# Seeking Peace in Higher Education[1]

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## Introduction

This paper provides an opportunity to discuss two questions. (1) What does peace education mean at the level of higher education? (2) How should higher education be reformed in order to promote peace education? Peace is one of the most important universal issues, and the worldwide consensus is that peace is morally preferable. However, as history (and indeed, current affairs) demonstrates, peace is not naturally realized or maintained. Contemporary peace education theory has been reviewing the diversity of peace education approaches from various perspectives including cultural, disciplinary, and political positions (Harris, 2004) to find an "effective peace education" which successfully develops the skills for peace. (Danesh, 2006) People across generations and social strata need to be educated about peace in order to develop a continuous focus on its attainment. This paper therefore explores alternative discussions of "effective peace education" by focusing on adults and the role of higher education in peace education. Here, a few notes are necessary to clarify the theoretical framework. This paper does not propose that peace education in higher education should develop a K-12 peace education pedagogy study for prospective teachers, neither does it argue for

the promotion of peace studies as a core curriculum of peace education at the level of higher education. Instead of discussing peace education as being associated with accountability, university curriculum, vocational skills, or knowledge, this paper attempts to discuss the matter at the level of higher education rather as a hidden curriculum, which provides students with a life-long attitude of thinking about issues related to peace as responsible adults and citizens.

The methodological approach of this paper is a conceptual analysis of democracy as a principle. It proposes that the foundation of peace education at the level of higher education is based on two issues: the idea of critical reflection and the idea of creative learning. In order to discuss the idea of critical reflection in peace education for higher education, Stanley Cavell's discussion on language education is applied. For the argument of the notion of creative learning, Walter Feinberg's argument on moral education is applied. These two educational approaches are discussed and developed as two major factors of "effective peace education" in higher education. At the end of the paper, the author proposes some ways to transform the role of higher education for the realization of "effective peace education" in higher education.

**Classifying Peace Education: One for Adults and One for Children**

Cavell states that one of the foundational factors for maintaining democracy is deliberating over one's own ideas. In this notion we find a crucial pivot for democratic society: whether or not each individual has their own opinion in the first place. Cavell strictly distinguishes between speaking one's own opinion and misunderstanding as if

speaking one's own opinion. For speaking one's own ideas, he believes that education is necessary. In support of individual thinking, Cavell classifies language education generationally, explaining that one kind is for children, and another is for adults. Cavell provides a transformational understanding of language by incorporating a sense of generation in his philosophical examinations of *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. In particular, Cavell interprets the matter of generation in language through Thoreau's distinction of "the mother tongue" which is "…commonly transitory, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the brutes, of our mothers" (Thoreau, 2009, pp. 53) and "the father tongue" which is "…the maturity and experience of that." (Thoreau, 2009, pp. 53) Naoko Saito, another ordinary language philosopher, does not interpret the symbolical usages of the expressions "the mother tongue" and "the father tongue" as intended to reinstate the power of masculinity or patriarchy. (Saito, 2005b, pp. 16) Rather, according to Saito, the demarcations of mother tongue and father tongue have a different function, which is to emphasize the generational. Precisely, the mother tongue could be seen as a language education for children and the father tongue as a language education for adults. The mother tongue education would be for children because it is geared towards the acquisition of the meanings of words, syntax, and expression. In contrast, Cavell and Saito emphasize certain aspects of the father tongue education as explained by Thoreau in *Walden.* Thoreau states that "the father tongue" is "…a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak." (Thoreau, 2009, pp. 53) According to Cavell and Saito (Saito, 2007a), Thoreau means that "the father tongue" is to have a critical reflection on the meaning of words and expressions that are nurtured under "the mother tongue." Thus, the role of "the father

3

tongue" is to examine whether the words are used in a way that is faithful to their meanings. This is why ordinary language philosophers claim the necessity of continuous language learning even after becoming adults, and this is how the meaning of language education shifts by generation. In the theoretical framework of Cavell and Saito, language education for peace also can be divided into mother tongue and father tongue education. Language education for peace requires not only teaching the moral value of peace, but also critically reflecting on the signification of the word and to evaluate whether or not the meaning of peace is at risk of being damaged. (Saito, 2005b, pp. 16) Just as children should be encouraged to acquire the moral value of peace under the mother tongue, so should adults require peace education under the father tongue. Thus, for language philosophers, a peace education for adults which continuously reforms relationships between individuals and the meanings of words is necessary to establish a peaceful society. (Saito, 2005b, pp. 17)

According to the language philosophers, some educational moments for adults come in the form of a child's unconventional questions about the reality of life. For instance, while teaching children the moral value of peace, adults would have to hear questions from children such as "What does it mean to have a war for peace?" or "Why do people say 'for peace' when they are at war?" At the moment, Saito says, adults feel confused or even threatened by these questions, as if the child's impulse points out the limitation of the rationality which adults have more abundantly than children. (Saito, 2007b, pp. 172) An adult cannot answer the questions as a teacher of the mother tongue. Rather, they would have to respond to the question as a student of the father tongue,

because it calls for a re-examination of the meaning and the resonance of the word "peace".

Maria Montessori, a peace educator, interestingly romanticizes the child as the father as well as the teacher. She states that "the child should be regarded as the father of the man, the father capable of creating a better humanity." (Montessori, 1972, pp. 87) Her statement could be seen as an indication that children are the teachers of adults in learning the father tongue. Montessori also states that "the aim becomes not so much to fight against disease as to attain health, thus shielding oneself against disease in general." (Montessori, 1972, pp. 12) Montessori would emphasize the importance of peace education for adults because the weakness of peace education has allowed the word to be distorted in historical use, often deployed in justification of war and conflict. Montessori is concerned that "…the characteristics and goals of the independent life of childhood are not recognized and that the adult takes those characteristics that are different from his own to be mistakes on the part of the child and hastens to correct them." (Montessori, 1972, pp. 17) This idea seems to share some ordinary language philosophers' claims, because both Saito and Cavell are also aware of the potential conflicts between the generations. Cavell and Saito point out that adults' stifling attitudes towards children's voices are a reflection of the social authority of exclusion. For them, disagreement around the meaning of the word peace should not be resolved through the use of power. In order to overcome the conflict, they propose developing a sense of mutual attunement (Cavell, 1979, pp. 32) between adults and children, which allows for the exploration of a democratic educational relationship. In order to understand the way children can become teachers for adults, Saito and Cavell use Ralph

Waldo Emerson's perception of children who ask adults tough questions as "formidable" (Emerson, 1993, pp.21). They explain that, for adults, children are "lunatics" (Cavell, 1990, pp. 76) in these moments, because they disturb the established relationship between language and adulthood, as well as the learning model of the mother tongue. (Saito, 2005a, pp. 90-93) However, again, what Cavell, Emerson, and Saito point out is that addressing children's "abnormal" (Saito, 2005a, pp. 91) questions is an educational moment for adults. Montessori refers to Emerson's same passages in her peace education lecture. (Montessori, 1972, pp. 119) However, for Montessori, peace education does not see the child as a "lunatic" but, rather as "the Messiah." Nor does it identify children's questions as "formidable", but rather as "gifts." (Montessori, 1972, pp. 14-15) For her, this is exactly the way in which "…the world of adults must change." (Montessori, 1972, pp. 87) In other words, even though the ordinary language philosophers criticize the authoritative relationship between adults and children, the solution suggested by them is still weak in the context of peace education because it dvides the contents of peace educations between adults and children, but it does nothing fundamentally to transform the way in which children are perceived.

To summarize, Cavell's idea of language education is interpreted in the context of peace education as follows. Since peace education in higher education is for adults, its educational purpose should be to teach peace at the level of "father's tongue." The role of peace education in higher education is thus to examine the consistency between the usage of the word peace and its actual meaning. This is an important educational issue because the word of peace has been distorted in historical use, often deployed in justification of war and conflict. On the other hand, peace education from the

6

perspective of the "father's tongue" does not meet effective peace education alone because it separates each individual through its emphasis on the importance of acquiring one's own ideas about the world. Peace is not fundamentally supposed to separate people, but to connect people peacefully as a result. In order to supply "father's tongue" type of peace education, the next question to explore becomes: what moral values support mutual coordination? In response to this question, Walter Feinberg's idea of democratic moral education is offered as a way to nurture a sense of connection across generations.

**Coordinating Peace Education Across Generations**

"Father's tongue" type of educational approaches should be carefully balanced with the association of the notion of creative learning because it has a risk to justify egoism in school ideology. Feinberg agrees with Cavell on the point that democracy is an important social structure to maintain. However, compared to the ordinary language philosophers who focus on each individual in society, Feinberg's interest is in the relationship between individuals in society. Under this assumption, Feinberg claims that a certain moral development— to educate people into the habit of thinking about others— is a lifelong form of education that sustains democratic communities. It should be taught and learned as an important moral value from a very early age, but at the same time, this attitude has to be continually cultivated throughout adult learning, as an unending educational goal. However, ironically, even though contemporary society allows us to be more interactive with others than ever before, the moral sense to think

about others remains underdeveloped. Feinberg suggests that this is because contemporary society so often disregards the importance of continuous moral education. According to his analysis, the difficulty in developing educational approaches for thinking about others is caused by a distorted school ideology consisting of two factors. First, the meaning of education is distorted by an overemphasis on the ideology of the school which suggests that schooling is the only system that can deliver education, when in fact school is just one of many possible educational activities. This confusion around the idea of schooling and of education makes it problematic to discuss the question of a lifelong moral education, not least because of the misleading idea that education has an end point.

The ideology of schooling creates the delusion that when people finish school, their education is complete. Second, the distorted school ideology creates what Feinberg sees as a social egoism, which thereby separates people. Feinberg's concern is that school ideology comes with a sense of "my child first" […] "my child only." (Feinberg, 2016, pp.1) It is understandable that parents have care for their own children above any others. It is also reasonable to claim that parents want to give their children the best possible school education. However, this should not be a justification for egoism. However, school ideology does not have a way to classify reasonable claim or self-centred claim. Rather, it often mixes up reasonable care and egoism associated with the issues on schooling. There are two types of egoism: political egoism and economic egoism. Political egoism comes with the personal desires associated with issues of race, religion, ethnicity, class, etc in schools. Economic egoism comes with the personal desires of vocational advantage as a reward of attending certain schools. Feinberg is

concerned that the marketization of school ideology puts strain on the connection between individuals as a result of promoting the idea that "…Education becomes less general and more vocational. " (Feinberg, 2016, pp.83) It means that when people overly count on how much money they can make after their school education, there is no reason for people to learn and develop a sense of morality whilst in school. Feinberg states, "… Children will learn good skills, but will fail to understand how to engage one another in a reflective discussion about the ends to which they will put those skills." (Feinberg, 1993, pp.166) In addition to the risk that students are learning good skills without learning ways to apply them to improve society, schooling is understood as if it is just a preparatory place for market economy. If K-12 school ideology is distorted in this way, then higher education is automatically marketed also, because schooling is basically systemized from stage to stage. It means that learning to think of others as an important part of moral education is not only a difficult approach within the K-12 system, but also difficult to practice in higher education because by the time they come to higher education, students misunderstand others either as political enemies or economic competitors . If students come to higher education just for private interests, there is no way to teach them a larger public good for peace society. (Feinberg, 2016, pp.89)

  To describe the complexity of the argument on moral education and for thinking about others, Feinberg compares the United States to Japan, looking at each country's social foundation and its association with market economy. He firstly questions why Japanese products are more reliable than American products. Feinberg says that the differences in reliability of the same kinds of products produced by the two

countries are caused by different conceptions of 'self' and 'other' in the social foundation of each country. (Feinberg, 1993) Feinberg criticizes that the American social foundation is overly individualistic. Thus, his response to the question above is that it is because a moral education that promotes thinking about others is consistent in Japan, from a very early age through to the end of life. Feinberg states that "American morality is repairable and the Japanese have come to show us how to make the needed repairs." (Feinberg, 1993, pp. 45) On the other hand, Feinberg does not praise moral education in Japan indiscriminately. His evaluation of the Japanese social foundation is that it is overly community-driven. He states that "… democracy must separate respect and obedience, reason and commitment, if the conversation about what we are to become is to continue in an age where not all symbols are shared, not all meanings are common, and not all ends are fully communal." (Feinberg, 1993, pp. 193) Thinking about and considering others is a very important moral skill in society, but it has to come with the strict distinction of whether it is characterized by obedience to others or respect for others.

For Feinberg, the point at issue of this comparative analysis is not which of the two countries is morally superior, but that there are two moral skills that people need to develop in order to be able to think of others. First, they must learn to listen to other people's ideas (although, crucially, not necessarily to submit to them). The second skill relates to how to receive other people's opinions. Feinberg states that "It requires only a sense that the way others see it may modify its own self-understanding – sometimes in productive ways and sometimes not." (Feinberg, 2016, pp. 35) Again, thinking about others is a moral education, but it does not mean that one loses one's own ideas. Rather,

it should be taken as an educational moment to cultivate oneself through interaction with others. In that sense, it should be identified as an endless educational activity, and its skills should be refined by continuous practice.

To summarize, in order to supply the "father's tongue" education, Feinberg's idea of moral education is effective and it has two aspects. The first is to undergo a continuous practice of developing an attitude of thinking about others. The second aspect is to refine the educational sense of receiving and evaluating information gathered by listening to other people's opinions. However, Feinberg is concerned that school ideology is more like promoting the separation of people with the exaggeration of individualism.

**Conformity and Distance**

As discussed above, "effective peace education" in higher education has two aspects. The first is the acquisition of the "father's tongue." The second is the development of an attitude of listening to other people's opinions properly. "Effective peace education" in higher education, thus, is at a point where these two educational factors are well balanced. If people focus overly on their own ideas, it leads to isolation. Thus, university-level peace education should not only teach the engagement of the "father's tongue". A sort of gravity is required to keep each of educational approach into society. On the other hand, if we overly emphasize the importance of thinking about others, there is a risk of dictatorship, because people would constantly watch each other and guess at each other's motives rather than claiming their own opinions.

What kind of practices, then, does higher education need to develop for effective peace education? The author believes that there are three major points. First, higher education should be sensitive in providing spaces where people can peacefully deliberate their own ideas and rationally listen to other people's understandings. This should be identified as the duty of higher education. To that end, higher education would need some distance from the actual ongoing political dynamics and economic powers. Second, as important as it is to provide an environment in which people in higher education can think freely, so should this environment have a moral code. It may sound inconsistent, but is not. Even though higher education is guaranteed academic freedom, it does not mean showing equal respect to any voice of fundamentalism, even if it is claimed as the "father's voice." The moral code comes from the principle of peace which believes that exploration of "father's tongue" should be rationally examined to ensure that it does not intend to harm other people. Third, the environment of higher education should protect against political and economic noise, but it also needs to strength people to the noises. It is also necessary to teach a sense of conformity and tolerance along with the strength to struggle. All in all, in order to practice "effective peace education" in higher education, the role of moral and ethical education needs to be emphasized, rather than the role of the market and politics. This might sound unrealistic, but it is the way of peace education.

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