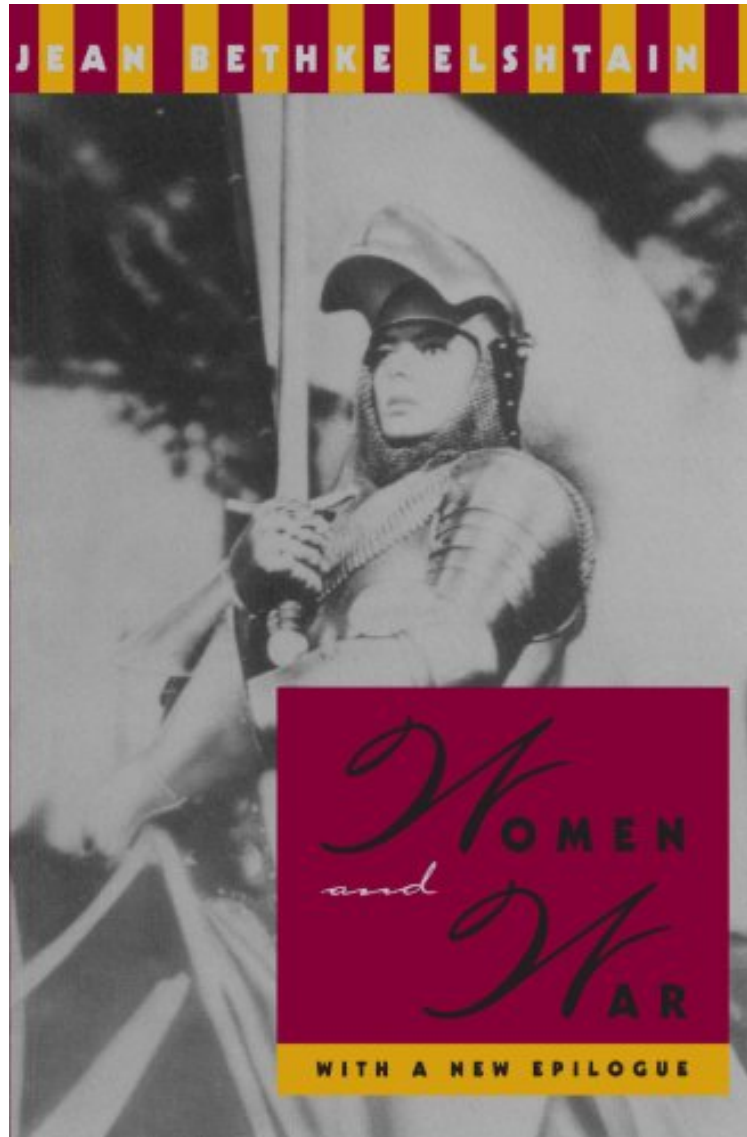


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## Women and War, with a new epilogue

*Jean Bethke Elshtain*

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**Jean Bethke Elshtain : Women and War, with a new epilogue** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women and War, with a new epilogue:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An important and urgent introductionBy QThe reviewer below summed up Jean Bethke Elshtain's book concisely, so I will refrain from the repetition. My only comment here is to say that Elshtain's curious omission of the issue of imperialism and colonialism, as well as the issue of race and class

(though she does sometimes cursorily include this latter category: class), ultimately detracts from her otherwise clear-sighted and compelling argument. Although Elshtain does openly limit her study to Western texts, political and otherwise, insofar as imperialism and colonialism are integral parts of Western history and self-definition, the omission is critical and not only surfaces glaringly, but also limits her critical models and potentials. As for her treatment of race and class (or lack thereof), this too is critical and ultimately undermines her otherwise compelling conclusion (basically, it renders her blind to her own elitism and assumptions; to become the "Chastened Patriot" she wants everyone to become requires certain privileges). Of course, no one can take everything into account, but the insularity of her study is unfortunate precisely because this is such an important work, especially now, with our so-called perpetual war on terror in full swing. While I do not agree with her conclusions about the possibilities of just wars and the ideal of what Elshtain calls the "Chastened Patriot," capable of assessing and waging such just wars, this is an excellent and accessible introduction for any reader who is interested thinking about the politics of war and peace, and their own positions in relation to it. 15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A fresh view

By B. Falk

From the Homeric warrior to Rambo, from the Spartan mother to the Greenham Common Women, Western paradigms of war have shaped public action and forged male and female identity. In the beginning, politics was war, and war has always been a quintessentially male activity. War, in fact, has always created the greatest gender gap, with deeply rooted myths of Man as just Warrior and Woman as Beautiful Soul serving to re-create and secure women's social position as noncombatants and men's identity as warriors. In this brilliant, startlingly original inquiry, a distinguished political philosopher and feminist demonstrates that the old myths-flattering to both men and women-will not do. They are defied by the reality of female bellicosity and sacrificial male love, and undermined by ambiguous issues-from the role of women in combat, to the moral imperatives of just wars. Finding inadequate the very forms of war discourse, Elshtain shakes us loose from both the institutional language of international-relations and conventional military narrative to open her book to the culture of war as she and her family experienced it in Colorado during and after the Second World War, thus creating a new genre of the woman's war story. Incorporating a vast range of materials, from history to cultural anthropology, popular culture, and feminist theory, she then critiques standard political theory from Aristotle to the present and shows how that theory itself constructs a life of collective conflict. By attacking the roots of war in the myths of war, Elshtain lays open the promise of a radical reconstruction of our political order.

Jean Elshtain examines how the myths of Man as "Just Warrior" and Woman as "Beautiful Soul" serve to recreate and secure women's social position as noncombatants and men's identity as warriors. Elshtain demonstrates how these myths are undermined by the reality of female bellicosity and sacrificial male love, as well as the moral imperatives of just wars.