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### Book Review of

**Dale T. Snauwaert: Teaching peace as a matter of justice: toward a pedagogy of moral reasoning**, PJSA book series, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023, 239pp., ISBN 978-1-5275-1866-7

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In an era where the concept of peace is often relegated to the cessation of hostilities, *Teaching peace as a matter of justice* redefines the field of peace studies. Snauwaert presents a compelling argument for understanding peace not merely as the absence of violence but as a state defined by the ‘presence of justice’ and the active participation of citizens in its maintenance, the ‘political efficacy of citizens’ (2). This book is a profound contribution to the discourse on peace education, asserting that the foundation of a peaceful society is predicated on the development of moral reasoning and justice-oriented citizenship.

Structured in two parts, the book offers both a normative framework for conceptualizing peace and a practical pedagogy for its realization in educational settings. In the first section, the author lays the philosophical groundwork, drawing on the rich traditions of moral and political philosophy. The exploration begins with the articulation of a normative ethical framework, advocating for a shift from empirical studies of peace to an approach rooted in the principles of justice. Through the lens of moral and political philosophy, the book posits that peace is not just the negation of war but a holistic state where justice permeates social structures and individual actions.

This redefinition of peace education is timely and critical. As the book highlights, traditional approaches to peace studies have often failed to address the underlying ethical dimensions of peace and justice. The author's thesis is built on the premise that peace education must go beyond conflict resolution and address the moral foundations of society. It must encourage students to become not just knowledgeable about peace as a concept but also capable agents of change who can understand and address the structural roots of violence and injustice.

The author draws from the educational philosophies of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Betty Reardon to propose a pedagogical approach that centers on moral reasoning. This approach is not a passive acquisition of knowledge but an active process of engagement with the philosophical underpinnings of justice. The book argues that students must be taught not just to think about justice but to apply these thoughts in shaping a just society.

The second part of the book transitions from theoretical underpinnings to tangible applications, presenting moral reasoning as a critical skill in addressing complex societal issues. In particular, the peace constitution project is a key pedagogical innovation in peace education, linking theory to practice. It engages students in the creation of a peace constitution, actively involving them in the justice process and moral reasoning. This approach cultivates agentic citizenship as students tackle real issues of justice and societal governance. By addressing power dynamics, inclusivity, and resource allocation, the project enhances students' skills in ethical deliberation. It underpins the book's concepts, transitioning students from passive learners to active participants in societal development, embodying the book's core inquiries of inclusion and decision-making. For each chapter, the author poses pivotal questions about security, belonging, truth, distribution, and power—these questions serve as a springboard for deeper exploration into the ethics of societal structures and individual responsibilities.

In 'Who belongs?' (Chapter 5), the text delves into the dynamics of societal inclusion, emphasizing the importance of community membership to our identity. Snauwaert asserts, "Membership in a community is a basic aspect of our humanity; belonging to social groups is fundamental to being human" (92). This principle of belonging sets the stage for his examination of the distribution of political power in 'Who decides?' (Chapter 8), where he tackles the foundational aspects of democracy and justice. Snauwaert scrutinizes the conditions under which a political system can be considered just, stating, "From within the moral point of view of the elements of fairness, the recognition of reciprocal equality suggests that there is no person with authority that is morally superior to any other person... no one can claim political power/authority without the consent of others; that is, there is a valid reason to reject non-consensual claims of power" (146). Building on this foundation, 'Who gets what?' (Chapter 7) further explores the concept of distributive justice as "what each person is due and what we owe others as matters of good and right"

(143), asserting that “the meaning of a just and peaceful society is contingent in part upon how distributive justice is conceived” (144). This perspective is critical to understanding that fairness in resource distribution is essential to avoiding structural violence and oppression, integral to achieving a positive peace.

Principles of corrective justice and resistance to injustice’ (Chapter 9) is particularly insightful. It contrasts corrective justice with ideal principles, situating nonviolence as a normative philosophy and a political strategy. This chapter presents a nuanced discussion of the moral duty to resist injustice and examines nonviolent resistance as the preferred approach while considering the ethical complexities of the use of force. Snauwaert argues, “the principles of corrective justice are grounded in the moral duty to resist and transform injustice” (196), highlighting the active role required to uphold justice. The book’s discourse on corrective justice is essential, especially in the context of nonideal theory. The author suggests that nonideal theory, which recognizes the imperfections of human society, offers a more pragmatic approach to justice. It acknowledges the role of nonviolence as both a moral and practical strategy for addressing and transforming social injustices. The examination of the use of military force in response to injustice presents a balanced view, recognizing the moral quandaries inherent in real-world conflicts and the ethical considerations that should guide post-conflict scenarios.

This text also excels in its global perspective. It acknowledges the diversity of societal contexts and the need for principles of justice that are adaptable to various cultural and social realities. The book underscores the importance of a pedagogy that is not only globally aware but also sensitive to local nuances of injustice and conflict.

In conclusion, the author has not only critiqued the existing paradigms of peace education but also a blueprint for an alternative approach. The book is a comprehensive guide for educators, policymakers, and activists who are committed to nurturing just societies through education. It is a persuasive argument for the necessity of a comprehensive educational framework that integrates the principles of justice into everyday learning. With its in-depth analysis and visionary outlook, *Teaching peace as a matter of justice* serves as a crucial resource for all those dedicated to the pursuit of a peaceful society grounded in justice and active citizenship.