milbank or indeed Gray, but also Martin Wight.

The Profession of Faith

It is certainly correct that, as Hall has pointed out, Rengger admired Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, both of whom were figures for which their Christian faith and scholarship were intertwined (Hall, 2014; 2022).

But to admire is not to believe. Hall points out that Rengger never openly professed faith (Hall, 2022) but makes the point that Rengger shared more than may have been recognised with Wight. Inspired by that thought, it is worth returning to Wight's explanation of what, for him, Christian pacifism entailed. In a 1936 essay, he wrote:

> The core of Pacifism is the belief that it is never right to take human life. It is nothing to do with quietism in the sense of immoral apathy and passivity. It is not the organization of mass-cowardice. It does not condemn all use of force. It does not assert that there is nothing worth fighting for. It does not make an unconditional surrender to evil. It does not believe in peace at any price.

16 Milbank employs the notion of gift as a transcendental category – creation and grace are gifts, incarnation is the supreme gift, while the Fall, evil and violence are the refusal of gift (See John Milbank, Why Study the Gift with John Milbank – YouTube, University of Nottingham, 4 March 2015).

There is much throughout the piece that Rengger agreed with, but then Wight's affirmation that: 'Taking life like giving it, is God's business and not yours or mine' (Wight, 1936).

This was Wight in 1936. In 1940, he was called up for national military service but registered as a conscientious objector (Porter, 2007). Later in life, he grew reticent about his Christian Pacifism. The reasons for that silence remain unclear, but in 1936, he had clearly stated the role of the Divine and God's sole responsibility for the taking of life. Michael Nicholson, in an essay addressing that point, retaliated that: 'If the only hope for the world is Divine Intervention (in my view a rather precarious hope), the choices are not very important, and politics is a charade' (Nicholson, 1981). For Nicholson, Wight had not answered the question over what his Pacifist views implied for International Relations. Thus, a direct question: 'Does he believe that there is anything one can do consistent with Pacifism which will reduce the amount of violence in the international scene and if so, what?' (Nicholson, 1981).

Nicholson found Wight deficient in several ways, foreshadowing later critiques of Rengger, namely that conclusions were not reached and answers were not provided to fundamental questions.[17] (Nicholson's judgements on Wight have been challenged in a fine book and a set of articles by Ian Hall, a former doctoral student and colleague of Rengger, which drew attention to the activism of Wight and his commitment to reshaping thinking about the international (Hall, 2006; 2014)).[18]

Rengger, like Nicholson, would have hesitated on the issue of divine retribution as the lone arbiter. This was because, as his work after 9/11 argued, political choices were always human judgments made against contingency and chance which, regrettably, were often flawed, and driven by a disastrous combination of (in Wight's words) 'low ideals and great expectations'[19] (Wight, 1936).

Nicholson entitled his piece, published in the *Review of International Studies* in 1981, 'The Enigma of Martin Wight', wondering, perhaps hoping, if Wight had lived, he might have provided answers not just to the issue of what could

17 Richard Jackson claimed in an article in 2018 that Rengger, like Elshtain, set up Pacifism as a 'strawman figure' to restrict the scope of the discussion. I suggest this is a misreading of Rengger: it is based only on two pages of Rengger's text. Rather than limit any discussion, Rengger throughout his work enlarged the scope of discussion to include not just a Gandhi or a King, but an Augustine. It is hard though not to agree with Jackson that in general, Pacifism has been subjugated within the boundaries of IR, but not, I suggest, Divinity, Theology or Political Theory (Jackson, 2018).

18 William Bain, an authority on both Nicolas Rengger and Martin Wight, has also been a friendly critic of my views on Rengger (Bain, 2020).

19 This phrase was used by Wight in his 1936 essay.

be done about war but why he had grown silent on his pacifism (Nicholson, 1981). Nicholson highlighted the 'astonishing' fact that in Elie Kedourie's 1979 Martin Wight memorial lecture devoted to 'The Influence of Religion on Martin Wight's Thought', his Pacifism was not even mentioned (Nicholson, 1981; Kedourie, 1979). Brian Porter recalled that, despite knowing Wight for years, he had only learnt of his pacifism during the memorial service in Wight's honour (Porter, 2007, 784).

In the case of Nicholas Rengger, any discussion of Pacifism is less obviously an omission. He did not nail his colours to the mast as Wight had done in 1936 and never made a public profession of faith. Paipais points out that in respect of his religious beliefs, like so much else, Rengger could be elusive.[20] It is unclear whether this was because he regarded faith as a personal matter, one separate from his career in academia (Hall, 2014)[21], or whether he was seeking a way to unite, to cohere his thoughts.

There are glimpses of a defence of aspects of Christian thought threaded throughout his essays. Of particular interest is his academic jousting with the philosopher John Gray. There is much that he admired and agreed with in Gray's work, certainly over the Iraq War, sharing doubts over the possibilities for progress in human affairs or the promise of a grand institutional project. But he disagreed with Gray's 'excessive pessimism' in viewing all religions as 'apocalyptic' and what Rengger saw as his sweeping rejection of the rich variety of Christian thought in favour of a monochrome vision of faith (Rengger, 2007).

If we cannot be certain about these matters, if we cannot untie the complexity of Rengger's thought, we are left with the impression of a growing engagement with writing on peace, on theological leanings and a profound unease with decision-making for war, its justifications and its usually (always) terrible consequences. Do these thoughts make a pacifist of some kind?

20 I can recall conversations with Rengger about his attraction to the Anglican church, its rituals, and the mystery of faith. Richard Whatmore has recalled that during his tenure at St Andrews, Rengger attracted large numbers of PhD students who were themselves devout and indeed evangelical in their rejection of contemporary morals and politics on the grounds of religious commitment (Whatmore, 2022, 218). In a striking echo of reminiscences of Wight, Rengger exerted a considerable influence on those he taught and those with whom he conversed.

21 Michael Nicholson in an article published in 1982, discussed the idea of a 'Private Pacifism' one which differentiated between a private belief in faith and the demands of public duty (Nicholson, 1982.)

The Enigma of Nicholas Rengger[22]

I end, as Rengger usually did, with a compromise. While there is little doubt that he would approved of recent research such as that of Paipais (2024) examining an Eastern tradition that seems to transcend the usual categories of Pacifism, of Just War or Holy War, he would I think ultimately have remained sceptical about any framework which eschewed context and judgement in favour of a blanket ban on the use of force. The virtue of Paipais's article (in my reading) is that it provides an account, close to Rengger's position, which refuses to think of war as simply just, justified or even the lesser evil.[23]

As others have noted, his mood had grown sombre after the events of 9/11; the usual sunny disposition had become gloomier, the tone more querulous as his writing on Elshtain demonstrated. Hall has written that the horrors of the first half of the 20th Century convinced Butterfield and Wight that moral progress in history was illusory: I suggest the wars following 9/11 entrenched Rengger's views in a similar way (Hall, 2022, 112; Hall, 2002).

Those who knew Rengger were often frustrated by his ability to side-step any overt conclusion to his thoughts and his ability to act as a 'gadfly'[24] in academic discussion[25]. There was, though after 9/11, a sustained critique of the purposes of war, a growing disenchantment woven through his work with those politicians who advocated, enabled and then dissembled about the business of war. There was appreciation of what theological understandings of the world might offer – and a belief that this meant much more than staring into a 'void.' Rengger did not march in protest, did not wave a physical placard against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Syria, or Libya, but across those years, he warned of the inevitable chaos that would surely follow military intervention. If not a pacifist, then he was perhaps increasingly beguiled by that philosophy more than any other.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following colleagues and friends of the late Nicholas Rengger for their recollections and thoughts: John Anderson, William Bain,

22 I am borrowing this expression from Paipais (2022, 18).

23 I am grateful to Dr Paipais for the conversations on his work and its connections to Nicholas Rengger.

24 That phrase is used by Paipais.

25 On the puzzle of Martin Wight, see Bain (2025).

Richard English, Anthony Lang, Jr, Oliver Richmond, Vasilios Paipais, Tom Waldman, and Richard Whatman.

References

Bain, W. (2025). Forward. Wight, M and Yost, S.D. (eds). *Faith and the Philosophy of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bain, W. (2020). *Political Theology of International Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bobbitt, P. (2008). *Terror and Consent: the wars for the twenty-first century*. London: Allen Lane.

Boucher, D. (2014). Reviewed Work(s): Just War and International Order: The Uncivil Condition in World Politics by Nicholas Rengger. *History of Political Thought* 35 (2), pp. 388-393, DOI:10.1017/CBO9781139382670.

Brown, C. (2022a). Rengger's War on Teleocracy. In: V. Paipais, ed., *The Civil Condition in World Politics Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 115-131.

Brown, C. (2020b). From Serpents and doves to the war on teleocracy. *International Relations* 34 (4), pp. 616-620, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820968623.

Buchanan, A. and Keohane, R. (2004). The preventive use of force: a Cosmopolitan institutional proposal. *Ethics & International Affairs* 18 (1), pp. 1-22, doi:10.1111/j.1747-7093.2004.tb00447.x.

Bush, G. (2002). West Point Commencement, June 1. Selected Speeches of President George. W. Bush. George. W. Bush White House Archives, https://georgewbush-whitehouse-archives.gov

Christoyannopoulos, A. (2022). An Anarcho-Pacifist Reading of International Relations: A Normative Critique of International Politics from the Confluence of Pacifism and Anarchism. *International Studies Quarterly* 66 (4), doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac070.

Clark, I. (2017). Taking 'justness' seriously in just war: who are the 'miserable comforters' now? *International Affairs* 93 (2), pp. 327-341, doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix003.

Coady, C.A.J. (2008). *Morality and Political Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coker, C. (2001). Humane Warfare. London: Routledge.

Danchev, A. (2007). 'Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the Special Relationship in historical perspective' *Review of International Studies.* 33.2, DOI:10.1017/S0260210507007462.

Davis, S.G. (1992). *Warcraft and the fragility of goodness*. Idaho: University of Idaho Press.

Doyle, M. (2008). *Striking First: preemption and prevention in international conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Elshtain, J.B. (2003). *A Just War Against Terror*. New York: Basic Books.

Ferguson, I. (2023). The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism. *International Affairs* 99 (6), pp. 2051-2052, https://doi.org/10.1093/IA/IIAD257.

Freedman, L. (2017). Force and the international community: Blair's Chicago Speech and the criteria for intervention. *International Relations.* 31. pp.107-124. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117817707395

Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.

Gaddis, J.L. (1997). *We Now Know* Rethinking Cold War History. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Gaddis, J.L. (2004). *Surprise, Security and the American Experience*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Hall, I. (2022). 'A Dangerous Place to Be'? Rengger, the English School, and International Disorder. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 97-114.

Hall, I. (2014). Martin Wight, Western Values, and the Whig Tradition of International Thought. *The International History Review* 36 (5), pp. 961-981, https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2014.900815.

Hall, I. (2006). The Enigmatic Martin Wight. In: *The International Thought of Martin Wight. The Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought Series*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, C. I. (2003). Sir Herbert Butterfield, Arnold J. Toynbee and Martin Wight and the Crisis of International Politics: A Study in International Thought. A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of St Andrews, http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk.

Jackson, R. (2018). Pacifism: the anatomy of a subjugated knowledge. *Critical Studies on Security* 6 (2), pp.160-175, https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2017.1342750.

Jackson, R., Breen Smyth, M., and Gunning, J., eds. (2009). *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*. London: Routledge.

Jervis, R. (2016). Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Preventive Wars and Regime Change. *Political Science Quarterly* 13 (2), pp. 285-311, https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12476.

Johnson, J. T. (2017). Three Perspectives on Just War. *International Relations* 31 (4), pp. 511-522, DOI: 10.1177/0047117817737359.

Kedourie, E. (1979). Religion and Politics Arnold Toynbee and Martin Wight. *British Journal of International Studies* 5 (1), pp. 6-14, doi:10.1017/S0260210500114676.

Kennedy-Pipe, C. (2024). On War: The Complexities of Christopher Coker and Nicholas Rengger. *International Politics*. Online first, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-024-00633-1.

Kennedy-Pipe, C. (2022). Rengger and the Business of War. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 172-187.

Kennedy-Pipe, C. and Rengger, N. (2006). Apocalypse Now? Continuities and disjunctions in world politics after 9/11. *International Affairs* 82 (3), pp. 539-552, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2006.00550.x.

Lang Jr, A. (2022). Rengger the Reluctant Rule Follower. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 155 -171.

Lang, Jr, A., Rengger, N., and Walker, W. (2006). The role(s) of rules: some conceptual clarifications. *International Relations* 23 (3), pp. 274-297, DOI:10.1177/0047117806066704.

Macedo, S. (2008). Edited and Introduction. In: Doyle, M., eds., *Striking First Preemption and Prevention in International Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. xi-7.

Millbank, J. (2015). Why Study the Gift? Part 2 University of Nottingham. 26 March 2015, https://mediaspace.nottingham.ac.uk/media/Why+Study+The+Gift+Pt+2+with+-John+Milbank/1_th63sv27.

Moses, J. (2018). Peace without Perfection. *Cooperation and Conflict* 53 (1), pp. 42-60, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836717728853.

Nicholson, M. (1982). Martin Wight: Enigma or Error. *Review of International Studies* 8 (1), pp. 125-128, doi:10.1017/S0260210500115517.

Nicholson, M. (1981). The Enigma of Martin Wight. *Review of International Studies* 7 (1), pp. 15-22, doi:10.1017/S0260210500115098.

O'Driscoll, C. (2007). Jean Bethke Elshtain's Just War Against Terror: A Tale of Two Cities. *International Relations* vol.21. (4). 485-492, DOI:10.1177/0047117807083074.

O'Sullivan, N., and Dingli S. (2022). Revisiting Rennger's Anti-Pelagianism. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 29-52.

Paipais, V. (2024). Between Pacifism and Just War: Oikonomia and Eastern Orthodox Political Theory. *Studies in Christian Ethics* 37 (3), pp. 657-668, https://doi.org/10.1177/09539468241257767.

Paipais, V., ed. (2022). *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Paipais, V. (2020). Between faith and scepticism: Nicholas Rengger's reflection on the 'hybridity' of modernity. *International Relations* 34 (4), pp. 627-633, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117820968624.

PM Blair. (2004). Prime Minister warns of continuing global terror threat. Sedgefield, https://www.britishpolitical.apeech.org>speech-online.

PM Blair. (1999). Doctrine of the International Community. Chicago, https://www.britishpolitical.speech.org>speech-online

Porter, B. (2007). The International Political Thought of Martin Wight. *International Affairs* 83 (4), pp. 783-789, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2007.00653.x.

Rengger, N. (2017). *The Anti-Pelagian Imagination in Political Theory and International Relations, Dealing in Darkness*. London: Routledge.

Rengger, N. (2016). The Philosophy of Peace. In: Richmond, O et al., eds, *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rengger, N. (2013a). Just War and International Order The Uncivil Condition in World Politics. Cambridge, Cambridge.

Rengger, N. (2013b). On theology and international relations: World politics beyond the empty sky. *International Relations* 27 (2), pp. 141-157, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813479985.

Rengger, N and Kennedy C. (2012). The New Assassination Bureau: On the 'Robotic Turn' in Contemporary War. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. *Carnegie Ethics online.* Nov 6.

Rengger, N. (2011). The World Turned Upside Down? Human Rights and International Relations after 25 years. *International Affairs* 87 (5), pp. 1159-1178, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2011.01026.x.

Rengger, N. (2009). Inter arma, silent leges? The political community, Supreme Emergency, and the rules of war in Lang, A.F. Jr, & Beattie, A. *War, Torture and Terrorism.* London, Routledge.

Rengger, N. and Kennedy-Pipe, C. (2008). The State of War. *International Affairs* 84 (5), pp. 891-901, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00744.x.

Rengger, N. (2008). The Greatest Treason? On the Subtle Temptations of Preventive War. *International Affairs* 84 (5), pp. 949-961, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00748.x.

Rengger, N. (2007). Political theory and the judgement of war: historical and contemporary reflections. *Contemporary Politics* 13 (3), pp. 243-255, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569770701467494.

Rengger, N. (2007). Review: The Exorcist? John Gray, apocalyptic religion and the return to realism in world politics. *International Affairs* 83 (5), pp. 951-959, DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2007.00665.x.

Rengger, N. (2005). The Judgement of War: on the idea of legitimate force in world politics. *Review of International Studies* 31 (1), pp. 143-61, doi:10.1017/S0260210505006832.

Rengger, N. (2004). Review Article: Just a War against Terror? Jean Bethke Elshtain's Burden and American Power. *International Affairs* 80 (1), pp. 107-116, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00372.x.

Rengger, N. (2002). On the Just War Tradition in the Twenty-First Century. *International Affairs* 78 (2), pp. 353-363, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00255.

Rengger, N. (2000). *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order. Beyond International Relations Theory?* London: Routledge.

Rengger, N. (2000). Political Theory and International Relations: Promised Land or Exit from Eden? *International Affairs* 76 (4), pp. 755-710, DOI:10.1111/1468-2346.00163.

Rengger, N. (1998). The beginning of the end of modernity? Honour, ethics, and the practice of civil war at the Fin De Siècle. *Civil Wars* 1 (2), pp. 38-51, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249808402373.

Richmond, O. and Pagodda, S. (eds.) (2016). *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schick, K. (2022). 'Keep your mind in Hell, and Despair Not': Gillian Roses's Anti-Pelagianism. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 75-66.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

The Mitre (2005).

The Kosovo Report – Albania (2000).

Whatmore, R. (2022). Rengger, History, and the Future of International Relations. In: Paipais, V., eds., *The Civil Condition in World Politics: Beyond Tragedy and Utopianism*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 211-228.

Wheeler, N. (2020). A Presumption of Trust in International Society. Forum on Nicholas Rengger. *International Relations.* Vol.34. (4) 634-61, DOI:10.1177/0047117820968628.

Wight, M. (1936). Christian Pacifism. *Theology* 33 (193), pp. 12-21, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X360331930.