3

War and Peace

Shorter Readings
- Sun Tzu, from The Art of War (p. 201)
- Bhagavad Gītā, from Book 2 (p. 205)
- St. Thomas Aquinas, from Summa Theologica (p. 210)
- Ibn Khaldūn, Methods of Waging War Practiced by the Various Nations (p. 215)

Mid-Length Readings
- Margaret Mead, Warfare: An Invention—Not a Biological Necessity (p. 239)
- George Orwell, Pacifism and the War (p. 247)
- Jean Bethke Elshtain, What Is a Just War? (p. 268)

Longer Readings
- Carl von Clausewitz, What Is War? (p. 223)
- Arundhati Roy, Come September (p. 253)

Visual Texts
- Eugène Delacroix, Liberty Leading the People (p. 220)
- Pablo Picasso, Guernica (p. 236)
Sun Tzu
from The Art of War
(400–320 BCE)

“Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.”

Summary

1–3: Military strategies should be minimally intrusive and should provide victory without requiring destruction; the best strategy at all is to win without fighting.

4–9: It is best to attack an enemy’s strategy and disrupt his alliances. It is less effective to engage his army. The worst strategy is to attack cities, since they are heavily defended and can cause an impatient army to fail.

10–11: If an enemy can be subdued without a battle, the victory will be complete.

12–17: If your forces are overwhelming, you can surround the enemy (and win without fighting). If you have a reasonable chance of victory, you should engage. If you do not have sufficient forces to win, you should withdraw.

18–23: Generals protect their states. Rulers risk harming their states when they do not defer to military leaders in military matters. This happens when they do three things: give commands for armies without understanding their positions, meddle in military affairs without sufficient knowledge to do so, and attempt to fulfill a command role without a sufficient understanding of command issues.

24–30: Victory can be predicted when commanders understand when and when not to fight, when they understand how to use large and small forces, when their forces are united, when they are prudent and set traps for foolish enemies, and when their generals are not interfered with by rulers.

31–33: Victory comes to commanders who understand themselves and their enemies. Defeat comes to commanders who do not.

Suggestions for Class Discussion

1. Ask students to think about what it might mean to win a total military victory without a violent engagement. Have them give examples from current events or from their own lives, when in contested situations avoided direct conflicts but still got everything they wanted.
2. Discuss Sun Tzu’s injunction that a commander must know the enemy and himself. Ask students to talk about the negative consequences of underestimating—or overestimating—themselves or other people.

**Understanding the Text**

1. This format also suggests that The Art of War may be a composite text, whose many authors contributed maxims that were later collected and organized as a single book. Short epigrams allow readers to provide their own reasons for assertions and participate more in the construction of a consistent narrative. They also often require extended contemplation of a few words—a practice highly valued in traditional Chinese culture.

2. Sun Tzu argues that the best generals do not need to fight, because they understand their enemies and their own strengths so well that they can manipulate the situation to achieve their military ends without fighting. He rejects the notion that generals should fight for glory, honor, or tangible rewards. Rather, they should be interested only in accomplishing the objectives that have been established for them, and the best way to do this is usually to win without an engagement. In any armed conflict, some elements cannot be controlled and, therefore, the possibility of defeat exists. Achieving the objectives without conflict avoids this possibility. This idea mirrors the Taoist notion of an ideal ruler who is invisible and unknown.

3. Cities in ancient China were often surrounded by walls and heavily fortified. It took months to gather the supplies necessary to attack such a city, and in the meantime, armies were likely to get impatient and start attacking too soon, resulting in defeat. Even when a city could be captured, doing so required the destruction of property, wealth, and life—making the conquest less profitable for the victor.

4. Sun Tzu believed that commanders had to understand not only their enemies’ strengths and weaknesses but also their own. Commanders who underestimate their own abilities do not engage when they can be victorious. Commanders who overestimate their abilities attack foolishly and suffer defeat. Ideal commanders understand how to get the most out of every tool at their disposal—including their own bodies and minds. This truth also applies outside the military arena—self-knowledge leads to better decisions in all areas.
5. *The Art of War* contains strategies for managing conflict that can easily be applied to confrontation in a boardroom, a political contest, or any other activity involving antagonism and strategy. For example, the principle that the most complete victory achieves all of one's objectives without ever engaging an opponent could apply to numerous contexts that do not require physical combat.
Bhagavad Gītā
from Book 2
(100 BCE)

Prepare for war with peace in thy soul. Be in peace in pleasure and pain, in gain and in loss, in victory or in the loss of a battle. In this peace there is no sin.

Summary

5–8: Arjuna expresses the agony that he feels at the thought of fighting a war against his cousins. He describes them as his “sacred teachers” and does not feel sure that his side deserves victory. He feels that he faces a conflict that cannot be resolved.

11–12: Because Arjuna has told Krishna that he will not fight, Krishna launches into an explanation about why he should.

13–14: Krishna explains that it is unnecessary to be concerned about causing deaths, since the human essence cannot be killed; when it leaves one body it migrates into another.

15–16: Pleasure and pain are part of the transient physical body. They are not part of a person’s essence. Those who can rise above these things and comprehend their fundamental unreality are “worthy of life in Eternity.”

17–20: Those who understand the true nature of things can never kill or be killed, since death is part of the unreal (or less real) physical experience.

21–29: Weapons cannot hurt the spirit. It is beyond death and beyond perception by mortal eyes. All bodies must die, and no spirit ever can, so it is senseless to feel pain at the death of a body.

30–31: Krishna further admonishes Arjuna to focus on his duty as a member of the warrior caste. It is his dharma, or duty, to fight, and in doing so he qualifies himself for the blessings that come with the faithful performance of one’s duty.

32–35: If Arjuna refuses to fight, he will be shirking his duty and bringing dishonor upon himself.

35–38: Arjuna should prepare for battle secure in the knowledge that he is doing his sacred duty. He should “prepare for war with peace in [his] soul.”
SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Have students evaluate Krishna's first argument—that it is impossible to really kill someone because the soul is immortal. Do students find this argument compelling? Could the same argument apply in a Judeo-Christian community that acknowledges the immortality of the soul?

2. Ask students what kinds of social roles they inhabit as students, members of a profession, or participants in a family, church, or community. Ask them if they agree with Krishna's argument that doing one's duty, as defined by these social roles, is a moral imperative.

3. Ask students to consider how they might feel if they were required to kill someone that they were close to. Ask them if Arjuna's desire not to kill others might be shared by someone today fighting in a war. What answers might a modern-day religious leader give to a soldier who felt that he could not fight a battle because he could not stand to kill another person? If members of the class have served in the military, ask them to share how they came to terms with these issues.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Arjuna does not want to have the sin of killing his cousins on his conscience. He grew up with these cousins and received his early education at their hands. He recognizes a debt to them and a family connection with them, and anguishs at the thought of becoming their executioner. Krishna responds in two ways. First, he tells Arjuna that he cannot really kill his cousins, since their souls cannot ever really die. If they leave this life, they will simply be reborn in other bodies. Second, Krishna tells Arjuna that, as a member of the warrior caste, he has a duty to fight this battle. Here, Krishna invokes the principle of dharma to explain that Arjuna's highest moral responsibility is to perform a warrior's responsibilities faithfully.

2. Krishna defines as "real" anything that concerns the soul or the essential nature of human beings or of the universe. Anything that concerns a single physical body—including pleasure, pain, and death—is "unreal." In terms of the coming battle, Krishna dismisses as unreal the possibility that Arjuna might kill his cousins, since death is a transitory, physical phenomenon. The only thing that is real in this sense is Arjuna's dharma, or his duty to fulfill his particular role faithfully.

3. There are some key similarities between Hinduism's doctrine of immortality and traditional Judeo-Christian-Islamic beliefs. Like these other religions, Hinduism sees the body and the soul as fundamentally different and
believes that the soul continues to live after the body dies. However, while many religions believe that the soul passes from mortal life to an immortal state, Hinduism believes that it is continually recycled into new physical forms—a belief conveyed in Krishna’s analogy about leaving an old garment and putting on a new one.

4. The coming war opens the doors to heaven for Arjuna because he is a member of the *kshatriya*, or warrior, caste. According to the Hindu principle of *dharma*, people have an absolute responsibility to fulfill the expectations of their caste. As a warrior, Arjuna has an absolute duty to fight, so the Bharata war becomes a test of his willingness and ability to follow his dharma. Krishna does not address whether the war itself is just; rather, he insists that Arjuna’s participation in the war is both just and necessary.

5. The peace that Krishna speaks of comes from two sources, which correspond to the two major parts of his argument. First, Arjuna can find peace in a true understanding of the nature of reality. The violence, bloodshed, and death of the coming battle will not be real in the same way that the human soul is real. Nothing that happens in the battle will affect the eternal nature of the souls that take part in it. Second, Arjuna should be peaceful knowing that, by going to war, he is fulfilling the dharma of a warrior and, therefore, his sacred responsibility.
St. Thomas Aquinas
from *Summa Theologica*
(1265–1274)

*Those who wage war justly aim at peace.*

**Summary**

1–4: Four moral objections can be raised to participating in a war: 1) wars are specifically prohibited by the Bible, which says: “All that take the sword shall perish with the sword”; 2) wars are contrary to the biblical injunctions not to resist evil and not to seek revenge; 3) war is contrary to peace, which is a virtue, and anything that is contrary to a virtue is a sin; and 4) the Church refuses Christian burial to those who die in military-style tournaments, so war must be sinful.

5: However, Augustine points out that, in the Bible, soldiers were commanded to “do violence to no man . . . and be content with [their] pay.” Yet they were not commanded to give up being soldiers, thus proving that the profession of a soldier is not in and of itself immoral.

6–8: For a war to be considered just, three conditions must be met: it must be commanded by a legitimate authority, it must have a just cause and must attack only those who deserve to be attacked, and those participating in the war must have righteous intentions and must not be motivated by cruelty, revenge, lust for power, or other unworthy motives.

9: Reply to Objection 1: “Taking the sword” implies using it on one’s own authority rather than using it at the command of a sovereign. Those who use the sword (i.e., go to war) when commanded to do so by a legitimate authority are not guilty of sin.

10: Reply to Objection 2: We should be willing to refrain from violence, even if it means refusing to defend ourselves, but not if it means refusing to defend others. Sometimes, war is necessary for the common good.

11: Reply to Objection 3: Those who participate in just wars “aim at peace.” Therefore, participating in a war is not contrary to the ultimate objective of peace.

12: Reply to Objection 4: It is not military exercises that are prohibited by the Church, but “those which are inordinate and perilous, and end in slaying or plundering.”
SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Have students analyze either a contemporary or a historical military conflict to determine whether or not it meets Aquinas's three criteria for a just war.

2. Have students try to prove a proposition in Aquinas's style, beginning with a proposition, including three or four possible objections, supporting the proposition, and then countering the objections. Ask students to think of how they might incorporate these strategies in their own writing.

3. Ask students to provide their own definitions of a “just cause” that would fulfill Aquinas's second criterion. Ask them to think about, and to share, their own lists of factors that would justify the use of military force against another nation.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. The first two moral objections concern specific biblical texts, the third with the philosophical opposition between peace (a moral good) and war (its opposite), and the fourth with a practice of the Church in Aquinas's lifetime. To answer these objections, Aquinas first establishes that some wars are just, meaning that the amount of harm they do is less than the amount of good they do. If a war meets all three of his just war criteria, then a participant in the war is not guilty of sinful behavior. By raising and responding to possible objections, Aquinas conveys the sense that his argument has accounted for any possible objections and should therefore be considered exhaustive.

2. An example of such a syllogism, based on the third of his potential objections, would look like this:

   **Major Premise:** That which is contrary to virtue is sin.
   
   **Minor Premise:** Waging war is contrary to the virtue of peace.
   
   **Conclusion:** Therefore, waging war is a sin.

3. Aquinas does not believe that individuals have the right to take up arms and wage war on their own authority, since they can pursue justice through civil means. However, since the sovereign of a country is charged with protecting the people, the sovereign may declare a war against external enemies for the sake of the public good. For Aquinas, sovereign authorities were always kings or other nobles. However, in many contemporary societies, they might also belong to the legislative and judicial branches of government.
4. Aquinas quotes St. Augustine to list categories for a just war. These include wars that avenge wrongs and wars that punish states for “refusing to make amends for the wrongs inflicted by its subjects, or to restore what was seized unjustly.” Aquinas does not present this list as comprehensive, but he gives little other guidance of what constitutes a just cause except to say that those who are attacked must deserve to be punished.

5. In addressing the motives of those who participate in a war, Aquinas distinguishes between what a person does and why the person does it. Even a war that is declared by a legitimate authority for a just cause can be unjust if the participants are governed by impure motives, such as a love of killing, a lust for power, or a “cruel thirst for vengeance.” As these motives are sinful, any action that they lead to will be a sin, even if it would otherwise be considered a just use of force.

6. Students might reject Aquinas’s proofs in two ways. First, they might argue that he misquotes and misapplies the Bible and that there are strong declarations in favor of peace that Aquinas fails to quote. If he cites intentionally weak counterarguments, Aquinas is guilty of a straw-man argument and can be refuted from his own sources. Second, students might argue that biblical injunctions cannot be used to determine either the morality or the legality of a particular war. In this case, they would be refuting the grounds upon which Aquinas makes his argument.
Ibn Khaldūn

Methods of Waging War Practiced by the Various Nations

(1377)

Superiority in war is, as a rule, the result of hidden causes, not of external ones. The occurrence of opportunities as the result of hidden causes is what is meant by the word “luck.”

Summary

1–5: The four kinds of war are those between neighboring tribes and families, those caused by hostility, holy wars, and dynastic wars against disobedient subjects. The first two kinds of wars are unjust and the second two are just.

6–10: Wars are fought either by advancing in closed formation or by “the strategy of attack and withdrawal.” The first of these strategies is the more fierce and the more disciplined of the two; it requires that the line be kept solid and steady. Disrupting the order of the line leads to defeat and is therefore a great sin.

11: Ali (Mohammed’s son-in-law) advised his men, “Straighten out your lines like a strongly constructed building.”

12–13: Victory in war is never assured. Even a commander with superior forces and equipment can lose because of trickery or superior strategy by an opposing commander or because of “celestial matters” that neither side can control. Factors such as numbers, equipment, and tactics are “external causes,” while trickery and hidden feelings of the soldiers are “hidden causes.”

14–15: At-Turtušī (another Arab writer) claims, incorrectly, that superior numbers of exceptional soldiers will produce victory. His assertion underestimates the importance of hidden causes. Ultimately, God has the power to grant victory to the side he favors.

Suggestions for Class Discussion

1. Have students apply Ibn Khaldūn’s notion of “hidden causes” to a recent military engagement or a historical battle that they may be familiar with—such as America’s experience in Vietnam.

2. Ask students to research the first Muslim conquests (632–732 CE), during which most of the events that Ibn Khaldūn analyzes occurred. Ask them how
well Ibn Khaldūn's theories explain the phenomenal success of Arabic forces during Islam's first century.

**Understanding the Text**

1. *The Muqaddimah*, or “The Introduction,” was conceived as an introduction to history. As such, it is concerned less with the events of history than with the forces that drive historical change. Given the role that warfare plays in the shaping of historical events, Ibn Khaldūn felt that understanding the basis of victory or defeat in war was vital to understanding the movement of history. Other Muslim writers had attributed victory in war to superior forces or superior tactics, but Ibn Khaldūn believed that intangible, hidden causes had to be factored in, making the results of any battle at least partly dependent on luck or divine will.

2. Unjust wars include wars of conquest between neighboring tribes and wars that are caused by hostilities between different parties. Just wars include holy wars (defensive wars or wars to protect Islam) and wars to punish secessionist states or disobedient subjects.

3. War can be waged in closed formation or by a strategy of attack and withdrawal. Ibn Khaldūn favors the war of close formation, which is spoken of in the Quran and which requires a disciplined effort on soldier's part. Ibn Khaldūn associates the military discipline necessary to fight in a closed formation with the moral discipline required of Muslims.

4. External causes are those that can be seen and quantified, including the size of the forces, the condition of the equipment, the level of military technology, and the appropriateness of the tactics. Hidden causes which cannot be seen or evaluated, include human trickery, the psychological state of the soldiers, and divine will.

5. At-Ṭurṭūshî believed that military victory could be assured by superior numbers or by a larger number of well-trained knights. Ibn Khaldūn asserts that superiority in numbers is an external cause that can always be overcome by hidden causes, such as the internal unity of the respective forces.
Eugène Delacroix

*Liberty Leading the People*

(1830)

A painting by a nineteenth-century French artist celebrates the French Revolution.

**Summary**

*Liberty Leading the People* is notable for the contrast between the intense realism of its artistic style and the mythic/allegorical nature of its subject. The central image of *Liberty Leading the People* is the allegorical figure “Liberty” marching through a battlefield with a musket in one hand and a flag in the other. The portrayal of Liberty is complex. On the one hand, she is painted in the mode of a mythological goddess with exposed breasts and a classical profile. On the other hand, she is presented as a strong, patriotic French citizen willing to take up arms and defend in battle the principle of liberty.

The painting’s portrayal of warfare is equally complex. On the one hand, Delacroix provides a realistic depiction of war’s horrors. The dead bodies in the painting’s foreground are realistically drawn and show that, in war, death comes to people from all walks of life. On the other hand, the death and destruction are presented as purposeful, as they provide a platform for Liberty’s advance and, allegorically, the progress of the French people from tyranny to freedom.

**Suggestions for Class Discussion**

1. Ask students to compare the image of Liberty in the painting with the Statue of Liberty. Have them discuss the similarities between these two allegories of freedom and the possible reasons that, in each case, the figure personifying liberty is female.

2. Have students discuss the images of war and destruction in the painting. What does it mean for violence and bloodshed to accompany a war for freedom?

**Understanding the Text**

1. *Liberty Leading the People* is an allegorical painting with a realistic style. The allegory consists of the central figure of the painting, Liberty—an abstract
concept portrayed as a woman. But the context in which this allegorical representation occurs is entirely realistic. The landscape, the human figures, and the dead bodies in the foreground are realistic images of violence and war.

2. The representation of liberty as a woman traces back to the Roman goddess Libertas, whose image Delacroix invokes in this painting. Her portrayal as a woman throughout history suggests liberty's beauty and desirability. It also suggests a maternal role: that liberty can give birth to industry and accomplishment. By depicting a seminude Liberty, Delacroix emphasizes all of these feminine qualities and, at the same time, suggests that Liberty is fundamentally beautiful—it does not require ornamentation that obscures its natural beauty.

3. The rifle represents war, and the flag represents freedom. By placing these two symbols in Liberty's hands, Delacroix suggests that freedom and liberty require the willingness to fight.

4. People from several social classes are represented in the painting. The man in the top hat to the right of Liberty is middle-class, while the man to his immediate right is probably a peasant. This same discrepancy appears among the dead bodies in the foreground. These images suggest that all classes have a stake in liberty.

5. The dead bodies show the real consequences of war. Without these bodies, Liberty Leading the People would have depicted warfare as glorious and honorable. By including these corpses, Delacroix reminds us that, no matter how necessary and how important, war is a terrible thing that requires many people to make the ultimate sacrifice.
Summary

1: The following study will examine the different elements of war, keeping in mind the relationship of those elements to the whole.

2–3: This study will not use complicated definitions of war. War is simply “an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.”

4: The “self-imposed restrictions” of international law do nothing to alter the essential nature of war, which is to compel the enemy to obey our will. Whatever the ultimate object of a war, the immediate object is always to disarm the enemy and make resistance impossible.

5–6: Those who think that it is possible, and therefore desirable, to disarm an enemy without bloodshed commit a serious error. In a war, the side that pursues its objective the most forcefully will win. Those who try to soften the horrors of war act against their own interests.

7: Civilized nations fight less viciously than savage tribes, as the result of social conventions within those nations. These conventions of moderation meet certain social and political objectives of the nations involved, but they do not suggest that any principle of moderation is inherent in the act of war.

8: People can be led to war by instinctive hostility and by hostile intentions. While the latter is always present in the former (instinctive hostility always includes hostile intentions), the former is not always present in the latter (it is conceivable to have hostile intentions toward a group of people for whom you feel no inherent hostility).

9–10: Nonetheless, even in the wars of civilized nations, instinctive hostilities are often involved. If this were not the case, war would not need to involve actual combat. It could simply be an algebraic equation among nations. The feelings of the participants are part of the equation.

11–12: If civilized nations do not engage in the barbarous practices of savage tribes, it is not because they are more intelligent or more moral, but because they have dis-
covered more effective ways to impose their will upon their enemies. The progress of civilization does not affect the fundamental nature of war.

13–14: The immediate objective in all acts of warfare is to place the enemy in a worse situation through violence than he would be placed in through submission to our will. This requires either disarmament or the threat of disarmament. If the enemy is not defeated, he may be victorious.

15: An enemy can be defeated through two factors: the sum of available means—such as soldiers, weapons, technology, etc.—and the strength of the Will, which cannot be determined exactly but can be estimated by examining the strengths of the motives.

16–21: In the abstract, it is easy to imagine military strategy as an absolute act that is always pushed to logical extremes. Such abstract reasoning is appropriate only if the particular war is an isolated act, that war can be solved by a single solution or multiple simultaneous solutions, and the facts of that war contain within themselves a final, absolute solution.

22: War is never an isolated act. It is always situated within a context of other events.

23–32: Wars are never single, instantaneous actions that involve all the resources that the different parties possess. Rather, they are drawn-out conflicts in which some assets are mobilized and some are not. Therefore, wars do not resolve themselves into single, decisive solutions or even complementary simultaneous solutions.

33: The results of a war are not absolute. The balance of power after the war is never permanent, and whatever concessions are made by the defeated party can be rejected at a future time.

34–35: Because no war ever meets the conditions that would be required for abstract theories to be valid, it is impossible to make exact predictions about the outcomes of wars. Participants in a war must deal in probabilities and estimations.

36–39: It is impossible to separate the military actions that occur in a war with the political objectives behind the war. The political objectives determine how much of its resources a country will commit to a war, and it determines the will that individual soldiers have to fight. If the military objectives and political objectives are identical (such as in the conquest of a territory), then the strength of the military action will be tied to the political will.

40–42: Because war involves the calculation of probabilities and an element of chance, it can be described as a “game.” War is a game both objectively (at the level of armies, equipment, and strategy) and subjectively (at the level of the thoughts and feelings of the individual soldiers).

43–44: Our minds are “attracted by uncertainty” in avenues of exploration. Thus, the tradition of military theory that attempts to offer certainty and guarantees—in the form of absolute rules—runs counter to human nature. Though rules can be useful, they must be flexible enough to account for variation, diversity, and chance.
War is an extremely serious subject. It is always part of a political context. In reality, war is not an extreme, theoretical enterprise. It is an interplay between different forces acting with different intensities for different motivations. Though it is part of a political context, it does not completely depend on that context. Once a war begins, the military objectives and the political objectives interact with each other dialectically.

War is a continuation of policy by other means.

Suggestions for Class Discussion

1. Ask students whether they agree with Clausewitz’s point that those advocating peaceful disarmament during a war are committing a disastrous mistake. Ask them what they believe the role of peacemakers is during a time of armed conflict.

2. Have students examine a recent or historical military action and identify the political objectives and the military objectives. Ask students which set was most important to the conduct of the war. Discuss how political and military objectives interacted throughout the conflict.

3. Discuss the hostility that Clausewitz exhibits toward abstract theory of war and military strategy. Discuss the difference between the theoretical world and the “real world” in other areas. Ask students to give examples of theoretical understandings having been inadequate to predict behavior.

Understanding the Text

1. Clausewitz argues that when two forces are involved in a war, the side that pursues its military objectives the most forcefully has the greatest chance of victory. Those who pursue those objectives with less fervor—even if motivated by benevolence and humanity—stand to be defeated by those without the same sense of virtue. Clausewitz believed that rules for warfare were possible, but that they were ultimately deceptive since they could be enforced only by the use or threat of force. Nations with enough power to defeat other nations in a war cannot be compelled by those same nations to observe international laws.

2. Weapons with the potential to completely annihilate an enemy may change some of the premises that Clausewitz’s work is based on. Such total destruction represents the kind of absolute, permanent solution that Clausewitz believes to be impossible. That in many potential conflicts both sides possess such weapons also means that total war—a war in which the participants use all means at their disposal to accomplish their objectives—has a higher cost to all sides than most would be willing to accept. These
technological factors must be taken into account when applying Clausewitz's theories to contemporary events.

3. Wars occur for reasons. The reasons for war generally involve such things as domestic politics, foreign alliances, economic interests, religious intolerance, etc. All of these factors have histories and complications of their own, and the ability of a country to prosecute a military action will depend on all of these factors.

4. Clausewitz's statement that a war is never absolute means that any solution to a war can be overturned at a later time as balances of power shift. Because the social, cultural, political, and economic forces responsible for warfare are constantly fluctuating, the results of a war can never be completely settled. A possible exception to this rule may be the case of a war of total annihilation (see question #2) in which all members of the defeated side are killed. However, even in this case, the position of the winning side can never be fully guaranteed. Consider, for example, two recent conflicts involving American troops. The Korean War officially ended in 1953, but the confrontation between North Korea and South Korea—and between North Korea and the United Stats—continued throughout the Cold War and remains dangerous even today. The American invasion of Iraq, similarly, “ended” with the fall of Sadaam Hussein’s government in 2003; however, American military presence in Iraq was required long after the achieving of the initial military goal because, as Clausewitz says, “the result of a war is never absolute.”

5. The military objective of a war is to disarm the opponent. The political objective can vary widely. In one sense, the political objective is more important than the military one, since without the political objective there would be no need for a military action. However, neither the political nor the military objective is absolute. They interact dialectically with each other. The strength with which a military objective is pursued depends on the political objective being pursued, and the shape of the political objective depends on what is militarily possible.

6. War is a game because it is a rule-governed enterprise with an element of chance. All of its factors cannot be known or properly understood, nor can its different elements be controlled enough to allow for completely accurate predictions.

7. Clausewitz constructs an ethos of knowledge and seriousness. His position as a Prussian general lends credibility to his words. Many readers have found his matter-of-fact discussions of violence and bloodshed off-putting. He is careful, however, to focus on the reality of war rather than on abstract theories and calculations that have no application in the real world, an approach that many readers find honest and refreshing.
Pablo Picasso

Guernica

(1937)

A cubist painting portrays the 1937 bombing of a Basque town in northern Spain.

Summary

*Guernica* is a challenging work of art that, like other cubist paintings, incorporates multiple visual perspectives into a single image. The painting combines a black-and-white style that mirrors the conventions of a realistic newspaper photograph with a series of tortured, disproportionate images designed to portray the horror and senselessness of the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica. Human and animal figures mix indiscriminately in the painting, including a bull with human characteristics that invokes the Greek myth of the Minotaur.

The painting can be profitably examined for the total impression that it conveys. But its individual components can also be analyzed separately. The bull, the woman holding a dead child, the dead man holding a broken sword, the twisted body of a horse, the disembodied head, the woman screaming on the right side of the panel, and the arm holding a candle can all be examined as parts that contribute to the overall whole.

Suggestions for Class Discussion

1. Read the following quotation by Picasso about *Guernica* and have students interpret the symbolism of the various images in the painting: "It isn’t up to the painter to define the symbols. Otherwise it would be better if he wrote them out in so many words! The public who look at the picture must interpret the symbols as they understand them."

2. Ask students what the painting’s fragmented nature might suggest about the subject. How might Picasso be using artistic form to create feelings or emotions that are essential to the message he is trying to convey?

3. Have students compare *Guernica* with a photographic portrayal of suffering during war, such as one of the realistic photographs taken during the Vietnam War. Have the students evaluate the differences between artistic and photographic representations of war.
1. A quick glance at *Guernica* reveals its images of pain and death. The figures are fragmented and in obvious pain. The title of the painting makes the subject very clear. Student responses to the overall emotional impact of the painting will vary, but should include pain, horror, confusion, and loss. The cubist style of the painting contributes to these emotions as does the choice of human and animal subjects, the facial expressions of the subjects, and the monotone color composition, which may suggest the barrenness and desolation of the landscape.

2. The agonized women frame the picture on two sides. One of them holds a dead baby, and the other one raises her hands in what may be religious supplication. That both of their heads face the sky at nearly perfect right angles may refer to the bombs dropping from the sky, but it may also suggest that they are looking to God for deliverance.

3. Animals were killed as randomly as humans in the Nazi carpet bombing of Guernica, so this element of the painting includes an element of historical truth. It also has mythological significance in the figure of the bull, whose human characteristics suggest the Minotaur of Greek mythology. Bulls and bullfighting are also important to Spanish culture, just as horses are important to military culture throughout Europe. By portraying human beings and animals suffering together equally, Picasso suggests that Franco and Hitler had treated human beings as animals.

4. One of the founders of cubism, Picasso believed that a single perspective or point of view could not capture the complexity of a subject. Most of the figures in the painting, therefore, are presented simultaneously from different points of view. The depiction of the bull, for example, combines a side view and a frontal view into a single image. The fragmented and disproportionate images in Picasso's painting are often seen as an attempt to portray the fragmented nature of modern life in general. In *Guernica*, this modern fragmentation combines with Picasso’s sense of the absurdity of the bombing of Guernica and the disproportionate suffering borne by the common people to create figures whose fragmentation and lack of proportion mirror their subject matter.

5. The broken sword at the bottom of the painting is a conventional symbol for the cessation of hostilities. The flower growing out of it suggests that beauty can grow out of the horrors of warfare or that war can be turned into art.

6. Student answers will vary as to what exactly Picasso wanted to communicate, but answers may include feelings of horror, sadness, desperation, and confusion. The facial expressions are of sheer terror, confusion, pain, and
anguish. They do not convey any understanding of the global forces behind war, nor do they suggest any kind of resistance to the aggressors. They do not even show the kind of sadness or resignation of people dying for things that they can comprehend, such as honor, glory, or the hope of a better world for their children.

7. The lamp and the candle shed light on the suffering portrayed in the painting. They duplicate, in one sense, the painting’s objective: to shed light on the massacre of Basque civilians by Hitler and Franco. On a deeper level, the painting sheds light on war itself, rejecting the idea that there is honor and glory in battle and presenting, instead, the suffering caused by war as purposeless and fundamentally irrational.
Margaret Mead

Warfare: An Invention—Not a Biological Necessity
(1940)

Warfare is just an invention known to the majority of human societies by which they permit their young men either to accumulate prestige or avenge their honour or acquire loot or wives or slaves or sago lands or cattle or appease the blood lust of their gods or the restless souls of the recently dead.

Summary

1–2: Those who think seriously about war tend to see it in one of three ways: as the playing out of human beings’ natural aggressiveness, which can be redirected in less harmful ways but never totally eliminated; as an inevitable result of the historical forces, such as class struggle and the competition for land; and as a middle ground between the first two positions, holding that human beings are inherently aggressive and that society gives us constant grounds to manifest this aggression through warfare.

3: I would like to propose another way of looking at war. Warfare, or “organized conflict between two groups as groups,” is an invention that, like cooking food, trial by jury, or burial of the dead, has not always existed in human cultures.

4: Some societies, such as the Lepchas of Sikkim and the Eskimos, even today have no concept of organized warfare. While the Lepchas are peaceful and, some might argue, have no cause to go to war, the Eskimos are violent and quarrelsome. While they often fight and kill each other, they have no organized conflict between groups.

5–7: Eskimos have no concept of warfare because, arguably, their society is relatively primitive and war is a product of advanced social development. However, similarly undeveloped people such as the Andaman Pygmies and the Australian aborigines have fully developed notions of warfare.

8–9: Discussing the causes of war gives an incomplete picture unless it is recognized that people can go to war only if their culture gives them an understanding of war to begin with. If people have no concept of organized conflict then, while they may be violent, they cannot go to war. Though conflicts occur in all societies, the ways that people resolve those conflicts are defined by their cultures.

10: Some may say that warfare is an invention that meets the needs of certain types of people, thus making it effectively inevitable. But an examination of primitive peo-
people shows that this might not be the case. In societies where warfare is necessary for honor, glory, and mate selection, young people go to war. In societies where mate selection is based on artistic creation, the same types of young people are steered into creative endeavors.

11: All of the skills and character traits that cultures value in warriors can be displayed in other venues—if the society defines those venues for the individual. Warfare is simply a very old, very widespread invention that is not made inevitable by any cultural propensities or individual personality types.

12: Even though warfare is only an invention, it is an extremely persistent one that has now been nearly universally adopted. Once something is invented, it cannot be uninvented, and, as long as it meets society’s needs, it will persist.

13–14: In the past, inventions have been abandoned only when they were replaced by better inventions, as the jury system replaced trial by ordeal and new innovations are now replacing the jury system. War will be replaced only when people believe that a better invention is possible.

Suggestions for Class Discussion

1. Ask students to discuss some of the social inventions (other than war) that Mead mentions, such as jury trials, marriage, writing, and burial. What alternatives to these practices can students imagine? Are any types of social arrangement inherent in human nature?

2. Have students discuss ways other than organized warfare that conflict between nations might be addressed. Ask them what kinds of social inventions might fulfill Mead’s injunction to imagine a better invention than war.

Understanding the Text

1. Mead does not necessarily reject the assumption that human beings are inherently aggressive or competitive, but she rejects the assumption that this aspect of human nature will inevitably lead to armed conflict between groups. To support her point, Mead gives examples of cultures such as the North American Eskimos, who display violent traits in their interpersonal relationships but do not have any concept of organized warfare.

2. With each of these examples, Mead seeks to prove one particular part of her argument. The Eskimos and the Lepchas have no concepts of organized warfare. But their cultures are very different. The Lepchas are peaceful, and the Eskimos are contentious. That both cultures have no concept of war refutes the idea that war is universal; that the Eskimos have all the aggres-
sive tendencies that we would describe as “warlike” shows that there is not necessarily a connection between aggressive tendencies and warfare. The example of the Andaman and Australian tribes—who are very primitive and have complex notions of war—shows that warfare is not a consequence of higher cultural development. Those societies that possess knowledge of war will wage war—and those societies that do not possess such knowledge will not wage war—regardless of their cultural traits or level of development.

3. The most important determinant in whether a civilization will wage war is its understanding of warfare. No matter what their natural tendencies may be, people can engage in only actions that their culture has some understanding of. If a culture has no notion of marriage or writing or burial of the dead, then each of these actions is impossible to members of that culture. The same holds true for warfare. Cultures who have a concept of war will eventually go to war. Cultures that do not have such a concept may have all of the same tendencies as cultures who do, but they will never wage war.

4. An invention, in Mead’s terms, is a social arrangement that was conceived of and implemented at some point in human development. Once something is invented, it can be transmitted from culture to culture. An invention endures as long as it serves, or is perceived to serve, a social function. War has traditionally been viewed as an inevitable outgrowth of human aggression and competitiveness. Seeing it as an invention removes the sense of inevitability surrounding war and makes it possible to imagine a society in which it did not exist. This, for Mead, is the first step in eliminating it.
George Orwell

*Pacifism and the War*

(1942)

*If Mr. Savage and others imagine that one can somehow “overcome” the German army by lying on one’s back, let them go on imagining it, but let them also wonder occasionally whether this is not an illusion due to security, too much money and a simple ignorance of the way in which things actually happen.*

**Summary**

1: Pacifism is “objectively pro-Fascist” because any action that hampers the war effort of one party in a conflict aids the other side. For this reason, pacifism is punishable by death in Germany and Japan. Pacifist arguments are effective only in countries that protect freedom of speech and opinion. Therefore, they help and support totalitarian regimes.

2: The “moral force” advocated by proponents of nonviolent resistance will never deter totalitarian governments, who recognize only physical force. Those who criticize the allies for their fight against fascism have a “marked tendency to be fascinated by the success and power of Nazism.”

3: Only the total military defeat of the Axis powers will bring stability to both the literary cultures and the everyday lives of people in occupied countries.

4–8: English pacifists are intellectually dishonest in their statements that they oppose fascism but also oppose the only methods capable of stopping its spread. Those who make this argument are guilty of “peace propaganda” that is just as deceptive as war propaganda. Disseminators of this propaganda exaggerate the similarities between England and fascist countries as a result of the war, ignore the prewar abuses of fascist countries, ignore the fact that fascism is generally supported by the upper classes, and refuse to mention that Communist forces in the Soviet Union and China are actively engaged in the war on fascism.

9: In response to personal attacks against me in previous letters, I answer that while I did serve in the British police in India, I gave up the job and am opposed to imperialism; I affiliated with the Trotskyites in Spain, and frequently disagreed with them, but Trotskyites are neither fascists nor pacifists and have no bearing on this discussion; and I, like many other distinguished British writers and Indian intellectuals, take part in British broadcasts against fascism in India, not in a desire to deceive the...
Indian people, but because we understand that a fascist victory in England would end any chance of independence for India.

10: Throughout my career, I have attacked what I see as intellectual cliques in Britain—the “Catholic gang,” the “Stalinist gang,” and the “present pacifist gang.” Nonetheless, I would never lump the members of these cliques together. The current pacifist intellectuals are engaged in a naïve and intellectually dishonest propaganda movement.

**Suggestions for Class Discussion**

1. Ask students to agree or disagree with Orwell’s premise that during a war, any talk of pacifism aids the enemy. Is it possible to maintain a pacifist position without tacitly supporting evil?

2. Ask students if Orwell’s arguments hold true for something like the war on terrorism. Would Orwell argue that those who oppose violent conflicts with terrorists are pro-terrorist?

**Understanding the Text**

1. Several answers to this question are possible. As Orwell is responding to three letters by people who have attacked him and his position, his arguments are at least partially directed against a hostile audience. However, since he is writing a letter to an American magazine (*Partisan Review*) about a controversy that most Americans do not understand, he is also providing information to an audience that does not know enough to make up its mind.

2. Orwell insists that during World War II the Allies and the Axis powers were engaged in an absolute struggle in which anything that helped one side hurt the other and anything that failed to hurt one side helped the other. Any refusal to fight the enemy, he believed, helped that enemy. Therefore, pacifist beliefs among the Allies directly helped the Axis war effort.

3. In the same way that pacifism in England was objectively profascist, pacifism in Germany and Japan was objectively antifascist (since pacifism equals, practically speaking, support for the enemy). Orwell suggests that the Axis powers fully understood this and forbade pacifist statements among their own people and encouraged them among their enemies.

4. Moral force, or the force brought to bear in movements of passive resistance such as those of Mahatma Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King Jr.
in the United States, requires that the opponent recognize the legitimacy of the arguments or can be moved to action through the force of public opinion. According to Orwell, the fascist powers in World War II were immune to moral force because the very nature of fascist government cannot accept moral arguments by outsiders. For Orwell, World War II could not be solved through good-faith negotiation on both sides, but had to end in the total defeat of one side or the other.

5. The peace propagandists that Orwell refers to overemphasize the faults of the Allies and cover up any discussion of the atrocities committed by the fascist states. They also selectively present information about the war. These same techniques are used by war propagandists to achieve the opposite end. Orwell believed that propagandists of all kinds create false comparisons by exaggerating either similarities or differences to suit their needs (war propaganda exaggerated the differences between the Germans and the English, while peace propaganda exaggerated the similarities between English leaders and Hitler). He also believed that propagandists choose their facts selectively and ignore substantial pieces of evidence that weaken their claims.

6. Orwell claims that the peace movement wants to portray World War II as a struggle of fascism against military-industrial capitalism as represented by the United States and Great Britain. Peace activists at this time often identified themselves as Marxists and expressed solidarity with the working people against democratic capitalism. This formulation ignores the fact that the Soviet Union, the world's bastion of Communism, had been attacked by Germany, and that the Communists in China, led by Mao Tse-tung, had suspended the civil war against nationalist forces to fight the Japanese.

7. The pacifist letter-writers that Orwell was responding to made three accusations against him: that he had been a member of the imperial police force in India and was therefore implicated in British imperialism, that he had been affiliated with Trotskyite forces in Spain and therefore had a political agenda to push, and that he had participated in anti-fascist BBC broadcasts in India and was therefore a tool of the British government. Orwell's defenses against these charges are made especially necessary by the fact that he is writing for an American audience that knows very little about him. Students may have different opinions on the effectiveness of his answers, but he does provide detailed rebuttals of each argument leveled against him.
Close to one year after the War Against Terror was officially flagged off in the ruins of Afghanistan, freedoms are being curtailed in country after country in the name of protecting freedom.

Summary

1–4: The major theme of what I write is “the relationship between power and powerlessness.” In the current environment, I find myself thinking about the relationship between the citizen and the state.

5–12: In India, those who question the government’s programs are labeled “anti-national.” In the world, those who criticize the U.S. government are labeled anti-American. Neither term is accurate, as it implies opposition to all the people of a nation rather than to a specific set of government policies. It is irrational to be anti-American or anti-Indian, but it is also irrational for those in power to use these labels on anyone who disagrees with them.

13: The U.S. government’s post–September 11 rhetoric is intentionally false and misleading. Its use of feminist principles to justify attacking the Taliban is disingenuous, as many of its allies are just as hostile to women.

14–15: The grief that America feels over the September 11 bombings is real, but starting another war against Iraq desecrates the memories of those that have died.

16–21: Along with being the anniversary of an American tragedy, September 11 is also the anniversary of the overthrow of Salvador Allende’s government in Chile by an American-backed coup, followed by a period of brutal slayings by the new regime.

22–23: U.S.-backed regimes throughout Latin America have killed and tortured hundreds of thousands of people, often with the tacit or overt support of the American government. Similar actions have occurred in Asia and Africa. Many Septembers have gone by in these countries with people being slaughtered with America’s consent.

24–34: September 11, 1922, is also the date of the British government’s first mandate in favor of a Jewish state in Israel, setting in motion the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that continues to this day with the full support of the American government.

35–37: September 11 is also the anniversary of the first President Bush’s speech to Congress announcing his intention to go to war in Iraq. Bush correctly stated that
Saddam Hussein was a cruel tyrant, but for years Hussein enjoyed the support of the American government—including support for developing chemical and biological weapons. Turkey, which also slaughters its own people, is currently one of America’s closest allies.

38–43: America went to war with Saddam Hussein not because of his cruelty, but because he invaded Kuwait without its permission. American-led troops killed thousands of Iraqis during the war and hundreds of thousands afterward with sanctions. Now that all of this destruction has failed to dislodge Hussein, George W. Bush has marshaled American public opinion to support a second invasion of Iraq on the dubious pretense that it has weapons of mass destruction.

44–49: America has preached peace to other nations, including India and Pakistan, but does not follow this principle itself. The wars in Iraq are largely motivated by financial concerns and oil interests. American military might is the “hidden fist” that drives American economic prosperity. The current Iraq war has exposed that hidden fist to the world.

50–52: The current global economy has undermined democracy by placing corporate interests first as the number of poor people in the world grows dramatically larger. In India, economically motivated projects are forcing people off of their land, out of work, and into despair.

53–54: The notion that free markets break down national barriers is false. What they undermine is popular democracy, especially in developing countries, where corporate interests can easily force their will on vulnerable populations.

55–56: Since the beginning of the American-led war on terror, civil liberties are being curtailed throughout the world and “all kinds of dissent are being defined as ‘terrorism.’” At the same time, corporate interests are consuming natural and human resources throughout the globe.

57: Donald Rumsfeld’s argument that the war on terror protects the American way of life is shortsighted, as the American way of life is itself disastrous for the rest of the world because of the country’s unbridled consumption.

58–60: Currently, large corporations and secret organizations are making decisions that affect almost everyone in the world. However, “power has a shelf life.” Just as Soviet communism failed because it was flawed, American-style capitalism is doomed to fail because of its flaws. “A world run by a handful of greedy bankers and CEOs who nobody elected can’t possibly last.”

**Suggestions for Class Discussion**

1. Have students discuss Roy’s position on America and American military and economic power. Ask students to construct arguments defending the American government from some of the statements that Roy makes.
2. Have students conduct research into some of the historical events and current events that Roy discusses, such as the Chilean coup of 1973, the Persian Gulf War of 1991, the British declaration on Palestine of 1922, and the Kargil war between India and Pakistan in 1999.

3. Have students discuss the metaphorical significance of “September” in Roy’s essay. Beyond the fact that the speech was given on the anniversary of the September 11 bombings, are any other concepts associated with September, or autumn, important to her essay?

**Understanding the Text**

1. Roy’s basic organizational strategy is to counter American anger and indignation over the September 11 bombings with examples of historical events that also occurred on September 11, in which America’s position led to the same kind of suffering in other countries that the World Trade Center bombings caused in the United States. These events—including the 1922 British declaration of intent to partition Palestine, the 1973 U.S.-backed coup in Chile, and President George H. W. Bush’s 1990 speech to Congress announcing his intention to invade Iraq—provide a framework that Roy uses to discuss America’s abuse of power in developing countries.

2. Roy argues that opposition to an entire country is foolish and unsupportable, since countries do not have inherent characteristics that can be opposed. She rejects the label “anti-American” and states that this label is often used to silence dissent and to set up an irrational “either/or” situation in which anyone who does not accept every pronouncement of the U.S. government is criticized for irrational opposition to all things American.

3. Roy argues that the fear and anger that Americans feel in the aftermath of the September 11 bombings are emotions that most of the world lives with on a daily basis. This is part of what she calls “the grief of history.” On many occasions, Roy says, the grief and anger have been caused by actions of the American government or American corporations.

4. By pointing to a series of historical events connected with September 11, Roy demonstrates that America is not alone in its grief. Though Roy could have chosen many events, and many dates, to illustrate her point, she focuses on the date of September 11 to highlight the self-centeredness of Americans who believe that this date is significant only to their suffering. The fact that the events that she discusses all involve America as an aggressor, rather than a victim, further underscores this point.

5. Roy states that military power has always been the “hidden fist” in the glove of America’s economic strength. By this, she means that the threat of mili-
tary intervention always underlies negotiations between American corporations and foreign governments and markets. On occasion, these military interventions become reality, as has happened twice in the Persian Gulf, which contains two-thirds of the world's oil reserves and, therefore, represents billions of dollars to American corporations. The current war on terror, then, is not unique; it simply reveals to the world the corporate interests behind America's military policies.

6. Roy criticizes India for its modernization policies that displace people in the name of progress. She has been particularly critical of efforts to build dams that flood populated valleys to create lakes. Her criticism of India is consistent with her belief that whole countries cannot be either criticized or supported with sweeping generalizations. She does not set up India as good and the United States as bad. Rather, she speaks against what she perceives as abuses of power wherever they occur.

7. Roy believes that the way of life prized by Americans requires Americans to consume a disproportionate share of the world's resources—such as energy, food, and land—while contributing disproportionately to the world's pollution. To sustain this lifestyle, she believes, American corporations engage in unfair, cruel, and environmentally unsound practices in the rest of the world. The great imbalance of power between America and other countries cannot be sustained. Her argument has political and economic implications. Politically, she believes that the American standard of living will become increasingly difficult to maintain as other countries become more and more hostile to American interests. Economically, she suggests that America (and the world) will simply run out of resources to consume at current rates.
Jean Bethke Elshtain  
*What Is a Just War?*  
(2003)

The world would have been much better off if the violence of particular regimes had been confronted on the battlefield earlier; fewer lives would have been lost over the long run.

**Summary**

1–2: The purpose of governments is to provide civic peace, or *tranquillitas ordinis*, to its citizens. Without this peace, it is impossible to exercise rights or freedoms or any of the other things that are so important to human beings, such as raising children, going to work, transacting business, and attending religious services.

3–4: Civic peace is different from the perfect peace that only God can promise. Such a peace requires that everyone be under one law, which is not the case in a pluralistic world. However, it is possible to achieve an imitation of this perfect peace in a society that is not regularly interrupted by violence.

5–6: When people live in fear, they become isolated and extreme. This is the world of all against all that Hobbes describes in *Leviathan* (p. 37).

7–8: The major reason for the existence of a state is to create the conditions necessary for *tranquillitas ordinis* to prevail. If a government does not do this, it cannot be considered legitimate. Governments exist to prevent people from doing the worst things they can do to each other.

9–10: Only someone who has experienced the horror of random violence can appreciate the urgency of a government’s duty to protect people from it. Governments must never lose sight of this. But citizens are not required, in the name of safety, to accept all government directives without questioning them. The people’s questioning is necessary to prevent the government from using illegitimate means in the name of safety.

11–12: After the September 11 attacks, Americans began to use the vocabulary of the just war tradition, which traces back to Augustine’s fourth-century work *The City of God*. The just war tradition attempts to grapple with the contradictions involved when Christians, who profess a gospel of peace, participate in a war.

13–14: A basic premise of the just war tradition is that “war can sometimes be an instrument of justice.” War can prevent, or correct, massive injustices that are worse than war. Many Christians inaccurately assume that the early Christian Church was
pacifist. But early Christian thinkers recognized that war could, on some occasions, be necessary to fulfilling their scriptural injunctions.

15–17: The early Christian Church frequently used martial metaphors and equated the followers of Christ with soldiers. In the New Testament, Jesus admonishes followers to be subject to civil governments, and Paul writes that civil societies have been established by God to benefit human beings. There is ample precedent, therefore, for Christians’ following established authorities in using force to address injustices.

18–20: Christians are not obligated to obey civil authority against the dictates of their own conscience (as in the demands of several Roman emperors to be worshipped as gods). But they are enjoined to contribute to civil peace even to the point of being judges. The work of a judge, like the work of a soldier, requires one to engage in factual and moral ambiguities, but it is necessary for the civic peace of the nation.

21: Since Augustine's time, the vocabulary of the just war tradition has been secularized and incorporated into the way that most of the world thinks about war.

22–24: In defining what kinds of wars are “just,” Augustine also defines what kinds are not permitted: wars of aggression and aggrandizement.” While peace is a general good, so is justice. Neither good is absolute. It is not true that violence never accomplishes worthy goals. Some forms of peace “violate norms of justice and do so egregiously.” Conversely, some acts of violence produce justice. As an example, consider the force used against Japan in World War II to deter that country’s manifestly unjust aggression in China and elsewhere in Asia. The force used to defeat this unjust society led not to more violence but to a strong industrial democracy with no wish to return to its prewar conditions.

25–26: Violence in warfare is tragic, but it is more tragic to permit great injustices. Just war theory insists that “the goods of settled social life cannot be achieved in the face of pervasive and unrelenting violence.” War is sometimes necessary to secure the conditions that allow civic peace to prevail.

27–30: The movie The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence, starring John Wayne, is a parable of the necessary use of force. In the movie, an outlaw named Liberty Valence terrorizes a small town and cowards the local authorities. John Wayne’s character, Tom Doniphon, accepts the necessity of killing Valence. The movie serves as “a parable on the use of force at the service of civic peace in the fog of an undeclared war.”

31: Absolute pacifism in the Christian tradition was limited to ascetics who withdrew from the world. Those who held leadership positions in civil societies knew that force was required in certain, limited circumstances.

32–35: Other than pacifism, the alternative to the just war tradition is the Machiavellian tradition of realpolitik, which holds that politics should be severed from ethics. Only power matters, which just war thinkers cannot accept. For pacifists, the most important concept is peace; for realists, it is power; and for just war thinkers, it is jus-
Just war thinking requires the rejection of easy solutions and a continual reevaluation of the amount of force necessary and allowable in the service of justice.

**36–37:** Force can be used in the service of Christian justice in a situation where one country is able to stop a campaign of genocide against another country. A war to protect a vulnerable country is an extension of the biblical injunction to “love thy neighbor.” According to Augustine, killing is not justifiable in self-defense, but it is justified in the defense of others.

**38:** The requirements of a just war are: the war must be authorized by a legitimate civil authority, it must be fought for a just cause, it must be entered into with the right intentions, and it must be a last resort. A fifth possible requirement from the just war tradition is that a nation entering a war must have a reasonable chance of being successful in its objectives.

**39:** The logic of just war thinking is different from the logic of crusades or of holy wars. Unlike the later kinds of religiously inspired warfare, just wars severely limit the means through which even the most righteous ends can be pursued.

**Suggestions for Class Discussion**

1. Ask students to create their own list of what makes a war just. If students argue that war is never appropriate, ask how they would deal with some of the incidents of peace without justice that Elshtain brings up.

2. Note that this essay comes from a book titled *A Just War against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World*. The overall objective of this book is to argue that the American-led war on terror is a just war. Ask students if they agree or disagree with this proposition.

3. Show clips of the movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*, which Elshtain uses as a major example, and use them as a springboard for discussion of how individuals and nations should deal with forces that disrupt the civic peace.

**Understanding the Text**

1. Elshtain builds her argument about the just use of force by quoting heavily from throughout the Christian tradition, appealing to an authority that many of her readers will accept. She also relies on contemporary philosophical arguments that appeal more to reason than to authority. Furthermore, she invokes a number of historical precedents to explain and justify her arguments, and she summarizes a popular film to illustrate her general point,
that force is often the only way to deal with injustice. The result is a single argument that can appeal to people with different values or belief systems.

2. According to Elshtain, the most basic responsibility of a government is to maintain the *tranquillitas ordinis*, or the civic peace. When the civic peace prevails, people are reasonably free from the fear of sudden, random violence and are not primarily motivated by fear for themselves and their families. Consequently, they can engage in commerce, religious worship, community organization, art, culture, and all the other social goods that Elshtain describes as the essence of what it means to be a human being.

3. The perfect peace of the kingdom of God—when swords will be beat into plowshares and the lion will lie down with the lamb—is not obtainable in the world today. Such a peace would require, at a minimum, that everybody in the world were under the same government, which is not the case. Practically, what this means is that both perfect peace and perfect justice are unobtainable in a world of imperfect human beings. The civic peace that Elshtain describes is a reasonable expectation of safety and protection, not an absolute guarantee.

4. Elshtain argues that the worst thing that can happen in a society is that the people, motivated by fear, will cease to cooperate with each other and will descend into an environment of all against all—the state that Thomas Hobbes (p. 37) describes as “the state of war.” Such a state of affairs is popularly known as “anarchy.” To prevent this from happening, government must protect people from internal and external threats so that they do not make the basic decisions of their lives based on fear.

5. In the Roman world, “peace” could be obtained by completely obliterating an enemy. Through this formulation, Elshtain argues that many situations feature the absence of war or open conflict but are neither just nor tolerable. If peace is defined simply as “the absence of war,” it does not offer any guarantee of justice, fairness, or even recognition of basic human rights.

6. Elshtain mentions the gulags, or prisons, where Stalin condemned millions of Russians to a slow death, and the acts of genocide perpetrated against the Jews and others in Germany during World War II and, afterwards, in places like Rwanda, Somalia, Yugoslavia, and the Kurdish region of Iraq.

7. According to Elshtain, war becomes an instrument of justice when a nation prevents or punishes a great injustice through a military intervention. In such a war, the amount of violence and suffering that the war prevents usually exceeds the amount of violence and suffering that it causes. Fighting for a just cause is a necessary characteristic of a just war, but it is not a sufficient one. The war must also be authorized by a legitimate civil authority, fought without any impure motives, and fought as a last resort.
8. A just war limits both the ends and the means of the participant. A just war requires a clearly defined, just cause and the sanction of an appropriate civil authority. It demands that the war be conducted in a way that protects non-combatants, and it allows only the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve the just objectives. A holy war, as Elshtain defines it, which includes a crusade, is simply a war fought under the auspices of religion. Those fighting such wars do not accept limits on either their ends or the means they use to achieve them.