

Related thoughts might lead to a better defence of narrative ethics. Small persuasively suggests that the standard ways in which narrative is used in ethical writings is often somewhat glib. This seems true and is an aspect of her work that is surely useful for medical ethicists to dwell upon. However, Small does not fully acknowledge the extent to which the notion of the narrative unity of a life plays a role in thinking about old age. It allows us, once again, to point to our embedded nature as human beings whose lives are co-authored by others. Our narratives interconnect in a way that commends dependency in old age (as in the rest of our lives) as a good thing. Furthermore, this interdependency highlights the importance of community and the need for social justice. These types of consideration – as George Agich has demonstrated – are vital in our thinking about old age and about how we should approach it for ourselves and on behalf of others.

Small's book is beautifully written, full of insights and fully engaging. There is no doubt in my mind that she has achieved her aim of broadening our thoughts about old age. She has also thrown the gauntlet down for philosophers: old age raises a mixture of legal, ethical, metaphysical and other conceptual issues that need to be considered in more detail. In so doing she has also shown how literature can contribute to these discussions and, thus, she has advanced the cause of medical humanities. If we are interested in old age, we should be interested by the themes of this book.

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The Philosophy of War and Peace

JENNY TEICHMAN

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Anyone interested in the philosophy of conflict will find a comprehensive, forthright and valuable account in Jenny Teichman's latest new book, *The Philosophy of War and Peace*. Much modern moral philosophy tends towards the bureaucratic and obscure. Teichman's work, by contrast, traverses conceptually rough ground with exuberance and ease. Given the breadth of the task she sets herself – to supply a historical, philosophical, political and military strategic analysis of war and peace – this is no mean accomplishment in a book of three hundred or so pages. Readers who want a concentrated analysis (pure politics, for example) will be disappointed; those who like a good read will not.

The Philosophy of War and Peace ranges over the philosophical treatises of the Greeks, medievals and Western philosophers (from Buddha to Gandhi), international law and declarations surrounding war, and the accounts of terrorism, torture, and ransom that characterise the practice of war. Divided into six parts the book may be briefly summarised as encompassing just war theory, unjust wars and injustice in war, popular resistance against injustice, the claims of pacifism and the claims of ethical theory. The first part includes a useful introduction to the theories of just war from Plato and Aristotle, to Aquinas, Vitoria, Grotius, Hobbes, Anscombe, Kenny, and Finnis. Parts II and III address the question of the horrors of war. 'Bomber' Sir Arthur Harris, the Chief Air Marshal who ordered the attacks on cities in Germany in 1943, is introduced

to challenge any latent amorality about the conduct of the Allied forces. It is generally acknowledged that Harris authorised the obliteration bombing of cities and towns with no military potential whatsoever. Like Professor Elizabeth Anscombe, her long-time friend and colleague, Teichman takes issue with the utilitarian doctrine that asserts that the purpose of bringing a swifter end to the war justified the means used. She brings the debate alive with references to Bishop George Bell who, in the House of Lords challenged the government on its policy of bombing residential rather than military targets ('If it is permissible to drive inhabitants to desire peace by making them suffer, why not allow pillage, burning, torture, murder, rape?').

Elizabeth Anscombe had similar reservations about the conduct of the war by the Allied forces. In 1956, when the University of Oxford proposed that President Harry S. Truman be given an honorary doctorate, Anscombe famously objected and demanded a vote for the proposal. Teichman peppers the account with detail. 'Some came along to support Mr Truman, others to foil what they suspected was a plot concocted by certain inherently incomprehensible people, namely, the female academics' (p. 32). In the end, Anscombe, Philippa Foot and Margaret Hubbard and M.R.D. Foot opposed the proposals to give Truman his degree and Anscombe published her pamphlet 'Mr Truman's degree' which in turn inspired many (this reviewer included) to reconsider the fundamental dispute at the heart of the analysis, namely the notion that the end justifies the means, a central tenet of varieties of utilitarianism. Teichman advises us that Anscombe in 1984 admitted in conversation that she lacked the skills of Jonathan Swift and 'for that reason regretted the somewhat intemperate tone of "War and Murder"'. Of Anscombe, Teichman writes: 'She makes no allowance for stupidity but in effect insists that all her unnamed opponents are bad people, not fools but knaves' (p. 34). The claim is certainly great fun and makes good philosophical reading, but in the context of her own off-the-cuff remarks, '[Sigmund Freud] was a well-read man (for a doctor)' (p. 15), 'Nietzsche, not a consistent thinker, also proposed a new set of "oughts"' (ibid.), a cursory examination of the 'popular entertainment' called 'Gangsta rap' will reveal heterosexual men 'who absolutely hate women' (p. 107), it prompts one to wonder whether the amusing descent into sweeping generalisation, the personal and sometimes ad hominem, is not, after all, an inbuilt trait of this particular squad of female Oxbridge academics.

Teichman is best when she pits the politics of totalitarianism, indoctrination, and torture against the moral malaise that characterises contemporary Western thought. Towards the end of her book she observes of amorality that: '[i]f right and wrong do not refer to realities there can be no objectively valid reasonings to show that Harry Truman or J.F. Kennedy, or Josef Stalin or Mao Tse Tung ever acted well or badly, no objectively valid reasonings for or against killing people, for or against instigating the third world war, for or against harbouring delusions and suicidal policies' (p. 234). She analyses David Hume's fact-value distinction and Ayer's 'egregious and ever popular' Boo-Hurrah theory both of which imply that all propositions about good and evil express purely subjective states of mind, boos and hurrahs, of approval or disapproval. She goes on to point out that there is every reason to suppose that the relativism of John Mackie, Simon Blackburn and Alfred Ayer produces the 'climate of delusion' that 'there is nothing that is categorically bad, bad in all circumstances' (ibid.). With these kinds of pre-suppositions underpinning practical moral questions (to torture or not to torture, for example), their relativism allows, and indeed requires, that men and women become complicit in moral outrages. Teichman relays the objections to the moral anti-realists

but leaves one wanting more philosophy. For this the reader will have to turn to Teichman's other works like *Social Ethics* (Oxford, Blackwell 1996) and *Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide* (with Katherine Evans, Blackwell, 1995), both stimulating introductions to general moral theory that take the reader further into philosophy than this book allows. It is there that one will discover that Teichman holds that almost all moral theories assume that there are rational foundations from which it is possible to derive judgments about what acts and states of affairs are better or worse than others (p. 14, *Social Ethics*). Insofar as they deny that they do so, they contradict themselves. Objectivism is, for Teichman, the ethical bedrock from which moral questions can often be answered.

Teichman introduces her reader to the philosophy of war by way of example. Historians, military strategists and political analysts will complain that the book does no justice to their specialisms. But if a philosophical page-turner is wanted, one that is full of insight and evident concern for the way the moral world is, Teichman's 'The Philosophy of War and Peace' performs admirably.

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