

Reviewer Biography

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Making Peace With the Earth

Vandana Shiva Spinifex Press, North Melbourne, 2012, 267 pp.,
ISBN 9781742198385
doi: 10.1017/aee.2015.4

Reviewed by David Wright, School of Education, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia

When the short list for the first Nobel prize for ecological understanding and activism is announced, Vandana Shiva will be on it, and a strong contender to win. Her insightful readings of the politics of ecological disequilibrium and the responsibilities assumed, or not, on a local and a global scale, are among the most influential in the field. Her work covers broad issues of land usage and is featured in internationally circulating publications. Her principal concern is the life of the Indian village. Accordingly, her politics is rooted in the social-ecological experience of those who belong most intimately to the land they work. This book, *Making Peace With the Earth*, published in Australia by Spinifex, is said to have ‘grown out of Shiva’s 2010 Sydney Peace Prize lecture’ and 4 decades of activism. Despite the local publisher and the Sydney award, this book makes only passing reference to Australia and Australian issues. Nonetheless, by focusing on Indian social-ecological concerns Shiva offers insights that are of relevance far beyond her homeland.

Shiva is in awe of the human diversity of India. She integrates the biodiversity of nature with the richness of the communities that inhabit it. Accordingly, she aligns the destruction of natural biodiversity with the dismantling of traditional communities — those who ‘understand the language of nature’. In her work, the struggle of local villagers against globalising forces takes an archetypal form: the village becomes a symbol, almost a metaphor for ‘the local’ in all nations. While offering the opportunity for this reading, Shiva’s study is also focused. It is detailed, evidence based, strongly argued, and of interest to anyone seeking critical insight into the ‘green revolution’, the politics of seed cultivation, gene patenting and global food production and distribution. Each of these are addressed in the context of the corporatisation of food and the destruction of local community self-governance. She positions this work in the context of a modernising India (the globalising client of Australian exporters) and identifies this as the source of the destruction of indigenous traditions and the basis of a movement that ‘must commodify everything’ (p. 30).

Shiva writes also as an activist. She reports from the fields in which conflict unfolds. Her analysis of developments in local Indian villages is infused with issues of equity, justice and the militarisation of the defence of vested interests. Shiva identifies with the Earth, and the book concludes with an argument for a transition from 'corporate control of the earth's resources' to 'earth democracy'. 'The world of the earth is the world of two-thirds of India — her land and her rivers, her peasants and tribals, her artisans and small producers, and her hawkers, street vendors and petty shopkeepers. The other is the world of the global corporations ... who seek to grab the land of India's 650 million peasants, and corner the market where more than 100 million hawkers and vendors make a living' (p. 37). The book is confronting, accessible and disturbingly hopeful.

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David Wright coordinates the Social Ecology program at the University of Western Sydney. He recently co-edited *Social Ecology: Ecological Understanding for Our Lives and Our Planet*.

Sustainability for Educators: A Toolkit of Learning Activities and Resources

Karina Shields and Lisa Hoggard Byron Regional Community College,
Mullimbimby, 2013, 245 pp., ISBN 9780992312701
doi: 10.1017/aee.2015.5

Reviewed by Ian Thomas, RMIT, Melbourne, Australia

Shields and Hoggard have presented us with an impressive piece of applied research. They begin their introduction with the point that:

There are potentially millions of people throughout the world who are taking action for change towards more sustainable thinking and practice. The change movement is manifesting in business, educational institutions, communities and homes, and the momentum is building.

Their intent, through this Toolkit, is to provide materials and processes for engaging all these people to bring about this change to sustainable thinking and practice. Having said that, the authors do not provide us with a vague manifesto about the need for change, of which there have been many examples. Rather, after briefly setting up the case for change, they focus on the way to bring about change through education.

From the start, the message that comes through clearly is that this is a comprehensive piece of work and, unlike many instances where a broad territory is to be covered, the work provides the reader with substantial detail. The authors recognise that a range of terms are used in connection with education and sustainability, but quickly identify their terminology and, importantly, set out their own perspectives and values that have