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Violence and Peace in Schools

Some Philosophical Reflections¹

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Introduction

The work tackling violence in schools does not concern solely the school as a particular establishment; rather, we must understand this work as concerning the role of the school as an institution within wider society. Any institution has values that must be translated into practice – for example, the ways in which families are welcomed and communicated with, and the ways in which violence is addressed (Meirieu 2011, 1). This means that we must look at the issue of violence in schools, and its possible solutions, not only within the walls of the establishment, but beyond and into society.

Historically, Meirieu (2011) points out that research into violence in schools appears to have started in the 1960s when the distinction between institutional violence and violence against the institution first emerged in educational research. In the 1970s, there was a further division with research into violence against adults and violence between peers, which was something that until then had been minimized. Soon afterwards, the educational discourse incorporated the idea that alongside the violence that is perceived, there are other kinds of violence that underpin it. It is important to note that research in this area, violence in schools, continued to grow steadily at an international level and with impetus (Bondu and Scheithauer 2014; Brown and Winterton 2010; Cowie and Jennifer 2007; Devine 1996; Harber 2004; Msibi 2012; NCES 2011; Olweus 1999; Silva and Salles 2010; Smith 2003), and it is pertinent, therefore, to consider which theoretical frameworks might be useful in understanding and responding to the issue of violence in schools. In this respect, we discuss different conceptions of violence, considering the views of Johan Galtung, Frantz Fanon, and Michel Foucault. Following from this, we connect these notions of violence to Buber's philosophy of dialogue, in order to make a case for an "epistemological shift" which

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might enable individuals and communities to achieve “peace.” Finally, we direct our argument to the education context and put forward some concrete proposals for peacemaking in schools.

Violence: A Philosophical View

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian scholar and one of the founders of the International Peace Research Association, is considered to be one of the most prominent figures in the field of Peace Studies. Peace education has a long history. Some scholars, for example, trace it back to as far as the work of Comenius, the Czech educationist, who argued in *A Reformation of Schools* (1969; first published in 1642) that peace could only be achieved through a universally shared knowledge; or Immanuel Kant (1790), who argued in his essay *Perpetual Peace* (first published in 1795) that violence could be controlled by a legal system with “checks and balances based upon courts, trials, and jails,” thus advocating “peace through justice” (Harris 2002, 7). Some would argue that the origins of peace education lie even further back in religious traditions, and the works of Buddha, Baha’u’lla (the founder of the Baha’i), and Jesus Christ (Harris 2002, 5).

Galtung’s work does, however, remain an important landmark in the field of Peace Studies. He argues that the best way to characterize peace is to contrast it to violence, its antithesis. Thus, Galtung makes a distinction between the notions of direct violence and indirect violence. *Direct violence* is conceived as physical aggression and violence, which can lead to severe injury and ultimately death and massacre; *indirect violence* finds expression in two ways, structural and cultural (Galtung 1969). Structural violence is the kind of violence that is present in societies, rendering them socially unjust (e.g., death by malnutrition). Cultural violence occurs in support of structural violence, masking it (e.g., indifference or support of domestic violence) (Cremin, Sellman, and McCluskey 2012, 430). It is arguable that structural and cultural violence are interdependent, as the structures of society provide the foundations for cultural violence (e.g., a section of the population being denied their rights, as happened to the Jewish community under the Nazi regime in Germany when in 1935 the Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of their citizenship and prohibited sexual relations and marriage between Jews and those of “German or related blood”); and cultural values might provide support for the continuation of structural violence (e.g., it being acceptable to discriminate against a section of society, such as happened to black South Africans under the apartheid regime in South Africa when racism encouraged discriminatory legislation like the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949).

Moreover, and depending on the context, violence against the Other always involves one or more of these three elements, namely, physical, structural, and cultural violence. Galtung’s characterization of violence seems to be very similar to that of Frantz Fanon, one of the most prominent thinkers on African decolonization. Commenting on the issue of colonialism, Fanon argues that it makes use of physical, structural, and psychological violence to oppress native populations. *Physical violence* means injuring human beings, with death being the ultimate form of injury; for Fanon colonialism is preceded, established, and maintained by the use of physical violence, which is used to subjugate local populations into accepting the colonizer’s rule and order. On writing about physical violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1963, 40) says, “the foreigner coming

from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines.” *Structural violence* is a kind of social-economic violence. This kind of violence is implemented through the harvesting and plundering of local resources by the colonizers, who use these resources in their own favor and in favor of the metropole, to the detriment of local populations and of the colony. This generates a situation in which the local population lives in dire poverty and the colonizer in affluence. Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*: “The colonial world is a world divided into compartments. It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans: in the same way we need not recall apartheid in South Africa” (1963, 37). *Psychological violence* is injury to a human being’s psyche and includes brainwashing, indoctrination, and threats, which are used to appease and break the local population’s will for self-determination. This kind of violence injures the very idea of selfhood and identity within local populations, and causes a pathological condition in which the local population only has a sense of self in the face of the colonizer; that is, the colonized only attain a sense of selfhood and of identity in the face of the master and colonizer. The implications for cultural confidence, self-value, and pride are wide-reaching (Fanon 1963; Jinadu 2003; Morgan and Guilherme 2013a, 59–61). On writing about psychological violence in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon says:

When the Negro makes contact with the White world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an *actional* person. The goal of his behaviour will be the Other (in the guise of the white man), for the Other alone can give him worth. That is on the ethical level: self-esteem. (1967, 60)

Thus, and according to Fanon, the psychological impact of colonization on local populations is severe and long-lasting, as the damage done to the psyche cannot be easily healed, and requires a continuous process in which selfhood is asserted and reasserted (Morgan and Guilherme 2013b).

The difference between Galtung’s and Fanon’s accounts is that Galtung understands *cultural violence* to be connected to *structural violence*, and vice versa, both of which are typified by him as forms of *indirect violence*. Fanon, however, who was a trained psychiatrist, seems to consider all forms of violence – physical, structural, and psychological – as direct violence. He identifies the implications of *cultural and structural imperialism* on colonized populations by arguing that it is a direct form of *psychological violence*. That is, Fanon draws our attention not only to forms of violence, but also to the very real *psychological damage* they do to individuals, affecting their sense of identity and of pride.

Fanon understood that education is very often used as a weapon of domination by colonialists, who either outlaw local culture (e.g., banning traditional dance and music) or downgrade it (e.g., undervaluing local language and replacing it with the colonizer’s language). An example of this is noted by Guilherme (2012), when he writes about missionary work in colonized lands. He notes:

This negative attitude towards local customs was certainly not something particular to the Salesians or to their work in the region, but something quite common in early missionary work across the world (e.g., American Protestant

missionaries denounced the Hawaiian Hula as a dance performed by heathens), which led to the loss of invaluable cultural heritage (i.e., their myths, concepts and religion, as well as their knowledge about the local environment, its food and medicinal resources). (Guilherme 2012, 5)

Writing in a different context, Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationist, also commented on how education was used by the elites of the country to “domesticate” the lower classes through “banking education,” thus preventing them from questioning the *structural* and *psychological/cultural* violences present in their societies (Freire 1970). The above-mentioned are prime examples of the kinds of violence that might spring from society into the classroom and schools, and we must identify these, be critical, and learn to deal with them in an effective manner.

Understanding schools and education as instruments of violence is also supported by the work of Michel Foucault (1979), the French philosopher writing from a poststructuralist perspective, who argued that schools are “institutions of power” (*institutions de séquestre*) in his seminal work *Discipline and Punish*. According to him, relations of power objectify individuals, attacking their singularities and normalizing them at the same time, so that they become incapable of fighting against that which dominates them. This is a form of structural violence coercing individuals to behave in a particular way, conforming to their realities, and becoming incapable of questioning the status quo either because they are incapable of critically analyzing it because they are too embedded in the system or because they fear reprimand from those who have more power. Thus, there is always a tension between those who retain power and those who are being dominated. In the educational context, we could mention the tension that often exists between those who govern a school and its teachers, or teachers and students, or support staff and parents. This tension caused by structural and indirect violence can erupt as forms of physical and direct violence, which can deeply affect an individual’s and institution’s life. In his essay “The Subject and Power,” Foucault characterized power relations in schools as deeply problematic. This is due to institutional and societal political structures, as well as totalitarian procedures that are sometimes cleverly concealed, restraining the individual’s capacity to consider things critically and act. He says:

Never ... in the history of human societies ... has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures. This is due to the fact that the modern Western state has integrated in a new political shape an old power technique which originated in Christian institutions ... Take, for example, an educational institution: the disposal of space, the meticulous regulations which govern its internal life, the different activities which are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with [his]² own function, his well-defined, character – all these things constitute a block of capacity–communication–power. The activity which ensures apprenticeship and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior is developed there by means of a whole ensemble of regulated

2 The original French would not have indicated gender in this way.

communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the “value” of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by the means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy). (Foucault 1982, 782, 787)

That is to say, schools can be structured in such a way that relations of power work as a form of violence between individuals. However, this structurally violent foundation has implications not just for the way individuals relate to each other but also to the way they engage with their education. The way they learn and what they study is affected by these structures of power and this could give rise to a culture of ambivalence, fear, and ultimately a feeling of revolt against the system. To deal with this situation, as we will argue, is to encourage more democratic structures in the classroom and in schools so that individuals do not feel threatened by power structures. Meirieu (2011, 17) concurs with Foucault and perhaps goes further by asserting that the very architecture of the school functions as a form of structural violence. This architecture is an inheritance from the past, from the army and monasteries, and imposes forms of both normalization and medicalization on the individual. It forces a way of being in the world, and a way of behaving in society, that the individual must accept in order to avoid being corrected. This kind of architecture does not fit in with current times, marked as they supposedly are by the democratization of education, modern teaching and learning methodologies, and the digitalization of society. It thus becomes imperative to consider questions of geography and architecture of classrooms and schools whilst thinking about ways of reducing violence in schools.

Thus, we argue that understandings of violence (i.e., physical, structural, cultural/psychological), which are often applied within Peace Studies and political theory and analysis, can be useful within the field of education. Schools and education systems can be powerful and efficient instruments of violence, which leaves real questions about how violence plays out in schools.

Peace: A Philosophical View

Having outlined the ways in which we can understand violence, we now go on to review how these relate to notions of peace, as suggested by Galtung. Galtung linked direct, structural, and cultural violence with notions of *negative peace* and *positive peace*. *Negative peace* is achieved by averting war or by removing the threat of direct violence, but without resolving the issues of structural and cultural violence. *Positive peace* implies encouraging conditions in which the causes of violence, whether direct or indirect, are removed; and this requires the development of democratic relationships and structures that enable conflict to be dealt with in a constructive and just manner (Cremin, Sellman, and McCluskey 2012, 430). We quote Galtung (1975, 29): “two concepts of peace should be distinguished: negative peace, defined as the absence of organised violence between such major human groups as nations, but also between racial and ethnic groups of the magnitude that can be reached by internal wars; and positive peace, defined as a pattern of cooperation and integration between major groups.” Further, Galtung (1975, 1976) connected the earlier notion of *violence* to that

of *peace* by advocating a differentiation between *peacekeeping*, and *peacemaking*, *peacebuilding*. Gill and Niens (2014, 11) commented that Galtung:

[i]ntroduced the notion of peacebuilding, and distinguished peacemaking and peacekeeping as the immediate responses to conflict from peacebuilding as a means to build a sustainable peaceful future. Peacebuilding thus goes beyond the notion of “negative peace” (as an absence of war) and involves the development of “positive peace” characterised by conditions in a society that promote harmony between people, including respect, justice and inclusiveness, as well as “sustainable peace” that incorporates processes to address the root causes of violent conflict.

That is to say, *peacekeeping* is something reactive and it is necessary when either (i) violence has already occurred or (ii) there is the potential for the occurrence of violence between parties, which are better kept apart because there is either a lack of willingness by one of the parties, or by both, to engage in *peacemaking* or *peacebuilding*. As such, *peacekeeping* is connected to *negative peace*, and the mere aversion of immediate conflict, without dealing with its roots.

Peacemaking is also something reactive and it involves helping conflicting parties to deal with violence that has already taken place, and it involves bringing about, and providing the right conditions for, the development of dialogue between them.

Finally, *peacebuilding* is something proactive which occurs after peacemaking because it requires engaging in a culture of peace, making the occurrence of violence less likely. Peacebuilding is characterized as overcoming structural violence (e.g., exploitation, marginalization) and cultural violence (e.g., subconscious beliefs supporting violence); it is a process of democratization, inclusion, and management of social conflict and human needs (Bickmore 2005a, 162). Peacebuilding is difficult because engaging in democratic processes requires that individuals participate in dialogic decision making and social justice initiatives as well as developing critical awareness and judgment. At the same time as developing personal morality and decision making, the individual is required to engage with the Other, including those whose views and dispositions may be very different. (Curle, Freire, and Galtung 1974 cited in Bickmore 2005b; Galtung 1996).

Both *peacemaking* and *peacebuilding* are connected to the notion of *positive peace* because they aim to deal with the very roots of violence (Cremin, Sellman, and McCluskey 2012). It is arguable that while each of these three manifestations of reducing conflict and violence emerge in different situations and moments, there is a real danger for long-lasting peace between parties if only *peacekeeping* is encouraged between them. As suggested above, this is because peacekeeping is a form of negative peace and as such it does not deal with the causes of the problem. *Peacekeeping* is to do with *safety and security*, *peacemaking* with *dialogue and conflict resolution*, and *peacebuilding* with *equity and relationship building*. They work as three distinctive, but often consecutive, moments.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that parties and interventions often only engage in *peacekeeping*, because it is connected to the kind of violence that is most visible: that is, physical violence. This is to the detriment of *peacemaking* and *peacebuilding*. When this happens, there is a risk that *peacekeeping* will become a tool for maintaining the status

quo and the continuation of structural and cultural/psychological violences. In this connection, Kathy Bickmore has very usefully applied these ideas to the field of education (Bickmore 2005a, 2005b, 2011). She has shown how schools tend to favor peacekeeping through security interventions such as CCTV, security guards, and metal detectors to the detriment of peacemaking initiatives such as peer mediation, and peacebuilding through activities such as engaging students in dialogue about controversial issues. She has shown how structural and cultural violence in many schools have undermined many peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives through, for example, a lack of teacher training, fear of diversity, and the need to perform well in high-stakes testing. Gur-Ze'ev (2010, 319) goes further to suggest that peace education is not only often a failed endeavor; it can become the opposite of itself when it is used to enforce homogenized, packaged peace. If its aim is to pacify and promote conformity, there is a danger that it can become "one of the most advanced manifestations of these violences and ... a serious threat to human edification." A prime example of this in the school setting would be to ask the victim of bullying not to create any issues and to try to ignore or avoid the bullies because *it would be better for everybody*. This means that without *peacemaking* and *peacebuilding*, which deal with structural, cultural, and psychological violence, *peacekeeping* can become a manifestation of violence because it only addresses physical violence.

Further, *peacemaking* can also become a tool for appeasing individuals in the sense in which Fanon would have argued. Fanon noted that the various forms of violence practiced by colonialism suppressed all avenues for debate and dialogue, and that even when the colonizer seems to offer dialogue, or is forced to do so, this is no more than an attempt to consolidate a position and to continue to dominate, keeping structural, cultural, and psychological violence in place. That is, there is an attempt to engage in discussions and dialogue as a way of maintaining the status quo; this is a real stratagem for the perpetuation of violence. In response to this, Fanon would argue, controversially, that only violence can put a stop to violence (Cherki 2000: 261–262; Morgan and Guilherme 2013b), so that the perpetrator of violence experiences the same forms of violence he or she inflicts on others. Thus, for dialogue to be truly effective and transformative, there is a need to deconstruct the conditions of power that maintain violence in all its forms, dealing with structural and cultural violence. This means that *peacebuilding* must involve discussions about power relations between individuals, while also analyzing the structures of the institution. Both Fanon and Foucault would maintain that only then can truly democratic and egalitarian relations and structures emerge.

Our position here is that, although these notions of violence, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding are very helpful for understanding conflict in individuals and communities, more work needs to be done to understand what we call the "epistemological shift" that is necessary for conflict transformation in educational settings. By "epistemological shift" we mean that for conflict resolution to happen, for some sort of closure to take place, the way the Other is perceived needs to be altered. That is to say, there has to be a change in the way parties perceive each other otherwise positive peace will not take place, and they will remain confined to negative peace, and perhaps even revert to aggression. This necessitates work at the individual and community level to ensure that the Other ceases to be viewed as an aggressor or enemy, and Buber's philosophy of dialogue is very helpful to us in explaining this epistemological shift (Guilherme and Morgan 2009; Morgan and Guilherme 2013a, 2013b). That is, Buber's

views enable us to understand what takes place when we objectify the Other (e.g., an aggressor) as well as when we meet the Other as an equal, a person like us. This is something crucial for making sense of the idea of epistemological shift and it is to this that we turn our attention now.

Buber: Dialogue and Conflict Resolution

In *I and Thou* Buber (2004) establishes a typology describing different kinds of human relations. For Buber, human beings:

- are relational beings;
- are always in a relation with either other human beings, or the world, or God;
- possess a twofold attitude toward other human beings, the world, or God, which is indicated by the basic words I-It (*Ich-Es*) and I-Thou (*Ich-Du*).

The basic words are a “linguistic construct created by Buber as a way of pointing to the quality of the experience that this *combination of words* seeks to connote” (Avnon 1998, 39, emphasis added), so that I-It and I-Thou are read as “unities” indicating one’s state of Being and attitude toward the *Other*, the *World* and *God*.³ This means that there is no *I* relating to a *Thou* or to an *It*; rather, what exists is a kind of relation encapsulated by the unification of these words. Avnon (1998, 40) comments insightfully that “one may summarize this point by suggesting that the difference between the I-You and the I-It relation to being is embedded in the hyphen.” The hyphen of I-Thou indicates the kind of relation that is inclusive of the Other whilst the hyphen of the I-It points to the sort of relation that is not inclusive of the Other, that in fact separates the Other. As such, these basic words are pivotal for a proper understanding of Buber’s thought, and consequently of his views on education. Buber (2004, 3) characterized these basic words succinctly, and in accordance with what we have just said about them, as follows: “The primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word I-It can never be spoken with the whole being.”

In more detail, the I-Thou relation is an *inclusive* reality between individuals. Buber argues that the I-Thou relation lacks structure and content because infinity and universality are at the basis of the relation. This is so, since when human beings encounter one another through this mode of being, an infinite number of meaningful and dynamic situations may take place in that which Buber calls the Between. Thus, it is important to note that any sort of preconception, expectation, or systematization about the Other prevents the I-Thou relation from arising (Olsen 2004, 17; Theunissen 1984, 274–275) because they work as a “veil,” a barrier to being *inclusive* toward the Other. Within I-Thou relations, the “I” is not sensed as enclosed and singular, but is present, open to, and inclusive toward the Other (Avnon 1998, 39) and Buber (1961, 22) comments that “no matter whether spoken or silent ... each participant really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them.” Despite the fact that it

³ For lack of space we are not able to deal with Buber’s philosophy of dialogue in relation to the World and God.

is difficult to characterize this kind of relation, Buber argues that it is real and perceivable, and examples of I-Thou relations in our day-to-day life, at different moments in time, are those of two lovers, two friends, or a teacher and a student.

In opposition to this is the I-It relation, in which a being confronts another being, objectifies it, and in so doing *separates* itself from the Other. This is in direct contrast with I-Thou relations, because the “I” of I-It relations indicates a separation of self from what it encounters” and

[b]y emphasising difference, the “I” of I-It experiences a sensation of apparent singularity – of being alive by virtue of being unique; of being unique by accentuating difference; of being different as a welcome separation from the other present in the situation; of having a psychological distance (“I”) that gives rise to a sense of being special in opposition to what is. (Avnon 1998, 39)

Thus, when one engages in I-It relations one separates oneself from the Other and gains a sense of being different, which can either be special – and, arguably, superior at the same time – or disconcerting, leading to a feeling of inferiority. For instance, a racist engages with people of other races through I-It relations and in doing so, believes he or she is special and somehow superior to them; likewise, victims of racism will feel unconfortable and might gain a wrong sense of inferiority.

Buber understood that human existence consists of an oscillation between I-Thou and I-It relations and that the I-Thou experiences are rather few and far between. It is also important to emphasize that he rejects any sort of sharp dualism between the I-Thou and I-It relation. That is, for Buber there is always an interplay between the I-Thou and the I-It rather than an either-or relation between these foundational concepts. I-Thou relations will always slip into I-It relations because I-Thou relations are too intense and we live in a worldly reality, requiring us to use people to fulfil our basic needs; but I-It relations have always the potential of becoming an I-Thou relation, if we remain on the watch, open to and inclusive of the Other. This oscillation is very significant for it is the source of transformation; that is, through every I-Thou encounter, the I is transformed and this affects the I’s outlook of the I-It relation and of future I-Thou encounters. Putnam (2008, 67) notes that “the idea is that if one achieves that mode of being in the world, however briefly ... then ideally, that mode of being ... will *transform* one’s life even when one is back in the ‘It world.’”

However, we argue that sociopolitical instability can easily lead to I-It relations gaining a stranglehold on human relations and thus suppressing I-Thou relations. Buber also understood that there are situations in which I-It relations become so prevalent that they suppress I-Thou relations and this has serious implications for human relationships. First, such situations devalue human beings and human existence because they do not account for the richness of the human condition; that is, they do not account for the fact that human beings are capable of both *dialogical I-Thou* relations and of *objectifying I-It* relations. Second, such situations have significant moral implications. That is, if one ceases to say *Thou* to fellow human beings then one ceases to see *Them* as *persons* and they become merely *objects*, they become *means to an end*, as we said earlier. As the *I-Thou* relation requires a mutual attitude of recognition, if one is unable to establish a *dialogue* with one’s fellow human beings, if one is unable to say *thou* to one’s fellow human beings, then one also becomes an object for them because one will

not hear the call *Thou* from *Them* (Babolin 1965, 197; Morgan and Guilherme 2013a; Okshevsky 2001, 297–298; Tallon 2004, 62).

In the light of this, how does Buber's philosophy of dialogue help us make sense of the "epistemological shift" that takes place in Galtung's *peacekeeping*, *peacemaking*, and *peacebuilding*? The epistemological shift means to be able to switch from I-It to I-Thou relations; that is, *to cease seeing the Other as an It and realizing that the Other is a Thou*. It is only when this "shift" occurs that conflict resolution can take place. Accordingly, it is arguable that in *peacekeeping*, parties are already treating each other as Its, rather than Thous, and there is a real danger that this will worsen through the use of violent means; as such, parties need to be kept apart so that they do not hurt each other. In *peacekeeping*, the epistemological shift is not ready to occur, and parties seem to be incapable of seeing each other as Thous rather than Its. That is, in *peacekeeping* individuals continue to objectify each other as, for instance, the aggressor, and therefore there is a need for putting in place measures to prevent them from performing some sort of direct violence against one another.

In *peacemaking*, parties have treated each other as *Its*, and this may have deteriorated into violence, but they have now reached a stage in which they are capable of engaging in meaningful dialogue; that is, there is a need to provide the right conditions for I-Thou relations to arise so that they do not deteriorate again into I-It relations. Thus, in *peacemaking* parties are ready to experience the epistemological shift and to cease treating each other as *Its*. In conflict theory this is referred to as "non-adversarial dispute resolution" (Coleman, Deutch, and Marcus 2014; Fisher and Ury 2012). The work of mediators and others is to encourage the parties to move away from attacking each other toward attacking the problem at the heart of the conflict. It is a move away from competition and hostility toward cooperation and problem solving. Energies engaged in fighting are redirected toward communication, empathy, creativity, and resolution. However, in *peacemaking* the right conditions need to be in place for the epistemological shift to occur; that is to say, for seeing the Other not as an *It* but as a *Thou*.

Finally, in *peacebuilding* the conditions exist for the proactive prevention of destructive conflict, and the harnessing of the transformative power of constructive conflict. Parties are ready to engage even more in I-Thou relations, despite the challenges that they may face, and the inescapability of I-It relations at times. Thus, in *peacebuilding* the epistemological shift has already occurred as parties have ceased routinely treating each other as *Its* in favor of addressing each other as *Thou*. In this connection, measures need to be put in place to facilitate I-Thou relations to continue to arise and to be strengthened, thus providing solid foundations for positive peace.

Conflict and Violence in Schools

Research shows that direct violence in European schools is substantial, and this is even without taking account of indirect structural, psychological, and cultural violence. For instance, in 2003, Smith reviewed levels of violence in schools in Europe through an initiative of the European Commission under its Fifth Framework programme of research activities, which aimed to gain an overview of violence in schools in the 15 member states at the time, and two associated states. Smith's research showed increasing levels of student–student and student–teacher direct violence. In French secondary

schools, for example, in 1999 a total of 240,000 incidents were registered with central government, with 6,240 of these regarded as serious. In Portugal, there was a 14% increase in reports of violence between 1995 and 1998. In Austria, studies from 1997 found that around 12% students admitted to bullying other students regularly or often. In the Netherlands, a nationwide random survey in 1994 found that 22% students had been victims of sexual harassment by boys at least once, and 43% had been a victim of intentional damage to property. More recent data reinforce these findings and trends reported by Smith. In Britain, in 2008, a survey by MORI found that 23% of 16-year-olds reported being victims of bullying, and another survey verified that 60% of teachers reported being verbally abused by students every week (Brown and Winterton 2010, 17, 32). And in the United States, the Institute of Educational Sciences established that 31% of students in grades 9–12 reported being in a physical fight at least once in the previous 12 months, with 27% of male students regularly carrying a weapon (NCES 2011). All these studies deal with the issue of direct violence but do not engage explicitly with indirect violence. Our question thus is: How then do we apply Galtung's and Buber's insights on conflict resolution in a school setting?

In the case of *peacekeeping* – that is, if violence has already occurred at the school, or may occur – strategies such as CCTV cameras, or separate “inclusion units” are often used to keep students safe. In connection to this, Taylor (2011) notes that 85% of schools in the United Kingdom have installed CCTV as a way of “controlling pupils’ behaviour,” “monitoring pupils’ behaviour,” and “tackling bullying.” Cremin, Mason, and Busher (2010) found that the use of CCTV cameras, locks, fences, and surveillance of both pupils and teachers in a secondary school created a prison culture, and that pupils felt criminalized, marginalized and “forgotten.” Cremin (2003) that other strategies such as zero tolerance and the use of inflexible sanctions and rewards are equally to blame for creating negative peace in schools through compliance, extrinsic motivation, and processes of pacification. As we have argued above, this involves teachers and students treating each other as *Its*, rather than *Thous*, and therefore this strategy avoids an escalation of violence without addressing its root causes. That is, it remediates it but does not solve it. Thus, it is arguable that through practicing peacekeeping only, schools generate an *It*-culture amongst students, missing opportunities to work toward more *I-Thou* relations in the student body. In addition, this *It* culture characterizes teacher–student relations, given that these will always be of an asymmetrical nature, with teachers favoring directive methods, such as authoritative power, rather than collaborative and educative methods, such as dialogue, to establish order within the school environment.

Peacemaking is different because it starts to deal with the causes of the problem, the source of violence, and as such, it is an important part of any education process. Galtung's notion of *peacemaking* has similarities with that which Jean Paul Lederach (e.g., 1995) has referred to as “elicitive conflict transformation.” This means that the role of the teacher, facilitator, or mediator is to elicit solutions to conflict from the parties involved, rather than imposing a solution. Clearly, if this work can begin in schools, there are many advantages for wider society in having young people who have a certain degree of conflict literacy, and who are able to take responsibility and be flexible in conflict situations. This suggests that learning conflict resolution skills, such as the ones proposed in this chapter, would have a very positive impact outside the classroom, in the wider society. Lederach (2003) suggests that this can be done in three stages, which

might help us visualize a concrete way of implementing peacemaking in schools. We quote:

- First, we need a lens to see the immediate situation.
- Second, we need a lens to see past the immediate problems and view the deeper relationship patterns that form the context of the conflict. This goes beyond finding a quick solution to the problem at hand, and seeks to address what is happening in human relationships at a deeper level.
- Third, we need a lens that helps us envision a framework that holds these together and creates a platform to address the content, the context, and the structure of the relationship. From this platform, parties can begin to find creative responses and solutions.

That is, we must evaluate the situation, consider foundational issues, and in the light of this seek innovative proposals. As per our previous discussion, in peacemaking parties are ready to stop treating each other as *Its*, and to starting addressing each other as *Thous*. One such strategy is *peer mediation* (Cremin 2007), which encourages young people to develop the skills, values, and attitudes to facilitate each other to resolve conflict cooperatively. Another is *restorative practice*, which enables young people in schools to be held to account for any harm that they have caused to others, and to make reparation for their actions (Sellman, Cremin, and McCluskey 2013). Building on concepts of shame, reintegration, and reparation in indigenous cultures, especially Maori culture, restorative justice (restorative practice or restorative approaches in schools) has been found to significantly reduce reoffending in criminal justice settings, and to build cultures of peace in schools. This is yet another important point demonstrating the porous condition that exists between schools and the wider society not only in terms of violence (e.g., structural violence such as malnutrition impacting on learning) but also in terms of solutions (e.g., indigenous culture notions of shame, reintegration, and reparation helping us construct a notion of restorative justice).

Examples of both of these strategies have been recorded by Cremin (2012) in her report of a restorative intervention in a secondary school in the United Kingdom. In one example, Jamie, a 13-year-old boy, had been cautioned by the police for assisting a burglary of his former primary school, and a restorative meeting took place between Jamie, his mother, and the head teacher of the primary school in the local community hall. The meeting was facilitated by a support worker attached to the secondary school who had been part of the restorative training program. Prior to the restorative meeting, Jamie had acknowledge the harm caused to his mother, his new school, and his old school, especially the head teacher. The meeting commenced with ground rules, and went on to ascertain that both Jamie and the head teacher wanted to repair the situation. There was further acknowledgment of the harm caused and an apology was given. Jamie's mother spoke of her feelings of shame, and was supported by people in the meeting, including Jamie. An agreement was reached whereby Jamie wished to clear litter from the school site and to talk with his friends about stopping the ongoing vandalism of the school. Formal legal proceedings were avoided, and all parties were supported to move out of adversarial I-It relations in the interests of healing and community cohesion. Through dialogue all parties ceased "objectifying" each Other and were able to reconnect on a deeper and more meaningful level. An "epistemological shift" occurred in which horizontal I-Thou relations replaced adversarial and objectifying I-It relations.

As can be gathered, the establishment of a Thou culture seems to be taking root, grounding student–student as well as teacher–student relations. Authoritative power and threats are replaced by dialogue and more equitable relations.

Finally, *peacebuilding* builds on peacemaking as it seeks to be proactive about peace. That is, it seeks to tackle potential sources of violence and conflict even before they become an issue. As such, it is important that schools provide a good standard of education, which provides pupils with critical thinking skills, is inclusive, and avoids categorization of certain sections of the community of students. The use of talking circles and cooperative group work and problem solving generate a collegial atmosphere and a sense of interdependence between teacher and students and between students.

An example of peacebuilding was recorded as part of the restorative intervention in the secondary school highlighted above. A teacher engaged with the local primary schools prior to the new intake arriving in September in order to support students at risk of exclusion to make a successful transfer. This was a voluntary process supported by parents. Students who had been in trouble in their primary school were invited to workshops over the summer to reflect on ways of improving their behavior and making a fresh start in their new school. Strategies such as Circle Time⁴ were used to promote empathy, cooperation, and creative problem solving. Students considered how they could be supported to make different choices in the future. These discussions were used by students to create individual behavior support plans. This resulted in a lower number of incidents being recorded for these students during transfer than had been the case for similar students in previous years, and no exclusions. This had been a real problem in the past. These ventures encourage and facilitate I-Thou relations, avoiding the permanent deterioration into I-It relations, the very source of violence and conflict. In peacebuilding, a more dialogical and democratic approach is developed, leading to more egalitarian power relations between students, and between teachers and students. This helps in dealing with the causes of conflict, whether structural or cultural/psychological, by creating and encouraging a culture of peace in the institution. The primary and obvious outcome of this is that the levels of violence in the school subside over time, providing a safer environment for both students and teachers. However, another outcome that is not always necessarily obvious to both teachers and students is that by engaging in building a culture of peace within the institution, they are actually creating a positive working environment for themselves, somewhere where they actually want to be and where they can study.

Final Thoughts

At the start of our discussion we mentioned that research into violence in schools has been growing steadily at an international level, suggesting a possible increase in levels of violence in schools, or at least a perception that this is taking place. This presents a serious problem for the education system to address. Finding positive ways to respond to violence has become imperative. As Meirieu (2011, 7) has argued, a crucial role of

⁴ Circle Time is a teaching strategy that involves students sitting in a circle to engage in various activities designed to develop social and emotional skills. Students use a talking object to symbolize trust and basic ground rules. These ensure that each person gets quality listening time and is not ridiculed or disrespected.

education is “to protect the student, particularly those who are from less favourable backgrounds, from those violences” (our translation). Meirieu is drawing our attention to the importance of protecting childhood, much as, we believe, Arendt had argued in *Reflections on Little Rock* and *The Crisis in Education* (Arendt 1954, 1957). But in the light of our discussion thus far, we could take this further and also argue that the teachers, support staff, and all those engaged in education also have to be protected from “those violences,” namely direct and indirect violence.

In our discussion we also, however, drew attention to the multifaceted nature of “violence,” demonstrating that it should not be understood as something merely direct and physical in nature, but as having structural, cultural, and psychological manifestations. We also argued, following Galtung, that there are three ways of responding to direct and indirect violence, namely *peacekeeping*, *peacemaking*, and *peacebuilding*, and that these understandings can usefully be applied to education.

It is our contention here that those involved with the education of others should become fully aware of all expressions of violence and peace in order to offer an education that is fit for purpose for the twenty-first century. This is a topic of utmost importance that Cremin extends in more detail elsewhere (Cremin and Bevington 2017), but it is enough at this stage to reassert that this is not just a matter for schools, and does not only concern direct forms of violence. In contemporary cultures of schooling, there is a propensity for direct physical violence to be identified at the expense of more indirect (but no less harmful) forms of violence. This has the result that *peacekeeping* is often pursued, to the detriment of other more positive and proactive forms of *peacemaking*. Such a strategy is problematic because it does not encourage the “epistemological shift” that enables individuals, or sections of society, to stop treating Others as Its, and to starting addressing them as Thous. Further, it does not build toward long-lasting peace, which necessitates a well-established culture of peace and democracy that can address power imbalances and structural and cultural violence. Finally, such a simplistic approach to the issue of violence (i.e., physical) and peace (i.e., *peacekeeping*) presents us with a major issue because, and to quote Gur-Ze’ev (2010, 319) again, peace education might become “one of the most advanced manifestations of these violences and is a serious threat to human edification.” That is, this approach does not deal with the causes of the problem and perpetuates more nuanced, but nevertheless insidious, forms of violence.

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