

Three Roots of Transdisciplinary Analysis in Peace Education¹

Tres Raíces del Análisis Transdisciplinario en Educación para la Paz

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Abstract

How is mentality understood in relation to contextual conditions and what significance does mentality have for participation in transforming those conditions? Answers to this question are decisive for both the selection of content and how to communicate in peace education. The complexity of this question is evident if we accept that mentality is both a product of contextual conditions as well as a possible cause of their transformation. Human agency or participation in transformation is embedded in those conditions. As contextual conditions are not limited to the present and the past but also include predicted and potential future contextual conditions, mentality has to be understood also as a product of itself in that it can transcend status quo. Peace education can be of help as a tool for not only understanding past and present contextual conditions—but also for imagining potential realities of wanted and unwanted futures—. Participation in transformations from “is” to “ought”—including strategies for how to act in the present to avoid or achieve specific future contextual conditions—depends to some extent upon the educational support of such knowledge. Socialization into a family and a community (informal and non-formal education) is colored by those conditions while formal education reflects the educational preferences of the state. As it is not unusual that learnings in informal, non-formal and formal education

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are different and sometimes contradictory, the decision to focus peace education on one or two of these educations—or all three— would have to be taken on the background of understanding the relationship between mentality and contextual conditions. This task is an invitation to academic disciplines to assist in meeting the need for transdisciplinary cooperation in analyzing this complexity. The history of peace education has contributed to embryonic transdisciplinarity in analyzing this complexity evident in three contributions discussed and compared in this paper.

Keywords: education, peace

Resumen

¿Cómo se entiende la mentalidad en relación con las condiciones contextuales y qué significado tiene para la participación en la transformación de esas condiciones? Las respuestas a esta pregunta son decisivas tanto para la selección de los contenidos como para la forma de comunicarse en educación para la paz. La complejidad de esta cuestión es evidente si aceptamos que la mentalidad es tanto un producto de las condiciones contextuales como una posible causa de su transformación. La agencia humana o la participación en la transformación está incrustada en esas condiciones. Como las condiciones contextuales no se limitan al presente y al pasado, sino que también incluyen las condiciones contextuales potenciales o futuras, la mentalidad tiene que ser entendida también como producto de sí misma, ya que puede trascender el statu quo. La educación para la paz puede ser una herramienta no sólo para la comprensión de las condiciones contextuales del pasado y del presente sino también para imaginar posibles realidades de futuros deseados y no deseados. La participación en las transformaciones del “es” al “deber ser” —incluyendo estrategias para la forma de actuar en el presente para evitar o lograr futuras condiciones contextuales específicas— depende en cierta medida de la ayuda educativa en tal conocimiento. La socialización en una familia y una comunidad (educación informal y no formal) está influenciada por esas condiciones, mientras que la educación formal refleja las preferencias educativas del Estado. Como no es raro que los aprendizajes en la educación informal, no formal y formal son diferentes, y a veces contradictorios, la decisión de centrarse en la educación para la paz en una o dos de estas enseñanzas —o

las tres— tendría que ser entendida como parte de la comprensión de la relación entre la mentalidad y las condiciones contextuales. Esta tarea es una invitación a las disciplinas académicas para ayudar a satisfacer la necesidad de la cooperación transdisciplinaria en el análisis de esta complejidad. La historia de la educación para la paz ha contribuido a la gestación de la transdiscipliniedad en el análisis de esta complejidad, evidente en tres contribuciones que son discutidas y comparadas en este trabajo.

Palabras clave: educación, paz

Contents: 1. Introduction, 2. Mentality and participation, 3. Concluding discussion, 4. References.

1. Introduction

In this paper I shall investigate how human agency is understood in relation to the contextual conditions of peace education interventions. My methodology is to review how human agency was understood in early contributions of peace education interventions in which participation was an expressed goal in three different contexts, viz. 1) in the Neapolitan subproletarian reality of the 60s and 70s, 2) in Japanese lifelong integrated education as developed since the 60s and 3) in a context of severe violence in both culture and structure as was the case in apartheid South Africa. It will be documented in the following that social, economic and political dimensions are highlighted in the Neapolitan context, a philosophical understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature is at the center in the Japanese analysis and the historical imprint of colonization upon the human mind is foregrounded in the South African case. These different ways of approaching an understanding of contextual conditions are not mutually exclusive, however, and together they are seen as valuable contributions to an analysis that sees no disciplinary borders in finding ways of understanding human agency in relation to contextual conditions. I shall therefore discuss how these different ways of understanding human agency have one thing in common in that they all meet criteria of transdisciplinarity.

In a recent article on transdisciplinary research methodologies, Pohl (2011) discusses a form of transdisciplinarity in which non-academic actors are participants in the production of knowledge. They participate with the researchers in selecting, formulating and analysing the problem(s) to be dealt with as well as searching for solutions to be implemented in change processes. Participation as discussed in this form of transdisciplinary research methodology is similar to criteria of relevance in peace education as well. A core principle in peace learning according to the theoretical framework in this article implies that the search for adequate analysis of contextual conditions relates to past, present and future dimensions as well as how close, intermediate and distant realities are seen in relation to each other (Cabezudo and Haavelsrud, 2007). Learners therefore—like the researched in transdisciplinary research— have a say in the selection, formulation and analysis of problem(s) to be dealt with and most importantly—not only in staking out ways of action—but also participating in enacting those ways towards future contextual conditions of more peace and less violence.²

In order to highlight the relevance of natural sciences in transdisciplinary analysis I shall towards the end of the article discuss a recent study originating in the discipline of biology on how the biological nature of the human being relates to participation in conflict behaviour. This study brings in *universal* biological qualities of the human being and I conclude that this research find does not see human agency in light of variable social landscapes and contextual conditions specific to those landscapes. It is of interest in the further development of transdisciplinarity both in theory

² The purpose of education for peace in this theoretical framework is to create more peace and less violence. This purpose has consequences for selection of content and how to educate as well as how the “what” and the “how” influence each other. The interrelations between content and form are generally recognized as an important element in peace pedagogy, but in a recent study it was found that interrelations of content and form with contextual conditions are less explicated and often overlooked leaving content and form preferences in a void (Haavelsrud and Stenberg, 2012). Less attention to contextual conditions may be related to the complexity involved in such analysis as it requires transdisciplinary insights. So the task is nothing less than analyzing the relation between social landscapes as they have developed to the present and human agency as one condition for participation in transformation. Even though such analysis may still be a shortcoming in the peace education search for ways and means towards more peace and less violence, it does not mean that the history of peace education has not made advances in understanding how both content and form preferences are grounded in an analysis of contextual conditions.

and practice to review how this very current research stands in relation to the analytic approaches in understanding human agency in relation to contextual conditions already in existence for a long time as discussed in the three selected cases—to which we now turn.

2. Mentality³ and participation

Subproletarian mentality

Popular participation was a basic methodological principle in this early formulation of peace education in the Neapolitan context. And it was argued—if not always practiced—that such participation should be closely intertwined with both research and action for peace. One of the pioneers and an enthusiastic “integrator” was Mario Borrelli—the prime mover in designing interventions in the problematic conditions existing in the Neapolitan subproletariat—. His work became a model for many in the involvement of non-violent popular participation in community development. His intervention strategies were firmly grounded in a thorough analysis of the subproletarian mentality as a product of contextual conditions—a contribution to embryonic transdisciplinarity at an early stage in peace education.

Borrelli gave a new meaning to community development as a result of designing interventions in order to weaken the political manipulation of the marginal and excluded sub-proletariat by involving them in the quest for improving public and social services (Borrelli, 1975). His purpose was not to assist in adapting individuals and groups to existing structures but to actually assist people in effecting structural changes by strengthening their capacity to participate in transformation. In seeking transformation in contextual conditions, he made an effort to research existing conditions before educational interventions and other actions were selected and implemented. Research, education, and action inspired and influenced

³ In his groundbreaking book on Peace by Peaceful Means Johan Galtung (1996: 70-80) does not use this concept of mentality but rather attitudes and assumptions in which he includes both the individual’s emotive and cognitive qualities of importance for human agency in dealing with conflicts. I shall use the concept of mentality here in the same meaning as this concept was used in Borrelli’s writings early on referring to beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions to act covering the same meaning as the attitude corner in Galtung’s conflict triangle.

each other in this effort and each of the three would have been different without the integration among them (Borrelli, 1977). His research found that direct violence often was a product of structural violence. Therefore, he saw it as a major strategy to resist structural violence in order to foster non-violent behaviours. In this understanding, non-violence became the product of policies towards social justice and fair sharing, i.e. an invitation to political authorities to assist in contributing towards non-violence through non-violent policies.

He saw the improvement of public and social services as a most important and realistic goal to work towards when inviting the participation of the marginalised and excluded. This action for change had the two-sided function of returning resources to the marginalized at the same time, as it was important in changing their understanding of their exclusion. Sub-proletarian mentality is analysed in terms of socio-economic facts documenting that a third of the population in the city belonged to the sub-proletarian category living on a minimum of resources and excluded from the productive process.

The local power is analysed in terms of a long-standing aristocracy, a political oligarchy, a pseudo middle class, a rather small working class and the large sub-proletarian mass making it possible for local political bosses to adopt modern “democratic” parameters in combination with social mechanisms of a feudal type. Two main political dynasties in the city—the Lauro and the Gava—were quite familiar with this combination in seeking power:

The passing of the votes from Lauro’s party to that of Gava took place without much upheaval [...] Interest was shown in the poorer classes only during election times, with massive poster and newspaper campaigns and a host of empty promises, which were aimed solely at capturing as many votes as possible. What was not changed was the technique of individual political cooptation through the supplying of economic advantages, which had the aim of tying the person to the power group for the rest of his life, and also estranging him completely from his social background (Borrelli, 1972: 4).

This manipulative feudality in the political system would not have been possible without the mentality of the sub-proletarian clan culture:

The individual was sunk into the clan and acted through it, never taking any decision without its approval (and gratification). His only strength was in the clan and anyone who betrayed it was eliminated. The only world which the individual accepted was that of the clan. Even the physical orbit of the clan coincided with the world. The outside world was perceived as strange and hostile and whoever ventured into it without a “protection” or a “recommendation” of a “friend” was likely to perish because the clan could no longer defend him. The outside world was regarded as a sort of hunting ground or “game reserve”. Every expedition into it, no matter how long it might last, presupposed a return with spoils to share amongst the members of the clan. Whoever succeeded in establishing a bridgehead with the outside world was seen as a scout, opening up the road. If he was successful, his success was not seen by the clan as a personal, individual achievement. The clan presumed that he would never have been able to succeed on his own without its continuous moral support and encouragement, and it was the right of the clan to share in any success the individual obtained (Borrelli 1975: 8).

This mentality of the sub-proletarian constitute an important contextual condition for the selected intervention methodology. Here we have people who “perceives time with a different rhythm, more leisurely, becoming reality only when in it is in fact the present. Tomorrow and the future are generally as vague and as indistinct as a more distant geographical space” (Borrelli 1975: 10). And in relations with others it is the heart and the imagination of the other rather than the intellect that is valued. A person in command or a person “liked” is often seen as having the right opinions. It is concluded in this analysis of the mentality of the sub-proletarian “that the social system where he lives, receives its strength from its incommunicability with the outside world and from its own rigid internal hierarchy” (Borrelli, 1975: 14). Education is not seen as preparation for action but as a reflection after the action to be utilized in the next action for survival. Hence the schooling system cannot be utilized as it is an instrument of the powerful. Non-formal education as part of the action for improving social and public services is therefore the most appropriate option and selected as the venue for the intervention strategy.

These interventions—both educational and political—were non-violent and inspired by Neapolitan popular pacifism which assumed that non-violence from below would assist political authorities in rectifying elements of structural violence. This strategy in no way limited the responsibility for non-violence to individuals but saw the role of macro units including political authorities as co-responsible. This popular pacifism, therefore, demonstrated the importance of synchronicity between cultural expressions at the micro level and political leadership (Haavelsrud, 2010: 202-283). The principle is to begin with the transformation of lifestyle and culture in order to influence the transformation of economic as well as political conditions.

This principle seems to be in harmony with Richards and Swanger (2006), who argue that the rules of capitalism as an economic system depends upon cultures that adopt these rules such as the lifestyles of commodification and consumerism. A change in such lifestyles might effect a change in the rules of that economic system. Research on violence (direct, structural, and cultural) in specific contexts is therefore basic in the development of a strategy for communication and consciousness-raising. This type of integration of research, education, and action was also made into “A Global Strategy for Communication and Consciousness Raising in Various Local Settings” with the enthusiastic participation of Borrelli in the Summer School of the Peace Education Commission in 1975 (Working Group, 1976 reprinted in Burns and Aspeslagh, 1996).

In his paper entitled “Socio-political analysis of the sub-proletarian reality of Naples and lines of intervention for the workers of the centre 1972/1973”, Borrelli (1972) connects the phenomenon of the large number of abandoned and illiterate children in Naples in the years since the end of WWII and social, political, cultural, and economic realities of the time. The fate of these children is also—in addition to the clan mentality noted above—explained in relation to the economic transition from a pre-industrial to an entrepreneurial and industrial production within a few decades. With this analysis as a background, it is logical that Borrelli selected non-formal rather than formal education as his venue for intervention.

Recent writings on transdisciplinarity propose an organizational model of the academy in which different disciplines evolve a dialogic approach to social issues for the purpose of producing new and transdisciplinary knowledge (Pohl, 2011). In some academies, concrete projects along these lines are now being developed.⁴ This transdisciplinary cooperation in the academy was not part of the contextual conditions in Italy so this type of knowledge orientation had to be handled outside the academy—with assistance from individual academicians—.⁵ Borrelli's analysis of contextual conditions is an example of embryonic transdisciplinarity carried⁶ out by one person with the purpose of involving non-academic actors in knowledge development and action. Borrelli embarks like an octopus⁷ in his studies of contextual conditions specifying historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological facts, issues, and problems. And he relates the findings in each sector to findings in other sectors always looking for interrelations of cause and effect among the sectors. As discussed above, the mentality of the sub-proletariat is understood in relation to the analysis of the clan and its relationship to the world of work and production including the class structure and the interrelations to the historical and political realities of the context. He discusses black, grey and white economies as a complicated web of structural violence in need of change at all levels from lifestyles to state policies (Borrelli, 1993).

The sub-proletariat is of course only one of many possible targets for interventions in this social landscape. Borrelli's choice of target is conditioned by the initial phase of his extraordinary work with the urchins

⁴ The South African Research Chair in Development Education under the leadership of Professor Odora Hoppers has the last 6 years worked with a group of distinguished fellows from different disciplines and from various parts of the world for the purpose of transforming the academy as well as development education towards transdisciplinarity involving all academic disciplines and subjects. This is done with close participation of Elders and communities for the purpose of contributing to both knowledge and action on social issues. The theoretical foundation behind this “transdisciplinarity in action”—as professor Odora Hoppers calls it—is available in (Hoppers and Richards 2011).

⁵ Borrelli was a co-founder of the Italian Peace Research Institute in 1977 and its Director till 1988. Academicians from many Italian universities participated in the projects of the Institute http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Borrelli

⁶ Pohl's model (2011: 622) of transdisciplinarity calls for dialogic communication among different thought styles in order as a tool in the production of collective knowledge transcending disciplinary knowledges.

⁷ His own metaphor for describing himself.

in Naples in the aftermath of WWII. This phase made him known the world over as the Tiger of Naples, Don Vesuvio and The Defiant One with comparisons to other religiously motivated interventionists like Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King—not to mention how close he was to being sanctified—a possibility rendered impossible with his leaving the priesthood in the Catholic Church and getting married in 1971. All this has been well documented and shall not be repeated here (see e.g. Finer, 1998 and 2000). His early work with abandoned children (cf. West, 1957) was an important background for his choice to participate in the early formulation of peace education within the International Peace Research Association (Aspeslagh and Burns 1996, R. J. Burns 1996, Aspeslagh, 1996) as these children came mainly from sub-proletarian families which he saw as a breeding ground for urchins.

I would argue that non-formal peace education interventions in any local setting would require a similar type of analysis of how contextual conditions could be a guide to understanding mentalities for participation in transforming structural as well as other forms of violence. And Borrelli's imperative to integrate research, education and action in transformation of violent contextual conditions is of even higher relevance today when confronting environmental and societal challenges resulting in different forms of violence that need a synchronized effort involving actors at all levels and in all spaces. Such integration challenges the fragmentation of specialized competencies in academic disciplines that often tend to avoid analysing realities outside their expert knowledge area. Knowledge that can assist in a comprehensive understanding of relations may be difficult to obtain without a transdisciplinary ambition.

Mentality and lifelong integrated education

The Borrelli version of transdisciplinary orientation does not include references to natural sciences. This was not unusual at the time as classic theories in social science such as the theories of Durkheim and Mead had not included considerations about the relationship between humanity and nature (Haavelsrud, 2010). The exclusion of such relations has implications

for what assumptions are made about the basic qualities of the human being—a matter of greatest importance for developing any kind of strategic knowledge for interventions towards more peace—. This consideration is foregrounded in oriental philosophy when the human being and his/her environment are conceptualized as an integrated whole:

While we may perceive our mind, body and environment to have separate existences, the view of nature that we have adopted holds that a human being does not exist apart and aloof from the natural world but is part of it. From this it follows that our mind and body together with the surrounding environment are integral to each other and identified as one (Nomura 2002: 49).

Nomura's concept of "environment" is partitioned in the human, the material, and the natural. The integration of the inner world of the individual and the outer world of the environment corresponds to the integration of subjectivity and objectivity. The simultaneous interdependence and the inseparability of subject and object are ensured through the senses of the human being (see, hear, smell, taste, touch). This oriental concept of seeing "humans in oneness with nature is based on the principle of identified relationship that the two are one, that their relations are mutually and indivisibly correlated" (Nomura, 1998: 125).

Before the advent of peace research, social science theories did not explicitly discuss socialization in light of questions of peace and violence. Nomura, however, makes an explicit connection when she defines peace as a "balanced state between mind, body and environment" (Nomura, 1998: 129). This definition suggests that there is a principle of co-existence underlying peace. Violence against one of the parts would be violence against the whole, including the self: "Our ignorant and reckless exploitation are destroying the environment on which we depend, threatening our own survival as well as that of all living things" (Nomura, 1998: 127).

The principle of coexistence for all humankind is seen as a potential and "valuable principle for peace" (1998: 131) depending upon the success of lifelong integrated education. Without such education, humans are going to continue to break wholes into parts and deal with isolated and segregated cases rather than interdependencies and wholes. The ignorance resulting

from fragmentation and separateness is therefore a basic cause of violence in this oriental view. And: The wisdom of integration and co-existence achieved through education could become a basic cause of peace.

The understanding of the human being as integrated with and part of nature is further explored in relation to consciousness and sub-consciousness. The deepest levels of our sub-conscious are seen as a result of evolution. This level, therefore, contains what is called the “cosmic will” and I reckon that this part of the sub-conscious is a given and can hardly be changed except through further evolution. It seems that what I have called macro (Haavelsrud, 1975 and 1996) has been sedimented in the micro of human consciousness in such a way that we can talk of the unity of macro and micro. This unity implies that macro is in micro and micro is in macro. The unity might mean that the distinction itself is problematic to make as even the macro of the beginning of time and the beginning of life is rooted in our consciousness as the cosmic will. And past and present macro realities in our lives—such as experienced political, economic, cultural, and social realities—will also find its way to some level of the conscious and sub-conscious—exemplified so well in the Borrelli analytic approach discussed above.

Peace education as lifelong integrated education is according to this philosophy highly dependent upon self-education. In my understanding of the principle of self-education, it is to recognize the macro in our mentality—both in the conscious and in the sub-conscious part—always keeping in mind that this macro also includes our visions of the future, i.e. our ideas about potential reality. I find support for this interpretation when Nomura (2002: 36) writes that “we must stare at the reality while we yearn of idealism [...] if we do not yearn for the ideal we will lose the meaning of our life. If we fail to look hard at reality we will live a rootless life. Reality without idealism is hollow and idealism without reality is but a castle of sand”. When education is seen as “a process that ‘begins and ends by knowing oneself’” Nomura (2002: 38) implies that by knowing ourselves we will know 1) that our self is part of the material and natural environment, 2) that it has been influenced by evolution from the beginning of time, 3) that it contains potentials for both good and evil as

a result of sedimentations of past and present influences from the external world, and 4) that its visionary potential is a power for transformation of present realities.

When Nomura applies her theory to the analysis of Japanese mentality, she begins by pointing out that ancient animism was introduced already in the first constitution in the year 604. Ancient animism is seen as the base for the emphasis on harmony—including harmony with nature—. In the 7th century both Confucian and Buddhist teachings were brought to Japan from China and these teachings were combined with this indigenous animism. These ancient roots, Nomura argues, continues to inspire a mentality of coexistence and integration even today—also with nature (Nomura, 1998: 66-67) —. She argues that experiences of the past are either retained as superficial memory whereas other experiences are adopted as knowledge, habit, talent, and ability. In this way, she finds interest in the structure of both the conscious and the subconscious. Based on such historical and philosophical analysis of which contextual conditions have influenced the human mind, Nomura develops practical approaches to contents and forms of peace education—always insisting on the principle of integration as the purpose of lifelong education for peace. This is manifested in all activities as for instance in the organization of the centre where children, youth, adults, and elders interact on issues of common concern. It is also reflected in the form of communication in developing knowledge about issues of concern both in micro and macro in that no academic discipline can monopolize the development of understanding—also in high level international fora held every four years at the UNESCO headquarters—.

Mentality in resisting a violent culture and structure

A most problematic and challenging context for peace education interventions appears when both the structure as well as the dominant culture are violent as in the case of apartheid (Haavelsrud, 2010: 66-82 and 237-258). Peace education interventions in this type of context pose an especially challenging problem discussed as a third example of the need for transdisciplinary analysis in finding ways and means for

change towards both a culture and a structure of peace. Peace education interventions within and outside South Africa in pre-liberation time posed a different challenge than building the new democracy in times of post-liberation and democracy. But the discontinuity that any liberation from oppression represents, however, is difficult to handle educationally in that this very discontinuity relates to the continuity of historical roots, beliefs and memories surviving centuries of subjugation since colonization began.

The Africanness surviving the onslaught of a colonialism which later converted into apartheid was embodied in freedom fighters and those who supported them. Africanness was kept alive as a force against the invasion of foreign cultures—including its oppressive political systems—. Apartheid—as well as the preceding colonial brutality—were not successful in eradicating all historical roots, beliefs, and memories resulting in frictions between modernity's "Other" and modernity until this day (Hoppers and Richards, 2011). As described in the two previous examples the force of roots independent of—and possibly contrary to—modernity influencing human agency are hard to overlook whether it relates to for instance Japanese animism or clan mentality in Naples.

Even in post-liberation time, versions of modernity's "Other" may—as many hope—survive and constitute an important challenge to modernity's worst excesses at present and in times to come. Frictions between modernity and modernity's "Other" appear frequently as for instance when Oprah Winfrey—a highly successful person at the core of what many regard as the most "advanced modernity" in the world—interviewed Nelson Mandela just out of 27 years in prison and much longer in a solidaric struggle with others—. She refused to recognize that the victory over apartheid was not

[...] his alone but the work of a group and the whole country. He kept stressing the collegiate, the cooperative; she kept insisting on the self, the individual. It all seemed to me like a little war game between the Western and African psychologies, between "I think, therefore I am" and "a human is human because of other humans (Achebe 2009: 50).

Growing up as a country boy in the Eastern Cape, his primary socialization was firmly rooted in the Xhosa culture founded in ubuntu

philosophy in which an individual is seen as a person in relation to other persons—an Africanness survived to this day in spite of colonization and apartheid—impacting his long walk to freedom. Modernity’s “Other” might be hidden, neglected and subjugated in many ways—also through media and school practices—by portraying the human being as a Cartesian individual defined only as a detached and separate individual thinker. But this hiding, subjugating and neglecting of modernity’s Other has not been totally successful because some of those who suffer and suffered from this attempt resist and join forces with others who resist. This is evidence that the human being has not been reduced to an individual thinker lacking in empathy and focussing on competition with others in climbing the ladder of social mobility in a system rewarding exactly that.

It is therefore important to keep in mind the importance of the contributions of past spokespersons for modernity’s “Other” to the liberation from apartheid in building democracy after liberation. One of them is Ezekiel Mphahlele—the doyen of African literature as Achebe (2009) calls him—. In his book *Down Second Avenue*, he writes about his experiences as a black teacher in Pretoria in the 1940’s and what “knowledge” the Department of Education required African children to learn. He had to teach the black children what the textbook said:

A history book with several distortions meant to glorify white colonization, frontier wars, the defeat of African tribes, and white rule; Afrikaans grammar books which abound with examples like: *the Kaffir has stolen a knife; that is a lazy Kaffir*; Afrikaans literature that teems with offensive words like *aia* – for non-white women, *outa* for non-white men, and a literature that teems with non-white characters who are savages or blundering idiots to be despised and laughed at; characters who are inevitably frustrated creatures of city life and decide to return ‘home’—to the reserves (Mphahlele, 1959: 167).

Mphahlele did not only stop teaching under such conditions. He also stopped going to church in 1947 and later diagnosed that institution as a symbol of the dishonesty of the West because of its silence about the oppression, humiliation and injustices in all spheres of society at the same time as it was preaching to love your neighbour (Mphahlele, 1959: 221).

All violence accumulated over many centuries has become a powerful part of history even after liberation from apartheid. A recent reminder that present day conflicts between modernity and modernity's "Other" is rooted in colonial repression a long time ago is the novel *The Heart of Redness* (Mda, 2000): In the 1850s, a 16-year-old girl prophet brought a message from the ancestors to the Xhosa people that they should kill all their cattle and destroy their crops, adding that when the time is ripe the dead will arise and new cattle will be back. The European colonialists and others who did not believe in this prophecy would be swept into the sea. The book tells the story of a family divided in believers and unbelievers and the contextual conditions they encounter since this prophecy in the 1850s till the present day, culminating in a conflict over development (including a casino) of a Xhosa village in the 1990s, i.e. after liberation and establishment of democracy.

The novel describes the colonization of the people living in the then Cape Colony around 1850—comprising also the Xhosa people in whose culture Mandela belongs—. Sir George Grey had arrived as the British Governor of the Cape Colony to repeat his success from Australia and New Zealand where he had taken the land from the people in return for his civilizing mission. Sir George was different from an earlier British governor who talked of exterminating the natives. Instead, his "humane" and "peaceful" assimilation policies were to "civilize" the natives so that they could reach "the supreme levels of the English" (Mda, 2000: 143). Rumours had it that he had been very successful with this in Australia and New Zealand, where he had even given civilized names to rivers he had "discovered". Therefore, he came to be known in the Cape Colony as "The Man Who Named Ten Rivers".

His belief was that civilization implies leaving old beliefs and accepting new beliefs. With his long and successful educational experience in Australia and New Zealand, The Man Who Named Ten Rivers decided that formal schooling would be a great addition to his more non-formal educational projects:

I plan to open a school in Cape Town for the sons of chiefs, where they will grow up in the bosom of British civilization. They will learn to appreciate the might of the British Empire and will acquire new modes of behaviour.

They will give up their barbaric culture and heathen habits, and when they take over in their chiefdoms they will be good chiefs. I want all the chiefs to undertake to send their sons to this school. (Mda, 2000: 145).

Sir George had that in common with most oppressors that he was for “peace”. On his visits to the chiefs in Xhosaland he expressed his work for peace this way: “You want peace, we want peace, all decent human beings want peace. It is possible for us to live together in harmony” (Mda, 2000: 143). By many Christians, he was well accepted, but others looked upon him as a thief. Even worse—some of the latter suspected him of inventing prophecies and lying that they came from highly respected Xhosa prophets in order to have them join a movement for killing cattle—. They thought that he “wanted the amaXhosa to destroy themselves with their own hands, saving the colonial government from dirtying its hands with endless wars” (Mda, 2000: 181).

Part of our mentality impacting human agency is our interpretation of important events of the past. The divide and conquer colonization policies had an enormous impact and many of Sir George’s predictions came true: “Christian civilization will sweep away ancient races. Antique laws and customs will moulder into oblivion [...] languages shall disappear, and the tongue of England alone shall be heard all around” (Mda, 2000: 237). One way of relating to such an awful past is to forget it and forgive it. And maybe even deny it as something that did not happen: “You only dreamt it. It is a figment of your rich collective imagination. It did not happen. Banish your memory. It is a sin to have a memory. There is virtue in amnesia” (Mda, 2000: 157). Another way is to recall it and analyse how divisions created in the past may find ways into present frictions between modernity and modernity’s “Other”. This is the task of present day peace education interventions and it was the task of peace education during apartheid—both within and outside of South Africa—the former characterized by resistance and the latter by solidarity with this resistance.

Resistance, however, took many forms in the struggle against apartheid and this made solidarity work from the outside difficult, as it required knowledge about these different strategies towards liberation. Should an outsider choose to support the Black Consciousness Movement, the

opposition from the (Anglican) Church, the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party or the Pan African Congress? Interventions from these different movements were based on different assumptions and analysis of the mentality for participation in resisting the apartheid state.⁸ Even though the liberation from oppression was a common goal amongst all resisters—the strategy to reach it might be different as exemplified by the decision of the ANC to pursue an armed struggle—. Solidarity with the struggle against apartheid and struggle for liberation in many other contexts such as Namibia and Zimbabwe actualized my curiosity about peace education as resistance in a context of a violent culture and structure. This curiosity remains until this day and it is felt that the field of peace education to an extent has avoided research into this question.⁹

3. Concluding discussion

These three examples from Europe, Asia, and Africa demonstrate how different analytic approaches in understanding participation in terms of

⁸ When the showing of the film “End of the Dialogue” ended with the names of murdered freedom fighters during apartheid the audience—initiated by African participants—at the first World Conference on Peace Education at the University of Keele in England in 1974 spontaneously sang Bob Dylan’s “The answer my friend is blowing in the wind”. Five years before the World Conference on Education organized by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in the U.S. met in Asilomar and conference delegates opposed the participation of two white representatives from the South African Department of Education. They had to leave the conference! In the five Summer Schools in Vasterhaninge, Sweden organized by the International Peace Research Association beginning in 1975 representatives of the liberation struggle from Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa were prominent participants – some of them more prominent today such as Ambassador Abdul Minty of South Africa and Former Namibian Prime Minister Nahas Angula who also served on the Peace Education Commission Council for many years.

⁹ It seems that all educational interventions in resistance to apartheid should be accepted as peace education in spite of the fact that the different movements had different analysis of the problem and how education could be designed to contribute to the struggle. Solidarity work from outside contexts of conflict in which both the structure and culture are violent is always posed with dangers because inside actors may prefer and select different strategies in their resistance. The outsider may not have access to sufficient information in order to select which to support. The question of support and potential for participation in resistance based on an understanding of the mentality of different groups may or may not be known or understood by the outsider and to varying degrees by the insider as well. Any strategy of resistance, however, depends on understanding mentalities for participation and it poses a great analytic challenge involving knowledge from many disciplines. As the academy was on the side of oppression, the embryonic transdisciplinarity demonstrated by resisters to a context of violent cultures and structures obviously had to be developed by individuals and groups outside academia—including some illoyal members of the academy—as academia could not join in resisting itself as it was an instrument of the oppressive State.

past and present contextual conditions result in different ways and means in peace education interventions. They were organized outside the academy in community centres in Tokyo and Naples and in political outlawed movements in South Africa—with no or only sporadic institutional support from the academy—. The actions undertaken in all three examples, however, are based in thinking that is not limited to disciplinary knowledge. Current interest in transdisciplinary development focus much on how the academy can be transformed in such a way that knowledge is no longer only restricted to disciplinary boundaries. As noted, one form of transdisciplinarity is seen to be characterized not only by the integration of disciplines but also invites non-academic actors to participate along with the academicians in which a more symmetric relationship between researcher and researched is established and in which the latter even participate in selecting the research problem and develop solutions to what is researched. Recent calls for such transdisciplinary initiatives in the academy is grounded in the need for recognizing modernity's "Other" in the analysis in order to find ways and means towards what Hoppers and Richards (2011) has called transformative human development. They point to the importance that the academy supports such development through enlargement and recognition of the presence of modernity's "Other". It is therefore of interest to observe that modernity's "Other" may have been more recognized outside academies than inside strengthening the argument that it is about time that the academy also takes greater interest through inclusion and enlargement in its search for a rationale for intervention in reality for assisting in finding solutions to problems we are confronted with in today's world.

The ivory tower academician may protest and say that (s)he does not take part in action—thereby revealing ignorance of what action is—in that even speech acts as well as writing acts—two action forms most common in the academy—are also part of action. And if we include the idea of transdisciplinary research, we have discussed how non-academic actors become involved in such research by participating in selecting which problem or socially relevant issue to investigate and how to formulate and analyse it as well as finding solutions to be implemented. It seems as

though the transformation of the academy as called for by Hoppers and Richards (2011) is long overdue and should recognize and also learn from some of the valuable work done in non-academia as illustrated in the three examples which all meet the criteria required in the type of transdisciplinary research we have selected for our discussion, viz. 1) participation of non-academic actors, 2) relating to socially relevant issues, and 3) transcending and integrating disciplinary paradigms.

This transdisciplinary approach is in sharp contrast to a recent study of attempting to understand the biology of cultural conflict—coming from the discipline of biology and recently published in the prestigious *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in the U.K. —. Here it is pointed out that there are certain universals—or biological primitive drives—of great relevance to understanding mentality in that as humans we all like or approach things that are linked to survival and prosperity (food, mates, and money) and dislike and avoid things linked with mortality and loss. But differences amongst us arise as to whether it is most important to seek the good or avoid the bad—leading to political differences causing conflicts both within and between cultures—. The definition of politics refers to governing institutions and policies and it is argued that ever since the French Revolution it is common to divide secular political camps into “left” and “right” (Dodd et al 2012). And new physiological evidence, it is argued, shows that there is a biological explanation for this division as they have found two contrasting types of politically relevant variation in cognitive and social dispositions. As this is a biological finding, it is argued that it is relevant in all cultures. They found significant differences in degree of arousal in physiological response between “left” and “right” people when they are shown pictures of aversive stimuli such as maggot-ridden meat and angry mobs as opposed to rabbits and happy children. “Leftists” show aroused physiological response to rabbits and happy children whereas the “rightists” respond more to rotten meat and mobs. And—as noted—the difference is significant!

It is concluded that the political right appear to be more sensitive and attuned to the unpleasant things in life, i.e. a preference for avoidance of the bad which again supports the political logic of the right-of-centre to

protect society from threats whether they are domestic or international. Accordingly, biological sensitivity causes political preference according to this research on the biology of cultural conflict. I wonder how—if at all—Borrelli, Nomura, and Mandela would have changed their intervention strategies if they had known these research findings. Dodd et al (2012) have not referenced any analysis of specific cultural, political, economic, and social facts of the past, present or the future and considered how these facts might have influenced the mentality of differing categories of people in these contexts or any other context. Their findings seem to be at the level of the “cosmic will”, to use Nomura’s concept and rooted in the unchangeable part of our sub-conscious. However, I doubt that these findings would have had any impact on the intervention strategies developed in the three examples. Because:

Even if it might be common to divide secular political camps into “left” and “right”, it certainly is not uncommon to have a different understanding of political divisions (cf. for instance Giddens, 1994). It is highly problematic to define politics as restricted to governing institutions and policies: policies do not drop down from the sky but are end results of political struggles—processes within political structures—over time among different actors ranging from individual to global actors. And when policies are implemented they are again either accepted or resisted by the polity—even in the most suppressive state—as exemplified in the struggle against apartheid. All this is politics which one would expect scientists to include when researching the relationship between biology and politics. For example, it is rightly pointed out that Steve Biko’s philosophy of liberation saw culture at the centre of the struggle. Black consciousness was a culture for resisting the oppression of the apartheid political system. It did not focus on self-pity without offering solutions and community development demonstrating self-reliance and self-development—results of popular participation (Mda, 2009)—. Biko’s success in organizing such participation was unacceptable to the apartheid political system and ending in his murder.

In another political system as for instance in representative democracy, one would find more acceptance for such participation even when it turns

out to be resisting the established order. Such resistance is demonstrated by Borrelli's mobilization efforts in Naples, in which health services and housing were discussed with the political authorities in the city. In his case, the political elites represented by two family dynasties were at least dependent upon the votes of the poor to continue in power. This was not the case in apartheid South Africa so the conditions for popular participation were very different in the two contexts. In the context of Naples, it did not seem to be a concern of the political power to improve delivery of services to the poor and without such political interest, city officials did not need to worry too much about the conditions of the sub-proletariat except for promises made at election times.

A different type of political condition is present in democracies that have stated goals of improving delivery of services to the poorest segments of society and has chosen to organize this through a bureaucratic structure which may not call for popular community participation, meaning that initiatives and efforts from the community itself is not rewarded leading to community passivity and waiting for things to happen. Government's delivery of services to constituents may be hampered by the very bureaucracy and political structure that has been designed for the purpose of development because popular participation is not part of the political structure. In case popular participation contributes towards self-reliance, self-development, and also community development, it may be wise to listen to those who argue that the failure of government strategies towards development "lies in the lack of participation of the communities concerned in mapping out their own development" (Mda, 2009: 34). Such development ideology might be counter-productive in that it is not emphasized that rights to service delivery have to be combined with responsibility meaning dignity and respect for the other and one's surroundings—even in situations of poverty (Tutu, 2009)—.

Dodd et al (2012) demonstrate ignorance about the contributions to embryonic transdisciplinarity developed outside the academy discussed in the three examples of peace education analysis originating in the 60s, and in this light I find that their findings are of little utility as a guide in the design of peace education initiatives in spite of the fact that the study

purports to be important for understanding conflict behaviour. As argued, participation in conflict is related to an understanding of mentality, which needs to be grounded in an analysis of the contextual conditions in which the conflict is situated.

In conclusion, I find Dodd et al's study (2012) a simplification of the task at hand which is to analyse the problem of how content and form preferences in peace education need to be grounded in an analysis of the contextual conditions in which the education takes place. An analysis of contextual conditions requires attention to the specificities of each context. In this article, I have attempted to show how relevant the analysis of clan mentality is in one context, how relevant oriental philosophy is for understanding consciousness in relation to nature in another, and how fundamental the experience of colonization, discrimination, and subjugation of knowledge is in understanding mentalities in South Africa, not only before but also after liberation from apartheid. I believe that this great variety of approaching the analysis of contextual conditions demonstrate that every context in which peace education is introduced the learners' experiential knowledge needs to become visible. This means that they need to participate in defining the contextual conditions along with the researchers in order to secure foregrounding the specific dimensions of relevance in that context. But in any and all contexts the challenge would always be the same, focussing on how to conduct a transdisciplinary analysis of those conditions. Hopefully, the roots of the 60s highlighted in this article might be a useful reference in the further advances in transdisciplinarity.

Contextual conditions span from micro conditions in everyday life to contemporary global affairs, which are related to historical facts as well as future potential reality. Contextual conditions includes nothing less than the interrelations between micro and macro in past, present, and future time. When both diachronic and synchronic dimensions are activated in researching such interrelations, it is unavoidable to confront and clarify the great variations in terms of social, political, cultural, and economic realities and how these realities are embedded in given natural conditions. To progress in transdisciplinary insights we need to recognize previous

contributions to embryonic transdisciplinarity outside the academy such as those discussed in this paper in reference to the plight of a sub-proletariat in a European country, a philosophy of the human being as part of and not separate from nature and the brave resisters in contexts of cultural and structural violence.

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