

Panel Discussion of Dale T. Snauwaert's
Teaching Peace as a Matter of Justice: Toward a Pedagogy of Moral Reasoning
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Abstract: Snauwaert summarizes his book as a “peace constitution project” aimed at facilitating pedagogically meaningful student discussion and development of main concepts (equality, recognition, reciprocity, impartiality) and issues (security, belonging, truth, sharing, power, resistance) determining the justness of society. Janet Gerson illuminates the power of pedagogical possibilities, both explicit and collateral, created by Snauwaert’s positive (re)definition of peace as the presence of justice. Jeffery Warnke finds in Snauwaert’s defense of a right to justification in a peaceful society a congruence between moral foundations of epistemology and the academic aims of education. Greg Seals reads Snauwaert’s argument as a noncircular answer to the question, “Why be moral?” by showing how *Teaching Peace* provides separate accounts of what it means to be moral and how to inculcate moral behavior among groups of people.

Author's Summary of
Teaching Peace as a Matter of Justice: Toward a Pedagogy of Moral Reasoning

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The purpose of this book is to articulate a normative philosophical framework for the development of an educational approach to teaching peace as a matter of justice, specifically through the lens of moral and political philosophy. The focus is to articulate a pedagogical framework for the development and exercise of citizens’ capacities for moral reasoning and judgment regarding potential responses to the basic questions of justice necessary for a peaceful society. This pedagogy takes the form of a “peace constitution project,” which provides a framework for students to deliberate and reason about principles of justice in response to basic questions of justice, thereby exercising and therefore developing their capacity for moral reasoning and judgment about justice. This development is essential for informed political participation of democratic citizens who are capable of being not merely recipients, but dynamic agents of justice.

John Rawls identified four roles for political philosophy (Rawls 2007, 10-11): (1) to be *practical*, working to resolve conflicts; (2) to provide an *orientation* that enables citizens to gain greater clarity about their political ideas and how to reason about them; (3) to enable *reconciliation*, enabling citizens to understand, evaluate, and possibly affirm their social world; and (4) to help citizens probe the limits of what is possible in terms of the political organization of society. All four roles of political philosophy are invoked in the exploration of thinking about an education for peace and justice, however, *reconciliation* has a central role. As the 19th century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1991 [1821]) maintained, *reconciliation* means that citizens come to understand and affirm the social and political institutions of their society, the basic structure of society, as expressing and being consistent with their dignity as free and equal persons (Rawls, 2000).

The ideal of realizing ourselves as free and equal persons within the context of just social and political institutional conditions is, however, contingent upon citizens coming to know and affirm that the institutions that shape our lives are reasonable and just. Reconciliation, the process of reconciling with one's social and political world, is therefore essential for a just and peaceful society. As Rawls suggests, to be a citizen means that "one understands that society is held together not simply by the satisfaction of particular interests but by a sense of reasonable [i.e., just] order" (Rawls 2000, 355).

Furthermore, the importance of citizens becoming reconciled with their society is a key dynamic involved in creating and maintaining a balance of power between political institutions and citizens. Based upon the historical analysis of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty* (2019), a balance of power between State and Society creates a narrow corridor of liberty. The dynamics of the creation and maintenance of this corridor of liberty occurs within the framework of a balanced, dynamic structure of state-society power relations — the right balance of power between the State (government institutions and the elites that control them) and Society (the people as citizens). Reconciliation paves the way to what Acemoglu and Robinson refer to as the "Shackled Leviathan": State power constrained by an informed and politically engaged citizenry. The mobilization and empowerment of a society of citizens in relation to the State balances the power between them, thus creating a "corridor of liberty."

It has long been recognized that rational and reasonable citizens are a necessary condition for democracy, and thereby for peace and justice. The conditions of peace and justice are contingent upon the informed political participation of citizens, and an essential aspect of citizens' capability to participate in the pursuit of peace and justice is their capacity of moral reasoning and judgment as *dynamic agents of justice*. This capacity cannot be transmitted but can only be developed through exercise and practice (Dewey 1916, 1995 [1910]; Freire 2005 [1970]; Reardon and Snauwaert, 2015; Reardon and Snauwaert, 2011; Rodowick 2021). Thus, the focus of this inquiry is to articulate a philosophical framework for, and a pedagogical approach to, the development of moral reasoning and judgment. The project is to engage in deliberation to construct a constitution of a just and peaceful society comprised of basic principles of justice by engaging students in inquiry into six basic questions of justice:

Whose Security? Who should have an equal right to security of person?

Who Belongs? Who should be considered an equal citizen and thus a full participant in the society?

Whose Truth? What is the valid basis of determining truth?

Who Gets What? What constitutes a just distribution of the basic goods and resources of a society?

Who Decides? What constitutes a just distribution of political power?

Whose Resistance? Is there a right and duty to resist and redress injustice? If so, what principles of corrective justice should guide that resistance? Who should bear this duty to resist?

Justifiable answers to these questions, in the form of principles of justice and political values, comprise the fabric of a *peace constitution*. A "constitution" is a statement of principles of justice and values that articulates fair terms for the regulation of the basic institutional

structure of society: it is a declaration of what a just society should be in principle. Moral reasoning concerns the normative justifiability of those principles of justice grounded in the elements of fairness (equality, recognition, reciprocity, and impartiality) as freestanding (from metaphysical claims) presuppositions of either the practice of moral reasoning and/or of the conception of persons as free and equal. Appeal to the normative criteria of fairness is a reasonable approach to normative justification in a world characterized by social and cultural pluralism. In considering the elements of a peace constitution students are asked to justify their choice of principles of justice and values from within the moral point of view of fairness:

Equality: Do they recognize and treat all persons as equals?

Recognition: Are they consistent with respect for persons?

Reciprocity: Do they apply to all affected? Are they acceptable to all? Do reasonable persons have valid reason to reject them?

Impartiality: Do they unfairly favor anyone? Do they serve the common good?

The peace constitution project is designed as a pedagogical means for the exercise and practice, and thus the development, of the moral reasoning capacities of students.

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