

# Innovations in Peace and Education Praxis

Transdisciplinary Reflections and Insights

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## New Lenses

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## An Introduction to Innovations in Peace and Education Praxis

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### Introduction

We would like to welcome you to this edited collection that presents what we consider to be innovative and illustrative examples of peace and education praxis. We hope the scholarship and practice on display in these pages encourage the cultivation of new connections, questions and insights, and create space for reflection and reflexivity. In this light, we see the book as an extension of an ongoing dialogue about peace and education that has shaped our own thinking and work as well as that of the illustrious group of authors that join us in this text. This opening section seeks to unpack the intellectual and experiential ideas underpinning the book, tease out the driving questions that animate the chapters, and situate this collection within the peace, education and peace education literatures. In doing so, we highlight why this book is framed around peace *and* education and why *praxis* remains essential to this work.

From its outset, this book seeks to navigate through existing absences in the field, interrogate limits, open space for new and generative praxis, and reflect on their implications for current and future peace and education research and practice. It does so by actively engaging with the value of critical approaches to peace and education while simultaneously exploring possibilities beyond them. It is thus an attempt to bring forward conversations that grapple with the limits of a modern/colonial imaginary that denies the psycho-affective, the embodied and the relational dimensions of our existence (Stein et al., 2020). Here we are inspired by the works of Santos (2014) and Andreotti (2018) who advocate for movement away from the binary logics of ‘either/or’ and towards an understanding of ‘both/and’ praxis. By presenting readers with a series of new lenses to see, feel, critique and envision more peaceful futures in, with and through education, we hope these chapters respond to recent calls from key leading scholars in the field to break new theoretical territories. We find Michalinos Zembylas’ recent call to action particularly pertinent:

I hope to see scholars bringing theoretical concepts and ideas from postcolonial/decolonial studies, feminist studies, new materialism, affect theory, and other theories to “look” at peace and human rights through new lenses.

I hope to see work that is more critical of peace and human rights education and their consequences in everyday life. Work that takes into consideration sociological, feminist, and political theories to do that, not only psychological and cognitive ones – the dominant theoretical frames in the field of education for the past 100 years.

(Interview with Zembylas from Hantzopoulos & Bajaj 2021, p. 125)

Inspired by the idea of lenses transcending disciplinary boundaries, we use the phrase *peace and education* in the book's title to include a variety of transdisciplinary scholarship and practice exploring peace, education and peace education. It is our hope to contribute to new knowledge within and amongst these bodies of literature, as well as to introduce innovative and insightful approaches on these subjects to a wider audience of scholars, researchers, students, practitioners and educators. To do so, this book showcases case studies of how fellow peace 'practitioner-scholars' (Lederach & Lopez, 2016) are grappling with the complexities of peace praxes in their everyday work and lives. We do not suggest these are the ways to 'do' peace, but instead to highlight the lived difficulties and innovative responses many are working through as we seek to 'walk our talk' of the do-ing and be-ing of peace (Archer, 2021) as critical peace scholars and practitioners.

Recent scholarship in peace education has suggested concerns around the need for more reflexivity, analytic and affective approaches, transdisciplinary work and pedagogies that hold privileged groups accountable – as well as other essential challenges and critiques around the need for a broader decolonisation of the fields and an examination of the fundamental assumptions they rest upon. Here, this book draws influence from Cremin's (2016) identification of the interconnected crisis of legitimation, representation and praxis in peace, education and research, Kester and Cremin's (2017) conceptualisation of post-structural violence and second-order reflexivity, and Hajir and Kester's (2020) call for decolonial praxis in critical peace education with a particular attention to 'discomforting privilege'. These scholars draw on a long line of insightful critiques and envisioned alternatives from peace education, and peace education adjacent approaches, showing how the echoes of these challenges and questions have reverberated and adapted over time (e.g., Gur Ze'ev, 2001, 2010, Page, 2008; Andreotti, 2011; Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011; Dietrich, 2012; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013; Bajaj, 2015; Zembylas, 2018).

This scholarship rightfully questions the peace and education status quo. It situates peace work within a matrix of intersectional structural violences or what hooks (2000) might call our imperialist, white-supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal systems. Doing so reveals the many challenges and violences peace educators seek to address and transform, some of which they themselves are complicit in and reproduce. This work, in turn, illuminates the inadequacies of assuming that 'peace work' is 'good work' when there are more often only good intentions, limited change and reifications of the violent status quo. Specifically, a second-order reflexivity lens moves beyond solely a reflection on individual practices and scholarship and towards an understanding of the ways in which the fields of peace and

education themselves are implicated in the perpetration and perpetuation of violence (Kester & Cremin, 2017). Second-order reflexivity thus connects practices, observations and assumptions to broader conceptual and theoretical analyses. It raises the sociological imagination and helps us to contemplate implications for systemic change, as well as personal change (Kester, 2020).

In engaging with these challenges, this book is influenced by the ‘dynamic interdependence of practice and scholarship’ and seeks to situate the two in constructive conversation rather than relegated siloes (Lederach & Lopez, 2016, p. 3). Thus, it is our aim that this collection of chapters speaks to individuals across the ‘practitioner–scholar spectrum’ including those primarily focused on academic inquiry, those whose work is exclusively in the everyday practice of teaching and peacebuilding, and the many people in-between who identify as scholar–practitioners or practitioner–scholars. Our transdisciplinary practitioner–scholar spectrum approach to peace and education research, theory and action, leads us towards an emphasis on what Freire (1970) famously called *praxis* or ‘reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it’ (p. 52). It is our hope that this book will serve both as a point of reflection on recent developments in the fields of peace and education and as a dialogue, encouraging and inspiring readers to stretch new boundaries of their own work in a world that faces pervasive and systemic challenges to peace and that requires deep and sustainable personal, relational, cultural and structural transformation. The esteemed feminist peace educator and activist Betty Reardon echoes this sentiment in the updated edition of her seminal text, *Comprehensive Peace Education*, when she notes, ‘These extraordinary times call for a fresh look at the concepts and assumptions that underlies our work’ (2021, p. xvii).

In the remainder of this introduction, we address four key areas that will help ground and guide the reading experience of this book. First, we discuss the important role of the Cambridge Peace and Education Research Group (CPERG) in the inception of this book as well as our own positionalities that inform it. Second, we outline the process by which this book was created, how it changed and adapted to new ideas and challenging contexts, and why this process of writing the book together with our co-authors is essential to understanding the finished product of the book itself. Third, we reflect on some of the theoretical contributions this collection of chapters brings forward. And fourth, we introduce the chapters and authors and highlight key connections and themes across the book.

## CPERG and Positionalities

The ideas behind this book have been simmering for many years through continuously evolving conversations amongst members of the CPERG. CPERG was formed at the University of Cambridge in 2011 by faculty and postgraduate students at the Faculty of Education to focus on the intersections between conflict, peace and education. All three editors of this book have served as Chairs of CPERG at some point during their doctoral studies and have been deeply influenced by the ‘cross-pollination’ (McInerney & Cremin, 2023) environment it provides. While

this book highlights CPERG's developing perspectives, it includes authors, perspectives and critiques from beyond CPERG, embracing the values of dialogue and engagement that are central to our understanding of peace. It is thus both a representation of CPERG's evolving work in this area and a contribution to and engagement with wider ongoing dialogues within the fields of peace and education.

A further value central to our interpretation of peace is the importance of acknowledging our positionalities so you, the reader, in some part know who you are interacting with. Positionalities can be hard to capture in words on the printed page and may feel incomplete, caricatured, tokenistic, or even result in further misleading assumptions. However, we believe this is an essential step to outline some of our experiences, influences and potential biases. We contend that such a step is central to peace, firstly, as we seek to mirror the importance of self-reflection and self-knowledge, and secondly, as we hope to build connection and trust with you through our vulnerability.

I (Basma) am a Palestinian from Haifa in historical Palestine. Following the forced dispossession of Palestinians in 1948 (or what is known as Nakba), my family moved to Syria as refugees. Born and raised in Syria, I experienced the Syrian war and forced internal displacement in 2013 before leaving the country for the UK to pursue my graduate studies. My work is primarily situated within the field of Education, Conflict and Peacebuilding. Having been involved in educational programming, evaluation and delivery for internally displaced children and youths in Syria, I approach the field both as a practitioner and a scholar. I draw largely on postcolonial and decolonial thinking, engage in reflexivity about dynamics of power and marginalisation, and promote a greater interdisciplinary collaboration so that the multidimensionality of human embodied experience and its interrelationship with oppressive structures can be adequately understood and addressed (Hajir, 2019; Brooks and Hajir, 2020; Cremin et al., 2021; Hajir et al., 2022). I am interested in the challenging character of peace work and post(de)colonial thinking and how they can be complex and counterproductive if done without caution and reflexivity (Hajir, forthcoming).

I (Tim) am from the North of the UK, born in a relatively turbulent time of mine closures and strikes. I became a practitioner in conflict resolution and peace education due to many privileged experiences living and working abroad. These experiences have been formative in my approaches to work as well as the way I seek to be in the world. However, to maintain such 'synergy' (Cremin, 2016) with the values I advocate I am conscious of the privileges such positionalities have afforded me. I am extremely influenced by world philosophies and am interested in diffraction (Kester et al., 2019; Archer, 2021) as a method towards influencing my work and how I walk on/with the earth while acknowledging the complexities and sensitivities required regarding respect for such traditions and the potential harms of borrowing them. A presiding focus of my work is, therefore, how I can maintain congruence and 'walk my talk' (Archer, 2021) with the values and methods of peace I advocate, not only during my work, but also my entire being, and I bring these approaches into my pedagogies as means to support participants to explore their own roles in violence and peace.

I (Will) am from North Carolina in the US, where I was influenced by key family, educator and activist role models from a young age. My path towards peace and education work was also deeply shaped by my own experiences with violence. I approach the field of peace education from the practitioner side of Lederach and Lopez's (2016) previously mentioned practitioner–scholar spectrum. My perspective is grounded in a decade of arts, peace and violence prevention teaching experience, a background in spoken word poetry and storytelling for social change, and a specialisation in engaging men and boys in gender justice education and mobilisation. Across these three areas, I seek to examine the transformative and transgressive potential of education and the nexus of creative expression and conflict transformation in addressing direct, cultural, structural and post-structural violences (McInerney, 2019; McInerney & Cremin, 2023; Herr et al., 2023). However, guided by reflexive practices and an interrogation of my own intersecting privileged identities, my work also focuses on examining the limitations of education and the risks of peace praxis. This includes paying close attention to the ways in which 'well-intentioned' peace education, and practitioners such as myself, can become complicit within cultures and structures of silence and violence.

### **The Process of the Book: 'Synergy with Peace Values'**

Cremin (2016) noted, peace and education research 'needs to ensure synergy with peace values' (p. 12). In response, this book sought to engage in an elicitive (Lederach, 1995) and collaborative co-creation process with the authors and each other. As editors, we believed that the writing process of the book was as important as the finished product and content. We put this guiding idea into editorial practice through a dialogic approach to reviewing chapters grounded in interactive questions, reflections and suggestions with each author. It was also manifested in our rejection of hierarchical name rankings in favour of an equal-editorship stance. We three editors have contributed equally to the creation of this book and have each brought our unique skills to the final product. Therefore, it would only seem congruent to have an equitable form of acknowledgement and representation. However, as other scholars have noted (Bhandari et al., 2014; Burgess, 2017; Holcombe, 2019), communicating equal authorship to readers within academic writing conventions that emphasise first-named authors and treat lists of authors as representations of hierarchy, is challenging to say the least. To address this tension, the editorship of the book was ordered alphabetically. Furthermore, the authorship of this introduction was placed in the reverse order, as alphabetical lists are not unproblematic themselves (Weber, 2018).

In addition, our efforts to practice synergy with peace values in editing the book shaped our decisions to bring all the authors together for a series of group dialogues or 'author pods' where we exchanged ideas, placed each other's work into conversation, and reflected on the purpose, underpinnings and contributions of this book. These pods helped create a sense of community and connection within the book, something that was particularly important as this book

was written and edited in the middle of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This approach also had a meaningful impact on the direction and focus of the final product you are now reading. For example, one of the original purposes of the book was to explore an area being discussed within CPERG, which we called a ‘postcritical’ approach to peace (see Kester, 2022 for further exploration of this approach). This concept originally provided a language helpful for us to conceptualise our ideas. Postcritical peace was not meant as a static concept capturable with a neat conceptualisation. Rather, it was a term we used as a critique of the desire of prescriptive approaches for a consensus, for a sense of predictability and certainty that does nothing but ‘maintain stable hierarchies of knowledge, authority, and cultures’ (Stein, 2021, p. 4). For us, postcritical epitomised our evolving ideas in the need for a ‘second-order reflexivity’ (Kester & Cremin, 2017) on the work we do. It sought to move with, yet not remain stuck in, critiques of peace and education, and instead towards action. It aimed at highlighting the false dichotomies of mind/body we as practitioner–scholars felt at the heart of peace education and engage in more diverse ontologies and epistemologies of peace beyond the modernist rational and human-centric tradition interrogated through postmodern, post(de)colonial and post-human perspectives. However, as the conversations with authors in this collection evolved in group dialogues and one-on-one conversations, we realised that such a term created critiques and disharmony among ourselves and soon became the antithesis of what we hoped it would be. Ironically, by creating a term, it became a ‘thing’, and this ‘thing’ became the opposite of what we hoped it could signify: a flexible ‘diasporic’ (Gur Ze’ev, 2010) concept. As a result of our collaborative, elicitive and relational process, we decided to relinquish the phrase ‘postcritical’ and focus instead on innovations in peace and education praxis more generally feeling this approach exemplified the co-creation idea of peace we advocate.

Finally, our approach in editing this book is also grounded in reflecting on and being clear about the limitations of our work. This book includes a diverse range of authors and ideas. However, it does not seek to claim to represent or account for all voices. This book does not claim to represent all geographies or to be able to engage with all relevant and important topics within the vast terrain of global peace and education work. As previously noted, this text intentionally does not seek to provide templated answers or universalising ideas but instead seeks to provide contextualised conceptual and practical scholarship that works to affect the head, heart, body and spirit of the audience in conversation towards stimulating the *do-ing* of peace.

## Theoretical Contributions

This book proposes and presents a peace and education praxis with and through the critical lens, the decolonial lens, the affective lens, and shows the potential for limitless others. We argue that peace education can be grounded in a broader transdisciplinary liberatory approach that includes and goes beyond critical perspectives in a holistic way that integrates affective, relational, humanising and

imaginative praxis. In this way, the book is a move away from simplistic caricatured binaries of individual-structural, relational-critical and rational-affective towards an approach that sees these as constantly intertwined – not statically, but always in a dynamic flux. The contention here is that we might not be able to truly understand or ‘grasp’ peace, that it might always be ‘imperfect’, and that it is the processes that matter. Focusing on the processes necessitates an acknowledgement that ‘all types of work are insufficient in themselves, requiring more than one theory/set of skills to be effective’ (Andreotti, 2011, p. 262). Therefore, the book is an invitation to horizontal dialogue as a primary condition for possibility. Eschewing rigid, deterministic and normative philosophical and theoretical standpoints, the book endorses the premise that ‘social reality can be studied from different theoretical viewpoints’ and that ‘this theoretical pluralism is essential for understanding certain phenomena in their full complexity’ (Meghji, 2020, p. 652). Informed by decolonial thought that fosters a practice of ‘pluriversality’ (Santos, 2014), we call for ‘radical openness’ (hooks, 1989, p. 19) and dialogue amongst different philosophical, theoretical, epistemic and disciplinary lenses (Kester et al., 2019; Archer, 2021) to explore synergy (not synthesis<sup>1</sup>), cross-pollination (McInerney & Cremin, 2023), resonance and ‘mutual enrichment’ (Hajir, 2020, p. 2). Thus, the book conceives peace and education research and practice as a terrain of struggle where no philosophical, theoretical, epistemic, or disciplinary standpoint is sufficient or could claim to capture social reality everywhere.

While contributing to unlocking a fresh territory; one that recognises the multiplicity, contingency and complexity of the work, we wish to clarify that this is not a generic call for undisciplined pragmatism. Rather, influenced by Santos’ (2018) suggestion of ‘trust criteria’ and how judgement and decisions about what knowledge or theories to use must be based on their efficacy in strengthening concrete struggles against oppression, this book is also a call to prioritise the lived experiences and viewpoints of struggling populations regarding the worth and meaning of peace as a concept, practice and/or intervention, as grounded within their contexts. In this way, it is not only a call for ‘cognitive justice’ but also for ‘ontological justice’ (Kester, 2022). We agree with Kester that: ‘Epistemological pluralism is insufficient. If living differently is not allowed, then thinking alternatives is at best an exercise of idealism; it does not lead to transformation of unjust systems’ (Kester, 2022, p. 6). This call for ontological justice is a call to avoid coercion or imposition of external judgements and preconceptions; a call for an ethical engagement with difference (Andreotti, 2011). That is, a call for a new form of contextualised epistemology and ontology of the dynamic nature of different forms of violence, multiple conceptions of peace, the infinite number of forms of struggle that marginalised and oppressed groups people might choose to put an end to their oppression, and to achieve the form of peace and the state of harmony and justice that they aspire for.

Further, this book makes a strong case for second-order reflexivity. As was discussed in the first section of this chapter, the concept of second-order reflexivity is deeply linked to this book through its conceptualisation in CPERG by Kester



and Cremin's (2017) work. This is the first edited collection that foregrounds the concept and engages with it from a diverse group of authors, contexts and theories. Peace and education work and research in a world entrenched in such individually, culturally, structurally and post-structurally violent conditions requires reflexivity to be relentless. This does not mean scholars should spend all their time just reflexively thinking about what they have done or what they could do – while actually doing nothing but thinking. We hope reflexive work would show how privilege-soaked such a position is at its extremes. What it does mean is that the work of reflexivity is never done. It could be, perhaps, our deepest value for peace (Archer, 2021), a humble acknowledgement of our own limitations. Such an understanding is vital to help us make sense of both the wickedly complex systems of violence – as well as the potential of a vibrant 'pluriversality' of approaches to peace and education. Extending second-order reflexivity theory and practice across its chapters, this book shows how centring second-order reflexivity can help us understand the problems facing peace and education as well as imagine alternatives. Analysis of and action upon these two practices is an interdependent process. As Giroux (2010) argues, 'hope is an act of moral imagination that enables progressive educators and others to think otherwise in order to act otherwise' (para 15). Similarly, hooks (2000) notes, 'To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality' (p. 110).

Finally, the book demonstrates alternative epistemological reflexive practices that include but go beyond cognitive-centric thinking and academic styles of written communication – which while valuable and in many cases practical, can also be limiting, exclusionary, detached and hollow if they are perceived as the 'right' or only way to do such personal and political reflexive work. The innovative approaches undertaken by some authors in this book draw attention to the need to pay due attention to the dispositions and 'being' of the actors in space and time with peace in mind, heart, body, spirit and action. They speak to the recommendation of Santos' *Epistemologies of the South* that 'without the senses, it would be impossible to warm up reason' (Santos, 2018, p. 166). The book hopes to provoke the 'feeling-thinking, the *corazonar* that renders possible the transformation of the world into a world conceived of as a personal responsibility' (ibid.). This book, therefore, aspires to be a call for the do-ing and be-ing of peace as we strive, in our own contexts, to affect change.

## Chapters and Authors

We have been very fortunate to work with the wonderful authors of this book and are so grateful for their contributions throughout its development. Each author has in some way written about the innovations, insights, questions and challenges they encounter as practitioner-scholars and the pathways they are exploring as they move forward in their praxis. We have placed these chapters into four parts to bring some similarities into focus. These include one chapter (including this one) that foreground the ideas behind peace and education, three chapters

that focus on research in educational settings, three that focus on peace praxis interventions, and three that draw in alternative ontologies and epistemologies. However, we feel these lines are artificial and often blurred and that other orders are certainly possible. We encourage you to engage with the chapters in differing orders and not to assume that our order is being suggested as the best way. We recommend putting chapters into conversation with each other as, by doing so, differences become produced. As Bozalek and Zembylas (2017) remind us, it is through such a diffractive process of reading that ‘difference is seen in an affirmative light, as a tool of creativity rather than as separation and lack’ (p. 115).

In Part 1, **Terence Bevington** begins by unpacking the concept of peace. Bevington proposes an understanding of peace that foregrounds the processes that stimulate and facilitate the back-and-forth movement between the ‘imagining’ of peace and its ‘actualisation’. The significance of this chapter lies not only in emphasising the centrality of relationality and processes, but in highlighting how operationalising this understanding of peace requires that we approach the ‘imagining’ of peace from a decolonised lens and prioritise the interpretations and understandings of local populations (those who are experiencing violence, navigating conflict, and are receivers of interventions). As expressed by Terence, only then can we optimise the capacity of our work to speak and matter to a local everyday level.

Starting Part 2, **Tania Saeed and Julia Paulson** write from a practitioner perspective working for a peace network called EdJam. They describe the values they feel are central to their work within this network and how they try to enshrine them in and through the relationships they foster with their local international partners. They discuss how their work takes a deeply relational and cooperative demeanour with their partners so that the values of reflexivity, dialogue, co-responsibility, respect, generosity, creativity, and sustainability are all exemplified and hopefully reciprocated. Through doing so, they not only aim to foster a congruence with the values of EdJam but also walk their talk in supporting local actors.

**Nomisha Kurian and Antti Rajala’s** chapter invokes a theoretical synergy of critical and relational discourses to offer a conceptualisation of critical compassion. The authors emphasise the relations between micro-level tensions and macro-level structural barriers. Their chapter showcases the realities that occur when we try to do the ‘good work’ but might miss maintaining synergy (Cremin, 2016) with the values we promote. Importantly, Kurian’s case avoids a simplistic approach to human transformative agency by acknowledging that routes for action available to people are predominantly defined by higher-level and macro-structural factors. Further, Rajala’s case connects with the book’s call for ‘humility and self-criticality’, for ‘acknowledging the complexity of the work’, and the need for avoiding overriding ‘the lived experience of the social groups that are in truth struggling’ (Santos, 2018, p. 65).

**Jwalin Patel and Kevin Kester’s** chapter addresses issues of power within research. Calling for the integration of second-order reflective practices and participatory research in peace research and practice, this chapter offers important

methodological reflections that speak directly to the book's call for avoiding the imposition of external agendas, and for valorising the lived experiences, understanding and interpretations of participants. Central to this chapter is the important role of not only giving back to the communities with which one works but becoming a part of the community. This nuanced difference seeks to challenge a 'parachute-in' researcher mentality and refocuses the power directly into the hands of those who are participating in the research.

Starting Part 3, **Robert Skinner and Andrés Velásquez** offer a compelling example of an attempt at a theoretical synergy to understand the particular needs surrounding a private elitist school in Colombia. The chapter is largely situated in the critical tradition and draws extensively on critical peace education (CPE). However, it extends beyond the confines of CPE by utilising Practice Theory to bring relational discourses into the conversation. By doing so, the chapter shows that there is no one way to understand 'relationality' and implicitly invokes what Brigg (2016) refers to as 'thicker relationality', a focus on the interactive and mutually conditioning ways in which entities come into existence (*ibid.*). The theoretical synergy offered in this chapter not only helps keep us attentive to power relations and positionings that enable us to understand where dominance and hierarchy come from, but also allows us to see how structures are reproduced through students' practices and relations.

**Annet Kragt, Mieke T.A. Lopes Cardozo and Clara McDonnell** write about tensions that arise when seeking to maintain synergy with the values they hold through a university group created alongside a peacebuilding degree. They discuss the disconnects they feel between what they do and how it is undertaken through the university. They describe the creation of the Critical Development and Diversity Explorations (CDDE) group that was formed to destabilise colonial norms within the university pedagogies and provide a space that can create something new that better aligns with the university students' requests. Their writing shows how their attempts to meet the diverse needs of the student body are not always successful. However, through a constant reflexive practice and readiness to hold space for difficult conversations lies, in some ways, the actualisation of the congruence with the values they seek.

The rich reflections offered in **Ute Kelly's** chapter align with the book's call for valorising lived experiences, developing 'a sense of intellectual humility and self-criticality', as well as 'self-reflexivity about dynamics of power and marginalisation'. This chapter presents a wide range of experiences influenced through teaching in a peace studies programme at a university while beautifully weaving together the intellectual and the personal in ways that affect the senses of the reader and challenge our assumptions of academic writing. By not only conveying the content but also the look and feel of the spaces that the author reflects on, this chapter speaks forcibly to the recommendation of Santos' *Epistemologies of the South* that 'Without the senses, it would be impossible to warm up reason' (Santos, 2018, p. 166).

Starting Part 4, **Toshi Tsuruhara and David Tim Archer's** chapter discusses what might occur if we embrace scholarly calls for alternative ontologies and

epistemologies in peace and education work. Specifically, the authors reflect on their attempts to engage multiple onto-epistemologies through a diffractive approach within their interpersonal mediation practices. In this way, they connect to the book's aspiration to showcase what diverse approaches to peace might entail. In the chapter, they show how our often-separated positionalities of work and personal life are not always clearly delineated and that we should be permitted to bring our whole identities into our peace work, especially if we often preach the importance of positionality. Tsuruhara and Archer suggest that only by doing so can we truly *be* who we are and affect as well as effect peace.

**Kenneth Gyamerah, David Baidoo-Anu, Ali Ahmed** write from the Ghanaian context and introduce the concept of Sankofa. In their chapter, they discuss the legacies of Colonialism within the educational system in Ghana. Drawing on decolonial discourses, they illustrate how the philosophy of Sankofa – looking back and moving forward – might be useful as a tool to make peace with the past and to find integrated approaches forward. To do so, they highlight the importance of not over-valorising or homogenising ‘traditional’ knowledges in our attempts to integrate them but to respectfully reincorporate them for the value they bring. Using Sankofa is positioned as particularly relevant in the Ghanaian context and useful in the aspiration of peace and education with its focus on reconciliation and integration of all voices.

In the book's final chapter, **Afrodita Nikolova** draws on her work teaching and researching a spoken word poetry programme in a Macedonian prison to explore how alternative forms of research, namely artography, could potentially foster peace interventions in their own right and allow for participants to utilise research towards their own transformative processes. This multi-disciplinary chapter weaves peace education, Black feminism, youth justice studies, and arts-based research together to conceptualise ‘artographic peace’ as the nexus of peace practitioners’ roles as artists, researchers and educators. In doing so, Nikolova uses analysis and affective forms of representation to outline a vision for how this creative and critical praxis might support the movement away from ‘instrumental, rational, and individualised’ practices and towards what she calls ‘spiritual, affective, and collective’ peace work.

The book finally concludes with a dialogue-style afterword facilitated by **Kevin Kester** and fellow prominent scholars **Michalinos Zembylas** and **Edward J. Brantmeier**, along with our very own **Basma Hajir**. This afterword aims to bring the threads together and push the conversation beyond the pages of this book towards further contemplation and engagement.

## Conclusion

To conclude, we wish to thank you for engaging with the chapters in this edited edition. We hope you are inspired, moved to think and feel, and even challenged. We feel the generative challenge is a central aspect to the process of educating for peace as it is through such moments that dialogue, vulnerability, reflexivity, change and new lenses for charting paths forward may emerge. This has been true for us

as editors throughout the book creation process, and we hope such reflections continue long after the book is completed. Our intention is not to convince you of the concepts employed here. Instead, we hope this edited collection instigates reflection and conversation and opens a kaleidoscope of possibilities as we try to find ways to be and do the work of innovative peace and education praxis.

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## Note

1 Informed by Meghji's (2020) work, we believe that calling for synthesising theories reflects a wider belief in sociology that a 'theory must be a 'theory of everything', and that if a theoretical paradigm cannot explain something, then it either needs to be revised through a synthesis, or simply thrown away'. However, we agree with Meghji (2020) and Bhambra (2014) that this belief is an extension of colonial logic. Alternatively, the decolonial notion of pluriversality 'involves different theories 'meeting' one another to reach the common goal of critical knowledge production; this dynamic is captured in the practice of theoretical synergy' (p. 6)

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