

PERFORMING EDUCATION

HOW A SHIFT FROM CONTENT TO FORM
MADE PEACE IN FOUR WARRING COMMUNITIES

*In saying these words we are doing something, namely marrying,
rather than reporting something, namely that we are marrying.*

- JL Austin

In the philosophy of language and in contemporary anthropology, the concept of performativity – that words and symbolic acts *constitute* the world as much as they *represent* it – has opened new ways to perceive meaning, identity, and social relationships. With this brief essay, I want to think through what it would mean to apply this insight to consider civic and peace education: what happens if we think about it as a *performance of peace*, and not merely instruction in how to make peace? This hypothesis may sound like mere common sense, but when we look at some of the most successful peacemaking in Latin American shantytowns and favelas, I think we will find the consequences to be as radical as those developed from J.L. Austin's simple essays on "how to do things with words."

The second element of my hypothesis comes from Latin American popular education: Paulo Freire and educators working in social movements around the continent have shown us that students not only learn the *content* of instruction, but are also constituted by the *form* education takes. As Freire points out, if a student only repeats lessons on autonomy and freedom while imprisoned in silence behind a desk, he has really only learned hypocrisy and passivity. The performance of education often matters more than its content.

Through brief case studies of four Latin American success stories in which I have participated in at least a marginal way, I want to examine the way *that attention to form and performance not merely teaches about, but also manifests, peace*. In the same way, a class does not merely teach some thing, be it an idea, a practice, or a change in perspective; it also performs the act of bringing people together to form new relationships. Traditionally, civic and peace education concentrates on the *content* of the learning –

what the students will learn to help them make peace in their communities – but I want to shift our thinking to consider what the *form* of the teaching does. Education does not merely refer to a content, but also enacts a model for relations between people, and it is this performance of new relations which my work with gangs, ex-street children, and ex-child soldiers throws into stark relief.

In the first part of this essay, I will show how street children in Argentina taught the broader public about life on the margins of society, not through the message of their words, but by their actions of selling newspapers on the street. Second, will address the intersection between conflict mediation and education in what had been the most violent shantytown of Medellín. Third, I'll consider the failures of classes against violence in the favela of Santa Marta in Rio de Janeiro, and how a transformation in the form of civic education worked to undermine the power of the mafia that controlled the neighborhood. And finally, I will describe our work with ex-child soldiers in Colombia, and how attention to performativity transformed the group. Covering four cases so quickly, I know that I cannot present a comprehensive argument about any of them; instead, I hope to present the outline of a new structure by which we can understand civic education, provoking discussion about how we can improve it.

Córdoba, Argentina

When we think about civic education, we often picture an expert who uses his knowledge to teach people in a violent area how to make peace. In contrast, my first story goes in the opposite motion, from the margins to the center. Over the last several years, in the face of a perceived (and sometimes real) crime wave, many Latin American cities have contracted professional security consultants from the United States, “experts” with a supposed panacea for crime and violence. Led by the Manhattan Institute, these consultants have promoted a “Zero Tolerance” model, one supposedly based on the success of New York, but in fact much more repressive and less community oriented. “Crime” has replaced “National Security” at the center of a rhetorical system, but the results are often similar to what we saw in the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s and ‘80s: forced disappearance, constraints on civil rights, and the criminalization of dissent.

In 2005, the Manhattan Institute came to Córdoba, Argentina, offering the same

prescription it had offered in so many other cities. Under the “theory... that public disorder, like graffiti, leads to greater social pathology if left unattended,”¹ these policies effectively lead to the criminalization of homelessness and informal businesses, highly armed police on the street, and regular invasions of the shantytowns. In a formal statement, the consultants declared that street children and other homeless people destroyed the social fabric so much that they could only be considered “urban terrorists”. City Hall prepared to implement their recommendations.

Within days, the streets filled with protesters: not just homeless people and human rights advocates, but the broad middle class of the city. In response to this broad-based social movement, the mayor not only backed down from the repressive plan; he proposed a new series of social services and micro-lending for people that live and work on the streets. Over the last half dozen years, I have worked in many cities proposing a Zero Tolerance policy, but Córdoba is the only one to consider and *reject* the strategy. In answering the question “why?”, we must turn to a magazine sold by homeless and working adolescents on the streets of Córdoba: *La Luciérnaga*.

The content of the magazine mattered in the debate over Zero Tolerance: *La Luciérnaga* had run article after article about the dynamics of life in the shantytowns and on the street, so its readers were sympathetic to the plight of the poor. More important, however, was the *act* of selling. Several years ago, I taught several ex-street boys in Córdoba how to make documentary films, so that they could teach other kids how they had gotten off the street. The magazine’s founder, Oscar Arias, appears in one of the movies to describe how important the act of selling was in the educational process:

“The children, their magazines in hand, re-signify the content of La Luciérnaga. You read an article about the economics of education, and then you ask the vendor, ‘Do your brothers and sisters go to school?’

‘I do’

‘Who pays for their books and uniforms? You do?’

‘Yes’

‘And you’re still in school, too?’

‘Absolutely...’ ”

¹ <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cci.htm#03>, accessed on July 19, 2007.

People walking through the streets and galleries of the city didn't learn about poverty in abstract terms: they read about it, and then talked directly to children suffering exclusion.

Hernán , one of the young men who learned how to make films, described selling the magazine:

"You don't get much time to meet people when they just stop for a red light. Washing windshields, generally it was just a 'no' or they would turn on their wipers and that was it. But with the magazine, it was different. People would talk with you; they would ask questions; they might tell about what was happening in their lives." He made a point of reading the magazine carefully each month, so that he could speak with anyone that rolled down a window. "People looked at me differently then. I learned how the magazine can transform society."

The magazine became the catalyst for a relationship between two people or two groups that would otherwise never interact. The words in the magazine, and the words they inspire between the buyer and the vendor, break down the class apartheid that rules so much of contemporary Latin America. The middle and upper class came to know the poor on a level that, if not truly equal, approached equality, and they came to see the virtues and to appreciate the struggles of people outside their ken.

In most cities, people see poor teenagers as criminals and gangsters – a threat to the city – and this stereotype perfectly serves the goals of repression and Zero Tolerance. In Córdoba, when people thought of poor teenagers, it was different: they thought of the young men and women that sold them *La Luciérnaga*. They knew hard-working, good kids, hardly the "urban terrorists" described by the Manhattan Institute. Not only on a small scale, but also on a large one, Hernán was right: the magazine had transformed society.

Very seldom do we consider selling a magazine to be a form of education, but the act of selling taught the general public more about poor children than any words might have done. As Austin points out, when we think in terms of what a word or phrase means, we judge it in terms of "true" or "false", depending on its correspondence

with reality.² Had the magazine merely published an essay by an academic contending that "marginalized children are hard workers," people would have debated the truth or falsity of the statement based on their own experiences and prejudices. However, the hardworking young vendors of the magazine were not presenting a falsifiable hypothesis. Their action lay outside of the realm of true and false; instead of reporting, it built relationships with people the kids would not otherwise know. Those relationships themselves – not the content of the conversation or the magazine, but the mere *fact* of interaction – served as the central element of education.

Had the Córdoba city council implemented the Zero Tolerance strategy, we might have seen Córdoba go down the same path taken by many Brazilian cities, where police repression strengthens the gangs, who gain legitimacy because they claim to defend poor people from the depredations of the police.³ In fact, however, the resistance to the plan brought the city together as it never had before, and as we'll see in the next section, this "being together" is one of the most important elements of an education that performs, instead of simply teaching, peace.⁴

Medellín, Colombia

After the death of Pablo Escobar, the drug mafias in Medellín collapsed into chaos. The *sicarios* (hired killers) who had worked for him now sold their services to the highest bidder, while small, fragmented gangs fought to defend their territory or conquer other neighborhoods. The popular militias responded to the crisis by creating an army stronger than any of the gangs, then killing the gang members who would not join them, a process so bloody that it still gives people chills when they talk about it. Soon afterward, the militias themselves began to sell drugs and involve themselves in the same crime they had promised to end.

Poor neighborhoods in Medellín had long suffered from this logic of decadence, corruption, fragmentation, and then the appearance of a new powerful gang... who

² Austin, J.L. *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford U. Press, 1962, pp. 5, 11.

³ See particularly Marcos Alvito, *As Cores de Acari*, Doctoral Thesis for the Universidade de São Paulo, 2001; Luiz Eduardo Soares, *Meu Casaco de General*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2000; Kurt Shaw, *Trincheiras Cidadãs*. Santa Fe and Florianópolis: Shine a Light, 2007

⁴ Hernán's film is available at <http://www.shinealight.org/Puterman.html>.

would then become corrupt and fragment, opening the way for yet another gang. In 1994, in the Moravia shantytown – perhaps the most violent neighborhood in the world in the early 1990s – something new happened. A group of young people had been learning about conflict mediation, so they proposed an unusual idea to the leaders of the militia. Since the militia leaders were their childhood friends, these young mediators knew that the militia had to resolve dozens of conflicts each day, everything from rent disputes to questions about leaky sewers or the price of water. The militia leaders hated to resolve these conflicts, because they thought that it distracted them from their more important tasks of maintaining order and making money, so they accepted the proposal to forward any conflicts on to the young mediators.

According to the young mediators, at the time no one anticipated the deep consequences of the treaty between the militia and the nascent Center for Conflict Mediation; they had merely seen that the gang often killed or exiled people judged to be in the wrong, and wanted to find a more just solution to the simple conflicts any neighborhood faces. In fact, however, they soon discovered that the act of conflict mediation gave legitimacy to the power of the militia, which had come to serve as the state in the anarchic shantytown. When people went to the gang with their problems, they accepted and affirmed that the gang had the right to judge; that act served as the basic affirmation of political legitimacy. Suddenly, though, when people went to the young mediators, they conferred political legitimacy on another, non-violent, group. Having lost its support in the community, the militia was forced into negotiations with the city government and, six months later, laid down its arms in exchange for the promise of a new school for the neighborhood. Fourteen years later, Moravia is one of the most prosperous and safe working class neighborhoods in the city, and though many people still live in poverty, the peace has held.

In the past, I have written about this process as a kind of military strategy, where the Center for Conflict Mediation looked for the weakest point in the militia's armor, then collaborated with the militia to bring about its own demise.⁵ Here, however, I would like to consider the mediation process as a kind of civic education based not on content, but on performance.

Even during the worst days in Moravia, when forty young men might die over the course of a week, even the gangs and militia justified their actions as "for the good

⁵ Trincheiras Cidadãs. Santa Fe and Florianópolis: Shine a Light, 2007. Chapter 5.

of the community." The militia insisted that its practice of "social cleansing" was the best way to improve life in the community, and though people often told the armed leaders that their might be a better way to peace, few leaders believed them. In the terms developed in my discussion of Córdoba, when people presented an argument that might be true or false, the militia knew quite well that arms were the only way to clean the neighborhood of the gangs and other "degenerates." More significantly, the people living in the neighborhood also believed that violence was the only solution to the war that was killing so many of their sons. Though the church, the local government, the school, and even local leaders tried to teach peace, the people "knew" that the only way out of the war was more violence.

In this context, civic education cannot merely take place in the classroom. Instead of instruction, it required a fundamental shift in the way people related to their neighborhood. As a first step, the population learned that young people without guns were, in fact, much better at resolving conflicts than the militia. More people left the negotiating table satisfied, and, unlike in the past, none left it dead. This action, this education through doing, taught peace much more effectively than the hundreds of classes on human rights and non-violence they had attended in church and school.

The second step, however, was even more important: the Center for Conflict Mediation began to plan its own obsolescence. As they had mediated conflicts between people in Moravia, they learned about the traditional places people would go when they were mad at their neighbors: the bar, the barber or hairdresser, the football field. In some cases, the bartender would offer good advice, but more often his words would add fire to the flames. In order to democratize mediation, the young mediators trained these foci of community activity⁶ as mediators, and soon barber shops and football fields became spaces for mediation.

The Center for Conflict Mediation broadened the idea of education to include not only instruction, but also any activity performed to create the subjectivity of people in the neighborhood.⁷ What practices, for instance, created violent subject? After seeing how badly resolved conflicts – whether by the militia, bartenders, or hairdressers – could turn simple disagreements into a bloodbath, they worked to transform those spaces so that people could practice and learn other ways to relate to each other. After

⁶ It is worthwhile to note that these trainings used in a very traditional, content-focused form of peace education.

⁷ *Educar* in Spanish maintains much of its Latin flavor of "leading someone towards." Child-rearing, for instance, a practice that goes far beyond mere instruction, is referred to as *educación*.

seeing that young men often joined gangs because they needed to feel pride in their street or neighborhood, they created football leagues based on the same principle, bringing people together to compete, but regulating the field with good coaches and referees, so that violence would not be an option. The lived practice of the community educated people more than any words, because it formed their subjectivity, their way of being in the world and relating to other people. By transforming the educator in subtle and targeted ways, the militia, the gangs, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood learned how to make peace.^{8,9}

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In the late 1990s, the favela of Santa Marta (known also as the Morro de Dona Marta) served as a headquarters of the feared Comando Vermelho, one of the loosely organized gangs that control drug trafficking in Rio de Janeiro. Wars between rival gangs or invasions by the notoriously corrupt state police made the community one of the most violent places in the city¹⁰. However, by 2002, the favela had become relatively peaceful again: trafficking persisted, but the level of violence had reduced dramatically. In 2004, I helped Allan Basílio and Glauber Martins, two young intellectuals and community leaders in Santa Marta, to make several films on peacemaking in the favela. In this chapter, I will try to bring their theories into dialogue with the idea of performing education.

Basílio and Martins saw many projects come into Santa Marta to promote peace and reduce crime, but few of them had anything but a momentary impact. The gang

⁸ Judith Butler, whose work to bring the concept of performativity into feminism revolutionized gender studies in the 1990s, offers us an unexpected insight into this process: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results.” In the same way that most people see dresses or modesty or passivity as the inevitable consequence of being a woman, the inhabitants of Moravia “knew” that violence was the inevitable result of violent people. However, the work of the Center for Conflict Mediation showed that violence did not so much emerge from a violent person as it constituted him.

⁹ I worked with the Center for Conflict Mediation to make several films on the history of the peacemaking process. The most important for this essay are “La Bombonera: Corazón de Moravia” (on football as a path to peace, <http://www.shinealight.org/Bombonera.html>) and *Trincheras Ciudadanas*, an overview of the history of the peace movement in the city: <http://www.shinealight.org/DocuMoravia.html>

¹⁰ Luck Dowdney, in his powerful *Children of the Drug Trade* (Rio de Janeiro: ISER/Viva Rio, 2003), shows that the death rate for children and adolescents in Rio de Janeiro in the 1990s was higher than the death rate in almost any civil war in that time period.

quickly realized that these programs were designed to undermine their political and economic power; it wasn't a hard conclusion to reach, because the programs' directors said exactly that in their grant proposals and in their outreach to the community. Seeing that anti-violence education was really anti-gang education, gang leaders did all that they could to undermine the programs, discouraging people from going, preventing meeting notices from being posted, and threatening organizers. These armed groups have strong roots in the favelas, know each of the inhabitants by name, and know how to manipulate clientelistic networks. In short, in a battle between a poor NGO and the Comando Vermelho, the gang is always going to win.

The gang leaders had known Basílio and Martins since they were schoolchildren together, so both gossip and the occasional direct conversation made it clear that the gang members knew they were on "*o caminho errado*" (the wrong path): after all, the slogan of the commando Vermelho is "the right side of the wrong life" (*o lado certo da vida errada*). The young community leaders saw that the clearest manifestation of this ambiguity in relationship to their own work was that *the gang members didn't want their own children to join the gang*. In fact, they would often say that their "wrong life" was a necessary sacrifice so that their children would not have to suffer in the same way that they had. The gang members wanted their kids to have a better life, and like other inhabitants of the favela, they saw education as one of the keys to making things better.

Kids join drug trafficking gangs early in Rio de Janeiro, often beginning by running errands when they are between eight and twelve years old¹¹, and when asked, they often say that they joined the gang because it gave them respect, money, and hope for a better life for them or their families.¹² The gang attracts kids because it is the only – or at least most visible – agent in the favela that can provide what kids want, but if children have other alternatives to find respect and hope, those alternatives will attract them as well. And, in the case of Santa Marta, "Even [the gang members] want alternatives for their children," as Basílio put it, so when he, Martins, and several other young leaders, in collaboration with the NGO Instituto Promundo, began work to strengthen community pre-schools, after school programs, and sports teams, the gang did not oppose them. In fact, the gang supported the initiative, and Martins and Basílio

¹¹ See Dowdney, *Children of the Drug Trade*.

¹² In many interviews with Dowdney and his team, gang members reported that they actually discouraged children from joining, because they knew it was not a good life. However, when the children persisted, they found odd jobs and errands for them to do. I heard similar stories in Rio de Janeiro.

had to walk a tightrope to make sure they kept the gang at arm's distance.

After several years of this new emphasis on education, the gang found itself with a major problem: it didn't have enough young recruits to compensate for the losses of soldiers in jail or dead in battle. Kids liked football and samba and helping younger kids even more than they liked the adventure and money of the gang. As its members waned, so did its power, and soon other factions of the Comando Vermelho became more powerful; Santa Marta was no longer a prime target in the gang wars, which had now moved on to Rocinha, the Complexo do Alemão, and other favelas.

We see a clear case here of education making peace, even though the education developed in the favela had nothing to do with the anti-violence, anti-gang classes that had failed so miserably. The kids weren't learning peace: they were learning football and drumming and math and how to care for babies. But because they chose that alternative – an alternative even the gang members wanted for their children – they brought peace to a warring favela. It wasn't the content of education that made the difference, but its mere presence. By performing a compelling education that kids liked, and felt gave them hope, the community leaders made peace.

The second key to this process was that education brought people together. Just as in Medellín, when the inhabitants of the neighborhood encountered each other in samba schools and football games and community preschools, they talked through their problems, organized after-school tutoring and child care, planned pot luck dinners... and in the process, resolved conflicts among themselves and practiced a minimal kind of self-government. And as other foci of power emerged in the neighborhood, people came to realize that they had alternatives to the gang: other people and organizations could provide work, services, and purpose. Once again, the mere act of coming together to educate their children formed a key to peace.¹³

Child soldiers (Bogotá, Colombia)

It hadn't taken us many days working with the group of ex-child soldiers to see how they had re-created a military hierarchy as they tried to make movies. The older

¹³ Basílio and Martins's films are available on line. "Ainda Eles querem Alternativas" is at <http://www.shinealight.org/Alternativas.html> and "A comunidade unida" is at <http://www.shinealight.org/Unidos.html>

teenagers, most of whom had already moved up the chain of command in the FARC, ELN, or paramilitaries, claimed titles like "director" and "director of photography" for themselves, while the younger kids, or those new to the group, were commanded to act or film or record sound just as their lieutenants wished. The younger teenagers wore resentful grimaces as they did their work or sat back and refused to do anything, while the older teenagers screamed at them or complained to the adult educator. Everyone had learned the basics of cinema well; they also knew how to talk about peace and the need to make themselves a new life outside of the armed groups where they had lived for many years. Unfortunately, they had created the same military logic they claimed they wanted to escape.

Taller de Vida, the brilliant Colombian organization where these kids were learning video (and their peers were learning photography, dance, and theater) had asked us to work with them for three months, trying to develop a new model for using the arts in peace education. Taller de Vida has long been one of the most innovative NGOs in Latin America, using the arts as a way for refugee children to reconstruct their lives – and, as the program puts it, reconstruct their humanity – after they escaped from the war. Their theater and dance groups, made up of refugee children, tour Europe regularly, teaching audiences about the Colombian civil war while providing a way for children to elaborate and transform their suffering, turning themselves from victims into political agents. This model had worked in certain ways with child soldiers, as we could see from the quality of the filming and the participants' ability to talk critically about war, but the military hierarchy in the group prevented the sort of transformative change among child soldiers that Taller de Vida had been able to realize among child refugees.

We had set ourselves the challenge of making a full length fictional movie, written, acted, and filmed by the ex-soldiers, no simple task for kids who had held guns, not cameras, in their hands not 5 months before. Yet as we began to work on the script, the same three young men dominated every conversation, imposed their ideas on their theater games, and tried to order the other twelve to obey. As these three became more authoritarian, the others became more passive, often simply lying on the floor in feigned or real slumber. We could quickly see why more than half of ex-child soldiers in programs managed by the Colombian government ran away to join the armed groups again, while few children developed the social or professional skills for

any work besides private security. Most of the students had quickly adopted language from Taller de Vida, and spoke eloquently about the need for peace and justice, but they continued to treat other members of the group as if it were an army. As one of the younger members of the group put it, "For all I try to leave the war, you won't let me."

The breakthrough in the project came when we were able to deconstruct the military hierarchies that had developed in the class, making the form of the class manifest the same message as its content, or, in other words, *for education to perform as well as instruct*. Everything from writing the script to acting to filming to directing the scenes was not only a collective endeavor, but a rotating one. No one person would film for more than one scene in a row, direction would rotate among every member of the group, and every participant had to act in front of the camera. The script itself reflected something of each ex-child soldier's story, and the group together agreed on a way to transform the structure of these stories into a script we could film in the city.

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, while showing that the Augustinian picture of language – that words represent things, and that the connection comes by the act of ostensibly pointing – fails to consider the way that people use words in every day contexts, Ludwig Wittgenstein dedicates several pages to the issue of pain. When someone says "Ouch" or "that hurts," we seldom consider the "truth criteria" to establish whether there is an adequate correspondence between signifier and signified. The ethical response to another's pain is not to think about whether the word points to anything concrete (or whether that "thing" it points to is the same that I feel); the ethical (and most usual) response is to offer help.¹⁴

This seemingly academic discussion on the correspondence theory of meaning and truth had a great impact on the participants in the group. As soldiers, they had to suspend their ethical response to pain: if the paramilitaries were taking over a town, for instance, and someone claimed to be hurt, the boys had been trained to see whether that pain was real or merely a stratagem of war. The same was true in a battle: the pain of their comrades was to be judged as representation and evaluated as true or false. However, in the movie – and the theater games we used to create it – the actors played the role of other people in pain, as well as themselves in pain, and in those scenes, they always created a character who reacted to the other's pain in an ethical way – not

¹⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, NY: Prentice Hall, 1973, comments 244-304

judging it, but offering to help. In this way, pain was no longer about representation and truth, but about human relationships.

The second issue elucidated by Wittgenstein's critique of the Augustinian picture has to do with the nature of representation in war. Traditionally, the army represents its country, while each soldier “represents the best of that county's youth” and the Lieutenant represents his company to those up the chain of command. In an ideologically based civil war, the FARC and ELN represent the proletariat or the peasants, while the paramilitaries represent the forces of stability, order, and piety. In this play of representing and being represented, human beings and their relationships are lost: and as we know from wars and genocides throughout history, people are willing to engage in atrocities in the name of something, that they would never commit on their own.

We found that a similar dynamic reigned when the ex-child soldiers played a fixed role in the making of the movie, representing the directorial function, for instance. Occupying that position, the older boys often abused their authority or commanded by caprice. When, however, they moved into other positions – actors, sound techs, camera-man – they began to treat people as people again. And more significantly, when the younger members of the group became screenwriters and had a hand in the direction of the movie, they abandoned their stoic acceptance and passive resistance, becoming the protagonists of the movie and of the process by which it was made.

Here again, the education that helped children escape war and violence did not refer to peace. In other classes, they had already learned that content, but it had not changed the way they related to the world. What mattered was the performance of education, the way that autonomy and respect were no longer mere signs to be manipulated, but an embodied experience.¹⁵

Conclusion

In the process of examining four very different cases of where education played an important role in peacemaking, we have seen that a focus on the content of education,

¹⁵ The trailer and “making of” documentary for the movie *Ruleta de la Vida* are available at www.shinealight.org/ruleta.html.

on the message learned by the student, can often lead us astray. Education must also be performative, an action and not merely a representation. We saw that:

1. In Córdoba, the act of selling newspapers built relationships across class barriers, tearing down the prejudices against the poor that have led to disastrous Zero Tolerance policies in many Latin American cities.
2. After dozens of seminars and workshops on peacemaking and conflict resolution, the inhabitants of Moravia only learned that they could govern themselves and resolve their own conflicts when teenagers showed them that they could do the work better than the local militia.
3. Gangs in Santa Marta opposed any attempt at anti-violence education, but supported pre-schools and after school programs, but once children had these options, they no longer joined the gang, undermining its power.
4. Peace education with ex-child soldiers made little impact on their lives until we deconstructed the military and corporate structure of representation, allowing each child to become an autonomous actor and thinker.

Each of these cases merits much more attention than I can give it in a brief essay, so I leave these words more as a provocation and a challenge than a proof. Peace and civic education needs to dedicate as much effort to its form as its content, so that students can embody, and not merely learn, democracy and equality.