War & *Peace*

Holy War

Length: 7 minutes

FIT FOR VIEWING by persons aged 15 YEARS OR MORE: contains violent images. Please warn your classes that they might find some of the images upsetting

TEACHERS

This film is in two parts:

{1} introduction {time code: 00:00 - 1:48}

{2} "Holy War" {time code: 1:48– 5:46}.

- ✓ **You might want to show this seven minute film all the way through and then play it again pausing between the two episodes.**

- ✓ **Before showing *War and Peace*, ask your class to bear in mind, as they watch it for the first time, possible answers to the following three questions - displayed on a flip chart:**

{1} What is the basic commandment? {1:58 - 2:03}

{2} According to the Bishop of Oxford, who flexed their muscles? {3:05 – 3: 36}

{3} How many people died during the Crusades? {4:07 – 4:15}

PUPILS

TASK 1

WRITE or SKETCH down the most memorable image or statement from *Holy War* that sticks in their mind.

SHOW a friend their image or statement and explain the reason why they chose it

DISCUSS what they consider to be the most important message of the film

EXCHANGE their findings with the rest of the class.

TASK 2

RECALL what they've just watched. If they were able to interview any ONE of the people appearing in *Holy War*, WHO would they most like to cross-examine?

WRITE DOWN the main question they would want to ask that person?

The people who appeared in *Holy War* were:

Students at Hereford Sixth Form College: Phil Greig; Toni Pettitt; Tim Daborn; Holly Doran; Emily Bentley-Leek; Gemma Budge; Jess Coombey, Alex Martin, Tom Baker and Jonathan Williams.

Adolf Hitler {1889-1945}: Fuhrer {leader} of German Nazi Party

Richard Harries: The Bishop of Oxford

Ronald Reagan: President of the United States of America, 1981 -1989

Voice of George W Bush: President of the United States of America, 2000 – 2008 {"This crusade is going to last a while….there will be no retreat"}.

Osama Bin Laden: Leader of Al Qaeda

DISCUSSION

Split up into six groups. Nominate a scribe from your group to take notes. You have 10 minutes to read and discuss the following statements before exchanging your group's ideas to the rest of the class:

- ❖ We cannot call ourselves civilized!

- ❖ Using physical violence reflects the fact that people don't use their minds!

- ❖ It is sometimes right to kill another human being if the greater good comes out of it, however innocent they may be!

- ❖ One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist!

HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS

Statements

Below are nine statements. READ THEM ALL and choose a statement you consider to be the most interesting. After you've made your choice, compare, contrast and share your chosen statement with TWO other people in your class. Be prepared to support your choice, with reasons.

Are there statements your friends have chosen that are different from yours? Argue the case for the importance of YOUR chosen statement, above theirs. Now exchange your views with the rest of your class.

Here are the statements:

1. "*Civilisation is a race between education and catastrophe*" {HG Wells {1866-1946}, author of *The War of the Worlds*}.

2. "*A 'terrorist' is a bomber without an air force*" {Placard at demonstration at British and USA invasion of Iraq, March 2003}

3. "*An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind*" {Mahatma Gandhi {1869-1948}, Pacifist leader}.

4. "*War is too big to put on screen*" {Donald Mcullen, Vietnam War photographer}.

5. "*Violence is the first refuge of the coward*" {Isaac Asimov {1920 – 1992}, fiction writer}.

6. "*Peace cannot be kept by force it can only be achieved through understanding*" {Albert Einstein {1879-1955}, physicist}.

7. "*We have guided missiles and misguided men*" {Dr Martin Luther King, {1929-1968}, Baptist Civil Rights Leader}.

8. "*The number of soldiers killed in the Great War is known…the number of ideals and dreams destroyed still remains unknown*" {Gustav Le Bon, writer}.

9. *"Violence is a lie and destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings.* {Pope John Paul II, 1920 – 2004}

GROUP WORK

Split up into groups of three/four. You have 10 minutes to read and discuss the following two pieces of writing. Nominate a scribe from your group to take notes and report your group's thoughts to the rest of the class.

1. "*Oh God, open all doors for me….God I lay myself in your hands. I ask with the light of your faith that has lit the whole world and lightened all darkness on this earth, to guide me*". Muhammad Atta used this prayer shortly before flying an aircraft into the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, killing nearly 3,000 innocent civilians in New York, an event that brought the devastation and violence that religious faith can cause, to the world's attention.

2. President George W Bush called the invasion of Iraq in 2003 "*this crusade*" shortly before launching a bombing campaign known as "*shock and awe*" on Iraq, described by the military as "*a simultaneous effect, rather like the nuclear weapons of Hiroshima, not taking days or weeks but minutes*". Estimates vary about the numbers of Iraqi civilians killed as General Tommy Franks, Commander of the US forces said: "*We don't do body counts*" when it comes to Iraqi civilians. However independent analysts believe that as many as one million people may have died since the invasion.

FOR TEACHERS

SOURCE MATERIAL FOR FURTHER WORK

Background to the Crusades

The series of western holy wars, the Crusades, lasted from 1095 until 1291 CE. The aim was to capture the sacred places in the Holy Land from the Muslims who lived there, so it was intended as a war to right wrongs done against Christianity. In November 1095, at a church council meeting in France - in what has been called one of the most successful speeches in history - the Pope of the time, Pope Urban II, urged the nobles and knights of Europe to go and free the Holy Land from the Saracens, as Muslims were often called and he absolved all who took part in the crusade of all their sins:

 "*Christ himself will be your leader ... Wear his cross as your badge. If you are killed your sins will be pardoned…When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God! Whoever shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God to that effect and shall offer himself to Him as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, shall wear the sign of the cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast.*" As Urban spoke, there was a great shout of "Deus le volt!" (God wills it!).

Knights welcomed heavenly salvation with their swords and all the volunteers sewed large crosses on their clothing.

If we look at the following quote by Pope Urban we get a sense that the crusades were launched as 'resource wars' – to help cope with an expanding European population. Pope Urban in 1095, on the eve of the First Crusade, wrote:

"For this land which you now inhabit, shut in on all sides by the sea and the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; it scarcely furnishes food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder and devour one another, that you wage wars, and that many among you perish in civil strife. Let hatred, therefore, depart from among you; let your quarrels end. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher; wrest that land from a wicked race, and subject it to yourselves."

This is one of the earliest expressions of what has come to be called the Malthusian theory of war, that wars are caused by expanding populations and limited resources. Thomas Malthus {1766 – 1834} wrote that populations always increase until they are limited by war, disease, or famine.

Background to the Muslim concept of *Jihad*

One of the responsibilities of a practicing Muslim is jihad, '*striving'* (to serve Allah), usually translated in the west as 'Holy War', which Muslims agree is a fair translation. All Muslims must constantly practice jihad to the best of their ability, especially coming to the aid of any fellow Muslim attacked for practicing Islam. Jihad, the defence of Islam, is regarded as just as much a primary duty of all sincere Muslims as prayer and fasting.

In the early years of the Islamic era, jihad was interpreted as the armed struggle against pagans and non-believers, and the followers of Muhammad swept out of Arabia to create an empire which eventually stretched from Spain to Indonesia. The fear created in Europe by the early successes of the armies of Islam still remains and consequently many view Islam as a religion of war and oppression, holding the Muslims responsible for the brutalities of the much later Crusades. However western propaganda against Islam - Islamophobia - is partly an attempt to divert attention away from the crimes of the western powers in their treatment of Muslims during the Crusades, when many atrocities were committed by 'Christian' armies.

The teaching of jihad in Islam is based on the teachings of the Qur'an - God's Revelation. The study of the Qur'an, proceeds from the outer literal meaning to the inner, spiritual meaning of the Revelation. The Qur'an teaches that the reason for our appearance in this world is to gain total knowledge of things; to become perfected as the 'Universal Man'; the purpose of the creation is for God to come to know Himself through the perfect instrument of knowledge which is the 'Universal Man'. God wished

to know Himself, to see His qualities - power, mercy, intelligence, and beauty - reflected in the Creation, so He created human beings as the instrument of His self-knowledge. Thus, through struggle (jihad) we become a mirror reflecting the Divine Names and Qualities, enabling God to fulfill the purpose of His Creation. The inner meaning of the Holy War is thus the struggle with our own evil and the victory over our own inner darkness.

The Script

Phil Greig: We say we're advanced and we're civilized but we spend so much more on killing than we do on living. So how come we call ourselves civilized when we're not?

Toni Pettitt: Using physical violence really does really reflect the fact that people don't use their minds.

Tim Daborn: If you just keep violence like as a threat behind it, it will be just a vicious cycle, and so it'll just keep going.

Holly Doran: The collateral damage, the massive civilian hurt that goes on, is just unacceptable.

Emily Bentley-Leek: I think war should be a last resort.

Gemma Budge: War should be avoided at all costs.

How valuable is an individual life?

Is it right to kill or maim another human being if I believe that something good will come out of it ………however innocent they may be?

Are there some things worth killing for….dying for?

How do we deal with evil?

Is war inevitable?

Can we bring about a world free of war?

Jess Coombey: Violence infringes the basic commandments that "Thou shall not kill".

Alex Martin: I find it baffling that people can go and fight in God's name or in the name of Allah and they're actually fighting for the same things on both sides.

Religions offer confusing messages concerning God and violence. On the one hand they teach of the need for peace and compassion, yet on the other hand sacred texts are full of images of a vengeful and violent God.

> "*And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword*"
> {The Old Testament}

Religion and war have gone hand in hand for a long time. Wars fought in the name of religion are called **Holy Wars -** declared by a religious leader with the promise of spiritual reward for those who take part. Armies go into battle believing that they have God on their side. The most famous holy wars, the Crusades, were fought from 1095 and 1291 CE, between Christian and Muslim forces in the Holy Land.

Richard Harries: "Islam spread very rapidly over one hundred and fifty and two hundred years, and conquered the very heartlands of what was once Christianity. The Islamic forces overrun these and people eventually became Muslims. It was four or five centuries later that the Christian West, particularly Europe and Northern France, suddenly started to flex its muscles and decide well its about time we had these countries, which were once Christian, back again".

At a meeting in France in November 1095 in what has been called one of the most successful speeches in history Pope Urban II urged Church leaders to go and fight the Saracens, as Muslims were often called, telling his rapt audience that it was the will of God.

After nearly two hundred years of bitter and bloody fighting between the so called Knights of Christ and the Muslims - who also believed that they had God on their side – there was huge loss of life – estimates vary from hundreds of thousands killed to upwards of a staggering five million.

As an example of how religion is used to justify war, the Crusades stand out in history and a collective memory and crusade mentality still colours both Christian and Islamic politics today.

Ronald Reagan: There is sin and evil in the world and we're enjoined by scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might.

George W Bush: This crusade is going to take awhile. There will be no retreat

Osama Bin Laden: All these crimes committed by the Americans are a declaration of war against Muslims. To kill the Americans and their allies, both civilian and military is the duty of every Muslim.

Tom Baker: One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist and I think it's important to remember this.

Toni Pettitt: It's all false strength and yet they can cause so much damage with it and they don't even think about the consequences.

Jonathan Reid: Who is worse the people who made the war in the first place or the people who refused to stop it?

War & Ethical Theory

AS/A2 studies

How do we address the ethical dilemmas involved in arguments for and against going to war in the twenty first century? Where do we look in order to discover if war and the deliberate killing of others can ever be morally justified?

In Western ethical thought there are broadly two approaches: {1} Deontological theories which hold that the rightness or wrongness of an act is determined by something other than consequences and {2} Teleological theories which hold that the rightness or wrongness of an act is understood by looking at the *consequences* of the action.

At the extreme of deontological theories it could be argued that possessing a just cause {e.g. the argument from righteousness} is a sufficient condition for pursuing *whatever means are necessary* to gain a victory or to punish an enemy.

At the extreme of consequentialism it could be argued that if victory is sought then *all methods should be employed* to ensure it's gained at a minimum of expense and time. Arguments from 'military necessity' are of this type: for example, to defeat Nazi Germany and Japan in World War Two, it was deemed necessary and ultimately morally acceptable to bomb civilian centres.

Whilst justifications for total warfare may be derived from both deontological and consequentialist perspectives, a less aggressive response than 'total warfare' or 'victory at all costs' can also result from these positions.

Consequentialists can argue that there are long-term benefits to having, for example, war conventions; so by fighting cleanly, both sides can be sure that the war does not escalate, thus reducing the probability of creating perpetual war - incessant wars of bloody revenge and counter-revenges.

Deontologists can also argue that the intrinsic value and dignity of any individual life means that certain spheres of life ought never to be targeted in war; e.g. hospitals, schools, a country's infrastructure and densely populated suburbs.

There *are* however difficulties with both ethical models as these sorts of responses may become at one extreme over restrictive and at other times vague or morally vacuous {"it is the right thing to do", to quote Tony Blair when asked to justify invading Iraq in 2003}.

Consequentialism is highly vulnerable to pressing military needs to adhere to any code of conduct in war - if more will be gained from breaking the rules than will be lost the consequentialist cannot but bow down to military necessity.

This has in certain circumstance led to the targeting of civilian areas {Dresden, 1942}; using munitions capable of harming innocent civilians {Iraq 1991}; torturing prisoners to extract intelligence information {Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan} in the name of military necessity or 'national security' and all violating international conventions on the use of torture

On the other hand deontological theories may produce an inflexible model that would restrain warriors' actions to the targeting of permissible targets only. In principle such a prescription is commendable, yet the nature of war is not so clean cut when for example military targets can be hidden amongst civilian centres or when the future success of the conflict may be at stake.

Kant and war

Kant argued that to be moral we have to imagine ourselves on the receiving end of other people's decisions and universalize from there: so "*act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law*". Kant argued that human beings have "an intrinsic worth", a "dignity'" which makes humankind valuable "above all price"; and humans can never be used as a means to an end: "Act so you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means also". According to Kant, possessing good intent constitutes the cornerstone of moral activity. However, possessing right intention raises an important question: *when does right intention separate itself from self-interest?*

A nation may possess just cause to defend an oppressed group, and may rightly argue that the proper intention is to secure their freedom, yet such a war may be deemed too expensive or too difficult to wage; i.e., it is not ultimately in their self-interest to fight the just war. On that account, some may demand that national interest is paramount: only if waging war on behalf of freedom is also complemented by the securing of economic or other military interests should a nation commit its troops. E.g. cynics might ask why the US and UK won't invade Zimbabwe currently run by a corrupt dictator {Mugabe} or didn't intervene in the horrific genocide in Rwanda in the 1990's when millions were macheted to death – there were no economic interests to be gained {unlike Iraq containing the 2nd largest oil reserves on the planet!}.

Kant also argued that morality rarely has anything to do with happiness and is all to do with Duty. Ordinary people are right, thought Kant, to believe that morality is essentially about sticking to a set of compulsory rules. However the idea that duty is important can be used to do the most awful things. The Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in his trial at Nuremburg quoted Kant's belief in the "fulfillment of duty". Kant himself - who believed that people are to be treated as ends in them selves not merely as means - would have been appalled.

However there is a side to Kantian morality to which the Nazis could claim a sort of adherence: the emphasis on obedience to rules for their own sake. For Kant, to act out of feelings of sympathy for others is act on a mere inclination rather than out of duty, and so to do something without moral worth. The Nazis produced a grim variant of this austere, self-enclosed morality.

While a utilitarian approach may argue that war and violent aggression are at certain times acceptable 'for the greater good', Kant on the other hand argued that any theories that *use people as a means to an end* are inherently wrong. However does this mean that if a state attacks another aggressively purely in order to secure "peace or justice or security", is it merely using that declaration of war as a means to an end?

Deontological theories can clash with consequentialist considerations: for example, if a war could be ended quicker and more effectively by breaching a convention then that convention should be breached. However Kantians would argue, that this maxim: "a state can breach a convention in order to achieve the goal of victory", if universalized would create global anarchy and undermine international law.

Kantians too would argue that the targeting of civilians or the use of certain weapons should be outlawed and absolutely prohibited, but consequentialists can focus on the benefits of breaking absolute prohibitions. For example, President Truman's motivation for bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic weapons - killing 250,000 {mostly civilians} instantly and maiming tens of thousands more - was based on the desire to avoid prolonged bloodshed in the war with Japan, when victory could be gained swiftly. If America, {supported by Britain} had not dropped the bomb supporters of the bombing maintain that the consequences for millions would have been even more dreadful as the war in the East prevailed and even escalated.

Principle of the sliding scale

An approach to war and ethics, and one that saddles the open-endedness of consequentialism and the absolutism of deontology, is offered by modern ethicist Michael Walzer who suggest a sliding scale principle. Whilst the rights of civilians and the traditional just war conventions {see **Film Two** in this series, **Just War**} are to be upheld, Walzer argues that in cases of a 'supreme emergency', such rights may be broached e.g. when Nazi Germany posed a threat to western civilization. However this approach has its pitfalls e.g. in the so called "war on terror" basic human rights have been violated in 'extraordinary renditions', in the flouting of international law at Guantanamo Bay and complicity in torture.

Deontological Pacifism

Deontologists argue that certain kinds of moral actions are good in them selves and claim that peace is a duty, to be categorically upheld. Pacifism here is held as a duty, it is incumbent on the pacifist never to aggress, use force, or support or engage in war against another. Duties are moral actions that are required or demanded in all pertinent circumstances.

There are however ethical problems with this approach – particularly the collision of duties: e.g. does the duty to respect others outweigh the duty to respect oneself? What if force is to be used to halt an aggressor who endangers the pacifist's life, or the life of an innocent? Regarding the pacifist s own life, it can be argued that he or she possesses no right of self-defence and must "turn the other cheek" - usually religious pacifists.

Deontological pacifists can claim that the right of others to life is of a higher order duty than the duty to intervene to save oneself. But that hinges upon a moral evaluation of the self compared to others, and it's not clear why others should accord a higher moral evaluation: for after all the self is in turn one amongst many others from a different subject's point of view.

The pacifist too, who claims that he has no duty to intervene in saving others treads a precarious moral path. Why should the moral life of the pacifist be morally more important than the life of the threatened innocent? For the sake of his own beliefs, could the pacifist consistently ignore the violence meted upon others? Yes, from two possible perspectives. The first is that the ideal of pacifism retains a supremacy over all other ideals and is not to be compromised. The second is that the life of the pacifist is morally superior to the life of the threatened innocent, even if that innocent happens to be a fellow absolute pacifist.

Consequentialist Pacifism

Other ethicists argue for pacifism on the basis of its beneficial consequences rather than any intrinsic notion of the good. These are called consequentialist pacifists who assert that the evils procured by violence, force, or war, far outweigh any of the good that may arise. For example, rule utilitarians claim that if certain evil consequences flow from particular actions, a blanket prohibition on such actions is morally required, which, in terms of the implications of the argument brings them close to the deontological position of an absolute prohibition of war and violence.

Classical utilitarianism and war

Actions are to be judged right or wrong solely by virtue of their consequences. Nothing else matters. Right actions are simply those that have the best consequences. In assessing consequences the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused. Everything else is irrelevant.

Thus right actions are those that produce the greatest balance of happiness over unhappiness. In calculating happiness or unhappiness, no one's happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else's.

This means that in order for a decision to go to war to be morally acceptable, it is not enough for it to produce much happiness for many people – it must also produce more happiness and less unhappiness overall than any alternative action would have produced. Alternatively, for an action to be wrong, it's not sufficient that it produces much unhappiness in many people, since maybe any action in that situation would have produced much pain. {Think of US President Truman's decision at the end of World War II to either drop the atomic bomb on Japan or let the war drag on – either way, many people die!!) In order for a decision to go to war to be wrong, there must be an alternative action which would have produced less unhappiness and/or more happiness. Despite the slogan, "the greatest good for the greatest number," it doesn't follow that an action is right just because it positively affects more people than the alternatives. We also need to know *how much* it affects them – what matters is not the number of people affected but the overall amount of happiness and unhappiness produced - an implementation of the hedonic calculus might help?.

We also come up against two fundamental criticism of utilitarianism:

{1} In addition to utility, there might well be various other considerations in determining whether actions are right, particularly justice and rights. Undoubtedly individual rights in the case of the victims of Hiroshima and justice for the innocents were trampled on merely because 'good results' were anticipated.

{2} British Prime Minister, Tony Blair in 2003, argued that the long term consequences of invading Iraq would produce more happiness {"peace, stability and security in the Middle East and the world" – to quote him} than unhappiness. Noble as these intentions seemed at the time, it is very difficult to calculate /predict long term consequences especially with something as unpredictable and inflammable as war, and this difficulty in predicting consequences is a serious problem for utilitarianism.

Act utilitarianism and war

Act-utilitarianism holds that each particular action is to be evaluated directly in terms of the utility principle. Act-utilitarianism judge a forcible intervention as morally justified when the state's military actions lead to victory at a minimum of expense and time. Thus, a humanitarian intervention can be considered to be just if the number of saved lives exceeds the number of those who die during fighting

Act utilitarianism and the principle of utility leads to the conclusion that we must only go to war in instances when other possibilities {diplomacy, sanctions} have

been exhausted and there is no other clear choice that will serve the welfare of the entire populace. Often war ends up destroying large numbers of people on both sides; however, hindsight tells us that if certain aggressors weren't stopped then they would surely have destroyed far more than the cumulative casualties and expenses of war. We cannot begin to imagine the cost of *not* fighting Nazism – slave camps, genocide, state control, medical experimentation, torture, repression, eugenics for generations to come!!

However act utilitarianism doesn't justify wars fought for economic, imperialistic, cultural, religious, or territorial gain; for these wars only benefit a minority and are fought for greed and dominance. Such causes for wars are not rare, in fact many argue that we are experiencing wars of this nature now, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The consequences of going to war in order to preserve life must always be considered. If 100,000 people have to die in order to save the lives of 35 million then utilitarianism would accept {sadly} that this is a reasonable cost. Some utilitarians argue that the cost of utility should never exceed half the number of the population for which it is to be spread amongst. For instance, a war that cost the lives of 51% of the population means that the majority of population died in the war benefiting the remaining 49%, certainly not a majority. Applying act utilitarian principles means then that war should only be used by unified forces against aggression, in order to thwart massive atrocities.

A problem with act utilitarianism is how to measure utility. In the hope of maximizing accurateness, the focus must turn to where the measuring tool is to be employed. First and foremost among the areas of measurement is the realm of peace and security. Other measurements, for instance individual rights and economic inequities, can and should be addressed. Peace and security yield no guarantee for increased utility - Hitler after all, provided temporary peace and security for many Germans, but ultimately caused decreases in utility throughout the world. Act utilitarianism has to acknowledge that increases of utility are not possible in the absence of peace and security. Where there is no peace and no security, there will more likely abound a lack of respect for individual rights and also dramatic increases in economic injustice.

Rule utilitarianism and war

Rule utilitarianism applies the principle of utility to the rule of action involved and holds that an ethical code or rule is morally right if the consequences of adopting that rule are more favourable than unfavourable to everyone. One determines the balance of pleasure and pain if that rule were followed in all similar cases.

For example, we could ask: if governments adopted the rule that they should impose democracy on the world by force if necessary would this produce more pleasure than pain for the world? In a sense what is being asked is: "What would be the consequences if this rule was applied universally?" For example, is it

possible that a pre-emptive strike against a sovereign state to impose democracy {as happened in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq} may produce more pleasure than pain? Maybe it would! The people of the world will be free of an evil tyrant! However, rules that permitted *universal* aggressive violence would likely produce more pain than pleasure if generally followed and probably lead to anarchy {maybe this is exactly what happened in Iraq!}. The outcome may depend on how general or specific the rule is.

It is interesting here to remember the words of John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* in relation to Iraq today: "*The spirit of improvement is not always a spirit of liberty, for it may aim at forcing improvements on an unwilling people; and the spirit of liberty, in so far as it resists such attempts, may ally itself locally and temporarily with the opponents of improvement*" {*On Liberty*, 58-59}. In the Iraqi case, or for that matter much of the Arab-Muslim world, it is not that improvement is unwanted, it is that Muslims do not believe the Americans and British are there to improve their society. As the violence escalated into terrible violence in Iraq, this only becomes progressively more evident; all people want improvement, they only disagree in how it is to be attained.

Since Utilitarianism aims at achieving "the greatest amount of happiness altogether" a claim of success in Iraq will only ever be truly calculable, only through examination of the increases or decreases of utility *throughout the world.* Utility, especially n terms of warfare - the gathering, processing and analyzing of data - is not easily measured.

Rule utilitarian pacifists

Accordingly, rule utilitarian pacifists claim that the avoidance of war, or violence, or force, should be a moral rule since its abrogation would be less beneficial to all. For example, if, on balance, all hitherto wars are perceived as producing effects that none would have wanted prior to the war, then a rule against war should be adopted: "never go to war". The rule outlaws war in the particular and in general, even if a particular war could produce better consequences it should not be accepted on the grounds that it violates a moral rule: "never go to war" and this rule will have more favourable consequences for the entire world if war is absolutely prohibited.

However, absolute principles such as these are very difficult to sustain, for they are firstly based on a particular reading of history - a reading that can emphasize ruinous results over any good that may ultimately have arisen. They are empirical judgments on the past and as such open to not only historical critique but also the logical argument that what was true yesterday may not be true tomorrow (or at least cannot be *proven* to be so). That is, while past wars were wholly detrimental to the human race as a whole, tomorrow's wars, because of new technology or strategy, or even a new ethic, may not be. Accordingly, the moral rule may in principle change and therefore cannot be held absolutely.

It is possible, for example, to argue that the Second World War, with all its death and destruction, ultimately promoted the greater good of a peaceful Europe and enhanced international co-operation. It's difficult to sustain that nothing good ever came from war for critics can always point to something good whose value may be suitably expanded to provide an argument; in which case the argument becomes a comparison of cost benefits like: "okay 55 million people died between 1939 and 1945, millions became refuges, whole cities were destroyed etc but the war led to sixty years of European peace and relative security for hundreds of millions" – having said this it is also true to say that this 'peace and security' was the result of the superpowers stockpiling thousands of nuclear weapons as a deterrent but at a huge cost {it ultimately destroyed the Russian economy and cost the Americans billions of dollars which might have been better spent on healthcare or international development}

Preference utilitarianism and war

Preference utilitarianism is a particular type of utilitarianism which defines the good to be maximized as the fulfillment of persons' preferences. Like any utilitarian theory, preference utilitarianism claims that the right thing to do is that which produces the best consequences. When preference utiltarianism is defined in terms of preference satisfaction, the best consequences here can include things like pleasure, reputation or rationality.

However in terms of arguments about going to war preference utilitarianism faces serious problems. A nation could justify going to war as the right thing to do on preference utilitarian grounds because it simply wanted to show off its military might and enhance its reputation as say a nuclear power. On the other hand a nation could argue that it is going to war because it wants to make its own subjects richer and enhace their pleasure, which is fine if you are not in the firing line.

Negative utiltarianism and war

Negative utiltarianism requires us to promote the least amount of evil or harm, or to prevent the greatest amount of harm for the greatest number. Proponents argue that this is an effective ethical formula, since, they argue, there are many more ways to do harm than to do good, and the greatest harms are more consequential than the greatest goods.

However at it extremes, some negative utiltarians could justify killing the entire human race in a nuclear holocaust as this would effectively and ultimately eliminate long term pain. Negative utilitarianism could call for the destruction of the world even if only to avoid the pain of a pinprick. Though this "pinprick argument" is absurd it is not dissimilar to the sorts of arguments that some religious zealots preach about the "endtime" and Armageddon.

Natural Law and war

The basic definition is that there are certain norms of good and right conduct which can be seen by everyone - unchanging and constant Moral Laws that exist in the world in much the same way as the law of gravity – the same for people everywhere and at all times; an unchanging moral law that can guide human beings to good. According to St Thomas Aquinas two of the main ideals that should govern behaviour of beings possessing reason and free will are {1} the imperative to be good and avoid evil and {2} the empathetic desire to respect and preserve life beyond their own.

The 17th-century Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius {see **Just War film**} believed that humans by nature are not only reasonable but social. Thus the rules that are "natural" to them - those dictated by reason alone - are those which enable them to live in harmony with one another. From this argument Grotius developed the first comprehensive theory of international law. In the 20th century natural law theory has received new attention, partly in reaction to the rise of totalitarianism and an increased interest in human rights throughout the world.

The discovery of the natural law is a continuously unfolding enterprise. Human beings took a long time to work out the laws of nature and we're still striving to develop and universalize the laws of moral nature. The passage of time and additional philosophical reflection always raises new issues in natural law theory. For instance, slavery was once accepted as normal and natural even by many who subscribed to natural law theory. We now know that slavery violates the natural law. Society once accepted judicial torture as being normal and 'natural'. We now know that judicial torture violates the natural law and this has been translated into international law conventions like the Geneva Conventions. However, the recently revealed 'rendition' procedures of the US to send suspected terrorists to states that openly torture {like Egypt} shows that today the Americans {sometimes appallingly supported by Britain} sometimes have little respect for natural law or international law!

Maybe one day too our society will "discover" that war and violence as a way of solving disputes violates natural law and is outlawed as a barbaric relic of past ignorance. The instinct for war is often assumed to be intrinsic or "natural" to human nature. But also, as any ex-soldier will tell you, war is often horrible and obscene, hinting that it is unnatural to us. Rational and sane human beings recoil from inflicting or suffering violence and in order to go to war have to learn to kill and require substantial training, extensive prior experience, and/or overpowering institutional control by commanders who are themselves often remote from the obscene realities of war.

Societies which have wars usually recognize that wars are in some sense a failure {they are 'unnatural'} and have established ways of partially avoiding

them; it should be noted that war is wholly unknown to a number of surviving, mostly hunter-gatherer cultures like the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic.

Some Natural Law theorists would argue that if St Thomas Aquinas' imperative to be good and avoid evil is applied in the case of war and peace then the only solution is absolute pacifism because war in itself is evil and peace is good.

They would argue too, that another imperative of Natural Law - to respect and preserve life beyond their own – means that it is wrong to go to war because war does not preserve life.

However, critics would argue that there are times when oppression and injustice rises to the level of a humanitarian crisis that justifies military intervention by another country in order to alleviate such suffering {e.g. Bosnia in the 1990's!}. They'd argue that it is only by going to war that evil can be avoided or life preserved. This view raises questions about jus ad bellum {'good cause'} and jus in Bello **{see Just War Film**}.

An argument from precedent

Sometimes the principle of precedent can become a justification for going to war. "Bomber" RAF Air Marshall Harris took the mass slaughter of a whole generation who were butchered in their millions in the trenches of France and Belgium during the First World War as a *precedent to avoid*. His policy of destroying Dresden, Hamburg etc with incendiary devices in 1943 made it easier and less morally taxing, later in the war, for the fire bombing of Japanese cities and indeed the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

The Principle of double-effect

The Principle of double-effect: an absolute prohibition on intentionally killing innocent people, but allowing some actions which have the foreseen but unintended consequences that innocent people die. The good has to be sufficient to outweigh the harm. The destruction of an armaments factory and the subsequent unintended death of 100 workers is a good act because it may and quicken the end of a war and contribute to the defeat of an enemy. So long as the numbers of deaths among workers is not disproportionately large, some foreseen but unintended civilian deaths can be morally acceptable. Yet it remains wrong intentionally to kill innocent people as a means of bringing about a good end.

According to the principle of double effect, the morality of the act is tied to whether the bad effect is merely foreseen or actually intended. The doctrine has difficulties: one is whether what is intended can really be distinguished sharply from a merely foreseen side effect. In the mist of war when propaganda and

deceit are often the order of the day a state can claim that the killing of civilians was unintended when in fact it was a deliberate psychological policy to undermine and traumatize the enemy's civilian population {think recent Israeli attack on Cana in Lebanon when children were slaughtered!}.

This is an increasing moral minefield these days when battles are not fought on traditional battlefields but often occur in heavily populated civilian areas.

Situation Ethics and war

In *Situation Ethics*, Joseph Fletcher challenged the method of ethics whereby a rule or principle is applied to a situation, and tried to show that it is the individual and the particular situation that is of paramount importance. He argued that the only moral principle that could be applied to all situations is: *to do whatever is the most loving thing*. There is only one duty and that is to love "thy neighbour as thyself" {the agapeistic calculus}. This requirement is not a law stating what should be done in any particular situation but rather an attitude that informs moral choice. Situation Ethics, therefore, has no concern for following an absolute moral law neither for the consequences of a decision.

In the light of situation ethics can war ever be justified? In essence it would appear that situation ethics is close to absolute pacifism because war entails the very antithesis of love – namely the destruction and maiming of lives. A major problem is that nations often interpret situations according to their own point of view and there is a danger that any country claiming to act in `the name of love' {e.g. often translated politically today as 'exporting democracy'/ 'liberal imperialism' for the good of the people} may in fact be acting from selfish motives. Leaders and politicians sometimes `love' themselves or their ideals too much.

Again, where does one draw the boundaries around `a situation'? For example it might have seemed 'loving' to free the people of Iraq from a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein but if we look at the history of Iraq we will find that Britain and America supported the tyrant logistically, militarily and morally for many years when it suited their interests and did nothing when he gassed the Kurds with chemical weapons in 1988.

It is also worth noting that it is not always easy to predict the consequences of war {this criticism can be levelled at utilitarian views too!}. In terms of Situation Ethics, absolute pacifists may have argued that it was the most loving thing not to go to war against the people of Germany in 1939 but by taking an agapeistic - pacifist approach, the long-term consequences could have been disastrous. If we had appeased Hitler in1939 what would have happened to the Jews, the disabled, the homosexuals, the socialists, the non-Aryan races of Europe and elsewhere?! It's doubtful too whether you would actually be reading this now as

the Nazis would not want the young generation thinking for themselves about issues of state control and state violence.

Virtue ethics and war

Virtue ethics is currently one of three major approaches in ethics. It may, initially, be identified as the one that emphasizes the virtues, or moral character, in contrast to the approach which emphasizes duties or rules (deontology) or that which emphasizes the consequences of actions (consequentialism).

Virtue ethicists claim that moral virtues are developed by practice {"*we are what we repeatedly do*" - e.g. "to be brave I must practise bravery"}; and moral virtues occur at the midpoint between extremes {e.g. courage between cowardice and rashness}. Aristotle the father of Virtue Ethics believed that education is important and a good state will aim to encourage its citizens to grow in moral understanding.

Are there occasions when it is virtuous to go to war? It could be argued that there are such ocassions, like the intervention in another country to protect an oppressed minority's human rights or as an act of self defence to protect one's own people. However war inevitably results in casualties, so is another's death justified in the pursuit of some "virtuous" goal?

Some people who consider themselves oppressed might argue that it is virtuous to martyr oneself for their peoples' freedom like the men who flew the planes into the Twin Towers in New York in 2001; or the Palestinian girl in 2004 who strapped nails and explosives to her stomach and walked into a Tel-Aviv restaurant and detonated the device believing that despite the terrible carnage and misery that she was about to unleash her act of suicide and slaughter was so virtuous that she would be rewarded in Paradise for all eternity! What is 'virtuous' to one can be hell for another!

In terms of jus ad bellum {causes of war} virtue ethicists are convinced that moral virtues can only be fully developed by practising them. It could quite reasonably be argued that it is far more virtuous that states should practice non-violent methods of conflict resolution rather than continuing to practise the prevailing doctrine of militarism. For example the British government's budget to global conflict prevention is currently a tiny half a percent of what it spends on the military.

But once a war has been declared then in the midst of the horrors and confusion of war and violence certain of the moral virtues can be applied in jus in bello, the conduct in war, particulalry virtues of moderation, courage and compassion.

It is also worth noting that Aristotle placed great emphasis on education, thus allowing citizens to grow in moral understanding. In the 1980's many people

wanted to see Peace Education on the school curriculum – conflict resolution, diplomacy, history of peace as well as wars etc – however this has not happened. Maybe in the 21st century as we face all sorts of threats we need to educate the young to learn that to resort to violence to solve a conflict is not a virtue nor a sign of strength but a vice and a weakness and not the way forward for rational beings!

Realism

However it is usually states that go to war under the banner of "realism" - the "political realism" of policy makers. They hold that 'ordinary' moral norms do not apply to the conduct of states, which should instead be guided exclusively by a concern for the national interest. However this is morally dubious because the rights of the state are all derived from the rights of individuals; and there are limits to what an individual can do to pursue their own interests.

Given this broad account of ethical theory and war, in an interdependent and complex world of nation-states bristling with weapons systems of awesome destructive power, there remain many unanswered questions.

Is it appropriate to intervene pre-emptively and how do we determine if that point is reached? Is there a level of threat that is so great that military pre-emption is justified, and if so what is that level of threat? When is it appropriate for a nation to use military force? What is the appropriate justification for declaring war? Are there times when oppression and injustice rise to the level of a humanitarian crisis justifying military intervention by another country in order to alleviate such suffering? What are non-violent alternatives to warfare for solving disputes and what non-violent methods exist for countering repression and injustice? How have people overthrown dictators and repelled military occupations non-violently and what can we learn from these examples? How can states work to protect or increase security yet pursue strategic interests ethically? What are the requirements of the laws of war {the Geneva Convention, etc.}? What are war crimes?

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