

## **DVD-Rezension: Die Menschenrechte**

Insgesamt ist dies offensichtlich die Darbietung eines Mannes, der seine Kunst im höchsten Maße beherrscht und sein Publikum bis zum letzten Moment bestens unterhält. Man kann sie einfach auf der Ebene betrachten, die Pantomime als Kunstform der visuellen Gesten zu genießen, die Räume, Orte und Figuren erschafft, damit wir sie im Geist interpretieren. Darüber hinaus verschafft sie dem gesellschaftsbewussten Zuschauer die Erfahrung, einmal ganz anders über Menschenrechte nachzudenken, vor allem darüber, in welchem hohem Maß diese Rechte von fundamentaler Bedeutung für Aspekte unseres täglichen Lebens sind, die wir für selbstverständlich nehmen. Ihre große Stärke wird in ihrer Fähigkeit liegen, auch die weniger Gesellschaftsbewussten anzusprechen und ihnen einen Anreiz zu geben, den notwendigen Schritt zu tun, über ihre Rechte und die anderer nachzudenken.

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**The Philosophy of War and Peace, Jenny Teichman, Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, 2006, ISBN 1-84540-050-X, paperback, 275 pages with index, £17.95/\$34.90.**

With continuing availability of the second edition of Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1992) and the recent publication of Tony Coady's *Morality and Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press 2008), any further philosophical book on war needs to be distinctive and insightful to deserve a place on our library shelves. Jenny Teichman's attempt to meet this challenge begins with some speculations on the causes of war – speculations that assume that war is caused by the natural aggression of human beings and which therefore miss the importantly political nature of war. Teichman then treats of the rules of war and of the writers in the just war tradition. Her focus is upon Catholic writers and recent papal encyclicals and on such organisations as the Red Cross. She goes on to recount stories about atrocities committed by all sides in the wars of the twentieth century and explores issues – such as torture – arising from the so called “war on terror”. She discusses pacifism and popular struggles against war and nuclear deterrence and asks what resources philosophy and religion might variously bring to such struggles. Her answer to that question is in the form of an absolutist moral realism.

As a philosophical text, this book is very unsatisfactory. We get a lot of anecdotes but their philosophical point is never spelt out. We get a lot of opinions of the kind any civilised person would agree with, but we get no philosophical explorations of those intuitions. The few philosophical arguments are shallow and dismissive of alternative views, and the naïve moral realism to which Teichman is wedded is never justified. Consequentialism is dismissed as nonsense and as licensing a policy of “anything goes”, while her discussions of John Mackie and Simon Blackburn are clumsy and snide. No philosopher should be encouraged to read a book which offers the following as an argument:

If right and wrong do not refer to realities there can be no objectively valid reasonings to show that Harry Truman or J. F. Kennedy or Josef Stalin or Mao Tse Tung ever acted well or badly, no objectively valid reasonings for or against killing people, for or against instigating the third world war, for or against harbouring delusions and suicidal policies. (p. 234)

Teichman seems not to realise that objectivity need not mean the same as referring to reality. Apart from some interesting historical anecdotes there is nothing in this book to advance our philosophical understanding of the morality of war and peace.

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**Human Rights, PR-Agency: Promotion & More, Carlos Martinez, 2005, Esslingen. ISBN: 3-7655-8390-1**

The main performance in this DVD (53 minutes), comprises a series of mime acts performed by Carlos Martinez in Stuttgart, 24 June 2005 where the words used in the UN Declaration of Human Rights are transformed into visual expression. It covers such things as labour related rights, social and economic rights but also emphasises that with rights there is a responsibility of duty. The Bonus piece in the DVD is the encore act to the stage performance – it is a subtle piece of work best viewed only after seeing the main show.

The explanatory literature that comes with the DVD succinctly outlines the performance. In it, Carlos says:

... I have chosen the words that belong to the Declaration of Human Rights and for these words I have created gestures.

With the gestures I began to create objects, places, feelings and characters who in some way experience situations where some of the Human Rights are violated.

But gestures and the technique of mime are not enough to present a theme of such importance as Human Rights. Therefore I had to add, to the black and white of my art, the colours of irony, surprise and humour.

I do not wish to describe or explain any of the acts as part of the experience of watching this show is the individual's personal involvement in working out that which is being portrayed. Suffice to say that the opening act is quite confronting and the mime gestures and movements used very clearly allow the audience to understand the scenario being played out. This is true for other acts in the performance with the exception of a couple. However part of the viewer's experience is the challenge of understanding the performance and making the audience think is clearly part of Carlos' intention.

The 'Interview' piece allows the viewer a window into Carlos' reasons for his art and gives an explanation for the humorous aspect to the performance.

The narrative outlines the specific right being played out prior to each act however within the Main Menu there is the option to mute the narrative. This allows an audience to view the show and be required to guess at what rights are being conveyed and played out. This would be a very useful tool for the DVD as an educational tool in schools etc.

Overall, the performance is clearly undertaken by someone highly skilled in his art and is entertaining to the end. It can be viewed simply at the level of appreciating mime as an artform of visual gestures creating spaces, places and characters for our minds to interpret. Additionally, for the more social conscious, it allows the viewer a different experience in thinking about human rights, what they stand

### Books available to review

Divinity and Diversity: A Hindu revitalization movement in Malaysia - *Alexandra Kent*

Modernity and Re-enchantment: Religion in post-revolutionary Vietnam - *Philip Taylor*

Market versus Nature: the social philosophy of Friedrich Hayek - *Eric Aarons*

Globalization and Its Counter-forces in Southeast Asia  
*Terence Chong*

Reluctant Indonesians - *Clinton Fernandes*

Island in the Stream: Australia and Japan face globalisation  
*Stephen Alomes*

Reconnecting Labor - *Barry Donovan*

Human Rights and Social Work: Towards rights-based practice  
*Jim Ife*

Watching Brief: Reflections on human rights, law and justice  
*Julian Burnside*

Unfinished Business: Paul Keating's interrupted revolution  
*David Lowe*

Risk: The science and politics of fear - *Dan Gardner*

Indonesian Islam in a New Era: how women negotiate their Muslim identities  
*Susan Blackburn, Bianca J Smith & Siti Syamsiyatun*

The First Indonesian Women's Congress of 1928  
*Susan Blackburn*

\* to obtain a copy, please contact the centre

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for, and more importantly the extent to which those rights are fundamental to aspects of our daily lives we take for granted. Its great strength will be its ability to engage with those not so social conscious and encourage them to take the required step in thinking about their rights and those of others.

The one aspect of this DVD I found a negative is only a technical one – after the final act, Carlos addresses his audience and the audio level is low. You will need to turn up the volume. Be ready to turn it down when the audience begins clapping.

[www.carlosmime.com](http://www.carlosmime.com)

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### National Conference

#### **Critical Pedagogy and Participatory Learning for Social Transformation: The Role of Higher Education**

Organised by Monash University, Borderlands Cooperative, OASES Masters Program in Integrative and Transformative Studies and UT Sydney's Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre

**27-28th of November**

**Monash University's Conference Centre, Clayton/  
Melbourne**

The recent resurgence of interest in participatory and dialogic approaches to teaching and learning makes its mark across university, TAFE and other professional development contexts, more specifically in the fields of international development, community development, environmental science, health, social work, education, feminist and women's studies and management and organisational development programs. With ideas of participation, democratisation, transformation, empowerment and social change so central to theory and practice in all of those fields, many educators are trying to put these into practice through classroom teaching and community outreach.

#### **Conference Aims**

**Sharing and reflecting** on participatory and transformative teaching-learning experiences, aimed at improving practice

**Promoting** participatory learning, critical pedagogy, popular and transformative education in higher education in Australia and elsewhere

**Developing** networks of educational practitioners and thinkers experienced and active in participatory learning and teaching

**Creating** publications with examples of current thinking and practice

The conference aims to be a forum for educators, teachers, students and others who are involved or interested in education for social transformation in institutions of higher education in Australia and elsewhere. While not narrowly circumscribing the theoretical or practical traditions that can contribute to education for social transformation, three overlapping themes sum up the conference goals:

\* paper abstracts before: 31 August 2008

\* expressions of interest in running a workshop before: 30 September 2008

[www.arts.monash.edu.au/ges/news-and-events/conf1.php](http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ges/news-and-events/conf1.php)