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Book Review

**Pedagogy, Politics and Philosophy of Peace: Interrogating Peace and Peacemaking**, edited by Carmen Borg & Michael Grech, Bloomsbury, 2017, 256 pp.

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In the foreword to *Pedagogy, Politics and Philosophy of Peace*, Peter Mayo notes that in a world where social contacts, equality, justice, and general stability, are being eroded, there is a call among critical educators “for a pedagogy of social Solidarität that emphasises the collective and communal in addition to the ecologically sustainable” (p. xvi). In response, Carmen Borg and Michael Grech offer this edited book to contribute to the call and provide what they hope will be a coherent vision of ‘authentic peace’ beyond the “growing cynicism and fatalism that blocks possibilities for transformative thinking and action” (p. 2).

Borg and Grech’s book consists of twelve authored chapters with perspectives on the nature of peace, myths relating to peace, logistics of peace and peacemaking, and the relationship between peace and pedagogy (p. 1). Borg and Grech argue these chapters highlight the differences between genuine peace based upon justice and equality, and false peace based on perpetuated common-sense notions and pacification. Each chapter promotes the importance of critical education to

disentangle the hidden asymmetrical power relations that create taken-for-granted assumptions and prevent genuine peace. They argue that within these asymmetrical power relations peace is achieved through pacification and imposed exogenous solutions that propagate Western ideals that are beyond critique. Instead more endogenous enriched approaches that account for contextual complexities are encouraged. For Borg and Grech, critical pedagogy offers dialogical opportunities for consciousness building around these taken-for-granted power relations contained in Western approaches to peace.

In total, the book consists of three parts: 'the contents of peace', 'challenges to peace education', and 'peace pedagogy'. Part one includes a chapter by Marianna Papastephanou, who discusses Western *pax romana* approaches to peace that seek to pacify the wilderness of the world. Papastephanou argues peace must be more radical and have *contemptus mundi* (p. 26) to these taken-for-granted pacifying approaches. Joseph Gravina's chapter also discusses pacification. Looking at historical revolutions he discusses differences between revolutions based upon critical consciousness and community-oriented action, and revolutions buttressed from outside. Revolutions must create relations of justice and equality otherwise they will only promote selective adaptation and appeasement.

Simone Galea's chapter focuses on the taken-for-granted patriarchal and phallogocentric approaches to peace. Drawing from Irigaray, Galea endorses incorporating feminine ideas of maternity and breath into peace. These principles open a third space where the teacher breathes "the life of education onto others, with the aim of having them eventually able to breathe on their own" (p. 57).

Arsalan Alshinawi's and Trimikliniotis and Trimithiotis' chapters close the first section by discussing exogenous Euro- and Western-centric liberal peace approaches that often increase instability. Alshinawi encourages endogenous approaches that account for the complex internal "constellations of historical and geographical factors" (p. 75). Trimikliniotis and Trimithiotis argue for a critical-sociological reconstruction of peace where peacemaking is "read in the context of the livelihoods, the socialities, solidarities and connectivities long experienced in the Global South, the East and that was thought of as the 'backward Rest'" (p. 90).

Part two discusses the challenges to peace education commencing with Antonia Darder's chapter on dreaming of a bold and brave peace. War is taught in the US in 'common-sense' notions that promulgate ideas that citizens cannot experience freedom unless the state exercises permanent aggression. This only reinforces dependency on the existing hegemonic structures, and must be challenged. Clive Zammit discusses the myth of the inevitability of war. He suggests such myths collude to give illusions they are factual when they are not. Awareness of how these myths operate is crucial in critical education "to see through their mythic force, and thus loosen the grip of a myth that keeps us enslaved to a constructed reality" (p. 125). Finally, Carmen Sammut discusses the media's potential for creating dialogical learning spaces. Discussing *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie Hebdo*, she notes how media, however, often fails to consider its own power relations. Sammut endorses a social responsibility approach that brings sensibilities of the Other to the forefront for dialogical exploration.

Part three then discusses the pedagogy of peace starting with Zembylas and Bekerman, who challenge a fideistic unquestioned foundation to peace education praxis. For peace education programmes to move beyond perpetuating hegemony, they claim four pillars need to be present: reinstating the materiality of things and practices; reontologizing research and practice in peace education; becoming critical experts of design; and engaging in critical cultural analysis. Elias Mazawi's chapter discusses how textbooks reproduce hegemonic discourses by creating certain *a priori* assumptions that normalize learners' perceptions of reality. These realities, however, contain biases that if remain unchallenged reinforce specific worldviews and 'us' and 'them' polarities. Michael Zammit's chapter draws on Advaita philosophy as an alternative epistemological approach to peace based on non-dualism. Crucial elements to this philosophy are practices of re(an)nunciation and participation. This philosophy moves beyond prioritizing mental functions, to praxis dependent on interactions with the other that provide an "enlightening transformation of mankind's awareness of itself" (p. 197). Finally, Linda Herrera, discusses how humanistic pedagogies, such as music, can solicit critical spaces of intra- and inter-cultural understanding. Focusing on Osman El-Mahdi in Egypt, Herrera discusses how music

assisted his students to become not only better musicians but better people based on inclusive 'open' humanistic principles found in music.

It is not entirely clear to this reviewer for what purpose the three sections have been divided from each other. Taken in totality the book achieves its goal in signifying the importance for critical peace praxis to challenge its own assumptions before action, and engage endogenous voices towards potentials for authentic peace. Indeed, as noted by the authors, critical education is about pedagogies of *hope*. This places pedagogy at the very heart of politics and philosophy and not as a separate compartmentalized element, as may be suggested.

In conclusion, the book will be a useful resource for anyone interested in the associations between asymmetrical power relations and society. More specifically, it will be particularly useful for educators and others interested in critical approaches to education that challenge hegemonic structures of peacebuilding.