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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Avery Plaw, ed.. *The Metamorphosis of War.* Amsterdam: Rodopi Bv Editions, 2012. 276 pp. $78.00, paper, ISBN 978-90-420-3571-3.

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Published on H-War (May, 2014)

Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air University)

Volume 80 in the Probing the Boundaries series "War, Civil Conflict, Peace and Security," ***The Metamorphosis of War*** addresses the rapidly changing face of war in the modern age and contemporary responses to it. The contents of the book derive from the Fifth Global Conference on War, Virtual War and Human Security, which took place in Budapest, Hungary, between May 5-7, 2008. As an interdisciplinary forum, the participants--and, by extension, the essays included in this volume--approached the questions raised by modern war from philosophical, ethical, and statistical perspectives, while maintaining an active dialogue with the evolution of war theory from Clausewitz to the apparent dissolution of "traditional" interstate wars as insurgency strategies came to the forefront of armed conflict.

In their introduction, Avery Plaw and Axel Augé identify four distinct characteristics endemic to this "new war," characteristics drawn from a close reading of the articles comprising the contents of the book. First, interstate wars have largely given way to expansive and extended civil wars. Interstate military involvement is generally limited to actions against nonstate belligerents (e.g., the United States versus Al Qaeda). Second, these civil wars are motivated more by a desire to draw external attention to a particular grievance--in other words, they are publicity-motivated--than to draw their own governments' attention to traditional motives for civil war (defined by Plaw and Augé as perceived or actual cultural, religious, or economic disparities). Third, civilians have become accepted targets for insurgency forces, while state-sponsored militaries pay lip-service to civilian deaths as unavoidable, if accidental, collateral damage. Fourth, the authors of the essays collected in ***The Metamorphosis of War*** conclude that these characteristics have forced armed conflict to an unprecedented level of politicization: casualty statistics alone are no longer sufficient to force a belligerent to capitulate and thereby end a war.

The first part of the book concentrates on an almost purely theoretical discussion of war. Nick Mansfield examines arguments from Clausewitz,

Hobbes, and Kant in an attempt to expose the "false duality of war and peace" (p. xiii), but ultimately rejects them all, arguing that all three perspectives instead illustrate the intrinsic interconnectivity between war and peace. From this realization, he argues, we can then begin to understand the fundamental dialogues of war, peace, and their human elements. Jason Edwards utilizes Michel Foucault's philosophical thought as a model for his argument that modern critiques of theories of war and extant armed conflicts attempt reductive essentialist fallacies. He argues that a Foucaultian model of interpretation permits one to examine prevailing reports of the circumstances of modern war (particularly those reports fashioned in the shape of Carl Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction), revitalizes the political element of war, and re-emphasizes political dialogue as a viable alternative to war. Bob Brecher's piece concludes this first section with a vital question: in a world dominated by the "War on Terror," do we experience political terrorism? He argues that we do not, for no terrorist group uses violence as an end in and of itself.

Part 2 of *The Metamorphosis of War* presents a series of case studies for consideration, seeking to identify the role and shape of security in the context of modern wars. Plaw presents the November 3, 2002 case of a United States Predator UAV annihilating a vehicle purported to contain six terrorists responsible for bombing the *U.S.S. Cole* in 2000. Plaw argues for the institution of several operational reforms that would provide increased legal accountability in future operations--legality that the operation he illustrates lacked. Benjamin Rampp, in his piece, argues that the term "human security" has lost its meaning. He argues that a rigorous process of narrowing the scope of the term's definition will revitalize the concept. Stuart Murray follows up on Rampp's piece, expressing the extent to which current operational concepts of diplomacy have become obsolete, and immediately disavows this perception. He argues, rather, that the perceived obsolescence of diplomacy in fact undermines diplomatic efforts to maintain national and human security. Murray examines a handful of emergent schools of diplomatic thought to support his case, concluding this section's focus on strategies for improving human security in the face of evolving forms of armed conflict.

Part 3 is dedicated to the social memory of war and historiographical approaches theretofore. Mustafa Serdan Palabıyık concentrates on how Ottoman history reveals a continual shift and re-presentation of war by intellectuals and political figures. He emphasizes that these changes are congruent with the evolution of Ottoman-Turkish historical conditions and shifting imperial interests. Pamela Chraibieh Badine argues that the means by which a society remembers war can in fact be an impediment to the peace process, and presents five case studies from recent Lebanese history to illustrate her point. To conclude this section, Tim Markham examines the impact of individual reporters of popular media through the processes of esotericization and ambivalence upon the popular perceptions of the consumer of armed conflict. He calls upon reporters to exercise greater awareness of the potential impact of the information they are disseminating, commenting that while advanced technologies permit near-instantaneous sharing of information, such a practice may not be expedient nor in humanity's best interest.

Part 4 returns to an academic examination of contemporary warfare. Timothy D. Hoyt examines the Irish Republican Army (IRA) from a sociological perspective, investigating its prolonged existence as a generational insurgency. Graeme Goldsworthy, Toby Chesson, and Erica Pasini focus on low-intensity warfare (LIW), presenting land-mine utilization in Sri Lanka as their example. They argue that international agreements--such as the international land-mine treaty--are unlikely to impede low-intensity warfare at all, and point to mechanistic problems such treaties

are supposed to address. Bård Macland argues that boredom--the soldier's eternal companion--is exacerbated by LIW, extends contemporary armed conflicts, and increases casualty rates. Boredom, he argues, interferes with a soldier's ability to cope with ennui and leads to lethargy. Low-intensity conflicts also draw less attention from politicians tasked with ending wars diplomatically. Indeed, politicians get bored as easily as soldiers, yet soldiers suffer because of the inaction of bored--or otherwise inattentive--policymakers.

The value of *The Metamorphosis of War* is manifold. To address Maeland's point, one could insist that this text be considered mandatory reading for any politician or policymaker at all engaged with questions of armed conflict and its impact, whatever it may be. Similarly, in this reviewer's experience, too few courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in history or international relations address the consequences past wars have had in shaping the modern world. Plaw et al. address this question in a sophisticated manner throughout the book, rendering the text all but useless to students below the third-year (or "junior") undergraduate level. Also, based on this reviewer's experience, this book quite succinctly addresses issues of a sociological and military-theoretical nature, making it highly useful for graduate-level students at military colleges, or otherwise engaged with their national and international security establishments. It appears that while non-North American readers may not benefit as directly from the case studies presented in ***The Metamorphosis of War***, a reader determined to derive lessons and guidance in equal measure will still benefit greatly from this work: the chapters address issues of contemporary warfare in a self-fulfilling holistic manner, starting with solid premises, concluding with meaningful suggestions, and all the while discussing various facets of the issues at hand and contextualizing them within the larger discussion as a whole.

Of greatest interest for civilian policymakers is Maeland's piece, while military servicemen and -women will likely benefit most from Mansfield's discussion on the evolving discourse between war and peace. Civilians--whether as students or professionals--will undoubtedly benefit most from Markham's exploration of popular media's role in perpetuating conflict, and will be faced with questions of an import quite unique in this work as they are posed by Chesson et al. pertaining to policy creation and low-intensity warfare.

In sum, Plaw has combined a series of articles that, to a layman, may only present a peripheral interest, but to those directly engaged with national and international security establishments, provides both context and an examination of consequence of issues that may not otherwise be brought to their explicit attention. The sophistication of the authors' engagement with their respective topics requires the reader to be capable of similar sophistication of thought, else the value of the book would be lost entirely. ***The Metamorphosis of War*** is therefore ideal for national- and human-security professionals, but this reviewer fears it may be wasted on those without an explicit, vested interest in the topics pursued therein.

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Citation: Ambjörn Adomeit. Review of Plaw, Avery, ed. *The Metamorphosis of War.* H-War, H-Net Reviews. May, 2014.

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