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Jill Stauffer

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Jill Stauffer : Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard:

Ethical loneliness is the experience of being abandoned by humanity, compounded by the cruelty of wrongs not being acknowledged. It is the result of multiple lapses on the part of human beings and political institutions that, in failing to listen well to survivors, deny them redress by negating their testimony and thwarting their claims for justice. Jill

Stauffer examines the root causes of ethical loneliness and how those in power revise history to serve their own ends rather than the needs of the abandoned. Out of this discussion, difficult truths about the desire and potential for political forgiveness, transitional justice, and political reconciliation emerge. Moving beyond a singular focus on truth commissions and legal trials, she considers more closely what is lost in the wake of oppression and violence, how selves and worlds are built and demolished, and who is responsible for re-creating lives after they are destroyed. Stauffer boldly argues that rebuilding worlds and just institutions after violence is a broad obligation and that those who care about justice must first confront their own assumptions about autonomy, liberty, and responsibility before an effective response to violence can take place. In building her claims, Stauffer draws on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, Jean Amry, Eve Sedgwick, and Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as concrete cases of justice and injustice across the world.

A timely book rarely has the fecundity of the Continental approach to ethics been so clearly and persuasively on display. (Robert Bernasconi, Penn State University) To read *Ethical Loneliness* is to undergo the page-turning yet profoundly uncomfortable experience of struggling to hear the fractured stories told by survivors. Jill Stauffer's voice leads us carefully and thoughtfully through an unsettling hell of testimonies, showing us how difficult it is for us to linger in the discomfort of hearing about violent injustice without rushing through the ugly parts, forgetting the hard parts, dismissing the odd parts, straightening out the chronology, watering down the anger, denying the complicity, enforcing forgiveness or victimhood, whitewashing the ending, and missing what is not said and what cannot be put into words. This book, or rather, this experience of listening, is destined to become, like Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, a classic text in the field. It is really that good. (Linda Meyer, Quinnipiac University) Stauffer's book breaks through legalistic approaches to mass violence and oppression to uncover the conditions of the repair of lives and worlds in human interdependence. Her bold claims for widely diffused reparative responsibilities are built on close discussions of how together we author or destroy ourselves and worlds. Her impressive blending of contemporary events and philosophical reflection reveals the wide scope of responsibility that implicates us in the repair of others' suffering in ways we are usually glad to ignore or resist. (Margaret Urban Walker, Marquette University) Our relationship to our past is shifting, multiple, and emotive. In *Ethical Loneliness*, Stauffer builds on this dialogic conception of the self over time to develop a communicative theory of justice as a 'reparative' mode of giving the past its due. Lucid, attentive, and nuanced, this scintillating and surprising work installs a finely filigreed protocol of listening, a duty of hearing, in the heart of law. (Peter Goodrich, Cardozo School of Law) Stauffer involves us in ways of being and of being-together that are imperative yet elusive. And while a ready resolution is neither offered nor possible, the book itself is an absorbing *vade mecum*. (Peter Fitzpatrick, Birkbeck, University of London) A small book with immense breadth and insight into the difficulties of and harms incurred through the process of political reconciliation in the aftermath of atrocity. (APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy) Stauffer's voice is singular, her style disarmingly direct. The text studiously refuses disciplinary conventions and idioms in order to appeal to the widest interdisciplinary audience. (Law, Culture and the Humanities) A superb book. The lessons it offers on how we fail to hear others' stories of suffering are vivid and wise. (No Foundations) As we enter into dark times that are sure to get darker, Stauffer's book is far from a cure-all but it offers a sense that to contend with the traumas to come, we must in some sense get not just louder but also quieter. This stands, not in a passive sense of accepting whatever happens, but on the contrary, in a position of active, engaged hearing, of never giving up on the fact that we share this earth together and we that suffer what happens in and to it together, or not at all. (Perspectives on Politics) Stauffer practices and models philosophical listening, through her leveling of traditional philosophical authority, her embrace of specialists and non-specialists alike, her critical attention to the particular echoes of ignorance in various discourses, her embrace and re-invigoration of a wide range of philosophical sources (from literary criticism to existential phenomenology), and ultimately, her attempts to listen to victims, perpetrators and adjudicators of harm without presupposition. Her prose is delightfully lucid and, even in its hesitations, produces a palpable rhetorical force. (Philosophy in)

About the Author: Jill Stauffer is associate professor of philosophy and director of the concentration in peace, justice, and human rights at Haverford College. She is the coeditor (with Bettina Bergo) of *Nietzsche and Levinas: "After the Death of a Certain God"* (Columbia, 2008) and has published widely on issues of responsibility within and beyond legality.