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## A Decolonial Imperative: Pluriversal Rights Education

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# A Decolonial Imperative: Pluriversal Rights Education

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## Abstract

*This editorial introduction invites a decolonial dialogue between peace education and human rights education so as to recognize and re-envision radical praxes. It begins by framing the similarities between the two subfields and discussing the effects of the critical turn, with special emphasis on critiques of the colonial entanglements of West-enforced peace and hegemonic rights discourses. Underscoring the imperative of decolonization, it concludes*

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*with a call for pluriversal rights education as a decolonial successor to peace and human rights education. It also offers a brief overview of the articles included in this special issue and how they each contribute to an ongoing decolonial dialogue.*

**Keywords:** Peace Education, Human Rights Education, Decolonization, Pluriversality

*“decolonization is not simply one more option or approach among others.  
...Rather, it is a fundamental imperative”  
(Abdulla et al, 2019, p. 130).*

**A**nthropocentrism and colonialism have been a toxic admixture for our planet. Centering White<sup>1</sup> human beings as the universal template has led to the denigration and erasure of inferiorized systems of knowing and being, as well as the decimation of the natural world. An automatic corollary, decolonization emerges as a fundamental imperative in the form of ongoing resistances, revolts, and emancipatory efforts. Part of that rich liberatory heritage has been the creation and evolution of peace education (PE) and human rights education (HRE).

These two interrelated strands of pedagogical reflection and practice aim to center human dignity and global peace as the core tenets of education. They have each—through their respective trajectories and particularities—promoted pedagogies that examine and counteract the root causes of violence and social injustice. Yet, they are also incomplete and imperfect projects, ever under construction. Both have been criticized for engaging in universal normative prescriptions with insufficient analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘White’ refers to a socially and politically constructed identity category, usually based on perceptions of skin color, that accrues social dominance through contraposition with non-White Others (i.e. indigenous, black and non-European identities). Rooted in coloniality, specific racialization processes differ across location and time, yet share an underlying foundation of anti-black and anti-indigenous violence, wherein privilege is accrued through distancing from blackness/indigeneity, even where this is ignored (Mills, 2007) or denied (Viatori, 2016).

the Eurocentric, colonial inheritance on which predominant notions of “peace” and “human rights” have been constructed, and the ways they are each co-opted to serve and sustain patterns of societal oppression and dominance (Bajaj, 2008b, 2011; Keet, 2015; Yang, 2015; Zembylas, 2017a).

In this introduction, and special issue, we contend that there is a gratuitous chasm between PE and HRE. We call instead for efforts to collectively reflect on the histories and futures of these shared endeavors. As a result, we attempt to place PE and HRE into a decolonial dialogue so as to recognize and re-envision radical praxes. This dialogue necessarily induces an interrogation of the colonially-circumscribed instantiations of peace, rights, human being-ness, and of course education itself, leading us to interpolate a paradigm shift toward pluriversal rights education.

This editorial introduction will briefly traverse the similarities between PE and HRE, document the impact of the critical turn on both subfields, then trouble the colonial entanglements of West-enforced peace, hegemonic rights discourses, and the reification of human being-ness as the highest form of life and arbiter of value in this complex Earthly ecosystem. We conclude with a call for pluriversal rights education as a decolonial successor to PE and HRE. Finally, we also offer a brief overview of the articles included in this special issue and how they each contribute to an ongoing decolonial dialogue.

### **Peace education vs human rights education?**

Peace education has been conceptualized as an umbrella term for anti-nuclear education, environmental education, conflict resolution education, and even human rights education (Harris, 2013; Zembylas, 2011); as a result, it is being constantly redefined (Verma, 2017). PE is focused on equipping all kinds of learners with the knowledges, skills, dispositions, and values to foster a culture of peace (Bajaj, 2008a; Reardon, 1988). HRE’s *raison d’être* is the same but more specifically focused on human rights (Bajaj, 2017; OHCHR, 1996).

Despite their differences in literature and operationalization, HRE and PE are both avowedly geared to building positive peace.<sup>2</sup> Reardon is reluctant to atomize these and interrelated fields (Al-Daraweesh, 2009); she states that:

human rights education is not only a corrective complement to education for peace but that it is essential to the development of peace making capacities and should be integrated into all forms of peace education. It is through human rights education that learners are provided with the knowledge and opportunities for specific corrective action that can fulfill the prescriptive requirements of education for peace. (1997, p. 22)

International organizations and declarations have also conceptualized this synergy between education, peace, and human rights (Baxi, 1997; UNESCO, 1974, 1995, 2000), and propelled PE's and HRE's popularity over the past forty years.

However, there is a schism between the two camps, and perhaps, understandably so. Peace is a polysemous and far more amorphous, and thus politically-rife, term. Human rights, as codified by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the host of subsequent covenants and conventions, has a specific legibility, and are thus more alluring to those agendas underwritten by the donor-driven dictates of accountability, monitoring, and evaluation. Also, while 'peace' has often been employed to foreclose deeper social transformation, human rights proffer a semblance of neutrality that can be applied strategically in contentious situations.

It is perhaps due to this intimate proximity with positivistic and Western geopolitically-motivated and donor-influenced interventions, that a proliferation of critical scholarship in PE and HRE was spawned.

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<sup>2</sup> See Galtung (1969) for his seminal elucidation of negative and positive peace.

### *Critical turn in PE and HRE*

Both PE and HRE have been impacted by the critical turn (Zembylas, 2011). Scholars have pushed PE to examine power more meticulously, and to foreground learners' agency and locally-grounded praxes (Bajaj, 2008b; Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011; Diaz-Soto, 2005; Hantzopoulos & Bajaj 2016; Snauwaert, 2011; Zakharia, 2017). As for HRE, scholars assert that hegemonic notions of HRE reify a particular brand of universality which ends up blunting its transformative and emancipatory potential (Canlas et al, 2015; Coysh, 2014; Keet 2015; Tibbitts, 2002; Zembylas & Keet, 2018, 2019).

Part of this critical turn in PE and HRE has been the pointed impugment of Eurocentric/occidental ideologies, their dissonance in postcolonial sites, and their long-standing negation of subaltern epistemes (Osler, 2015; Shirazi, 2011; Williams, 2017). Emergent from this critique have been calls for and sketches of decolonial iterations of PE and HRE (Aldawood, 2018; Golding, 2017; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Zembylas 2017a; Zembylas 2018a; Zembylas & Keet, 2019). Here, and through the special issue, we join this emergent dialogue, calling for coalesced reflection on the decolonial futures of peace and human rights education praxes.

### **Decolonization is a fundamental imperative**

Although decoloniality is the analytic fulcrum of this special issue, we must first register an observation: that the academic knowledge production-scape is overgrown with the 'metaphorization' of decolonization, something against which Tuck & Yang admonished (2012). They note that

[t]he easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to "decolonize our schools," or use "decolonizing methods," or, "decolonize student thinking", turns decolonization into a metaphor. ...The metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions (p. 21).

Here, evasions refer to the academic utilization of decolonization without the concomitant repatriation of Indigenous lands, reparations for the harms of

slavery, and structural transformations of society to address the legacies of colonial violence. Academe's co-optation of the language of decoloniality risks hollowing out its authentic meaning and its charge.

While we concur with Tuck and Yang's critique of the discursive abuses and impotent usages of decoloniality, we contend that decolonization remains an imperative shared by all. It is everyone's responsibility (Sanchez, 2019) because, although colonialism warped the epistemologies, cosmologies, ontologies, spiritualities, bodies, and minds of the dispossessed (Williams, 2016a), the dialectical constitution of colonizer-colonized injured (to varying degrees) everyone involved (Memmi, 1965) and continues to fuel ongoing harm and destruction. This injury was/is not singularly human-to-human, but also human-to-other-entities on the Earth, which is too often a praxical lacuna that decolonial PE and HRE must address.

*Colonizing 'being'...*

“We live our lives of human passions,  
cruelties, dreams, concepts,  
crimes and the exercise of virtue  
in and beside a world devoid  
of our preoccupations, free  
from apprehension—though affected,  
certainly, by our actions. A world  
parallel to our own though overlapping.  
We call it "Nature"; only reluctantly  
admitting ourselves to be "Nature" too....”

(Excerpt from *Sojourns in the Parallel World*, Levertov, 1996)

Enlightenment rationality entrenched and coercively projected certain schisms: mind/body/spirit, natural/supernatural, human/non-human (Wynter, 2003). These divides were cemented and disseminated as certainties, invalidating any alternative cosmovision. They were further compounded by the deeply wounding violence of colonialism where non-White humans (and we would add non-human entities) were ‘thingified’ (Cesaire, 2000), treated as disposable objects, subservient to the colonizers. Maldonado-Torres (2007) avers that prior to the Cartesian dictum ‘ego cogito’ (I think), was ‘ego conquiro’ (I conquer). Interwoven and determinant

in these processes of colonial subjugation and dominance, gender power was also central to the making of colonial social relations. It deepened the rendering and naturalization of hierarchized binaries and subjectivities—constitutive elements of the coloniality of power (Schiwy, 2007)—and added gender-specific forms of subalternization that further truncated the wholeness, fluidity and complementarity of being. Particular power relations therefore emerged from this imperialistic, disembodied self-construction.

This overlapping anthropocentrism, patriarchy and Eurocentrism in colonial expansion (Val Plumwood, 2001, as cited in Tiffin, 2015; Haraway, 1992) birthed a modernity with the lingering colonialities (Williams, 2013, 2016b) of hierarchization, stark asymmetries and rank exploitation. Analyzing this axis as coloniality-modernity<sup>3</sup> (Mignolo 2009, 2011; Quijano 2007) perturbs misperceived historical discontinuities and reveals enduring violences and atomized ontologies that have led human beings to be estranged from each other and from the planet, precipitating a possible earth-systems collapse (Taylor, 2020). In essence, too many of us no longer know how to be with the Earth and each other.

This corrupted colonization of being has perpetuated intergenerational injuries and traumas<sup>4</sup> (Brown, 2020; Fanon 1967) that require not just human re-subjectification (Fanon 1963), but also the decolonization of being and relationality. We thus need an education that can facilitate and engender this shift, a shift that must involve an ongoing decolonization of the dominant constructions of relationality and (human)being-ness, peace, (human) rights, and of course PE and HRE.

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<sup>3</sup> See Williams (1994) for a detailed explication of how slavery was the engine that drove inchoate capitalism and helped usher in the Industrial Revolution, laying fertile ground for the modern economic era.

<sup>4</sup> See van der Kolk (2014) for more on the intricate and sprawling effects of trauma on the body; from this, one could extrapolate to the implications of unattended trauma in individuals and communities.



## **Reimagining being, relationality, rights, peace, and education**

### *Decolonizing being and relationality*

Since the logic of coloniality (Mignolo, 2011) is a trammel to sustainable inter-relationality—that is, a relationality among humans and with other earth beings that is not characterized by ruinous human dominance—we will need to reconceptualize certain forms of relationality, which, in the colonial-modernist imaginary, have become “hierarchical, anthropocentric, capitalocentric, and hetero- and homonormative” (Tallbear and Willy, 2019, p.5). This task compels us to “rethink...the human as the only important unit for relational ethics, and the white supremacist settler and other colonial scripts as ethical measures of belonging” (TallBear and Willy, 2019, p. 2), by pursuing myriad “embodied conceptions and practices of decoloniality”; in other words a ‘pluriversal decoloniality’ (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 1). Such a pluriversal decoloniality recognizes the spectrum of all sentient entities/earth beings (including mountains, waters, animals, plants, etc.) (Costa et al, 2017; de la Cadena, 2015). By decentering Western-constructed universality and moving toward a “nonhierarchical coexistence of different worlds” (Silova, 2020, p. 139; Escobar, 2020; Mignolo, 2011, 2018), we can pluriversalize the very notions of sentience and being. This shift to relational and communal logics (Escobar, 2018) affirms manifold sovereignties and interdependencies, and is integral to the envisioning of radically alternative and sustainable futurities.

### *Decolonizing human rights*

Re-configured inter-relationality presupposes a decolonization of human rights, because human exceptionalism itself threatens life and balance on Earth. In this Western/capitalist-dominated polity, we have a global human rights regime largely demarcated by “false hope and unaccountable intervention”, exposing its outmoded “one-size-fits-all universalism” (Hopgood, 2013, p. 2). The decolonization of human rights does not efface the validity of preventing violations of human dignity, instead it

acknowledges the colonial barriers imposed on rights discourse and expands concepts of being-ness and human rights (Barretto, 2018; Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Zembylas 2018b), so as to accommodate pluriversal praxes, and multispecism (Haraway, 2016).

Part of decolonizing human rights is reckoning with its colonial entanglements and confronting and transgressing both its Eurocentrism (Mutua, 2002; see Ibhawoh 2007) and anthropocentrism. In embracing non-cartesian epistemologies and relational ontologies (Fregoso, 2014, p. 593), we affirm

the agential capabilities of the living earth, a universal kinship with land as sacred and rights bearing, together with other (nonhuman) species/beings in the material world and ancestors in the spirit world. ...An interbeing understanding of the human ("no you without mountains, without sun, without sky") disrupts the human-centric and living-oriented understanding of human rights discourse. The orientation to the interconnectedness of beings, to the nonhuman and nonliving in a pluriverse, similarly affirms the distribution of agency beyond the human. (Fregoso, 2014, pp. 599 & 604)

This decolonial reorientation does not, however, turn away from the vast resistance that has been waged for basic rights through bottom-up processes of local and transnational activism, referred to by Hopgood (2013) as "lower-case human rights." The notion of 'rights', with its assumption of collective entitlement, has been at the core of many struggles for a world where each being has equal claim to dignity. Such struggles have been rooted in diverse cultural meanings and visions, and have served to generate accountability and societal change. They highlight the transformative and dynamic potential of rights work. The legal dimension of rights has also entailed efforts to build and codify consensus at local, national and international scales. While the outcomes of these efforts have been fraught by the persistence of colonial relations, they also suggest an aspiration to dialogue and collectivity.

This thus begets a pluriversal rights regime, one that includes humans but also the vast array of other earth beings/sentient entities, where the comprehensive enactment of pluriversal rights is the embodiment of a more

authentic, living global peace: pluriversal equilibrium<sup>5</sup> as it were. A living global peace that could be characterized as pluriversal equilibrium that may perhaps be dismissed as chimera because of the impoverished delimitations of realpolitik constructions of peace.

### *Decolonizing 'peace'*

Pluriversal equilibrium advances a reappraisal of the concept of 'peace'—a central aspiration of PE and HRE. Peace “remains an openly contested abstract notion” (Verma, 2017, p. 16). As a testament to this, there are many denotations of peace, with little consensus on a clear definition (Anderson, 2004); different disciplines and regions of the world conceptualize peace in their own way (see Richmond et al, 2016 for examples). While avoiding specific definitional canonization responds to a cosmopolitan ethic and resists the imposition of universal concepts (Golding, 2017), it also risks a troublesome dissipation that may diminish conceptual relevance. Still, there are perhaps “as many peaces as there are peoples, cultures, and contexts” (Rodriguez Iglesias, 2019, p. 205), so perhaps conceptual unity is not as integral as having some shared values across pluriverses.

Currently, the universalized model of peace that is enforced by the colonial-modernist apparatuses of international development, economic neoliberalism, and global security, turns peace education into a potentially neocolonial enterprise (Wessells, 2013). Horner (2013) offers an affirming critique:

Liberal peace is synonymous with state building, extolling democracy, free markets and human rights as the, apparently, tried and tested solutions for peace. However, while liberal peace appears to have become embedded as the self-evident answer to conflict and fragile states... it can actually be detrimental for peace (p. 367).

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<sup>5</sup> Not equilibrium in the sense of preserving an unjust status quo, but pluriversal cross-dialogues and co-enactments that foster maximal sustainable benefit for Earth and its inhabitants.

As Abu Moghli (in this issue) shows in the Palestinian case, the concept of peace has been coopted to serve the interests of the occupier, rather than to ensure justice and dignity for all parties. Similar co-optations can be observed in conflict settings around the world, turning ‘peace’ into a dirty word for many peoples.

Decolonizing the construct of West-enforced peace reveals the continuities between global governance and the repressions, expropriations, and impositions of the colonial era (Tucker, 2018). It underscores the extent to which hegemonic peace and human rights discourses can serve as disciplinary and exclusionary technologies that attempt to corral us into a universally-governable, but core-peripheralized, body politic; they evoke an image of the current world order as *naturalized* or *immutable*. A disposition of decolonial pluriversality destabilizes such naturalization and instead surfaces the multiple perspectives, experiences, effects and options that the pursuit of planetary justice and dignity convenes.

We therefore need a decolonial education that helps us reimagine discourses and praxes of being and relationality, peace, and rights. And it is to a rich historiography of resistances that we turn in finding conceptual shape for pluriversal rights education.

### *Delinking & Radical Politico-Epistemological Marronage*

Wheresoever oppression exists, so too do resistance and endeavors toward freedom. Freedom dreaming (Love, 2019)—conjuring pathways to emancipation—is central to some education projects, such as critical PE and HRE. However, we must ask if our efforts toward a pluriversal inter-relationality are malnourished by using the very tools of coloniality-modernity, because if we do ‘use the master’s tools to attempt to dismantle the master’s house’, it means that “only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable” (Lorde, 2007, pp. 110-111).

To circumvent being hemmed in by a colonially-informed politics of permissibility, Mignolo (2009) suggests political and epistemic de-linking to

facilitate new imaginaries. For inspiration, we look to maroons: enslaved persons who fled plantations and formed their own communities elsewhere:

For more than four centuries, the communities formed by such runaways dotted the fringes of plantation America, from Brazil to the southwestern United States, from Peru to the American Southwest. Known variously as palenques, quilombos, mocambos, cumbes, ladeiras, or mambises, these new societies ranged from tiny bands that survived less than a year to powerful states encompassing thousands of members and surviving for generations or even centuries. ...Living with the ever-present fear of sudden attack, they nevertheless succeeded in developing a wide range of innovative techniques that allowed them to carry on the business of daily life...Marronage was not a unitary phenomenon from the point of view of the slaves, and it cannot be given a single locus along a continuum of 'forms of resistance' (Price, 1996, pp. 1, 10, 23, original emphasis).

Roberts (2015) details “modes of marronage as an economy of survival, state of being, and condition of becoming, from fugitive acts...and attempts at liberation to the constructive constitution of freedom” (p. 144). In this sense, marronage entails both a fugitive movement away from subjugation and the simultaneous enactment of an alternative world (Wright, 2020; Roberts, 2015), a present futurity.

To recognize and re-envision liberatory praxes, we need an iterative, radical, politico-epistemological marronage, one that allows us to continually disrupt and de-link from oppressive ways of thinking and being, to “open up space for different epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies that have been suppressed by the global spread of Western modernity-coloniality” (Takayama, 2020, p. 51; Baker, 2012). This affords us a platform to sustainably innovate and re-imagine.

### *Reimagining education: Pluriversal Rights Education*

A radical, politico-epistemological marronage as a framework means that “to reimagine the world, we need to reimagine education” (Silova, 2020,

p. 141). To empower learners to co-craft and honor pluriversal equilibrium, we need spaces “where [they] are put in relationship with the material, ecological, cultural, and social world around them” (Perry, 2020, p. 13), and where epistemic reflexivities (Takayama et al, 2016), decolonial pedagogies of global solidarities (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012), and principles of kindredness can be radically actualized (De Lissovoy, 2010).

Building on Zembylas’ (2017b) decolonizing and pluriversalizing HRE, we invite educators to de-center the human in co-postulating a pluriversal rights education (PRE). It is part nomenclatural adjustment for what some communities have been practicing and envisioning for millennia, and part, a parsimoniously sketched expansion of the broad conceptual tent that houses critical PE and HRE.

We conceptualize PRE as an embodied, prefigurative<sup>6</sup> ontology of trans-cartesian wholeness.<sup>7</sup> It is an education that equips learners with the knowledges, skills, dispositions and values to recognize and respect the pluriverse, the rights of all earth beings/sentient entities and the fostering of peace as planetary and sustainable equilibrium. It is not overly prescriptive because that would be re-inscribing coloniality by foreclosing vastly differential possibilities. However, we offer a few guiding fundamentals drawn from critical PE and HRE, and elsewhere, with which to motivate further dialogue. In this, we include dispositions, modes, and actions.

The dispositions we identify include: pluriversal sentience; pluriversal equilibrium; abolitionism and decoloniality; and radical hope. **Pluriversal sentience** recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings. As such, it confronts the imposition of Eurocentric epistemes and decenters humans as the grounding construct of being-ness. It accepts and respects pluriversal rights as axiomatic. Based on a consciousness of our

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<sup>6</sup> Prefigurative, according to Boggs (1977, p. 100) is “the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal.” That is, we wish to enact an educational praxis now for a world that we are envisioning.

<sup>7</sup> See the latter chapters of Bohm (2005) for a post-cartesian elaboration of undivided wholeness, which contends that everything is dynamically interconnected and always in a state of becoming.

planetary interdependence, inter-relationality and solidarity become core values, and transnational solidarities and kindredness as core practices. As a corollary, a disposition toward **pluriversal equilibrium** emerges as peace reconceived. Pluriversal equilibrium is dialogical; it recognizes the Earth as a dynamic, vibrant, living eco-system, and thus equilibrium is also a living entity, a permanently dynamic condition of growth, evolution and complementarity. Pluriversality is not cultural relativism but cosmologies entangled in a power differential (Mignolo, 2018, p. x). The task then is to propose and sustain “cross-cultural dialogues across isomorphic concerns” (Santos, 2002, p. 46). Conflict and difference are welcomed as keys to revelatory contributors to growth and change.

Alongside these dynamic reciprocities, a third disposition emerges in response to historical disequilibrium—that of **abolitionism and decoloniality**, wherein de-linking from oppressive epistemological and ontological regimes is understood as a cornerstone for pluriversal equilibrium. Abolitionism and decoloniality affirm that pluriversality requires active dismantling of prior systems of colonial, patriarchal, heteronormative, ableist and extractive violences. Abolition here is “a radically imaginative, generative, and socially productive communal (and community-building) practice” (Rodríguez, 2019 p. 1576). As such, abolitionism and decoloniality are necessarily action-oriented, which connotes constant unlearning and freedom fighting. They also encompass processes of communal restoration and healing.

Finally, a disposition of **radical hope** is an integrative and proactive buttress to the orientations of pluriversal sentience, pluriversal equilibrium and abolitionism and decoloniality. Radical hope values futurity without losing site of the past. It is active, in enacting now the world desired, even while we are ever in a process of transformation; “it is directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is” (Lear, 2006, p. 103). Such hope is courageous, proactive and indefatigable. It heeds the marginal practices that emerge from devastation (Dreyfus, 2009); it recognizes the resources embedded in each of us; it sees and treats communities as **possibilities** and not as things or problems to be fixed (Block, 2008).

These dispositions require paradigmatic shifts in our modes of thinking/feeling/experiencing. Here we identify these modes as including: border-thinking; spatial, temporal, and socio-politico-economic conscientization; and systems thinking. Pluriversality recognizes the constant need for decoloniality because of long-established power differentials. Therefore, there is an ongoing need to resuscitate subaltern ways of knowing and being. Learners therefore should be acclimated to **border thinking** (Anzaldúa, 2012), navigating worlds that are not indigenous to them and in so doing, honoring (not co-opting or superficially mimicking) emergent mestiza consciousnesses. Learners also engage in processes of **conscientization**. Freire (1990) articulated conscientization as consciousness-raising, and especially focused on the socio-politico-economic. We add spatial and temporal conscientization. Spatial conscientization is the grounding of a critical awareness of self in and with community with other earth beings and how those localized geographies affect and are affected by the other eco-systems<sup>8</sup>. It is about respecting locally-informed wisdoms without enshrining myopic parochialism. Temporal conscientization is a critical awareness of varying temporalities. It is about reconnecting with the past and bridging that to one's present, and disrupting the colonial hegemony of linear thinking/processing<sup>9</sup>. Finally, learners need 'transformative competencies' to be able to embrace complex challenges (OECD, 2018). This entails capacities to read the world as a complex, interrelated and dynamic ecology – for which **systems thinking** is a relevant mode. Systems thinking promotes a holistic approach to analysis that engages in circular and relational understandings, examining systems along different scales and temporalities.

In closing, these dispositions and modes produce a set of actions, among which we identify: Freirean praxis; systemic restorative praxis; pedagogies of innovation; pluriversal design; and decolonial research ethics and justice-oriented data analytics.

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<sup>8</sup> See Soja (2010) for more on spatial consciousness and spatial justice.

<sup>9</sup> See Ramos (2005) who explores temporal conscientization in relation to futures education.



- **Freirean praxis** (1990): Critical reflection and critical action as a feedback loop remains central to radical educational praxes. Learning should be scaffolded on this foundation. Action is core to PRE so that, similarly to academe's usurpation of decoloniality, it doesn't become an empty metaphor. Truth telling about (Romano & Ragland, 2018) and reparations for enduring colonialities is a critical action of abolition, decoloniality and justice.
- **Systemic restorative praxis**: Williams (2016a) posited Systemic Restorative Praxis, which is a model for social change, premised on three Rs: Reflect, Repair, Re-envision. We must foster the skills and capacities to critically disinter and appraise our past, to celebrate that which has been denigrated and to re-acclimate ourselves and others with the previously misplaced but rich heritages. Learners engage in contrapuntal readings of the present with the past. In tandem with this reflection is critical healing and repairing of generational hurts, wounds and traumas. This provides the clarity and realignment to re-envision bold alternative, sustainable futures. It is an impossibly difficult task to envision radical tomorrows with the repressive, violently-assimilative tools of today. The goal is to build capacities to perceive more of the 'whole', within ourselves, and in community with other sentient beings.
- **Pluriversal design**: In efforts to transform education into a truly inclusive process, proponents of universal design have emphasized the need to incorporate flexibility and variety in education design in order to generate equity for students (Rose & Meyer, 2002; Coppola et al, 2019). To these calls, we add the perspective of pluriversality, nudging such efforts to integrate decolonial modes and embrace perpetual self-reflection and innovation as key practices with which to best engage the diversity of learners and respond to a changing world.
- **Pedagogies of innovation**: We need pedagogies and knowledges to help learners think and act innovatively. We should pivot away from innovation frameworks and incentive structures that reinforce 'competitive individualism' (Suchman & Bishop, 2000) toward

innovation that is non-hierarchical, participatory, collaborative and sustainable (Fabian & Fabricant, 2014). Design theory and practice can be very complementary to this in fostering capacities that are Earth-centered and justice-oriented, rather than centering modernizing aims (Escobar, 2018).

- **Decolonial research ethics and justice-oriented data work:** A range of scholars have offered critical reflection on the role of research and data in decolonization processes, with special attention to the histories of violence and exploitation that have oriented these practices (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck and Yang, 2018). A justice-oriented, decolonial orientation to research situates research in service of decolonization and calls for the centering of indigenous and marginalized epistemologies and peoples. Alongside these priorities, special attention is needed in engaging data analytics. In an increasingly digital world, we have emerging ethical dilemmas (including biases and discrimination) around the collection and uses of big data (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2020). We should equip learners with the know-how to navigate and re-appropriate new technologies, but also justice-oriented ethics and skills in data analytics (see Herodotou et al., 2019 for more on formative analytics, and Taylor, 2017, for more on data justice).

The afore-mentioned lists are not exhaustive or definitive, for that would be antithetical to decoloniality. They are meant to be generative, and in that spirit, PRE is thus not only prefigurative, but also rhizomatic<sup>10</sup>: we wish for others to build on this and/or proffer constructive refutations. Our collective task is to continually challenge, in and with community, because freedom dreaming and liberatory enactments demand that.

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<sup>10</sup> See Deleuze & Guattari (1987) for their philosophical conception of the rhizome, and Cormier (2008) for rhizomatic learning and his characterization of 'community as curriculum'.

### **Aims of the special issue: An offering to decolonial dialogue**

In this special issue, we invited authors to participate in a decolonial dialogue about the present and future of peace education and human rights education. The contributors to the issue engaged this invitation through different modes: philosophical, hermeneutic interpretive, content analysis, ethnography, and artistic. They collectively shed light on the complexities and potentialities of decolonial rights pedagogies.

In “*Toward a Decolonial Ethics in Human Rights and Peace Education*”, Michalinos Zembylas argues that a fundamental aspect of decolonization in HRE and PE is the task of developing a decolonial ethics. In his article, Zembylas discusses how coloniality’s ethics imbues PE and HRE thought and practice. He then moves on to analysis of the contributions of decolonial scholars Enrique Dussel, Sylvia Wynter and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, offering critique of the Eurocentric paradigm of war and the ethical subjectivity found in European epistemes, and posing reflection on an ethics of materiality, positionality and corporeality. Drawing on this analysis, he closes by sketching an alternate path for HRE and PE contoured by border thinking, being human as praxis, and pluriversality. The three directions outlined by Zembylas offer an orientation regarding how scholars and practitioners of HRE and PE might engage in the disruptive decolonial praxes that strive toward epistemic justice.

In their article, “*The Relevance of Unmasking Neoliberal Narratives for a Decolonized Human Rights and Peace Education*”, Bettina Gruber and Josefine Scherling draw our attention toward the coloniality of the neoliberal paradigm, which positions education as a site of human capital formation, subordinating people to the logic of the market. After a discussion of the interrelations between colonialism, neoliberalism and education, Gruber and Scherling engage in a close reading of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, to examine how assumptions are applied to HRE and PE. Their analysis shows that HRE and PE are framed in ways that serve neoliberal interpretation and reveals how the setting of global goals becomes an avenue for interpretive dominance. In this study, Gruber and Scherling emphasize the critical importance of examining the

neoliberal paradigm in decolonization efforts. They show a pathway toward resisting neoliberal narratives and engaging in transformative learning.

The remaining two articles examine pedagogical and curricular enactments, offering critical decolonial analysis of the limitations and potentialities of contemporary HRE. Drawing on interviews and content analysis of syllabi, Danielle Aldawood conducted a study on decolonization in higher education human rights curricula and presents the implications for PE and HRE. Her article, "*Decolonizing Approaches to Human Rights and Peace Education Higher Education Curriculum*", analyses the contemporary practices of U.S. human rights professors and reveals the extent to which they incorporate decolonial theory. Aldawood begins her article with a discussion of the decolonial critiques of human rights and peace, and their implications for PE and HRE. She proposes four tenets of a decolonial approach to academic curriculum, and then explores how these emerge in the participants' narratives and syllabi. Her findings demonstrate a nascent decolonial curricular approach, wherein decolonial theory has gained currency among human rights professors but is not yet fully reflected in their pedagogical and curricular decisions. This study is a clarion call to those of us that aim to integrate decolonial praxis with our work in university settings.

Through ethnographic engagement, Mai Abu Moghli offers insights from HRE and PE practice in the Palestinian context. Her article, "*Re-conceptualizing Human Rights Education: from the Global to the Occupied*", offers a critical reading of HRE in a context of colonial occupation and an authoritarian national ruling structure. After situating her work in relation to a critical reading of HRE and describing her research methodology, Moghli presents rich description of the political context for HRE in the Occupied West Bank and the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students. The critique offered by participants highlights how HRE has become commodified and subservient to donor agendas, rendering it decontextualized, depoliticized and, ultimately, meaningless. They also show the irrelevance and violence of a PE framework in a setting where the language of peace has been coopted to normalize oppression. This rich ethnographic account also offers insights into alternative practices,

highlighting how teachers and students have shaped and enacted their own liberatory pedagogies. Moghli closes with a call to critical educators to engage in situated analyses of the implications of their frameworks, practices and relationships. This study unsettles the foundations of HRE, emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledges and strategies, and underscores the need to develop alternative forms of education.

Finally, the special issue also includes an artistic contribution from Erin O'Halloran. In her piece, "*Toward a global common*," O-Halloran offers an opportunity to step into a 'third space' found at the intersection of HRE and PE, where learning and creating is a reciprocal praxis, and is extended to embrace nature and its 'other-than-human inhabitants.' O-Halloran rooted her painting in the Earth Charter, posing it in contrast to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as a resource for decolonial, inclusive, rights-based, peaceable education. Her piece pulls the viewer into futurity, toward imagining a world beyond this one, a world where systemic injustices and injuries are healed and transformed, where relationality is plural and responsive, where a global commons flourishes.

We hope these offerings nurture the ongoing growth of new and varied pedagogical iterations towards inclusionary, rights-based, peaceable education that transcends the overrepresentation of human beings and the destructive coloniality that currently grips our world.

*El mundo que queremos es uno donde quepan muchos mundos. / The world we want is one in which many worlds fit.*

(Zapatista 4th Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle Jan. 1, 1996)

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