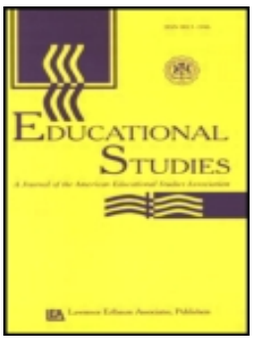

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ARTICLES

A Nonviolent Approach to Social Justice Education

Hongyu Wang

Oklahoma State University-Tulsa

This article advocates a nonviolent approach to social justice education. First, social justice education literature is reviewed, and two contrasting and influential approaches—critical theory and poststructural theory—are the focus of critical analysis. A nonviolent approach is proposed as an alternative. Second, the notion of social justice is reexamined to reveal its tie with the notion of the individual, and the concept of nonviolence in its emphasis on relationality is discussed. Three facets of nonviolence are further elaborated: relational dynamics, inner peace, and nonviolent means. Third, these facets are translated into important aspects of a pedagogy of nonviolence: Integrating the inner and the outer work; shifting the struggles of opposites to the interdependence of differences; using and improvising nonviolent teaching strategies. To enrich theoretical understandings and inspire practical insights, this article also interweaves international wisdom traditions (including African *ubuntu*, Buddist nonduality, and Taoist dynamics), my teaching experiences, and the formulation of a nonviolent social justice pedagogy in teacher education.

Social justice education has increasingly gained attention in the field of education, calling for transforming and reconstructing social, cultural, and educational systems, structures, and processes to address social inequality for equitable redistribution of educational resources and outcomes. In social justice education, we often evoke the ideals of democracy, justice, human rights, equality, and equity;

Correspondence should be addressed to Hongyu Wang, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, School of Teaching and Curriculum Leadership, 700 North Greenwood Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74106. E-mail: hongyu.wang@okstate.edu

however, we seldom discuss nonviolence in its noncompromising, powerful stand against any violence and its compassionate call for humane interconnections, even though nonviolent principles have existed for a long time (Addams [1906] 2007; Lynd and Lynd 1995). I argue in this article that no other ideal can play the same role as nonviolence in dissolving the very mechanism of control and domination that leads to violence while not enacting another form of imposition or coercion. During a decade of teaching multicultural education classes on a predominately White campus, I have gradually come to realize that the means and end of education must be united through nonviolence to treat the root problem of social violence in its various symptoms (racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, to name a few) and to transform relational dynamics toward a compassionate community in which differences are contributors to the collective good.

In my journey to embracing nonviolence education, international wisdom traditions have played an important role, including *ubuntu*, Buddhist nonduality, and Taoist *yin-yang* dynamics. A systematic discussion of these traditions is beyond the scope of this article, so I only interweave the most relevant principle of each tradition with a pedagogy of nonviolence. *Ubuntu* emphasizes the power of organic interconnections in healing wounds; Buddhist nonduality suggests that the fundamental source of violence is the dichotomy between body and mind and between self and other, so we need to unlearn dualism; and Taoist *yin-yang* dynamics bring the tensionality of conflicts back into the whole and emphasize the importance of not-forcing in leadership. All of them adopt an interconnected stance in valuing the ecological health of both individual and community, and thus offer fresh lenses for all involved parties to see through conflicts and fragmentation for a bigger picture. To cross-culturally blend these notions with social justice education literature, I intend to explore pathways of cultivating nonviolent relationships at multiple levels in teaching difficult knowledge.

First, this article reviews social justice education literature, particularly focusing on two contrasting and influential approaches: critical theory and poststructural theory. The limitations of these two approaches are discussed and a nonviolent approach is proposed as an alternative. Second, to lay ground for further discussion, the notions of social justice and nonviolence are (re)examined to reveal their similarity and differences in understanding the relationship between the self and the other. After the significance of nonviolence is affirmed, its facets are discussed: relational dynamics, inner peace, and nonviolent means. Third, these facets are translated into important aspects of working toward a pedagogy of nonviolence: Integrating the inner and the outer work, shifting the struggles of opposites to the interdependence of differences, and improvising and using nonviolent teaching strategies. Throughout the article, students' resistance to learning difficult knowledge and nonviolent pedagogical responses is another thread.

APPROACHES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

The approach to social justice education is not unitary, as demonstrated well by North's (2008) comprehensive analysis of the tensions and contradictions inherent in various perspectives. This article does not use categories that North uses in her analysis, but due to its central concern with transforming relational dynamics through nonviolent principles, here I highlight the issue of identity and social differences in two influential, contrasting approaches in order to situate a nonviolent approach.

First, an influential approach that is oriented by critical theory intends to raise critical consciousness, or in Freire's ([1970] 1997) term, "conscientização," (104), and to help marginalized groups and individuals resist social oppression and actively pursue cultural transformation. There has been a proliferation of educational literature highlighting racial, ethnic, gendered, and class minority groups, among other layers of cultural diversity, and their struggles for educational equality and equity. Related to this orientation, teachers are encouraged to promote culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching (e.g., Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings 1995; Sleeter and Cornbleth 2011), suggesting that students'—especially minority students'—cultural backgrounds have certain characteristics that must be considered for successful teaching and learning. Such a critical orientation is necessary to expose the unequal and unjust social and pedagogical reality of marginalization, to advocate redistribution of power and wealth, and to promote social activism for a better world. However, it runs the risk of setting up the camps of *minority us* against *majority them*, although the categories of minority and majority are slippery concepts and are context dependent. The dualistic distinction between the self and the other, both within and across social identity, leads to social violence in the first place, so another way of categorizing *us* versus *them* does not necessarily undo the mechanism of objectification and domination. Different foci within critical theory often compete for establishing class, or race, or gender as more fundamental than other factors in shaping social reality. Such debates address particular social manifestations of violence rather than uncovering and further treating the root of social violence.

With the influence of postmodern and poststructural approaches, social differences are perceived as fluid, multiple, ever-changing, and conflicting; and any universal and essential project of emancipation is under question. In this framework, both self and other become complicated beyond the dualism between the oppressor and the oppressed, indicating greater potential for addressing the complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity of cultural diversity (e.g., Martusewicz 2001; Parkes, Gore, and Elsworth 2010; Todd 2003; Trifonas 2003). The notion of identity, itself, is problematized because of the inherent confining effect of categorization.

There are important differences between critical theory and poststructural theory, but for the purpose of this article, I discuss only two. First, critical theory has a clearly defined notion of marginalized groups and positions their struggles as against domination; in other words, the marginalized other becomes the subject of emancipation. However, in the poststructural notion of the otherness of the other, especially in Levinasian and Derridian discourses, the effort to define the other is resisted, so that the other always has a capacity to surprise, which requires the self to be receptive to the other's radical difference. Second, critical theory is based upon a collective identity: Whether it is class, race, gender, or when multiple identities are acknowledged, the emphasis is on the coalition among oppressed groups in working together to achieve social justice through structural changes. However, in the postmodern Foucaultian reformulation of power relationships, it is the individual's exercise of power in a specific and localized situation that holds the potential for enacting social change. Foucault further positions the individual against social and institutional constraints and argues for nonidentity to radicalize the necessity for self-creation (Wang 2004). Although, theoretically, I align more with poststructural discourses, I also find their radical emphasis on the otherness of the other and individual singularity problematic. In radicalizing the distinction between the self and the other to not lose the novelty and alterity of the other, the poststructural vigilance against assimilating the other into the self runs the risk of distancing the self and the other to such a degree that it becomes difficult to weave self and other back into the whole. The necessity for respecting the other's difference is the basis for making meaningful interrelationships, but such a connection is difficult to accomplish if the other is positioned in the realm of the unknown. Furthermore, the postmodern emphasis on the singularity and creativity of the individual, however contingent and fluid, rather than on the social and the individual as interdependent, still reinforce the problematic tendency of setting individuality against society (Wang 2004).

If we listen to students' stories in their responses to social justice education, their resistance to learning "difficult knowledge" (Britzman 1998, 2) has been under discussion for more than a decade across various disciplines (e.g., Chan and Treacy 1996; Chizhik 2003; Jakubowski 2001; Pipino 2005; Rhone 2002). Different pedagogical approaches to deal with this issue have also been proposed. In those proposals, however, the starting point is usually the instructor's perceptions and perspectives, and it is the students, more or less, who must overcome the difficulties. In other words, students are pedagogical objects to be enlightened. But doesn't students' resistance also indicate the need to question our own desires as educators to transform students in a particular direction? Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) argues that there is a third participant in the student–teacher relation: the unconscious of both students and the teacher. Without awareness of such an indirect participation, the teacher's direct routes of teaching difficult knowledge often meet students' "passion for ignorance" (63).

Herbert Kohl (1991) discusses how students' "active not-learning" (13) is a choice against institutionalized schooling that reinforces various forms of social injustice. So he makes efforts to invite students into a teaching–learning relationship. His stories are largely about learning from minority students' resistance against official knowledge. I also think that we need to learn from White students who have a difficult time with the notion of White privilege that is becoming the mainstream knowledge in multicultural education. Students' unreceptiveness to difficult knowledge does not simply suggest mainstream students' desire to preserve their privileged identity (or minority students' wish to be assimilated in order to belong), but their refusal to learn may also indicate their desire to resist the pedagogical objectification that portrays them as lacking critical consciousness and being subject to "conversion" (Jupp and Slattery 2010, 457). We need to be mindful of not setting up a dualism between teacher educators as critical pedagogues and students as resistant learners.

Therefore social justice education needs to be attentive to its own tendency toward polarizing sameness/difference, self/other into irreconcilable or distant opposites in the existing discourses, assumptions, and practices. Although not negating the usefulness of critical and poststructural approaches in certain contexts, this article argues for a different, organic, nonviolent pathway that undermines modern dualism in various forms, addresses the root of social violence, and redirects the relational dynamics away from individual's or group's struggles against one another but towards an interdependent viewpoint in which all parties contribute to the well-being of society.

Nonviolence is centrally concerned with the nature of relationality, although it also emphasizes the role of the individual, who remains as an essential site for dissolving violence and practicing nonviolence, and the role of institutions, which provide the structural support for containing violence and promoting nonviolence. Critical theory is more concerned with structural changes and collective struggles, although poststructural theory is more concerned with individual creativity and singularity, albeit socially and historically situated. By contrast, nonviolence works at the site of relationality within and between individuals or groups or institutions to work through difficulty and transform both individuality and communality. Furthermore, the nature of relationality in nonviolence is different from that in both critical theory and poststructural theory: Through nonduality, nonviolence goes beyond dualism in critical theory; through interdependence, nonviolence mediates the poststructural distance between self and other. Relationality in nonviolence refers to interpersonal/intrapersonal, intergroup/intragroup, and intercultural/intracultural relationships, so the relationship between the self and other is not individualistic but multidimensional. What, then, can a nonviolent approach bring to social justice education? Before answering this question, I need first to lay the ground for further discussion by examining the notions of social justice and nonviolence.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND NONVIOLENCE

I used Tutu's book (1999) *No Future without Forgiveness* in my multicultural education classes. The book describes the inspiring work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission after South Africa's independence from colonialism in following the third way to heal the terrible trauma inflicted by the apartheid regime. One central notion of the book is restorative justice in the spirit of *ubuntu*, which focuses on restoring broken relationships through a process of rehumanizing both the victims and the perpetrators, rather than on retributive justice which punishes the perpetrators. My students, mainly in-service teachers, were profoundly moved by the book, but they kept saying that such a principle would not work in the United States. So I asked them: "Then what does justice mean in the US?" They quickly replied: "An eye for an eye." My students perceived justice as *us* against *them* and found it difficult to imagine how restoring individual peace is based upon restoring the peace of community. Ironically, Americans Jane Addams and Martin Luther King, Jr. are both renowned for their advocacy for nonviolence and peace. When a separate sense of the individual, or by extension a group or a nation, is elevated above the human and cosmic shared relationality, transcending one's own boundary for the bigger collective good remains difficult. If the notion of justice in today's conflict-ridden society does not unsettle the dualism between the self/us and the other/them, social justice education can hardly lead us out of the cycle of blame, guilt, and defense to a less violent world.

Social justice has different meanings for different people, and often hosts internal contradictions (North 2008). Zajda, Majhanovich, and Rust (2006) trace the epistemology of social justice back to Plato, Aristotle, and Kant philosophically, and locate its direct source in social reformers' efforts to attend to the needs of uprooted peasants at the end of the 19th century. They point out that "most conceptions of social justice refer to an egalitarian society that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being" (1). This commonly used idea of social justice is based upon the notion of the individual person, each person with individual rights forming a collective to decide what is most beneficial to all (or at least to the majority). As Aoki (2005) suggests, most important Western concepts such as right, democracy, freedom, autonomy, or privatization are based upon the notion of the individual. When an individual (or a group) is considered an entity in itself, separate from others, social justice in its emphasis on the social welfare of all participants as equals does not necessarily lead to better social relationships but may slip into another version of the (group) self in the name of the collective. The conception of critical theory-oriented social justice, although emphasizing the collective, tends to separate groups; and in oppositional struggles, social identities can become self-contained and a particular collective becomes exclusive of others.

As Hershock (2009) argues, it is a fallacy to assume that "whatever is good for each and every one of us [individually] will be good for all of us [communally or ecologically]" (156) because, as we have witnessed, what is good for the local may become detrimental to the ecological or the global. We need a more interconnected approach to think about social justice issues.

Taking a poststructural turn, Todd (2003) loosely defined social justice education as:

> a wide range of pedagogies that seek to ameliorate social harm wrought through inequitable practices and structures. Social justice education has been and continues to be marked by a moral concern with those who have been 'Othered' and marginalized through discriminatory relations that are seen as violent, both in symbolic and material terms. (1)

This moral concern with the marginalized others share a similarity with critical theory, but Todd's notion of the "Other" is based upon the "Levinasian understanding of the Other as infinitely unknowable" (3). This ethical call to deobjectify the other and preserve the alterity of the Other is important for the shift from learning about the other to learning from the other, making moments of nonviolent learning possible. The remaining question, however, is whether such a radical commitment to the other can bring both the self and the other back into the interwoven fabric of life.

Facets of Nonviolence

Not incompatible with the notion of social justice, nonviolence is also fundamentally concerned with not doing harm to others, especially those who are marginalized, but its underlying basis is the mutual embededness of everything and everybody in the cycle of life. Philosophically and spiritually, nonviolence as a notion and a practice has existed for thousands of years in different traditions throughout the world (Nagler 2004; Smith-Christopher 2007). Politically, it has become widely recognized due to anticolonial and civil rights movements in the contemporary age, particularly the nonviolent movements in India led by Gandhi. Here *nonviolence* refers to using nonviolent means in collective struggles against colonization or social injustice. In other words, it refers to grassroot social and political movements. Nagler (2004), however, convincingly argues that nonviolent governing both in the United States and in the world has also had a long history. The possibility of practicing nonviolence top-down is particularly informative for teacher educators, who hold institutional and pedagogical authority in the classroom, in moving toward a pedagogy of nonviolence. Although the historical and structural forces influencing nonviolence education are paramount, this article

does not highlight these structural issues because its focus is on nonviolent pedagogical relationships in teacher education. Although a pedagogy of nonviolence is constrained by educational institutions and social systems that are currently not supportive but suppressive of nonviolent relational dynamics, such a pedagogy can also contribute to nonviolent political and social change by teaching against the grain.

When we talk about violence and nonviolence, we usually first associate violence with physical aggression, but the realm of both violence and nonviolence is much broader, involving conceptual, intellectual, emotional, cultural, and political dimensions, among others (Wang 2010). Within and across these dimensions, several facets of nonviolence are particularly important for social justice education. First, nonviolence initiates and sustains a relational dynamic that draws out the compassionate and loving side of humanity to rise above human cruelty and hatred. Second, a nonviolent relationship with the other goes hand-in-hand with a nonviolent relationship with the self. Third, the means and end are united through nonviolent principles that do not use any form of imposition and coercion. I discuss these aspects briefly as follows.

Relational Dynamics

The power of nonviolence lies in the relational dynamics that go beyond modern dualism and a win-or-lose mentality to situate the relationship between the self and the other—individually or collectively—as mutually beneficial in the picture of the whole. Although dealing with cultural differences is crucial to social justice education, Hershock (2009) draws upon the Buddhist notion of nonduality to argue for "a concerted shift from considerations of how much we are the *same* or *different from* each [sic] another to how we might best *differ for* one another" (160; emphasis in original). In a nondualistic view, subject and object, body and mind, and self and other exist interdependently. The importance of difference lies in enriching an intricate interconnectedness of life, rather than asserting the value of the singular over the network. Such a shift to perceiving differences as essential for mutual contribution and shared welfare, as neither needing to be erased (or merely tolerated) nor needing to be elevated or preserved, but as a part of a relationship network, is a shift not only away from the liberal notion of the individual, but also from the identity politics of static diversity or the postmodern radicalization of singularity. When social and cultural differences are viewed in this way, the underlying task of social justice education is to create educational conditions for such relational dynamics of *differing for*, rather than *differing from* to flourish. Although particular differences such as racial or gendered differences must be discussed, the discussions are not only for solving one particular issue, but for changing our ways of relating to others so that we can practice nonviolence in other situations as well.

Nonviolence changes the nature of the relationships in which all participants are involved and evokes all parties' feelings for the connectedness of humanity (and of humanity and nature). The underlying basis of nonviolence is the mutual embededness of everything and everybody in the cycle of life, which the notion of *ubuntu* expresses well. *Ubuntu* is tied to African orality and tradition (for instance, the saying "A person is a person through other persons"), although not particularly to any authoritative text, and connotes a complicated sense of connectedness in which a person is in relation to others horizontally in a community and vertically to ancestors and offspring (van der Walt 2010; Venter 2004). Venter (2004) also points out that such an African community, similar to the Buddhist community, is connected with the universe through sharing the earth, mountain, and sky "with the unborn, [and] the living spirits of the dead" (151). Nonviolence is not about power struggles but about social, moral, and spiritual imaginations for the oneness of body/mind and self/other in a local, national, or international community.

The belief in nonviolence is also a belief in humans' capacity for compassion and love that can dissolve aggression and hatred. Many moving stories in Tutu's (1999) book demonstrate the power of forgiveness and love in transforming pain and hatred. To dissolve social violence, we as educators must have such a profound faith in students and be able to discern what is good in them and let it out. The duality between critical pedagogues and resistant students implies teacher educators' lack of trust in students' own capacity to work through difficulty for critical awareness. If we can enact nonviolent relational dynamics in the classroom, students become participants in building a productive community, and they are more likely to demonstrate their best potential and less likely to respond in self-defensive ways (see students' own stores in book chapters edited by Wang and Olson 2009).

Inner Peace

Not doing violence to oneself is also important for forming a nonviolent relationship. Both Buddhist and Taoist notions of nonviolence require cultivating inner peace as an important step. To be able to interact with the other nonviolently, including both friendly others and hostile others, one must engage in the inner work of transforming anger, hatred, fear, and greed into positive relational orientations. Being able to negotiate conflicts within makes it possible to negotiate conflicts in the outside world, although the inner work and the outer work are usually intertwined and mutually enhance each other.

Jane Addams ([1906] 2007), who was able to question the social and family expectations for a woman of her time and work through her internalized gendered norms to pursue a public life according to the "newer ideals of peace" (5), is an example of such an extraordinary work of integration (see Pinar 2009, Chapter 5, for details). For Mandela ([1994] 2003), decades of prison life did not intensify

his hatred of enemies but transformed his anguish, despair, and anger into a vision for South Africa's independence through negotiation and peace. Both leaders cultivated inner peace to reach outer peace. Their stories are particularly inspiring for students from historically marginalized groups. But inner work is equally important for the mainstream White students, although the emotions and feelings that they need to work through might not be the same as those of the minority students. For instance, guilt and shame often emerge during the process to lock students into defensive mechanisms. Here Howard's (2006) journey of working through difficult knowledge and difficult emotions to become a transformative White teacher and teacher educator is particularly illuminating. Many White students related to his journey in different ways (see students' chapters in Wang and Olson 2009). Only when White students integrate conflicting thoughts and emotions provoked in confronting privilege and their own implications in a system of injustice can they achieve a certain sense of integration to contribute to developing nonviolent relationships in the community.

Teacher educators are not free from such a need for a rigorous process of inner work. We must ask what is behind our own passion for social justice education and our adoption of particular modes of pedagogy. For instance, as a gendered, national, racial minority teaching in American teacher education, I have had to work on myself as I work with my students. It has taken me years to understand how my own implicit sense of loss interacts with my teaching, and such an inner work has continually changed the trajectories of my pedagogy from a more confrontational mode to a more nonviolent mode of teaching (Wang and Olson 2009).

Nonviolent Means

The key to nonviolence is to use nonviolent means to transform the nature of relationality, as Gandhi declares: "I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. . . . I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes" (quoted in Easwaran [1972] 1997, 43). Especially in a conflicting situation, transforming the win-or-lose mentality to enable the cooperation of all parties cannot be achieved by imposing one's own agenda. Nonviolent principles of relying on persuasion, emotional resonance, experiential understanding, or personal examples operate not only at the conscious level, but also at the subconscious level to influence the whole person. Taoism is well known for enacting nonviolent dynamics in a community, which I will discuss further later.

Violence is the result of the collapse of relationality, whether the relationship is human or ecological, physical or psychic, material or spiritual. In other words, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and all other forms of social violence are symptoms of the domination mechanism which desires to erase the other, however the other is defined, in order to preserve the self. To treat such symptoms and

achieve the end of a nonviolent world, the pedagogical means we use cannot be impositional, even when students disagree with our vision of social justice. Otherwise, students may experience the pedagogical demand for change as another form of authoritarian control. In pedagogical situations, teacher educators have a unique opportunity to practice nonviolence from an authority position and thus to model how to establish nonviolent relationships. Nonviolent means, however, do not shy away from challenging students to unlearn the taken-for-granted assumptions in a disciplined way, because the core of nonviolence education is to dissect the norm of violence and carve out compassionate understandings and commitments.

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF NONVIOLENCE

Three facets of nonviolence show a fundamental shift in our view about the nature of relationship: Neither the self nor the other can exist without relationality. A nonviolent approach is not about privileging either the self or the other; it is about reexamining the relational dynamics and reorienting the relational changes to promote the mutual contribution of all to the whole which in turn supports nonviolent and creative individuality and communality. Relationship here becomes organic because it is based upon internal connections across differences and the whole is not an addition of separate equal entities but achieves its integrity by an intricate interweaving of all parts in various shapes.

A decade of teaching multicultural education classes has convinced me that students are more willing to respond with compassion, courage, and the capacity to move forward when nonviolent principles underlie pedagogical arrangements. Embodying the different facets of nonviolence, we need to pay attention to the following aspects to move towards a pedagogy of nonviolence: Integrating the inner and the outer work; shifting from the struggle of opposites to the interdependence of differences; and improvising and using nonviolent teaching strategies. I briefly discuss these aspects here.

Integrating the Inner and the Outer Work

In social justice education, integrating the inner and the outer work is seldom a rational knowing process. More often than not, when learning is arrested, when students refuse to move forward with more understanding, or when students openly challenge the teacher's authority, it is not because they don't have enough knowledge, but precisely because they cannot afford to feel the burden of knowledge. It is not knowing that is at stake; it is students' emotional dissonance that underlies resistance.

Many strong emotions are evoked when students engage social justice literature, including anger, outrage, shame, guilt, shock, fear, sadness, or ambivalence

and inner conflicts. Teaching the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 at Oklahoma State University has been full of emotional dramas for my multicultural education class because the Riot happened right here on the site of the OSU-Tulsa campus, yet few students know about it in detail. Various strong emotions surface during the process of learning from what happened so close to home. As the instructor, I have found it difficult to witness students' emotional responses and to simultaneously deal with my own feelings evoked by confronting the historical trauma. Despite my best efforts to lead students beyond guilt so that they can take on "responsibility without guilt" (Howard 2006, 104), the shame and guilt many White students experience remain, articulated or unarticulated, throughout the course. I have gradually realized that a nonviolent relationship with difficult emotions involve letting students stay with or/and express them. Teacher educators need to be open, nonjudgmental, and receptive in such situations, rather than trying to push those emotions away. As some scholars (Boler 1999; Martusewicz 2001; Todd 2003) argue, such discomfort should become the very site of education. After all, the denial of guilt and the evasion of responsibility can have devastating personal and social consequences.

On the other hand, I argue that the organic interconnectedness permeating life is prior to individual experiencing of guilt, so once the power of integrated life energy is tapped and released, social violence can be addressed through organic relationality without necessarily evoking social guilt. If violence comes from a dualistic, objectified consciousness that dominates and controls the other and the world (Bai and Cohen 2008), then the target of our critique is the dualism that causes human alienation and misery, not any person or group. As Nagler (2004) points out, blaming somebody or a certain group for wrongdoing cannot lead to any enlightenment but usually traps the blamed party in a defensive position. In a multicultural class, for example, it is not unusual for White students to feel blamed when racism is discussed or male students to feel blamed when sexism is discussed. Key to the issue at hand is what, rather than who, leads to violence so that the mechanism of violence can be treated. When students can both separate themselves from the blame and understand their implication in the system of domination, they are more likely to be committed to working against social violence.

An organic approach of healing can be helpful for working through difficult emotions. In the art of Chinese acupuncture, strongly influenced by the Taoist philosophy, needles are not necessarily put into the area that hurts. Needles can be put into another part of the body to relieve the symptoms, and such a treatment away from the problematic area can have long-term effects. This principle is based upon the inner connectedness of the body, as well as its connections with the external environment; therefore, restoring the circulation of *qi*—the vital energy of life—through the whole body is healing. For pedagogical considerations, an identity-based categorical dichotomy between White and Black/people of color, man and woman, poor and rich, straight and queer, and so on, can easily

induce shame and guilt and provoke defensive mechanisms. But if we rely on the integrative power of nonviolence to enable students to get in touch with their connectedness to the other and to the world, if we engage students with whole-being experiences to move them out of their comfort zones, if we situate issues in larger contexts so that students don't feel blamed personally, they are much more willing to initiate new learning.

One of my examples is teaching the book *No Future without Forgiveness* by Desmond Tutu (1999) in juxtaposition with teaching about the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. Students are touched to see how so much pain can be addressed through an interconnected sense of humanity and an integrated sense of community in the South African situation. After reading and discussing this moving book, students are confronted with what happened in their backyard. Such a pedagogical arrangement of bridging knowledge and emotions and of situating our own racial scar in the global struggle is an approach to healing the pain through the circulation of life energy, rather than by paying attention only to the isolated area that hurts. Even though the book directly challenges students' individualistic sense of the self, and some students remain skeptical, they are opened up to another possibility for redressing social wrongs. As they felt strongly about what they were learning, some of them also engaged their families, coworkers, and their own students with discussions about the Tulsa Race Riot and the African notion of *ubuntu*. After the class, some students also chose to teach the Tulsa Race Riot themselves, or create Web sites to spread the influence, or use *ubuntu* as the topic of their master's degree final projects. Such an integration of thought, emotion, and action led to transformations more integrative and less painful.

Getting in touch with interconnectedness, however, may not always protect students from pain. Sometimes, uncovering the intricate and complex connections that have been invisible to students can be shocking, as such a *seeing* may turn their taken-for-granted world upside down. For instance, Loewen's (1995) historical discussions about Native Americans' direct contributions to the American political system of democracy hit right at students' blind spot because the conventional assumption was that the White founding fathers created American democracy single-handedly. Recovery of such stories at the intersections of different cultures is important because when the undercurrent of mutual influence within and across cultural differences is made visible, the domination of one party can no longer hold firm. On such occasions, we cannot avoid pain as it emerges in teaching and must make pedagogical use of it. If students are able to express their strong emotions in a supportive class community and discuss their affective reactions so that words and feelings can be connected, they are less likely to project their own difficulty onto others. And it cannot be overemphasized that teacher educators must continually engage their own inner work throughout the process to accompany students' integrative inner and outer work.

Shifting From the Struggle of Opposites to the Interdependence of Differences

Relational dynamics is a key aspect of a pedagogy of nonviolence. The *yin*/*yang* dynamics in Taoism are informative here. *Yin* and *yang* are opposite yet complementary cosmic forces, the interaction of which gives birth to all the phenomena of the universe. *Yin* signifies darkness, softness, passivity, and femininity; *yang* signifies brightness, hardness, activity, and masculinity. What underlies *yin*/*yang* dynamics is the mutual transformation of opposites based upon the interdependence of differences. In the *Tai-ji* symbol demonstrating this dynamic, there is a smaller dot of *yang* within the realm of *yin* and a smaller dot of *yin* within the realm of *yang*. When *yang* goes to the extreme, *yang* can be changed into *yin*, and *vice versa*. Due to this built-in element of openness to the opposite, opposites are prevented from becoming enemies to each other but are inherently connected. The *yin*/*yang* interplay is the basis not only for the Taoist interconnected worldview, but also for Taoist leadership by not forcing change. When a leader follows the *Tao* to accomplish a task, it happens "naturally" without effort (Lao Tzu 1992, Chapter 17). If accumulated masculine (in both men and women) aggression leads to its downfall and accumulated feminine (in both women and men) gentleness leads to sustaining strength, then nonviolence is the key to the secret of sustaining life energy for individual well-being, social welfare, and ecological harmony.

In social justice education, categorical distinctions often lead to opposite pairs struggling against each other. A strong sense of a power struggle often marks students on the either side of the struggle. Although various forms of unequal power relationships must be disrupted, a Taoist approach is not for one side to win the battle; the approach is to demonstrate the mutuality of opposites and the changeability of conflicting sides and to reveal the fatal vulnerability of the forceful to prevent aggression from becoming harmful. In the broader context, the win-or-lose mentality has been intensified by external attacks on public education and internal complexity with identity-based competition for a representative presence. Being able to see conflicting directions at the same time, to come up with adaptive responses to facilitate the flow beyond conflict, and to pull tensionality back into the whole becomes even more important. The Taoist interplay between *yin* and *yang* is enabled by an inherent bridge between opposites, and a pedagogy of nonviolence is dependent upon building internal connections between and among differences. Such a relational, fluid, and interdependent view goes against violence by dissolving its basis in the domination of one side over the other side.

Enacting such relational dynamics requires rethinking the notion of identity from an interdependent viewpoint. Like an animal shedding its skin for a new birth, a Taoist leader's wisdom is not achieved by intellectual or emotional attachment, but by dissolving attachment to any narrowly defined identity, layer by layer, to achieve insights into the whole of intricate interconnections. The notion of no-self in Buddhism also suggests that there is no fixed essence or identity because all

existence is impermanent, in flux, and relational. Transcending a separate sense of the self to reach a state of no-self involves a lifelong process of personal cultivation towards enlightenment and compassion. The Taoist and Buddhist nonattachment to a rigid sense of identity not only directly challenges identity politics but also invites us to rethink the issue regarding the identity-building of marginalized students and the identity awareness of mainstream students. For instance, if a White male student with rich diversity experiences does not identify with the mainstream culture but chooses to start with a sense of interconnectedness when approaching racial issues, should he be redirected to critiquing Whiteness as the starting point? Critical multicultural educators' categorical demand that White students critique Whiteness and that minority students embrace coloredness may block the multiple potentiality and pathways of nonidentity and no-self in engaging nonviolent social change. Identity building in social justice education from the different vantage points of students can be helpful under certain contexts, but we need to avoid categorical claims. We also need to work with students to complicate and destabilize social identities to build an element of opening within to what is different outside. Tutu's (1999) definition of *ubuntu* also demonstrates well such a relational ontology:

> A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are. (31)

Such an interdependent view of humanity forms a stark contrast to a competitive mentality; it sees what is affirmative to the other as affirmative of the self and what is damaging to the other as damaging to the self. In such a view, differences are for enriching a community, not for competing against others. To connect students with such a spirit of *differing for one other*, rather than *from each other*, teacher educators can select materials embodying the interconnectedness of life and let students' engagement with texts and with one another initiate the process of unlearning and learning. In addition to using emotionally appealing materials, theoretical works can also serve a similar purpose. I have been using Nagler's (2004) *The Search for a Nonviolent Future* for two years, challenging students to understand social justice from an interdependent view and envision their own multicultural teaching from a nonviolent approach. Students' discussions of this text have led to intriguing and heated debates among students from various angles. The emotional resonance/dissonance of *No Future without Forgiveness* and the provocative ideas of *The Search for a Nonviolent Future* both have served well in inviting students to see the world differently even if they disagree. When such materials were combined with students' local investigation of the Tulsa Race Riots of 1921, students were invited to see relational dynamics through the view of interconnectedness.

Improvising and Using Nonviolent Teaching Strategies

Teacher educators can adopt various teaching strategies to infuse the interconnected energy into learning, not to force change by conversion, but to engage students in a heartfelt process of experiencing, understanding, and acting upon the world differently. Such a process is usually uncertain, ambiguous, and full of surprises, and students need compassionate guidance in their journeys. As I have discussed, choosing materials that embody the integrative power of life (literature, film, local history, or theories promoting dynamic relationships) and using activities that encourage students' whole-being experiences (writing autobiographies, role playing nonviolent social interactions, engaging in community actions or local investigation projects, or sharing peers' multicultural journeys) can be effective in moving students toward the integration of body/mind, self/other, and inner/outer works. No specific method holds the key to enacting nonviolent dynamics in teaching, but the underlying orientation of nonviolence can make many strategies successful. Without any set formula for enacting nonviolent principles in teaching, teacher educators' ability to improvise situation-specific pedagogical responses becomes important. The pedagogical relationship itself can become a nonviolent means.

Social justice education in general advocates a proactive stance toward changing the world, but social action and meditative unlearning need to be combined to achieve the integration of the inner and outer work and enact nonviolent relational dynamics. Meditation, *Tai-ji*, and yoga are well-acknowledged practices for inner peace; if we cannot use these practices directly in the classroom, we certainly can encourage students to engage in contemplative, whole-body, whole-being experiences in other forms. *Currere* (Pinar 1994), as a particular form of autobiographical study, combines meditative sensitivity and critical reflection. When I used it in my class as a whole-semester self-study project with social and cultural differences as the focus of reflection (Wang and Olson 2009) , it proved effective in not only bringing clarity and insights but also in promoting productive emotional work to reach a new level of multicultural awareness.

Another useful method is to role-play conflicting situations with the purpose of finding alternative paths out of conflicts. I used small group studies of cases, which were either taken from casebooks or happened in students' educational work, and asked students to address the needs of each participant in a conflicting situation. Students discuss what basic needs of each party in the conflict are reflected in the situation, think about how to negotiate and meet each person's needs without anybody taking out aggression against others, and write up an agreement among all parties to live together more peacefully. This method can be enriched by Rosenberg's (2003) nonviolent communication process, which involves four components: observing, feeling, uncovering needs, and making a specific request. The self expressing these components and receiving them from

the other leads to a cycle of communication and mutual understanding. In such a process, one does not impose one's own agenda because one is working on the self, rather than blaming the other; however, neither does one assume that the other is unknown either but invites the other to participate in such a communication. Teacher educators can also learn specific techniques from Rosenberg's strategies about particular ways of questioning that encourage students to go beneath their defensiveness or aggression to understand their own needs and desires.

To establish nonviolent pedagogical relationships, the teacher educator's responsive and responsible connectedness with students is crucial to providing both support and challenge. As a responsive loving guide, the teacher educator accompanies students' difficult journey and holds on to their struggles. As a responsible, compassionate critic, the teacher educator is not afraid of being interruptive, as learning happens at the site where one resists learning. Such attentiveness to bringing the unaware potential into existence may not be pleasant immediately, but the teacher's nonviolent stance is not about being nice, but about being educative for the long-term effects of teaching–learning relationships. In my classes, the instructor and students establish discussion guidelines and expect an uncomfortable learning space from the beginning, and we work on accepting difference and dissonance as a natural element in a nonlinear curve of learning throughout the semester. I also make efforts to maximize the interactions between students and texts and among students throughout the class, to decenter the teacher's authority. I firmly believe in students' ability to unlearn the legacy of violence and construct nonviolent social relationships even if they resist my pedagogical efforts. As I improvise my teaching strategies according to students' need and the pedagogical situation each day, I have learned to hold on to students' learning curves through "pedagogical thoughtfulness" (Aoki 2005, 196). Even when shut-down moments happen, I still choose to open up conversations that may not be effective at the time of eruption, but may sink in later.

It is worthwhile to mention here that a pedagogy of nonviolence is not a given ideal for others to follow; it is a rigorous process of both inner and outer work in which teacher and student must be willing to engage individually and communally to work out their unique pathways. There is no step-by-step model to follow, and the specific means, as long as they follow nonviolent principles, can be various but effective. Moreover, nonviolence usually shows its effect in the long run, so it may not work immediately in teaching situations, and when teacher educators have students for just one semester, results might not be visible at the end of the class. But over time and collectively, social justice education can be better served by a pedagogy of nonviolence.

In summary, this article critically examines the dualism in critical theory and the radicalization of the otherness in post-modern theory and proposes a nonviolent approach to social justice education with its emphasis on nondual relationality. This approach challenges both teacher educators and (preservice or in-service)

teachers to go beyond any separate sense of the self, whether in a personal or a group sense, layer by layer, to get in tune with the interconnected pulse of life. Informed by the wisdom of *ubuntu*, Buddhism, and Taoism, I identify three important facets of nonviolence: relational dynamics of differing for one another, inner peace as the basis for outer peace, and the necessity of nonviolent means. To enact a pedagogy of nonviolence based upon such a conception of nonviolence, I address the following important aspects of educational work: The inner work of transforming difficult emotions into life-affirmative energies go hand in hand with outer work of social action; The mentality of competitiveness is dissolved for an interconnected approach to social differences; The educational means of nonviolent strategies are improvised and used to accompany students' ongoing process of learning difficult knowledge. I argue that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of injustice are symptoms of social violence. To heal these symptoms, we must treat the root of violence, and it takes nothing less than committed and consistent efforts to engage nonviolence pedagogy in social justice education to empty out the metanarrative of domination and to co-create a more compassionate world.

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