
Postmodern Social In/Justice in Don DeLillo's *Underworld*

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Abstract

The present study illustrates DeLillo's *Underworld* from a Social Justice perspective. In his major works, John Rawls, a Harvard University professor, has written about a well-ordered society and a utopian world. In contrast, Don DeLillo, in *Underworld*, asserts, because of paranoia, waste, warfare, etc., there is no social justice today. *Underworld* is, in fact, an attempt to account for the emergence of paranoia as a significant feature of American national identity during the Cold War. The novel jumps between times periods ranging from 1951 to the early 1990s. The settings range across America, including New York, Arizona, and Minnesota. Individual conflicts, in this novel, occur beneath the wider context of the Cold War. Postmodern events are examined in this novel to find out if these events are compatible with the utopian world Rawls has asserted, and to explore if a just society is observed today. Paranoia, waste, and warfare are considered the central reference in this novel. Although the tone is distant and detached, DeLillo effectively evokes the Cold War mood of fear and uncertainty. Hence, the main target of this paper is to illustrate there is no social justice in this paranoid postmodern culture.

Keywords: Don DeLillo, Paranoia, Schizophrenia, Social In/Justice, *Underworld*, Waste

INTRODUCTION

Paranoia is the feeling that you're being threatened in some way, such as people watching you or acting against you, even though there's no proof that it's true. It happens to a lot of people at some point. Even when you know that your concerns aren't based on reality, they can be troubling if they happen too often. "Paranoia can become delusions, when irrational thoughts and beliefs become so fixed that nothing (including contrary evidence) can convince a person that what they think or feel is not true" (Kiran & Chaudhury, 2009, p. 3). Moreover, the novel illustrates "how the United States became postmodern, both culturally and aesthetically" (Duvall, 2008, p. 13). Peter Knight, in *Conspiracy Culture*, asserts, "The

prominence of conspiracy theories in American politics and culture has generated much anxious discussion in recent years, not least in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing and its panicked revelations about the rise of paranoia-promoting militias" (ibid, p. 5).

Likewise, Jesse Walker (2013) states, "In America, it is always a paranoid time" (p. 12). Also, Patrick O'Donnell (2008) in, *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*, argues, "the contemporary American life is waste" and that "we are surrounded by it" (p. 110). He holds, "waste" is occupying "our cities", and we wonder "where to put it – particularly nuclear waste – is the source of heated local (and, increasingly, national and international) political debates" (ibid, p. 110). In similar manner, Don DeLillo (1998), the American contemporary novelist illustrates that in *Underworld*, the

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postmodern America is occupied by “contaminated waste” (p. 37) and “genuine paranoia” (ibid, p. 154) as well as cold war: “You need the leaders of both sides to keep the cold war going” (ibid, p. 72). After the Second World War we bear witness to Cold War - the possibility of a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. In addition, the American invasion of Vietnam creates absurdity which breeds social disease.

Hence, this paper attempts to address social injustice through paranoia, waste and warfare, as well as their impact on postmodern society. We learn *Underworld* reflects, the domination of social diseases on the American society and the universe in general. Although John Rawls, the late professor of Harvard University, has written about social justice and utopian ideals, the society is influenced by paranoia as well as waste, and this paranoia breeds social crime and war.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though a few critics worked on DeLillo's novels, their investigations have not been specified to analyze his works from John Rawls's points of view. Paul Giaimo (2011) holds, “*Underworld* is stuffed with dialect, vernacular, and ethnic representations of language that signify the language of the people, the working Poor” (p. 10). He believes that DeLillo is neither modernist nor postmodernist. He argues, “As shown, neither the relativity of the postmodern outlook nor the occasionally elite-driven vision of the artist evoked by some modernists captures the moral force of DeLillo's vision that is the author's sense of right and wrong” (ibid, p. 16). He asserts, “From the devastating portrayals of evil in *Mao II*, *Libra*, and *Cosmopolis* to the confrontation of media stereotypes and inspiring renditions of urban missionary work in its collusion with art in *Underworld*, art imitates life” (ibid, p. 20).

Patrick O'Donnell, in *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo* (2009), asserts that the novel, “to some degree, might be viewed as a history of Cold War consumerist fantasies and the role that collective desire plays in the formation of both discrete and mass identities” (p. 116). O'Donnell, then refers to Susan Buck-

Morss's remarks and reading of Walter Benjamin's assessment of nineteenth-century consumerist culture as a “dreaming collective composed of atomized individuals, consumers who imagined their commodity dreamworld to be uniquely personal and who experienced their membership in the collectivity only in an isolated, alienating sense, as an anonymous component of the crowd” (ibid).

Besides, Duvall (2008) argues, “Despite the fact that DeLillo is most frequently cast as a postmodern novelist, *Underworld's* method of presenting its story of memory and desire recalls the chronological disruptions of modernist narration” (p. 13). He mentions, “how the United States became postmodern, both culturally and aesthetically.” (ibid) Moreover, he tells us about the victory of the US over the Russians, not fully by the official governmental procedure of the containment of communism. In its weakness “in the hot war with Vietnam, United States excesses —saturation bombing, the use of Agent Orange to defoliate the countryside, and terrorism directed against civilians —in retrospect clearly seem to have bolstered the resolve of the North Vietnamese” (ibid).

In addition, Knight, in *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo* (2009), explores, “The best example in DeLillo's oeuvre of this post modernization of paranoid fears of control comes in *Underworld*” (p. 36). He remarks, “the novel conducts a historical investigation of the shift from the paradoxically secure paranoia of the Cold War to the less stable insecure paranoia of postmodernity, in which it is no longer clear who or what is the enemy” (ibid). He believes that in such a situation “fear of hidden dangers and hidden agendas is a pervasive attitude for characters living under the shadow of nuclear destruction, pollution, and other forms of unpredictable technological nightmare that create a permanent environment of risk (ibid).

Michael Barkun (2013) writes about the serpent in the Garden. He believes that the interrelationship of inner-earth and reptilian themes is complex and that they are often interweaved but at times separate. The connection stems from their associations with death and wickedness. He argues that the, “underworld is the domain of the dead and dwelling place of

those whose lives have not merited a heavenly reward. In the popular imagination, it is the location of hell, where the devil supervises the punishments endured by the wicked” (p. 123). He asserts, “And Satan, the Evil One, is also the serpent who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, bringing humanity sin and mortality” (ibid).

Likewise, Peter Boxall (2006) remarks, “If *Underworld* is a novel of apocalypse, however, if it is a novel which celebrates and witnesses the triumph of death, the arrival of the millennial moment”, however it is “the case that the currents which drive the novel towards such a revelatory moment of final becoming produce, also, a form of resistance to historical closure, a denial of the power of the interpolating, homogenizing American voice” (p. 186). The process of “apocalyptic homogenization in *Underworld* creates its own counter process, a kind of resistance to apocalyptic closure that is born out of the novel’s experience of ecstasy” (ibid).

Theoretical Framework: John Rawls’ theory of Justice and equality

The researcher applies John Rawls’s theory of justice and ethical standards in Don DeLillo’s novel to find out if DeLillo’s postmodern novels are in line with the realistic utopia Rawls has illustrated in his works. John Rawls, in his major books, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), *political Liberalism* (1993), and *The Law of Peoples* (1999) writes about a well-ordered society. He points out various points including, a realistic utopia, justice of fairness and the idea of an ideal society.

A Theory of Justice

Rawls’ aim is “to work out a theory of justice that represents an alternative to utilitarian thought generally and so to all of these different versions of it” (Rawls, 2020, p. 20). Utilitarianism is a theory of morality, which advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and opposes actions that cause unhappiness or harm. Besides, he asserts that Justice as fairness begins, “with one of the most general of all choices which persons might make together, namely, with the choice of the first principles of a

conception of justice which is to regulate all subsequent criticism and reform of institutions” (pp. 11, 12). Then, following choosing a conception of justice, he remarks that they are “to choose a constitution and a legislature to enact laws, and so on, all in accordance with the principles of justice initially agreed upon” (p. 12). He holds, “our social situation is just if it is such that by this sequence of hypothetical agreements we would have contracted into the general system of rules which defines it” (ibid). Moreover, Rawls writes about equality and believes that there must be equality in a just society. He states, “the meaning of equality is specified by the principles of justice which require that equal basic rights be assigned to all persons” (p. 442). In addition, he argues that there must be no racial discrimination and the basic rights should not “depend on the color of one’s skin or the texture of one’s hair” (ibid, p. 129). As he puts it, “viewing the theory of justice as a whole, the ideal part presents a conception of a just society that we are to achieve if we can” (ibid, p. 216). As far as circumstances permit, we have a natural duty to remove any injustices, beginning with the most grievous as identified by the extent of the deviation from perfect justice. Rawls, in this regard, mentions “the principle of fairness as a premise” along with other theories and believes, “justice as fairness holds that natural duties and obligations arise only in virtue of ethical principles” (ibid, p. 306). He remarks that in a well ordered society we should have “a freedom of thought and conscience” and “[guarantee] equal protection of the laws” (ibid, p. 307).

Political Liberalism

In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls (1993) talks about justice as fairness and states, “the aim of justice as fairness is to resolve this question by starting from the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation in which the fair terms of cooperation are agreed upon by Citizens...” (p. 35). He considers this approach as “the basic structure of society” (ibid, p. 286). Further, he poses the idea of a well-ordered society. He believes that there is democratic thought in a democratic society, “the content of which is at least familiar and intelligible to the educated common sense

of citizens generally. Society's main institutions, and their accepted forms of interpretation, are seen as a fund of implicitly shared ideas and principles" (ibid, p. 14). He remarks that a well-ordered society conveys three things: first, it is a society in which "everyone accepts, and knows that everyone else accepts, the very same principles of justice" (ibid, p. 35); and second, its chief structure—that is, "its main political and social institutions and how they fit together as one system of cooperation—is publicly known, or with good reason believed, to satisfy these principles" (ibid). And third, "its citizens have a normally effective sense of justice and so they generally comply with society's basic institutions, which they regard as just" (ibid). Thus, there is no denying that in such a society we could have the conception of justice.

Rawls holds that justice as fairness begins from within a political convention and gradually takes its basic idea from its society as a fair system from generation to generation. Two companion fundamental ideas develop with the central organizing idea: one of them is the idea of citizens who deal with cooperation as free and equal people and the other is the idea of a well-ordered society which is inspired by political conception of justice.

The Law of Peoples

Furthermore, in, *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls (1999) writes about a realistic utopia. He hopes that in the future we would have a reasonably just and democratic societies of peoples. "In such a social world peace and justice would be achieved between liberal and decent peoples both at home and abroad" (p. 6). He believes that the idea of this society is "realistically Utopian in that it depicts an achievable social world that combines political right and justice for all liberal and decent peoples in a Society of Peoples" (ibid). Both *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, two of his major works, say "how a liberal society might be possible" (ibid). In *The Law of Peoples*, he asserts how a world society of liberal and decent Peoples might be possible.

Clearly, many would believe that "it is not possible, and that Utopian elements may be a serious defect in a society's political culture"

(ibid). On the contrary, he would not deny that such elements could be misconceived. He believes the concept of a realistic utopia is crucial. He suggests that two ideas draw the law of peoples. One is "the great evils of human history—unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty" (ibid, p. 126), which comes from political injustice. The other one, clearly connected with the first is that "once the gravest forms of political injustice are eliminated by following just social policies and establishing just basic institutions, these great evils will eventually disappear" (ibid). He calls a world where these great evils have been eliminated and just basic institutions founded by decent and liberal people who care about the law of peoples, a real utopia.

This study, regarding paranoia and waste as well as warfare, attempts to examine if utopian elements, well-ordered society and socio ethical standards Rawls has emphasized in his major works are observed in the postmodern society DeLillo has illustrated in his novels.

Underworld: Paranoia and Social Justice

Underworld is Don DeLillo's eleventh novel. It is regarded as DeLillo's "major novel to date" and in many ways, "it represents the culmination of DeLillo's novelistic career, though one must exercise caution in making such monumental statements about a living author who shows no signs of slowing down" (Duvall, 2009, p. 108). Since its publication in 1997 *Underworld* has received both critical and public acclaim and DeLillo, for only the second time in his career (*Libra* being the first), has found himself topping the bestseller lists. The novel jumps between times periods ranging from 1951 to the early 1990s. The settings range across America, including New York, Arizona and Minnesota. *Underworld*, an eight hundred twenty-seven-page novel, is being praised as a triumph of American writing, a literary monument to symbolize the end of the cold war and the beginning of a new millennium of peace. The mood of *Underworld* is basically tense and dark. Although the tone is distant and detached, DeLillo effectively evokes the Cold War mood of fear and uncertainty. DeLillo's fiction is often labeled as

“postmodernist” for its representation of the predominance of the spectacle and commodity and the consequent decline of historical consciousness (Osteen, 2000, p. 2).

The story opens on October 3, 1951 when a boy by the name of Cotter Martin jumps the turnstiles at the Polo Grounds and enters the Dodgers-Giant game. Cotter left the stadium with a home run ball; he wanted to keep it as a souvenir, but his father, Max, stole it while he was asleep and sold it to Charles Wainwright, who was standing in line to buy tickets at Yankee Stadium. That exact day, the Soviets successfully completed a test of atomic bombs. Then, the book tells the story of Nick and Marian, who are two native Bronx residents. Nick's father is a numbers runner, who one day left and never returned. Nick is a good kid, but his street kid smarts got him to spend time in juvenile detention for negligent homicide. One day, he met Klara and had a quick affair. After reuniting for the second time, Klara decides to break it off and the two individuals head off separately. Klara is a girl that seeks independence, while Nick tries to think about who he was back then and who he is now. During the entire story, the Cold War affects everybody's lives since everybody is feeling paranoia of what's to happen. The effect of paranoia is portrayed by Lenny Bruce, who is a comedian known for nightclub performances. *Underworld* presents both a certain characteristic post-Cold War paranoia and nostalgia, while portraying waste's metaphorical role as both the corruption, underlying, discarded remnants of the paranoia and nostalgia. Moreover, it expresses a characteristic appeal of ideological surveillance as it manifests in the character's reactions to envired spaces. Elaine Showalter's recent book *Hystories* (1997) speaks to the common perception there is a “plague of paranoia” (p. 143) spreading through western society. Just when you thought it was safe, the emergence of new fears and fantasies summed up by President Bush's infamous announcement of a “New World Order” (Knight, 2000, p. 12) has paradoxically meant a return to the dominance of conspiracy thinking in American life.

The picture of paranoia illustrated here can be completed with O'Donnell's notion of

cultural paranoia, pointing to the paranoid notions of history or knowledge being legitimized by the fact that the real truth may not necessarily be seen by everybody; most people will see it as disconnected pieces; whereas, it is only some who can perceive the formal ties binding these elements. The reason why it is only the paranoid who can see those ties, pieces of the real present in such narratives, can only be found when the whole issue is analyzed through the perspective of the paranoid mind. According to O'Donnell (2000), *Underworld* can be read as an illustration of the paranoia underlying the history of the Cold War, which he calls, in *Latent Destinies*, “under history” (p. 179).

O'Donnell (2000) is right seeing many historical facts in *Underworld* “explained” to the reader by paranoids themselves: Edgar Hoover eliminating (un)real dangers to the system, Lenny Bruce providing the reader with details of the Cuban Missile Crisis, or Ismael Munoz paranoically afraid of being stigmatized by the system. O'Donnell is apt to observe, that the “real” or official history in *Underworld* is but symptomatic: DeLillo replaces history with a patchwork of underhistories that collectively accumulate as massive, monumental desire whose quantifiable metabolism produces qualitative changes that materialize in the events of public history. It is the relation between history under the ground and the history of the official record – between the history of desire marked by waste and loss, and the history of nation or world – that DeLillo pursues in *Underworld* (1998) through a narrative inversion in which official history is represented only indirectly as the symptomatic, destined, yet processional outcome of “under history” (p. 179). From what we can gather, *Underworld* indicates the emergence of paranoia as a result of Cold War in American society which is in contrast with “Utilitarianism” Rawls has depicted in *A Theory of Justice*.

Underworld: Warfare and Social Justice

Another point in this novel, indicating lack of social justice, is warfare. After the Second World War there was Cold War between the superpowers. DeLillo (1998) believes that in

those years we lived through two levels of danger: The possibility of “a nuclear exchange” (p. 270) between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the psychological sense of randomness and ambiguity that flowed from the assassinations and social disruptions of the 1960s. “I’m making plans I get some heat and electric in here. Furthermore, pirate cable for the Knicks” (DeLillo, 1998, p. 159). DeLillo, in *Underworld*, writes about the spreading of the virus. He asserts that many people held the government was accountable for the spread of virus in the Wall. “Edgar knew better. The KGB was behind this particular piece of disinformation. And the KGB was responsible for the disease itself, a product of germ warfare making it, spreading it through networks of paid agents” (ibid, p. 107).

Moreover, *Underworld* tells us about the American invasion of Vietnam in 1965. In its lack of success in the hot war with Vietnam, “United States excesses — saturation bombing, the use of Agent Orange to defoliate the countryside, and terrorism directed against civilians — in retrospect clearly seem to have bolstered the resolve of the North Vietnamese” (ibid, 13). This invasion creates paranoia, waste among the Americans. It seems there is “no sense of balance in the universe. Historical absurdity (like the war in Vietnam) breeds social disease (Mailer, 2007, p. 357). Hence, paranoia, social injustice, waste and conspiracy is inevitable in this postmodern society.

However, John Rawls does not believe in war at all. In *The Law of Peoples*, he asserts, “As a consequence of focusing on the idea of a realistic Utopia, many of the immediate problems of contemporary foreign policy that trouble citizens and politicians will be left aside altogether or treated only briefly” (Rawls, 1993, p. 8). Rawls suggests, “three important examples: unjust war, immigration, and nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction” (ibid). The crucial fact for the problem of war is that constitutional “democratic societies do not go to war with one another” (ibid). He remarks that it is not because the citizens of such societies are just and good, but more simply because they have no reason to fight with one another. Rawls refers to dynastic wars

and states, “England, France, Spain, Hapsburg Austria, Sweden, and others fought dynastic wars for territory, true religion, for power and glory, and a place in the sun” (ibid). These wars of “Monarchs and Royal Houses” made them essentially “aggressive and hostile to other states” (ibid). He believes that the mere fact of peace among democracies “rests on the *internal* structure of democratic societies, which are not tempted to go to war except in self-defense or in grave cases of intervention in unjust societies to protect human rights” (ibid). Because fundamental “democratic societies are safe from each other, peace reigns among them” (ibid). He holds that the basic principle of the law of nations is a principle of equality and peace.

Underworld: Waste, Social Injustice

The only thing that seems to tie *Underworld* all together is waste. “With every turn of the page, there is more waste—wasted lives, wastelands, wasted bodies, limbs, sewers, dumps, landfills, junk, trash, garbage, and, of course, radioactive nuclear waste” (Taylor, 2012, p. 191). There are also other less recognizable and predictable forms of waste—games, art, etc. For DeLillo, “waste is the secret history, the under history, the way archaeologists dig out the history of early cultures, every sort of bone heap and broken tool, literally from under the ground” (ibid, p. 201).

In addition to the paranoid, public, macro-cosmic American Cold-War history, of which the connection of waste and weapons functions as the chief organizational principle, we also observe in the underworld of the novel “the shared traumatic sense of insecurity, confusion, alienation, dread, and loss” (Osteen, 2000, p. 216). Waste is “a central preoccupation of *Underworld*, and this centrality is related, in no small measure, to its Recyclability” (Boxall, 2006, p. 196). Moreover, Patrick O’Donnell (2008), in *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*, holds that the contemporary “American life is waste” and that “we are surrounded by it”. He believes, “waste” is occupying “our cities”, and we wonder “where to put it – particularly nuclear waste – is the source of heated local (and, increasingly, national and international) political debates” (p. 110).

The central character of the novel, Nick Shay, is a waste manager, working for a company named Waste Containment. Nick, near the opening of *Underworld*, reflects on the etymology of the word waste: “Waste is an interesting word that you can trace through Old English and Old Norse back to the Latin, finding such derivatives as empty, void, vanish and devastate” (DeLillo, 1998, p. 52). Nick, in the novel, flirts with a life of crime in the Bronx of the 1950s and 1960s. He “accidentally shoots and kills a waiter who has attempted to introduce him to heroin – to his career in the waste management industry as he gets involved with the problem of waste in increasingly global proportions” (Duvall, 2008, p. 110). Also, Nick talks about his job, his “discipline” as a waste official: My firm was involved with waste. We were waste handlers, waste traders, cosmologists of waste (DeLillo, 1998, p. 88). Similarly, O’Donnell (2000) notes, “In *Underworld* waste exists as a kind of underground empire” (p. 113). Regarding Nick and waste management, he believes that waste is the “map of our progress toward death, individual and collective” (Duvall, 2008, p. 110).

It appears that the underworld is the territory of the dead and dwelling place of those whose lives have not merited a celestial reward. Considering “the omnipresence of waste in America,” (ibid, p. 112) a superintendent in the Bronx tells a group of cardplayers “this goddamn country has garbage you can eat, garbage that’s better to eat than the food on the table in other countries. They have garbage here you can furnish your house and feed your kids” (DeLillo, 1998, pp. 766–7). The paradoxes of waste are sensed in this passage. It covers random objects, some whole, some now broken or torn apart. Objects that once covered specific personal and historical significance (old letters) or economic value (faded dollar bills) are now changed into a spreading piles of “happy garbage” (ibid, p. 17).

At the same time, this random spreading and gathering also serves as a means for identification with the mass, the crowd, and the historical event it has just witnessed. The “happy garbage” indicates the lack of personal identity and the acquisition of communal

identity, except for the latter which is only a “shadow identity,” (ibid, p. 17) a vestigial and momentary collectivity that evaporates as the disorganized mass of the crowd leaves the stadium and goes a thousand separate ways. From the statements of various critics on waste, one becomes painfully aware that waste is omnipresence in American society and this indicates there is no social justice despite John Rawls’s remarks.

Regarding social justice, John Rawls holds that justice is the first step in social institutions, as truth is of basis of thought. Rawls (2020), in *A Theory of Justice*, writes, “A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise, laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust” (p. 3). He believes that a just society must not allow “the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many” (ibid). As he puts it, “the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation” (ibid, p. 6). Now, regarding waste which is the result of conspiracy and injustice, there appears to be no trace of social justice and we are living in a world that is meaningless.

CONCLUSION

Underworld, DeLillo’s major work to date, is based on Cold War and uncertainty. Also, the effect of paranoia, warfare and waste has been shown not only in *Underworld*, but also for everyday lives of Americans. As DeLillo and O’Donnell state, American life is waste and we are surrounded by it. And this paranoid public sphere is inferred to create mass schizophrenia so that the average good Christian American secretly loves the war in Vietnam. We live in a universe where our aspiration for coherence and order is so serious that we create narratives of conspiracy in order to provide answers and meaning, this is in contrast with a well-ordered society. Waste seems to be the essence of post-modernism. As DeLillo and O’Donnell portray, the effects of these narratives, or versions of

history, are found in the presence of paranoia in our society and cause social injustice.

As we discover, the novel illustrates the periods from 1951 to the early 1990s and the settings range across America, including New York, Arizona, and Minnesota. It appears DeLillo is giving us an account indicating fear and waste that abound in our world. Besides, paranoid delusion and Cold War tell us about incoherent and fragmented aspects of postmodernism. In fact, in order to improve standards, DeLillo illustrates an accurate personal account of the effects of paranoia and waste on our society.

Now regarding social justice, it is noteworthy that John Rawls, in his book, *A Theory of Justice*, believes justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise, laws and institutions, no matter how efficient and well-arranged, must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. In addition, Rawls discusses the welfare of the society and proposes each person should possess an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason, justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. He believes a just society must not allow the sacrifices imposed on a few to be outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. In addition, he holds that the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. Moreover, he asserts that the principles of justice would regulate a well-ordered society and believes everyone, in this society, is presumed to act justly and to do their part in upholding just institutions.

In conclusion, regarding conspiracy, paranoia and warfare, it must be admitted that we do not have a, so to speak, well-ordered society in the postmodern world, and we come to an understanding that American society is cursed with absurdity. Thus, social justice and socio ethical standards are ignored in the postmodern world.

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