

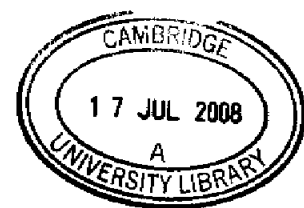
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British Foreign Policy and the Anglican Church

Christian Engagement with the Contemporary World

Edited by

TIMOTHY BLEWETT, ADRIAN HYDE-PRICE & WYN REES
Launde Abbey, University of Bath, and University of Nottingham, UK



ASLIGATE

Chapter 5

Three Parables About War¹

Charles Jones

The 'just war' tradition provides a robust and comprehensive framework for argument about war. It offers guidance on the declaration and conduct of war; it has exerted a profound influence on the law of armed conflict; it has been remarkably resourceful in accommodating the moral dilemmas arising out of irregular warfare, nuclear weapons and precision-guided munitions. Most of all, it appears to offer an arena within which those of many faiths and of none can meet on equal terms. The tradition, it is often said, is just that: a tradition and not a theory. Marked disagreements persist on particular questions, including the identification of legitimate authority, double effect and conditional deterrence. It is all too often reduced to a mere box-ticking exercise, to justify some specific instance of resort to force or military episode, when it ought rather to be thought of as a space for moral reflection. But at least the parameters of debate are secure, with pacifists and advocates of the unconstrained use of force consigned to the fringes.

Something along these lines appears to be the dominant view in Britain and the US. It is mistaken. Indeed it is pernicious. It encourages complacency and shuts the door on a wide range of moral experience, both personal and collective, intrinsic to modern warfare. It leaves the Christian churches with some of their biggest guns in fixed emplacements, pointing the wrong way. It dissuades the secular mind from any profound consideration of its moral predicament by encouraging it to ride in the Christian slipstream. It allows pacifists and nihilists alike too easy a dismissal of rational approaches to warfare. Those engaged in the planning, authorisation and conduct of contemporary armed conflict are to limit the moral harm that they commit, and to which they – let alone their enemies – are exposed, just as they now routinely seek to address psychological and physical damage arising from the trauma of war. But if this is to be achieved, the silken warp of love, justice and authority with which 'just war' discourse has traditionally been woven needs an altogether tougher weft, spun from the full range of modern political and military experience rather than the more limited range of concerns that preoccupied St. Thomas Aquinas at the dawn of the modern international system.

For it is in a version much indebted to Aquinas and his Spanish Dominican successors that the tradition is most often presented. They wrote at a time – broadly

¹ Earlier versions of parts of this chapter have been read to the Imperial and Commonwealth Seminar of the Cambridge History Faculty (2004) the June 2005 conference on War and Cinema at the Centre for Research in the Arts and Social Sciences, Cambridge and published in *Cambridge: the Magazine of the Cambridge Society*, No. 57 (New Year 2006).

between 1200 and 1650 – when the monarchs of France, England, Spain and several other European countries were steadily establishing sovereign authority over consolidated territories at the expense of Pope and Emperor. The discovery, in the second half of this period, of orderly political communities in the Americas that had neither accepted nor – like the Ottomans – rejected the gospel, merely aggravated the position by confirming the autonomy of international relations from any single faith, and its technical anarchy, or lack of any supreme temporal authority capable of arbitrating between princes. In these circumstances, a doctrine of how armed conflict between sovereigns could be contained within the moral realm was sorely needed and this is what the later scholastic theologians attempted.

Reduced to its bare bones, it runs like this. Justification of resort to war requires a formal declaration of hostilities – all other remedies having been exhausted – by a proper authority with a reasonable prospect of victory, moved by right intention to make good an injury or wrong of sufficient importance to outweigh the unavoidable evils that will result from the conduct of hostilities. Once engaged in warfare, combatants are enjoined not to attack non-combatants and to use no more force than is needed to achieve their objectives.

Some of the bread-and-butter issues that constitute contemporary debate within the tradition leap from the page. They are daily on our lips. Where does legitimate authority reside in a world where many states have long since lost control of large tracts of their territory and armed groups flourish without any clear political programme or aspiration to secession or control of the state while permanent alliances or regional unions such as NATO or the European Union begin to acquire a measure of autonomy, even from their most powerful members, and uncertainty about the authority of the UN Security Council is aggravated by the pretensions of the US to a quasi-imperial regulatory role? How are we to regard collateral damage? Is it justified by the outcome of a military operation, or must it be the unintended outcome of attack upon a legitimate target, as in the Scholastic doctrine of double effect? And what of nuclear deterrence? May it be right to threaten to do wrong if by so doing one minimises the chance of ever having to carry out the threat?

It is here, or hereabouts that the first step of a critique of the tradition might be taken. For St. Thomas, the very idea of legitimate authority was embedded in an Aristotelian concept of the perfect political community. By this he did not mean a polity without error, but one that was complete, in that it provided the conditions for individuals to live the good life. Within such a polity every adult had responsibility, by the exercise of prudence, for the conformity of behaviour to natural law; but the prudence of prince in this respect was uniquely important, for he alone was not subject to the regulatory check of positive law and he alone took responsibility for the whole polity rather than just a household, estate, or city. Few people today think in quite this way. Opinion is divided about both the extent of the perfect political community and the location of legitimate authority, whether in the United Nations Organisation, the multiplicity of sovereign states, a smaller number of great powers or regional hegemony, or the single remaining superpower.

Double effect and conditional threat raise further problems for the secular mind. Christian thought about moral issues has always been more concerned with intention

precondition of just resort to force. There is more. War was treated in very different ways by St. Thomas and by St. Augustine, who first introduced the concept of the just war into Christian thought at the turn of the fifth century, but both located their discussion of armed conflict within a broader discussion of love or charity. Oliver O'Donovan puts it most succinctly, remarking that it is '[I]n the context of war [that] we find in its sharpest and most paradoxical form the thought that love can sometimes smite, and even slay'.²

In short, legitimate authority and right intention, central concepts in the just war tradition, are deeply embedded in Christian theology and in one very specific, albeit central strand of theology. And since Western liberalism generally consigns religious belief to the private realm while seeking legitimate authority in the secular state or the UN, while the law of armed conflict deriving from the just war tradition has become universally applicable through a series of international conventions, the grounding of contemporary thought about war in Christianity prompts two urgent questions: 'Can the tradition be successfully secularised?' and 'Is this all the Church has to say about war?'

Each of these questions is addressed to a quite distinct group: the first primarily to disbelievers and the second to the faithful. Natural law theorists may reason their way to a view of common morality, universal in incidence, providing a ground for the regulation of warfare. But for those who cannot quite swallow a secular version of legal naturalism there is a second, more secular route, which is to ground value in community, whether it be the national community or a universal community of humankind. The trouble with such views is that they seem constantly to be seeking some substitute for the divine authority that was once held to underpin political authority, whether it be through Hegelian recognition or organic nationalism; and such attempts look ever less convincing in the face of Nietzschean and post-modern critiques of metaphysics and social constructivist exposures of the imagined or invented character of supposedly organic or primordial nations. Worst of all, the vision of a single global community that might harbour a secular ethics of armed conflict is inchoate and poorly institutionalised, while any lesser form of communitarianism, such as that of Michael Walzer, can hardly avoid privileging the state of which one is a citizen, thereby admitting arguments from national interest or supreme emergency which run counter to the spirit of Augustine and Aquinas, substituting expediency for justice.³

Even if the problem of legitimate authority and political community can be solved, the secular thinker faces a second problem: the balance between intentions and outcomes. Recall Augustine's maxim: 'Love, and do what you will!' If a Christian accepts this injunction, consequences are subordinated to virtue. To repeat, even war may be undertaken in a spirit of love. For the non-believer consequences may seem to be just about all there is and certainly not lightly to be disregarded. Conversely, there is no Lord to know the secrets of our hearts. Once again, separation of the tradition from its implicit theology poses problems.

The question faced by the secular thinker wishing to deliberate within the just war tradition is how long the locomotive will go on running once the tender has been uncoupled. Will it reach some convenient downward slope where gravity takes over?

² Oliver O'Donovan, *The Just War Revisited* (Cambridge 2003).

(What kind of buffers lie ahead?) The question addressed to the Christian is very different. To continue the railway metaphor, the Christian needs to consider whether it might be prudent to send some goods by way of branch lines rather than entrust the whole lot to the express, just in case the main line gets blocked. For Christianity has many other resources for thinking about war besides the high discourse of justice and charity. Consider just three: trusteeship, the Passion and pilgrimage.

Rather than develop this last thought in abstract terms it may be more helpful to do so within the framework of a strategy that offers a first step along the road to a new ethic of warfare, encompassing a wider range of experience, both political and personal, than the just war tradition. And this is to look to representations of warfare, in the novel and other literary genres, in cinema, in graphic art, through which modern creativity has sought to express the emotional and moral experience of warfare and combat. To do this is to encounter a wider range of virtues, vices and broader matters of value – such as secrecy, alienation and personal identity – than is customarily considered in contemporary debate about the ethics of war.

As an empirical method, study of the representation of war and the development of the modern imaginative is neutral in principle. It offers resources to both the religious and the secular thinker. This said, the remainder of this chapter is addressed primarily to Christians and explores some ways in which they might think about war outside the framework of the Just War through three parables. First, the way in which warfare engages and sometimes compromises human responsibility for the natural world and exposes tensions between nature, passion and discipline is considered through some narratives of the South African War of 1899–1902. Next, a treatment of the Passion narrative as metaphor for popular anti-colonial insurrection is offered through Gillo Pontecorvo's film, *The Battle of Algiers*. The chapter then concludes with a narrative of war as pilgrimage in the third and least known of John Buchan's Richard Hannay novels, *Mr. Standfast*.

The Horses

Part of the case advanced here is that modern representations of warfare, both factual and fictional, have extended the moral vocabulary in ways that foster serious deliberation of the dilemmas of military service and command; part, that legalistic, formulaic and narrowly secular approaches to the ethics of war have been gaining ground over the past century in ways that threaten that ethical deepening. Narratives of the Boer War help advance both these claims. Contemporary accounts and some later histories light upon the disregard with which the British and their allies denuded farmland and squandered horses. Yet the 1978 Australian film *Breaker Morant* reduces a broader account of the experience of one Australian combatant to courtroom drama, editing out one of the most striking features of the book on which it was based, George Witton's, *Scapegoats of the Empire*, in which lassitude, ill-health, the horses and the sheer wastefulness of war figure prominently.

Who, aside from those personally engaged in hunting, racing, or eventing, gives much thought to horses these days? Part of the political force of the Countryside Alliance and most of the surprise it evoked in Whitehall stemmed from sharply contrasting answers to this question in Plein's Britain. Horses are no longer involved

in mundane transportation or warfare. More broadly, warfare has been mechanised to the point where mechanical and biological adaptation or enhancement even of the human body is now routine.⁴ Think only of night vision. As to landscape, it is far from inconsequential. Deserts and mountains still challenge human endurance and mechanical reliability. Yet technological ingenuity in the form of novel means of surveillance, protection of personnel and precision-guided munitions have done much to minimise the significance of the ground over which wars are fought. There has been, in short, a diminution in the natural limits to warfare and a corresponding growth in the risk of permanent harm to the environment from combat. All this must seem to Christians in stark contrast with God's injunction to Adam, when He placed him in the Garden of Eden 'to dress it and to keep it'.⁵

It was not yet so a century ago. The Second Boer War (1899–1902) was almost certainly the last war in which the British suffered far greater casualties among their horses than among the troops. When Field Marshall Lord Roberts, Commander in Chief of the imperial forces in South Africa, invaded the Orange Free State, 500 mounts of the 8,000 strong cavalry division commanded by Lieutenant-General John French were dead or useless after the first two days, before ever the enemy were ever engaged. By the time French reached the capital, Bloemfontein, two-thirds of the horses at his disposal were dead.⁶ In his authoritative history of the war, Thomas Pakenham estimated that 21,942 out of a combined force of 448,435 imperial and colonial troops died in the war: 5,774 in combat and a further 16,168 from their wounds or from disease. Compare this with an estimated loss of between 400,346 and 513,320 horses, mules and donkeys, 'turning South Africa into [an] ... imperial knacker's yard'.⁷

Fatalities among the horses were a serious military issue. In the absence of mechanised road transport, and with the few railways that there were increasingly targeted by Boer irregulars, British logistics depended on them. Moreover the innumerable corpses, not easily gathered and burnt, posed a serious health risk, polluting watercourses.⁸ To make matters worse, the logistical and combat aspects of the horse shortage worsened as the war progressed. Initial Afrikaaner successes during the first two months were soon reversed as British and Dominion forces reached Cape Colony in strength. By August the major cities of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal had been taken. Unable to match the British in conventional warfare, the Dutch or Afrikaaners fell back on irregular means. Raids on British communications and outposts increased in frequency toward the end of 1900. In October 1899 the British had 'barely 14,000 mounted men'.⁹ Over the next two years hundreds of thousands of mounts were imported from as far afield as Argentina and Hungary.

⁴ Christopher Coker, *The Future of War* (Oxford, 2004).

⁵ *Genesis* 2.15.

⁶ Byron Farrell, *The Great Boer War* (London, 1979), pp. 240–41.

⁷ Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, 1979), p. 572; Farrell, *The Great Boer War*, pp. 240–41. Pakenham's is the lower estimate.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Lord Kitchener's response to the operations of the lightly armed and highly mobile Boer commandos was twofold. The first step was to drain the water in which they swam by moving civilians into concentration camps. But it was also in this late phase of the war that special mounted units were formed, designed to beat the Dutch at their own game by operating deep in hostile territory. The war became a highly mobile irregular struggle in which horses and their care were vital to success. One of these units, the Bushveldt Carbineers, was raised in Capetown early in 1901 to serve in the Northern Transvaal, working out of Pietersberg. Nominally commanded by British officers, it was in essence an Australian force, relying on the much more widespread familiarity of colonials than urbanised British recruits with life in the saddle and on the range.

While it may be true that 'the British, a horse-loving people, were horrified by the dreadful treatment of horses in South Africa', they were also largely responsible for them.¹⁰ Those from Indian and colonial units were appalled. A recent official history quotes Captain Laurence Maxwell, of the Second Bengal Lancers, writing in March 1900 to his sister, about the conditions under which the remounts he had brought from India were being moved up to the front. 'The horses are shoved into trucks just like cattle – he wrote – and with room enough to turn around and get mixed up higgledy-piggledy and kick and do all sorts of mischief.'¹¹

The Australians, as is evident from *Scapegoats*, did not kill their horses by neglect or carelessness. They cared about them and cared for them. Not for them the heavy iron-framed English cavalry saddle. Indeed, the men of the Bushveldt Carbineers had been selected for the skill and familiarity with horses. George Witton, who served as a Lieutenant and was one of the three officers from the Carbineers sentenced to death in February 1902 for killing prisoners and a German missionary, had originally embarked for South Africa with the Royal Australian Artillery. All recruits had been subjected to a riding test before leaving Australia. Those that failed had been rejected. Witton's memoir (his sentence was commuted) shows a consistent interest in and regard for horses. He describes the embarkation and rather precarious disembarkation of his unit's 700 horses; he comments on the Hungarian re-mounts at Beira and notes the admiration of the Portuguese Governor for the condition of the Australian horses; he criticises the quality of the saddlery issued at East London by the British as 'just the kind of equipment to cripple the rider and ruin the horse at the same time'; on arrival at Pietersberg, his principal duty was to oversee the care of the horses.¹² Not only does Witton evidently care about the horses; so also

¹⁰ Farwell, *The Great Boer War*, pp. 240–41. H.S. Gaskell, who interrupted his medical studies at Edinburgh University to serve in South Africa in the Imperial Yeomanry, pays close attention to the horses (pp. 41, 42, 44, 51, 61, 66–7, 79, 81, and *passim*) and provides a horrifying description of the burden carried by the small American horses on which his unit was mounted and the incompetence of many of his fellow-soldiers. Loading the horse was two hours' work. H.S. Gaskell, *With Lord Methuen in South Africa* (London, 1906), pp. 31–3.

¹¹ Field Marshall Lord Carver, *The National Army Museum Book of the Boer War* (London, 1999), p. 140.

¹² George R. Witton, *Scapegoats of Empire: the Story of the Bushveldt Carbineers* (London, 1902), pp. 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

did those who stood trial with him and were later shot by firing squad. Lieutenant Handcock had been a farrier. In the Bushveldt Carbineers he served as a Veterinary Lieutenant.¹³ Lieutenant H.H. 'Breaker' Morant, eponymous anti-hero of the film based on Witton's book, was a breaker of horses. He took wild horses and brought them to the point where they were rideable.

So much time has been devoted to the prominence of the horse in the Boer war and the contrast between British and colonial attitudes to the horse, because this theme, present in scholarly historical accounts of the war and in contemporary memoirs, is virtually absent from the later film. *Breaker Morant*, like the antecedent novel and play, is as much a gloss on Australian participation in the two World Wars and Vietnam as the literal treatment of events in the Boer War that it purports to be. Australian resentments bubble under the surface: Gallipoli, the loss of the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales* in December 1941, and the yet more ignominious fall of Singapore in February 1942, which resulted in the captivity thousands of Australians and left the country scarcely defended. When the condemned Australians in *Breaker Morant* are temporarily released to help the British regulars to repel a Boer raid on Fort Edward their valour earns no mitigation. High politics, it is suggested, trumps humanity and moral obligation among the British commanders.

The contemporaneity of its implicit political target surely guided the editing of *Scapegoats* into *Breaker* and its relative neglect of opposition between natural Australian and artificial Briton. The horses fade into the background. Emphasis moves from the natural Australian of Witton's almost certainly ghosted narrative to the passion of the film's eponymous anti-hero. Passion and reason contend in Morant and the former triumphs. Nature precedes both and receives less attention in the industrial cultural product of a largely urban Australia than it did in Witton's simpler (though hardly simple!) testimony of 70 years before. In formal terms, the courtroom frames the film but is merely the central episode in the book.

The film gives an account of a harsh guerrilla war in which it was impossible to take prisoners. Though this had become routine, sanctified by direct orders from the British commanders, the eponymous hero, Lieutenant Harry Morant, and two other officers in the Bushveldt Carbineers are court marshalled in January 1902 for the unlawful killing, the previous August, of prisoners and of a German missionary who had witnessed some of the killings. Fearing German intervention and anxious to reach a negotiated settlement of an expensive and costly conflict, the British take steps to ensure conviction and subsequently execute Morant and Handcock.

edition have survived. The memoir and the incidents to which it refers were little regarded by historians until a novel (Kit Denton, *The Breaker*) was published in 1973. This led in turn to a play (Kenneth Ross, *'Breaker' Morant* (1978)), a film under the same title directed by Bruce Beresford in 1980 and starring Edward Woodward and a new edition of Witton's memoir in 1982. There is still no agreement on the facts of the case and British official records have not been found. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breaker_Morant.

¹³ The word 'farrier' is little known these days, as much because of the rise of professional vets as because of the marginalisation of the horse, but denotes a common horse doctor. In a statement to the court, Handcock declared: 'I am a Veterinary Lieutenant. I have had a very good education. I never cared much about being an officer; all I know about is horses, though

Witnesses who might have exonerated the accused are posted elsewhere; others with personal grudges against them are brought forward. A British officer denies under oath that orders to kill prisoners have been issued.

The film takes the conventional form of a courtroom drama, exercising numerous tensions in the Witton narrative between law, morality and expediency. It has two main arguments. The first, and more legalistic, is that the British, having chosen to pursue the war by irregular means, were duplicitous in holding those who were the instruments of their policy to the standards appropriate to conventional warfare.

The second argument is concerned with passion and morality rather than law. Morant, Handcock and Witton are unjustly condemned, yet they may be thought guilty men.¹⁴ Though Morant may indeed have been obeying orders, there is a strong suggestion that he was also motivated by revenge and moved by anger. What sparked the whole episode off was the death, on August 5th 1901, of Captain Percy Hunt, Morant's senior officer and friend. Acting on false intelligence, Hunt had attacked what he believed to be a lightly defended farmhouse 80 miles from base. Encountering a force more than four times more numerous than his own patrol of 17 men, he nevertheless persisted until he fell wounded on the veranda of the farmhouse. When his body was subsequently recovered for burial, it was found to have been stripped and mutilated.

This convinced Morant – so Witton tells his readers – that his brother officer and best friend had been brutally murdered; he vowed there and then that he would give no quarter and take no prisoners. He had ignored his orders [to this effect] in the past, but he would carry them out in the future.¹⁵

Australians are natural; the British are simply expedient; Morant ineffectually guards the passes between nature, discipline and passion. In manipulating the trial, the High Command bring to bear the passions of those involved like so many pieces of artillery. They rely on the resentment felt towards Hunt and Morant by those whom they alienated while restoring discipline among the Carbineers. They move key witnesses for the defence into administrative dead ground. More broadly, British vulnerability and failure in the war, just as much as the cynicism of military justice, arise from the distance of an industrialised Britain from nature. The poor state of health of British recruits, their ignorant mistreatment of horses, the removal of the Boer non-combatants

¹⁴ Opinions on this point still differ. Pakenham gives short shrift to the Bushveldt Carbineers. There is no suggestion in his brief account of any miscarriage of justice or British kow-towing to German diplomatic pressure. The episode is seen as simply the worst case of a process of reciprocal brutalization that characterised the later stages of the war (Pakenham, *Boer War*, pp. 538–9). Wallace quotes a letter of 21st October 1929 from Witton to his erstwhile defence lawyer, from which it appears that Witton believed that Handcock murdered the German missionary and that Morant knew of his intention. It may be, then, that Handcock and Morant were condemned and executed for a crime (killing prisoners) of which they were technically innocent, but acquitted of a capital crime of which they were guilty and that a kind of justice was done, though Wallace himself is unconvinced; R.L. Wallace, *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, 1976), n. 370.

from their natural surroundings and the consequent desolation of the countryside all bespeak a gulf between the British and their natural environment, the consequence of more than a century of sustained urbanisation and industrialisation.

Australians, on this reading, are not so much undisciplined as natural and passionate by turns. It is perfectly true that Harry Morant was a man who tamed or 'broke' horses. It is also emblematic and perhaps accounts for the perennial appeal of this episode – the merest detail in most of the general histories of the war – that his calling gives Morant a Janus-like character, looking both ways. He was English and set to marry an Englishwoman, Hunt's sister-in-law-to-be, yet thoroughly at home in the Australian bush after 14 years working there. He is a poet and a reader, yet also a man of action. He stands literally at the point where the wild horse is brought into subjection – 'the only Englishman capable of riding a buck-jumper like a native-born Australian' – while, metaphorically, he 'breaks' the men under his command as one of those responsible for restoring discipline among the Bushveldt Carbineers shortly before the death of Captain Hunt. Yet Morant fails wholly to break *himself*, allowing revenge to supplant discipline when push comes to shove. And with Morant gone, in later mythic readings of the story, the bridge between natural Australia and artificial Britain is broken. By a further irony, the success of the film occludes Witton's narrative, substituting courtroom for Veldt and passion for nature. The British, Witton told us, were no longer fit to watch over the Garden of Eden. The Australians, we come to suspect, may have been more Cain than Adam, more Jacob than Esau.

The Thief at Christ's Side

Among the most celebrated of twentieth-century war films, winner of the *Leone d'oro* at the Venice film festival in 1966, banned until 1971 in France and not shown on network television there until 2004, Gillo Pontecorvo's 1965 film is an Italian-Algerian co-production made less than a decade after the events it portrayed, when wounds were still raw and many of the participants still active.¹⁶ Over the years, the film has acquired a curious and ironic didactic life, adopted by the Black Panthers for training purposes and more recently shown to members of the security and intelligence communities of the US, Israel and Northern Ireland to prompt discussion of how best to respond to contemporary insurgency and terrorism.¹⁷

Identification of *The Battle of Algiers* with the Christian Passion narrative is neither unprecedented nor speculative. Some interpreters have hinted strongly at it, yet perhaps been restrained from any clearer statement by the secular Marxist-nationalist thought world of the period. Irene Bignardi, for example, writes of Pontecorvo's identification with 'the choral nature of the [Algerian] struggle' but rapidly elides this into the banal Leftism of 'sentiments and emotions felt in unison

¹⁶ Joan Mellen, *Filmguide to 'The Battle of Algiers'* (Bloomington and London, 1973) is still a good starting point. The literature has grown since and continues to grow.

¹⁷ Donald Reid, 'Re-viewing *The Battle of Algiers* with Germaine Tillion', *History Workshop Journal*, 60 (Autumn 2005), n. 110; for the detail about the Black Panthers see

with the masses'.¹⁸ Mellen also notes Pontecorvo's concern with the interplay of individuals and collective, but expresses it in exclusively Marxist dialectical terms.¹⁹ Closer to a religious interpretation was Joseph Morgenstern, reviewing the film in *Newsweek*, who commented that 'rather than playing God ... Pontecorvo and his team have chosen the scarcely less difficult role of witnessing angels'. True: and they explicitly cast the audience, too, in this role.

However, *The Battle of Algiers* is not simply open to interpretation; there is also direct evidence of authorial intention in this matter of narrative structure and analogy with the Passion. The film opens with a lengthy quotation from Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Matthew Passion.²⁰ This immediately marks it out, for all its Leftist sympathy with the Algerian nationalist cause and for Islam, as a narrative firmly embedded in the Christian tradition. Brought up in a cultivated middle-class household, persecuted as a Jew during the Second World War, a man of the secular Left who had hoped to become a composer in his youth and chose the music for his films with great care, Pontecorvo recognised the need for a more than secular approach to the Algerian struggle.²¹ There is a hint here of the motivation behind Otto Klemperer's brief conversion to Christianity: necessary – he felt – if he were to conduct the St. Matthew.²²

The quotation ends before the entry of the choir, so that the words remain implicit: 'Come ye daughters, share my mourning. See him! – Whom? – The bridegroom, Christ.' Yet the effect of these few bars is to establish not only a passion narrative but also a chorus to bear witness to the narrative, or perhaps two choruses: those daughters of Zion – the unnamed Arab women of the city of Algiers – and ourselves, the audience, who become witnesses through our implication in this form, with its conventional use of the chorale.

It may assist an appreciation of the shape of the film to keep those opening bars in mind – prelude to a monumental and meticulously structured baroque masterpiece – and cut to an image from the very end of the film, when the battle for Algiers has been fought and won by the French and the film has traced the passion of freedom fighter and terrorist Ali La Pointe (the thief at Christ's side?) and the Arab nation to its explosive conclusion. Two years have passed. Suddenly, no one knows quite why, not even the Arab leadership, Algiers explodes. The French have defeated the insurgency in the capital but are now about to lose the war and, with it, the country they have regarded as part of their own for more than a century.

While the *battle* was fought between rational men, tacticians, presented to the viewer as bound by mutual respect amounting almost to collusion, the *war* is won by nameless women, those daughters of Zion: ululating insistently, witnessing without

¹⁸ Bignardi, 'The Making', p. 15.

¹⁹ Mellen, *Filmguide*, pp. 9–13.

²⁰ The film and the St. Matthew Passion.

²¹ For the care that Pontecorvo devoted to choice of music for the soundtrack see Bignardi, 'The Making', pp. 18–19 and Mellen, *Filmguide*, pp. 13–14 and pp. 24–32.

²² Daniel Barenboim interviewed Klemperer, 'who became a Christian to conduct Bach's St. Matthew Passion but eventually returned to Judaism', reported in Nextbook: a gateway to Jewish literature, culture, and ideas, <http://www.nextbook.org/cultural/dioest>

argument, 'a presence of all voice rather than an absence of all words'.²³ The war is won by an unstructured multitude, invisible through the fog, with whom communication is impossible. Demonstrations stream through the streets. A bewildered gendarme stands, megaphone to his mouth, shouting at the fog of tear gas into which the protesters have vanished. 'Go home!' he exclaims. (But it is our home!) 'What is it you want?' (How can you not know by now?) By this point we have moved from battle, with a clear competitive logic, to the more cosmic opposition of two forms of reason, instrumental and existential, which constitutes warfare proper.

It would be quite wrong to contend that Pontecorvo's film is solely or even principally a Passion narrative. Alongside the Passion of Ali la Pointe a quasi-Marxist dialectic unfolds in which stereotypically masculine clarity serves as thesis, equally stereotypically feminine deception and transgression as antithesis and complicity as a synthesis which immediately comes into fresh opposition with something in that fog and wailing which is no more than suggested: certainly not un-reason; perhaps the multitude, perhaps right, perhaps becoming, perhaps salvation.²⁴

Take clarification first. The film shows a steadily escalating definition of European and Arab spaces within the city of Algiers and of the roles of the major protagonists. As attacks on the police and terrorist bombings increase, the Casbah is cordoned off. Barbed wire and checkpoints appear. The civil police give way to French paratroopers. Within the Casbah the revolutionaries respond by purifying their own ranks, securitising the rituals of everyday life and eliminating gangsters and drunkards.

After clarification comes transgression. The barriers have been set up; the checkpoints manned. To continue the terrorist campaign the FLN must penetrate these clear lines. To do this, they must transgress in other ways too. Using women to carry bombs into the European quarter they not only breach traditional conventions about the distinction between combatant and non-combatant and women as nurturers but also break trust by exploiting the supposed respect of the French for women. One French soldier reprimands another in the very first checkpoint scene for having started too rough a search of the white shrouded figure, who, moments later, hands the pistol she had concealed about her to an assassin. 'You must not touch their women', he insists.

More than this, these women who carry bombs must 'pass' in the sense of diminishing or concealing their Arab identity. One, the young woman who passes most convincingly, is first seen at home with her two companions, dressing to kill. Abandoning traditional clothing for the flared cotton skirts of the time, she next sets about dying and perming her hair. Her cover is a trip to the beach. Passing though the checkpoint, a carefree peroxide blonde, she flirts easily with a young French soldier as he and his companions eye the crowd for those who look suspicious. She is not out of place among the other young people in the Milk Bar. She begins to move with the music, almost dancing to the music of French youth, but uneasily, as she plants the bomb that will kill or maim those who could so easily have been her student friends had things gone differently.

²³ Personal communication: Sara Crangle, 26 May 2005.

²⁴ This dialectical structure is snelt out and illustrated in some detail in my 'Film as

Clarification-as-thesis is contradicted by transgression-as-antithesis. So, finally, comes complicity-as-synthesis: politically the most problematic and theologically intriguing aspect of this Italian-Algerian co-production.

In the opening scene, the Judas figure who has just betrayed Ali La Pointe, the last remaining FLN leader in the city, is immediately comforted, protected and clothed. When he attempts suicide, he is restrained. Pontecorvo argues strongly for a traditional bond between warriors, rooted in their shared understanding of necessity, even in a new kind of war. The more likely outcome in fact, if General Paul Aussarresses is to be believed, would have been summary execution.²⁵

The fictional Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu, orchestrator of the French operation, shares a bond with the tortured, but also with the enemy leadership and most of all Ben M'Hidi. Mathieu understands the logic of asymmetric warfare and the necessity of terrorism; it is the mirror image of the torture that he must employ against the FLN. Many French officers who served in Algeria had themselves taken part in irregular Resistance operations against the German occupying forces in the 1940s, not long before. Pontecorvo himself had fought as a partisan in Milan during the Second World War, as commander of the Third Brigade.²⁶ This mutual understanding of a new breed of warrior is reinforced most strongly and repeatedly through the character of Mathieu: Mathew, the apostle who had served Herod's puppet state. His ambivalence is once again pointed up as he tells the journalists, Pilate-like, following the faked suicide of Ben M'Hidi in captivity: 'You must ask the spokesman of the Minister of the Interior'.

Pontecorvo suggests complicity between opposing forces. Then, finally, the audience is made complicit in the film in a number of ways. Three examples will do: the first two very specific, the third more general.

Remember that young woman with the peroxide perm? The transformation scene, where she and her companions groom themselves for the triple bomb attacks on the French quarter, is shot from an oddly high angle. The audience look down on the three women, changing modestly because they are in each other's company and only at the end of the scene as the youngest starts to treat her hair, looking directly at camera, does it become apparent that the audience is behind the mirror. The intrusion into the intimacy of the home and the scene of changing is not simply that of the self-effacing camera, but is suggestive of the two-way mirror, cliché of police interrogation scenes and almost Delphic emblem of false truth. 'Mirror, mirror, on the wall ...' The trick is repeated. Mathieu, newly appointed leader of the French paratroops brought in to suppress the insurrection after the police are deemed to have failed, shows his men a recently made police film. His ostensible aim is to demonstrate errors made by the police in the management of checkpoints. It is hard to watch that clip without darting to that familiar figure, picking her out as with a Judas kiss: the slight eye movement enough to betray her to an experienced observer watching you. In this way an audience comes to understand the temptation to inform, a little like the desire to jump from a high place.

Finally, for evidence of the more general complicity of the audience, one must go back to the very start of the film once more. The hegemony of the Christian narrative is immediately established by the quotation from Bach. As audience, we are assumed

to recognise this just as surely as we recognise the blonde terrorist, and, in doing so, to bring into play the entire imaginary resources of the Passion. The purpose is no longer transgression but the fusion of enemies: the implication of the audience in the representation they are witnessing, which becomes less entertainment than liturgy.

A Presbyterian Pilgrim

If Pontecorvo blends Marxist dialectic with the Passion narrative, John Buchan, his senior by a generation, blended established Romantic tropes with one of the most celebrated narratives of Christian pilgrimage, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.²⁷ Best known for the first of his Richard Hannay adventures, the thrice-filmed *Thirty-Nine Steps*, Buchan had serious political ambitions, served as a Member of Parliament and was later to die in office as Governor-General of Canada. He wrote the third of the Hannay novels as World War I and with it his war-work as a propagandist in the British Ministry of Information and a chronicler of the conflict for the *Daily Mail*, drew to a close.

Mr. Standfast takes its title from a character in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, perhaps – alongside the King James Bible, *Waverley*, and *Robinson Crusoe* – the most widely read narrative in English during the nineteenth century. Its central argument is that the outcome of conflict is now determined through the secret and shameful war of espionage and deception rather than the open and honourable war of the battlefield. The narrative device he employs to press home this message is the modelling, of what presents superficially as a thriller or novel of espionage, on Bunyan's devotional text.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* Pilgrim himself first leaves home and family to travel through a world of temptations and dangers to salvation. In the second half of the book his wife and children follow. Adopting the same, two-part structure and playing with the stereotypes of his day, Buchan embarks on a game of Romantic inversions worthy of his literary hero, Sir Walter Scott, with Pilgrim-Hannay, adrift in the feminine secret world in the first half of the book and his male yet feminised opponent, the German spy von Schwabing, unable to survive in the masculine world of the battlefield in the second.

The analogy between journeying, salvation and narrative and its attendant themes of landscape, identity and deception, or pretence, are immediately evident in the novel. Suddenly called back to England from the Western Front, Richard Hannay journeys from the Somme, by way of London, to the Cotswolds. There he meets Mary Lamington, a young woman who is able to give him orders in this secret war and with whom he falls in love. Like the novel as a whole, his initial journey is from the 'real' war of the Western Front, through the frustrations of the secret war, to embodiments of the ideal of England which alone can justify a new style of warfare. The same analogy between warfare and pilgrimage is pursued through abundant references throughout the novel to *Pilgrim's Progress*, which has been adopted as a code book by the British agents, providing a secret language through which Mary

²⁵ Paul Aussarresses, *The Battle of the Casbah* (New York, 2002).

²⁷ Buchan's debt to and use of *Pilgrim's Progress* is explored in Jeremy Idle, 'The Pilgrim's Plane-Crash: Buchan, Bunyan and Canonicity', *Literature and Theology*, 13/3

and Hannay are able to filter their shared experience of the covert struggle.²⁸ As Idle so elegantly puts it:

the Progress in Standfast is a prize, a code-book, a good read, a fortune-telling device, a timeless anatomy of human folly, and inspiration to fight and die, a source of moral and theological comfort, and an English classic and reminder of the glory of the English countryside.²⁹

For Buchan, with his Free Church background, it is not the rational public discourse of Thomistic readings of the 'just war' tradition, but the private confessional tradition of Baxter and Bunyan that provides the better context in which to consider the nature of modern warfare and its significance for the individual as personal struggle, akin to *jihad*. Yet any literal application of the analogy poses problems, as Buchan surely knows. To raise just one: the first part of the novel deals with the secret war, in which women as well as men are participants while the distinction between combatant and non-combatant is intentionally obscured. The second part deals with the open or 'real' war of front-line combat, still at that time an exclusively male preserve. Yet the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress* relates the path to salvation of a man, Christian: the second, that of his wife and children. It is not simply that there is a conflict between secret and open war, but that there is doubt about which is more privileged in modern warfare, the feminine or the masculine. Buchan follows another of his literary heroes, Sir Walter Scott, when he sews doubt by inconsistent and contradictory inversion of the binary oppositions with which he constructs the symbolic world of his novel. The book is full of inversions – of sanity and madness, youth and age, male and female, clothed and naked, innocence and guilt. Yet constant inversion means that all are trumped by the master-themes of initiation, secrecy and identity. As faith moved from the public to the private sphere with the Reformation, so now, it seems, war moves from the public and rational world of Aquinas and the battlefield to an esoteric world in which nothing can be relied upon and everything is at risk in a struggle for salvation.

Hannay despises pretence. He hates having to pretend to be opposed to the war as he works under cover as Cornelius Brand, an Afrikaaner pacifist, testing the moral temperature of Middle England and infiltrating the enemy intelligence network. 'I detested my new part and looked forward to naked shame', he declared (3). There is nothing worse than a fake. 'The mass of faked china fruit' at Fosse Manor comes under Hannay's disapproving scrutiny as, much later, does the desk of his German arch-enemy, the Graf von Schwabing: 'it's a bad piece of fake empire and deserves smashing' (162).

Arriving in the oxymoronic Garden City of Biggleswick, Hannay finds a whole sub-culture that is incomplete or unreal because of its lack of contact with the reality of war (13). Its people 'shut out the war from their lives' (21). 'It was their fashion – he noted – never to admire anything that was obviously beautiful, like a sunset or a pretty woman, but to find surprising loveliness in things which I thought

hideous' (19). His hosts, the Jimsons, dress inappropriately and appear younger than their age (16). The city is in one sense a wholly public place 'where people lived brazenly in the open and wore their hearts on their sleeves'. But finding his room has been searched Hannay realises that this pretence of transparency conceals a mystery (18).

In Biggleswick, the German spy-master, the Graf von Schwabing, who passes for an English pacifist, Moxon Ivery, is a pretence in several ways. He is identified by Hannay's American comrade, Blenkiron, as 'the superbest actor that ever walked the earth [with a face that] isn't a face, it's a mask' (34). He is more specifically false in allowing Hannay and his companions to believe themselves to be manipulating him and his channels of information when, as Hannay suddenly discovers in the course of a London air raid, the reverse obtained (120–121).

Pretence is associated with unreality and the unreal cannot be fought by 'real' or honest methods of combat, but only in its own terms. Thus even Fosse Manor, the Cotswold Manor House where Hannay is commissioned into the secret war and falls for Mary Lamington, is at heart unreal, even though placed in the most 'real' of landscapes, the Cotswolds being central to the idyll and ideal of Englishness for which Hannay is fighting. Hannay is repelled by the inappropriately young dress style of the over-intellectual Miss Wymondhams and the heavy make-up of Claire Wymondham, representative members of the disengaged *haute bourgeoisie* whom he encounters there (8–9). Mary herself is obliged to change out of her VAD uniform the moment she arrives home. 'She may masquerade as she likes out-of-doors, but this house is for civilized people'; but the masquerade – the role of military nurse – is more real, though of course it is at the same time a pretence: the cover for Lamington's intelligence work (9). Fosse Manor is a pretence, then, because the war has been shut out and because those within it who are really engaged in the war must pretend that they are not. Meanwhile Buchan plays with a second related inversion of innocence and guilt, as guileless pacifists are innocently drawn into the enemy espionage network and are therefore guilty even though, being unaware of what they are really doing, they remain innocent (117).

Real and covert war are constantly juxtaposed in this most didactic and complex of Buchan's novels, and in one of the few moments of sheer inventive brilliance in the book, fleeing from the police on the outskirts of the northern city of Bradfield, Hannay suddenly stumbles out of the covert war of Part 1 of the novel into a real battlefield in the middle of Yorkshire, only to perceive, moments later, that it is a re-enactment of combat for the cine-camera, though like enough to real warfare for the experienced officer that he is to take over direction and reduce the carefully planned mock battle to sheer chaos, covering his escape (112). Soon afterwards, finally reaching London, Hannay heralds the conclusion of Part 1 and the move back to the 'real' battlefields of Flanders. 'The day of disguises is past', he declares (125). And the first chapter of Part 2 is headed 'I become a combatant once more', as though the first part had not related a story of combat, albeit clandestine.

Finally, the novel as a whole is an inversion, the two parts being reversals or mirror images of each other: the covert war and the war of the battlefield. The battlefield presents a mortal threat and the ultimate test of character. The climax of the book is the final massive German attack of the war: the Ludendorff Offensive,

²⁸ John Buchan, *Mr. Standfast* (London, 1919), pp. 14, 75, 81, 130, 135, 160, 168, 184, 185, 190, 196–7 and passim. My page references, the remainder of which are given in brackets in the text to avoid a string of 'Ibids', are to the 1994 Wordsworth Classics edition.

that it is no longer battle but intelligence that holds the key to victory (167). This is to prove the very root of the twentieth-century spy novel, above all during the Cold War. Von Schwabing is 'the big enemy, compared to whom the ordinary Boche in the trenches was innocent and friendly'. The burden of the tale is that in modern warfare 'the whole world [is] one battlefield and every man and woman among the combatant nations ... in the battle line' (168).

By his use of *Pilgrim's Progress* Buchan fixes the attention of his reader on questions of salvation and identity, both personal and national. War is less about the implementation of justice by sovereigns than about the exercise of judgment by individuals under conditions of radical uncertainty. His is a profoundly Protestant response to Aquinas.

Conclusion

Christians can hardly remain indifferent to the discourse of nature, discipline and passion in the Morant episode or to the ambiguities of colonial sensitivity toward the disregard shown by industrialised warfare toward the natural world for which humankind was given responsibility in *Genesis*. They are surely bound to dwell upon, if not to accept, the audacious and considered analogy between Christ's passion and the Algerian war of liberation as drawn by Pontecorvo. They should find no difficulty in accepting that war, for many individuals – Buchan's Hannay, but also Waugh's Guy Crouchback, Stephen Crane's Henry Fleming, or even Henry Williamson's largely forgotten John Bullock – is a pilgrimage: a journey towards salvation or self-discovery, in which the distinction between innocents and combatants has gone and the mantle of responsibility fallen upon every individual caught up in the dreadful process.³⁰ To have made possible moral deliberation about war and inspired contemporary law of armed conflict is no mean achievement and not lightly to be discarded. Yet would not Aquinas himself have been open to the argument that a discourse of justice comes nowhere near exhausting what the Christian tradition has to say on the question of war, and that overtly rational discourse can never entirely displace parable in deliberations about war.

A treasure house of material lies barely touched by those historians, strategists and ethicists who study war professionally and has yet to be felt in the peculiarly limited, legalistic and literally scholastic public discourse on war with which we are trying to steer our way through dangerous times. The three narratives examined here have been selected to explore how Christians might broaden the scope of their deliberation about modern warfare. Other texts which may appeal more readily to the secular mind include Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* (1961), Powell and Pressburger's film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), Jean-Luc Godard's *Le petit soldat* (1963), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Pilote de guerre* (1942), James Fennimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* (1817). The list is a long one and each reader will have favourites. Lately, officers and defence officials in the

United States and the British Isles have been watching *The Battle of Algiers*. What do they make of it? To some, at least, it will seem to depict breaches of the legal and moral constraints within which they aspire to operate, yet cannot. Yet its torturers and tortured, its terrorists and soldiers, do not stand outside the moral realm and more than Buchan's implicit statement of war aims or his concern with deception do, or George Witton's regard for innocent horses. If the objections of self-styled realists who throw up their hands and claim that all's fair in love and war are to be overcome and war brought more firmly within reason, then the imaginative resources of modernity, both religious and secular, need to be more effectively deployed, perhaps to flank, perhaps to replace the just war tradition.

³⁰ Evelyn Waugh, *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender* (1962); Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895); Henry Williamson, *The*