Expanding Responsibility for the Just War

As demonstrated in any armed conflict, war is violent and causes grave harm to innocent persons, even when fought in compliance with just war criteria. In this book, Rosemary Kellison presents a feminist critique of just war reasoning, with particular focus on the issue of responsibility for harm to noncombatants. Contemporary just war reasoning denies the violence of war by suggesting that many of the harms caused by war are necessary, though regrettable, injuries for which inflicting agents bear no responsibility. She challenges this narrow understanding of responsibility through a feminist ethical approach that emphasizes the relationality of humans and the resulting asymmetries in their relative power and vulnerability. According to this approach, the powerful individual and collective agents who inflict harm during war are responsible for recognizing and responding to the vulnerable persons they harm, thereby reducing the likelihood of future violence. Kellison’s volume goes beyond abstract theoretical work to consider the real implications of an important ethical problem.

Rosemary Kellison is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of West Georgia. A scholar of comparative religious ethics, she has published in the Journal of Religious Ethics, Soundings, and the Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion.
Expanding Responsibility for the Just War

A Feminist Critique

ROSEMARY KELLISON
University of West Georgia
To Timothy
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