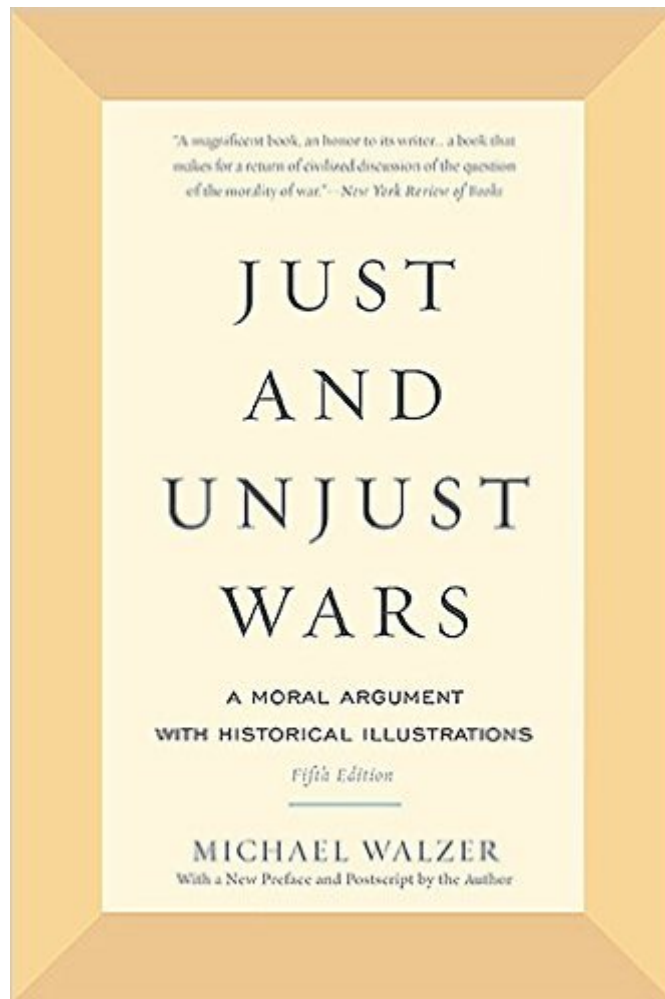


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Just And Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations



Synopsis

Just and Unjust Wars forever changed the way we think about the ethics of conflict. First published in 1977 and now brought up to the present with a new preface and postscript, this classic work by political philosopher Michael Walzer examines the moral issues that arise before, during, and after the wars we fight. Reaching from the Athenian attack on Melos, to the Mai Lai massacre, to Afghanistan and beyond, Walzer mines historical accounts and the testimony of participants, decision makers, and victims to explain when war is justified and what ethical limitations apply to those who wage it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Walzer's book is a superb introduction to Just War. It addresses both justice of war and justice in war. Most importantly, it is philosophical and deep while at the same time always clear and well illustrated with concrete examples and historical cases. It really could not be better written. Every chapter is concise, fascinating and provides an excellent overview/introduction to its respected subject. The main framework for Justice of War is the legalist paradigm/domestic analogy. In society, one is allowed to defend oneself if attacked. Analogously, a country can fight a war in self defense. Similarly, if evidence is uncovered that someone is plotting a murder or robbery, domestic authorities don't have to wait until he actually commits the crime to intervene. When the evidence accumulates to a certain level, beyond reasonable doubt say, they can intervene and pre-empt him. Same thing applies on the international scale: pre-emption is legitimate. Walzer illustrates this with the Six Day War of 1967, a preemptive war initiated by Israel. Of course, the current War on Iraq is

supposed to be preemptive as well. But, as Walzer shows, it is in fact preventive. Prevention is when you intervene against a known bad person or country without specific evidence of an imminent attack because one believes that this person or country would harm one if it could and it can't be allowed to gain more power, because then it will attack, even though it won't now. Or roughly that ;) Walzer claims that preventive wars sometimes lead to unnecessary wars, to wars against countries that never would have attacked. Therefore, they are unjustified; we should wait until we have sufficient evidence for plans of a definite attack at some point in the near future. I find it persuasive.

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