

## Prospective Philosophical Foundations of Peace Education

Sue McGregor

There are many attributes of an effective peace educator,<sup>1</sup> including having a philosophy of peace.<sup>2</sup> And, while “a peace philosophy without practicability is imperfect and incomplete”,<sup>3</sup> having no peace philosophy *at all* (or having an unexamined or unarticulated philosophy) is even worse. Its critical absence compromises a peace educator’s ability to formulate responses to life and reality. Educators who live life without a philosophy tend to act out their opinions without examining them, which is an untenable approach for peace educators.

The main power of a philosophy is its ability to help people better understand and appreciate what they do and why they do it.<sup>4</sup> The concern is not so much about what people do, but *why* they do it - what is the *philosophical underpinning* of their actions.<sup>5</sup> Philosophies help educators obtain, interpret, organize, and use information while making pedagogical decisions.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Navarro-Castro, L., & Nario-Galace, J. *Peace education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace*. Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Page, J. S. “Peace Education.” In Peterson, P., Baker, E., & McGaw, B. (Eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of Education*. Oxford, England: Elsevier, 2010, 850-854.

<sup>3</sup> Carter, C., & Kumar, R. (Eds.). *Peace Philosophy in Action*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Brockett, R. G. (Ed.). (1998). *Ethical Issues in Adult Education*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998; Merriam, S. B. “Some thoughts on the relationship between theory and practice.” *New Directions for Continuing Education*, 15 (1982): 87-91.

<sup>5</sup> Maddux, M., Dong, B., Miller, W., Nelson, K., Raebel, M., Raehl, C., & Smith, W. “A vision of pharmacy's future roles, responsibilities, and manpower needs in the United States.” *Pharmacotherapy*, 20 (2000) 991-1020.

<sup>6</sup> Boggs, D. L. “Philosophies at issue.” In B. W. Kreitlow (Ed.), *Examining controversies in adult education* (pp.1-10). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1981; MacFarland, K., Cartmel, J., & Nolan, A. *Early childhood care*

“Philosophy is a perceptual tool that aligns one’s referential axis.”<sup>7</sup> From this reference point, educators can assess a situation (e.g., their peace pedagogy), come to an informed decision or set of beliefs about the situation, and act accordingly.

Gorski coined the term “philosophical warrant,” akin to philosophical permission to dig deeper and wider into what constitutes one’s philosophy of peace.<sup>8</sup> This process should lead to philosophical acumen and more responsible pedagogy. Nonetheless, despite the importance of philosophical acumen, most peace education initiatives are not based on philosophical elaboration or reflection because peace educators view philosophical work as unnecessary, artificial or even dangerous for the cause.<sup>9</sup> Such lacunae, worse yet, philosophical avoidance and resistance, cannot be tolerated if peace educators want to be responsible pedagogues.

The premise of this paper is that peace educators must be cognizant of their own peace philosophy,<sup>10</sup> because it affects why and how they teach peace. More important, they should be aware of any discussions in the literature around peace philosophies. These have the potential to impact their philosophical musings and professional peace philosophy. To that end, this paper shares an overview of several prospective foundations for peace philosophies. It culminates with a critique of Western peace philosophies (per the musings of Ilan Gur-Zéev), accompanied with his suggestions for a counter philosophy of peace education. Taken together, these six approaches provide a rich foundation for personal musings about one’s philosophy of peace.

### **An overview of Six Philosophical Foundations of Peace**

A related and pressing issue is the dearth of peace education literature focused on a philosophy of peace.<sup>11</sup> Page explained that “there have been recent attempts to develop a coherent philosophy of peace education,”<sup>12</sup> but Gur-Zéev described these as “very modest first steps toward a serious conceptualization and reflections concerning the fundamentals of the field of peace education.”<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, peace educators do not yet associate their practice,

---

*and education leadership modules - Module 3 – Philosophy*, 2010. Retrieved from the Early Childhood Care and Education website, <http://www.ecceleadership.org.au/module3.html> <http://www.ecceleadership.org.au/node/14>

<sup>7</sup> A Philosopher. (2012, October 21). Re: What is the purpose of philosophy? [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://forums.philosophyforums.com/threads/what-is-the-purpose-of-this-universe-57045.html>

<sup>8</sup> Gorski, P. S. “Special essay: What is critical realism? And why should you care.” *Contemporary Sociology*, 42 (2013): 668.

<sup>9</sup> Gur-Zéev, I. “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era.” *Educational Theory*, 51 (2001): 315-336; Gur-Zéev, I. “Beyond peace education: Toward co-poiesis and enduring improvisation.” *Policy Futures in Education*, 8 (2010): 315-339; Gur-Zéev, I. “Philosophy of peace education in a postmetaphysical era.” In Gavriel, S., & Cairns, E. (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education*. New York, NY: Taylor Francis, 2010, 171-186; Page, J. S. “Peace education: Exploring some philosophical foundations.” *International Review of Education*, 50 (2004): 3-15.

<sup>10</sup> Gorski, “Special essay: What is critical realism?”

<sup>11</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Beyond peace education”; Page, “Peace Education;” Page, *Peace Education. Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Page, “Peace Education,” 853.

<sup>13</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Beyond peace education”, 317.

pedagogy or theories with any *particular* philosopher.<sup>14</sup>

Taking advantage of this philosophical and pedagogical opportunity, six prospective philosophical foundations of peace are now profiled: Calleja's Kantian-inspired philosophy of peace, Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace, Harris and Morrison's philosophies of peace, Reardon's cosmopolitan philosophy of peace, Page's ethics-based philosophies of peace, and Gur-Zéev's counter-education philosophy of peace (see Figure 1). These approaches were chosen because they appear most often in the scarce literature on philosophies of peace.

---

<sup>14</sup> Synott, J. "Peace education as an educational paradigm." *Journal of Peace Education*, 2 (2005): 3-16.

# Philosophical Foundations of Peace Education

Western

Non-Western

## Calleja

- communication
- cooperation
- confidence (trust)

## Harris and Morrison

- deterrence through military strength
- ensure justice
- sustainability (don't compromise connectedness)
- pacifism and transformation
- political institutions
- education

## Reardon

- citizenship
- cosopolitanism (universal moral inclusion, equality and respect for human dignity)
- political efficacy and equality

## Page

- virtue
- consequential
- conservative politics
- aesthetics
- care

## Ikeda

- human revolution; inner transformation
- dialogue
- global civilization and citizenship (collaboration and engagement)

## Gur-Zéev

- negative utopia and transcendent negative imperative
- principle of reality and worthy suffering
- challenge hegemonic order and normalized education, leading to real consensus
- live with conflict in constructive manner and problematize peace

Figure 1 -- Six Prospective Philosophical Foundations of Peace Education

## Calleja's Kantian-inspired Philosophy of Peace

Joachim Calleja analyzed Immanuel Kant's writings and discerned four major conditions that are prerequisites of peace: Human Nature, the Power of Reason, the Rule of Law, and the Principles of Morality.<sup>15</sup> In essence, this is Kant's philosophy of peace. Respectively, Kant believed that the features of people's minds, their ability to reason, the unconditional observance of law and freedom of others (with a heavy focus on ends and means, and rights and duties), and morality in politics are necessary conditions for the emergence of peace.

Calleja especially focused on Kant's categorical (duty) imperative as a key contender for any philosophy of peace.<sup>16</sup> This duty forces people to act in accordance with morality. The basic tenets of this imperative are that: (a) the categorical duty is an end in itself; (b) people have to fulfil the duty regardless of the circumstances (cannot beg off due to dislikes, inabilities or lack of opportunities); (c) the ends to fulfilling the duty can never justify the means, especially if the means involve exploiting people's bodies, labour and talents without their consent; (d) human rights are acknowledged and are inviolable; and, (e) the categorical duty emphasizes the respect of persons.<sup>17</sup>

Subsequent to an intense analysis of Kant's musings, Calleja then developed his own agenda for a philosophy of peace. Calleja deduced that "communication, cooperation and confidence are the three main pillars that emerge from Kant's ... philosophy of peace."<sup>18</sup> First, communication between humans requires that peace education teach people to think critically, to actively integrate themselves into society, and to strive for greater solidarity amongst humans. Second, peace education must teach that cooperation is a natural human urge, the basic element in human co-existence. Third, Calleja believed that where communication and cooperation exist, trust comes into play, leading toward confidence. Trust in each other (a sign of maturity) is the absolute ground for confidence building. In summary, Calleja asserted that "peace is not the ultimate objective of human coexistence but the daily driving force towards more cooperation, more confidence and more communication."<sup>19</sup>

## Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace

Daisaku Ikeda tendered another approach to a philosophy of peace, deftly articulated by Urbain.<sup>20</sup> Ikeda is the founder of the *Toda Institute*, and the leader of the Buddhist organization,

---

<sup>15</sup> Calleja, J. J. *A Kantian epistemology of education and peace: An examination of concepts and values*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bradford University, 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> McGregor, S. L. T. *Consumer moral leadership*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2010, Chapter 1.

<sup>18</sup> Calleja, *A Kantian epistemology of education and peace*, 520.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 532.

<sup>20</sup> Urbain, O. *Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace: Dialogue, transformation and global civilization*. London,

*Soka Gakkai International* (SGI). His peace philosophy is based on 13<sup>th</sup> century Japanese, Nichiren Buddhism<sup>21</sup> and centers on three main concepts: (a) *human revolution* (each person's decision to effect a change in their life - inner transformation); (b) genuine, productive and enriching *dialogue*, made possible because of empowerment from inner transformation; and, (c) *global citizenship and civilization* (based on interdependence, community and collaboration), realizable because of both inner transformations and inter-human dialogue.

Goulah and Urbain explained that movement from inner peace to global peace includes progression through these three fundamental phases (i.e., inner transformation, dialogue, and global citizenship).<sup>22</sup> Respectively, Ikeda places special emphasis on people's belief in the potential to strengthen their courage, wisdom and compassion so they can bring out their best self through meaningful exchanges and dialogue, better ensuring their engagement with the global world.

Guha further explained that Ikeda's philosophy unified three truths, namely (a) emptiness, (b) temporary reality, and (c) mean (or the middle path).<sup>23</sup> By this Ikeda meant, respectively, that empty truth entails detachment without essence; this truth is non-sustainable. Temporary truth does exist (lasting for a limited time), and has the property of action. The middle truth (mean) exists between emptiness and reality and is called the Truth of the Middle Way. Guha further clarified that (a) emptiness is an ideal or a goal; (b) temporary reality or truth is materialism; and, (c) mean (the Middle Way) is existentialism, the intermediary stage between idealism and materialism.

In more detail, Ikeda considers empty truth to be idealism (the pursuit of ideas and the ideal) and temporary truth to be materialism (the pursuit of wealth and possessions). These truths are viewed as "two big forces opposing and confronting each other," each with independently strong opinions and preferred directions.<sup>24</sup> Ikeda understands the Middle Way to be a path laying between these two forces, paving a way to put the public interest, practical policy, morality and ethics at the forefront so that people can find prosperity and happiness (the third truth, existentialism). Presuming that the middle way is the essence of human life, Ikeda argues that people should not get attached to either of the two big forces, because such attachment ignores too many fundamentals of the essence of human life.<sup>25</sup> Guha clarified that "*human life [the Middle Way] is the bridge between (a) the earthly existence (or [temporary, material] life) and (b) the cosmic entity or emptiness (infinity).*"<sup>26</sup>

---

England: I. B. Tauris, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Kobayashi, M. "Nichiren's philosophy of peace." *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 18 (2008): 149-154.

<sup>22</sup> Goulah, J., & Urbain, O. (2013). Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace, education proposals, and Soka education: Convergences and divergences in peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 10 (2013): 303-322.

<sup>23</sup> Guha, A. "Buddhist cosmic philosophy and Daisaku Ikeda's concept of peace cosmology." *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 13 (2003): 160-176.

<sup>24</sup> Jingsong, H. "The Lotus Sutra and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda." *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 10 (2000); 48.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Guha "Buddhist cosmic philosophy and Daisaku Ikeda's concept of peace cosmology," 170, italics in original.

## Harris and Morrison's Philosophies of Peace

Ian Harris and Mary Lee Morrison argued that “peace education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process... . The philosophy teaches non-violence, love, compassion and reverence for all life.”<sup>27</sup> Contingent upon various doctrines of what constitutes peace, they proposed that peace can be achieved *through* one of six strategies: military strength, justice, sustainability, transformation, politics, or education.

First, *peace through military strength* entails one side building up massive armaments as a deterrent. Guided by a desire for a balance of power, people on the other side can be convinced to not go to war because they may not win against the other side. This philosophy entails a well maintained and prepared armed forces, thought to provide security in a dangerous world. This approach assumes the world is competitive, that humans are violent, and that deterrence is a viable peace philosophy. Second, *peace through justice* assumes peace can be reached by getting rid of structural violence, eliminating oppression and economic exploitation, and ensuring human rights and human security. This philosophy assumes peace can be achieved if humans' basic needs are protected and preserved.<sup>28</sup>

Third, the philosophy of *peace through sustainability* assumes peace can be achieved by non-violent relationships with, and commitment to, the human and natural worlds. People embracing this philosophy assume that people are spiritually and materially connected to others and nature, and that there is enough for everyone. Fourth, some people hold the belief that peace can be achieved through *pacifism and transformation*. This philosophy assumes people can face confrontations, using non-violence to resolve conflict and to deal with human aggression. Pacifism holds great confidence in the infinite possibilities of the human spirit. This philosophy further assumes humans are capable of love and personal transformations.<sup>29</sup>

A fifth philosophy is *peace thorough politics* or institution building. This approach assumes peace can be achieved (maintain order in society) by working through political channels to provide alternatives for resolving conflicts aside from all out war and violence (e.g., through a Department of Peace, United Nations, diplomats, international law, treaties, laws, courts). It also assumes that humans can be rational, and can successfully appeal to the common interest. Finally, *peace education* is a philosophy that posits people can be taught to gauge which philosophical orientation or foundation is appropriate given the situation.<sup>30</sup> This philosophy

---

<sup>27</sup> Harris, I., & Morrison, M. L. *Peace education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> See also Ragland, D. “Recasting classical and contemporary philosophies to ground peace education: A review essay of ‘James Page, Peace education: Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations’.” *In Factis Pax*, 3 (2009): 147-153.

assumes humans are capable of changing their behaviours and beliefs as a result of the education process. Education is Latin *educare*, to draw or lead out; hence, it is assumed that peace education can draw out people's instincts to live peacefully with others.<sup>31</sup>

### Reardon's Cosmopolitan Philosophy of Peace

Betty Reardon maintained that the articulation of a philosophy of peace education is predicated on the critical task of defining the meaning of peace.<sup>32</sup> She drew on both negative and positive conceptions of peace, ultimately calling for *authentic peace* (grounded in international human rights and global justice). She understood authentic peace to mean the abolition of the war system and the establishment of global justice and a global civic community.<sup>33</sup> Reardon's philosophy of peace is "grounded in a cosmopolitan and transformative moral and political orientation, [which] provides a powerful framework for the development of a philosophy of peace education."<sup>34</sup>

Reardon positioned peace education within the broader issue of *citizenship*, enabling her to suggest that any philosophy of peace should be concerned with the *political efficacy* of future *citizens* (i.e., their ability to engage in transformative political action). She linked this idea with *cosmopolitanism*, conventionally defined as familiar and at ease with many different cultures and countries. In a nice intellectual twist, Snauwaert suggested that "the Cosmopolitanism perspective finds its moral grounding in a basic commitment to equal respect for persons, a respect that transcends cultural and political boundaries."<sup>35</sup> In her peace philosophy, Reardon accordingly defined cosmopolitanism as people valuing *universal* moral inclusion, grounded in respect for human dignity.<sup>36</sup> Her philosophy of peace embraced the "cosmopolitan ideal of universal respect for human dignity and moral inclusion [grounded in] the value of universal moral equality... Each person is a morally equal member of the human moral community."<sup>37</sup>

At the core of cosmopolitanism is a deep ethical dimension, with Reardon maintaining that the political dimension logically follows from the ethical. Appreciating the principle of universal moral equality, her philosophy holds that "the rights of equal political consideration and equal political participation constitute political equality."<sup>38</sup> In summary, Reardon's philosophy of peace holds that "the basic purpose of peace education should be the

---

<sup>31</sup> Harris, I., & Morrison, M. L. *Peace education*.

<sup>32</sup> Reardon, B. A. *Comprehensive peace education*. New York, NY: Columbia Teachers College Press, 1988.

<sup>33</sup> Snauwaert, Dale T. "Betty Reardon's Conception of "Peace" and Its Implications for a Philosophy of Peace Education." *Peace Studies Journal* 5, no. 3 (2012): 45-52.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> Reardon, Betty A, and Dale T Snauwaert. "Reflective Pedagogy, Cosmopolitanism, and Critical Peace Education for Political Efficacy: A Discussion of Betty A. Reardon's Assessment of the Field." *In Factis Pax: Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice* 5, no. 1 (2011): 1-14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

transformation of the social order and its implicit patterns of thought in the direction of authentic peace, a conception of peace that is grounded in a cosmopolitan ethical and political orientation.”<sup>39</sup>

### Page’s Ethics-based Philosophies of Peace

James Smith Page also drew on ethics in his approach to a philosophy of peace.<sup>40</sup> “A formal philosophy of peace education [can] undergird both individual and institutional commitments to peace education.”<sup>41</sup> He proposed five strands of ethics that may serve as philosophical foundations for peace education: virtue, consequentialist, conservative political, aesthetics, and care. These ethical philosophies have the potential to “uncover and inform our thinking on peace.”<sup>42</sup> Page reasoned that a peace educator’s approach would be different, depending on which combination of these philosophies was in use. His approach draws from a Western Eurocentric epistemological framework.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding *virtue ethics*, any educator embracing this philosophy would assume that peace is a virtue, a morally good or right thing. Peace is a character orientation for a person, rather than a set of actions or a state of affairs. Indeed, from this philosophy, peace educators focus on *whom you are* as a person, assuming that *who you are* will shape what you do (action). This peace philosophy assumes that the purpose of peace education is to empower individuals at a time when society does not see individuals as significant. This assumption is paramount because we live in a time when people sense a loss of social civility, an increase in personal aggression, and an overall decline in ethical conduct. Informed by this philosophy, people would gain empowerment through peace education that is focused on the conscious development of people’s character and personality. In this process, peace education would foster peace-focused virtues such as non-violence, respect for others, diversity, harmony, solidarity, and cooperative relations.<sup>44</sup>

Instead of focusing on a person’s character and virtues, *consequentialist ethics* focuses on the consequences of their (in)actions. Embracing this philosophy means peace educators would accept that their pedagogy has consequences; how they teach and what they teach (or not) affects

---

<sup>39</sup> Snauwaert, Dale T. "Betty Reardon’s Conception of “Peace” and Its Implications for a Philosophy of Peace Education," 51.

<sup>40</sup> Page, “Peace education: Exploring some philosophical foundations;” Page, *Peace education. Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations*; Page, J. S. “Philosophy of peace education.” In M. Bajaj (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of peace education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/PDF%20articles/Philosophy%20of%20Peace%20Education.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Page, “Philosophy of peace education,” 3.

<sup>42</sup> Ragland, “Recasting classical and contemporary philosophies to ground peace education ,” 148.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Page, “Peace education: Exploring some philosophical foundations;” Page, *Peace education. Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations*; Page, “Philosophy of peace education.”

the society that is formed. Consequently (pun intended), educators inspired by this philosophy would teach students that the morality of their actions is assessed by the consequences. This philosophy, not surprisingly then, assumes an implied hope of betterment. Hope is a connection to the future. If teachers educate students about dangers looming in the future, it follows that critically literate students can choose to avert those dangers (avoid or mitigate consequences) by challenging social structures in society. Students are encouraged to think about the world they want, and peace education would strive to empower them to create such a world. They would learn that there are alternatives to conflict and suffering, violence and injustice.<sup>45</sup>

A peace philosophy informed by *conservative political ethics* would focus on the evolution of social institutions, a stable nation state, and the importance of ordered and lawful social change. Conservatism means to maintain the status quo and to only move forward with orderly change (not violent change), ensured through a stable nation state. Using this philosophy, educators would teach for continuity with the past because continuity ensures orderly change and stable social structures, which better mitigates violence. If people can commit to an orderly nation state, there can be orderly, peaceful social change.<sup>46</sup>

*Aesthetics ethics* assumes that peace is a beautiful and valuable thing, worthy of being a clearly stated objective within any curriculum. Peace is accepted as a defensible value orientation. Indeed, peace education grounded in an aesthetic ethics philosophy would be value laden (not value free), with a focus on aesthetic judgements. The latter concern judgements of the rightness or wrongness of a situation or action, and such judgements are made with limited information, within a time line. Peace education would teach students that their actions are based on their judgements about what is desirable and considered to be of value (defensible); these become worthwhile activities that respect the beauty of humanity and justice.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, *an ethics of care* philosophy of peace would focus on trust and engagement with others. It assumes that nurturing and care ought to be the dominant guiding principles of how people act toward others. Actions should be relationship-based and focused on kindness instead of focused on rights, duties, and what is just. This care approach is based on the assumption that peace is all about establishing and nurturing a supportive network of relationships through which people can learn and practice peace. Therefore, peace education should teach students to act out of an altruistic concern and care for others and their welfare because the latter are necessary for trusting and nurturing relationships.<sup>48</sup>

## Challenges to Western Philosophies of Peace

Burns and Aspeslagh observed that the concept of peace education, and what it should

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

comprise, was developed in Western countries and then projected onto the wider world.<sup>49</sup> Page acknowledged the resultant slippery slope of peace education and the threat of indoctrination, necessitating an exploration of non-Western sources for peace education.<sup>50</sup> Ilan Gur-Zéev stands out in this regard with his powerful critique of Westernized peace education. Gur-Zéev argued that present day peace education glorifies, enables, serves and conceals the hegemonic power relations that threaten humanity and the planet.<sup>51</sup> He felt that Western peace educators needed to face up to and critique the existential, philosophical and political settings that lead to the false promises stemming from contemporary Western peace education.

In more detail, Gur-Zéev claimed that Western peace education is based on flawed assumptions, namely that: (a) peace should be taught, longed for, and struggled for; (b) peace is the opposite of violence and conflict; (c) it is possible to educate for peace or the promotion of peace; and, (d) it is justifiable and desirable to invest resources to educate for peace as understood from the Western viewpoint. He challenged these assumptions, arguing they are informed by humanistic, universalistic, essentialist, and fundamentalist philosophies from the Western world.<sup>52</sup>

In more detail, the humanistic philosophy assumes people can become enlightened, increase their human capacities, and realize their potential. This personal growth leads to social change that would prevent the conditions for war. Universalism refers to religious, theological and philosophical concepts that are presumed to apply to everyone (e.g., human rights). Essentialism holds that there are invariant (constant) truths about the world and that humans have characteristics that are universally valid. Their potential is conceived as rooted in their essence. Finally, fundamentalism pertains to unquestioning submission to an absolute authority, leading to an intolerance of alternative view points. Fundamentalism is perpetuated through religious dogma and distortions of history, philosophy or both.

Gur-Zéev vehemently argued that Western peace education fails because it is based on these aforementioned philosophical premises.<sup>53</sup> To illustrate, he asserted that students are not taught to critique the Western hegemonic culture, or to resist the power of this apparatus. This hegemony allows conflict and violence to become invisible; although it is very real, it remains hidden because it is normalized. Peace education formed within the grip of this hegemonic power acts as a normalizing agent. Normalizing refers to the social processes thorough which

---

<sup>49</sup> Burns, R., & Aspeslagh, R. "Concepts of peace education: A view of Western perspectives." *International Review of Education*, 29 (1983), 311-330.

<sup>50</sup> Page, "Philosophy of peace education;" Page, "Peace education."

<sup>51</sup> Gur-Zéev, I. "Philosophy of peace education in a postmetaphysical era." In Gavriel, S., & Cairns, E. (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education* (pp. 171-186). New York, NY: Taylor Francis, 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Gur-Zéev, "Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era;" Gur-Zéev, I. (2010). Beyond peace education: Toward co-poiesis and enduring improvisation. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(3/4), 315-339.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

ideas and actions come to be seen as *normal* and taken-for-granted (i.e., not critically examined or questioned). Normalized peace education conceals its own foundations, making it impossible for students to *see* the real education they are receiving. They are misled and indoctrinated into reproducing the Western hegemony.

Also, Gur-Zéev argued that Western peace education fails to teach students to be critical of the Western metanarrative or Grand narrative (i.e., competition, capitalism, individualism, success and progress, science and technology, and patriarchy).<sup>54</sup> Since even on a good day, most citizens are not aware they are being influenced by a societal Grand narrative (the collection of modern ideas that shape how society is organized, ruled and how power is shared), it does not bode well that students are being taught peace through the Western philosophy. Grand narratives tend to reflect universal truths that help people make sense of their world; without a deep critique of the Grand narrative, peace educators inadvertently legitimize the narrative, making it appear as moral, right and reasonable (i.e., normalized).

### **Gur-Zéev's Counter Philosophy of Peace**

Gur-Zéev actually argued that peace educators who are using Western philosophies are complicit in perpetuating violence and injustices because they do their job so well. He urged people to challenge the dialectics of peace education; that is, to challenge their philosophy of peace. Gur-Zéev's critique was not empty. He articulated a compelling counter-education that would challenge the Western approach. It would be based on contingencies, localism, differences, uniqueness, and an anti-fundamentalist pedagogy. This approach would also replace universal truths and rights and universal solidarity and responsibility.<sup>55</sup>

In more detail, first, Gur-Zéev envisioned a philosophy of peace that would teach that peace is a negative utopia (instead of a positive utopia). This approach is based on the assumption that there are no universals (like justice and rights); instead, there are *transcendent negative imperatives* (such as being open to responding to injustice and to worthy suffering). Instead of being committed to universal truths, students would be taught to transcend the truths that serve the hegemonic culture.<sup>56</sup> With transcendence, they would learn to give way to the sovereignty of entrenched truths, thereby creating space to surmount the weight of universal Western truths, leading to the formation of new insights and new truths.<sup>57</sup>

Second, this counter-education would reject the pleasure principle for the principle of reality. Peace education would validate the presence, and possibility, of transcending pain into

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Somerville, M. A., & Rapport, D. *Transdisciplinarity: reCreating integrated knowledge*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002.

worthy suffering (i.e., do not waste the suffering, learn from it - become more worthy).<sup>58</sup> Instead of just suffering while in or facing a painful situation, people would face the truth of their painful reality and, after reflection upon the situation, they would move onto a worthier way of life; that is, worthy suffering. They would avail themselves of the opportunities to attain the moral values that a painful situation can afford them - whether or not they do this decides whether or not they are worthy of the suffering.<sup>59</sup> Gur-Zéev characterized this as “right, just, beautiful and meaningful suffering.”<sup>60</sup> Worthy suffering, therefore, is seen as helping people transcend pain, creating a space for reflections on society’s production of identities, meanings and life quests. In particular, violences (painful realities) would be viewed as possibilities for counter-ethics and counter-responsibilities because there is rebirth within violence.<sup>61</sup>

Third, in reference to normalized peace education, Gur-Zéev argued that counter-education would challenge the politics of Western peace education, especially the core idea of consensus as way to resolve conflict.<sup>62</sup> Western approaches to peace education assume that consensus is predicated on the notions of rationality, good intentions, openness to others, and universal truths. A counter-education would reject this approach, calling it an illusion because the Grand narrative would distort any dialogue attendant to consensus. What is needed instead is peace education that teaches people to challenge the hegemonic order. Only when the distortion is revealed can true dialogue emerge and consensus take place.

Fourth, Gur-Zéev maintained that this counter-education would assume that peace involves learning to live with conflict in a constructive manner; peace is not just about the absence of conflict.<sup>63</sup> The latter assumption enables the Western approach to conflict resolution, which actually perpetuates the conflict instead of resolving it. This happens because Western-based peace education assumes that there *can be* co-existence in a safe collective. Counter-educators would ask instead “What kind of togetherness is possible, bearable, or longed-for and what are the ways to approach such a future?”<sup>64</sup> As well, counter-education would have people pose compelling questions about *what is* worthy of a life-and-death struggle; that is, they would actively problematize the kind of peace longed for instead of assuming

---

<sup>58</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era;” Gur-Zéev, I. “Philosophy of peace education in a postmetaphysical era.” In Gavriel, S., & Cairns, E. (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education* (pp. 171-186). New York, NY: Taylor Francis, 2010; Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era;” Gur-Zéev, I. (2010). Beyond peace education: Toward co-poiesis and enduring improvisation. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(3/4), 315-339.

<sup>59</sup> Peters, M. A. (Ed.) *Heidegger, education and modernity*. Oxford, England: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era,” 333.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era;” Gur-Zéev, I. “Philosophy of peace education in a postmetaphysical era.” In Gavriel, S., & Cairns, E. (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education* (pp. 171-186). New York, NY: Taylor Francis, 2010; Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era;” Gur-Zéev, I. (2010). “Beyond peace education: Toward co-poiesis and enduring improvisation.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Gur-Zéev, “Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era,” p. 333.

Western notions of peaceful co-existence in a positive utopian state replete with universal truths (rights and justice), and realized human potential.<sup>65</sup>

## Summary and Implications

The main premise of this paper was that effective peace educators need a philosophy of peace because philosophies have a profound impact on pedagogies; however, achieving philosophical acumen is compromised because of the dearth of literature about what constitutes a peace philosophy and what could be the foundational underpinnings of such a philosophy. To address these issues, this paper identified and profiled six prospective philosophical foundations for peace education, mostly Western in their orientation (see Figure 1), and, in the process, discovered and recounted a powerful counter-education to a perceived Western hegemony in peace education.

Several implications are now addressed. First, it appears that the literature around philosophical foundations for peace philosophies is not as deficient as Page (2004, 2008a) assumed. Six distinct approaches were identified, and they proved quite rich in their own right as well as collectively. Peace educators so inclined to ponder and reflect upon what might inform their peace philosophy have quite a range of ideas from which to choose. Interestingly, these ideas are not new. To illustrate, Cajello drew on Kant's philosophy of peace, articulated nearly 250 years ago. Urbain recounted Ikeda's philosophy, which was inspired by a form of Japanese Buddhism more than 800 years old. Page drew on longstanding ethical philosophies, some of them centuries old. Gur-Zéev critiqued peace education that was informed by philosophical tenets from the Enlightenment and Modernism eras, going back hundreds of years. Reardon drew on the centuries-old idea of cosmopolitanism (from the times Before Christ (400BC), and now experiencing a renaissance). Harris and Morrison's approach to peace is grounded in contemporary conversations about different kinds of peace aside from negative peace (absence of war).

Second, there are many commonalities amongst the six approaches, including: personal transformation, political channels and politics, communication and dialogue, cooperation and collaboration, citizenship, morality, and relationships. Third, there are intriguing outliers as well, such as: aesthetic judgements, care to balance duties and rights, confidence and trust, sustainability (connectedness), military strength as a deterrent, challenges to hegemonic power of any context (avoid fundamentalism), peace as non-utopian and as self-problematized, and worthy suffering as part of inner transformation. Peace educators exploring what could constitute their philosophy of peace have a rich collection of ideas from which to draw, including familiar and not so familiar concepts.

Finally, future philosophical musing about what could constitute a philosophy of peace

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

should consider the merit of Gur-Zéev's counter-argument, which happened to challenge the Western hegemony of peace education. Insights from likeminded critiques have the potential to shape peace education philosophies and pedagogies. Resisting centric approaches to peace education opens the door to deeper insights into the hegemonic influence of foundational underpinnings for a peace philosophy, regardless of the source. The more transparent people make the foundations upon which they base their philosophies of peace, the more responsible they are as peace pedagogues.

## References

- A Philosopher. (2012, October 21). Re: What is the purpose of philosophy? [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://forums.philosophyforums.com/threads/what-is-the-purpose-of-this-universe-57045.html>
- Boggs, D. L. (1981). Philosophies at issue. In B. W. Kreitlow (Ed.), *Examining controversies in adult education* (pp.1-10). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brockett, R. G. (Ed.). (1998). *Ethical issues in adult education*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Burns, R., & Aspeslagh, R. (1983). Concepts of peace education: A view of Western perspectives. *International Review of Education*, 29(3), 311-330.
- Calleja, J. J. (1991). *A Kantian epistemology of education and peace: An examination of concepts and values*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bradford University.
- Carter, C., & Kumar, R. (Eds.). (2010). *Peace philosophy in action*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gorski, P. S. (2013). Special essay: What is critical realism? And why should you care." *Contemporary Sociology*, 42(5), 658-670.
- Goulah, J., & Urbain, O. (2013). Daisaky Ikeda's philosophy of peace, education proposals, and Soka education: Convergences and divergences in peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 10(3), 303-322.
- Guha, A. (2003). Buddhist cosmic philosophy and Daisaku Ikeda's concept of peace cosmology. *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 13, 160-176.
- Gur-Zéev, I. (2001). Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era. *Educational Theory*, 51(3), 315-336.
- Gur-Zéev, I. (2010a). Beyond peace education: Toward co-poiesis and enduring improvisation. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(3/4), 315-339.

- Gur-Zéev, I. (2010b). Philosophy of peace education in a postmetaphysical era. In Gavriel, S., & Cairns, E. (Eds.), *Handbook on peace education* (pp. 171-186). New York, NY: Taylor Francis.
- Harris, I., & Morrison, M. L. (2003). *Peace education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Jingsong, H. (2000). The Lotus Sutra and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda. *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 10, 47-55.
- Kobayashi, M. (2008). Nichiren's philosophy of peace. *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 18, 149-154.
- MacFarland, K., Cartmel, J., & Nolan, A. (2010). *Early childhood care and education leadership modules - Module 3 - Philosophy*. Retrieved from the Early Childhood Care and Education website, <http://www.ecceleadership.org.au/module3.html>  
<http://www.ecceleadership.org.au/node/14>
- Maddux, M., Dong, B., Miller, W., Nelson, K., Raebel, M., Raehl, C., & Smith, W. (2000). A vision of pharmacy's future roles, responsibilities, and manpower needs in the United States. *Pharmacotherapy*, 20(8), 991-1020.
- McGregor, S. L. T. (2010). *Consumer moral leadership*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Merino, E. S. V., & Solbes, V. M. M. (2011). Philosophy of education and culture of peace in the pedagogical discourse. *Revista Innovación Educativa*, 11(55), 68-75.
- Merriam, S. B. (1982). Some thoughts on the relationship between theory and practice. *New Directions for Continuing Education*, 15, 87-91.
- Navarro-Castro, L., & Nario-Galace, J. (2008). *Peace education: A pathway to a culture of peace*. Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College.
- Page, J. S. (2004). Peace education: Exploring some philosophical foundations. *International Review of Education*, 50(1), 3-15.
- Page, J. S. (2008a). *Peace education. Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Page, J. S. (2008b). Philosophy of peace education. In M. Bajaj (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of peace education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/PDF%20articles/Philosophy%20of%20Peace%20Education.pdf>
- Page, J. S. (2010). Peace education. In Peterson, P., Baker, E., & McGaw, B. (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of education* (pp. 850-854). Oxford, England: Elsevier.
- Peters, M. A. (Ed.). (2002). *Heidegger, education and modernity*. Oxford, England: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Ragland, D. (2009). Recasting classical and contemporary philosophies to ground peace education: A review essay of 'James Page, Peace education: Exploring ethical and philosophical foundations'. *In Factis Pax*, 3(1), 147-153.
- Reardon, B. (1988). *Comprehensive peace education*. New York, NY: Columbia Teachers College Press.
- Reardon, B., & Snauwaert, D. (2011). Reflective pedagogy, cosmopolitanism, and critical peace education for political efficacy: A discussion of Betty A. Reardon's assessment of the field. *In Factis Pax*, 5(1), 1-14.
- Snauwaert, D. T. (2012). Betty Reardon's conception of 'peace' and its implications for a

- philosophy of peace education. *Peace Studies Journal*, 5(3), 45-52.
- Somerville, M. A., & Rapport, D. (2002). *Transdisciplinarity: reCreating integrated knowledge*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Synott, J. (2005). Peace education as an educational paradigm. *Journal of Peace Education*, 2(1), 3-16.
- Urbain, O. (2010). *Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace: Dialogue, transformation and global civilization*. London, England: I. B. Tauris.