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..". a moving, deep series of insights into the suicide's world... " --Kirkus Reviews

Jean Améry (Auschwitz survivor and author of *At the Mind's Limits*) thought of *On Suicide* as a continuation of the kind of reflections on mortality he had laid down in *On Aging*. But here he probes further and more deeply into the meaning of death and into the human capacity for suicide or voluntary death.

On Suicide: A Discourse on Voluntary Death Details

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Brandon says

What a writer. Amery's reasoning is baffling at times, but he always seems to end his thoughts with the most gracefully chosen words. This is one of the best books about depression and suicide I've ever read.

Emilio Renzi says

Una estupenda reflexión en torno a la idea del suicidio y de su ejecución concebidas como otro ámbito del ejercicio de la libertad. Améry refuta la distinción entre muerte natural y antinatural para escindir las concepciones individuales y colectivas sobre el final de la vida, del mismo modo que enfrenta los prejuicios respecto la muerte voluntaria que han hecho de los suicidas sujetos que deben ser negados por sus sobrevivientes.

Avle Margarin says

ponekad repetitivan i mjestimice HERMETI?AN, ali u glavnoj tezi krajnje interesantan i zna?ajan esej. "Kamo god ja gledao, ja nigdje - s kvantitativno neznatnim iznimkama filozofskih škola ili filozofiraju?ih individua (Epikur, Seneka, Diderot) - ne vidim da bi se slobodna smrt priznavala kao ono što jest: naprosto kao slobodna smrt i krajnje individualna stvar, koja se, doduše, nikad ne izvodi bez društvenih odnosa, ali s kojom je u krajnjoj liniji èovjek sam sa sobom i pred kojom društvo ima da šuti"

Loredana (Bookinista08) says

Nu sunt în m?sur? s? fac o recenzie acestei c?r?i fiindc? nu am studii de specialitate, iar câteva fragmente au trecut pe deasupra capului meu. Dar este o colec?ie fascinant? de eseuri semi-filozofice despre moartea liber aleas? ?i care este raportul dintre aceasta ?i concepte generale cum ar fi timpul, sinele, libertatea, fiin?area, etc. Nu este sub nicio form? un manifest pentru sinucidere, ci pentru demnitatea uman?. Dac? ve?i citi cartea, ve?i în?elege ce vreau s? spun. Amery nu face altceva decât s? disece acest subiect ?i evit? cu mare gra?ie luarea unei pozi?ii anume, de?i în anumite secven?e se vede clar s? tind? spre o idee sau alta. 4 stele fiindc? nu m-a dat neap?rat pe spate, de?i m-a f?cut s? gândesc din alt? perspectiv?.

Bookaholic says

Jean Améry a scris în anii '70 o carte despre sinucidere ca „moarte liber aleas?”, Despre sinucidere. Discurs

asupra mor?ii liber alese, ap?rut? în limba român? anul trecut la Editura Art (traducere din german? de Corina Bernic). Interesant e c? perspectiva din care autorul abordeaz? aceast? problem? cât se poate de delicat? este nu una psihologic? sau sociologic?, ci mai degrab? una „fenomenologic?“, o perspectiv? care încearc? s? se plaseze în „forul interior” al suicidarilor sau suicidan?ilor, cum îi nume?te el: „Textul de fa?? se situeaz? dincolo de psihologie ?i sociologie. El începe acolo unde suicidologia ?tiin?ific? se opre?te. Am încercat s? nu privesc moartea liber aleas? din afar?, dinspre lumea vie?uitorilor sau a supravie?uitorilor, ci din forul interior al celor pe care eu îi numesc suicidari sau suicidan?i (s.a.). Deci, o «fenomenologie a mor?ii liber alese»? Ar fi prea preten?ios” – noteaz? Jean Améry în „Cuvântul înainte” al c?r?ii.

A?adar, autorul refuz? s? porneasc? de la literatura consacrat? subiectului (fie ea de fic?iune sau cercetare de specialitate), preferând s? apeleze la experien?a personal? ?i a prietenilor: „O via?? oarecum îndelungat?, l?untric petrecut? în apropierea mor?ii în general, a mor?ii liber alese în particular, discu?ii cu prieteni erudi?i, experien?e decisive ale vie?ii personale mi-au oferit acea autolegitimare care se constituie ca îns?i condi?ie a scrisului”. (cronic?: <http://bookaholic.ro/un-mic-tratat-de...>)

Maurizio Manco says

"La morte [...] è più grande di dio. Tutti hanno almeno una volta visto un morto, il buon dio invece fa vita ritirata, è il trucco che gli consente di vivere." (p. 33)

Lou Fillari says

Essays one and two were enthralling. The others were heavy-handed. I'll read it again next year.

Diether says

"Doordat ik spreek, bereid ik alleen zo goed en zo kwaad als het gaat het terrein voor, het nevelige hooggelegen veengebied waarover we verder moeten gaan, als we met méér voor de dag willen komen dan alleen een paar gegevens en trivialiteiten (...) beklagenswaardige figuren zijn we, dat ziet iedereen. Dus zullen we stemmig, in een passende houding en met gebogen hoofd de mens betreuren die ons in vrijheid verliet."

Maximiliano Graneros says

Ensayo interesante donde Améry nos acerca planteamientos fluidos, a veces de la mano, a veces en rosca sobre el suicidio o como le llama "suicidante" -el que completa el "salto"- y el "suicidario" -quienes piensan o fantasean con aniquilarse o "levantarse la mano sobre sí mismos"-.

A través de sus páginas tendremos citas y renombres de filósofos, soiólogos y entidades de las ciencias que Améry usará para argüir su postura. La cual, él mismo lo dice, no es un experto ni mucho menos.

Así nos dislucirá sobre su persepción de lo que es matarse, Sartre danzará bastante sobre el texto, sus

definiciones como "la náusea" vendrá como anillo al dedo.

Más allá de esto podrá ser denso y algo reiterativo pero es una buena forma de aprehender más sobre el sino del que se mata.

Tara says

“They tell us that suicide is the greatest piece of cowardice, that only a madman could be guilty of it, and other insipidities of the same kind, or else they make the nonsensical remark that suicide is wrong, when it is quite obvious that there is nothing in the world to which every man has a more unassailable title than to his own life and person.”

—Arthur Schopenhauer

On Suicide: A Discourse on Voluntary Death is a collection of five relatively short, interlocked philosophical essays. In each of these, Améry analyzed the still rather stigmatized topic of suicide in a diligent, meticulous, and incisive manner. Be aware that this is not a work that focuses much on the historical, sociological, or psychiatric aspects of suicide, but instead one that seldom strays very far from the realm of philosophy. If you're looking for a more comprehensive study, albeit one that devotes a fair amount of time to exploring suicide's pervasive presence in literature, I'd recommend *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide* by Al Álvarez.

While this survey adhered almost exclusively to the philosophical approach, it was certainly not without depth and discernment. What was perhaps most impressive was Améry's ferociously cogent, articulate and insightful defense of an individual's right to choose how to live (within reason, of course), and, as an extension of that argument, also how to die. The fourth essay, "Belonging to Oneself," which delved into these matters, contained some of the most persuasive writing in the book. In that sense, his views align closely with the opening quote I included from Schopenhauer. (And, in point of fact, that quote actually functions quite well as a general summary of this book as a whole.)

There were, however, two not insignificant points on which I found Améry's reasoning shallow, woefully facile, and ultimately disappointing. The first was that he was apparently of the opinion that depression should rarely (if ever) qualify as a bona fide mental illness. He pointed out—and rightly so—that it's frequently a perfectly natural reaction to ugly, dismal, hopeless life circumstances. Hey, no argument here, buddy. But it simply doesn't follow that feeling depressed is NEVER a manifestation of a mental illness. In those instances, stopping people from killing themselves can no longer be viewed as an infringement of their freedom, rights and dignity. For those individuals, it is instead a means of keeping them safe until their transient symptoms pass and they regain their equilibrium and former outlook on life.

The second point of his that I found wretchedly weak was his claim that people who kill themselves don't tend to cause lasting pain for the loved ones they leave behind. I'd argue that's often completely and utterly false, but even supposing suicide doesn't frequently devastate loved ones, how can you be sure you're not one of the rare people who *will* be dearly missed? I believe that the question you must really contemplate is this: Is your personal freedom more important than preventing the extensive damage you may very well inflict on the people who care about you if you kill yourself? That, in my opinion, is up to each individual to decide for him or herself. But to contend that suicide doesn't leave some pretty nasty scars on those left to

deal with the fallout is ludicrous.

In spite of my two fairly sizeable objections, by and large these essays were intelligently written, rigorous, thought-provoking, and remarkably honest. They were even scathingly funny at times; the dude definitely had a dark sense of humor. I can't in good conscience neglect to mention that some of his logic was a bit iffy, and that his perspective was occasionally even downright biased. For although Améry claimed in the preface not to be advocating suicide, he did opt to kill himself two years after this collection was published, and while I don't doubt that he genuinely attempted to remain as neutral as possible, his personal opinions can't help but seep into and color his work. That said, it is rare indeed to encounter such a refreshingly frank discussion of this rather controversial topic. For its unsurpassed dedication to directness and sincerity alone, the book was well worth reading.

Valter says

Non l'ho finito: l'ho interrotto all'inizio del 2° capitolo.

A parte il linguaggio prolioso, non mi diceva quasi nulla di nuovo o che non avessi già realizzato per conto mio.

Gli avrei dato 2 stelle (per quanto risultava poco interessante a me personalmente), ma siccome non l'ho finito, gli concedo 3 stelle per beneficio d'inventario.

NB: Altre persone, meno avvezze al pensiero del suicidio e della morte (temi a me familiari), potrebbero trovarlo molto più interessante o sorprendente - oppure irritante. YMMV.

Orsodimondo says

LA VITA OFFESA NON È UN'OFFESA ALLA VITA

Ancora una volta Améry mi ha portato in una terra che sembra al di là di qualsiasi altra. La più lontana, in apparenza irraggiungibile, dalla quale la visione complessiva del mondo è radicalmente diversa.

la ferrovia ad Auschwitz

Una terra di ragione e logica (oltre il dolore?), una terra profondamente umana, anzi, assolutamente solo umana, più umana che non si può, dove si *rafforza la libertà, la dignità, il diritto alla felicità* [Jean Baechler, *Les suicides*, 1975].

Una terra dove la vita non è il sommo bene, dove *l'atto che nessuna parola descrive, che infrange ogni vincolo* è libertà.

Entrata principale al campo di concentramento di Buchenwald: "Jedem das Seine" = A ciascuno il suo.

Il male non è mai banale, non certo per chi ne ha sperimentato la crudeltà in prima persona, chi è stato degradato al ruolo di vittima. *Chi è stato torturato resta tale*, chi è stato nel lager non ne esce più, neppure quando è fuori.

Un libro terribile scritto da un pensatore profondo, che si porta dentro un carico di male senza misura, la sua esperienza ad Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, che per tutta la vita lo tenne vicino alla morte.

Un libro terribile scritto da chi ha già deciso di alzare la mano su di sé, ha già deciso di abbandonare la vita, da chi opta per una disperata affermazione di libertà. Fu pubblicato due anni prima che Améry si suicidasse.

PS

Ma perché chiamarlo Olocausto? L'olocausto è un sacrificio a dio. Di quale sacrificio s'è trattato? E, soprattutto, a quale dio?

Molto meglio Shoa, molto più appropriato.

PPSS

Il suo vero nome era Hans Mayer, essendo nato in Austria, nel 1912 a Vienna: dopo la guerra lo cambiò in Jean Améry (l'anagramma in francese del suo cognome originale) a significare la sua dissociazione dalla cultura tedesca e la sua adesione a quella francese.

Jean Améry. *La tortura è stata per lui una interminabile morte*, scriverà Primo Levi, che levò la mano su di sé nove anni dopo Améry.

Drew says

A laugh riot. One of the funniest books I've ever read.

P says

Analytic philosophers that accuse the Continental heavyweights of merely "doing literature" should get a load of *this* guy!

A second-tier philosopher to be sure, but an exemplary biographical one. Essentially a repudiation of the methodologies employed by the human sciences (seen as merely agents of society's "logic of life") to "treat" potential suicides and a call for universal existential dignity. Some interesting concepts are explored, such as the poorly translatable French term *échec*, which for Améry is not merely failure or defeat, but *living in or through* total ruin; an inborn inclination towards death, weaker than the logic of life and distinguished from the death instinct of classical psychoanalytic theory; some interesting ethical dilemmas associated with voluntary death (an appeal to *apres moi, le déluge* is pretty cool); an analysis of the other as not merely the Sartrean hell but as simultaneous Samaritan; some interpretations of Wittgenstein that are sure to piss some people off; etc. etc. Infinitely quotable, and highly recommended to whoever has found one's self in what is developed by Améry as the "situation before the leap."

Stephanie McGarrah says

My shrink would hate it, but I loved *On Suicide*! It was as humorous and light as it was serious and thoughtful, which was a pleasant surprise to someone who has been comforted, as well as tormented, by the knowledge that I can always choose to exit. This is supposed to be a continuation of Améry's "On Aging," which I haven't read, but that didn't seem to matter. *On Suicide* is a book that will always be relevant, and is especially relevant now in an age where nets are put around factories to stop workers from jumping into the void and queer teens are told "It Gets Better."

One of the most important ideas in this book in my opinion, is that "sociology, psychiatry and psychology are the appointed bearers of public order." Suicide is posited as an answer to the "oppressive provocations of existence, especially the passage of time." I'm glad Jean Améry was able to succeed in leaving the absurdity of this world for the absurdity of nothing, because for him it was a true act of liberation. *Suicide: The ultimate negation.*

For lovers of existentialism and nihilism and highly recommended to anarchists, people contemplating suicide and anybody who has lost someone to voluntary death.
