

Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding. Edited by Jennifer J. Llewellyn and Daniel Philpott. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 263. US \$34.95 paper.

This volume is the outcome of cross-disciplinary work by scholars of reconciliation and restorative justice at the Kroc Institute for International Peace (University of Notre Dame). The ten chapters seek to clarify the “cacophony and contestation” (7) surrounding ideas pertaining to the merits and limits of reconciliation and restorative justice. The volume illuminates these concepts within the frame of global peacebuilding. In the introductory chapter, the editors articulate three assumptions they want to redress: first, scholars in reconciliation studies and scholars in restorative justice studies engage with each other “remarkably little” (8); second, the two fields remain under-theorized and, hence, are in need of a “theory oriented to practice” (8); and, third, the “relational” dimension of reconciliation and restorative justice needs our attention. The editors assert that what makes restorative justice and reconciliation distinct is that they are relational: they create and restore human relations within a social fabric. Such relational approaches are vital for developing “holistic, integrated concepts of justice” (3, 8).

The notion of restoring “right relations” (17) is further developed in Chapter 1, written by the co-editors Jennifer Llewellyn (for whom, strangely, there is no biography in the otherwise complete list of contributors) and Daniel Philpott. They distinguish the concepts of restorative justice and reconciliation from both retributive justice (with its focus on punishment) and liberal philosophies of individualism (with their focus on individual agency). They argue that relational approaches do not isolate and separate individuals but, to the contrary, connect people affected by injustice: individual and communities, wrongdoers and victims. “At their core, relational approaches to justice are concerned . . . with the harm and effects of wrongs on relationships at all levels: individual, group, community, national, and international” (16); they are based on “dialogue and encounter; non-adversarial, multi-party, and future-focused” (23).

Llewellyn and Philpott place themselves (and, by extension, the whole volume) among “relation scholars” (18), who have worked on repairing the harm that is the result of injustice, wrongdoings, and crimes. Feminist theorists are particularly pointed out as advocates of relation theory that eschews liberal notions of autonomous selves. Curiously, though, no reference is made to important works in the area by feminist philosophers Claudia Card (*The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil*; 2002) and Margaret Walker (*Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing*; 2006).

Each chapter addresses a particular aspect related to the concepts of restorative justice and reconciliation. In chapter 2, Aaron Boesenecker and Leslie Vinjamuri (both scholars of international politics) suggest various typologies among actors in peacebuilding organizations. They distinguish between “identity-based actors” (who limit their commitment to social, ethnic, religious, or national groups with whom they identify) and “universalist” actors, whose vision transcends parochial interests (40). Within the universalist group, Boesenecker and Vinjarumi further distinguish between “secular universalists,” who frame justice issues within international law, and “faith-based universalists,” who follow moral commitments that transcend both the judicial realm of international law and any narrow identity-based advocacy. Whereas “identity-based actors” and “secular universalists” tend to support retributive justice, “faith-based universalists,” Boesenecker and Vinjamuri argue, tend to embrace restorative justice models.

This typology is further refined by classifying peacebuilding activists as “legalists,” “restorers,” and “capacity-builders.” The former—secular and faith-based legalists—insist on legal and moral accountability and international human rights standards. Secular and faith-based restorers approach peacebuilding pragmatically through negotiation and compromise rather than insistence on judicial accountability. Finally, the capacity-builders pursue peacebuilding as a long-term commitment to nonviolence and reconciliation.

The chapter by Jonathan VanAntwerpen (trained in philosophy and sociology) examines how the language of reconciliation has seeped into the public and scholarly discourse of truth commissions and transitional justice organizations. He argues that the language of reconciliation has challenged many of the political and legal assumptions of the secular human rights community. South African archbishop Desmond Tutu serves as a prime example. Tutu, VanAntwerpen argues, managed to insert a heterodox voice into an established discourse—a discourse that claimed the pursuit of “truth” and “accountability” as a progressive political act while denigrating “reconciliation” as right-wing attempts at cover-up and impunity. Regrettably, the important point about the heterodox character of reconciliation is almost lost in VanAntwerpen’s lengthy and somewhat unfocused chapter.

Daniel Van Ness’ chapter on accountability suggests that, at the end of the twentieth century, the State’s exclusive authority in determining criminal accountability was challenged by two movements: the victim rights movement and the restorative justice movement. These movements, however, were not pursuing the same goals. The former focused on victim-centered compensation and reparations, the latter on redressing relational harms. Van Ness proposes to address issues of past injustices not on the grounds of victimhood but responsibility. By distinguishing between levels of “direct” responsibility for crimes (individuals or organizations), “secondary” responsibility (bystanders and beneficiaries), and “social responsibility” by communities, he embeds questions of justice in the community, away from the State’s exclusive jurisdiction (129).

Louise Mallinder (international law; human rights) looks at the role of political amnesty within the practice of reconciliation and restorative justice. After discussing whether restorative justice is compromised justice or full justice (or whether it should be pursued only in exceptional circumstances), she suggests a list of principles to be followed when considering political amnesty. They include: active participation of all people affected, discussion of appropriate outcomes among stakeholders, “answerability” by the wrongdoers, repairing of harms, and dialogical encounters between victims and offenders (156).

Stephen Pope (theology) provides historical context in his ethical exploration of how the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation overlap and differ. Referencing the South African theologian De Gruchy, Pope helpfully distinguishes between political reconciliation (“moving beyond collective forms of enmity”) and social reconciliation (“overcoming alienation between and within communities at local levels”) (179). Charles Villa-Vicencio (South Africa) makes a strong case for reparations. The alternative, he states, are cycles of retribution. Reparations must include but also go beyond the material level; their goal is to infuse a socially transformative dimension in order to “restore the human dignity of others” (204). John Braithwaite (Australia) introduces different indigenous traditions of restorative justice. What he calls “traditional justice”

is often, as he writes, a hybrid blend of local cultures and Christianity. His chapter mentions the Rwandan *gacaca* trials, the Fijian *bulubulu* reconciliation traditions, the Mozambiquean *magamba* spirits, the Indonesian philosophy of *gotong royong*, and the role of laughter and humor.

The last chapter is written as a concluding summary and outlook. Jason Springs (religion; ethics) uses the motif of “*transformational* vision” to synthesize the preceding chapters (242). The chapter’s verbiage, however, makes it difficult to discern a consistent streak of thought. Also, some of the laudatory comments about the volume strike this reviewer as unnecessarily hyperbolic. To cite one example: “In fact, it is tempting to describe what unfolds in these pages as the makings of yet another ‘paradigm shift’—a shift that overturns the prevailing conception of ‘justice’” (241). The volume is engaging, but such inflated praise is unwarranted. The ideas discussed here are not altogether new (the bibliographic references attached to each chapter demonstrate this easily). There is also redundancy, perhaps unavoidably so in an edited volume. Some chapters could have been condensed, others would have benefitted from a more clearly structured exposition. Yet, *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding* helps to conceptualize the complex social, legal, moral, and political dimensions of reconciliation and restorative justice, and for this reason, it is worthwhile reading.

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