

*Expanding Responsibility for the Just War: A Feminist Critique*, Rosemary Kellison (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 264 pp., \$105 cloth, \$84.00 eBook.

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Rosemary Kellison's new book builds on the growing body of feminist just war scholarship to pose a critique of the just war tradition that draws on a relational theory of autonomy. Humans are relational beings; therefore, all of our actions can only be understood within the multitude of relationships we have and the power structures into which those relationships fall. Because of this interdependency, human action may have unintended consequences, which bears greater attention in just war thinking. Unlike her predecessors, Kellison conducts an immanent critique of the tradition, thereby "focus[ing] not on the concepts of gender, women, patriarchy, and masculinity, but instead on modern Western ethical categories such as tradition, agency, intention, and justice" (p. 13). *Expanding Responsibility for the Just War* demonstrates a thorough command of the just war canon, and as a result, the scholars with whom she engages will be hard-pressed to dismiss her position, at least not without considerable effort. Indeed, in an era of inclusive academia, it would behoove more just war scholars to incorporate feminist critiques with greater epistemological tolerance, starting with this book.

Kellison begins by noting that her "central focus is on the tradition of moral reasoning that has come to underlie international humanitarian law and US military policy," and says she is "especially interested in the ways this reasoning justifies practices of assigning, taking, and evading

responsibility—particularly for acts that cause harm to non-combatants, the most vulnerable persons in any armed conflict" (p. 3).

Indeed, the book is clearly structured as a journey into the heart of intention, which figures in both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* principles in the criteria of right intention and discrimination, respectively. Kellison criticizes the evasion of responsibility for noncombatant deaths in war, which a narrow understanding of intention and the weighing of proportionality and double effect allows. She argues this traditional approach may often be self-serving, as it only thinly recognizes the harm that comes to noncombatants in war. Instead, she reconceptualizes and expands intention via relational autonomy, which in turn allows for a more inclusive, more *aware*, understanding of responsibility for harm.

In a clear and succinct discussion of relational autonomy, Kellison establishes the ties that bind people to each other. Kellison is also deeply cognizant of the power dynamics that allow people to diminish these relational ties, leading to some level of dehumanization of a weaker "other." Dehumanization allows a vulnerable other to be harmed with seemingly little recognition of this harm, and thus just war theorizing must take into account that "one group of persons who have been made much more vulnerable than others because of their particular situation within power relationships is civilians living in areas where violent force is being used" (p. 33).

Additionally, Kellison is not content to let the harms of war be tied solely to injury and death as just war thinkers typically do, a tendency that can allow people to elide responsibility for harm. In order to address this, Kellison investigates claims of moral injury—or the harm that occurs when someone, typically a soldier, is forced to act against his or her personal morality. Indeed, this is the standard framing of moral injury. Importantly, Kellison expands moral injury to include the harm done to noncombatants, including the various harms that make it very difficult or impossible for people to engage with their culture and the world around them. Therefore, in Kellison's development of moral injury the concept includes the harm that affects people's ability to relate to others and the world around them.

As a consequence, any contemplation of right intention must also factor in harm short of death and possibly absent of physical injury. The focus on intention is obvious, as it is "the most important factor in legitimizing or condemning acts of violence against non-combatants" (p. 102). Just as those who are harmed are not fully autonomous individuals, those making the decision to engage in war are also "inhibited" by their own relationships, social context, and political structures (p. 103). Furthermore, hegemonic powers can persuade other states or actors of their right intention and just cause—even when this may not be the case—thus making intention *and* legitimate authority subjective.

Intention cannot just be centered on a calculation of physical harm to a population that the decision-makers may value less than their own. Instead, "intention must be expanded—both over time, such that it is considered within a broader narrative of character, and over relationships, such that other persons' roles in interpreting and attributing intention are recognized as partly

constitutive of intention itself" (p. 121). In this way, those who begin to deliberate on the justness of a war should do so with a greater degree of relationality in mind.

In sum, Kellison elegantly articulates a different way of being and thinking in just war. She asks her reader to make a not insignificant epistemic shift: to let relationships lead and to let power and the seduction of power, *even within* just war thinking (which is often romanticized as being above such things), take a back seat. This call for a reconsideration of priorities within the just war tradition is an important one. Like other feminists before her, Kellison is deeply aware of the entrenched just war thinking she is up against, where there has not been much discussion of the *actual violence* of war against "persons, communities, and relationships; or of how those kinds of harms might be healed or those relationships reconciled in order to make peace more possible" (p. 223). Kellison lays the blame for this omission on a broadly defined Christian realism, whose ontological dynamic of power and sin fails to "harmonize peace-building ethics with just war reasoning" (p. 223). Here I disagree somewhat. I think the resistance to more creative ways of approaching just war is not due to this narrow group of scholars but to an epistemic position that determines who belongs (or does not) to the community of just war scholars, and to what scholarship should be studied. To that end, greater engagement with gender structures may prove helpful.

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