

*Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict*. Edited by Alice MacLachlan and Allen Speight. Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life 1. London: Springer Science+Business Media, 2013. Pp. 238. EUR €99.95 paper.

*Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict* offers eleven broad-ranging essays that consider the obligations, demands, and conceptual complexities of conflicts and their aftermaths. Divided into three parts, this volume brings together scholars working predominantly in philosophy, but also in political theory and peace studies, to extend current debates on war, justice and post-conflict reconciliation. The editors, Alice MacLachlan and Allen Speight, pose two distinct, but related, questions in their opening address: “What are the moral obligations facing participants and bystanders in the wake of conflict? How have theoretical understandings of justice, peace, and responsibility changed in the face of the contemporary realities of war?” Framed in this way, the dynamic relationship between theory and action is immediately offered as the organising logic of the volume.

In Part I, ‘What is War? What is Peace?’, Nir Eisikovits argues that lack of recognition about the utility of truces – as a condition in between the traditional dichotomy between war and peace, has had the effect of making wars last longer, and ‘more brutal’, than they might otherwise be. Grounded in historical examples such as the Détente between the Soviet Union and the United States, political relationships between a range of Middle Eastern countries, such as between Israel and Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt, Eisikovits notes that military conflicts since the late 1940s have tended to progress along asymmetrical trajectories. He goes on to suggest that in the face of these ragged conflicts, ‘Truce Thinking’ might provide meaningful interim outcomes in the face of ongoing conflict, compared to the futurity of Peace Thinking.

The significance of asymmetrical power relations also threads through Chapter 3, where philosopher Anat Biletzki considers ‘peace-less reconciliation’ in the context of the long-running conflict between Israel and Palestine. Challenging the presupposition that reconciliation can only be initiated in the wake of conflict, Biletzki proposes a model that incorporates an ‘integrated process between [political] reconciliation and (even preliminary) peacemaking’ (33). This chapter also explores a distinction between *bona fide* peace projects and what Biletzki elsewhere calls ‘the peace industry’ (44). Arguably the strongest part of this chapter is the conclusion, which spells out more clearly the author’s argument via two case examples—*Zochrot* and *Combatants for Peace*. The latter is composed of ex-fighters from both Israel and Palestine, and the author notes that these individuals decided to ‘put down [their] guns’. It would be interesting to also learn the ‘how’ and ‘why’ this group was formed so as to understand how this process might emerge on a broader scale.

The fourth and fifth chapters in Part I are also based in philosophy. Gregory Fried compares and contrasts the philosophical positions taken up by Heidegger and Gandhi in relation to truth and conflict (Chapter 4). Of particular interest to both figures is the notion of 'human finitude', a condition that Fried posits where 'we necessarily find ourselves as members of an existing, historical community whose horizons are bounded by its own historical understanding...' (57). Fried then traces the divergent vectors of this condition for both Heidegger and Gandhi. In Chapter 5, Tanguay-Renaud explores the conditions of public emergencies such as war, focussing not on their public dimension, but on their specific characteristics as emergencies, including how the balance between value, risk and worth can be calibrated under conditions that qualify as emergencies.

Part II opens with an important chapter by Brian Orend on suggestions for a new Geneva Convention devoted to post-war justice. Orend commences by outlining the grounds for a new Convention before evaluating 'retributive' and 'rehabilitative' models of post-war responses to conflict, a comparison that, as noted by Orend, is not always clearly distinguishable. The discussion of the retributive model is anchored in two case examples of the settlements of World War I (through the Treaty of Versailles) and the Persian Gulf War (through the 1991 Treaty). Through the discussion, Orend highlights the problems associated with using punitive measures, making the argument that this paves the way for future conflict or war, and fails to punish its intended recipients. By contrast, Orend notes the success associated with the rehabilitative model of post-war measures used to deal with West Germany and Japan after World War II, in terms of extensive support for reform to educational and legal institutions.

While neither the 'retributive' nor 'rehabilitative' approach is entirely successful, Orend's chapter sets up a useful framework to think through the work of the subsequent chapters on rebuilding post-conflict (Chapter 7), and on political reconciliation and punishment (Chapter 8). In the latter, Colleen Murphy focuses on the treatment of 'grudge informers', who report personal enemies to authorities during conflict in an attempt to have them arrested or killed. The rub here is how to treat these grudge informers in a post-conflict or transitional states, with the recognition that the informer may well have been acting in accordance with the law during the time of conflict. Murphy explores this quandary in relation to a number of hypothetical conditions, and sheds light on the relevance of this tension for other conflict scenarios.

Part III, entitled 'The Shape of Reconciliation', offers an excellent survey of three distinct post-conflict settings, that is, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (Chapter 9), the role of apology and the Rwandan Genocide (Chapter 10), and Government apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canadian and Australian contexts

(Chapter 11). In Chapter 9, Ajume Wingo uses the TRC in South Africa to think through the role of TRCs more broadly as a strategy to heal societies scarred by internal conflicts. Wingo's discussion usefully considers the genealogy of the South African TRC, and also highlights the ways in which different participants in atrocities (victims, oppressors, and others) are un/related. Wingo's analysis is sensitive to the differences between conflicts, and the way in which future TRCs can be flexibly managed to meet difference needs for successful reconciliation.

The next chapter on apology in the context of the Rwandan genocide offers a gripping account of the role and place of apology in recognition and material remuneration. Thoughtful and provocative, the penultimate chapter of the book compares national apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia, and here, Alice MacLachlan analyses the difference functions of apology, and assesses their future benefit in emotional and material terms. Margaret Urban Walker opens the final chapter with a useful survey on the history of reparation and its role in modern conflicts before turning to its focus on its expressive dimension – a novel analytical framework.

This book is a useful resource for different participants in post-conflict resolution such as policy makers, lawyers, scholars, and other groups invested in exploring theoretical and practical options for justice and reconciliation. The essays are diverse in scope and approach, and while the more theoretical chapters offer useful points of inquiry, the contributions that combine theoretical with practical excursions into the past, carefully illuminate possible directions for responding to highly complex situations such as conflict and war.

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