

War is inconceivable without some image, or concept, of the enemy. It is the presence of the enemy that gives meaning and justification to war. ‘War follows from feelings of hatred’, wrote Carl Schmitt. ‘War has its own strategic, tactical, and other rules and points of view, but they all presuppose that the political decision has already been made as to who the enemy is’. The concept of the enemy is fundamental to the moral assessment of war: ‘The basic aim of a nation at war in establishing an image of the enemy is to distinguish as sharply as possible the act of killing from the act of murder’. However, we need to be cautious about thinking of war and the image of the enemy that informs it in an abstract and uniform way. Rather, both must be seen for the cultural and contingent phenomena that they are