Critical Comprehensive Peace Education: Finding a Pedagogical Nexus for Personal, Structural, and Cultural Change

Tony Jenkins

> Had peace educators been better students of history, we might have understood from the outset of our work that significant change in human behaviors and human institutions cannot be achieved without change in the cultures which give rise to and are shaped by the behaviors and institutions.—Betty Reardon (2000, p. 416)

> [Most social] movements…have of necessity for the most part taken an oppositional stance to policy establishments rather than a transformational stance toward systems and the culture which produce them.—Betty Reardon (2000, p. 417)

Peace education is rooted in traditions of critical theory. While the field is broad and dynamic, most theorists and practitioners share the conviction that peace education should support learners in developing a critical consciousness of the world as it is and should be. Furthermore, peace education is overtly and intentionally political, seeking to foster the human agency necessary for social and political transformation. Inquiry into violence, in its myriad of direct and indirect forms (Galtung, 1969), including especially epistemic violence, is the focal point from which peace education provides its diagnosis and prognosis. Some, if not most institutionalized forms and approaches to peace education are politically benign; in an effort to be adopted into schools many take

T. Jenkins (✉)
Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA
e-mail: jenkins@i-i-p-e.org

the path of least resistance, opting to forsake the critical social dimensions in favor of more politically acceptable interventions. The hope, for some, is that this strategy affords an opportunity to change the institution from within. Programs such as social emotional learning and conflict resolution programs tend to emphasize psycho-social approaches to change, accentuating behavioral and social changes among students. While such programs foster social emotional intelligence and may capacitate learners for constructive conflict management, they generally fall short in capacitating the critical thinking, imaginative, futures oriented, and political competencies are seen as necessary for pursuing socio-political change. At the same time, many critical theorist-practitioners fail to see the essential interdependencies between psycho-social and socio-political approaches to educational change. Fostering human agency for social and political action, one of the central pillars of peace education, requires a holistic, comprehensive pedagogical approach. Having cognition of a social problem, even when accompanied by a vision of a preferred social alternative, is generally insufficient if the internal conviction to take external action is not also generated. Given this challenge, this chapter will explore the possibilities for developing a critical, comprehensive pedagogical approach to peace education that exists at the nexus of personal, structural, and cultural change.

Peace Education: A Field in and of Praxis

Peace education is a field in and of praxis; its parameters and guiding principles are consistently evolving through the reflective learning of its practitioners and theorists (Bajaj, 2008b; Haavelsrud, 1996; Haavelsrud & Cabezudo, 2013; Harris & Morrison, 2013; Jenkins, 2019; Reardon, 2000, 2015b; Wintersteiner, 2009; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). As the field developed more formally over the past half century, there have been many debates as to its social purposes, goals, and approaches. These disputes have provided opportunities for critical reflection and interrogation, opening the doors for new evolutions. The debates that shape these evolutionary developments, similar to other transdisciplinary social and educational sciences (Boulding, 1956; Jenkins, 2013a), are reflective of the varying contexts and conditions of those who were, and are actively engaged in peace education. In Freirean terms, these contexts represent the elicited, generative themes of the learning of the field (Freire, 1970). While there is near-universal agreement that the central problématique of peace education is violence in all its various forms and manifestations (Reardon, 1988), there are many, wide-ranging discussions as to the most efficacious, ethical, and contextually relevant educational strategies, methods, pedagogies, and approaches for nurturing and sustaining personal, social, and political change and transformation. Werner Wintersteiner (2009) contests that "there is no concept that explains sufficiently how education fits into the process of political change. We have to be aware of this theoretical gap of peace research rather than to blame peace education for it" (p. 52).

These contested theories of change illuminate the need for increased dialogue among practitioners and theorists to learn and appreciate the contextual milieus shaping preferred approaches. They also call for a renewed emphasis on rigorous evaluation and research (Wisler et al., 2015), as well as training in research methods consistent with social justice pedagogies. When evaluating formal educational interventions, the external myriad of direct and indirect social, cultural, and political educational influences, which comprise the contextual conditions (Haavelsrud, 1996; Haavelsrud & Cabezudo, 2013) of a given population, require researchers to make intuitive judgments. These intuitions constitute a critical and valid form of knowledge (Hajir & Kester, 2020), yet they foster uncertainties and anxieties among those who generally hold positivist renderings of the world (Walzer, 1993).

One of the prominent discussions currently influencing the field weighs psycho-social against socio-political approaches to educational change (Bar-Tal, 2002; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). In generalized terms, psycho-social approaches are individual-centered, oriented toward worldview change of the learner, and emphasizing the development of inner moral resources and social emotional competencies. Such approaches have a tendency to fixate on the individual as the locus of the problem that is to be fixed, accompanied by a linear view of social change captured by the refrain often attributed to Gandhi: "If you want to change the world, start with yourself." Zembylas and Bekerman (2013) challenge the assumption "that lack of peace, tolerance, justice, equality, and recognition is primarily considered a product of 'ignorance'" (p. 201) and bring attention to the importance of centering education on the social, historical, political, and structural contexts that give rise to such "ignorance" (see also: Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011). From this viewpoint, many significant scholarly calls for reclaiming critical peace education have been made over the past two decades. Critical peace education theorists bring attention to socio-political approaches that center institutions and structural violence as that which must be transformed. Juxtaposed with the psycho-social, socio-political approaches tend to overlook psychological barriers and motivators for political engagement, and may have a pedagogical leaning toward rationalism (which many theorists consider a contested terrain of structural violence). The scholarly propensity to see these two approaches as polarities may be owed, in part, to those "paradigmatic dichotomies set by Western epistemologies" (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013, p. 1999), which ignore their essential interdependencies. To advance the transformative potential of peace education, a conscious effort should be made to shift academic energy from debate to dialogical encounter. How are the psycho-social and socio-political approaches to educational change related? What are the interdependencies between personal and political change? Arguably, human agency may be the crucial point of pedagogical convergence that may help us render a more comprehensive and holistic view of critical peace education. An examination of some of the historical developments of the field that have shaped these different views will be explored before diving into these specific inquiries.

A Brief History of Peace Education Developments

The history of peace education comprises formal, non-formal, and informal developments, with the still contested formalization of the academic field emerging in the latter half of the twentieth century. Harris and Morrison (2013) trace the earliest origins of peace education to informal, cultural practices and community-based peace education strategies. They also point to the influence of activist movements, suggesting that modern peace education may have emerged in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars via progressive intellectuals. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the rise of peace education has been largely considered a response to global issues, particularly violent conflicts, and wars (Bajaj, 2008b; Harris & Morrison, 2013; Pervical, 1989; Reardon, 1988, 2000; Wulf, 1974). Arising from these contexts, early approaches to peace education focused on the achievement of negative peace (Galtung, 1969), which emphasizes the elimination and reduction of direct forms of violence.

It is generally recognized that peace education emerged as a more formal academic pursuit with the formation of the Peace Education Commission (PEC) of the International Peace Research Association in 1973. In *An Intellectual History of the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association* Mindy Pervical (1989) examines the complex conditions that gave rise to the development of the field and the field's relationship to other realms of peace knowledge, particularly peace research:

> Peace education, and the formation of PEC as a major expression of that field, is a manifestation of a complicated variety of social, academic, political and psychological trends. It is the culmination of interests spawned from religion, politics, education, philosophy, economics and history. Peace researchers were responsible for introducing to educators a consistently *critical approach* to the problems of war and violence which allowed them to retain a theoretical framework independent of the popular peace philosophy of the day. (pp. 45–46)

The critical approaches referred to by Percival probe the possibilities of peace education contributing to "positive peace," which is characterized by the absence of both direct and indirect violence, and the presence of social justice and human rights (Galtung, 1969). Indirect violence, as coined by Johan Galtung (1969) refers to forms of harm (social, cultural, political, and economic) that are not physical in nature, yet are obviously intimately related to physical violence and often give rise to it. Indirect violence can be conceptualized as any form of harm that prevents the achievement of one's full human potential—or violates one's human dignity. Johan Galtung further delineated two forms of indirect violence: structural and cultural. Structural violence is systemic and institutionalized: it's violence that harms a specific group of people by either denying them certain basic rights or preventing them from equitable access to resources. It is exemplified by policies and practices of discrimination based on age, gender, sex preference, race, ethnicity, class, and

religion. Magnus Haavelsrud (Haavelsrud, 1996), a contemporary to Galtung, observes that "structural violence also has other more subtle consequences. It kills the imagination of powerless people, it alienates marginalized boys and girls, men and women, to the extent that they become passive acceptors of oppressive reality" (p. 67). Cultural violence is more symbolic and insidious; it is rooted in social and political assumptions and beliefs used to justify direct and structural violence that are passed on and reproduced culturally—often via formal education. The lenses of structural and cultural violence broadened the scope of peace education's inquiry and learning goals. From this vantage, the problématique of violence requires critical investigation of the full array of human inventions, institutions, and cultural practices. With this critical awareness, the knowledge, skills, and values that peace education seeks to inculcate and nurture become much more context-dependent. The influences of structures and institutions must be examined for their contextual impacts on social and political relations.

Perhaps even more important, the critical lens requires inquiry into how structures, institutions, and cultures may be sources of epistemological and/or pedagogical violence. Many critical peace education scholars acknowledge that how we come to know, what it is that we think that we know, significantly impacts how we will come to use and act upon that knowledge in the world (Jenkins, 2008). For example, the cognitive imperialism of colonialist pedagogies is an impediment to critical and reflective thinking, social imagination, and the possibilities of peace and social justice. The emphasis on knowledge production and reproduction of Eurocentric/Western pedagogies, adopted by most systems of formal education, inherently imposes a finite set of deterministic social and political values that serve to maintain the world as it is. Such pedagogies mold individual epistemic assumptions of both teachers and students to conform to a narrow view of acceptable forms of knowledge and thought. Hajir and Kester (2020) argue that certain epistemic assumptions "value reason and rational dialogue as a means toward transformation and emancipation while failing to attend to unequal power relations operating in the background, such as the subjugation of non-rational ways of knowing/being" (p. 518). This epistemological violence produces cognitive biases, and is an obstacle to the development of a learner's full human potential, well-being, and flourishing. This enduring legacy of colonialist pedagogies is a fundamental source of cultural, structural, and direct violence that the current generation of peace education scholars seeks to bring renewed attention to.

The influence of feminist perspectives is also critical to the evolution of peace education, likely having the most significant and maturing impact on the field, and to peace knowledge in general. Feminists, largely through the PEC, introduced women's perspectives and feminist analysis to peace research. Women's concerns were largely ignored within the IPRA archipelago and considered peripheral to the issues of war, disarmament, and traditional peace and security. The feminists countered this false logic through critical structural

analysis, showing the interconnections between women's issues and quotidian experiences of violence and the war system. With a particular focus on the multiple forms of sexist violence suffered by women in most societies and the effects of armed conflict on women, came the recognition that these multiple forms of violence, both in times of apparent peace as well as in times of war, were interconnected in a global culture of violence. These trends illuminated and brought wider attention to gender inequality—war interconnections. Understanding these interconnections in turn led more feminist scholars, researchers, and peace activists, to adopt as a working premise the assertion that gender violence is one component of an essentially violent patriarchal international system (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007).

Patriarchy established a new lens through which the war system could be analyzed. It also forced, albeit uneasily and slow, a gendered structural analysis of IPRA and the guiding principles, goals, and values of peace research in general. While these substantive contributions have been significant, the influence of feminist perspectives on comprehensive peace education and transformative pedagogy are perhaps even more foundational. Pervical (1989) observed that "structural change, feminists argued, would be unsuccessful without attention to personal, inner change, and changes in human relationships, as authentic transformation can occur only when people change their values, behaviors, and their worldviews" (p. 103). The affective, intuitive, creative, psychological, emotional, care, and relational dimensions—largely considered inferior women's concerns—had a significant impact on broadening the scope of peace education. There was a call for the person to be given as much attention as the political. The feminist perspective was relational rather than conflict centered, recognizing that the resolution of conflicts was meaningless if the underlying relationship was not also addressed and made whole. Percival's interviews with PEC members revealed the basis of a feminist peace education framework built upon three essential principles:

> (1) An interconnectedness between the personal and the political, (2) a restoration of the values of 'insight and imagination' and (3) inclusion of the sentimental and emotional in the study of peace and education for peace. The primary goal of education for peace is, therefore, to reveal and develop talents and characteristics conducive to a meaningful and life-enhancing existence. (p. 103)

The goals and purposes derived from this perspective intimate a positive peace orientation, emphasizing building and establishing the conditions necessary for peace to flourish. This emphasis is not at the expense of the pursuit of negative peace (Ragland, 2012) or the resistance to violence and the dismantling of war, rather, the feminists thought it essential to pursue both, viewing holism, and interconnectedness as vital to the process of educating for a culture of peace. This thinking presupposes the violent alignment of the gender order as an overarching concern for both women and men. With the emergence of

masculinities studies in the 1990s, men's negative experiences of the patriarchal gender order emerged from the shadows, finally giving credence to the long-overlooked structural analysis brought into the discussion by feminists some 20 years earlier (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007).

As this critical gender analysis reveals, it's also important to observe the historical development of peace education in relationship to other fields of peace knowledge. Betty Reardon (2000) asserts peace knowledge as the "various learning, research and action practices related to peace" (p. 420). Peace knowledge is a spectrum, comprising knowledge about the substance of peace, violence, conflict, and world order; knowledge necessary for analyzing and interpreting violence, conflict, and peace; as well as the knowledge, skills, and capacities necessary for building just, peaceful relationships, institutions, and world order. Reardon orders peace knowledge into four interdependent categories: peace studies, peace research, peace education, and peace action. Peace research outlines much of the substance and methods of the peace knowledge field and prepares learners with the analytic and interpretive skills essential to future research. Reardon historically situates peace research within academic traditions of irenology and polemology (as well as other social and political science disciplines), which emerged largely in Europe in the 1950s, and was more officially adopted as peace research with the founding of IPRA in 1964. In Reardon's framing of peace knowledge, peace studies are the realm that emphasizes the transfer of peace-related knowledge and issues. Peace studies are now well situated within the academic system. Peace action refers to knowledge and skills essential to nonviolent strategy and action, civil resistance, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, conflict management, and future thinking. Most knowledge related to peace action is pursued outside the university system through non-formal training programs conducted by nongovernmental and civil society organizations. Peace education, based upon the substance of all the other realms, is especially concerned with the role of education (formal, non-formal, informal) in contributing to a culture of peace and emphasizes methodological and pedagogical processes and modes of education that are essential for transformative learning and nurturing attitudes and capacities for pursuing peace personally, interpersonally, socially, and politically. In this regard, peace education is holistic, intentionally transformative, and politically and action-oriented.

In delimiting these spheres of peace knowledge, Reardon provides historical context and examines the interrelationships among the typologies. In Reardon's observation, the spheres are not dichotomous, rather they reciprocally inform and shape each other. This holism is rarely pursued in academia where the relationship between knowledge, learning, research, and action remains relatively contentious (Boulding, 1956; Jenkins, 2008, 2013a). For example, "traditional peace knowledge, such as that taught in many university programs, draws from positivist research traditions, where objectivity outweighs subjectivity" (Jenkins, 2013b, p. 174). Fortunately, the evolution in academic peace knowledge fields has gradually moved toward the subjective (Charmaz, 2005),

recognizing that the social justice researcher "no matter how objective – is an active participant in the creation of meaning at all stages of their research or practice: the design, the hypothesis, the questioning, and the analysis" (Jenkins, 2013b, p. 175). Recognizing this relationship could spur a transformation in the academic discourse toward transdisciplinarity. Further, it implies the emergence of an ethical disposition for all fields of peace knowledge: that all research, knowledge generation, learning, and action should be directed toward positive social purposes. Increased exchanges and collaborative knowledge creation between the spheres are essential. Returning to the previous reflections on epistemological violence, there is a need as well to take up the task of analyzing education systems and pedagogies to assess their positive and negative impacts toward a culture of peace.

In *Peace Education: A Review and Projection*, Betty Reardon (2000) reflects further upon "the conceptual evolution of the pedagogical purposes and the historical conditions in which they evolved" (p. 417). Reardon's reflections mirror aspects of Percival's investigation of the developments of the field within the PEC. Reardon begins by describing what she terms "traditional peace education," a broad categorization that she stipulates as "planned and guided learning that attempts to comprehend and reduce multiple forms of violence (physical, structural, institutional and cultural) used as instruments for the advancement or maintenance of cultural, social or religious beliefs and practices or of political, economic or ideological institutions or practices" (p. 401). This definition is consistent with recent theorists' views on critical peace education, albeit with a few nuanced distinctions. Reardon suggests the traditionalist approach focuses on the transmission of knowledge and development of skills of peacemaking without necessarily taking into consideration the personal, inner or transformative dimensions and development of supportive attitude and capacities called forth by other approaches. She also refers to traditional peace education somewhat interchangeably as "essential" peace education, and education that only focuses on the transmission of knowledge (minus the skills) as "supportive" peace education. Reardon also specifies several general approaches to education that have their basis in the traditional approach: international, multicultural, and environmental education. These traditional approaches are grouped with human rights education and conflict resolution as "essential peace education," recognizing "the substance it addresses is about what peace is, its essence, and assumes that without knowledge of what comprises it, peace cannot be pursued, much less achieved. Certain knowledge is essential to peace" (p. 404). She suggests that elements of these traditional approaches have deep historical roots connected to social and political movements, and thus pre-date much of the theory and curricula of more modern peace education.

Comprehensive peace education, another of Reardon's (2000) conceptions rooted in the feminist tradition, is put forward as an essential evolutionary step in the field:

> The approach… seeks to integrate relevant aspects of education for and educa-tion about peace into a common conceptual framework with its foundation in the purposes of essential and traditional peace education and its pedagogies derived from a developmental concept of learning for social change. It was to some degree a response to the problem of fragmentation and proliferation of approaches to peace education… It owes much to the emergence of holism as a general principle of learning and curriculum development that gained more advocates among educators during the 1980s. (p. 412)

Comprehensive peace education differs from traditional peace education in that it advocates for intentional system change as well as the transformation of human consciousness and human society. For Reardon, developing critical and reflective consciousness is seen as an essential basis for the possibility of social action and engagement as well as the pursuit of a good and meaningful life.

Another present phase of peace education development is rooted in the vision of a culture of peace (Jenkins, 2013b; Reardon, 2000; Wintersteiner, 2009). This vision, articulated in the 1999 UN Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace is based upon "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life" (United Nations General Assembly, 1999) that flow from several interrelated principles including respect for life, human rights, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, sustainable devel-opment and ecological integrity, gender equity, and human dignity. Betty Reardon (2000) observed that:

> Given the particular nature of the current problems of violence and the unprece-dented opportunities presented by the growing attention to the concept of a culture of peace, in particular, questions of the development of consciousness, and human capacities to intentionally participate in the evolution of the species and the reconceptualization of culture should inform the next phase of peace education which might now address the "heart of the problem." A culture of peace perspective promises the possibility to probe these depths, the "heart", the self-concept and identity of the human species and the cosmologies from which these concepts and the dominant modes of thinking of a culture of violence arise. Now, as never before, all of education needs to be concerned about the questions of what it is to be human and how formal curriculum can facili-tate the exploration of that question so as to prepare learners to participate in social change, political-economic reconstruction, transformation of culture and consciousness. Clearly, this requires profound changes throughout all educa-tional systems, but most especially it demands equally significant developments in peace education, a new concept of purpose, a more fully developed peda-gogy, broader dimensions than even comprehensive, feminist or ecological and cooperative education have envisioned. (p. 415)

Reardon's vision calls for nothing short of a prophetic shift in culture and in the educational institutions and pedagogies that give rise to, support, and sustain dominant worldviews and ways of being.

Historical Reflections

The preceding review of the historical developments of the field, while far from complete, helps illuminate the praxis at the heart of peace education that reflects the contextual realities from which various orientations and approaches to peace education have emerged. Elements of critical peace education, of varying approach and quality, have been foundational to the field throughout its development. Early efforts, centered primarily on deconstructing the conditions of direct violence and creating the conditions for a negative peace, fall somewhat short of the holism called for by present-day critical peace education thinking. Many such efforts fail to discern the critical interdependence between forms of direct, structural, and cultural violence. Raising such linkages is key to the pursuit of transformative socio-political change. Feminists helped bring further attention to structural and cultural violence by observing the quotidian impacts of war and conflict. From this perspective, feminists also perceived and theorized change holistically, observing an integral interrelationship between structural change and personal change. While some feminists might hold the view that change in values, behaviors, and worldviews should precede structural change (and thus a presumed preference for psycho-social approaches), there is a clear symbiosis between the two approaches. By further applying a lens of epistemological violence (as rooted in colonialist pedagogies, for example), structural and cultural violence can be seen as having a direct relationship to individual attitudes and worldviews. In general terms, how we perceive the world is shaped by structural, cultural and other contextual conditions; and our perceptions of the world in turn shape how we interact with the world. Thus, as feminists have long avowed, the personal and the political are essentially inseparable. Therefore, critical peace education should seek to be holistic, while contextually specific, in its approach to nurturing learners to be agents of change.

Political & Contextual Patterns

Patterns and preferences for the policy adoption of psycho-social vs socio-political approaches can certainly be observed under some generalized contextual conditions. Peace education policy that emerges from above is more likely to be psycho-social in nature. For example, states experiencing and emerging from direct, violent conflict are prone to adopt psycho-social approaches. One reason for this is that it diverts attention away from the failings of the state (i.e., structural failures), and puts the locus on the individual citizen as the broken link in the system. From a more benevolent view, a psycho-social emphasis may be seen as essential to peacebuilding efforts confronting long-standing ethnic and political identity conflicts. In Western democracies, particularly in the USA, there is also a tendency to adopt psycho-social programs in schools in the form of interventions such as social emotional learning (SEL), peer mediation, and conflict resolution programs. Such programs center student behavior

as the problem and generally avoid the institutional and structural analysis that might threaten the political establishment and status-quo. While such programs undoubtedly have an individual and social benefit, they commonly fail to address the contextual conditions from which the perceived negative student behaviors originate. Restorative justice programs are somewhat caught in the middle of this milieu. When applied critically, restorative justice brings an intentional focus to structural and relational patterns. Unfortunately, in many cases, restorative justice is applied unceremoniously as little more than an alternative form of school discipline (Winn, 2018; Zehr, 2002).

In contrast, educational projects adopting a socio-political lens is more likely to originate from civil society. Such approaches, consistent with the feminist view, originate from more intimate and direct experiences with structural violence. These projects, typically undertaken by NGOs and community organizations, mostly operate in non-formal spaces. These efforts take roots in community spaces, where their values and learning goals become culturally embraced. As a result of this cultural acceptance, social and political authorities have little recourse but to consider these changes for formal curricular adoption (Jenkins & Segal de la Garza, 2021). In the view of many educational researchers, this bottom-up approach may be the most probable pathway toward policy implementation in formal education.

Pedagogical Pathways to Human Agency

Acquiring peace knowledge rarely results in peace activism due to apathy, privilege, and the normalization of violence…—Rita Verma (2017, p. 8)

What we are about, on a day-to-day basis, is actually how we change paradigms. We must change ourselves and our immediate realities and relationships if we are to change our social structures and our patterns of thought.—Betty Reardon (2015c, p. 112)

The most influential factor in transformative learning is the conscious, reflective experience of the learner.—Betty Reardon (2015a, p. 159)

Integrating peace education into formal schools has long been championed by peace educators as an essential peacebuilding strategy (Bajaj, 2015), recognizing that formal schooling is perhaps the most influential site of cultural production and reproduction in society. Schools not only provide knowledge and skills, but also shape social and cultural values, norms, attitudes, and dispositions. However, as previously acknowledged, educational policy is generally established from the worldview of a relative few social and political elites who seek to maintain their power and privilege through the maintenance of the status quo. From the lens of critical peace education, this policy influence can itself be considered a form of structural violence, which, by design, establishes

and maintains an inequitable distribution of power in society. Thus, advocating for critical peace education, which by its nature invites critical interrogation of institutionalized learning as a potential source of structural violence, presents many strategic challenges. As Zembylas and Bekerman (2013) observe, "what education is asked to correct has little to do with education and a lot to do with the world in which schools exist, the very world they are asked to support" (p. 202). In response to the hopelessness this view may generate, Zembylas and Bekerman suggest that efforts may be better focused on the "struggle to change pedagogical practices and strategies" (p. 203). Pedagogical adaptation, integration, and curricular infusion are short-term strategic work-arounds, with potential indirect long-term benefits to these policy challenges.

How then might critical comprehensive peace education be approached pedagogically and utilized as a counter-hegemonic force for knowledge decolonization and a source of personal and social liberation accompanied by structural change? Pedagogical holism is the starting point. The learning must provide opportunities for reflection on the interdependence between personal and political realities (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011). The learning must also be meaningful; it must center and draw from the learner's experience of the world and should be pursued through various modes of critical self-reflection (Freire, 1970; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Jenkins, 2016, 2019; Mezirow, 1991; Reardon & Snauwaert, 2011; Verma, 2017) Social transformation is dependent upon human agency (Bajaj, 2008a), which is the keystone in the bridge that spans the personal and the political dimensions of one's subjective reality. For Jack Mezirow (Mezirow, 1991), one of the founding fathers of transformative learning theory, human agency is the outcome of a transformative learning process. Mezirow suggests that worldview transformation is pursued through four stages (see Fig. 22.1), which are guided by accompanying pedagogical principles: (1) the centrality of experience (it is the learner's experience that is the starting point and the basis of the subject matter), (2) critical self-reflection (the internalized processes of meaning making), (3) rational discourse as a form of social validation in the process of meaning transformation, and (4) responsive action. Mezirow's view is consistent with Freirean praxis (see Fig. 22.2), a learner-centered cycle of "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970).

For both Mezirow and Freire, if the learning is to be meaningful it must center the learner's experience, drawing forth cognitive, affective, and intuitive interpretations of their subjective reality and aiding them in finding ways and means to express and articulate their experience. By centering inquiry and reflection on the student's experience, and making the student's experience the subject matter of the learning, learners are invited to theorize an understanding of their reality. Reflection is the soul of all transformative peace pedagogy, raising critical consciousness by bringing attention to experience and questioning worldview assumptions. Action is then the process of seeking to live one's truth through experimentation in new ways being and acting, both personally and politically. Perhaps overlooked in the Freirean model is

Fig. 22.1 Mezirow's
stages of worldview
transformation (a pathway
to human agency)
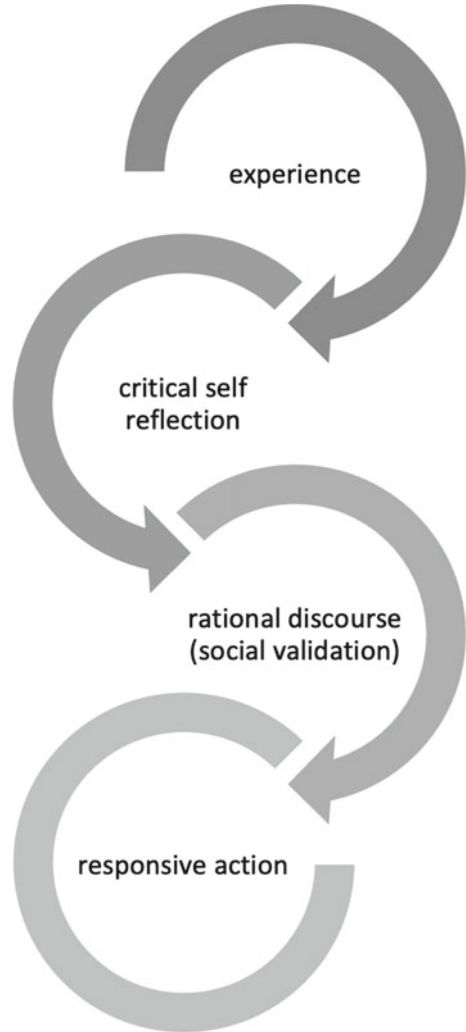
the importance of social learning in worldview transformation (stage 3 of
Mezirow). For Mezirow (1991), this is a process of social validation in which
personal reflection is corroborated with others, where "the personal mean-
ings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through
human interaction and communication" (p. xiv). Reardon adds to this a polit-
ical dimension: "while it is possible for the [reflective] process to remain
inward and still be productive of learning, the practice of reflective inquiry as
peace education - learning toward social and political change – must become
outwardly dialogic…" (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2011, p. 7). Reardon's reflec-
tion illuminates the importance of integrating a community-centered political

Fig. 22.2 Paulo Freire's praxis
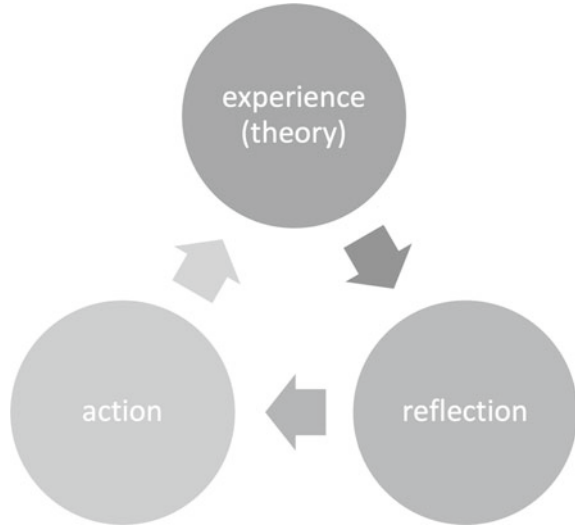
praxis, as a process of shared meaning-making, into transformative pedagogical practice.

The action dimension of the learning praxis establishes human agency as one of the central goals and a guiding social purpose of all transformative peace learning. Human agency is fostered via a holistic, comprehensive critical pedagogy that is guided by an awareness of the interdependencies between psycho-social and socio-political change. In other words, transformative critical pedagogies are premised upon a holistic theory of change in which personal, structural, and cultural change are in a symbiotic relationship. Further, as implied by Reardon, Freire, and Mezirow, learning for personal, structural, and cultural change is both relational and learner-centered. I've previously described this holistic, transformative framework as a *pedagogy of relationships* (illustrated in Fig. 22.3). The pedagogy of relationships introduces four intentional, learner-centered dimensions of reflective inquiry focused on examining the learner's interdependent relationships to the present, past, future, and others. (Previous iterations of this framework included additional dimensions, with a strong emphasis on examining the relationship of the teacher to the student [Jenkins, 2013b, 2019]. It is beyond the scope of this short chapter to illuminate these additional dimensions.)

In applying this pedagogical framework, peace education necessitates a critical reflection on each of these dimensions. As Rita Verma (2017) observes, "openings are created when unlimited questioning is encouraged of the past, present and future and when the three are understood to be in continual embrace and tension" (p. 10). One's relationship to the past might be examined via inquiries supporting reflection upon historically relevant social, cultural, political, and economic foundations of society and their influences

Fig. 22.3 A pedagogy of relationships

upon perceived reality. Such critical reflection upon the past can foster critical self-reflection and double-loop learning (Marsick & Saugeut, 2000) that supports questioning of epistemological assumptions. Critical reflection upon one's experience of the present (a form of reflection-in-action) supports affective and intuitive awareness, which, when connected to critical reflection of past assumptions, can foster critical consciousness. Holistically reflecting on our relationship to the past and present may free the self from assumptions of the past as well as foster worldview transformation. On a more pragmatic level, psycho-social reflection supports the development of emotional intelligence and capacitates learners to constructively deal with conflict and to respond to violence with nonviolence. The learner's relationship to the future must also be considered. This requires imaginative, ruminative, and contemplative reflection (Reardon, 2013). Elise Boulding reminded us that the images we hold of the future are rooted in our present experience of the world and in our interpretations of the past (Boulding, 1988, 2000; Morrison, 2013). Warren Ziegler adds that "the future is nothing more and nothing less than a grand act of the human imagination" (Ziegler, 1982). Humans construct reality in their minds before acting on it externally, "thus how we think about the future also shapes the actions we take in the present" (Jenkins, 2020). Further, "to open ourselves up to thinking about preferred futures requires, at least temporarily, that we step away from rational thought and embrace our intuitive and affective ways of thinking, knowing and being" (Jenkins, 2020). Constructive and transformative human agency is dependent upon our ability to envision a preferred world, and further, to believe that a new world is even possible. For the learning to become socially and politically transformative,

it must also invite reflection on our relationship to others that comprise our moral universe. Transformative learning for political and structural change is a form of community praxis. Through collective reflection on action, social and cultural assumptions are challenged, and new expressions of reality are validated. As a form of political learning, Reardon observed that if reflective learning were to be "left at the inward without the communal sharing, it might become meditative rather than ruminative, remaining personal, not becoming a social learning process, preparatory to the public political discourse for change" (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2011, p. 8). Human agency, from Reardon's perspective, is fostered through both personal and social reflection.

Conclusion

> Critical peace education is oriented towards the particularistic, seeking to enhance transformative agency and participatory citizenship, and open to resonating in distinct ways with the diverse chords of peace that exist across fields and cultures.—Monisha Bajaj (2015, p. 4)

> [Pedagogy is the] determinant of human relationships in the educational process. It is itself the medium of communication between teacher and learner, and that aspect of the educational process which most affects what learners receive from their teachers.—Betty Reardon (1993)

At the heart of this essay has been a spirited attempt to address Wintersteiner's (2009) distressed concern that "there is no concept that explains sufficiently how education fits into the process of political change" (p. 52). It is easy to see how top-down, strategic efforts to institutionalize peace education in schools rarely succeed, particularly as critical approaches to peace education challenge the very structures and ways of thinking that schools have been designed to uphold—and schools are but an extension of a given society. Although this conclusion seems to present an insurmountable challenge, pursuing the integration of critical peace education into schools should remain a priority. However, we may wish to approach the task of transforming formal education as critical pedagogues, and not as politicians. Institutions learn in similar ways to humans: they are more likely to transform when the learning is elicited from within, rather than imposed by an authority from above. Generating transformative institutional agency is a process of learning as much as it is a process of politics.

I've put forward that the answer to how we pedagogically generate human agency might be the missing piece to the puzzle of how education can contribute to political and structural change. Political agency is particularly goal directed and assumes an individual is acting with intention toward applying their individual power to effect change on the structures of society. Of course, human agency can be hampered by the presence of conditions

of enduring structural violence and oppression. Nonetheless, cultivating the human agency necessary for intentionally pursuing personal, structural, and cultural transformation can be approached through elicitive and reflective learning that fosters recognition of the intimately intertwined relationships between present structural conditions, social and political histories, individual psychological dispositions, and the epistemic conditioning that shapes one's orientation to the world. The potential for human agency is further enhanced when the inward reflective learning becomes a social, dialogic process of communal meaning-making and potential political action.

Critical, comprehensive peace education contributes to the process of political/structural change in many ways. As a desired formal curricular intervention, it may serve to disrupt the production and reproduction of legacies of epistemic violence. Pursued as a holistic pedagogical intervention, educators emerge as the locus of the political mediation, facilitating transformative learning opportunities that may lead to cultivating human agency that is the fountain of personal, structural, and cultural change. Zembylas and Bekerman (2013) caution that "educators cannot do it all, they cannot change the world, but they should do the most they can in changing, a bit, their immediate contexts" (p. 203). Most important, as I've observed elsewhere, we must be aware that "the disposition that we take as educators in the classroom is political. It is the modeling of a political relationship that is extended outside of the classroom. As such, we need to be ever mindful of how our teaching praxis informs and shapes political externalities" (Jenkins, 2019, p. 204). This responsibility placed upon educators as agents of structural change is a tremendous burden, but it is not all that dissimilar to the strains and struggles experienced by those living under, and seeking to change, the day-to-day oppressions of systems of structural violence. If we accept the strategic proposal put forward here that peace pedagogues are the key link in the chain of social and political change pursued through education, we might begin by prioritizing the development of transformative teacher training programs to foster the human agency of critical, reflective peace educators.

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