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Terrorism: A Philosophical Enquiry, by Schwenkenbecher Anne

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philosophical theories in general. Saul considers an abundance of puzzle cases and sheds new light on them all.

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Schwenkenbecher, Anne, *Terrorism: A Philosophical Enquiry*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 200, US\$85.00 (hardback).

Despite the voluminous philosophical literature on terrorism, the debate can be framed in terms of two deceptively straightforward questions: ‘What is terrorism?’ and ‘Under what circumstances can terrorism be morally justified?’ In her important contribution to the debate, Anne Schwenkenbecher powerfully argues for the importance of providing a clear and principled answer to the former question, in order to successfully tackle the latter. The book has two parts, dealing with each element in turn.

After rigorous and thoughtful discussion, Schwenkenbecher settles on this definition of terrorism: an indirect strategy of using fear induced by violent attacks or force against one group of people, as a means to intimidate or coerce another group of people and influence their actions, in order to achieve further political goals [38].

The novel feature of this definition is that it makes no reference to the status of those against whom terrorism is used. Whereas the majority of contemporary accounts hold that terrorism is necessarily inflicted on those who are ‘innocent’ or, at least, are ‘non-combatants’, Schwenkenbecher’s view is open to the possibility that terrorism can be directed at the non-innocent. Accordingly, the distinguishing features of terrorism lie in its manipulative method, not in facts about its agents or victims. The virtue of this account is that it avoids importing any morally loaded terms into the definition of terrorism, and thus provides a neutral starting point from which to properly evaluate its permissibility.

Schwenkenbecher’s neutral definition allows her to draw some neglected distinctions in assessing the morality of terrorism. She points out that terrorism may be required to meet different justificatory burdens depending on whom it is employed against. Whereas terrorism against the innocent requires that the conditions of ‘Supreme Emergency’ be met (where the rights of the innocent are overridden by the (much) greater good), terrorism against those who are liable to harm may be justified in terms of the non-consequentialist framework of the just war tradition. This is not to say that the latter is easier to justify than the former—Schwenkenbecher concludes by raising the interesting and under-explored issue of justifying the collateral killing that will often result from terrorist attacks, even those directed at the non-innocent.

This book demonstrates the value of traditional philosophical analysis for thinking about the most contemporary of ethical problems.

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