

B. Discussion Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Can you think of additional issues in IR, beyond those noted in this introduction, to which *LOTR* might have relevance? What about specific regional or subregional concerns?
2. Identify a foreign policy action and assess its impact in terms of Order and Justice. Can you think of historical instances in which one of these goals received too much priority over the other, with detrimental consequences?
3. In what ways does the Ring of Power resemble a WMD in our world? How is it different?

CHAPTER ONE

1. When reflecting on the Shire, Rivendell, and Mordor, what systems in the real world, past or present, come to mind? How do the domestic characteristics of these political entities influence the quality and nature of their foreign policies?
2. How would missing voices—referring to those on the lower rungs of various societies (e.g., women of different races or members of lower classes)—have changed deliberations at the Council of Elrond? What issues would have been added? How would the deliberations process have been changed? How would later politics (e.g., among the Fellowship or after the completion of the quest) have been altered?
3. Give examples of dependency influencing the playing out of foreign policy. Are there instances within the developed, as well as developing, world that come to mind?
4. How might Frodo's journey have succeeded in a way that brought a greater sense of Justice than simply destroying Sauron's evil empire? What tactics might the Free Peoples have prioritized, if any, along those lines?

CHAPTER TWO

1. How do you see your vision of IR overall? Do you find a particular paradigm, or combination of them, to be appealing? Why or why not?
2. Take an event from *LOTR* and assess it, respectively, from problem-solving and critical points of view. Do you see potential for synthesis for that event in particular or perhaps even in general?
3. Consider a foreign policy problem for the United States or another state. Assess possible outcomes of action on the basis of Miles' Law. How might that law impact the positions advocated by bureaucracies such as the departments of State or Homeland Security (or their equivalents elsewhere)?
4. Based on criteria from critical IR, who would you designate as the least- and most-appealing characters in Middle-earth? Why?

CHAPTER THREE

1. Why would you guess that Marxist and related approaches ended up being shut out of the first Great Debate in IR? Can you think of worthwhile ideas that still lack a place within IR theorizing even now?
2. Who do you side with (mostly, if not exclusively) in each of the three Great Debates? Why?
3. Can you think of leaders in our world who remind you of Saruman? Describe the narratives in terms of which they are framed and how people have organized reality in response to those stories.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Can you think of additional causes of war, over and above those enumerated in this chapter?
2. Focus on a war other than those covered in this chapter. Use figure 3 to organize and present the causes of that war.
3. Given the causes of war presented in this chapter, what do you see as one or more dangerous-looking situations in the world today?
4. Consider, instead of causes, the consequences of war. Select a case of war and assess its consequences in terms of Order and Justice.
5. Among those presented in this chapter, what theories might have some relevance to peace building as opposed to merely the causes of war? Can you think of other factors that might be more relevant to sustaining peace, beyond those included in this chapter?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. What does it mean that we view the world through different kinds of colored lenses? How does using a “gender-sensitive lens” help us explain and understand global politics?
2. How can we analyze violence (e.g., domestic violence, human trafficking, or war) from different feminist perspectives? How would rationalist, standpoint, and postmodern feminist approaches link such violence to state behavior? What are the policy implications of each approach?
3. After 9/11 the United States initiated the War on Terror. Would this have been possible if the War on Terror had incorporated a gender-sensitive lens? If so, how might it have been conducted? Think especially about war impacts and empathetic dialogue.
4. How could the foreign policy priorities of United States (or another state) change in order to promote greater Justice or greater Order? What should move from background to foreground in a given issue or approach (e.g., diplomacy, development, or defense)?

CHAPTER SIX

1. What groups do you identify with (e.g., national, ethnic, racial, gender, class, sexual, or religious identity)? What stereotypes are assumed to be “natural” about these groups? How do these stories privilege or constrain you?
2. Think of examples of propaganda in the real world. Do you see instances of feminization? What kind of relationships (e.g., dominating or egalitarian) does this support—individually, nationally, and globally?
3. How might feminist care ethics, empathic war fighting, and related concepts be implemented in the real world of foreign policy?
4. Compare a real world event to one in Middle-earth through a gender-sensitive lens. How might concerns raised in one context influence thinking about the other?
5. How is the “personal” also “international”? How is the international also personal? Consider your own experience, evidence in Middle-earth, or evidence in our world (e.g., colonialism, neocolonialism, or nation building).

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What other key issues, in your opinion, could be explored in the same way as those currently included in this chapter?
2. Consider a case of war, other than the War in Iraq, and focus on how its long-term consequences might be inconsistent with its short-term goals. What could have been done to make these better match up?
3. Think about a traditional hero story that is told about the United States (e.g., the United States as policeman to the world). How does recognizing and valuing a broader set of voices change this story? What are the foreign policy implications?
4. Imagine somehow, as a counterfactual, that the 9/11 hijackers somehow could be alive. What would you recommend for them, bearing in mind this chapter’s analysis of mercy in the context of characters from *LOTR*?

CONCLUSION

1. Consider a foreign policy action that is either just getting under way or on the brink of coming about. What would constitute a Just action in this context?
2. Return now to paradigms and theories. How have your views on these frameworks changed, if at all, as a result of reading this book?
3. What are most important parallels and differences vis-à-vis the international relations of Middle-earth in comparison to the real world? What have you gained by making the comparison?