Poetic Peace Education: A Curriculum Connecting the Mind, Body, and Heart in Workshop Spaces

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Contents

Abstract

In this chapter, we discuss the use of poetry in peace education curricula and explore what we call a poetic peace education approach. This epistemological, pedagogical, and curricular reorientation focuses on using poetry to dynamically engage learners' minds, bodies, and hearts in peace education contexts. Our emphasis on multiple ways of knowing and being in the classroom is in response to a series of interlocking crises facing peace education and recent critiques that peace education has become less effective and less peaceful due to its overly psychologized and hyper-cognitive approaches. In response, we seek to explore and expand on new paths forward for peace education that have been advocated by scholars at the Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group. These works approach the crises and critiques facing the field as an opportunity for creative

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transformation of peace education praxis and collectively point toward the power of the arts in learning about peace. Using these texts as a foundation, this chapter specifically explores how poetry can support peace education in becoming a more affective, responsive, and peaceful learning process. To do so, the chapter also draws on examples from our US and UK peace education classrooms where poetry was infused with critical explorations of masculine gender norms and higher education epistemologies. In its discussion and conclusions, this chapter braids together peace education literature, original poetic texts, personal teaching reflections, and our collaborative analysis to illuminate the challenges facing peace education curricula and the potent potential of poetic peace education alternatives moving forward.

Keywords

Peace education · Peace and conflict studies · Poetry · Arts education · Higher education · Critical masculinities

1 Introduction

I come to you Not
As colonizer
With dreams
To sell.

I do Not bring
Suffocating,
Homogenizing
Packaged
Peace.

I come to you
As visitor-host,
My-your space
Gives warmth,
Hospitality,
Connection
Nourishment.

I come to you as migrant.
Pilgrim,
Witness,
Weaver,
Dreamer.
Educator for peace.

(This poem by Hilary Cremin is the final section of a larger poem about peace educators. See Cremin (2018) for a larger excerpt of the poem.)

In this chapter, we seek to explore the value and possibilities of integrating poetry into peace education curricula. We frame this work by engaging with a recent body of academic literature that explores challenges facing peace education in the twenty-first century. We then draw on examples from our own teaching to discuss the potential of what we call *poetic peace education*. In our experiences, using poetry as learning texts, creative writing activities, and embodied performances can complement and strengthen traditional peace education classrooms by dynamically engaging learners' minds, bodies, and hearts. Our emphasis on multiple ways of knowing and being in the classroom is in response to recent critiques that peace education has become less effective and less peaceful due to its overly psychologized and hyper-cognitive approaches (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). Peace education is less *effective* in part because it is less *affective*.

In particular, we draw on one of this chapter's author's previous works (Cremin, 2016) to outline the challenges we see for peace education moving forward. We use this text as a touchstone to explore how Cremin and her colleagues in the Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group (CPERG) have responded to what they see as a crisis in peace education. We explore four responses to the crises (Cremin, 2016; Cremin & Archer, 2018; Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Cremin & Kester, 2020) that each discuss new ways forward for peace education. These works are part of an ongoing scholarly dialogue within CPERG that we find generative for our own thinking, research, and practice. In this chapter we highlight how these works share common themes, collectively point to the importance of the arts in peace education, and form the foundation of our approach to poetic peace education.

Thus, this chapter has two main goals: (1) to review this recent body of academic literature exploring challenges and opportunities facing peace education in the twenty-first century and (2) to discuss how this work leads us to the integration of poetry into peace curricula through what we call poetic peace education. As this chapter will make clear, important challenges to peace education must be addressed with critical *and* creative praxis. We seek to unpack the proposals from Cremin and CPERG and to expand on these works by outlining a new path forward that supports peace education in becoming a more affective, responsive, and peaceful learning process through engagement with poetry in the curriculum. However, our poetic peace education is not a template to be copy and pasted, nor is it a declaration of what is best for peace education in all contexts. Rather, as the poem that starts this chapter notes, this work is a constellation of connections, a nourishing concept that we have found beneficial in our own experiences and resonant with the literature. We share our ideas of poetic peace education with you the reader not as *bloodless angel* experts (Cremin & Kester, 2020; MacLure, 2013), but as witnesses to its potential, weavers of its possibilities, and dreamers of a more peaceful world.

In the following sections, we will (1) define peace education and explore crises facing the field, (2) highlight four potential paths forward for peace education that draw on the arts, (3) share two examples of poetry in peace education from our own practice, and (4) discuss the possibilities and potential value of poetic peace education praxis and curricula.

2 Peace Education

We begin by defining terms. What is peace education? In 1999, Susan Fountain defined peace education for the United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF):

> Peace education in UNICEF refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Fountain, 1999: 1)

This is a useful and comprehensive definition that applies beyond its original context of post-war settings. Another definition from Betty Reardon also includes indirect violence and therefore offers greater facility for considering the strong relationship between peace education and education for social justice. Reardon (2000: 401) defines peace education as, "planned and guided learning that attempts to comprehend and reduce the 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." Finally, Ian Harris' definition is grounded in processes that are involved when communities (within and beyond formal education) work together toward peace:

> Peace education is the process of teaching people about the threats of violence and strategies for peace. Peace educators strive to provide insights into how to transform a culture of violence into a peaceful culture. They have to build consensus about what peace strategies can bring maximum benefit to the group. (Harris, 2009: 11)

We find this process-oriented definition of peace education useful, as is the social justice-oriented definition above. We find ourselves, however, left with more questions than answers, as is often the case when complex social and cultural practices are constrained by tight definitions. For example, is global peace really a matter of changing young people's behaviors through a focus on their individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes? Can peace be achieved through the cumulative effects of peace education on individual learners? Is it sufficient to comprehend multiple forms of violence in order to reduce them? How can a culture of peace be established within dominant cultures of violence, and how can the consensus of any group be garnered so as to take account of diversity and unequal power relations?

These questions are further compounded by considerations about the changing nature of war. While peace education grew from determined efforts after the Second World War to ensure that global violence on such a scale could never arise again, the twenty-first century has seen different kinds of war emerging. These are just as likely to occur within states as between them, and wars now can be waged on abstract notions such as terrorism. Because of this, a new form of peace education is needed. The old form of peace education is no longer fit for purpose.

In writing about this in 2016, Cremin highlighted three crises (or opportunities?) that apply to peace education: legitimacy, representation, and praxis. The first is an existential crisis – whose peace are we talking about? As Dietrich (2012) points out, there are many peaces. To impose an urban, liberal, Western view of democratic peace on the entire planet is anything but peaceful. The late-twentieth-century fantasy promoted by organizations such as the UN (Boutros-Gali, 1992) that world peace would eventually result from all nations becoming democratic and engaging in global trade has been revealed as just that – critically unaware wishful thinking. As the grand narratives of modernity have given way to more nuanced and contested ways of thinking about big topics such as peace and justice, postmodern thinking has challenged the legitimacy of notions of peace that deny structural and cultural violence permeating liberal democracies. The struggles of the oppressed are increasingly seen as having greater theoretical and practical legitimacy than the books and articles of peace scholars situated in the academy (Santos, 2018).

The unsettling of taken-for-granted notions of peace of course unsettles the peace education that flows from it. Peace education needs to be grounded in a different ontology (how the world is) and epistemology (the ways of knowing we use to address this question). What do we believe about how the world is? What forms of knowing and learning can facilitate an engagement with this question? It is certainly not the case that an epistemology based on science, reason, and rationality alone can take us there. If it were simply a case of convincing learners that intolerance and direct violence are a bad thing, then the world would by now be much less intolerant and violent than it is. More than half a century of well-intended peace education curricula has not achieved this. The first crisis then is of legitimacy and epistemology.

The second crisis is linked with the first and is around the idea of representation. Whose voices count in the academy and beyond, and who gets to represent whom? More will follow later in this chapter about this second crisis in one of our examples. For now, we focus on the third crisis of praxis. It is untenable (and clearly always was) to assume that learners of any kind can be taught about peace in militarized educational settings that mimic the prison and the factory. It is not a question of what we tell young people to believe, it is more a question of how we go about teaching them what we value. As any parent will attest, children learn more from what we do than from what we say. Any peace education lesson that is based on rote learning, worksheets, or an impoverished exam-driven pedagogy is not teaching about peace. As Cremin and Archer (2018) point out, peace pedagogy needs to engage with diverse ideas of peace, including those that emanate from wisdom traditions, and it needs to enable learners to integrate heart, soul, body and mind. Learners need to experience curiosity, real-world interest, connection, and freedom to engage in peace learning in ways of their choosing. This goes back to Paulo Freire (1973: 10) and his view of educators as radicals who are committed to a path that is "predominantly critical, loving, humble, and communicative." Those who follow this route do not "deny another [person's] right to choose." They do, however, "have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence [them] – or those who, in the name of freedom, kill [their] freedom and their own." We take this as the basis of our own work.

3 Responding to the Crises

Cremin (2016) argues that within the interconnected crisis of legitimacy, representation, and praxis also comes opportunity. She writes (A clarification note: In this instance "she" refers to Hilary Cremin writing in 2016. Hilary Cremin is also one of the coauthors of this chapter. In this chapter, we use "she" or "Cremin" when referring to Hilary Cremin's past works being cited. We will use "we" when discussing new examples, analysis, and contributions from McInerney and Cremin originating in this chapter), "Are peace education and peace education research in the twenty-first century facing danger, or are they facing a turning point, a time for decision and an opportunity for change?" (2016: 2). In this second section of the chapter, we outline some of the paths forward for peace education that have been identified by Cremin and CPERG. We do this by reviewing four specific contributions we find informative (Cremin, 2016; Cremin & Archer, 2018; Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Cremin & Kester, 2020). These works discuss peace education pedagogies and ideas developed in response to the critiques highlighted above. We find these four particular responses helpful in our work here because they build upon common themes, have curricular implications relevant to our focus here, and point toward the value of arts in peace education. These articles and chapters form the foundation upon which we will further develop our poetic peace education praxis.

We view this chapter as an extension of a scholarly dialogue stemming from Cremin and CPERG's work critiquing and reimagining peace education over the past decade. However, CPERG is not the only group responding to crises within peace education. Many scholars have identified similar concerns and have explored ways to respond. Two of the most salient strands that have emerged are the renewal of critical peace education (Bajaj, 2008, 2015; Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011) and the rise of decolonial and postcolonial peace education (Hajir & Kester, 2020; Williams & Bermeo, 2020; Zembylas, 2018). These new stems within the garden of the peace education field offer new theory and practice to further support researchers, educators, and students alike. Our work draws inspiration from all of the above while also seeking to extend these conversations by homing in specifically on the need to address the overly cognitive focus of peace education that still permeates much of the field. This specific critique turns our focus to the work of Cremin and CPERG.

By selecting these four works from Cremin and CPERG to review in this chapter, we do not mean to imply that such responses are the only or most important to the field as a whole. Rather, we argue that the identified works are part of a particular scholarly dialogue (see Kester et al., 2019 for a more comprehensive review) that both authors of this chapter have taken part in and find particular resonances within our own personal and professional peace work. Thus, it is important to locate this chapter as both a part of this handbook on education curricula and as another entry in an ongoing multi-year, multi-author, trans-publication dialogue within CPERG on how best to transform peace education into a more peaceful, effective, and affective praxis.

3.1 Four Paths Forward

In various works, Cremin and CPERG colleagues have called for aesthetic peace education (Cremin, 2016), an iPEACE model (Cremin & Bevington, 2017), transrational pedagogies (Cremin & Archer, 2018), and a pedagogy of vulnerability (Cremin & Kester, 2020) to address the challenges facing peace education. We will begin by exploring these ideas briefly before turning toward their engagement with arts and poetry.

Aesthetic peace education (Cremin, 2016) draws on Page's (2008) aesthetic ethics to advocate for peace education "to be implemented as a process of educating the body to be in dialogue with the senses" (Cremin, 2016: 13) through praxis that integrates the body, heart, mind, and spirit in the classroom. Cremin uses a constellation of concepts including Gur-Ze'ev's (2011) co-poesies and improvisation, Buber's (2004) I-Thou relations, and Dietrich's (2012) transrational peace to envision peace education that is collaborative, creative, centered in deep relationality, and engaging with epistemological shifts away from Othering, mechanistic learning, and hyperrational modernity. The transrational onto-epistemological foundation is key here – holding space for multiple ways of knowing and being to be represented and valued. Such a peace education would value rational-based praxis but also engage the *transrational*, moving beyond and through traditional approaches with "a horizontal aesthetic of journeying; of being both in and beyond" (Cremin, 2016: 14). Aesthetic peace education can thus be analytical and affective, cognitive and sensory, and dialogic and embodied. Cremin concludes this beyond binaries epistemological and pedagogical path forward for peace education could be achieved in part by integrating the arts into traditional peace education curricula. The arts could help students and teachers tap into the often-under-illuminated aesthetic dimensions of learning for peace and promote the necessity of alternative ways of knowing, feeling, sensing, and being in our pursuit of peace.

Cremin and Bevington (2017) extend this conversation by outlining a more specific and detailed iPEACE model to support practitioners in fostering cultures of peace in schools. The authors emphasize a turn toward the postmodern in peace education rooted in complexity, intersectionality, and the cultivation of heterotopias (Foucault, 1986). Heterotopias in this context can be understood as transgressive peace education spaces that might open up the opportunities for moments of transformation within the violent structures and cultures of schools (Zembylas & Ferreira, 2009). The iPEACE model integrates these ideas with previous concepts from Cremin (2016) and advocates for elicitive or person-centered (Lederach, 2005) pedagogies and approaches to teaching peace and responding to violence. While grounded in a postmodern turn and transrational onto-epistemological stance, this text also makes clear the importance of the rational within the transrational. The authors provide an array of practical tips for educators in schools built around Galtung's (1969) peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding model.

Cremin and Bevington note that one key way to achieve deeper peacebuilding and heterotopias within schools is through engagement with creativity and the moral

imagination (Lederach, 2005). They argue, "creativity enables adults and young people in school to locate themselves within complex frameworks and to find voice that might otherwise be hard to articulate" (Cremin & Bevington, 2017: 69). Thus, the authors conclude that incorporating the arts might help to "bring people together and enable the sharing of perspectives and emotions surrounding conflict and peace" (2017: 71). Again, the emphasis here is on engaging the arts to explore the value and complexity of affect and voice in transforming conflicts within schools *and* on the everyday practices of building tangible skills for peace through the curriculum. This work is not just about emoting (or at its worst, navel gazing); it is also about using affect-integrated peace education to support students in becoming more expert in skill and technique. The iPEACE model demonstrates the science and the art of peace education and the necessity of balancing skill and technique of peace work with the heart and soul of peace itself (Lederach, 2005).

Cremin and Archer (2018) take this conversation one step further by more fully conceptualizing the possibilities of transrational pedagogies in responding to the peace education crisis. In discussing the role of the educator, they argue a fundamental shift is needed from the solely "rational, modern manager of knowledge and resources in neoliberal times, to the transrational postmodern pedagogue in times to come" (Cremin and Archer 2018: 1). The authors illuminate the need for this shift by unpacking Dietrich's (2012) five families of peace – modern, moral, postmodern, energetic, and transrational – and exploring their complex resonances and dissonances in the peace education context. The authors echo and expand upon Cremin (2016) and Cremin and Bevington (2017) in calling for a transrational path forward and help further conceptualize how such an approach integrates multiple ways of knowing and being. Cremin and Archer contend transrational approaches focus on the transformation of learning and teaching itself – the process of *how* peace education works, more than the prescription of *what peace education does*. Transrational, process-based pedagogies are thus situated and relational, personal and political, concerned about both teachers' and students' well-being, and capable of occupying an infinite range of learning spaces throughout the life-course (Cremin & Archer, 2018: 9). In their discussion of what this might look like in practice, Cremin and Archer note the importance of art-work in the curriculum and the use of art-spaces as places with heterotopic potential for peace education.

Finally, Cremin and Kester (2020) highlight the importance of a pedagogy of vulnerability in addressing the challenges of peace education. They discuss efforts to "denationalize, decolonize, and de-epistemologize peace-building education through effort toward transnational, transrational, and transformational education" (Cremin and Kester, 2020: 28). Central to this effort for them is the need for vulnerability in peace education. Practicing what they preach, Cremin and Kester engage in this exploration through dialogue noting, "vulnerability is an act of dialogue in dialogue and through dialogue" (Cremin and Kester, 2020: 25). Drawing on their own situated lived experiences and an "assemblage of literatures" (Cremin and Kester, 2020: 32), they provide guidance and techniques to support vulnerability in the classroom and argue that a vulnerable educator:

(a) enters into the teachable moment with all of her/himself, body, mind, heart and spirit;
(b) is open to the other, noticing them, beholding them, delighting in their presence;
(c) allows others to affect him/her, is challenged, confirmed, inspired by others;
(d) takes note of the learning that does occur and plans for development and growth; and
(e) practices critical yet compassionate thinking. (Cremin & Kester, 2020: 37)

Cremin and Kester contend this practice of vulnerability in the peace education classroom brings forward heterotopic potentials, "creating spaces where normative power relations are disrupted, and where an ethos of care, openness, peace, and creativity is evoked" (p. 32).

There are several themes echoing across these four contributions. Reading Cremin and Kester (2020) in conversation with Cremin (2016), Cremin and Bevington (2017), and Cremin and Archer (2018), we see the vulnerable educator as a situated and holistic pedagogue weaving the aesthetic and affective dimensions of peace – to the centrality of relationships, dialogue, and elicitive approaches to learning – to the transrational epistemological shift in peace education that integrates the analytic and the affective through the mind, body, heart, and soul. This ripe mixture of ideas points toward a multiplicity of critical and creative as well as cognitive and embodied ways to engage and reimagine peace education. Unpacking the full breadth and depth of all the ideas raised here is beyond the scope of this chapter. We instead turn our focus to one particular area, a nexus point, at which these four works and our own experiences teaching peace education all find resonance – the arts.

3.2 Arts at the Nexus

When it comes to the particulars of curricular suggestions Cremin and colleagues collectively point to the arts. Art is referenced and exemplified across the four texts as an ideal peace education learning practice and as a possible answer to the challenges put forward in Cremin's (2016) three crises facing the field. These authors argue that art in the peace education classroom works as a bridge connecting transrational epistemologies and pedagogies (Cremin, 2016; Cremin & Archer, 2018), opening space for peace learning activities that engage the mind, heart, and body. Further, arts in the curriculum act as a catalyst for bringing people together in relational, elicitive, and dialogic spaces for transformation (Cremin & Archer, 2018; Cremin & Bevington, 2017). And lastly, arts practices have a simple but powerful capacity to help individuals communicate, situate, express, uncover, and transform themselves (Cremin & Bevington, 2017). Cremin and Bevington (2017) go on to share several practical examples and curricular activities that show how artistic elements can be essential in the peace education classroom. This collection of ideas complements and builds upon the broader literature on arts and peacebuilding (see Boal, 2008; Lederach, 2005; Marshall, 2014; Shank & Schirch, 2008).

We find it important and revealing that Cremin and colleagues used art, and particularly poetry, within the texts of the four works discussed here. For example,

Cremin and Kester (2020) use multiple poems from Cremin to help situate the author, to express complex points of reflection from the peace education classroom, and to model their own practice through their own vulnerability. Cremin and Bevington (2017) and Cremin and Archer (2018) also both draw on poetic text from Lederach (2005) to illustrate their points on the iPEACE model and transrational pedagogies, respectively. The authors call for elicitive and morally imaginative (Lederach, 2005) poetry in peace education while simultaneously using poetry itself to illuminate their analysis of peace education. In short, as Archer notes, the authors are walking their talk.

In summary, a review of Cremin and colleagues' work here has illuminated a range of responses to the challenges facing peace education. We see these responses as an ongoing dialogue within CPERG about how to respond to the crises in peace education with new, creative, and critical ways forward. These responses seek to address the epistemological, pedagogical, and curricular dimensions of peace education and argue for transrational, aesthetic, relational, vulnerable, and artistic peace education. The arts are specifically identified as a practical curricular addition to help facilitate the epistemological and pedagogical reorientations and transformations needed. The arts support this new path for peace education in many ways – notably by helping students and educators engage in multiple ways of knowing and being that are so vital to understanding the multiplicity of peace(s), violence(s), and transformation(s) possible in the peace education classroom. As Wood (2015) notes, "The transformative power of the arts largely lies in the fact that art operates – often simultaneously – in the physical, emotional, and existential realms." It is this type of holistic learning that is needed for twenty-first century peace education.

4 Poetry and Peace Education in Practice

While the arts have been noted across Cremin and colleagues works, and specifically named and used in Cremin's other writings on this subject as well (see Cremin, 2018), there has not yet been a deeper exploration of what an arts-based peace education curriculum might entail within this specific scholarly dialogue. Drawing inspiration from the use of poetry within the texts of the works examined here, our own backgrounds as poets and peace educators, and examples of peace education and poetry from the literature (Morrison, 2009), the second half of this chapter seeks to extend this conversation by exploring the possibilities of poetic peace education in response to the present challenges and possibilities outlined above.

In this third section, we introduce examples from our own practices of poetry and peace education. In doing so, we seek to practice pedagogical reflexivity and vulnerability in sharing from our teaching and in walking our talk in the process of writing this chapter. First, McInerney discusses how and why he fused peace and poetry lessons in a peace education program designed to creatively engage men in violence prevention and gender equality. Second, Cremin shares one of her own poems as she explores issues of representation in peace education and some of the ways poetry and peace education can be used in higher education contexts.

4.1 Cross-Pollinating Poetry and Peace

I (William McInerney) have taught peace education and poetry education programs for the past 10 years. Over time, my education work between these two realms became more connected through a process I describe as cross-pollination. My poetry work and peace work combined to create something new. This approach resonates with the arts-infused peace pedagogies outlined by Cremin and CPERG above and provides an example of poetic peace education that this chapter seeks to further illuminate, question, and conceptualize.

As a young educator, I compartmentalized my poetry and peace work. Sometimes I was hired to teach peace, helping students learn about the complexities of violence and conflict transformation. Other times I was hired to teach poetry, supporting students' creative expression through metaphor, sensory images, and the art of storytelling. As my educational practice expanded and my engagement with more peace (Bajaj, 2008), critical (Freire, 1970), and feminist (hooks, 1994) pedagogies took root, I came to realize the potential of combining my own poetry and peace praxis in the classroom. Perhaps poetry and creative expression could be a spark to help make peace education more engaging, or a catalyst to open space for dialogue on complex issues of violence? Likewise, maybe issues of peace and justice could provide inspiration, purpose, and fuel for poetry writing and sharing? These questions shifted my identity from a poetry educator and a peace educator toward something more akin to a poet/peacebuilder/educator.

At first, I used a simple additive approach – including a poem in a peace lesson or incorporating a peace-related prompt in a poetry class. This was helpful, but superficial curricular amendments failed to grasp the full potential at the nexus of poetry and peace work. A deeper dive required a consideration of the dynamic praxis links among peace and poetry curricula, pedagogy, and onto-epistemologies. Through experimentation, I started braiding my two practices and thinking more intentionally – working collaboratively with peace and poetry pedagogues to design programs, creating curricula where poetic and peace activities synergize, and making sure my poetic praxis was peaceful and peace praxis was poetic.

The metaphor of cross-pollination is generative here. Pollination refers to the transfer of pollen to catalyze a process of fertilization and seed production in plants. Pollination often occurs with the assistance of an external agent – either an animal like a bee or a larger natural force like the wind. Cross-pollination is a particular type of pollination when one plant pollinates another, including those of the same species but of a different variety. Here, the genetic material of the two plants combines with the support of an agent of change to produce something new – often a stronger plant with elements of both manifesting in the creation. Cross-pollination as a metaphor echoes the transdisciplinary origins of peace studies (Galtung, 1969, 2008, 2010), as well as the more recent emergence of transrational (Cremin & Archer, 2018) and diffractive (Diffraction approaches in peace education draw inspiration from Karan Barad's (2007) posthumanist and feminist new materialist work on the concept. See Barad (2014) for a deeper exploration and a diffraction of diffraction itself) (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017; Kester et al., 2019) conceptualizations of peace education. In all

these examples, the emphasis is not on simply combining two approaches, but rather entering a process of thinking and practicing multiple onto-epistemologies, theories, or disciplines with and through one another. Cross-pollination in education is thus the integrative process of two approaches fusing into a single emergent praxis.

As an example of cross-pollinating poetry and peace education, in 2014 I was hired to design and teach a 12-week peace education program at a large US public university. The institution wanted to develop a program that focused on addressing men's violence on campus and promoting healthier and more peaceful masculinities. (Much has been written about the growing field of gender transformative work with men or engaging men in the prevention of violence against women in recent years. See Flood (2018) for a comprehensive review of the field.) I was hired because they wanted an engaging violence prevention program that incorporated creative approaches. Using a cross-pollination approach, the first step was to ensure the team developing and teaching the program included both poetry and peace experts. Neither was tokenized or added on after the fact – the process was co-creative and responsive to the poetry and peace educators' differing positionalities and epistemological stances. Poetic and peace praxes were placed in conversation with one-another to design the goals and structure of the program and to fashion a theory of change that could inform, inspire, and equip the male participants by engaging them both effectively and affectively. Thus, the sessions sought to balance critical consciousness raising and technical skill-building with affective explorations of key issues, personal reflexive writing, and fruitful creative expression.

Each week in the program featured a synergetic combination of peace education lessons with poetic infusions, examples, and activities. The peace and poetry work extended from one another, sprouting from the intertwined critical and creative roots at the foundation of the work. For example, a lesson on intersectionality started with a facilitator poem exploring his own identity and relationship with masculinity. This poetic role-modeling and vulnerability worked to destabilize hierarchical student-teacher relations and to broaden the epistemic and representational horizons to include poetic and personal narratives. These starter poems set the tone for poetic and peace sharing and learning together.

This poem also served as a spark and a transition to a more traditional peace lesson on intersectionality and men's violence. The lesson brought forward social-historical context, relevant statistics, and an analytical model for intersectionality, violence, and masculinity. The students then had both a creative and critical lens on the topic. This learning in-turn was used as fuel for a poetry writing exercise where the participants applied these ideas to their own complex identities and relationships with masculinities. Bringing the lesson full circle, the men were then invited to share their poems, just as the facilitator had done. This creative action of sharing and bringing the men's personal lives and voices into the room was then the seed for a cumulative closing group discussion informed by the facilitator poem, the peace lesson, and participant poems and perspectives.

Leading scholar on men and masculinities, Michael Flood has noted the importance of addressing men's affective entanglements with sexism, privilege, power, and violence in education programs like this one (2018). The exchange of poetry and

peace in the session described above created a space to engage the men's cognitive, emotional, and embodied relationships with masculinity and violence. This session created a conduit between the critical and creative, the abstract discussion of peace and violence, and the concrete lived experiences and feelings of the people in the room. The power of the program came not in any individual technical peace lesson on men's violence or poetic activity exploring lived experiences, but rather in the liminal site of action and creation between the two, where peace and poetry combined to raise critical consciousness, shift epistemological horizons, cultivate a deeper learning community, and create potentially transformative moments for the men. In this case of cross-pollination, there was no bee or wind unintentionally creating something new, the combination of poetry and peace here required intentional agents of change in the form of program designers, educators, and the participants themselves in a process of co-creative planning, teaching, sharing, and learning.

In reflecting on this program many years ago and writing this chapter now, I continue to draw inspiration from Lederach's (2005) conceptualization of the moral imagination and his emphasis on making space for creative acts within peace work. In doing so, he argues we cultivate the vital capacity to think beyond what was originally thought possible.

> Creativity and imagination, the artist giving birth to something new, propose to us avenues of inquiry and ideas about change that require us to think about how we know the world, how we are in the world, and most important, what in the world is possible. (Lederach, 2005: 37)

This peace and poetry program was ultimately effective and affective because it stretched what the men thought was possible – moving beyond rigid ideas of masculinity and toward more peaceful ones and moving beyond silence and apathy and toward an understanding of their own roles as gender justice allies. The feminist scholar bell hooks (2004) talks about this type of vital creative work as the *blueprints for change* for men away from patriarchal masculinities. As an educator, I have tried to stretch what is possible in the classroom by fusing poetry and peace together. In doing so, I have tried to make space for creative acts in the pedagogy, in the curriculum, and in the onto-epistemological foundations. These spaces must be meaningful, integrated throughout, and collaborative. Such an approach goes beyond an additive incorporation producing an altered linear outcome and toward a cross-pollination creation of something new that entangles the two.

4.2 Saying the Unsayable: Poetry as Second-Order Reflexivity

Despite many years of working directly with young people, families, and teaching and support staff in schools, I (Hilary Cremin) find that much of my peace education work nowadays is done with graduate students within the context of Higher Education. This often involves a triple helix of me working with teachers and educators who in turn work with children. The complexities here are significant, and

necessitate a good deal of reflexivity and feed-back. They also require a strong preoccupation with process. As with Freire, it is the path that counts, not the final destination. Getting there in ways that are critical, loving, humble, and communicative matters more than any static curriculum. I find that working with adults is often like this. While lecturers often have a certain expertise, it is important to remember that the students in higher education learning spaces have significant and diverse life experiences which enrich and add value to their studies. They are partners in learning, not recipients of pure knowledge. On this basis, learning spaces need to be interactive, dynamic, and inclusive. It is here that poetry comes in. It has enabled me to get quickly to the heart of the matter in my teaching and to make space for the deep responses of students. This in turn enables students (hopefully) to put this into practice in their work with young people, who also have valuable perspectives and experiences to contribute to the learning process. Hence the triple helix, with me, students, and young people spiraling around each other with multiple opportunities for feed-back and growth.

In this example, I will describe one of the occasions when I used poetry for higher education peace learning. Here we have another helix, this time a double helix – I am returning to the topic of representation as a crisis in peace education while demonstrating how poetry can be used as a means of addressing that crisis.

In November 2018, I was asked to be on a panel by a group of doctoral students who were organizing a conference on ethical debates of representation in research in Cambridge. I was given 10 minutes alongside three other presenters. I decided to use my slot to read a poem (Cremin, 2019). The poem that I wrote for the occasion had been fermenting for a while. I had found myself to be increasingly frustrated with one side of my identity as an academic researcher. This side of me is a "bloodless angel," disembodied and formal. It is the predominant identity that is adopted by academics, in my experience, and is the one that is developed and incentivized by the academic institutions that we inhabit:

I am a bloodless angel. I float in airy efficacy
I exist outside of history, outside of time.
I have no place,
I speak from nowhere in particular.
I speak from everywhere.

I have no thoughts
I convey what is thought
I have no feet,
so I leave no footprint.
I have no hands,
so I do not act.
I have no body
Prick me, and I will not bleed.

This lack of body, the voice from nowhere, serves academics well. It enables us to represent others in ways of our choosing without being represented ourselves (how

can you represent a non-entity?). This god's-eye view of the world is very powerful. The poem goes on to point out that academics rest on their canon, their validity, their reliability, and their rationale and that powerful people want to hear what they have to say. The subjects of research, however, are a different matter:

The subjects of my research
Are gendered, ethnic, gay, disabled, poor.
They have bodies.
Entangled in the messiness of time and space,
Grounded in clay.
Prick them, and they bleed.

It is the disparity between these two positions that was the main impetus for the poem. Research participants, unlike academics, are seen as strongly embodied, and it is in their very embodiment that they lose their power. They become instantiations of humanity. A particular person in a particular place at a particular time. They are represented in research by those who use the authoritative voice of the universalized academic, and it is this process, and the values and assumptions that underpin it, that undermine the emancipatory potential of the research before it has even begun.

When I got up to read this poem at the conference in 2018, people were expecting me to make a 10-minute presentation as a member of a panel. I stood up and looked back at the audience before I spoke, taking in the room, noticing who was there, and savoring the silence that was starting to deepen. It is unusual not to have a PowerPoint presentation and people were already looking at me quizzically. Into the deepening silence, I read my poem. When I sat back down (with no commentary) a stunned silence continued for quite a while. I had a feeling that my poem had resonated with many members of the audience, evoking an emotional response. I felt really pleased that I had managed to get to the heart of the matter, and that – as so often with poetry – a few words had managed to communicate what otherwise would have stretched to many pages of academic discourse. The quality of the discussion for the rest of the day was enhanced by the fact that people had been deeply touched by the ideas that were presented.

The final part of the poem introduces a new character. This character gives me hope. The bloodless angel says of her:

She stands in the mud
And the clay
Of her positionality,
Bizarrely proud
Of her bricolage.
Her participatory methodology.
Her new story
Her research journey.

She speaks of postcoloniality
Patriarchy,
Elitism.

She renders me an actor
In this world,
Gendered, embodied, classed.
She dares to colour me white.

It is this new kind of researcher that pushes me forward when it comes to thinking about myself as an academic. This new researcher is certainly a challenge to the bloodless angel, but she is also perfect for the kinds of positions, values, and philosophies that we have been presenting here. Born of poetry, she embodies the poetic ideal for the peace education researcher.

5 Poetic Peace Education

This chapter has thus far outlined crises facing peace education, discussed some potential paths forward with a nexus point converging at the arts, and provided examples from practice – exploring an approach to cross-pollinated poetry and peace praxis with men and a poetic illumination of the complexities of representation and voice within peace education. Considering this work, the final section of this chapter will situate poetic peace education within the existing literature we have discussed and explore and question what a poetic peace education praxis might look like in curricula moving forward.

The interlocking crises of legitimacy, representation, and praxis facing peace education require scholars and practitioners to reflect upon their epistemological stances, pedagogical approaches, and curricular designs. These crises reveal the shortcomings of epistemologically myopic and pedagogically templated hyper-cognitive curricula in studying peace in the classroom. While often well-intentioned, it is through such overly mechanized education that the peace in peace education gets lost and we begin to question more broadly how peaceful peace education might really be (Cremin, 2016; Kester & Cremin, 2017; Gur-Ze'ev, 2001, 2011). However, we are not saying there is no value in cognitive-focused learning and technical skill-building for peace. Instead, we contend the science of peace must be balanced with the art of peace (Lederach, 2005), the rational engaged from within the transrational (Dietrich, 2012), and the analytic in conversation with the emotional (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2015). This is what Cremin (2016), Cremin and Bevington (2017), Cremin and Archer (2018), and Cremin and Kester (2020) make so patently clear – the need to include and go beyond the mind through more holistic accounts of peace and education in peace education.

Doing so requires thinking about how the minds, bodies, and hearts of students are interconnected and engaged through the epistemologies, pedagogies, and praxes of peace education programs. Such a holistic approach is needed for a program to be both effective and affective. Further, this work pushes us to see how peace education must be both inward-facing (individual and relational) and outward-facing (structural and cultural). One does not exist without the other, they are co-constitutive. Peace education curricula must then be a manifestation of such complexity,

grounded just as much in the process and how we understand and work for peace as the product of what we do to learn and act for peace. We believe the arts are a powerful way to achieve such education because they unlock the power of creativity in the classroom and help facilitate multiple ways of knowing and being in the classroom. We believe poetry in particular is potent praxis to put into action in peace education. The two examples shared in this chapter demonstrate how integration of poetry into peace curricula can produce outcomes greater than the summation of its constitutive components. By this we mean, there is something new that is created in the process of combining peace and poetry in the classroom. This creative act is responsive to and reflexive of the people and context in which it is cultivated and laced through the curricula, pedagogy, and onto-epistemology of the program. The use of the metaphors of cross-pollination and double and triple helices in our examples above allude to this generative capacity at the heart of poetic peace praxis.

In writing about poetic inquiry, Leggo and colleagues (2011) discuss the transformative *lingering liminal spaces* between poetry and research. This fertile space also exists between poetry and peace within education. Cremin and Bevington (2017) speak of this space as a heterotopia for conflict transformation within school. In the first example we shared above, such a space was cultivated through the synergized balancing of peace and poetry activities with the young men that raised both their critical consciousness of men's violences and deepened their affective personal engagement and understanding of the issues. It is at the intersection of the two where the group's moral imagination (Lederach, 2005) opened to what was possible beyond dominant and rigid ideas of masculinity. In the second example, the space was created by the transgressive (hooks, 1994) use of poetry in the higher education peace context to break down the fourth wall of the ivory tower – revealing the charade of bloodless angel researcher objectivity. This space was created for the students to reflect analytically and affectively on their own positionalities while listening to the words of the poem and while wading in the pools of silence surrounding the poem. Writing about poetry as peace pedagogy, Mary Lee Morrison notes,

> It is not just in the hearing of the words, the reading or writing of the words, but in that space between the words and the "unwords", between the language and the unlanguage, as we hear a poem, or write a poem or read a poem, it is in that space during which the reflective processes of moving inward and outward occur, as we both hear the words and "still the words", that the transformative educational process begins. Here, also, is the heart of educating for peace. (Morrison, 2009: 97)

In both of our examples, the language and unlanguage of poetry fused and infused with peace resulting in a generative liminal space. This heterotopic liminal site was grounded in a transrational onto-epistemological orientation (Cremin & Archer, 2018), built upon a praxis of aesthetics (Cremin, 2016) and a pedagogy of vulnerability in sharing from the educators and the students (Cremin & Kester, 2020), and manifested through both technical and artistic knowledges and practices (Cremin & Bevington, 2017).

So what does this mean for poetic peace praxis in the curriculum moving forward? This chapter has shown how poetry can be integrated into the peace education curriculum in many ways – poems as learning texts and videos, poetry writing activities, and poetry sharing performances and group circles for participants and facilitators. Poetic learning texts, videos, readings, and performances can provide an engaging and potentially more culturally responsive way to teach peace lessons. The act of listening to, watching, or reading poems can raise students' critical consciousness about core peace topics, spark group discussions, help democratize student-teacher relationships, and help show the affective dimensions of peace and violence. Poetic writing workshops can help students reflect on their own personal connections to the topics and apply lessons learned through their own critical and creative writing. We believe peace education curricula could benefit from all of the above. However, it is essential to note that such work cannot start or stop at the curricular level. To achieve the potent lingering liminal space or the heterotopic potential, a cross-pollination of poetry and peace needs to extend deeper and expand the epistemic and pedagogic horizons. The poetic peace work we are discussing here addresses epistemology, pedagogy, curriculum, and the constant churning of praxis cycles of theory, action, and reflection in the classroom. Poetic peace education is thus a journey not an endpoint; a process not a product.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to bring forward a series of guiding lights illuminating poetry and peace education work that we think might help inform peace education scholars and practitioners. Our word choice is intentional here. These are not prescriptions, as such would be contrary to much of what we have argued throughout this chapter. Rather, these are ideas that resonate with the literature, that have supported our own work, and that push us to continue to innovate and question what might be possible in the peace classroom. Returning to the poem we started this chapter with, we are hopeful about this work, but we are not here with dreams to sell. Rather, we come to offer a glimpse of our poetic peace praxis, to place them in conversation with transdisciplinary bodies of literature, to reflect upon how poetry might change how we understand peace education, and to imagine what poetic peace education was/is/could be.

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