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# Relational and Embodied Epistemologies in Peace Education

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Daniela Lehner

*Alpe Adria University Klagenfurt (Austria)*  
*daniela.lehner@aau.at*

## Abstract

In this contribution, I am exploring from a theoretical perspective, relational and embodied epistemologies in peace education. The question that guides me: How can we create an individual and collective transformation of our worldviews and perceptual habits towards peace? I argue that the complex challenges, the dividing structures of our time, and the various forms of separation that promote violent structures, ask for (new) forms of being, knowing and acting that are based on interconnectedness. A relational understanding of life is crucial for peaceful and caring ways of living. I believe that especially dualistic and binary modes of being and knowing need to be transformed towards relational epistemologies. Therefore, I try to approach relational and embodied epistemologies combining Indigenous, phenomenological and feminist ideas. I discuss embodiment as a possible approach to describe the intertwining of self and world, including the intelligence of the heart, as a form of presence to sense deeper levels of perception. I end the paper with a feminist pedagogical approach of care.

## Keywords

embodiment; peace education; Indigenous education; interconnectedness; care

## Introduction

We are in a state of polycrisis (multiple crisis visible through wars, climate change, species extinction, pandemics, social inequalities) with complexities that ask for new ways of feeling, imagining and thinking about our world (Wintersteiner & Peterlini, 2021). With the current societal shifts, old structures and patterns are breaking down, and new approaches of being and living arise. The imperial, capitalist and neoliberal logic of endless growth, consumerism, commodification, and the western lifestyle of separation, disconnection and otherness are no longer serving our societies (Brand & Wissen, 2021). At the same time authoritarian regimes, ideological agendas and violent conflicts are rising. Our fundamental structures have been significantly disrupted and are in a state of transition. We do not know yet where it will lead us. The crucial point is that we cannot any longer only learn from the past but we must learn “from the future as it emerges” (Scharmer, 2008, p. 7). As Einstein famously noted, we cannot solve problems with the same level of consciousness or mindset as we created them (Scharmer, 2008, p. 168).

The postmodern turn was crucial to deconstruct the modernist episteme and especially the dominant hegemonic discourses of truth. At the same time, as Bayo Akomolafe (2020) highlights, the postmodernist position still circles around the anthropocentric and misses the interconnectedness of life including other living beings and the environment. We need to go further and start to integrate, not only differentiate. We are in a time “to recognize interconnection in everything from pollution to politics to persons” (Hart, 2014, p. 5). We are realizing that the world is not just dead matter but a living universe that exists in interdependence and integration at every level of being (Hart, 2014). As a planetary community, we can create (new) future imaginations and emerging possibilities.

As a peace researcher and educationist located in Austria, I constantly wonder how education and learning can help to create peaceful societies. By peaceful societies, I mean not only peace between humans, but also peace between humans, nature and the cosmos. When I think about my life, among other things, I could experience changes in perception about myself and the world through embodied practices such as dance, different forms of breathwork, systemic constellation work or guided meditations. Especially the Hero's Journey process from Paul Rebillot (2017) and the MA Program in Peace Studies in Innsbruck gave me the possibility to experience embodied methods. Through feeling embodied, I feel more connected to others, the world and myself. These are of course not only feelings of joy but also feelings of pain and despair, which might be one of the reasons why it is sometimes more pleasant to feel less embodied. Another reason I think lies in the division of the world into *res cogita* (things of the mind) and *res extensa* (substances or matter) based on Rene

Descartes' thoughts which created a hierarchy of mind and body and human and nature. In this worldview, understanding happens through dividing, separating, compartmentalizing and analyzing, as well as atomism and reductionism. The organic interconnectivity of the world is separated into small pieces. These epistemologies have partly colonized our ways of thinking and feeling and our educational systems. Embodied and holistic forms of learning and knowing are marginal in educational institutions. Learning and knowing is separated from our senses and from our lifeworld's (Selby, 2002, p. 78). Scharmer (2008) describes that we are facing various forms of separation: the social separation of self from the other, the ecological separation of self from the senses, and the spiritual separation of self from self (Scharmer, 2008, pp. 99-100). I believe these separations are (amongst others causes), a reason for seeing so much violence in our society.

In this text, I want to explore both relational and embodied epistemologies, and their potential for peace education. I think that relational and embodied approaches to living and education can be one way to heal the many separations we are facing. The question that guides me: How can we create an individual and collective transformation of our worldviews and perceptual habits towards peace? The second paragraph is a short introduction to peace and peace education to form a relational understanding of peace. In paragraph three, four and five, I engage with embodied and relational epistemologies from Indigenous, phenomenological, feminist and educationalist perspectives. The last paragraph, concluding thoughts, will end the paper.

## Peace and Peace Education: A Short Introduction

Peace Studies is a diverse and interdisciplinary field that engages with peace and conflict in our societies. Especially within liberal understandings of peace, the relationality and contextuality of peace is often forgotten. The Innsbruck School of Peace Studies formulated a transrational peace philosophy based on different perceptions and interpretations of peace in history and culture. It is summarized as the five peace families: energetic- focus on harmony, moral- focus on justice, modern- focus on security, postmodern- focus on truths and transrational- the larger concept of the four. These peace families aim to systemize various understandings of peace. The idea of some static or one-sidedness of peace is rejected in favor of relational and processual understandings of peace combining the aesthetical and the ethical dimension of being (Dietrich, 2012). The starting point of the Innsbruck peace philosophy was the *Call for Many Peaces* drawing on Gustavo Esteva and Ivan Illich's critique of development and economic growth. "Against the homogenizing, modern, capitalist trends that impose the idea of one worldwide peace as a regulatory ideal, Wolfgang Dietrich posits a multiplicity of often competing and contradictory small, concretely lived and relational peaces" (Echavarría Alvarez & Koppensteiner, 2018, p. 2). Transrational peace philosophy aims to address "the human being in all her/his faculties" and acknowledges that "peace and war

rise and fall in human consciousness” (Echavarría Alvarez & Koppensteiner, 2018, pp. 4-5). Especially the energetic understanding of peace that builds on embodied, spiritual and Indigenous traditions, highlights the need for relational and embodied understandings of being and peace. This also includes transpersonal aspects of being and knowing (Dietrich, 2012).

It is important to highlight the various interpretations and understandings of peace. Even or especially peace, if it ignores the context, can be a form of epistemic violence that replicates the colonial power pattern (Cruz, 2021, p. 279). There is not only direct, structural and cultural violence as Galtung (1990) highlights, but also the violence of knowledge and science: epistemic violence. “Knowledge is intrinsically linked to the naturalization and legitimization of both visible and invisible forms of violence” (Brunner, 2021, p. 197). Epistemic violence has its theoretical roots in the work of Michel Foucault and the post- and decolonial thinkers like Said and Spivak. Especially colonialism as the violent exploitation of the Global South by the Global North is a form of violence that oppressed various forms of knowledge as Santos' (2014) concept of *epistemicide* highlights. Peace as decolonial practice is understood within its unique locality, which means that it is crucial to constantly negotiate peace. A single peace narrative can be violent and might end up in dogmatic and oppressive forms of the one single truth. Peace is relational, plural and local, and there are various experiences and interpretations of peace (Dietrich, 2012). Muñoz (2006) describes peace as *imperfect* to emphasize the processual, conflicting and imperfect nature of peace.

Peace Education is the educational theory and practice to create peace and constructively engage with conflicts. Peace educational theorists and practitioners assume that attitudes and behavior can be positively influenced through education and peace can be learned. A second basic assumption is that through educational processes it is possible to promote participation, wellbeing, reduce *othering*, develop democracies and create forms for nonviolent interactions and conflicts. Peace education addresses issues, such as how to overcome violence and war, empower people to deal with conflicts constructively, and how to promote a culture of peace on all levels (individual, societal, collective). For this, it is important to raise awareness against violence, to perceive and transform violence in all its historically and socially changing forms, to counter it preventively, to break through the escalation dynamics of conflicts and to learn how to deal with conflicts constructively at all levels (Gugel, 2011, p. 150).

There are various approaches in peace education. There is critical peace education that focuses on the knowledge required to question dominant violent unequal structures like racism, patriarchy, coloniality or capitalism including self-reflective tools to question these violent structures and one's own privileges (Bernhard, 2017). There are approaches and methods that encourage skills for peaceful living like for example, Active Listening (Rogers, 1995), Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2015), Theatre for Living (Diamond, 2008), World

Peace Game (Hunter, 2014) and methods for conflict transformation like for example the Elicitive Conflict Transformation (Echavarría Alvarez & Koppensteiner, 2018). There are educational approaches towards planetary and ecological consciousness (O'Sullivan, 2002), that promote a change in perception or awareness towards more peaceful ways of living. Approaches that stress the importance of changing epistemologies and habits are rather marginal in Peace Education.

Wenders and Zournazi (2013) stress the need of a creative revolution to transform perceptual habits that reinforce separation and violence to change our habitual ways of seeing that alienate us from each other and a sense of belonging. For this we need different ways, stories and imaginations, different ways of seeing the world and understanding peace. The recognition of peaceful acts and moments that already surround us, lead to awareness.

Quintessentially, peace is the imagining of a different world, but a world that already surrounds us- it is the making and unmaking of ritual and tradition in our everyday lives in-as-much as it is holy and sacred. It involves becoming aware as the philosopher Martin Buber would put it. This becoming aware is a special kind of observation or of looking at the world that involves compassion, grace and care. The everyday and the holy involve a care toward the future, this care involves an ethics that is founded in the relation between the infinite and the everyday (Wenders & Zournazi, 2013, p. 4)

What kind of awareness or special kind of observation allows us to look at the world with compassion, grace and care? How can we be aware of the whole? Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers (2005) describe, for an awareness of the whole, we need a shift in the “seer” and “seen”, a subject-object duality where we understand ourselves as separate, detached observers of the world. Living systems are not static like machines and can never fully be understood by division or in their separated parts because they are constantly changing and evolving. When we start to perceive from a more holistic viewpoint, we see ourselves in relation to others, the world and its things. Kazuma Matoba (2021) notices that sometimes we feel connected and can relate to the world, other times we feel separated and outside of it. A crucial question Matoba asks: “Are we witnessing the world?” (p. 60). Do we feel interrelated with the world and other beings? How do we activate the deeper sources of knowing? I think that embodiment, the intelligence of the body and the heart are crucial to experience interconnectedness and thus to enhance forms of living that are more caring and peaceful. This also includes a social field perspective that combines the individual, social and relational reality creation (Scharmer, 2008). There are various approaches that highlight the interconnectedness and awareness of self in relation to the living world. In the next three paragraphs, I try to get a first look of some of these approaches building on Indigenous, phenomenological and feminist perspectives.

## Tracing Relational and Embodied Epistemologies

The invitation of the next three paragraphs is to bring different knowledge systems together, so that those involved in transformative work can learn together as we seek to bring about the shifts we seek. Goodchild (2021) (with Senge, Scharmer, Roronhiakewen, Longboat, Longboat, Hill & Deer), for example, combines Indigenous epistemologies with systems thinking theory “to attend to a deeper level of consciousness” and “a place between epistemologies” (Goodchild, 2021, p. 80). This dialogical way of sharing knowledge could be seen as a pluriversal approach as developed by Latin American thinkers like Arturo Escobar (2020). As Tyson Yunkaporta (2019) highlights Indigenous knowledge which is often connected to non-linear ways of knowing and a knowledge that comes from the lively world has been oppressed through colonial invasion. Still the knowledge endures because people carry parts of it and these parts reflect the pattern of the whole system. (Yunkaporta, 2019, pp. 18-19). There is of course not a unity of Indigenous or aboriginal ways of knowing. Still I will use the terms Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous intelligence to describe perspectives that highlight the connection of knowledge to place, land, body, heart, soul and spirit. “These are ancient paths of Dreaming etched into the landscape in song and story and mapped into our minds and bodies and relationships with everything around us: knowledge stored in every waterway and every rock” (Yunkaporta, 2019, p. 25). In this sense, knowledge is the recognition of patterns which can be found in a stone and also in our own bodies. It is a form of knowledge that attends to deeper levels of our consciousness, which Scharmer describes as the resonance of a social field and a space between the subjective and the objective (in Goodchild, 2021, pp. 88–89). We sometimes need to uncover and connect to the knowledge of our senses to access the experience of interconnectedness and the living authentic whole (Goodchild, 2021, p. 93).

Scharmer (2008) developed the Theory U process as a social change methodology to create a shift from ego-system to eco-system awareness that combines mind, heart and will. The social field, as a “collective body of resonance” (p. 438) is the space where we can connect to future possibilities, not only individual possibilities but also collective ones. We can tune into the social field through *presencing* like sensing, co-sensing and redirecting our attention towards something larger, and at the same time stress the importance of sharing and hearing individual stories based in lived experience, in order to enable new narratives to start to emerge, from which a different meta-narrative of the future becomes possible in the present. The social field is like “a shared medium that literally connects us with all other human beings on the planet” (Scharmer, 2008, p. 438).

What I see rising is a new form of presence and power that starts to grow spontaneously from and through small groups and networks of people. It’s a different quality of connection, a different way of being present with one another and with what wants to emerge. When groups begin to operate from a real future

possibility, they start to tap into a different social field from the one they normally experience. It manifests through a shift in quality of thinking, conversing, and collective action. When that shift happens, people can connect with a deeper source of creativity and knowing and move beyond the patterns of the past (Scharmer, 2008, p. 4).

The social field includes the visible – our actions, what we say and do and the invisible dimension - the place from which our actions emerge. The term *field structure of attention* describes the linkage between these visible and invisible social dimensions (Scharmer, 2008, p. 10). “The field structure of attention concerns the relationship between observer and observed. It concerns the quality of how we attend to the world” (Wilson, 2017, p. 11). When we listen empathically, for example, our perception shifts:

We move from staring at the objective world of things, figures, and facts into the story of a living being, a living system, and self. To do so, we have to activate and tune a special instrument: the open heart, that is, the empathic capacity to connect directly with another person or living system. Empathic listening is a skill that can be cultivated and developed, just like any other human relations skill. It’s a skill that requires us to activate a different source of intelligence: the intelligence of the heart (Scharmer, 2008, p. 12).

The notion *seeing with the heart* might sound sentimental or poetic, yet it rather leads to an embodied and affective form of sensibility or awareness that is different from a pure cognitive awareness or analytical knowing (Scharmer, 2008). Hillman (1981) describes the feeling quality of the heart as the ability to perceive the more subtle and metaphorical qualities. Also sense perception is connected to the feeling quality of the heart, like for example the Greek understanding of sense perception that is related to “the Greek goddess of the senses or the organ of Greek sensation, the heart, and the root in the word - that sniffing, grasping, breathing the world” suggests (Hillman, 2014, p. 40).

What is it to “take in” or breathe in the world? First, it means aspiring and inspiring the literal presentation of things by gasping. The transfiguration of matter occurs through wonder. This aesthetic reaction, which precedes intellectual wonder, inspires the given beyond itself, letting each thing reveal its particular aspiration within a cosmic arrangement (Hillman, 2014, p. 40).

The intelligence of the heart, with its sensing and feeling quality, is a form of knowing that connects easier to the whole and in general to other living beings.

Opening the heart means accessing and activating the deeper levels of our emotional perception. Listening with the heart literally means using the heart and our capacity for appreciation

and love as an organ of perception. At this point, we can actually see with the heart (Scharmer, 2008, p. 149).

Formenti and West (2018) who research transformative educational processes, argue that too “much research in education is sanitized and anaesthetized, as if researchers, participants, or readers were disembodied, decontextualised minds” (Formenti & West, 2018, p. 9). The heart and body in social science are the stories and voices of breathing and feeling people that are not distant from their work. Drawing on Bateson (1972), they describe that the intelligence of the heart is love, truth, beauty and grace, a perception that is more than just seeing. It is a meeting between the inside and the outside. “For the attainment of grace, the reasons of the heart must be integrated with the reasons of the reason” (Bateson, 1972, p. 108).

Knowing through the heart as affective and empathic knowing highlights our interconnectedness and the interpersonal, intrapersonal and transpersonal aspects of relationality (Koppensteiner, 2018, p. 69). Senge emphasizes the need to find ways to rediscover our capacity to connect and love that which is rooted in our emotional experience. Interconnectedness consists of moments where we experience beauty, where the distant observer the *you* becomes one with the phenomena. For this, we have to highlight the potential of lived experience (Goodchild, 2021, pp. 87-91). The lived experience is embodied, sensual and bound to time and space— it is the experience of being human. In the next paragraph I try to describe the intertwining of self and world through our condition of being embodied and the body’s capacity to interact with the living world. This idea of body and embodiment seems crucial to me for relational and embodied epistemologies.

## Embodiment—Intertwining of Self and World

Ricardo Dutra Gonçalves and Arawana Hayashi (2021) argue that the especially complex challenges of our time ask for embodied intelligence and a language for our embodied experiences (p. 35). There lies transformative power in “our very ordinary embodied presence (...) embodied knowing is core to our experience of the world” (p. 37). Drawing on Netzer and Rowe (2010) embodiment, imagination and intuition “open learners to multiple ways of knowing and develop in them, experientially, the capacity for reflective awareness of self in relationship to a larger scope of being in the world” (Netzer & Rowe, 2010, p. 125). From a phenomenological perspective, embodiment and sensibility are crucial dimensions of perception, awareness, knowing and being. The phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty was in search of an ontology and epistemology that connects experience and perception of the subject with/through its embeddedness in the world. Especially in one of his latest works, published posthumously in 1968, called *The Visible and the Invisible*, he started to draft his ideas based on an ontology of the sensible and the flesh (*la chair*). In this work he is trying to twist the dichotomy of an autonomous self and an autonomous world and moved from



a phenomenology of perception towards a phenomenology of being (Collins, 2013, p.48).

What is crucial in Merleau-Ponty's thoughts for relational epistemologies in peace education is the condition of embodiment as the intertwining of self and world. Our embeddedness/embodiedness and world presence is crucial to connecting to a larger whole. The world communicates with us through our bodies: "Merleau-Ponty is not referring exclusively to the materiality of the body (though in many ways the human body is emblematic of the flesh), but to the ontological fabric of the world" (Trigg, 2012 p. 144). Sensing is one possibility to create a "pre-objective and pre-subjective contact with the world, self and other" (Waldenfels, 2008, p. 131). Feeling and sensing our body can transform our perceived separation of self, world and other and create an experience of interconnectedness. Bodily sensations are never pure but they are our way to experience the world. What is perceived is always perceived as a certain form or figure against a background. The body is our expression of our existence in the world. Our involvement and existence with and in the world is always the precondition of our experiences. We sensually discover and respond to a world, to which we belong. (Moran, 2000, p. 422). Sociality does not start from isolated individuals but from inter-corporeality and inter-affectivity as Fuchs (2017) highlights. As embodied beings we can get an intuitive empathic understanding for each other through bodily resonance. Emotions are shared through inter-corporeality, they are not only mental (Fuchs, 2017, p. 196).

Our body, flesh and skin opens us up toward the world and makes us vulnerable and sensible. "[...] the lived body is unendingly exposed to foreign influences, and because of this remains vulnerable. Sensitivity and vulnerability are inseparable" (Waldenfels, 2008, p. 133). This implies a being that is in touch with the world, open, vulnerable and to some extent alienated. Like a state of empty presence that opens up for the mysteries of the world. It asks for an engagement with unpredictability and being able to let go of controlling every moment through pre-given concepts and expectations (Waldenfels, 2008). In this state, we are in resonance with the collective and in touch with ourselves. The ego awareness that wants to hold on to pre-given concepts, old stories and patterns, opens up for something larger. This can also be a transpersonal dimension (Walch, 2011). Indigenous educational approaches recognize a "knowing Center in all human beings that reflects the knowing Center of the Earth and other living things" (Cajete, 2010, p. 1130).

At birth, humans come new yet recycled through the elegant cycles of metamorphosis, transformation, and regeneration that form the basis for all life on Earth. Indigenous peoples view the body as an expression of the sensual manifestation of mind and spirit. Death and the body's ultimate decomposition into the primal elements of earth, wind, fire, air, and water mark the transformation of one's relatives and ancestors into living landscape, its plants, animals, waters, soils, clouds, and air (Cajete, 2000, p. 21).

The consciousness and experience that we are connected to a larger whole can heal the connection of mind, body and spirit. Rituals, dances, music, stories and other arts-based and embodied approaches can encourage these healing processes (Cajete, 2010, p. 1130).

David Abram (1996) who combines phenomenology and Indigenous knowledge, to explore the body's capacity to interact with the living world, highlights that we have to unlearn some of our habitual ways of seeing and hearing and realize the reciprocity of our senses and the sensuous earth. From a deep ecological understanding, our environmental disconnection is related to our emotional disconnection (Macy & Brown, 2014). Heike Pourian (2021) who is part of the *sensing the change* project, describes that we have to remember how to sense and feel again to recognize our feelings (Pourian, 2021, pp. 156-158). For Gregory Cajete (2010) "deep healing occurs in which the self "mutualizes" with body, mind, and spirit" (Cajete, 2010, p. 1130). They all call for an integral ecology, a call to all of us as we learn what mutual co-existence asks of each and all of us. Feminist writers like bell hooks or Audre Lorde describe this as a call to love and freedom living together. Care could be a central aspect to follow this call. Care might be the concrete expression of relational and embodied epistemologies.

## Relational and Embodied Pedagogies of Care

Feminist writers like Audre Lorde or bell hooks see the embodied, affective and sensual aspects crucial for a systemic change towards justice and politics beyond the patriarchy. Lorde (1984) challenged in her essay "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," patriarchal and Western understandings of the erotic and especially the sensuality of women. She blurs the boundaries of the political, the sensual, the erotic and creativity. She writes, "erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling" (Lorde, 1993, p. 53). The erotic is the power connected to our expression, voice and feelings. When she writes about the erotic, she means a deeply sensual, affective and embodied form of intuition and power. "For the erotic is not a question only of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing" (Lorde, 1993, p. 54). bell hooks builds on the insights of Audre Lorde and creates a pedagogy of sensitivity, care, love and freedom.

For bell hooks the presence and voice of everyone in the classroom is crucial and must be acknowledged. She encourages teachers and students to show up as their full and vulnerable selves and share their stories in the classroom. She describes the classroom as an open learning community that is not built on individual competition but collective care for each other. For her, a love ethic and the emotional engagement in the classroom is central to empowerment (hooks, 2003). She defines love as a powerful and affective force. "To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients- care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication" (hooks, 2001,

p. 5). hooks was constantly criticised for being a too passionate and emotional teacher. The so-called objectivity was seen as an unbiased standpoint at the university, but it was rather a safe place to not really engage with the students. Teachers can be facilitators of emancipation if they show up as embodied beings. This also includes caring for the emotional well-being of the students. With care for students, it is also possible to engage with fears and conflicts.

Bozalek, Zembylas and Tronto (2013) formulate a political ethics of care as a critique of the individual rational human actor as the center of morality and create relational ways of knowing the world. A political ethic of care starts from the understanding that all beings need care. “Ontologically, the ethic of care sees humans as vulnerable and relational beings, who have needs to give and receive care throughout their lives and whose lives are entangled with the more-than human” (Bozalek et al., 2013, p. 3). The entanglement with the more-than human is an important aspect to highlight an ethical approach that considers all living and sentient beings. “Caring values include democratic values such as responsiveness, responsibility, respect for alterity and diversity, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 120). For educators the metaphor *web of relationships* can help to connect and teach from a more interconnected and embedded viewpoint (Selby, 2002, p. 83). “Inspired by the metaphor of the web, they have called for intuition (the ability to be immediately sensitive to the whole), synthesis, the sharing of subjectivities, and relational sensibility to be accepted as equally valid ways of knowing” (Selby, 2002, p. 88). This implies a “reclaiming of emotion, subjectivity, bodily sensibility, intuition, empathy, caring and compassion, love, and relational and spiritual sensibility as means of knowing” (Selby, 2002, p. 88).

Hart (2014) engages with two ways of knowing, one is categorical which means to know the world through abstraction and separating. “In a sense everything is reduced to parts, the lowest units that are differentiated, named, catalogued” (p. 6). The second form of knowing is contact. “Its style is direct, relational, embodied, and recognizes wholes and connections. Awareness through contact enables a broader view, one connected with the world and the body, scanning for changes in the environment” (p. 6). This form of knowing listens for metaphors and the implicit. “Knowledge through contact is evolving, implicit, and indeterminate since it always exists in relationship to something else and is not ever fully graspable” (p. 6). He calls for an integrative mind that includes contemplation, empathy, beauty, embodiment and imagination (Hart, 2014).

Lange (2018) builds on Hart’s integrative mind and Barad’s ethics of entanglement to enrich transformative education or an understanding of transformation through ontologies of relationality and connection. Knowing in Barad’s (2007) understanding does not come from distance “but rather from a direct material engagement with the world” (p. 49). Barad calls the capacity for action performativity, which means that knowledge is created and “emerges from intra-acting with other humans and other life forms embedded in the same reality, not as discrete entities interrelating. How we engage with other species

or a class of human learners will automatically shape the doings of these beings” (Lange, 2018, p. 293). We are entangled in the unfolding of life through our embodiment. This means as educators we have to encourage approaches of learning in which embodiment and care gain in significance (Taylor, 2017, p. 428). We can soften the boundaries “that have been put into place with regard to theory and practice, mind and body, brain and body, self and other, reason and emotion, human and nature, human and animal, male and female” (Taylor, 2017, p. 427). Embodied ways of knowing acknowledge our connection to place and to the larger world.

Drawing on Gregory Cajete's (2000) work on Indigenous education, the relation to place, land, nature, earth, and planet is crucial. Not only the observation of nature but also the participation as a sensual being with intimate expressions of care for the land is central. “As we experience the world, so we are also experienced by the world” (Cajete, 2000, p. 20). Everything in nature and the world as large has something to teach us and from birth to death, we are in a constant relationship with nature and the world. Indigenous education is the restoring of community knowledge to a good life (Huaman, 2011, p. 248). Indigenous intelligence as Anishinaabe scholar Dumont (2002) writes, is the use of knowledge in a good and meaningful way. This means that the intelligence of the mind needs the intelligence of the heart, “the connectedness and relationship with everything else” (Dumont, 2002, p. 20). This form of knowledge leads towards a responsibility to the present and seven generations into the past as well as into the future (Dumont, 2002, pp. 20-21).

## Concluding Thoughts

In this contribution, I have tried to highlight the potential for relational and embodied epistemologies in peace education. Peace education builds on the premises that peace can be learned and that we can create peaceful societies. Perspectives on relationality or embodiment are marginal in peace education and therefore it is crucial to build on Indigenous, phenomenological and feminist perspectives. Peace is relational and asks for an awareness of relationality that needs our mind, our bodies and our hearts. If we learn to perceive, feel and sense ourselves not only as part of the world but as interwoven, entangled and embedded in/with this world, our relationship to the living can change towards more caring modes of being. I think approaches that highlight our embodied entanglement and involvement with and in the world, teach us new ways of interacting. These intersecting points are grounded in our bodies, in the context and the land. Only by realizing the connective nature of all beings, we can start to embrace and learn *imperfect* peace.

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