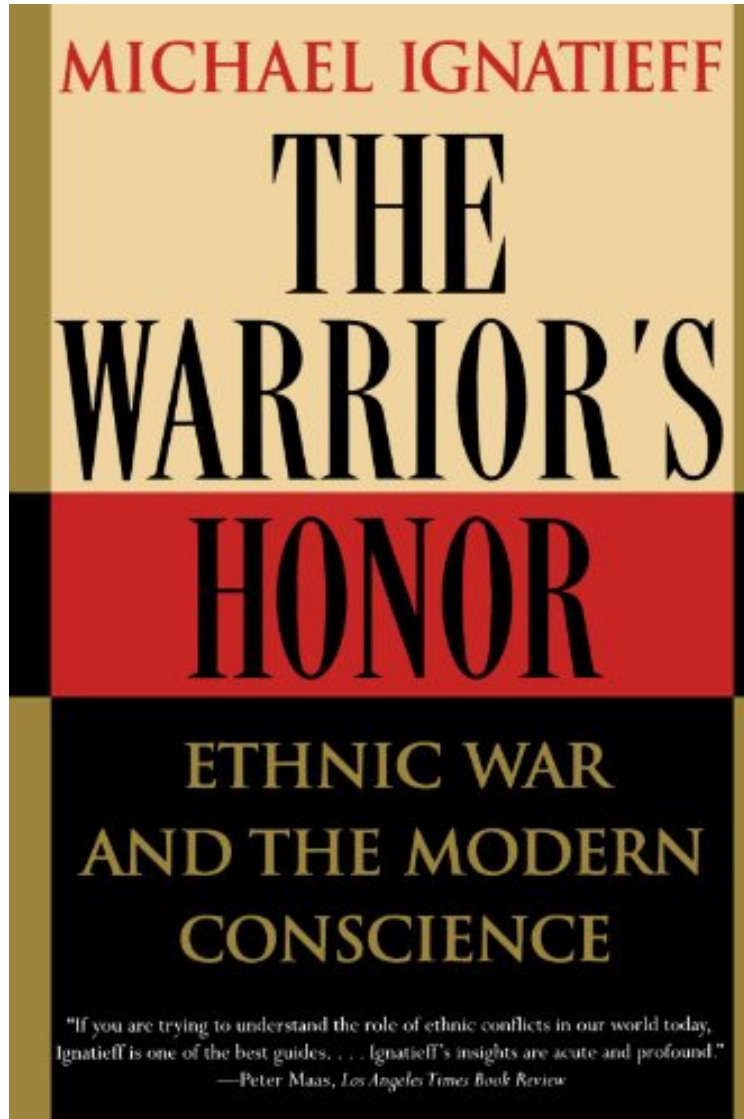


(Library ebook) The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience

The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience

Michael Ignatieff

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Michael Ignatieff : The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience:

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reset my perceptions of the International Red Cross. The IRC's principles in conflict zones are quite different than most of us believe. Ignatieff shows that where barbarism is concerned either organization is entirely willing to enter into an agreement of perpetual silence with the perpetrators in order to attempt to protect their ability to protect. The IRC's premise is that warriors have a code of honor that can be appealed to in order to preserve a minimum standard of ethical behavior in war. In some cases this works, in others it doesn't. Ignatieff does an excellent job of describing the moral dilemmas involved which are as relevant today as when he wrote about them.¹ of 1 people found the following review helpful. Approaches to a warring world

By Customer

The collapse of communism did not merely deprive writers of the Cold War genre fertile ground to drape their stories on. On a far more serious note, it deprived a lot of the warring factions of the world distinct adversaries and ideologies that they could take sides with. This vacuum took away the dialectical umbrella that by design or not provided some relatively sane and civilised ground rules for the fight. It gave rise instead to a battle against all and quarrels based on the flimsiest differences. In some other parts of the world the collapse of a central totalitarian authority or during or after civil wars, a similar command hiatus ensued. As Thomas Hobbes noted back in 1651, during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are [at] war; and such a war is of every man against every man. This book is Michael Ignatieff's philosophical rumination on the conflicts that have emanated in such situations. He plumbs his extensive journalistic experience covering such theatres of conflict as the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Angola and Zaire and Afghanistan (pre-2001) to provide necessary context for his discussion of the nature of war and its consequences. He begins with the premise that war is here to stay and, given that, what can we do about it, how we reduce the suffering it generates. Ignatieff realises that given the right trigger such as the collapse of a common enemy even minor differences between groups can transform brothers into enemies. He cites some writings of Sigmund Freud to support this axiom. Freud was tempted to derive from this narcissism of minor differences (such as the fact that not much may distinguish a Croat from a Serb barring such differences as the former may be Catholic while the latter is Orthodox) that it is simply such minor dissimilarities that form of the basis of hostility among them. Ignatieff's enquiry also ranges over such related questions as the success or failure of modern humanitarian reactions to ethnic struggles, how such responses are shaped by the media (particularly television) and the nature of truth and reconciliation. As he notes, all well-meaning people, nations and benevolent organisations recognise, to paraphrase James Joyce, the need to fly by the nets of nationality, language and religion. We also need to awake from the nightmare of our histories (to quote Joyce again). Ignatieff recognises none the less the futility of expecting war crimes trials, truth commissions and such instruments to perform as a panacea for putting a broken world back together. This is because acceptance of and tolerance for each other after years or decades of conflict cannot be manufactured or mandated. It requires instead a willing change in the hearts and minds of the people involved in such an exercise. This book is a collection of essays published in their original version between about 1993 and 1997. This was before 9/11 changed the dynamics of Western approach to terrorism and totalitarianism which did not hesitate to use the former as a tool. Since 9/11, the West has been less dovish and more aggressive in dealing with such ethnic and ideological confrontations. Despite the passage of years and such recent and significant developments, this book manages nevertheless to retain its contemporaneity. This may be because the fundamental catalysts for conflict and war and how humanity reacts to it do not appear to have changed much over the course of our history. Lastly, while Ignatieff's analysis is generally quite dispassionate, one can occasionally note a certain wistfulness, as though Ignatieff is wishing for a better world. This is certainly not a criticism as this may perhaps be the laudable objective that may have in fact impelled Ignatieff to write this book. If you are looking for an engaging study of ethnic conflict and how we deal with its consequences (without the dryness and verbosity of works by those academics and pseudo-experts who can't tell the difference between Rwanda and Rumania), this book is highly recommended. This book is also required reading for anyone who holds even vestiges of such values as the equality of all human beings and the social responsibilities we share in a globalised milieu and has not yet fallen over into the no-man's land of apathy and despair.

Since the early 1990s, Michael Ignatieff has traveled the world's war zones, from Bosnia to the West Bank, from Afghanistan to central Africa. *The Warrior's Honor* is a report and a reflection on what he has seen in the places where ethnic war has become a way of life. Ignatieff charts the rise of the new moral interventionists--the relief workers, reporters, delegates, and diplomats who believe that other people's misery is of concern to us all. And he brings us face-to-face with the new ethnic warriors--the warlords, gunmen, and paramilitaries--who have escalated postmodern war to an unprecedented level of savagery. Hard-hitting and passionate, *The Warrior's Honor* is a profound and searching exploration of the perils and obligations of moral citizenship in a world scarred by war and genocide.

.com Between 1993 and 1997, Michael Ignatieff traveled through the battlefields of modern ethnic war, visiting Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan to consider the mixture of moral solidarity and hubris that led Western nations to embark on the campaign of "putting the world to rights." Why do some people and nations, he wonders, feel morally responsible for strangers thousands of miles away? In *The Warrior's Honor*, Ignatieff explores this question by skillfully combining eyewitness accounts of modern war with a historian's insight into the constancy

of human conflict. Ignatieff's concisely written essays examine four primary themes: the moral connection created by modern culture with distant victims of war, the architects of postmodern war, the impact of ethnic war abroad on our thinking about ethnic accommodations at home (the "seductive temptation of misanthropy"), and the function of memory and social healing. He firmly believes that "the world is not becoming more chaotic or violent, although our failure to understand and act makes it seem so." *The Warrior's Honor* takes an important step toward educating the reader about the historical context of modern ethnic conflict. Perhaps most importantly, Ignatieff fosters discussion of the means by which deeper, more permanent commitments can be made in the future to minimize such atrocities. -- Bertina Loeffler

From Library Journal This collection of Ignatieff's previously published essays conveys through meticulous reporting the moral enigmas of current warfare. Each of the five essays poses a core dilemma: How has television's "promiscuous" gaze promoted both moral universalism and "generalized misanthropy"? How does Freud's idea of the "narcissism of minor difference" play itself out among the perpetrators of Bosnia's ethnic cleansing? Why does "moral disgust" in our reaction to Africa's killing fields deflect Western states from an effective response? The book's title comes from an essay about the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross to blunt the slaughter of Afghan innocents in appeals to "warrior's honor." Ignatieff (*Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, LJ 3/1/94) calls for the creation of a "saving distance" between myths of historical violence and the imperatives of present life. He is not optimistic, but serious readers will not flinch from these durable and troubling essays. Recommended for all academic and public libraries. ?Zachary T. Irwin, Pennsylvania State Erie, Pa. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Having spent much of the '90s traveling the world's "zones of danger," initially for *Blood and Belonging* (1994) and the parallel BBC/PBS series, Ignatieff here views the '90s ethnic horrors from a variety of angles. In the section "Is Nothing Sacred? The Ethics of Television," he explores the Western humanitarian consensus that TV news stories often activate, but he insists that "a dishonor is done when the flow of television news reduces all the world's horror to identical commodities." In "The Narcissism of Minor Difference," Ignatieff probes the fictions at the root of liberal beliefs as well as nationalist hatreds. In "The Seductiveness of Moral Disgust," he suggests that "in a postimperial age, we have forsworn imperial methods, but traces of imperial arrogance remain." "The Warrior's Honor" discusses the International Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions in a world where soldiers are often thugs or teenagers. "The Nightmare from Which We Are Trying to Awake" traces many nations' efforts to transcend revenge and consign their painful past violence to the past. Mary Carroll