

Freirean Dialogue for Peace Education: A Promising Pedagogy for Grassroots Peace in the Middle East

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Abstract: The relatively few studies focused on the inter-ethnic/inter-religious encounter/dialogue initiatives between Israel and Palestine emphasize the failure of these efforts in promoting tolerance and mutual respect. However, with all the tools of the 21st century to change the recurrent history, we have every reason to be hopeful for a peaceful future. This paper presents an overview of Arab-Jewish dialogue projects in order to reveal future directions towards achieving critical dialogue as a foundation for peace education from the grassroots. For this purpose, the dialogue encounters in the Israel and Palestine are portrayed as they are operated by non-governmental organizations, international third-party interventions, and schools. Next, drawing from a number of dialogue scholars, the notion of Freirean dialogue is presented. Finally, Freirean dialogue is proposed as an effective pedagogy in order to eliminate the barriers undermining dialogue between the two groups for a grassroots peace movement.

Keywords: Dialogue, Dialogic Pedagogy, Encounter, Freire, Grassroots Peace Education, International Third-Party Interventions, Israel and Palestine, Transformative Education.

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BARIŞ EĞİTİMİ İÇİN FREİRE DİYALOĞU: ORTA DOĞU'DA KÖKLÜ BARIŞI İÇİN UMUT VEREN BİR PEDAGOJİ

Özet: İsrail ile Filistin arasındaki etnik/dinler arası karşılaşma/diyalog girişimlerine odaklanan nispeten az sayıda çalışma, bu çabaların hoşgörü ve karşılıklı saygıyı teşvik etmedeki başarısızlığını vurgulamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, 21. yüzyılın tarihi değiştirecek tüm araçlarıyla, barışçıl bir gelecek için umutlu olmak için her türlü nedenimiz bulunmaktadır. Bu makale, halkın arasından yeşerecek ve sürdürülebilir barış eğitimi için bir temel olarak eleştirel diyalogu etkin şekillerde uygulamaya yönelik imkanları ortaya çıkarmak için Arap-Yahudi diyalog projelerine genel bir bakış sunuyor. Bu amaçla İsrail ve Filistin'deki diyalog karşılaşmaları, sivil toplum örgütleri, uluslararası üçüncü taraf müdahaleleri ve okullar tarafından işletildiği şekliyle tartışılmaktadır. Daha sonra, önde gelen diyalog akademisyenlerinin uluslararası alanyazında kabul gören yaklaşımlarından hareketle, Freire diyalogu kavramı sunulmaktadır. Son olarak, Freire diyalogu, halkın arasında filizlenecek bir barış hareketi için iki grup arasındaki diyalogu zayıflatan engelleri ortadan kaldırmak doğrultusunda etkili bir pedagoji olarak önerilmektedir.

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Anahtar sözcükler: Diyalog, Diyalog Pedagoji, Karşılaşma, Kökleşmiş Barış Eğitimi, Uluslararası Üçüncü Taraf Müdahaleleri, İsrail ve Filistin, Dönüştürücü Eğitim.

INTRODUCTION

Dialogue has been employed in various encounter programs to resolve the incessant Israeli-Palestinian conflict as it is assumed to provide a transformative setting to resolve conflicts by granting equal voices for each party (Hantzopoulos, 2011). However, these dialogue encounters must be troubled in order to analyse what dynamics are at play during these projects. There is evidence that a deficient understanding of dialogue and ill-conceived encounters between Palestinians and Israelis have resulted in more distrust, demonization, alienation, and segregation from each other than before (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Glenna, 2012; Hantzopoulos, 2011).

The main argument of this paper is to emphasize the potential of Freirean dialogue in eliminating asymmetrical power relations and establishing a sound basis for future encounters, especially on digital platforms, between the individuals of the two nations. The title of this paper sets an ambitious task because it is not a simple mission to eliminate the destructive effects of the centuries old Israel-Palestinian conflict. However, if empowered with the capacity of critical dialogue, Israeli and Palestinian children and youth, as the adults of tomorrow, can and will break the vicious circle of violence between the two nations. Therefore, peace education scholars would do well to focus on the children and youths in both nations to equip them with the essential insights and skills of Freirean dialogue infused in the school curricula and cultures. As the famous Sufi Rumi (1207-1273) puts it, “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” Designed and employed effectively, Freirean dialogue has the potential to not only eliminate all the barriers that we have built in front of love of another human being, despite all differences, but also construct cultures of love and peace. The real promise of such a perspective of dialogue is sustainable love and peace not despite but thanks to all the differences individuals might have.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part portrays encounter/dialogue initiatives between Israelis and Palestinians as they are operated by non-governmental organizations, international third-parties, and formal schooling. This section points to the challenges, complexities, and contradictions related to Arab-Jewish encounter/dialogue projects, and reveals future directions towards achieving critical dialogue as a foundation for these encounters. The second part draws from a number of dialogue scholars in order to describe the notion of dialogue, and proposes Freirean dialogue as an effective pedagogy to eliminate the barriers in front of critical dialogue between the two nations. The final part emphasizes the significance of employing Freirean dialogue as a pedagogy in the mainstream educational institutions.

Encounters in the Middle East

In this study, peace education refers to educational planning, pedagogy, practice, and policy towards transforming educational structure, content, and pedagogy to address various forms of violence (Bajaj, 2008; Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1988). Besides the efforts of numerous prominent scholars and practitioners, the supportive role of international organizations (e.g., United Nations) is notable in the process of international recognition of peace education. A global intergovernmental organization, established in 1945, with the fundamental goal of maintaining international peace and encouraging international cooperation, United Nations (UN) have had a number of commitments to peace education through several declarations, instruments, and programs aimed at establishing a culture of peace in the world (Trifonas & Wright, 2011). Towards this goal, the agencies within the UN (e.g., United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF)) have been employing dialogue in order to establish a culture of peace, especially in conflict situations, countries in transition, and post-conflict situations. The conflict in the Middle East, namely Israel-Palestinian conflict, has been targeted in several peace building initiatives implemented by international organizations.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes an example case where peace and justice are entangled. Each party consider themselves as victimized completely by the other party (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2011; Scham et al., 2005). In order to develop a comprehensive approach to the resolution of the long-standing conflict, it is essential to know the history of this conflict. However, due to its elasticity, the history of the conflict tends to differ intensely according to the person telling it and where they begin to tell it. Thus, keeping an unbiased stance is challenging while presenting a historic timeline of events.

Several studies exploring the failure of the Oslo process and the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian conflict have characterized it as "intractable, uncontrollable, and insoluble" (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2011, p. 178). Believing that it is difficult, if not impossible, to resolve such a deep-rooted conflict by pushing top-down political diplomacy, dialogue is acknowledged by many scholars as the only method to resolve this never-ending conflict between Israel and Palestine (e.g., Scham et al., 2005; Halabi, 2004). Hence, in order to provide a basis for solid interaction between the two societies at grass-root level, a number of encounter efforts have been put into action. These encounters can be analysed in three groups in terms of the agencies implementing them: non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and schools. A brief discussion of each group is presented below.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In most countries, especially in those where intergroup tension is experienced, peace education activities are carried out either by national or international peace organizations. Regarding the former, horrified by the violence in their community, local people grapple with

the challenge in order to help their fellow citizens gain awareness of the violent policies of militaristic governments. Peace Now is an example of these local organizations. This organization holds rallies in order to garner citizen support for a less-violent resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict (Harris, 2008). Similar to Peace Now, there are grassroots groups or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with their various philosophies and methodologies to empower the citizens with appropriate skills and insights to seek non-violent resolutions to the never-ending conflict with Palestinians. As it is not within the scope of this paper to present an exhaustive overview of all of these organizations, one will be briefly presented in order to give the general idea regarding the way they operate.

The Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva (JACP) is one, probably the oldest, of these local organizations. Established in 1963 in the heart of the Wadi 'Ara region that is characterized by a mosaic of an ethnically mixed population, the JACP develops projects of instruction, education, research, and community involvement with various target groups. Given that it aims to foster closer and non-violent relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel, the Center

...functions within the spirit of humanism, in the belief that all human beings are entitled to be regarded of equal worth and treated with equal dignity. It strives to lead the way to attaining a greater degree of democracy and equality of civil rights between the Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel; to create social and cultural pluralism in the country; to achieve reconciliation and peace among the nations in the region. (Ozacky-Lazar, 2008, p. 188)

Towards this purpose, JACP serves over 25,000 people each year through its various departments that provide education, language instruction, research, counselling, and community work, depending on their particular area of specialization. Among the Center's departments, the Department for Regional Cooperation is remarkable due to its hard work to promote and support the Palestinians' quest for democracy, programming for peace education, and ongoing dialogue between the communities (Ozacky-Lazar, 2008).

International Intervention Programs

There are a number of peace initiatives funded and directed by international organizations, especially by United Nations. As the literature about these numerous initiatives is vast, it is not within the scope of this paper to present an exhaustive overview of these projects. Therefore, the approaches guiding the implementation of these projects are discussed briefly as their approaches tell us a lot about the underlying reasons of the limited outcomes.

Inspired by John Burton's efficacious series of experimental controlled communication workshops that were designed to facilitate dialogue between representatives of the Indonesian

and Malaysian governments, a wave of scholarly interventions were set up to bring together Israelis and Palestinians. Among these workshops, Kelman's (1966) workshop was prominent in that it explicitly prioritized the underlying psychological aspects of conflicts between the opposing groups before the political ones. In this transformative cross-conflict encounter, the participants from both groups were required to listen empathetically to each other's needs and fears, and then engage in concrete disputes in order to enhance mutual understanding and build trust so that they could seek mutually acceptable resolution to the previously irreconcilable concerns (Fisher, 1997). These workshops that Kelman held over thirty times to address Israeli-Palestinian conflicts later evolved into a theory of conflict resolution practice, namely Interactive conflict resolution (ICR), with contributions of several scholars (e.g., Harold Saunders, Christopher Mitchell, and Ronald J. Fisher). ICR, as Fisher (1997) asserts, highlights the necessity for negotiation between Israelis and Palestinians with the help of a competent mediator. "The ultimate goals are deep understanding, mutual recognition and respect, and jointly acceptable and sustainable solutions-in sum, an improved relationship between the parties"(Fisher, 1997, p. 241).

In line with ICP's ultimate goal of "mutual acceptance of the other's identity and humanity" (Kelman, 2008, p. 17), Seeds of Peace (SOP) approach was developed by John Wallach (Lazarus, 2011). This approach aims to humanize the conflict by bringing Arab and Israeli teenagers together to experience "a cathartic process" or "conflict therapy (Wallach, 2000, p. 115). In this process, SOP is aimed to foster critical dialogue between the participants that will stimulate authentic and lasting changes in their lives. That way, each party will engage in "the other side" of the long-lasting conflict (Lazarus, 2011, p. 14).

Contact Hypothesis was another theory, established by Allport (1954) aiming at resolution of intergroup conflict by means of interpersonal encounters. Contact Theory assumed that the absence of an effective encounter between conflicting parties results in prejudice. Thus, initiation of such a contact was the remedy. Allport's ideas were remarkable in that he opposed the idea that putting individuals from conflicting parties in the same room could result in a permanent resolution. According to Allport (1954), several conditions were required for effective encounters. These conditions included "equal status contact between majority and minority group members in pursuit of common goals," official supports for the participants, and well-designed activities to promote common benefits (Allport, 1954, p. 281).

Based on the critique of Contact Theory's proposal of initiation of contact between individual members of conflicting parties, Social Identity Theory (SIT) proposed that shared identities are the essential in intergroup encounters. Developed by Henri Tajfel and colleagues (1979), SIT suggested

that intergroup dialogue is essentially dialogue between the identities individuals have rather than individuals themselves. The SIT scholars claimed that intergroup encounters result in an ingroup/outgroup dynamic that triggers overstated perceptions of outgroup differences and ingroup similarities, prioritizing ingroup partners, and competition with outgroup members (Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Another type of international intervention for the tension between Israeli-Palestinian is summer co-existence programs implemented outside the Middle East (Lazarus, 2011). Starting from 1993, thousands of Israeli and Arab youths have took part in those programs organized with the rationale that “an experience of dialogue in an idyllic American setting will inspire youth to return to the Middle East as aspiring peacemakers” (Lazarus, 2011, p. iv). The SOP is one of these projects involving camp programs. At least twelve of these encounter programs were implemented in North America, beside at least three European encounter programs.

These programs differ in numerous aspects. Some take place in idyllic, isolated settings reminiscent of SOP’s lakeside retreat; others take place in urban centers, housing participants in college dormitories or arranging homestays with local host families. Some have special programmatic emphases: Artsbridge and Creativity for Peace emphasize visual arts; Peace It Together engages participants in filmmaking; New Story Leadership focuses on narrative arts, including speechmaking and storytelling. Some are based in religious organizations (Christian or Jewish); others are explicitly interfaith or officially non-denominational. (Lazarus, 2011, p. 24)

Despite those differences, all these programs share particular similarities: all of them were founded and directed by the U.S. citizens or Canadians, and all aimed to facilitate dialogue through mixed model contact approach integrating creative, cultural and social activities. As Lazarus (2011) strikingly states, the listed goals or values of all these programs, without exception included “empowerment,” “leadership,” and conflict resolution, “peace,” “coexistence,” “dialogue,” “empathy,” “understanding,” “transformation” (p. 24).

Carrying out the first comprehensive, longitudinal evaluation of that theory, Lazarus (2011) examined the intergroup contact activities of 824 Israeli and Palestinian graduates of the SOP employed in 1993-2003, and further scrutinized this study with qualitative methodologies focused on over 100 adult graduates (ages 21-30). Lazarus’ (2011, p. iv) findings were thought-provoking findings:

... more than half of alumni engaged in peacebuilding during high school; that compulsory Israeli military service discouraged activity among both Israeli and Palestinian graduates; that nearly one-fifth of alumni engaged in peacebuilding as adults; and that extensive follow-up programming was essential for sustaining long-term commitments to peacebuilding.

The findings of this study portray the effective impact of international intervention on a “pivotal generation of Palestinians and Israeli, entering adolescence “at the hopeful dawn of the Oslo peace process, to emerge as adults in an era of *intifada* and *separation*” (Lazarus, 2011, p. iv; emphasis in original).

Schools

Although peace education grew tremendously into a philosophy in the twentieth century, the educational insights developed by peace scholars have been generally neglected by formal schools around the world. Due to cultural and economic pressures, most schools prefer adding more math and science classes to their curriculum so that their graduates will be able to compete well in the global arena. As a result, they consider peace education as “soft” and totally ignore it (Harris, 2008, p. 22). Using United Nations’ mandates to stimulate formal school-based peace education activities, few countries mandated peace education in public schools (e.g., Philippines and Uganda). However, they were challenged by lack of resources and training in the numerous complexities of this new field. In such a context, it is not surprising that the potential of formal schooling to eliminate violence is totally disregarded by the actors of the Middle East conflict. Both the Palestinian and Israeli schools are not teaching future citizens about the Diaspora and its effect upon mutual claims to the same land (Cochran, 2005). The author continues to claim that neither school system is presenting the other people's experience for the same historic event. Ashkenazi and Mizrachi's findings suggest that no real peace education exists in formal textbooks or Israeli state curricula (cited in Cochran, 2005). Likewise, Firer (2004) analysed 44 histories and 23 civics books used in Israeli schools to find that all these books are increasing hostility and distrust of Palestinians. As the author remarkably asserts, "All history and civics textbooks emphasize the idea that Israel wants peace with the Arabs, and claim that the Arabs (till lately) prefer war and terrorism" (p. 199; cited in Cochran, 2005).

In the same vein, the increased demand for dialogue rarely had its effect on schools in Israel. As a reaction to a documented rise in anti-democratic and discriminatory attitudes among Jewish-Israeli youth in 1980s, the Israeli Ministry of Education created a “Unit for Democracy” (UFD). The efforts of this unit resulted in the integration of co-existence projects in numerous schools in Israeli. These schools incorporated coexistence in their curriculum, especially Arab and Jewish encounters. Moreover, several coexistence programs (e.g., Beit Hagefen, Givat Haviva) supported Arab-Jewish encounters at schools or elsewhere by training and providing facilitators and facilities. The evaluation of 47 peace education encounter programs employed in Israel in 1999-2000 showed that these programs did not include any components of dialogue (Maoz, 2002).

The formal educational systems in both countries have not developed a comprehensive peace curriculum to address the violent reality in the region yet (Ozacky-Lazar, 2008). Likewise, Posner (2006, p. 136) strongly asserts that “neither the Israeli nor Palestinian Ministry of Education has acted consistently favourably towards the implementation of peace education curricula in its formal school systems.” Similarly, the stance of the Ministries of Education in both Israel and Palestine toward peace education displayed contradiction: “they have neither been able to completely accept nor wholly reject the content of peace education, neither to consistently implement nor completely ban specific projects” (Lazarus, 2011, p192). The infrequent policy support, if any, is discarded due to political reasons. For example, the Rabin/Peres (1992-1996) and Olmert (2007-2009) administrations asked Daniel Bar-Tal to integrate peace aspect field into the official state curriculum. Nevertheless, the efforts of the leading Israeli scholar of peace education were prevented by the following right-wing administrations (Bar-Tal, 2010). The situation in Palestinian educational context is not so different. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, a Palestinian scholar, created a “progressive” humanist curriculum after years of work under support of a UNESCO grant. However, his approach was found “too radical” by the Palestinian Ministry of Education (Brown, 2006, p. 233). Instead, the final version of the books, renewed by the Palestinian educators, emphasized and interlinked various authoritative components such as God, nation, homeland and family (Brown, 2006). In short, the Ministries of both countries most often view “peace education NGOs with scepticism, suspicion, antagonism or, at best, ambivalence” (Posner, 2006, p. 329).

On the other hand, there are truly innovative Israeli-Palestinian peace education initiatives that won international approval. An example for this category is the project entitled “Learning Each Other’s Historical Narrative,” which involves a series of dual-narrative historical textbooks of the long-lasting conflict. This project was translated into at least six languages and received multiple international awards. Unfortunately, this promising project did not receive constructive reaction from the Ministries of Education in both countries. A school principal who allowed its use was censured in 2010, and it was completely banned from public schools in Israel. Palestinian Ministry of Education, however, tried to use Israel’s rejection and tried to present a “peaceful” image to the international audience, only to rapidly withdraw its approval immediately after its announcement was displayed online (Kashti, 2010). As Lazarus (2011) remarkably concludes, although both Ministries seem to have tried to incorporate peace education aspects into their national curricula, which would supposedly align themselves with liberal elites in their society and global norms, these attempts generally could not go beyond a desire to project exceptionally positive public images of cooperation.

Critique: Analysing the Former Encounter Initiations between Israel and Palestine

In line with Allport’s renowned statement that “It is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice,” (Lazarus 2011 p. 17), subsequent research confirmed that contact alone is not

enough to achieve a peaceful resolution (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Amir, 1976; Glenna, 2012; Hantzopoulos, 2011; Schimmel, 2009). A number of organizations, both local and international, have been working actively for decades to reduce tensions between Israel and Palestine and to support the official peace process. However, effects of these extensive peacebuilding efforts, including dialogue among other numerous projects, have not been far reaching enough (Glenna, 2012; Ozacky-Lazar, 2008). Glenna (2012) underlines that many of these initiations may have contributed to meaningful and important changes, and cautions that,

During the same period that these activities were conducted, the Oslo Process collapsed, violence targeting both sides escalated, the separation barrier was built, and the hardship of the occupation intensified. As a result, distrust and demonization have increased, and Palestinians and Israelis are even more alienated and segregated from each other than before the 1990s. Glenna (2012, p. 1-2)

Similarly, drawing from her reflections and insights from her experiences both as a dialogue facilitator and researcher, Hantzopoulos (2011) raises central questions regarding the definitions, manifestations, and performances of the notion of peace; the individuals defining, manifesting, and performing peace; the geographical features as well as the particular time it is embodied. Then, the author argues that these kinds of questions are most often totally overlooked –possibly even deliberately – in the well-meant dialogue programs between Israelis and Palestinians. She continues to suggest that the rare attempts to acknowledge such questions are often superficial.

One argument regarding the disappointing outcomes of these encounters is the failure to acknowledge asymmetrical power relations (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Hantzopoulos, 2011). Abu-Nimer, an experienced facilitator of in these dialogue programs in the 1980s, stresses asymmetric power relations, and finds that interpersonal approaches are inappropriate for Arab-Jewish encounter programs due to the extensive structural problems that Arab citizens of Israel have been going through such as inequality and institutionalized discrimination. Similarly, Hantzopoulos (2011), based on her findings, raises concerns regarding the granting of equal voice in dialogue work and encounter groups when there are existing asymmetrical power relations and dynamics that define the broader context.

Another reason regarding the limited impact of peace encounters between Israeli-Palestinian citizens relates to the fact that these encounter programs are developed and facilitated mostly by foreigner “third-party” agencies. Bar-Ilan (2000), for example, referring to the programs implemented under the facilitation of independent third-parties, emphasizes the insincerity of the participants and bias, ignorance or naïveté of the foreign third-party facilitators. Similarly, Hammack (2006) criticizes these dialogue works facilitated by Western third-parties as he finds them misleading. As he maintains, these encounter models, although appropriate for Western needs and narratives, are

culturally incompatible, politically inappropriate, and methodologically ineffective for the Middle East context.

As the above discussion reveals, encounter or dialogue work must be systematically and critically designed and implemented with utmost caution. It is essential to consider the notion of dialogue seriously and comprehensively at all levels of these initiations (i.e., design, implementation, and evaluation). In this regard, Bar-Siman-Tov (2011, p. 16) argues that without a comprehensive analysis of obstacles to a peaceful resolution of the conflict,

It is questionable whether it would be at all feasible for the various peace plans to advance toward resolution, and the circumstances would most likely leave the rival parties empty-handed once again, and on track to return to a cycle of violence.

Bar-Siman-Tov (2011) emphasizes the vitality of the discussion and portrayal of the prevalent barriers, and critical dialogue towards the possibilities of overcoming these mostly structural, strategic, and psychological challenges. Strategic barriers may involve security problems and the efforts of the parties to maximize their benefits by employing hard strategies and tactics. Structural barriers, shaped by the internal political structures, produce institutional and bureaucratic restrictions that undermine the legitimacy and sustainability of the peace initiatives. Psychological barriers are emotional, cognitive, or motivational difficulties. The psychological barriers relate to collective narratives of each nation, and prevent any possible changes in beliefs and attitudes toward the conflict itself and the other group. All the barriers are so interrelated that it is sometimes difficult to separate them from one another. These barriers can prevent building and maintaining peace. As Bar-Siman-Tov (2011) maintains, all these challenges are the results of the history and nature of Israeli-Palestinian conflict; hence, it is crucial for any peace initiation to take them into consideration in all steps of peace building initiations.

Defining Dialogue

The concept of dialogue is not a recent one. The related literature goes as far back as Plato. The works of the ancient Greek philosopher contributed immensely to the growth of the notion of dialogue through his timeless dialogues. In Plato's thirty-five dialogues, he preserved his teacher's legacy, and declared his Socrates' wisdom of questioning every assumption, every belief, and every idea (Keller, 2012). Such a commitment to inquiry required a particular moral practice: putting aside "our often unconscious tendency to hold our beliefs as part of ourselves and instead identify with the bare, unencumbered questioner" (Keller, 2012, p. xx).

Socratic wisdom additionally includes practicing particular virtues concerning ourselves as well as others. The main virtues entail integrity, courage, and justice. In addition to these traditional virtues, Levinas (1998) emphasized encounter which opens individual to the other's otherness, and the transcending of simple reciprocity through being faced by the priority of the other; Gadamer (1991)

identified fluidity, the value of the unexpected, and conversation as paradigm for learning; Foucault (2003) emphasizes contemporary virtues of questioning, listening, and reciprocity (cited in Keller, 2012). Socratic method, formerly influenced by his teacher Plato's dialogues, has become a basis of Western pedagogical traditions. This method aims to actively engage learners in critical thinking, and mutual dialogue between the learners and the teacher(s) who are all supposed to maintain the dialogue through questioning.

Since Socrates, dialogue literature has developed considerably with the contributions of numerous scholars from an array of fields of scholarship (e.g., Anderson, Baxter, and Cissna, 2004; Arnett, 1994; Bakhtin, 1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1986, 1990; Buber, 1985; Foucault, 2003; Freire, 1970; Friedman, 1960, 1996; Gadamer, 1991; Gergen, 1991, 1994, 1999; Levinas, 1998; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). It is not within the scope of this paper to present an exhaustive overview of literature on dialogue. In this vast literature of dialogue, Freire's notion of dialogue is highly acknowledged in education due to his emphasis of dialogue as a human phenomenon. Thus, Freire's perspective of dialogue is briefly presented in the following section.

Although mostly overused and underexplained in the literature, dialogue partakes a unique meaning in Freire's perception. Paulo Freire, the great Brazilian, describes dialogue as "the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 2013, p. 155). In his view, dialogue, "a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it," must be understood as "something taking part in the very historical nature of human beings." Shor and Freire (1987, pp. 98-99; emphasis added) illustrates how dialogue is (re)constructed collaboratively by the cognitive subjects at the moment when he emphasizes,

To the extent that we are communicative beings who communicate to each other as we become more able to transform our reality, we are able to *know that we know*, which is something more than just knowing. . . . Knowing is a social event with nevertheless an individual dimension. What is dialogue in this moment of communication, knowing and social transformation? Dialogue seals the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know.

Dialogue embraces separate individuals; yet, it is essentially a non-individualistic process. Although it includes transitory moments, these moments are inherently historical and reality defining for the participants of dialogue (Cissna and Anderson, 1994).

Freire (2013) considers dialogue as a human phenomenon and identifies "the word" as the essence of dialogue itself (p. 155). In this exceptional perspective of dialogue as an "existential necessity" (Miller, 1998, p. 76), the word is composed of two key dimensions: reflection and action. Transforming the word much more than the instrument for the dialogue, reflection and action interacts radically. "If one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers" (Freire, 2013, p. 155).

When separated from action, words turn into verbalisms, empty words that cannot denounce the world. Similarly, action cannot also be divorced from reflection. Dialogue is impossible when it is intended for an action's sake. This radical interaction of reflection and action is essential human existence in order to transform the world by speaking a true word that Freire describes as a praxis. Freire (2013, p. 155) presents:

An unauthentic word, one which is unable to transform reality, results when dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism*, into an alienated and alienating “blah.” It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action. On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism*. The latter—action for action's sake—negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible. Either dichotomy, by creating unauthentic forms of existence, creates also unauthentic forms of thought, which reinforce the original dichotomy.

According to Freire, “human existence cannot be silent” (p. 155). In contrast, in order to exist humanly, individuals need to name the world. This is a continuous process. Once they name the world, it re-emerges to the namers as a problem and necessitates a new naming. Ultimately, the namers transform the world by using their true words. On the other hand, Freire (1970) cautions that praxis, or saying the true word must be considered everyone's right not the privilege of anyone. Thus, “no one can say a true word alone – nor can she say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words” (p. 155, *emphasis in the original*). Thus, Freire's understanding of dialogue can be viewed as an epistemological category and an emancipating pedagogy. It is a critical medium establishing a critical setting to reflect on the cultural, cognitive, and societal conditions of existence for those who are involved in the acts of learning and transforming the present realities towards a democratic and socially just society. Eventually, dialogue establishes a critical setting for those who dare to (re)create knowledge *with(in)* the world (Liambas & Kaskaris, 2013).

Influenced by Buber's phraseology, Freire is profoundly concerned about the relationship between the self and the other (Rule, 2011). Indeed, Freire directly refers to the greatest philosopher of the 20th century (Emerson, 1997) by stating (1972, p. 135),

The antialogical, dominating ‘I’ transforms the dominated, conquered ‘thou’ into a mere ‘it’ in Martin Buber's phraseology. The dialogical ‘I’, however, knows that it is precisely the ‘thou’ (‘not’-‘I’) which has called forth his own existence. He also knows that the ‘thou’ which calls forth his own existence in turn constitutes an ‘I’ which has in his ‘I’ its ‘thou’. The ‘I’ and the ‘thou’ thus become, in the dialectic of these relationships, two ‘thous’ which become two ‘Is’.

In Buber's (1958) understanding of dialogue, 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' are the two primary words used to assign relations. In the relation between I and Thou, "I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou" (p. 11, emphasis in the original). Thus, Buber's conception of 'I-Thou' presents a relation which is about communication, relationship, and becoming. Whereas, the relation between I and It is of an object, which may cause oppression when the Self (I) dominates over the Other (It) considering is an object (Rule, 2011).

Freirean Dialogue as a Pedagogy for a Grassroots Peace Education at Schools

In human societies there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. (The Dalai Lama, 1997)

Freire's notion of dialogue constitutes effective pedagogy to achieve the goals of peace education. Indeed, it is essential that the scholars of the field engage in dialogical practice by promoting the attributes of critical dialogue as proposed by Freire (1970), namely love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking. The final section below presents a brief discussion on each of these attributes and the significance of critical dialogue in pursuing long-term peace education programming.

The 21st century has brought awareness of the indivisible, interrelated, and interdependent existence of all peoples around the world, creating a unique unity. This awareness connects well critical dialogue. The word *dialogue* bears an intense meaning that is yet underestimated by many. On the other hand, rising to the challenge of making this century a century of dialogue as proposed by The Dalai Lama (1997), it is essential to acquire what dialogue entails. Dialogue, as skilfully described by Freire, can provide a safe and feasible foundation, when applied appropriately, for the encounter initiations to resolve Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a peaceful way. In achieving this extraordinary process of dialogue, Freire emphasizes six particular preconditions to be fulfilled. This section of the paper provides a brief description of these preconditions as suggested by Freire.

Such a perspective of dialogue that can be considered within the genealogy stretching centuries back to the Socratic dialogues of Plato, is inherently an authentic way of being and doing, beyond comparison to a mere technique (Rule, 2004). Macedo (2005) also underlines that "the fundamental goal of dialogical teaching is to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process" (p. 17). As Macedo (2005) also cautions, educators and dialogue practitioners ignoring this feature of Freire's exceptional perception of dialogue can mistakenly transform it into a method. In this regard, Freire (1970) emphasizes the epistemological relationship of dialogue, and proposes that "dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task" (Freire and Macedo, 1995, p.

379). As the authors also caution us regarding the simplistic understanding of Freirean dialogue as a mere tactic (p. 379),

We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.

For Freire, a horizontal relationship must be established to engage in dialogue. He strongly criticizes anti-dialogue that is a vertical, unloving, acritical relationship because it reduces the other to the status of an object and results in suppression (Rule, 2011). In order to achieve genuine dialogue, Freire (1970) decidedly proposes specific attributes; namely, love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking (Freire, 1972; 1998). These prerequisites are briefly discussed below.

Love

According to Freire, profound love for human beings and the world is crucial for dialogue. Indeed, the revolution must be perceived as an act of love for its creative and emancipatory nature. Therefore, as he decidedly underlines, “the naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love” (Freire, 2013, p. 158). Similarly, love of others can be considered the foundation of dialogue. As a result, Subjects are responsible for establishing and maintain love. Otherwise, the relationship will turn into domination. “Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated” (p. 158). The true revolutionaries are strongly committed to love the oppressed because it is the foundation of their liberation. Such a commitment is at the same time dialogical. However, he cautions that “as an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation” (p. 158). Freire (1970) decidedly argues that love, by definition, generates other acts of freedom. Regarding the often misrepresentation of the notion of love by the capitalist world, Freire’s strongly encourages hope. Freire (1970) refers to Guevara as he was courageous enough to affirm that “with the risk of appearing ridiculous, the true revolution is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality” (1969, p. 398). Freire’s perception of love is away from being sentimental, and is aimed at overcoming oppression. Deep love for the world and for the beings in it allows individuals to view others as Subjects who cannot be stripped of their decision-making and creating powers. “Our love for others entails abolition of those oppressive circumstances in order to restore love to the lives of the oppressed” (Miller, 1998, p. 76). Hence, Freirean love is the foundation of both dialogue and of other conditions for dialogue.

Establishing love is a foundational concept for all dialogue practitioners intending to practice Freirean dialogue and peace education. Therefore, educators and/or dialogue facilitators who aspire for

becoming more while guiding others to (re)name the world and become more must first aspire for establishing “a world in which it is easier to love” (Freire, 1972, p. 6).

Humility

In Freirean dialogue, humility is another foundational concept for dialogue. According to Freire, the continuous (re)naming of the world and thus constant (re)creating the reality can only be an act of humility. When dialogue participants are arrogant, they cannot engage in genuine dialogue. Regarding the necessity of humility, Freire (2013, p. 158) discusses,

How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere "its" in whom I cannot recognize other "I"s? How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of "pure" men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are "these people" or "the great unwashed"? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite and that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others? How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness?

Engaging in dialogue is essentially becoming partners with other individuals in (re)creating the world and the reality. When the dialogue participants lack this foundational attribute for dialogue, or in other words when they are arrogant, they can no longer be partners, and so dialogue will not survive. Freire’s criticism for arrogant individuals is sharp, “Someone who cannot acknowledge himself to be as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he can reach the point of encounter” (2013, p. 158). In the case of coming across with individuals who lack humility, Freire strongly contrasts with the idea of submitting oneself to the arrogance of others who lack respect for human beings. Instead, he proposes, “What humility asks of me when I cannot react appropriately to a given offense is to face it with dignity. The dignity of my silence, of my look” (Freire, 1998, p. 109).

Humility can be an elusive concept to define. In this regard, components of humility can be listed as: not protruding ignorance onto other (human) being; regarding other (human) beings as Subjects; not discriminating individuals based on their qualities such as socioeconomic status; supporting that (re)naming the world is the right of all individuals; welcoming and encouraging the contribution of others in (re)naming the world; (6) welcoming displacement, changing status; and finally being aware that we are all mortal and imperfect (Miller, 1998).

Faith

Intense faith in humanity is another foundational attribute for Freire’s concept of dialogue. This notion Freire proposes entails faith in the power and potential of individuals to (re)make and (re)create the world. It is “a priori” condition for Freirean dialogue that provides a sufficient setting for

humankind to seek to be more fully human (Freire, 2013, p. 158). In such a perspective, the dialogue partners believe in each other others even before seeing each other. Profound love unquestionably “grounds these people as ends-in-themselves and makes faith possible” (Miller, 1998, p. 78). The author argues that faith can be considered a component of love because human beings can have faith only when they love others.

However, it is vital to realize that this view of faith is critical rather than *naïve*. *The dialogical is aware that humankind is capable of (re)creating and transforming the world. Human beings may be lessened in the use of this power because of the doings of the oppressor. This might result in apathy and self-hatred. Hence, the dialogical pursuing liberation from oppression must recognise the crippling consequences of oppression. Yet, Faith in the creativity and revival of the human kind endures (Miller, 1998).*

Mutual trust

"Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence" (Freire, 2013, p. 159). Freire proposes that mutual trust is only a predictable outcome once dialogue integrates the merits of love, humility, and faith. Otherwise, it would be a contradiction. In such a climate of mutual trust, dialoguers can complement each other in the process of (re)naming the world. The hierarchical or vertical banking notion of education, however, does not allow the establishment of mutual trust. Trust can be nourished only when the dialogical's words do match their actions; talking at or down people makes trust impossible (Miller, 1998). In Freire's words, "to say one thing and do another—to take one's own word lightly—cannot inspire trust. To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce; to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie" (2013, p. 159). Hence, monologues, too frequently the dominant discourse in schooling and educational settings, result in closed relationships that involves centralized epistemic authority (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010).

Hope

Freire sees hope, another essential facet of Freirean dialogue, as linked with the incompleteness of individuals and their endless search for wholeness (Miller, 1998). According to Freire, this pursuit of wholeness can be achieved only in communication with other human beings and the world, in dialogue. Hopelessness, on the other hand, is denying and fleeing from the world. In this respect, dehumanization as a result of an unjust order can be a cause only for hope rather than not despair. According to Freire, dialogue, the encounter of individuals seeking to be more complete, is impossible in hopelessness (Freire, 2013). Such an encounter will be “empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious” (Freire, 2013, p. 159). As long as dialoguer struggle, they must be encouraged by hope. They cannot be lost in hopelessness or cross their arms and wait.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking, the final attribute of genuine dialogue. Dialogue cannot survive when dialoguers do not engage in critical thinking. Freire discusses that critical thinking is “thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them” (2013, p. 159). Such thinking allows the perception of reality as a process and transformation, rather than reality as a static entity. Because critical thinking is essentially integrated with action, it “constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved” (p. 159). Freire’s notion of critical thinking contrasts with naïve thinking that perceives historical time as weight, a stratification of past attainments and practices. This historical time most frequently allows the present to appear well-behaved and normalized. Valuing accommodation to the normalized present, the naïve thinker attempts precisely to hold fast to the assured space and fine-tuning to it. Such thinking negates temporality, and so negates itself. In this regard, Freire quotes Pierre Further (1966, p. 26-7),

The goal will no longer be to eliminate the risks of temporality by clutching to guaranteed space, but rather to temporalize space . . . The universe is revealed to me not as space, imposing a massive presence to which I can but adapt, but as a scope, a domain which takes shape as I act upon it.

The critical thinker, however, welcomes the enduring transformation of reality in their seeking of becoming fully human.

Freirean dialogue, as it has been discussed above, has the potential to start a grassroots peace movement in the long-rooted Israel and Palestine conflict. Peace education scholars would do well to infuse Freirean dialogue as a pedagogy in the mainstream educational institutions-formal or nonformal- due to its transformational potential. Equipped with the six attributes of Freirean dialogue (i.e., love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking), today’s children, tomorrow’s adults, will have the power and courage to create a profound relationship between Israelis and Palestinians. Thanks to the technological advances, individuals do not need to be physically face-to-face in order to be in dialogue anymore. Communicating on the digital platforms, young people of different nationalities can connect with each other and build interpersonal bonds. Empowered with the critical skills of Freirean dialogue, such connections can be the places where grassroots peace can flourish. Therefore, the seeds of peace must be planted in the schools of both nations by practicing the fundamental attributes of Freirean dialogue.

Conclusions

In this paper, an overview of Arab-Jewish dialogue projects are presented in order to describe and analyse the deep-rooted challenges, complexities, and contradictions in order to reveal future directions towards achieving critical dialogue as a foundation for a grassroots peace movement. For

this purpose, first the dialogue encounters in the Israel and Palestine are portrayed as they are operated by non-governmental organizations, international third-party interventions, and schools. In the second part, drawing from a number of dialogue scholars, the notion of dialogue is discussed. The particular emphasis of this section is on Freire's concept of dialogue as a human phenomenon. Finally, Freirean dialogue is proposed as a promising pedagogy in order to eliminate the barriers undermining critical dialogue between the two groups. In order to accomplish Freirean dialogue in peace encounters between Israeli and Palestinian citizens, it is essential to realize the six prerequisites of Freirean dialogue as a groundwork so that the participants of the peace encounter programs from the conflicting nations can engage in dialogue by establishing a horizontal relationship, and see beyond the deep complexities nourished by their national histories and identities.

Children and youths are digital natives and they spend a considerable amount of their time in virtual settings, especially social media. Given that the borders between nations are becoming almost invisible and futile, young people are increasingly more often engaging in dialogue with people from other nationalities and cultures. As Israeli and Palestinian youths are no exceptions to this 21st century phenomenon, young individuals from these two conflicting nations have more chances to engage in dialogue with each other online than they do face-to-face. This is an invaluable chance for them to get to know the other party as an *individual* before their national identity as an Israeli or a Palestinian. Establishing critical dialogue conceptualized around Freire's attributes (i.e., love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking) will enable the youths to break the vicious circle of violence between the two nations by (re)naming their realities. Towards this goal, it is vital to empower children and youths with the skills and insights of critical dialogue. The most feasible way to achieve this is to infuse critical dialogue in the school curricula and cultures in both Israel and Palestine.

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