PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE EDUCATION

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1. Definition: The Philosophy of Peace Education

The philosophy of peace education can be defined, most simply, as the elaboration of reasons why we ought to be committed to peace education. To some extent, all writers on peace and peace education may be said to be articulating reasons why we ought to be committed to peace education. However, if we think of an organized philosophy of peace education, this implies that such reasons for the commitment to peace education as organized within the context of established philosophical traditions. A philosophy of peace education is thus more than a personal statement of the importance of peace education, as valuable as this might be. There must be some argumentation of the importance of peace education through either established philosophers and/or established schools of philosophical debate.

2. Dearth of Attention to the Philosophy of Peace Education

There are many within the field of peace research and education who have lamented the dearth of attention to developing a systematic philosophy of peace education. In 1965, Johan Galtung referred to "dephilosophizing" within peace research, that is, merely "collecting research experience without having a satisfactory definition and a conceptual framework and a deductive theory" (EPR:1:171). Galtung was referring to peace research, although the diagnosis from Galtung regarding peace education is similar. Galtung contended in 1971 that a theory for peace education had yet to be developed and the need for such a theory clearly existed (EPR:1:334-339). Over a decade later, Nigel Blake reached a similar conclusion, ending an essay on peace education with a call for philosophical work on the field, as such work was "urgent" (1985:38).

The comments by Galtung and Blake are now dated, although problem of a lack of a developed philosophical rationale for peace education is an enduring one. Ilan Gur-Ze'ev has more recently identified a lack of theoretical coherence and philosophical elaboration for peace education, although he wryly suggests (2001:351) that this lack of theoretical coherence or philosophical elaboration is not always viewed as a bad thing, as "at times philosophical work is understood as unnecessary, artificial or even dangerous for this educational cause". James Page (2004:5,11) suggests that the dearth of attention is due to the fideistic nature of peace education, that is, those involved in peace education tend to be already convinced of its importance and see the reasons for peace education to be self-obvious. Yet it is precisely the fideistic nature of the commitment to peace education which underscores how important it is to articulate clear reasons for such an educational endeavour.

3. Reasons for a Philosophy of Peace Education

The reasons for developing a philosophy of peace education are, at one level, similar to the reasons for developing a philosophy for any educational activity. Put simply, if the state and civil society are expected to commit resources to peace education, then it is reasonable that the state and civil society be told why this is important. Peace education is often mentioned within United Nations instruments as being of central importance, although it most instances this is an assumed importance (Page, 2004:4,5). The importance of peace and education for peace may well be obvious to some, although it does nevertheless need to be argued.

In addition to this, there is a special reason for articulating an educational philosophy with regard to peace education: peace education is often prone to accusations of political correctness (something which we might define as fashionable morality) or constituting a form

of indoctrination. If indeed peace education is to be regarded as more than political correctness or indoctrination, then a well developed philosophy of peace education is one way of countering this accusation. In developing a philosophy of peace education, we are arguably engaging in an apologetics of peace education and subtly also an apologetics of peace.

3. The Expansive Nature of a Philosophy of Peace Education

One of the central problems for articulating a philosophy of peace education is the definition problem of peace education, in much same way that the definition of peace is a problem for peace research. Working from Galtungian theory, peace is now generally taken to include direct peace, structural peace and cultural peace. So too, peace education may be taken to include development education, futures education, educational for international understanding, human rights education, inclusive education and environmental education. One problem which flows from this is whether a philosophy of peace education ought to constitute a philosophy of the expansive understanding of peace education and, if so, how ought the definitional boundaries ought to be drawn.

A related problem for a philosophy of peace education is the closeness of peace education to peace advocacy, especially if we think of education operating within formal and informal contexts. For education within formal contexts, it is relatively easy to distinguish peace education from peace advocacy, although the distinction is not so straightforward for education within an informal context. In some respects peace education is a form of peace advocacy. This expanded notion of the philosophy of peace education is not something we ought necessarily to feel uneasy about: the leading figure of modern educational philosophy, John Dewey, famously equated philosophy with the philosophy-of-education (MW9:331-342), suggesting that philosophy may be described as a general theory of education (338) and that philosophy substantially originated in response to educational questions (339).

 4. Two Attempts at a Philosophy of Peace Education

It is appropriate to discuss two recent attempts to develop a philosophy of peace education. James Calleja, who has been active in the international leadership of peace education, has written (1991) of possible philosophical basis for peace education in the Kantian epistemology of education and peace, and specifically in the Kantian categorical imperative. The categorical imperative has a number of formulations, including that our actions must be morally universal and we must regard humans as ends in themselves. Kant argues we have a duty to act according to the categorical imperative and that we also have a duty to educate in this manner. Kant was also a strong peace advocate and, in his writing on peace, duty figures prominently: indeed in the Second Definitive Article of the 1795 essay *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (On Perpetual Peace), Kant suggests we have "an immediate duty" to peace. It follows that peace education ought also to be regarded as a duty, flowing from the categorical imperative and from the importance of reason.

More recently, James Page (2004) has suggested five possible ethical or philosophical foundations for peace education: virtue ethics, whereby peace may be interpreted as a virtue, and/or virtue is interpreted as peacefulness, and peace education as education in that virtue; consequentialist ethics, whereby peace education may be interpreted as education regarding the consequences of our action and inaction, both as individuals and collectivities; conservative political ethics, whereby peace education may be interpreted as emphasizing the importance of the evolution of social institutions and the importance of ordered and lawful social change; aesthetic ethics, whereby peace may be interpreted as something beautiful and valuable in itself, and peace education as emphasizing the importance of that beauty and value; and the ethics of care, whereby care may be interpreted as a core element in peace, and peace education as encouraging trust and engagement with the other.

5. Towards a Philosophy of Peace Education

One of the adages of philosophy is that there is always more work to be undertaken and this applies also to the project of establishing a philosophy of peace education. The challenge of encouraging individuals and groups to interact harmoniously and creatively, with themselves and their environment, is such a profound and multifaceted challenge that it is appropriate that we should think of the task of establishing a philosophy of education as one which still yet to be completed. Areas for further investigation include: the interaction between religious education and peace education; peace education and indoctrination; a postfoundationalist basis for peace education; non-western sources for peace education; imagination and peace education; eschatology and peace education; peace education and justice education; and a philosophy for teaching peace to the military.

The philosophy of peace education is fundamentally a theoretical exercise, although it may nevertheless serve as an exercise in applied philosophy. A formal philosophy of peace education can assist to undergird both individual and institutional commitment to peace education, in all levels of education. For instance, within each of the five philosophical rationales for peace education outlined in the previous section, there are hints as to what some practical approaches to peace education might look like. Peace education may be thought of as encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an agent for peace; as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others.

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