Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 21st Century: The Pedagogical Possibilities and Limitations for Transformative Education

By

Paul Banahene Adjei

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Graduate Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The current trend of global violence and their impact on families and communities as well as the field of university education is scary for a society that is struggling with this false sense of apathy and complacency. How did the ordinary people get seduced to the idea that there is no way out of this global assault? How then do we extricate ourselves from this “tortured consciousness” (Asante, 2007) and this false sense of “nihilism” (West, 1994) and recoup this “incommensurable loss” (Simmons, 2010) to global violence? Even more crucial, where is the place of education in retrieving this incommensurable loss while providing hope and possibility for a better future? Provoked by the desire to have answers to these questions, the dissertation relies on the knowledge and experiences of twenty qualitatively selected university activists and existing literature to critically examine the non-violent praxes of Gandhi and King, Jr. and their pedagogical implications for transformative university education. The dissertation further draws on the knowledge of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X to bring complex and nuanced readings to violence and non-violence. The dissertation notes that violence and non-violence are not mutually exclusive as already known. The dissertation also notes that while resistive violence may be justified, it does not necessarily guarantee true transformation,
reconciliation, and healing. Instead, love, humility, truth, dialogue, non-violent direct action, discipline, and spirituality are salient in achieving true transformation in university activism. The dissertation further observes that educational activism is more than walking on the street with placards to protest against institutional violence. Sometimes, the secret activism that is done strategically within the corridors of power can achieve more far-reaching results than the open protest against power on the street. The dissertation concludes with six key non-violent strategies that can help in social and political mobilization of university students for transformative university education.
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If there is any praise for this dissertation, these individuals have earned it; however, if there is any mistake, it is my doing and I fully accept the blame.
CHAPTER ONE — INTRODUCTION

Context

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. have been championed by many social commentators and educators as “remarkable ethical individuals” and “Great Souls” (see Hunt, 2005, p.56; Brown, 1993, p.11; also see Brown, 1972; 1977; 1989; 2000). Gandhi, for instance, is viewed by many people in the world as the epitome of the highest moral behaviour with respect to means and ends (see Alinsky, 1972; Nagler, 2004; Holmes and Gan, 2005; Kurlansky, 2006). Stuart Nelson once wrote that nowhere in human history and time, perhaps over the past thousand years, have humanity known one with a greater compassion for his or her fellow human beings than Gandhi (see Nelson, 1975, p.58). Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel also prophesied that “the whole future of America depends on the impact and influence of Dr. King” (West, 2011, para.3). Further to these accolades, the non-violent philosophies and practices of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, in social conflict, have been idealized by many people as the conscience of humanity in the twentieth century (see, Nagler, 2004; Holmes and Gan, 2005; Kurlansky, 2006). In fact, in the opening introduction to the book Gandhi and King: The Power of Non-Violent Resistance, Michael J. Nojeim was even more audacious in his description of Gandhi and King: “when the history of the 20th century is written, it shall record that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were at the forefront of that century’s most important struggles: the struggle for freedom, the fight for equality, and the battle against violence” (Nojeim, 2004, p.xi).
However, it was not everybody that was magnanimous in his or her description of Gandhi and King. Rabindranath Tagore, M.N. Roy, Nirad Chaudhuri, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Winston Churchill, Lord Archibald Percival Wavell, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had one time or another seen and described Gandhi and King as frauds and disingenuous individuals who must be avoided by all decent people. For instance, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a leader of the “untouchables” of India, described Gandhi’s influence in India with these words: “Few know what tragedies the “untouchables” as well as the country has had to go through on account of the illusions of Mr. Gandhi” (Ambedkar, 1946, p.39). Similarly, Winston Churchill in 1931 described Gandhi as a “seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir … striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroyal palace” (Churchill, 1931, pp.94-95). In the case of Martin Luther King, he was constantly accused of promoting Communist agenda. In fact, he was even accused of being on the payroll of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and was heavily criticised for his opposing stand on the Vietnam War (see Aberbathy, 1989; Dyson, 2000). According to Cornel West, as many as 72 percent of white American population and 55 percent of black American population then disapproved of Martin Luther King Jr.’s opposition to the Vietnam War and his efforts to eradicate poverty in America (West, 2011).

However, beyond this hero-worshipping and the villain-scrning of Gandhi and King, the truth is that not much has been done to critically examine their non-violent ideas in ways that wrestled the discussion outside the politics of polemics. Even with the few critical works that have been done on Gandhi and King, the contents are more useful in the field of Political Science, History, Religion, and Philosophy than in the field of Education (see Sharp, 1973; Fischer, 1982; Colaiaco, 1988; Nojeim, 2004; Kurlansky, 2006). It appears that within the field of Education, not much has been done so far to study King and Gandhi as critical pedagogues.
Although I recognize that in 2005 I attempted to study Mahatma Gandhi as a critical pedagogue whose ideas about non-violence can help decolonize schooling and education in Ghana (see Adjei, 2007), the study was limited in scope and operation. This dissertation seeks to expand what was started in 2005, by critically examining Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King’s ideas about non-violence and their pedagogical implications for transformative university schooling in Toronto.

The dissertation recognizes that any examination of Gandhi and King within the field of university schooling is a risky venture because most previous readings of Gandhi and King had been outside the field of schooling. The dissertation recognizes the existing tension between schooling and education. Dei and Simmons (2010) note that education is broad and include the workplace, homes and families, schools, media, museums, arts, and the criminal justice system. Schooling on the other hand, refers to formal classroom, instruction, curriculum, pedagogical practices, and the rules and norms that govern the management and operation of schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12, through to post-secondary. Thus, there are not many works to drawn on when studying Gandhi and King in context of schooling. Further, Gandhi is full of contradictions; therefore, it becomes difficult to subject him to any robust pedagogical questioning. For instance, Gandhi was in support of the Caste system, yet he was vehemently opposed to the practice of Untouchability; he was for India’s progress yet was against industrialization; he supported democracy yet was against the parliamentary system of government; he loved national sovereignty but was against nationalism. Bidvut Chakrabarty noted that Gandhi’s thought is problematic because there is neither a thesis nor consistency in his arguments as he reacted differently at different times in response to circumstances (Chakrabarty, 2006, p.57). In fact, Gandhi once boasted that at the time of his writing, he never thought of what
he had previously said because his aim was not to be consistent with his previous statements but to be consistent with the truth (cited in Attenborough, 1982, p.93). Thus, given his contradictory nature, it is extremely difficult to subject his ideas to critical analyses in education.

Yet, Gandhi and King have a lot to say about contemporary university schooling and education. By education, I mean the varied options, strategies, and ways through which people come to learn, know, and understand their world and act within it to bring about change (Dei, 2000a). University schooling, on the other hand, refers to formal university education and rules and norms that operate and govern it.

The current trends of global violence and their impact on families, communities as well as the field of university schooling are frightening for a society that is caught up in a false sense of comfort and complacency. By global violence, I imply a pattern of global relations in which the management of society in handed over to the “market.” The usual justification for this abdication of responsibilities, according to John W. Burton, is that, in competitive global conditions, the management and administration of essential social services such as education, health, environment, energy services, law and order are best left to the judgement and competitive incentive of private enterprises (Burton, 2010, p.2). Unfortunately, the private enterprises, as we all know, have historically pursued the interest of the few to the detriment of the majority—an action that has resulted in the increasing gap between “the wealthy” and “the poor”; the privileged and the de-privileged, and the global destruction of the environment (see Burton, 2011). The problem is that the more governments abdicate their responsibilities to the private enterprises, the more humanity will continue to witness an increased social and economic neglect of marginalized people. How else can one explain what recently happened in South Fulton, Tennessee, when firefighters watched and allowed a house to burn along with three dogs and one
cat because the home owner had not paid a yearly subscription fee of $75 (see The Telegraph, 2010). Speaking in the defence of firefighters, Glenn Beck of Fox News Channel argued that the debate on the actions of the firefighters will go nowhere if one goes into compassion (Gastaldo, 2010, para. 1).

However, if learners cannot ask complex and sophisticated questions about the nature of global relations and the need to openly and defiantly challenge this human degradation, then the fate of humanity lies in danger. But as Jack DuVall, the President of International Centre on Non-Violent Conflict, once noted, “the capacity of the ordinary people to change the system too often goes unnoticed” (DuVall, 2006, p.3) because the people “can’t get respect” unless there are a million of them on the streets (DuVall, 2006). Institutions of domination have always assumed that people are naturally malleable and that compliance is always possible because individuals have no sense of responsibility or can be compelled by rewards and punishments (Burton, 2001). This is why mobilizing students to challenge the current trends of global violence on university schooling cannot be postponed. But, in what ways can one mobilize a million university students to believe and understand that the current conditions of university schooling requires some action and that there is an urgent need for them to untie their tongues to speak against the current global assault on university schooling? The dissertation opines that political mobilization, knowledge, strategies, courage, unity, and discipline of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. can help achieve this feat. Contrary to those who may think Gandhi and King’s non-violent praxes are straining against the boundaries of a closed ontology, this dissertation will establish that there is a lot that can be learned from the non-violent strategies of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. in the pursuit of university schooling transformation in the 21st century. Although the dissertation has no intention of idolizing and canonizing Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther
it uses qualitative studies of twenty University activists operating within Toronto to critically examine the non-violent praxes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. and their possibilities and limits in the social and political mobilization of university students to create transformation within university schooling in Toronto.

Research Objectives

The dissertation makes no intellectual pretences to possess extraordinary knowledge about Gandhi and King; instead, what it has sought to do is to raise critical pedagogical questions about non-violent ideas of Gandhi and King and the possibilities and limitations of using these ideas to create transformative university schooling. In particular, the dissertation pursues these four research and learning objectives:

1. A critical examination of the general conception and operationalization of violence and non-violence in the works of Gandhi, King Jr, Malcolm X, and Frantz Fanon and their implications for the social and political mobilization of activists working in the university school system in Toronto

2. A further examination of ways in which the non-violent praxes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. can help in social and political mobilization of activists working in the university school system in Toronto.

3. To identify the possibilities and limits of Gandhi and King Jr.’s ideas to the social and political mobilization of activists working in the university school system in Toronto.

4. To identify the relevance of spirituality, as embedded in the teachings of these two educators, in the pursuit of transformation in the university schooling in Toronto.
In order to answer these research and learning objectives, the dissertation utilizes qualitative audiotape interviews of twenty activists working within the university school system in Toronto. Qualitative research technique is appropriate for this research because it effectively captures the narrations and personal stories of research participants who were interviewed. Elsewhere, Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.7) argue that qualitative inquiry allows researchers to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to that complexity while respecting the views of the research subjects. Qualitative research technique, unlike quantitative research technique, offers a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about research participants. Although the primary objective of any research is to bring the voices of research participants into the centre of the research (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995), research techniques that rely solely on statistics cannot provide researchers with all the actual experiences of research subjects. Thus, qualitative research technique is a suitable method for my research because it enables the voices of my research participants to inform significantly the resultant interpretations and the theoretical development of my research—a task that cannot be possible if I have to rely only on numbers. Although I am aware of how research inquiry which is situated on quantitative techniques can be attractive to certain individuals who may prefer to rely on statistics to tell a story (see, Eisner 1991, p.5), in the context of this research, qualitative inquiry is preferable because it enables my research participants to speak freely and openly about university activism of the 21st century and the way forward.

The dissertation is aware of the usual tension and binary that people create between violence and non-violence as though these terms are mutually exclusive. There are those who associate non-violence to anything angelic and violence to anything devilish (see Schep-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Also, there are people who dismiss non-violence as an effective
strategy to create changes, and there are those who may claim to be non-violent advocates yet enact violent acts on others. If violence and non-violence are complex and nuanced concepts, then how can we think through, understand, read, and use them in university schooling activism of the 21st century? This dissertation is not about making judgement between violence and non-violence, for no one can understand fully what non-violence is without first understanding what violence is; instead, it critically explores the philosophical differences, tensions, and ambivalence that exist between non-violence and violence and their implications for transformative university schooling in Toronto.

The discussion on non-violence and violence is situated within the non-violent ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. However, the dissertation recognizes that both Gandhi and King constructed their ideas of non-violence within a particular social, cultural, geopolitical, historical context; therefore, there may be limits and even consequences for trying to make their works relevant within the university schooling within Toronto. Therefore, in order to have a robust intellectual discussion of Gandhi and King, their ideas must be bounced off with the ideas of other anti-colonial thinkers who lived through their time but had different understanding and interpretation of violence and non-violence.

In this sense, Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X become perfect choices to contextualize the discussion in the dissertation. Although they were born and lived in the same eras as Gandhi and King, Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X understood and operationalized violence and non-violence differently. While Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King saw non-violent resistance as necessary to rehabilitate oppressive bodies, Malcolm X and Fanon saw the opposite to be true—namely, an obstinate dedication to non-violence was a deliberate posture for self-disempowerment. Fanon and Malcolm X contended that rehabilitation of the oppressed cannot
take place within the purview of oppressive institutions, structures, and systems; therefore, the primary duty of the oppressed is to overthrow oppressive arrangements by any means necessary (Malcolm X, 1964; Fanon, 1963). Both Fanon and Malcolm X were of the opinion that resistive violence could empower oppressed bodies and even assert their humanity in the face of violent colonial juggernaut that denies them such humanity. Gandhi and King on the other hand thought that non-violent resistance through love and self-suffering could help the oppressed regain their sense of humanity and redeem themselves from oppression (Gandhi, 1961; King Jr., 1966). Although Gandhi and King, on one hand, and Fanon and Malcolm X, on the other hand, differ in their interpretations and approaches to violence and non-violence, they all have something relevant to teach contemporary university schooling. This is why the dissertation though it is about the non-violent ideas of Gandhi and King, it still pays attention to the violent ideas of Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon.

**Research Problem**

Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), the famous author of the book *Goethe’s Elective Affinities* once noted that “the oppressed teaches us that the state of emergency in which we live is not the exception but the rule.” Walter Benjamin’s statement attests to the fact that the current global violence that neglects many people because of their racial, class, sexual, gender, and disabled background is not an aberration but the general rule. In the light of this development, a call for social change is in order. But how do we proceed with social change? What strategy is the most productive and effective in attaining social change in the 21st century?

At the moment, there appears to be, albeit coarsely, two positions on the best way to embark on institutional reforms and the effective tactics needed to achieve results. One position
insists on the absolute use of non-violent tactics while the other position suggests diverse tactics that do not exclude violence. The central position of the dissertation is not to adjudge which actors of the debate have legitimate claim and which actors do not. Instead, the dissertation, using qualitative audio-taped interviewing of twenty university activists, critically examines each side of the argument and its relevance and limitations in university schools praxes.

**Global Violence**

In his famous speech made before the United Nations General Assembly in 1963—a speech the late Bob Marley immortalized in his song *War*—Emperor Haile Selassie I, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the spiritual head of the Rastafarian movement, urged the United Nations and the world at large to end international exploitation and injustices and take action against racial inequality:

> On the question of racial discrimination, the Addis Ababa Conference taught to those who will learn this further lesson: That until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned; That until there are no longer first-class and second class citizens of any nation; That until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes; That until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race; That until that day, the dream of lasting peace and world citizenship and the rule of international morality will remain but a fleeting illusion, to be pursued but never attained; And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes that hold our brothers in Angola, in Mozambique and in South Africa in sub-human bondage have been toppled and destroyed; Until bigotry and prejudice and malicious and inhuman self-interest have been replaced by understanding and tolerance and good-will; Until all Africans stand and speak as free beings, equal in the eyes of all men, as they are in the eyes of Heaven; Until that day, the African continent will not know peace. We Africans will fight, if necessary and we know that we shall win, as we are confident in the victory of good over evil. (1963, n.p.)

Haile Selassie’s comments do not only complicate violence but also call for new thinking and understanding to violence. For Haile Selassie, oppression reproduces tensions and violence; thus
any effort to resolve violence and tension in society cannot ignore underlying issues that give rise to violence. The Norwegian peace researchers and activists Johan Galtung and Ikeda use the terms “structural violence and cultural violence” to explain the underlying causes of violence in society:

Some cultures are very dangerous because they consider themselves select or chosen above all others … Some structures are either highly repressive or exploitative—or both. Structures of this readily elicit revolutionary violence from below or counter-revolutionary violence from above. The combination of so-called chosen cultures and repressive social structures almost invariably and fairly speedily results in direct violence; from below in order to liberate, and from above in order to prevent liberation. (Galtung and Ikeda, 1995, p.69)

Galtung and Ikeda’s argument is that violence is embedded in structural and institutional practices. Therefore, any effort to seek peace cannot be delinked from efforts to address structural and cultural injustice, inequity, and unfairness in society. Harmony and peace cannot be achieved in society if there is no effort to address the issue of power inequities. Frantz Fanon noted that while violence is wrong and causes physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual damage to its victims, it also teaches oppressed groups to resist (Fanon, 1963). Thus, for the oppressed groups, violence is a necessary choice, not just to redeem their freedom from oppressive regimes but also to cure the internalization of their own inferiority created through oppressive relations. Within this context, Emperor Haile Selassie should be applauded for linking structural and systemic inequities to conflicts in the world. Haile Selassie’s comments teach us that world peace cannot be fully secured if social injustices and inequities are allowed to go unchallenged. Indeed, world peace should not be reduced to the mere absence of tensions and conflicts, but more importantly, it should be tied to the presence of justice, fairness, and equity. Perhaps, provoked by the artificial split between conflict and injustice, Donaldo Macedo, in his introductory chapter to Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed, criticizes Gerald Graff’s pedagogy of “Teaching
Conflict” for treating conflict as if it suddenly fell from the sky (see Freire, 2007). Donaldo Macedo contends that one cannot fully address conflict in general unless one is willing to anchor the discussion of conflict within competing histories and ideologies that generate conflict in the first place (Freire, 2007, p.24). What can be deduced from the argument of Donald Macedo is that violence at individual level can never be fully understood, explained, and analyzed without critically examining structural and institutional violence. How is this relevant to the understanding and articulation of violence within university schooling in Toronto?

Violence and Schooling

The schooling system in Euro-American/Canadian society has always narrowed the general conception and operation of violence to only physical contacts and in the process has overlooked other acts of violence that are part of the normative fabric of social and political life (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004) especially violence within the structures of schooling. This violence occurs in not only what is taught but also what is not taught and its effects on learners. In what ways can we see minority youth school disengagement and dropouts/push-outs as the direct products of re-colonial relations and situations in schooling? How is alienation and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness of racialized, gendered, sexualized, classed, and disabled learners related to particular socio-political arrangements of schooling? What accounts for the normalization of violence in schooling?

In the Executive Summary of Julian Falconer’s report on school safety, the following observation was made:

There is a community-wide crisis of confidence in the ability of the TDSB to ensure violence-free and weapons-free environments in all of its schools. The Panel shares this concern. A combination of direct consultations with education personnel and community
agencies, anonymous surveying of staff and students and research in respect of TDSB incident records for the last 24 months lead the Panel to the conclusion that there are guns in select schools across the city in non-trivial numbers. Circumstances are such that neither the TDSB nor the police are in any position to accurately account for the numbers of guns in schools. Sexual assaults have also increased at alarming rates across the city. Inhibitions to reporting sexual assaults in the present system have resulted in the vast majority of youth not reporting their own their own victimization or that of their fellow students. As detailed below and in the body of this Report, the anonymous surveys at Westview Centennial (870 of the 1200 students responded) indicated that 23% of students reported that they know someone who had brought a gun to school in the past two years. 22.5% reported that they have seen a gun in the past two years. 61% reported that they knew four or more people who brought guns to school in the past two years. (Falconer’s Report, 2008, p.2)

Although Julian Falconer’s report is about the safety of our schools at K-12, it, nevertheless, reveals some questions that are relevant to the general direction of this dissertation: how did we reach this stage in our school system that the prevalence of guns at our schools at the K-12 level is not surprising and uncommon anymore? What happened to our school system that sexual assaults of female students at the K-12 level have been “normalized” to the extent that the victims of sexual assaults are afraid to report them when they happen? What happened to students’ innocence?

This dissertation argues poignantly that the violence of students in schools is a direct result of students’ school disengagement and disenfranchise. In earlier writings (Adjei, 2007; Adjei 2010), I argue that the teaching curricula guiding Eurocentric education system are so insidious that they have the power to erase any trace of the existence of indigenous, racialized, classed, sexualized, gendered, and disabled learners. So, when anti-colonial authors (Wane, 2004; 2006; Dei, 2004; Dei, 1996; Dei et al., 1997; Dei et al., 2000; Smith, 2001; wa’Thiongo, 1986; and Iseke-Barnes, 2004) argue that colonial schooling system is a subtle and sophisticated garden in which the seeds of colonization and neo-liberal ideas are sown in the minds of learners, they
are invariably speaking about the conditions of violence in the school system that continue to exclude rich cultural knowledge and experiences that learners bring to the classroom.

The reality remains that our Canadian public schools continue to hinge on White supremacist, heterosexual, patriarchal, able-bodied and Christian ideologies and practices that constantly treat racialized, classed, disabled, gendered, Muslim, and sexualized learners as unwelcome intruders and as the “new bio-politics of disposability” (Giroux, 2006, p.174). “Bio-politics of disposability” occurs when human lives are reduced to economic goods. In bio-politics of disposability, state institutions only response to the needs of individuals based on their economic values. In new bio-politics, bodies deemed worthless and useless to the state are left on their own in times of trouble. As Ojakangas (2005, p.6) rightly opines, “biopower is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Its task is to take charge of life that needs a continuous regulatory and corrective mechanism.” Michel Foucault (1997, p.255) contends that biopolitics does not remove itself from “introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die.”

In the school system, bio-politics manifests in the form of reducing students’ lives to the level of economic values. A student’s value largely determines whether she or he is worth saving in a period of trouble. Sexualized, classed, racialized, gendered, disabled students, and students from certain religion are easily disposable; therefore, not only are they not worth spending school resources to save but also their histories, cultures, values, worldviews can be disposed at the periphery of knowledge production, validation, and dissemination. Within Toronto, we see biopolitics of schooling manifesting itself in the area of funding. Public schools in poor and marginalized communities continue to be underfunded while other public schools in affluent
communities continue to get all the resources and support from the Toronto District School Board (see Dei et al, 2000; Dei et al, 1997). This underfunding of certain public schools is a crisis of schooling in Toronto. In fact, Julian Falconer’s Report on School Safety did not shy away from this underfunding of schools in racialized communities (see pages 19-22, 463-471, and 564 of Julian Falconer’s Report of School Safety). Similarly, Thomas-Long (2010), in her research about university funding within Toronto, alluded to the crisis of funding at the university level. It is the submission of this dissertation that this crisis of funding as related to specific programs—in the case of the university schooling, programs related to minority studies (see Thomas-Long, 2010)—subtly and not so subtly sanctions what is taught and what is not taught and who is to be admitted and who is not to be admitted in public university schooling. Consequently, certain bodies within the university schooling are made to feel out of place and not belonging to the space of university schooling.

In (Adjei, 2008; Adjei, 2010), I recounted my conversation with a white administrative staffer in my own institution of learning, the University of Toronto, when I went to his department to look for a summer job. The white administrative staffer asked me what I was doing at the University of Toronto. I told him I was studying for my Ph.D. degree in Education. He looked at me for some time and then said to me: “You can lie to me, I don’t care.” Even when another administrative staffer who knew me from my department told him I was telling the truth, he still disbelieved me. Why did this white male assume that I could not be what I claimed to be? Surely, he did not know me and had not engaged in any intellectual discussion with me to determine my intellectual capability, yet he was willing to draw the conclusion that I could not be a Ph.D. candidate. I ask those who may want to dismiss the comment of this white administrative staffer as rabble of an ignorant person to trace his comment about me within the new bio-politics
of disposability. In bio-politics, there is an active political assertion that certain bodies, especially black bodies, represent a homogenous social group in which degeneracy, criminality, destitution, illiteracy, immorality, and violence are part of their normative history, culture, and identity. Therefore, these bodies should be viewed and read as not belonging to spaces reserved for people of privilege.

Fanon (1967) offers a description of how a black male is constituted through fear and through naming and seeing in a world of bio-politics of disposability:

In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. … The elements that I used had been provided for me not by ‘residual sensations and perceptions … but by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of thousand details, anecdotes, stories. I thought that what I had in hand was to construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations, and here I was called on for more. “Look, a Negro!” … “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” Frightened! Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. (Fanon, 1967, pp.111-112)

In Frantz Fanon’s racial interpellation, a black male is already pathologized, criminalized, and degenerated even before he enters the white world. It is like going to a place for the first time but realizing that the residents of that place have pre-existing knowledge of you (Adjei, 2010). Although the white male administrative staffer was meeting me for the first time, he knew me through a violent colonial imaginary story that scripts black bodies like me as the quintessence of evil, less educated, lazy, dishonest, and inferior (see Memmi, 1965; Fanon, 1963). Thus, in the imagination of this white administrative staffer, not only must I be black as he had imagined and read me to be but also I must be black in relation to whiteness (see Fanon, 1967, p. 161). Thus, if he, a white male, did not possess a Ph.D. degree—an academic achievement reserved for the crème de la crème—then he found it hard to believe that a black male like me should be pursuing
one. In the new bio-politics of disposability, the script reads like this: a black male like me is not supposed to possess any “ontological resistance” (Fanon, 1967, p.110); rather, we should appear exactly as we have been woven out of thousands of detailed, anecdotal stories—lazy, uneducated, dishonest, criminal, violent, immoral, unintelligent people.

Further, what was imagined or projected on me by the white administrator can also be traced to the violent school curricula in Euro-American/Canadian schools. Within Euro American/Canadian school curricula, the “naturalness” of white intelligence and superiority as against the “naturalness” of black unintelligence and inferiority is typically uncontested knowledge. This knowledge renders marginalized bodies as easily disposable material—bodies who are out of their usual place. We see this coded message in the ways the school curricula refuse to speak about the history, values, culture, and worldviews of non-European students. We see this coded message in the ways racialized, classed, gendered, sexualized, and disabled bodies are made to feel unwelcome and uninvited in the school system. So, when black youths say that “school sucks,” they are basically referring to the new “bio-politics of disposability” (Giroux 2006) in the school system in Canada. In a sense, the white administrative staffer did not err when he told me “I do not belong” to the Ph.D. program; he was only informing me of what I had already been told in the implicit school curricula.

The Connection Between School Violence and Violence in Society

It is contended that the acts of violence within society are rooted in the violent conditions within schooling. Schooling is normative and based on what every society values. Schooling implies that something worthwhile or something society considers as valuable is being or has been intentionally transmitted to learners. Therefore, it will be logically contradictory to say that
a person has been schooled but has not been influenced by schooling. When a school system, like the one we have in Euro-American/Canadian society, espouses and practices racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia, then it should not surprise anyone when learners who go through this school system enact similar violence on others.

Writing separately about the sexualized and racialized violence at Abu Ghraib\(^1\), both Sherene Razack (2005) and Henry Giroux (2004) argue that what happened at Abu Ghraib was neither an aberrant behaviour of a few soldiers nor an overly aggressive approach to terrorism gone awry. Instead, what happened at Abu Ghraib is a symptom of a wrong schooling system. Although the dissertation does not accuse the school system for directly creating Abu Ghraib scandals, it questions the ideological and pedagogical conditions that produce subjects—(like Specialists Charles Graner and Lynndie England, Brigadier General Janis Karpinski and fourteen other soldiers and officers) who easily and dutifully enact racialized and sexualized violence on others because they see it as part of their duty to the state.

Giroux (2006, p.11) rightly notes that because the new media rely on sophisticated technologies to produce violence and “unspeakably transgressive violence” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004, p.807), public spaces are now saturated with shocks and creative desires to participate in violence. For instance, Bernard Lawrence Madoff, Allen Stanford, and greedy business executives on Wall Street who engaged in the *Ponzi Scheme*\(^2\) and other shenanigan acts

\(^1\) In 2004, the rest of the world were shocked when accounts of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, including torture, rape, sodomy, and homicide of prisoners held in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq (also known as Baghdad Correctional Facility) came to public attention. These acts were committed by military police personnel of the United States Army together with additional US governmental agencies (For details, see Hersh, Seymour M (2004). *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*. New York: HarperCollins).

\(^2\) The *Ponzi Scheme* is an investment fraud that involves the payment of purported returns to existing investors from funds contributed by new investors. Ponzi scheme organizers often solicit new investors by
to defraud ordinary people to the tune of over $500 billion are not just bad reflections of excessive capitalism but also are the products of a schooling system that corrupts the soul and normalizes greed and capital exploitation in the name of free market system. Although Razack (2005, p.345) argues that Abu Ghraib photos reveal the racial fault-line of the “new world order”—the colour line that W.E.B. Dubois described more than one hundred years ago, in which white nations are lined up on one side and Dubois’ “darker races” are on the other—I argue that Abu Ghraib photos reveal structural and systemic malfunctions of Euro-American/Canadian institutional set up.

Martin Luther King Jr. warned schools to desist from producing learners who have high reasoning ability but are morally and spiritually bankrupt:

The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but with no morals. The late Eugene Talmadge, in my opinion, possessed one of the better minds of Georgia, or even America. Moreover, he wore the Phi Beta Kappa key. By all measuring rods, Mr. Talmadge could think critically and intensively, yet he contends that I am an inferior being. Are those the types of men we call educated? We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration but [also] worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living. If we are not careful, our colleges will produce a group of close-minded, unscientific, illogical

promising to invest funds in opportunities claimed to generate high returns with little or no risk. In many Ponzi schemes, the fraudsters focus on attracting new money to make promised payments to earlier-stage investors and to use for personal expenses, instead of engaging in any legitimate investment activity. The Ponzi Scheme is named after Charles Ponzi, who made a fortune in the United States using fraudulent means. Charles Ponzi, in 1920, succeeded in collecting $9,500,000 from 10,000 investors by selling to them promissory notes that guaranteed fifty percent profit in forty-five days. As Ponzi paid the matured notes held by early investors, word of enormous profits spread through the community, whipping many people to join the scheme. Investigation later revealed that there were no coupons or profits; in fact, the earlier payments were the proceeds of money raised from those who joined the scheme later. The simplicity and grand scale of his scheme linked Ponzi’s name to this particular form of fraud. (For more on Ponzi Scheme, refer to these websites: http://hubpages.com/hub/Ponzi-Scheme-Defined-The-Difference-Between-Ponzi-Scheme-and-Pyramid-Schemes; http://www.sec.gov/answers/ponzi.htm#PonziWhatIs)
propagandists, consumed with immoral acts. Be careful, "brethren!" Be careful, teachers! (King Jr., 1947, n.p.)

The comment of Martin Luther King Jr. and the examples from Abu Ghraib and Wall Street reveal a new question: What kind of schooling system would it take to interrupt the production and reproduction of learners who so easily participate in racialized, sexualized, classed, disabled, religious, and gendered violence?

Razack (2005) reminds us that if critical educators are to disrupt the violent colour line in our society, then we need to understand not only how violence is required to make and maintain the colour-line but also how ordinary people are seduced to participate and recreate the colour-line. This dissertation argues that the answer to the bankrupt schooling system in Euro-American/Canadian society is critical humanistic schooling. By critical humanistic schooling, I imply a pedagogical and an instructional approach that challenges learners to think critically about the world and commit themselves to resistance praxes that expose, disturb, and disrupt the hidden, insidious violence of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia in our society. Critical humanistic schooling also includes developing the souls of learners to think humanely about our world and its people. Furthermore, critical humanistic schooling allows learners to imagine and fight for a new world where non-violent praxis reigns supreme. Arundhati Roy, an Indian novelist and human rights activist, once said “another world is not only possible, she is on her way, on a quiet day I can hear her breathing.” I will maintain that Frantz Fanon’s conception of new humanism in the concluding chapter of The Wretched of the Earth can be the starting point to imagine the critical humanistic schooling.
Towards Fanonian New Humanism: Imagining a Non-Violence Society

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy observed:

But the great question which confronted this body in 1945 is still before us: whether man's cherished hopes for progress and peace are to be destroyed by terror and disruption, whether the "foul winds of war" can be tamed in time to free the cooling winds of reason, and whether the pledges of our charter are to be fulfilled or defied—pledges to secure peace, progress, human rights, and world law. (Kennedy, 1961, n.p)

This dissertation argues that in the 21st century world where terrorists insist that resistance requires indiscriminate killing of innocent people and the United States and its Allied Forces believe that the only way to deal with terrorism is to drop bombs on countries and innocent people, an answer to the 1945’s question cannot be postponed. For instance, during the Persian Gulf War in 1990, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, said that the United States military’s objective was clear: to locate the enemy “and kill it” (Hojeim, 2004, pp.9-10). Interestingly, after seven months (between August 2, 1990 and February 28, 1991) of constant bombing, killing, injuries, and the destruction of property, the United States and its Allied Forces could not remove the so-called “enemy” in Iraq. Ten years later, the United States and Great Britain needed another invasion of Iraq to fight the same enemy again. After seven and half years (from March 20, 2003 to August 31, 2010)—with the dead count of over hundred thousand Iraqi civilians, 4400 American soldiers, war expenses of over three Trillion dollars (US dollars), not to count the total cost of the destruction of Iraqis’ property and resources (see Stigliz and Bilmes, 2010)—the United States and its Allied Forces left Iraq without succeeding in their quest to rid Iraq of all the United States’ enemies. In fact, two days after President Obama issued a second “mission accomplished” statement, Anthony H. Cordesman, a military specialist at the
Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, wrote on the Center’s Web site: “The Iraq war is not over and it is not ‘won.’ In fact, it is at a critical stage as it is at any time since 2003” (Cordesman, 2010).

In spite of numerous examples to show that violence has not achieved world peace, humanity still thinks violence is the surest path to world peace. Today, violence is glorified and commoditized in our society. We do not only enjoy violent games, violent sports, and violent movies but also we consider those who enact violence in games, movies, and sports as heroes and heroines. Similarly, within the school system, the teaching curricula have extensively addressed the violent military exploits of Julius Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon Bonaparte, Genghis Khan, and Alexander the Great. Meanwhile, little or no attention has been paid to the non-violent exploits of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, John Woolman, and A.J. Muste. In fact, those who advocate for non-violence as a tool of social change are ridiculed and branded naïve, idealists, utopian, and “sell-outs” (see Hojeim, 2004). It seems the media and the cinemas have succeeded in making violence spectacular to the viewing public. Consequently, violence elicits pleasure to the people because it is seen as a means of fighting the chains of inaction and apathy. The effect is that humanity has lost any plot to think alternatively and instead has been sold into this myth that violence is the only way to empower oneself. Not surprisingly, humanity has used 3170 years of the last 3400 years of recorded human history to engage in wars and acts of war while the remaining 230 years have been used to prepare for war (see McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007). Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist, soldier, and pedagogue, warned that “any man [or woman] who has once proclaimed violence as his [or her] method is inevitably forced to take the lie as his principle” (DuVall, 2006, p.2). Before we jump into the contention and contestation of what Alexander Solzhenitsyn has said, we need to ask this fundamental
question: At what point will humanity learn to say “no” to the 3400 years’ maxim: “pax paritur bello” (peace is produced by war)? (see McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007).

Probably, more than any other figure, it is, of course, Frantz Fanon who carried anxiety and contradictory ideas of the usefulness of violence to create social change. Speaking from a subjective position of an anti-colonial theorist and a practitioner, Frantz Fanon demanded a national liberation for colonized subjects but insisted that the revolutionary project should lead to a deliberate production of the new humanity:

The Third World must start over a new history of man and woman which takes account of not only the occasional prodigious theses maintained by Europe but also its crimes, the most heinous of which have been committed at the very heart of man and woman, the pathological dismembering of his or her functions and the erosion of his or her unity, and in the context of the community, the fracture, the stratification, and the bloody tensions fed by class, and finally, on the immense scale of humanity, the racial hatred, slavery, exploitation and, above all, the bloodless genocide whereby one and a half billion men and women have been written off. So comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions, and societies that draw their inspiration from it. Humanity expects other things from us than this grotesque and generally obscene emulation. … Moreover, if we want to respond to the expectations of the Europeans we must not send them back a reflection, however ideal, of their society and their thought that periodically sickens even them. For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavour to create a new man and woman. (Fanon 2004, pp.238-239)

It seems that Fanon himself was much more doubtful about violence than his admirers. Fanon knew the danger of uncontrollable violence which oftentimes misdirect the vision and goals of a movement to create changes. Frantz Fanon realized that humanity is chasing after peace without realizing that peace is not a destination but a journey itself. Thus, he did not only object to European imperial powers that had wrongly deprived colonial subjects of their humanity (Gilroy, 2000) but also he appealed to colonized subjects to seek for social change that respects and maintains human dignity, justice, fairness, and equity. Frantz Fanon could not help but notice the open contradiction and “madness” of Europe: on one hand, Europe is never done talking about
humanity and the virtue of respecting human life, yet Europe “murder men [humanity] everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe” (Sartre in Fanon, 1963, p.9). Thus, Frantz Fanon called on marginalized bodies to eschew the “madness” of Europe and start afresh. If Europe cannot leave its “mad, reckless pace that she is running headlong into the abyss” (Sartre in Fanon, 1963, p.9), then marginalized bodies should keep away from this “madness” and show Europe an alternative that is more effective than what Europe has to offer.

Paulo Freire, in his famous and internationally read book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* echoes the thoughts of Frantz Fanon:

> This, then, is the greatest humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (Freire, 2007, p.44)

Both Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire had a critical humanist vision. Their desire was to extend human dignity, freedom, love, care, and justice to all who are daily exploited and even to those who daily exploit others.

Although Frantz Fanon did not live long enough to explain exactly what he meant by the “new humanism,” it is the submission of this dissertation that the non-violent praxes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. can be a starting point of imagining Fanon’s “new humanism.” Although they were not perfect in their thinking and actions, Gandhi and King were, no doubt, outstanding non-violent strategists who believe that the exercise of power depended on the consent of the ruled and not the ruler. Thus, through the acts of discipline, fearlessness, love, and non-violence, the oppressed can stand and overcome the might of the oppressor. Although
the famous philosopher, Hannah Arendt, once noted that “in a contest of violence against violence the superiority of the government has always been absolute” (Arendt, 1970, p.240), the dissertation submits that power does not reside with those who wield it but with those who consent to being ruled. If those threatened by power are not any more afraid and defiantly refuse to be ruled, power loses its control.

Abraham Lincoln once wisely observed that “no man [or woman] is good enough to rule another man [or woman] without that man’s [woman’s] consent.” Within this context, the dissertation argues that the current global assault on university schooling can be stopped if university students can shed off fear, sense of helplessness, and apathy and commit themselves to political action. One way of reviving the seemingly “dying spirit” of activism in university schooling is to bring back Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. to university schooling. This is what the dissertation seeks to do. In the foregoing discussion, I articulate my personal and political interest that can influence how I examine, analyze, and interpret the data of this research.

Memory and Remembering: In Search of My Authentic Self and Voice

Every personal location is epistemic (a process of studying reality) because it is the filter through which one can make sense, understand, interpret, and articulate realities. Cook et al (2010) argue that research allows a researcher to reinvest in the construction of the self and to reflect and reassess his or her identity in connection to theory. Thus, writing oneself into research is not only reflexive but also unburdens unwanted truths that expose the innermost feelings of the author (Collins, 2000). I argue that locating the “self” in research is always valuable because it helps readers to understand that the personal is always political and the political is always
personal (Lorde, 1984, p.12). Within this context, I devote this section of the dissertation to talk about who I am and what brings me to this research.

I was born in Ghana, in a society where racism was not part of our daily conversation. Although I did not know what racism was until my final days at a university in Ghana, I knew something was not right when all pictures in the Christian literature used at church depicted God, Jesus, and Angels as white, with long hair and blue eyes, while the devil and demons in these stories had my skin colour. I did not understand it then, but I knew it was not right when parents referred to their successful children as “me broni” [my white child] (see Adjei, 2007). Although I did not know the language of classism, I definitely knew how it felt to live in poverty. I saw it in my mother’s eyes. I saw it also in the eyes of other parents as they daily struggled to put food on the table for their children. I saw sexism playing out every day, in Ghana. I saw that the school enrolment system favoured boys over girls. I saw parents making difficult choices, yet sexist ones, when they chose to educate their male children over their female children; although in some of the cases, the female children were smarter than the male children. Also, I saw a system of social relations that had fewer women in managerial positions as compared to their male counterparts. I did not then know it was called sexism, but I knew it was not right. The Christian churches I attended did not help matters for me. They constantly reminded me of the “sinful” nature of homosexuality and the Islam religion. The church colonized me and taught me to have negative thoughts about others who have different sexual orientation outside of heterosexual relations. It was with this personal baggage that I came to Canada to pursue my graduate education.

However, after few days in Canada, I saw the intensity of these inequities. I saw that social relations in Canada are subtly and not so subtly structured along the line of class, gender,
race, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, and ableism. I came to a sudden realization that the social categories of class, gender, race, sexuality, religion, and ableism are not simply sites of identity but are also sites of power and privilege. There are material, cultural, spiritual, and symbolic investments associated with these categories. Where and how individuals are positioned within these categories largely determine how the individuals can access life opportunities in Canada. The social relations in Euro-American/Canadian society are dictated by the tenets of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, and ableism. For the first time, I saw and understood the violent nature of social relations structured along the line of gender, class, race, dis/ability, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion. Fortunately for me, courses I took in my Department (Sociology and Equity Studies in Education) helped me to understand the historical roots of these violent colonial relations and the processes through which I could unlearn and interrogate them. Today, I am not only an active community member, constantly speaking and acting against the violence of heterosexism, classism, sexism, ableism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and racism, but also I am teaching undergraduate students, in Equity Studies, to understand the material, political, and spiritual implications of the violence of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia on marginalized bodies.

Thus, as I start writing in front of my computer, reflecting through life, remembering my own struggles to make sense of this colonial violence, and the complicit and implicit roles I have played in my own oppression and the oppression of others, I know I have come a long way. But I also recognize the patience others have had for me to unlearn my own homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, and ableism. Although I occasionally buy into gender, sexuality, ableism, and Christian privileges, when I make these mistakes, I face them and try to amend them. My journey towards decolonization has renewed my hope and faith in humanity. I now believe more than
ever that given a chance, some people—although not all—can change from their homophobic, Islamophobic, classist, ableist, sexist, and racist ideas and practices.

bell hooks, in her book *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, posed an important question: “what happens when white people change?” (hooks, 2003, p.51). hooks’s question is informed by the experience of racial struggle in the United States when the so-called national integration in the United States failed to rid America of racism. Consequently, many black and brown people despaired, and the idea that white folks will never change from their racist ideas gained momentum (hooks, 2003). bell hooks further argues that whoever truly believes that white people cannot change is a doomsayer, investing in a belief that there is no way out (ibid). The truth is that no one is born racist, classist, homophobic, sexist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, or ableist (see hooks, 2003; Freire, 1997). These are behaviours and practices that are acquired through the process of socialization. I argue that whatever is learned through colonial violent schooling can be unlearned through anti-colonial education. Thus, when critical anti-oppression educators assume that the material benefits of sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia will always discourage dominant bodies from genuinely participating in institutional reforms, we diminish the good works other dominant groups had done to challenge structures of power. The Late Oppositional Leader of Canada, Jack Layton of New Democratic Party, once said, “Hope is better than fear; optimism is better than despair.” Jack Layton’s words have something useful to say about our university schooling system. As critical educators, we need to work with the pedagogy of possibility. We need to work with the hope that we can change our students for the better. Critical educators who doubt their abilities to create change in their students have no business taking on the noble profession of teaching. In the words of Paulo Freire (1994, p.8), critical educators “need critical hope the way fish need
unpolluted water.” McLaren and Jaramillo (2007) summon critical educators to rescue the principle of hope from the abyss of cynicism and complacency:

Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history’s hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of ‘what is,’ but becomes a reality carved out of ‘what could be.’ Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Hope refers to the rejection of subjective idealism in favour of a materialist reading of social life in its totality. Hope mediates between the universal and the particular in grasping the concrete forms of our objective existence under capital. Hope is the medium of dialectical praxis. Revolutionary dreams are those in which the dreamers dream until there are no longer the dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential. (p. 55)

In envisioning a world governed by hope over a world governed by despair; a world governed by possibility over a world governed by fait accompli, we must be wary, to put it mildly, of educators who try to separate scholarship from activism (see Seidman, 1994; Cole and Rikowski, 1997; Blake, 1996; Hudis, 2004; Lyotard, 1984). The idea that one can separate scholarship from activism is luxurious thinking that can be entertained only by the privileged.

As a critical, transformative educator, my experiences, politics, and present struggles do not allow me to pay attention to cynics who mock at the idea of non-violent change in university schooling. In fact, “my ethical and political responsibility,” to borrow the words of Paulo Freire (1997, p.101), “does not allow me to hesitate before the cynics who say things are as they are because there is no other way.” It is within this context that I embark on this dissertation—knowing that if critical educators make it their habit of educating up-and-coming learners to think more about non-violence than violence, there is great likelihood that they will end up thinking and acting in non-violent ways. As a university instructor, I have often used my classroom as a
revolutionary space to transform my students. Every year, many students enrol in my course with little or no idea about equity issues. After much occurrence and sometimes frustration, many of these students complete the course with a new attitude and desire to fight for human justice. It is always refreshing, at the end of the course, to read e-mails from some of these students, especially e-mails that include anecdotes of their work to fight social injustices. These encounters and correspondence with students have taught me that when educators instil in their students the culture and habits of speaking against sexism, classism, homophobia, racism, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia in society, the students leave school with the determination to be the voice of justice and equity. Understandingly, not all students leave the school with a commitment to fight injustice, but at least, a seed has been planted and one can never predict when the seed will become a tree that will bear the fruits of justice and equity.

The individuals who carry out racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia at institutional and structural levels do so as part of their obligation to systems of domination that constantly reward them. Therefore, institutional and systemic changes cannot occur in Canada unless individuals manning these institutions and structures have changed. It is within this context that the dissertation argues that schools have moral obligations to ensure that learners who pass through the schooling system have acquired the habits and desire to fight human injustice and environment degradation.

**Mapping the Dissertation: A Road Map for Readers**

The dissertation is categorized into seven chapters. As noted, *Chapter One* deals with the introduction. It begins with three research objectives and three research questions that guide the entire dissertation. Closely following the research questions is a statement that explains my
personal location. Within the statement, I discuss various life experiences in Ghana and Canada that have shaped my thoughts and actions about violence and non-violence in schooling and education. I further argue that these lived experiences have become conceptual and personal baggage that influence and impact on everything I do. Thus, readers should not be surprised when they realize that these lived experiences have influenced the reflections, analyses, and discussions I brought into the writing of the dissertation. I have always worked with the premise that all knowledge is epistemic. Therefore, who we are, defines how we think, make meaning, and act in everyday social relations.

Chapter Two reviews the existing literature on violence and non-violence as taken up by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Frantz Fanon, and Malcolm X. Although the dissertation focuses on the non-violent ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., it also notes that any robust intellectual discussion of Gandhi and King needs to be done alongside the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X. Although Fanon and Malcolm X are equally anti-colonial thinkers, they bring different interpretation to violence and non-violence. Therefore, reading Gandhi and King alongside Fanon and Malcolm only enriches any discussion about violence and non-violence. Thus, the literature review in Chapter Two equally draws on the works of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X and other scholars of non-violence to bring complex and nuanced readings into how violence and non-violence should be conceptualized and operationalized. Chapter Two ends with how the ideas of Fanon and Malcolm X converge and diverge with the ideas of Gandhi and King.

Chapter Three deals with theoretical frameworks. Guided by anti-colonial and integrative antiracism education, Chapter Three seeks for theoretical building blocks that reinterpret and reframe violence and non-violence for educational transformation.
Chapter Four deals with the methodology of the dissertation. Here, the discussion includes various research techniques used to access and gain research participants. The discussion also shows how the data from the research subjects were gathered, handled, and analyzed in the dissertation. Chapter Four also highlights some of the unanticipated issues that emerged in the research and how these issues were delved into.

Chapters Five and Six deal with research findings and discussions respectively. Here, I combine various literature and personal stories of my research participants to analyse and discuss the three research questions posed in chapter one. Chapter Seven discusses the summary of the dissertation. It also raises some of the unanswered questions for future research on Gandhi and King.
CHAPTER TWO—LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a relatively open contradiction about how violence is understood and operationalized in Euro-American/Canadian university schooling. While everybody appears to be against violence—at least, perpetrators’ demeanour and receivers of violence syndrome when violent incident occurs—society continues to enact violence on each other in our everyday social interactions and relations. How is violence conceptualized and operationalized to allow this open contradiction to occur in society? In the chapter “Making Sense of Violence,” Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois urged critical educators to think through violence beyond its physicality—force, assault, or the infliction of pain—to include other areas of violence that cannot be measured (2004, p.1). What constitutes violence is always mediated by an expressed or implicit dichotomy between legitimate and illegitimate, permissible or sanctioned acts and impermissible and unsanctioned acts. But who is to determine which violent action is justified and which violent action is not justified? Dei (2010) warns that any undertaking to conceptualize violence within marginalized communities must be done with maximum caution because violence is often (mis)read within the lens of social pathologies, for communities that are already stigmatized by violence; one cannot help but be more cautious when undertaking any exercise to study violence in such communities.

At the risk of sounding highly theoretical or even too philosophical, this chapter critically examines and reviews how violence and non-violence have been conceptualized by previous social scientists and critical thinkers and its implication for transformative education in the 21st century. The review is divided into two sections: the first section deals with violence and the second section deals with non-violence. The review is guided by these questions: In what ways have different historical epochs contributed to the shifting and sometimes contradictory meanings
of the term violence and non-violence? What is the implication of the shifting meanings of violence and non-violence for contemporary pursuit of university schooling transformation? What are the points of convergence and divergence between violence and non-violence?

**Concerning Violence**

Violence is more complex to imagine, conceptualize, and operationalize than many critical educators would admit. This is why any reading of violence must be done in a way that teases out violence in its myriad and complex forms. The challenge of discussing violence in society is that there is selective understanding and interpretation of violence. Dominant bodies usually blur over what constitutes violence. For instance, public discussion of violence often focuses on violence emerging from resistance and, in the process, ignores violence emerging from oppression. This selective response to violence often allows certain forms of violence (violence of the dominant) to remain unaccounted for. We see this behavior frequently in the Canadian public school system. Oftentimes, students who tend to resist and challenge dominant hegemonic texts and pedagogical practices are labeled as “students with behavior problems” and they often get punished (see Dei et al 1997; Dei et al, 2000). Meanwhile the violence emerging from schooling is often-times ignored. The complex nature of violence in the schooling system requires a definitional approach that can capture violence in its nuanced, myriad, and contradictory forms. The following are some of the historical attempts at the definition of violence:

Joan V. Bondurant (1988, p.9), a prominent scholar of violence and non-violence, defines violence as “a wilful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to a person or a group against whom it is applied.” The key words in this definition are “wilful or
intentional,” “applied force,” “harm,” and “one’s opponent.” For this definition, violence is assumed to have occurred when one intentionally utilizes forces of any physical form to cause emotional or/and physical harm to one’s opponent. This definition stresses the issue of intent and the physical nature of violence. In other words, violence is only assumed to have occurred when there is, first, an intent and second, an element of physical or emotional injury. While this definition, to a large extent, captures the physical and harmful effects of violence, it does not capture the myriad forms of violence in society. Further, by stressing on intent, this definition ignores violence that occurs through unintentional acts. This can be problematic given the fact that there are many violent acts within the school system that are unintentional. Thus, when the term “intentional” becomes the benchmark of defining violence, there is a danger of missing out on other forms of violence created through unintentional acts. This is why this definition cannot be adequate to explain current violence in schooling.

Gail Manson perhaps provides a detailed conception of violence that accounts for the myriad forms of violence in schooling. In her introduction to *The Spectacle of Violence: Homophobia, Gender, and Knowledge*, Manson (2002, p.5) saw “conventional conception of violence” to include “a vast array of oppression (in addition to physical force) that face particular groups of people. These might include various forms of discrimination, financial exploitation, institutional exclusion, and social marginalization.” While this conception of violence is generally broad, ironically, Gail Manson sees this definition to be insufficient because it does not fully capture different forms of violence in society. Instead, Gail Manson defines violence as the use of physical force by one person or more upon the body of another or others. By physical force, Gail Manson means, pushing, shoving, hitting, punching, or otherwise harming or hurting a person who is targeted. This form of violence often produces emotional and psychological
harm. Gail Manson further noted in her definition that violence is often (or not) accompanied by threatening and abusive language. Violence can also be carried out with weapons or without weapons (Manson, 2002, pp.5). Furthermore, violence can be “planned or spontaneous, organized or disorganized.”

This definition is refreshing in a sense that it is a break away from the definition that emphasizes “intentionality or wilfulness.” While Gail Mansion’s definition may be useful in understanding violence, her emphasis on “physical force” can be problematic when it is applied to violent conditions of schooling and education. For instance, Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986); Dei et al (1997; 2000); Cummins (1986; 1989); Curtis et al (1992); Appel (1988); and Verma (1987, 1989) have observed that racial hostility, lack of representation, lack of role models, low teacher expectation, unsuitable teaching curricula, culturally biased standardized tests, and biased labeling and streaming are some of the violent issues in schooling and education in North America. Perhaps, it is this insidious violence in the school system in North America that might have prompted Richard Nathaniel Wright—the Black novelist who penned Outsider, Black Power (1954), The Color Curtain (1956), Pagan Spain (1957), and The Long Dream (1958)—to inform his English speaking audience that “luckily, the state government of Mississippi did not provide school for Negroes beyond the eighth grade” (Wright 1960b, P.9). Richard Wright further argues that the neglect of schools for Blacks in Mississippi is a “gift” because it saved him from an education system that would have forced on him values that did not correspond to his culture, values, worldviews, and experiences (Wright 1960b). Although most violence in schooling may not require physical forces to enact, its detrimental effects on racialized, gendered, classed, sexualized, and disabled learners cannot be underemphasized. Unfortunately, Gail Mason’s definition does not capture the nuanced nature of violence of schooling.
Another definition of violence worth looking at is the definition provided by Johan Galtung, a renowned scholar in the area of violence and non-violence in society. Galtung (1969) defines violence as that which causes people’s actual physical and mental accomplishments to fall short of their physical potentials and mental realizations (p.168). Johan Galtung contends that the more intense the gap between the individual’s potential and actual fulfilment of somatic and mental needs, the greater the violence inflicted upon the actors concerned (see Galtung, 1969). Galtung then went on to distinguish between indirect, structural violence, and the more direct, physical manifestations of violence:

A structurally based discrepancy between actual and potential states of somatic and mental well-being, [structural violence] need not be perceived by its "victims" or involve physical violence. What it does constitute, however, is a system of differential, unequal access to the means for closing the gap between the actual and the potential, where those at the "bottom" of some hierarchically structured relational system cannot—by virtue of involuntary membership in certain ethnic, class, religious, gender, and/or other groups—obtain fair access to the social, economic political, educational, legal, and/or other systems and corresponding resources typically enjoyed, and presided over, by the mainstream. Structural violence is what exists in situations of institutionalised racism within and imperialism across societies. (Galtung, 1969, p. 169)

Galtung implies, by his definition, that the very structure established in society to ensure equitable and fair distribution of resources to everybody, is only serving the interest of the special few while ignoring the plights of the majority. Galtung’s argument of violence is closely compatible with the work of Ted Robert Gurr’s theory on relative deprivation. Gurr (1970) noted that the felt gap between “value expectations” (resources individuals feel entitled to in society) and “value capabilities” (resources individuals feel capable of achieving and holding in society) is directly proportional to violence the individual is willing to commit. In other words, if the individuals cannot meet their basic needs within the existing structures of power, they will device their own means (whether fair or foul) to fulfill their basic human needs (see Burton 1997).
Applying this theory to schooling, one can deduce that students’ school disengagement, disenfranchisement, and drop-outs are closely connected to youth violence in society. For instance, Sandole (2001, p.4), applying the arguments of Burton, Gurr, and Galtung to schooling, noted that when a gang member says that she or he has entered and remains a member of a gang subculture because gang membership provides love, respect, and security, she or he is invariably saying that the family and school institutions have generally failed to help her or him meet those needs. James Garbarino also made similar observation in his work *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*:

Emotionally needy boys who are rejected by teachers and parents are prime targets for antisocial older youth and adults. These negative role models recruit vulnerable boys, and they exchange self-affirmation for loyalty to the antisocial cause. Many violent and troubled boys have stories of how they were befriended by older boys who accepted them in return for their involvement in criminal activities. When I asked Stephen about his motivation for joining a gang, he said, "They were like a family, but a hell of a lot better than the family I had" (Garbarino, 1999, p. 168).

This theory clearly shows that the school system is directly implicated in youth violence in society. When school curricula and pedagogical practices fail to provide emotional, psychological, spiritual, and material support to racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized students, schools are invariably pushing these learners to look elsewhere for these supports. Unfortunately, some of these learners have to rely on gangs for support.

The limitation of Gurr, Burton, and Galtung’s definitions is that they ignore individuals’ agencies and resistance power. Human beings are not naturally docile bodies for action to be exerted on them. Anthony Giddens in his work *The Theory of Structuration* contends that “the structure properties of social systems do not act, or “act on” anyone like forces of nature to “compel” him or her to behave in any particular way” (Giddens, 1984a, p.181). What Giddens is
implying in his argument is that people are not just the abstract subjects of an act; rather, when people engage in social praxis, they exert their influence on the course of that praxis (Munch, 1994, p.176). Understandingly, the structure though informs people on how to act in certain ways; such calls are not deterministic. Therefore, the idea that the system has absolute power and can highly determine the actions of individuals with agency and resistance power is an over-stretched argument. As Outhwaite puts it:

We should not conceive of the structure of domination built into social institutions as in some way grinding out ‘docile bodies’ that behave like the automata suggested by objectivist social science. Power within social systems, which enjoy some continuity over time and space, presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is what I call the dialectic of control in social systems. (1990, p. 66).

Closely related to Anthony Giddens’ concept of ‘agency and structure’ is Michel Foucault's notion of power relations. Foucault (1982) contends that individuals are “condemned to be free” within any power relations. That is, individuals are free subjects who participate in multiple subject-positions. According to Foucault (1982, p.790), “When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others ... one [should] include an important element: freedom” Although Michel Foucault has been critiqued for treating power relations as if it is the same at every level (see Dei, 2008; Dei and Marlon, 2010; Dei, 2010), his argument raises questions about the power of structures to determine the fate of individuals. While the debate between the power of the structure and individual agencies may continue, it is obvious that any analytical reading of individual violence must be connected to structural and institutional violence.
Defining Non-Violence in Schooling

Non-violence is practised in almost all major faiths and religions: Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In fact, for some of these faiths, non-violence is not just a matter of choice; it is an undeniable and irrevocable way of life that followers must strictly adhere to. For instance, Jainism, a religion of about 4 million Indians and several hundred thousands more around the world, espouses complete philosophical commitment to non-violence (Chapple, 1998). Jains has five great vows for its followers: non-violence (ahimsa), truth (satya), non-stealing (asteya), celibacy (brahmacharya), and non-possession (aparigraha). For the Jains, non-violence is refraining from all forms of injury and violence even if that violence involves the subtlest, invisible living creatures. For the most devoted Jains, committing harm to microorganisms constitutes violence. Thus, it is not surprising that the most devoted Jains wear small cotton face masks that filter their inhalations in order to prevent them from ingesting—and thereby killing—even the smallest of airborne organisms (Chapple, 1998; Holmes and Gan, 2005). In addition, Jains carry large, soft brushes to gently sweep an area of all living organisms before they sit or lie down. In fact, some Jain monks even refuse to cook for themselves for fear of killing any organism during the cooking process (Chapple, 1998). The Jains practice non-violence in three principles which are called the three Guptis: the Gupti of mental non-violence, the Gupti of verbal non-violence, and the Gupti of physical non-violence. The Jains believes that speaking truth is non-violence because lies can cause verbal injury. Similarly, non-possession is non-violence because a person who hoards wealth deprives the poor and the needy. Mahatma Gandhi was influenced by the non-violent teachings of Jainism through his lifetime friend and a “teacher,” Rajchandra Ravjibhai Mehta (Raychadbha) (Brown, 1989). Gandhi came to trust and respect the views of Raychadbha so much that when Gandhi moved to South Africa, he kept
corresponding with Raychadbha on several matters including matters relating to his family and work (Chapple, 1989). Raychadbhai’s intense idealism and intelligence serve Gandhi many purposes that in later years, when Gandhi was reflecting on those who have influenced him the most, he said that he considered Raychadbhai to be “higher than Tolstoy in religious perception” (Tendulkar, 1951, p.35). The passion, intellect, and deep faith of Raychadbhai provided Gandhi with a living example of how a man, caught up in modern society, can still seek God. Gandhi saw in Raychadbhai, a man who combines active involvement in day-to-day commercial ventures with religious devotion and a quest for virtue and detachment from earthly desires (Brown, 1989, pp.76-77). Raychadbhai’s character taught Gandhi why it is necessary for individuals to strive for self-knowledge and also to be open to truths contained in all religions. “From Raychandbhai, Gandhi came to believe that all religions were, at their essence, both perfect and imperfect, but that each provided its own way to the truth about God and worship” (Nojeim, 2004, p.71). Gandhi also came to understand, through the help of his Jain friend, that truth has many sides; therefore, any search for truth must be done with openness and tolerance to opposing views (Brown, 1989). This notion of multiple sides to truth serves as the keystone to Gandhi’s ceaseless belief that a non-violent approach is the appropriate method to search for the truth.

In fact, history abounds with so many examples of non-violent acts. Whether one is looking at the Plebeian protests against Rome in the fifth century B.C., the resistance of the Netherlands to Spanish rule in the mid-sixteenth century Europe, or the American colonists’ refusal to pay taxes and debts to the British colonists, non-violent resistance has been used in many places and by several groups to attain a certain amount of change in society. Thus, it is fair to say that non-violent philosophy was already known and practised long before Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. adopted it as a tool of social change.
In spite of this seemingly popular use of non-violent resistance in human history, it remains ironic that we are yet to find a community or a society that has a single word for “non-violence” (see Kurlansky, 2006; Holmes and Gan, 2005). In fact, the closest we have had a word for non-violence is in the Sanskrit tradition which uses the word *ahimsa* to imply non-violence. Interestingly, *ahimsa* has its root in another Sanskrit word *himsa*, which means “harm.” The negation of *himsa* is *ahimsa*. Thus, *ahimsa* becomes “not harm” just as non-violence is interpreted as “not doing harm.” However, if non-violence is “not doing harm” then what is it doing? Does non-violence mean the same thing as “not violence?” The dissertation opines that the lack of a word for “non-violence” unlike “violence” makes the definition of the term confusing and is responsible for the many misreading and misinterpretation of “non-violence” within public discourses.

Gene Sharp, one of the foremost scholars of non-violence, argues that there are several meanings associated with non-violent action (Sharp 1959). Sharp (1959, pp.46-59) outlines non-violence into nine different forms. These include *non-resistance, active reconciliation, moral resistance, selective non-violence, passive resistance, peaceful resistance, non-violent direct action, non-violent revolution*, and *satyagraha*. *Non-resistance* is generally people who do not want to get involved in anything in society. For such individuals, they are non-violent, not on the basis of an ideology or politics but on the simple basis of being apathetic. *Active reconciliation* is a method of activism that only tries to convince people without using non-violent coercive techniques. For *moral resistance* activists, evil should always be resisted by peaceful and moral means. *Selective non-violent advocates* are not generally non-violent; rather, as the name implies, they only decide on which issues they may want to be non-violent. For instance, *selective non-violent activists* may refuse to participate in specific violent conflicts such as international war.
This does not mean that they are against violence in general. Example, the fact that somebody is an anti-war protestor does not necessarily mean that the person is generally non-violent. Passive resistance activists may be closer to selective non-violent activists; however, passive resistance activists are non-violent, not for reasons of principle but because they lack the means to use violence, or they know they will lose in a violent confrontation. Peaceful resistance activists are within the category of passive resistance except that peaceful resisters recognize the moral superiority of non-violent struggles. Non-violent direct action activists are those who use methods such as civil disobedience and non-cooperation to establish new patterns and institutional changes. Closely related to non-violent direct action activists are non-violent revolutionists. They are those who change society completely through non-violent means without the use of the state’s apparatus. The last types of non-violent activists are the Satyagrahis. They are individuals who attain truth with the opponents through love and non-violent actions. While Gene Sharp’s typology of non-violence is useful, it does not tell us exactly what constitutes non-violence.

Similar to Gene Sharp, Douglas Bond (1988, pp.86-87) categorizes non-violence into three types: absolute pacifist, principled pacifist, and pragmatic pacifist. The absolute pacifists endure suffering even to death; unfortunately, they do not work to reduce the suffering of others. The principled pacifists, although they have the objective of working to mitigate violence, to the best of their ability, do not know with certainty which path is least violent in the long term. Pragmatic pacifists are concerned with using non-violence in pursuit of a specific socio-political objective wherein non-violent ethic is specially utilized as a means to other ends. The relevance of Douglas Bond’s conception of non-violence is that he links a sense of community with the sanctity of all life. In this sense, non-violent advocates refrain from violent behaviour because
they believe that “sacrifice without a sense of community or unity between conflicting groups is nothing but violence for other ends” (Bond, 1988, p.87). Unfortunately, Douglas Bond’s typology, like Sharp’s, does not give us adequate understanding of what constitutes non-violence. Nagler (1986) defines non-violence as not a mere absence of violence but also the presence of positive quality of life. Michael Nagler’s definition of non-violence is useful because it teaches that non-violence is deeper than just staying away from violence; there must also be a desire to seek for a positive quality of life. Non-violence should not be read as “not violent.” In fact, non-violence is deeper than refusal to hit an opponent; it is about reaching out to an opponent. The definition of Michael Nagler is useful to the dissertation because it shifts the discussion of non-violence from the simple understanding of “not committing harm to an opponent” to a political stance that seeks justice and equity through love. Thus, non-violence is not necessarily an absence of tension and conflict, but the presence of justice and equity.

Perhaps, as a way of separating his ideas of non-violence from the existing definition of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi borrowed two Gujarati words satya and agraha to formulate his conception of non-violence. Satya means “truth” and agraha means “taking, firmness, seizing, or holding.” In fact, satya in the language of Sanskrit means real, actual, genuine, sincere, honest, truthful, faithful, pure, virtuous, good, successful, effectual, and valid (see Monier-Williams 1963). Within the Gujarati language, there are a number of proverbs that speak about satya. These include satya tare chhe truth comes to the surface, satyamev jayate truth always has firm foundation, and satyano beli Ishwar truth is the daughter of God (Hardiman, 2003). Satyagraha (satya+agraha) means to hold on to the “Truth” in a firm manner; hence, satyagraha also means “love-force” or “soul-force.” Mahatma Gandhi believes that “Truth” is God. Thus, satyagraha, as articulated in the editorial note of Non-Violent Resistance literally connotes “clinging to the
Truth.” In short, *satyagraha* means the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to God and dedicates his or her life to Him (Gandhi, 1961, p.iii). Gandhi argues that Truth is the most important name of God and wherever there is Truth (note the capitalization of the “T”) there is also knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there cannot be true knowledge, and where there is “true knowledge,” there is always “bliss” (*Ananda*) (Gandhi, 1961, p. 38). For Mahatma Gandhi, the search for Truth is the sole purpose and justification of human existence. All human activities must be centered on the search for Truth. Gandhi further argues that when the search for Truth is completed, all other human desires and aspirations will be naturally achieved. Therefore, *satyagraha* is about devoting one’s life to the search for Truth (Gandhi, 1961). Since it is impossible for humans to clearly know Truth (which is God) when they see Him, as long as humans are imprisoned in the mortal frame, seekers of Truth should be guided by *ahimsa* (Gandhi, 1961, p.41).

*Ahimsa* (non-violence) is the basic law of being. It is the basis of the search for Truth. According to Gandhi, the search for Truth is vain unless one is guided by *ahimsa*. Merton (1965, p.23) notes that *ahimsa* is the most effective principle for social action because it is in deep accord with true human nature and corresponds to one’s innate desire for peace, justice, order, freedom, and personal dignity. Within the moral structure of Gandhi, there are “two basic pillars—Truth and *ahimsa*; that is, non-violence or—as Gandhi calls it, love. Truth is the end; non-violence is the means. But the end and the means are bound irrevocably to each other. Diwakar (1969, p.18) concludes that in *satyagraha*, Truth is one supreme end and non-violence or love is only the means to attain it. These words—Truth and non-violence or love—are the obverse and reverse of the same coin but if at any time doubt arises as to which of them is the more important or primarily unquestionable, Truth precedes. However, if people are confused
about Truth any day, they should follow non-violence, the way of love and the path of suffering, and they will definitely find Truth. Explaining further the Gandhian understanding of non-violence, Nelson (1975, p.57) notes that non-violence is not a single virtue or a single quality of life; it is a spirit, a way of life, a religion, or the law of being.

Similar to Gene Sharp, Gandhi draws a distinction between *satyagraha* and *passive resistance*. The passive resisters or those who adopt non-violence as policy “are really not non-violence, for they would be violence if they could and are non-violence only because they do not for the time being have the means or capacity for violence” (Gandhi, 1961, p.iv). Thus, the passive resisters resort to non-violence temporarily because they do not have the means to resist violently. On the other hand, *satyagrahis* resort to non-violence not because they do not have the means to be violent but because they have love in their hearts and will not harm or want harm for anybody. Mahatma Gandhi has a firm and stubborn belief in the effectiveness of his non-violent framework in creating change. Even in such unlikely cases as “the internationally infamous Hitler or his own reprobate son, Harilal, who caused him such domestic distress, he held to this hope and seemingly held fast by what he experienced as truth against the apparent evidence” (Brown, 1993, p.12).

Gandhi’s idea of non-violence is repeated several times in the works and words of Martin Luther King Jr. (see King Jr., 1958; 1959 1963; 1966). Unlike Gandhi who engages in complex religious philosophical interpretation and analysis of non-violence, King Jr. treats non-violence as a moral principle: “do unto others as you may want others to do unto you.” Thus, if violence is wrong and has to be challenged by oppressed bodies, then the oppressed bodies cannot use violent strategies to fight social and institutional injustices. Like Gandhi, King insists that the means should be as pure as the end. Just as it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends,
it is equally wrong to use violent means to attain social justice and equity. The moral argument of Gandhi and King has been refuted by Malcolm X: “I don’t believe in any form of unjustified extremism. But I believe that when a man is exercising extremism.... in defense of liberty for human beings, it is no vice. And when one is moderate in the pursuit of justice for human beings, I say he is a sinner” (Malcolm X, 1964, n.p.). According to Malcolm X, immoral acts are not committed by those who use violence to challenge injustice but by those who adopt moderation in the face of injustice and oppression. The dissertation contends that violence and non-violence should not be read within the context of morality; instead, violence and non-violence should be read in the context of justice and equity.

To be fair, Martin Luther King Jr. was not necessarily asking oppressed bodies to resort to moderation when challenging injustice. In fact, Martin Luther King Jr. did not discount tensions and conflicts in non-violent direct action. For Martin Luther King Jr., those who engage in non-violent resistance do not create tensions; they merely bring to public awareness the hidden tensions in society so that members of society can address them. King likens tension in non-violent resistance to a boil that can never be cured as long as it is covered up: “Like a boil that can never be cured as long it is covered up but must be opened with all its pus-flowing ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be likewise exposed with all of the tension its exposing creates to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured” (King Jr., 1963, p.91). King Jr. was more interested in achieving social justice, equity, and fairness even if it would take tension and conflict conditions to achieve them. He condemns what he considers to be “negative peace,” which is the absence of tension but the presence of injustice and inequities. Martin Luther King Jr. argues that if peace must come at the expense of justice, equity, and fairness, then that peace is not worth pursuing.
If peace means a second class citizenship, then I don’t want it. If peace means keeping my mouth shut in the midst of evil and injustice, then I don’t want it. If peace means being complacent and accepting the status quo, then I don’t want it. If peace means being passive then I don’t want it. If peace means a willingness to be exploited and humiliated, then that’s the kind of peace that I don’t want. (King, 1956, n.p)

It seems that Martin Luther King Jr. had a peace-conflict approach in mind when he spoke about non-violence. Peace-conflict theorists, who are offshoots of conflict theorists, view structural and systemic inequities as the root cause of conflicts in society (see Deutsch, 1973; Galtung & Jacobsen, 2000; Danesh 2002; 2006; see Lederach, 1995; Bush and Opp, 2001; and Danesh and Clarke-Habibi, 2007). Thus, all conflicts are the unavoidable outcomes of struggles between marginalized bodies and institutions of domination (Dahrendorf 1958; Coser 1956). The contention of Martin Luther King Jr. is that society should always welcome conflicts and tension if that is the only way of exposing hidden structural inequities and unfairness.

**Points of Convergence and Divergence of Gandhi and King with the Dissertation**

From what has been said so far, it can be concluded that though Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Frantz Fanon are all in favour of fighting injustice and oppression, they differ in their approach and strategy. How then can one apply these nuanced and complex intellectual contributions of Frantz Fanon, Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. to the violent condition of university schooling in the 21st century? What are the challenges of these men’s ideas for the critical pursuit of transformative university schooling? How can the ideas of these men, about violence and non-violence and their effects on the human psyche, help critical educators to understand the tensions, contentions, contestations, and nuances about the questions of identity and the difference and the pursuit of race, gender, class, religion,
and sexual politics of university schooling? The intent of the dissertation is to further explore these questions.

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Frantz Fanon, and Malcolm X’s conceptions of violence and non-violence offer opportunities and limitations in the search for non-violent working framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century. Although the dissertation acknowledges the relevance of these men to university schooling activism of the 21st century, there are several ways the dissertation may want to depart from their ideas.

First, it appears that at the centre of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi’s lives and works was a deep and deepening religious vision for the world. Thus, it is not surprising that their ideas of non-violence were largely influenced by Jain, Hindu, and Christian teachings. Consequently, Gandhi and King’s theological position and personal views as activists cannot easily be separated. In fact, Gandhi defiantly argues that “Truth and love have jointly been the guiding principle of my life. If God who is indefinable can be at all defined, then I should say that God is Truth. It is impossible to reach Him, that [sic] is Truth, except through Love” (Gandhi 1927, p.452). Although Gandhi’s theological position may cut across religious affiliation, his constant reference to God in his articulation of satyagraha and ahimsa may discourage university school activists who are atheists from using his ideas. Thus, this dissertation intends to explore how one can pursue truth and love outside the arena of religion. Thus, rather than religion, the dissertation wants to explore Gandhi’s ideas in context of spirituality. What will non-violent resistance look like when it is grounded in spirituality instead of religion? What are the fatalities of situating one’s non-violent resistance within spiritual politics? The dissertation intends to explore these questions.
Second, it appears that Mahatma Gandhi’s conception of non-violence was not necessarily an activist’s tool to create change but a way of life that goes beyond mere resistance. The social conditions of Gandhi and his followers at Ashram clearly show that Gandhi has a vision of satyagraha that goes beyond a resistance tool for creating change. For instance, Gandhi insisted that followers of satyagraha and ahimsa must make a lifelong commitment to poverty and a vow of chastity. What does it mean and look like to adopt Gandhi and King’s ideas as a working framework for social change and what will be the limitations? The dissertation will explore this question.

Third, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King’s ideas of violence seem limited to physical contacts, yet violence of the 21st century exists in myriad and subtle forms. As it has been noted, violence can be physical, economic, psychological, verbal, emotional, or spiritual. If violence exists in myriad forms, why is violence read in the dominant interpellation and lens? The dissertation will examine this question.

Fourth, in spite of these points of departure, the dissertation shares Mahatma Gandhi’s conception of ahimsa. Mahatma Gandhi contends that institutions of power organize and dominate through the use of force instead of persuasion and love. Consequently, institutions of power have woefully failed to secure long-lasting change. The dissertation acknowledges that the changes needed in contemporary education have to be grounded in love. Brown asks, “If state power could not achieve genuine and enduring change, what force could?” The dissertation argues that probably Gandhi’s conception of love could be a starting point in the search for means and strategies through which true and authentic change can occur. Mahatma Gandhi and King argue that in resistance work, the means is as important as the ends. As university school activists, sometimes, our own history and personal experiences with violence can fill us with rage
and vengeance that we may want nothing more than to harm the oppressor the same way they have harmed us. However, Gandhi and King’s notion of love provides a relevant starting point in creating change. Thus, for this dissertation, the notion of love as captured by both Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi is a relevant starting point to pursue university schooling transformation.

Fifth, Gandhi and King work with the idea that real change in any situation must begin with individuals before it can result in overall structural change. Thus, whether university school activists are looking at economic, social, religious, or political change, the real change must begin with the individuals manning these institutions. Within this context, persuasion and appealing to people’s conscience are more effective than applying brute force and coercion to get change. The dissertation agrees and works with Gandhi and King on this issue. As already noted at Chapter One, the real and lasting change needs to begin with individuals and not necessarily with the structures of power. This position is not to suggest that oppression does not emanate from structures and at the institutional level. No, in fact, throughout the dissertation, it has been argued that changes within structures and institutions are essential if real change is to occur in society. However, focusing on only structures and institutions of power without paying attention to individuals working within these institutions can be less effective. The argument of the dissertation is that when structures and institutions are talked about as if they are faceless and independent entities that exist outside the individual agencies, we make any demand for accountability and responsibility almost difficult. Separating individuals from institutions of domination makes it easier for people benefiting from structural and institutional violence to absolve themselves from accountability and complicity. The dissertation refuses to accept any argument that suggests that people with agencies and resistance power are not accountable and
responsible when they chose to enact violence against others in the name of serving institutions of domination. There are no justifiable explanations and excuses for Nazi soldiers who participated in the Holocaust even if their acts of violence against Jews were instigated by the state. Similarly, there are no justifiable explanations and excuses for academia, school administrators, and policy makers who continue to promote homophobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, classist, ableist, racist, sexist ideas within university schooling. Within this context, the dissertation argues that true transformation within university schooling must equally target academia, school administrators, and policy makers who manage, maintain, and promote racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, Islamophobic values, cultures, and worldviews in teaching curricula and pedagogical practices. The dissertation intends to bridge the gap between the practices of structures of domination and individuals who work within these structures.
In this dissertation, I draw on both integrative antiracism education and anti-colonial discursive frameworks as theoretical building blocks for the reinterpreting and reframing of violence that helps critical educators to work with non-violence as a framework of social justice work in the current university schooling system in Toronto. Critical scholars have noted that the current schooling system performs “epistemic violence” on different bodies (see Spivak, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Dei and Simmons, 2010). Anti-colonial education and integrative antiracism education frameworks remind us to be aware of the protean ways in which colonial, historic violence comes to be embedded in contemporary systems of schooling (Dei and Simmons, 2010, p.xv). This makes Frantz Fanon’s question still relevant today: “How do we extricate ourselves” from this colonial violence of schooling? These frameworks are relevant in understanding issues of violence and non-violence in schooling because they offer sites and spaces of individual and collective resistance to the culture of dominance in schooling settings (Dei and Simmons, 2010, p.xvi). By using anti-colonial education and integrative antiracism education discursive prisms as the theoretical frameworks for the dissertation, I intend to expose the myriad ways in which colonial violence continues to reproduce itself in current university schooling and the alternative ways in which this violence can be resisted.

Although there is overlapping between anti-colonial education and integrative antiracism education, there are also differences. In context of similarities, both frameworks recognize the power dynamics of social identities. For these frameworks, the social categories of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and ethnicity are not only sites of identity but also are sites of power and privilege. Thus, to speak about social identities is also to speak about inherent violence within social relations and those who benefit from these violent social relations.
Dei (2010, p.13) noted that the violence of schooling is real when one thinks of the effects of the mis-education of youth; the oppressive practices of racist, sexist, classist, heterosexist, and ableist texts, curricula, and instructional materials; the failure on the part of the dominant group to engage critical question of culture, identity, and representation in both cultural and macro-social politics of schooling. Yet, in the face of this racist, classist, sexist, ableist, and homophobic violence of schooling, we witness teachers and school administrators who risk everything to circumvent the hegemonic relations and practices in schooling (see Dei with Butler, Charania, Kola-Olusanya, Opini, Thomas, and Wagner, 2010). Integrative antiracism education and anti-colonial education frameworks are about celebrating the efforts of these progressive educators who are working for change in university schooling.

In the area of differences, although anti-colonial education acknowledges the connection between racism and colonialism (see Fanon 1967; Memmi 1965; Dubois 1901), integrative antiracism education treats race as salience in its analysis of social oppression. Anti-colonial education, in its politics and praxes, has most often treated race as part of the broader issues confronting colonized subjects but has never fore-grounded race as its entry point in the analysis of oppression. For instance, in The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon, a foremost anti-colonialist, foregrounds class, and not race, in his analysis of oppression. However, integrative antiracism education recognizes the saliency and centrality of race in understanding other forms of social oppression. This does not suggest that race is more important than other forms of social oppression. In fact, the decision to treat race as salient in integrative antiracism education is purely a political and not an ideological stand. How is the politics of integrative antiracism education relevant in reinterpreting and reframing violence of university schooling, and how does this help us to work with non-violence as a framework for social justice work?
Several lessons can be laid bare here: Integrative antiracism reclaim race as a site of difference and an entry point into the larger struggles for social justice (Dei 2008). Among the indigenous Akans of Ghana, there is a proverbial saying that goes: *Obiara wo nea mako ko a eye no ya* [We all have special parts of our body that we do not want pepper to touch]. When one connects this Akan proverb with the politics of integrative antiracism education, what becomes clear is that everybody experiences oppression differently. For instance, the sense of rage I may feel about racial violence may be different from my experience of classism or ethnic violence. This does not suggest that I value racial violence above other forms of oppression. No, however, given the history of my people, any experience of racism brings back the pain of enslavement, segregation, and racial lynching. Thus, my reaction to racism may be different from my reaction to classism or other forms of oppression. Since no individual, in reality, reacts in the same way to all forms of oppression, the contention is not what enrages and provokes us into social justice work, but how our rage leads us to understand and appreciate the rage and anger of others. It is hypocritical for those enraged by racial violence not to think that others have the right to be enraged by homophobic violence. Thus, if racism enrages me because of my history, I should understand and expect why anti-Semitism must enraged people of Jewish heritage. If our rage against a particular form of violence cannot help us to understand and support the rage of others against other forms of oppression connected to their history, then we are being insincere in our social justice works.

Further, integrative antiracism education shows the myriad ways in which violence of university schooling manifests in everyday social relations. In his book *I Write What I Like*, Steve Biko noted that no one likes to be told how to react after being kicked (Biko 1978). There is something de-spiriting and violating when dominant bodies engage in insidious politics that tries
to devalue, undermine, and delegitimize voices of marginalized groups that speak about their violent experiences (see Dei 2008). For instance, the request for “proof” or “evidence” that is often required of marginalized bodies when they speak of their violent experience is itself violating and painful. Again, the idea that certain bodies have “chips on their shoulders” or like “playing victim” roles whenever they talk about their violent experience of schooling can be spirit and psyche wounding, yet we hear this charge against racial bodies any time they complain about racism in our schools (see Dei et al 2004). But how can we talk about violence of university schooling if others are not allowed to tell their stories of pain and injuries, or are asked to show the “evidence” of violence before they are taken seriously? Of course, we all know that any analysis of difference that fails to recognize the complexity and multiplicity of identity is limited. However, this concern for comprehensive analysis of difference should not delegitimize those who use one identity marker as an entry point into social justice work.

Another point of difference between integrative antiracism education and anti-colonial education is that the latter speaks to issue of spirituality. For anti-colonial education, spirituality in university schooling shapes learners consciousness into collective and unified existence. Anti-colonial education does not accept spirit and intellect split in Eurocentric education; rather, it gestures towards an inexorability of body, mind, and spirit connection. The synergy between one’s physical and metaphysical world informs one’s behaviour at any given moment. Thus, university schooling gains nothing when it reduces human behaviour to separate units of body-mind. Within this context, Elaine Brown Spencer unceasingly appeals to academics not to overlook or to ignore the role of spirituality in creating survival, self-worth, and sanity for Blacks in Canada (see Spencer 2006). Understanding spirituality in context of violent university schooling is very important. Oftentimes, universities judge students’ academic successes based
on their performances in standardized test, yet hardly do we talk about spiritual wounds students have to sustain in order to become successful (see Dei et al 2010). In (Adjei, 2010), I lamented about things I have to amputate in order to survive in the colonial schooling system in Ghana. Although, today, I am pursuing my doctoral education—a sign that I have been successful in school—this “success” has come at the expense of my values, worldviews, culture, soul, and spirit. I have literally given up who I am in order to survive in the academy. Spirituality within anti-colonial education helps us to understand the extent to which violent colonial education can be damaging to the spirit and psyche of learners. It also helps us to understand that a spiritually centered academy can be emotionally empowering to learners (Dei 2008). Later in the dissertation, I will speak more to the issue of spirituality and activism in university schooling. For now, I highlight the strengths of integrative antiracism education to the intersectional analysis of oppression.

**Building a Theoretical Block for Reframing and Reinterpreting Violence: A Case of Integrative Antiracism Education**

Dei (1996) defines integrative antiracism framework as the “study of how the dynamics of social difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, language, and religion) are mediated in people’s daily experiences” (p.55). Integrative antiracism is an activist framework that consciously links all struggles against social injustice, inequities, and oppression. It acknowledges multiple, shifting, and often contradictory identities and subjective positions (Dei 1996). Integrative antiracist approach calls on activists to depart from the current liberal additive analysis of social oppression that denies the complexity of difference and rather pursue the multiplicative understanding and an analysis of social oppression. The relevance of
integrative antiracism framework is that it helps unravel the complex interlocking nature of oppression so as to intellectually engage in meaningful and progressive political action to address them.

Discussing integrative antiracism education brings to mind an incident that happened at the University of Toronto in the latter part of 2008. As part of its campaign to make equity issues visible on the university campus, the Office of Equity of the University of Toronto introduced an equity poster in the latter part of 2008 to generate discussions on equity issues at the university campus. The poster which was in a form of a crossword puzzle had the caption “Equity: It Includes You.” The poster presented arrays of social identities (Jew, Lesbian, Buddhist, Muslim, Single mom, Blind, and White) and how they played out in the intersectional view of oppression. Ironically and conspicuously missing from the crossword puzzle poster were categories for racialized and classed bodies. This omission provoked a series of protest e-mails from many racialized and classed students, at the University of Toronto, who felt that their lived experiences had been rendered invisible through the omission. In a response to these protest e-mails, a staffer at the Office of Equity argued that the list for oppression is long and inconclusive hence the crossword puzzle could not represent all equity issues. Thus, the lack of representation for racialized and classed bodies on the poster should be attributed to a lack of space on the poster and not to a lack of interest in race and class issues.

While I do recognize the good works of the Office of Equity and even sincerely believe that this error was unintentional, I am still troubled by the space explanation. I am concerned that the Office of Equity may not address adequately inequity issues on campus if its staffers keep using space to justify the omission of other equity issues. Foucault (1976, p.55) argues that “choosing not to recognize [is] another vagary of the will to truth.” I also argue that “choosing
not to recognize” is a strategy of power because it sanctions what should be said and what should not be said. It tells us what is permissible to discuss and what is not permissible to discuss—something Foucault (1982) describes as a “regime of truth.” Therefore, by choosing not to include race and class issues on the poster, the Office of Equity is subtly, and not so subtly, sanctioning a conversation that excludes race and class issues. This is a bit troubling given the background in which Black feminists in the United States coined the term “intersectionality” and later developed to specifically address the omission of race and class issues in the praxis of White Western feminists (see Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Smith, 1980; Smith & Smith, 1980; 1983; hooks, 1981; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984; Collins, 2000). Thus, to see that a crossword puzzle poster that is based on intersectional analysis to also ignore race and class issues is quite disturbing.

Why is this story relevant to the dissertation? Over the years, I have been quite dismayed by the sheer display of contradiction and inconsistency among certain university school activists. In (Dei, 2008), George Dei lamented about what sometimes appears to be a lack of support and misunderstanding from even some progressive university educators when certain marginalized bodies speak about their experiences of violence within the school system. This concern of George Dei is not a figment of his imagination. I was privy to some of the responses after George Dei had called for the Toronto District School Board to experiment with an Africentric School in Toronto. Folks that one thought were allies suddenly were accusing Blacks for seeking special treatment. A colleague, at the university, who is not of an African descent, even asked me, “What do you think will happen when Asians also demand their own schools, or when all other interest groups demand their schools?” Yet, this same colleague has done extensive research and published book chapters about how the school system is failing black students. Similarly, three years ago, a black male student in my undergraduate course, at New College of the University of
Toronto, approached me after a class to express his concern about LGBTQ groups on university campuses. According to the student, homophobia is justified because the Bible does not support homosexual relations. I told the student that the same Bible had been equally used in the past to justify sexism, racism, enslavement of black people, classism, and ableism. If that is the case would he support racism, sexism, classism, and ableism because a section of the Bible says so? The student immediately understood my point. Of course, I do not deny that religion creates discomfort, among some people, to openly talk about homosexual relations; however, there is a meaningful difference between experiencing discomfort in speaking about homosexuality and avoiding speaking about it altogether. Unfortunately, this is the new trend in contemporary activism. We saw it during the ugly campaign in California about Ballot Proposition 8 or The California Marriage Protection Act. Folks who one thought would be understanding and vote against the Proposition were surprisingly defending it. The point is that without building bridges that connect to other struggles, social justice work will yield little result. Audre Lorde once notes:

For women, the need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered.... Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. ... Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters. (Lorde, 1984, p.111)

Although I acknowledge that oppression is usually relational and that one’s experience with a particular form of oppression may inform one’s resistance politics, I argue that our resistance work cannot deal with only oppression that affects us and leaves others intact. To do so is to repeat the trend that contributes to the production of hegemonic knowledge. How can we genuinely expect transformation in schooling and education, if we keep telling other equity issues
to pick numbers and wait for their turn in what appears to be a long queue of competing interests. How can we accomplish much in creating change in education if we keep marginalizing those who are already languishing at the periphery? How can we even talk about an intersection of oppressions on the university campuses if we keep rendering other marginalities invisible and irrelevant in our analyses? How do we manage diversity in the field of difference? Commonsense must dictate that those who had walked through a path and seen the challenges within that path should be the first to understand the struggles of those walking through a similar path. Unfortunately, within the field of university schooling, diversity is often mismanaged to ignore the legitimate complains and concerns of others. Integrative antiracism education provides theoretical building blocks that connect all violent experiences of university schooling. There are several ways integrative antiracism education can be relevant to understanding violence of university schooling. In this dissertation, I focus on only four points:

First, integrative antiracism education speaks of power and privilege embedded in the social relations of difference. All forms of oppression have one thing in common: they all work within the structures and institutions of power to establish material advantage over others and make an invidious distinction of self and others. Therefore, the social categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and dis/ability should not be treated as the simple sites of identities but as the sites of power and privilege. Thus, to speak of any social categories of difference is also to unmask its insidious power to differentiate, discriminate, and establish material advantage over others.

Although integrative antiracism education acknowledges the varied forms of oppression and their varied degree of social effects for different bodies, the framework calls for honest, complicit, implicit response to analysis and discussion of oppression. There are benefits and
burdens at the helm of any oppressive relation. If the burden effects of a particular oppression are invisible to individuals, it is because individuals are receiving the benefits of that oppression. Devon Carbado (2005, p.190) warns that those who fail to acknowledge their victimless statuses with respect to racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism are equally guilty of violence. This implies that we cannot even have honest conversations about intersections of difference if those who benefit from structural and institutional violence of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism are not willing to acknowledge and account for their privileges. In the book The Colonizer and the Colonized, Albert Memmi argues that every colonizer, even those who are against the colonial system, is privileged by the colonial system:

To tell the truth, the style of colonization does not depend upon one or a few generous or clear-thinking individuals. Colonial relations do not stem from individuals goodwill or actions: they exist before his [or her] arrival or birth, and whether he [or she] accepts or rejects them matters little. It is they, on the contrary which, like any institution determine a priori his place and that of the colonized and, in the final analysis, their true relationship. No matter how he [or she] may reassure himself [herself], “I have always been this way or that with the colonized,” he [or she] suspects, even if she or he is no way guilty as an individual, that he [or she] shares a collective responsibility by the fact of membership in a national oppressor group. (Memmi, 1965, pp.38-39)

What does this tell us about violence in university schooling? It tells us that it is possible for a person to be good or kind but still benefit from sexist, racist, classist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, ableist violence. Being kind-hearted towards marginalized bodies does not, in any way prevent one from accessing the privileges within structural and institutional practices that victimize marginalized groups. For integrative antiracism education, it is impossible for a heterosexual body to live in a homophobic society; a white body to live in a white supremacist society; a male to live in a patriarchal society, the able-bodied to live in a
normalized society, or a middle/upper class person to live in a classed society without any form of privilege.

Unfortunately, in an era in the university schooling system where the discourse of dominance is invested in maintaining privilege while claiming innocence, what is worth pursuing in intersections of difference is to maintain a gaze on one’s privileges even if the individual possesses multiple identities. This means that critical educators should stop drawing on their own subordination whenever their domination is called into question. Dominant bodies are frequently comforted in assuming roles of victimhood. Fellows and Sherene Razack noted that when confronted with white racial superiority, many white women turn to deny their dominance by retreating to a position of subordination with an argument that “since we are oppressed as women, we cannot be oppressors of women of colour (Fellow and Razack 1998, p.14). Elsewhere (Chesler et al. 2003, p.226), it is noted that the discourse of white victimhood does not only act to obscure the experiences of racialized bodies but also it further reinforces barriers to dominant bodies’ inability to acknowledge their own racial identity as members of the dominant or privileged group. The effect is that a position of victimhood that does not exist is created by many dominant groups to avoid any further responsibility and accountability. However, while “race treason” or the renunciation of whiteness is possible among white subjects (see Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996), such denial does not stop the flow of institutional privilege and power for white subjects. This means that unless privileges are properly acknowledged and accounted for within intersectionality, critical educators will just be working to affirm, entrench, and support the violent conditions of university schooling.

Second, although integrative antiracism recognizes the complexity, multiplicity, and fluidity of identity, it also acknowledges that for some bodies there are certain parts of their
identities that are not negotiable. For instance, despite claims that identity is fluid, complex, and multiple, Whiteness continues to produce and maintain raced, classed, sexualized, disabled, and gendered subjects (See Fanon 1967; Memmi 1965; Dei 1996; 2008). Whiteness has become a trope for carrying racist, classist, sexist, disability, anti-semitic, homophobic, and Islamophobic practices. Dei (2008, p.87) argues that while the sedimentation of race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class points to the complexities of everyday existence, it does not deny the material, symbolic, and emotional benefits and rewards accorded dominant subjects as they tap into the reservoir of privilege made possible through systems of Whiteness.

In their classical works, Dubois (1903) and Cox (1948; 1976) noted that Whiteness has shown more successful in uniting white people across ethno/cultural—if I may add—sexual, disability, gender, and class boundaries than any other social location (also see Dyer 1997). The coalescing of white bodies around whiteness is so powerful that it is able to transcend any form of boundary and bond. For instance, class struggle has failed to unite the working class as Karl Marx postulated, because the white working class identify themselves more with white bourgeoisies and middle class, through the bond of Whiteness, than they do with black and brown working class, through the bond of class struggle. What does this say about Whiteness? It says that when all things are held constant, Whiteness still accords power and privilege irrespective of class, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, and ethnic background. This point is not to reinscribe white dominance but to acknowledge that despite the relative salience of differences and situational and contextual variations in the intensities of oppression, race, privilege and white identities are profound.

It is the power of Whiteness to coalesce white bodies together that Deliovsky (2005) and Dei (2008) have both argued that for the sake of conceptual and practical realities, “white
identity” should be treated as “whiteness” (also see the debate between Gillborn, 2005; 2009, and Cole, 2009a; 2009b). In fact, a radical black feminist writer, bell hooks, prefers to use the term “White Supremacy” rather than the term “racism” to explain racial exploitation in the United States: “As I write, I try to remember when the word racism ceased to be the term which best expressed for me the exploitation of black people and other people of color in this society and when I began to understand that the most useful term was white supremacy” (hooks, 1989, p.12). In fact, Zeus Leonardo (2004) noted that white supremacy makes white privilege possible because in order for white racial hegemony to saturate everyday life, it has to be secured by a process of domination or by decisions, acts, and policies that secure privilege and power to white subjects. For George Dei, Katerina Deliovsky, David Gillborn, bell hooks, and Zeus Leornardo, the separation of white identity from whiteness allows some white bodies to evade or deny their structural location within the systems of privilege and power. James Scheurich also describes white privilege as akin to walking down the street with money being put into one’s pocket without one’s knowledge. Having no knowledge about the money and how it ended up in one’s pocket does not prevent one from using it when the need arises. This means that denying one’s white race does not necessarily mean that one cannot gain from whiteness. Within this context, Dei (2008, p.87) concludes that for more useful purposes, antiracism education should see and treat “whiteness as a raced and socially constructed identity standpoint and structural location.”

Although I acknowledge the validity of George Dei, Katerina Deliovsky, David Gillborn, Zeus Leornado, and bell hooks’ argument, I maintain that given the varied and contradictory ways in which whiteness has been used in the past and present to assign power, privilege, and punishment to whites and black/brown bodies, the separation between whiteness and white identity is necessary. For instance, during the Apartheid regime of South Africa, the Japanese in
South Africa, although they were not white, they were allowed to tap into the privilege and power reserved for white people. Similarly, Jews, Irish, and Italians, although they possess white identity, they were, until recently, denied access to Whiteness. This implies that the reservoir of privilege and power in whiteness is not evenly distributed among Whites; they are complicated by the individuals’ class, religion, sexual, disable, ethnic, and gender location. Thus, given the complexities and nuances associated with whiteness, it is still important, at least for analytical and discursive clarity, to draw the line between whiteness and white identity even if the line between them is fading. Further, the conflation of whiteness and white identity can result in intellectual gymnastics that fails to interrogate asymmetrical power relations that exist between Whites who take on the tropes of whiteness as a given pigmentary passport of privilege and a sense of entitlement (Dei et al, 2004) and racialized bodies who play the game, or are forced to play the game, in order to be validated, accepted, or/and credentialed. Thus, the distinction between white identity and whiteness offers pedagogic, intellectual, and political arguments for intersectional analysis of difference.

Third, integrative antiracism approach calls on activists to watch out for invisible spots in their analysis. Critical educators cannot cast their gaze on only oppression that affects them while constantly ignoring oppression that affects others. There is no justification for educators to give exclusive pre-eminence to equity issues that affect them. Educators cannot blur their identity differences while encouraging coalition building. Our common experience of violence of schooling must guide and shape the ways in which we, individually and collectively, response to injustice and inequities. The experience of racism should serve as a bridge to support those who suffer from sexism, homophobia, classism, and disability. Speaking to a feminist group, Barbara
Smith, the Black feminist educator and one of the pioneers of intersectional analysis of difference, argues:

The reason racism is a feminist issue is easily explained by the inherent definition of feminism. Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women—as well as white economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this total vision of freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement. (1981, p.49)

Although integrative antiracism disavows any hierarchical treatment of oppression, it argues that groups are raced, classed, sexualized, disabled, and gendered differently. Therefore, integrative antiracism education calls for politics that is inclusive and linked with others in the pursuit of social justice. As Dei (2008, p.6) eloquently puts it:

Oppressions are multifaceted and complex, interwoven with each other. An ability to develop theoretical and discursive lenses that work with such complexity and with intersecting oppressions puts us on the road to securing justice for all. This is why we cannot allow multiple oppressions to compete with each other. The power of our intersecting marginalities is that it allows a politics that is inclusive, leaving no issue unattended and implicates us as a collective.

Fourth, integrative antiracism education calls for collective efforts between oppressors and oppressed groups to bring about change. Although oppressed bodies are not docile and have subjective power to resist oppression, their struggles to fight oppression cannot achieve desired results without the collective support of those in power. Thus, there is greater responsibility on those within the arena of power to work with marginalized subjects to bring about change (Dei 1996). This means that dominant groups cannot continue to claim ignorance of their privilege or even insist that their privilege is invisible to them (see Howard, 2008). We cannot deal with the questions of complicity, accountability, and responsibility as if, somehow, oppression is perpetuated by someone else and not ourselves. Within intersectional analysis of difference,
marginalized groups have to constantly remind allies that they are equally benefiting from oppressive structures. Oftentimes, such calls are read by many allies as indictments to the good works they are doing (Adjei, 2010, pp.97-98). Of course, the roles of allies in critical anti-oppression work cannot be devalued, but asking individuals to account for their complicit and implicit roles in the oppression of others does not imply that the individuals’ works against social injustices are not appreciated. Rather, it is a reminder that our fights against racism, classism, sexism, disability, homophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism do not inoculate us from accountability and responsibility.

A site of domination is always a site of possibilities. However, the possibilities will not be realized unless there is an open acknowledgement of privileges. According to Audre Lorde, acknowledging one’s privilege is the first step in making it available for wider use: “Each of us is blessed in some particular way, whether we recognize our blessings or not. And each of us, somewhere in our lives, must clear a space within that blessing where we can call upon whatever resources are available [to help others] in the name of something that must be done” (1988, p.130). The dominant groups always have a role to play in fighting injustice and inequities in society, but their work must begin with themselves. For instance, by virtue of their locations as dominant bodies, it is possible that certain doors will automatically be opened to them. The charge is not about whether dominant bodies need to access those doors or not; rather, it is what they use those doors to achieve. It is just not enough for dominant people to acknowledge their privileges; they also have to show how they are using them to address systemic and institutional violence. Sometimes, it is the choices we make in public and private places, as privileged groups, that go a long way to disrupt or “entrench a variety of social practices, institutional arrangements, and laws that disadvantage other people” (Carbado 2005, p.191).
Anti-Colonial Readings of Violence in Schooling

Dei (2006, p.2) defines anti-colonial discursive framework as an approach to theorize colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of knowledge production, validation, disseminations, claims/recourse to indigeneity, and pursuit of agency, resistance, and subjective politics. Although there are several key issues that anti-colonial discursive framework brings to the understanding and interpretation of violent schooling, in this dissertation, I focus on anti-colonial readings of colonialism, spirituality, and decolonization and its implications for the search for the alternative ways of dealing with violence in schooling and education. The discussion that follows explains these key issues:

Post-Colonial Fantasy and Realities of Colonialism in Contemporary Schooling

In today’s intellectual fixation towards the term “post” (see post-structuralism, post-feminism, post-Marxism, post-modernism, post-postmodernism), arguably, there is no “post” that brings so much tension, contention, and contestation to educators and social scientists as the term “post” in post-colonialism. Post-colonialism is a discourse emerging from elite diasporic migrants who think their current location within the empire calls for a new explanation and articulation of colonial relations. These elite individuals speak of hybridity, alterity, ambivalent, mélange and potpourri, fragmentation, heterogeneity, and dis/juncture (see Suleri 1992; Shohat 1992; Spivak 1988; 1990; 1999; Bhabha 1990; Slemon 1995; Rushdie 1991). These concepts and discourses are welcomed additions to on-going discussions about current colonial relations; however, we need to ask the question Dei and Asgharzageh (2001, p.304) posed 9 years ago: “Can these handfuls of hybridist post-colonialists be realistic representatives of the globe’s millions of immigrants and refugees” not to mention the classed, gendered, racialized, disabled,
and sexualized bodies that are still languishing at the bottom of social hierarchies? One’s social location cannot be confused with one’s epistemic thinking. The fact that these hybridist post-colonial elites occupy the same racial, gender, sexual, ethnic, religious, and disabled locations with subalterns does not indicate that they share the same epistemic understanding of colonial relations. For the individuals who are still fighting sexism, classism, racism, disability, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia in their daily lives, there is nothing “post” about their situations. These victims cannot afford to dance to the “seductive rhythms” of post-coloniality. The languages that articulate post-colonial experiences are not the languages of those at the margins of colonial relations; in fact, the subalterns neither bear any resemblance nor share the privileges of post-colonial elites. Therefore, we should not be surprised that the post-colonial language that so passionately talks about heterogeneity, fluidity, fragmentation, alterity, hybridity, disjuncture, displacement, Mélange, and de-centrism is deeply rooted in privilege and opulence and can only be understood by a highly specialized audience (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001, p.304). Ahmad (1995, p.16) got it right when he said that post-colonial metaphorization is all but a matter of class. It is indeed ironic and openly contradictory that a discourse that constantly repudiates any form of homogenization can boldly talk about post-coloniality in a way that falsely suggests that it is an experience available to all colonized subjects. Maybe, it is time to revisit Ania Loomba (1998)’s observation: these hybridist post-colonial theorists have to tell us not only when post-colonial began but also where it can be found? Post-colonialism is nothing more than a premature funeral without a corpse or to use Dei and Asgharzadeh’s (2001, p.304) words “a funeral for a wrong corpse.” As a critical discursive framework, anti-colonial education takes issue quite poignantly with the manner in which post-colonial theory has failed woefully to
name, track, isolate, and resist ongoing colonial relations in both the global south and the global north (see Howard 2006).

The discursive framework defines “colonialism” as not simply alien or foreign, but anything imposing and dominating (Dei 2006; Dei and Asgharzadeh 2001). The anti-colonial’s definition of colonialism is an important addition to the reframing and reinterpreting of violence in schooling and education. Anti-colonial education posits that colonial violence should not be restricted to a distant past; instead, it should be recognized in the contemporary violence of schooling and education. For instance, in recent times, Black parents and communities are scapegoated and pathologized for their children’s poor performance in school (see Dei et al 1997; Dei et al 2000; Dei 2010). Of course, there is nothing wrong with asking parents to be responsible for their children’s education. Definitely, parents, like schools and communities, have roles to play in their children’s education. However, there is a meaningful conceptual and intellectual difference between asking parents to take responsibility for their children’s education and naively blaming them for all the problems of their children’s education especially when the language of blaming is constructed in ways that suggest that students’ failures are rooted in their biological and genetic make-ups. An anti-colonial reading of violence of schooling will flip the issue on its head; it will rightly hold institutions and structures of power responsible and accountable for students’ abysmal performances in the schools (Dei 2010). An anti-colonial education approach to violence will ask these questions: In what ways have continuous violent colonial relations in schooling contributed to students’ poor academic performances? What are the arrangements of schooling (in context of teaching curricula, hiring policies, and pedagogical practices) that continue to disenfranchise and disengage racialized bodies? What accounts for student drop-outs in university schooling? Anti-colonial education calls on those who are quick to accept credits for
the students’ academic successes to be equally willing to accept blame for the students’ academic failures. Anti-colonial education refuses to pathologize communities and parents; instead, it pathologizes institutions and structures of power for the students’ poor academic performances. Anti-colonial education argues that the process of pathologizing communities for students’ poor academic performance is also the process of enacting violence on communities. For instance, the idea that black parents are not interested in their children’s education is insulting and de-spiriting, given the contributions of many black parents to the total education of white children in this country. These same parents, who are being accused of not showing interest in their children’s education, are the same people who in the sixties, seventies and eighties served as nannies and babysitters for many white middle class parents (Shadd 2003; Daenzer 1993). In those days, they read books to white children they were babysitting and even helped them to do their school assignments (Shadd 2003; Daenzer 1993). Thus, we need to ask why these same parents who were reading to other children would not be interested in their own children’s education. The irony is that those who accused black parents of not getting involved in their children’s education are the same people who cannot accept that black parents have rights to demand Africentric Schools for their children’s education. If black parents cannot simply ask for an appropriate system of schooling for their children, then what exactly does “getting involved” mean? Sometimes, these parents and their communities’ pathologization is dominant ways of delegitimizing and silencing voices of resistance that speak about current mis-education. For anti-colonial discursive frameworks, to speak about violence of schooling is to speak about the arrangements of schooling (school policies, teaching curricula and pedagogical practices) that continue to disengage and disenfranchise learners.
Further, anti-colonialism education challenges the post-colonial analyses that render violent issues such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and ableism passé in schooling and education. Anti-colonial education helps us to understand that sexism, racism, classism, heterosexim, ableism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia are not simple additive elements to economic and political structures of the capitalist world-system, but also they are integral and entangled parts of European, modern capitalist, heterosexual, patriarchal, normative world-system (see Grosfoguel 2002). How then can we articulate and make sense of current right-wing Christian Evangelicals’ vicious attacks on our gay brothers and lesbian sisters without linking the attack to hegemonic violent colonial history that normalized heterosexual relationships and treated homosexuality as deviance and immorality (See Burstow 1990; Kinsman 2000; Davis, 1995)? How can we understand anti-Semitism of our time without looking at violent, colonial, racist eugenics’ ideas that sanction the Holocaust (see Dikkoter, 1998; Miles, 1989)? I have argued (see Adjei 2008, p.112) that understanding the history of violence is important to understanding current violent relations in schooling and education. Without history, people will simply assume that racism is a recent phenomenon that emerged only after the arrival of immigrants of colour in North America. In fact, people will forget that both Canada and the United States were founded on racist ideologies and practices. These ideologies and practices informed physical, cultural, and spiritual violence committed against Aboriginal people and Africans who were brought to North America to be slaves (see Churchill, 2004; Henry and Tator, 2006; Moore, 1994; Montague, 1974; Stepah, 1982). Finally, by defining colonialism broadly to include every violent relation, anti-colonial education is providing a broader frame of reference for understanding and re-defining violence of schooling and education.
The broader gaze anti-colonial discursive framework brings to the understanding of violence makes it a good addition to the dissertation. What I admire about anti-colonial discursive framework is that it does not only name and track colonial relations in contemporary social relations but also it names and tracks resistance power and agencies of colonized subjects. Within this context, anti-colonial education also talks about decolonization as a tool for challenging violence in schooling and education.

*Decolonization and Violence: Mapping the Terrain for Anti-Colonial Education*

In *Toward the African Revolution*, Frantz Fanon offered his readers a broader analysis of the colonial situation. Of course, Frantz Fanon, having lived in Martinique, France, and Algeria, had acquired an experiential and intellectual insight into colonial experience and therefore is well positioned to tell the rest of the world of the material, spiritual, and psychological effects of colonial violence: “[Colonialism] was a perfect logical, perfectly coherent whole in which all those who lived within it were inevitable accomplices” (Fanon, 1967b, p.ix). In the opinion of Frantz Fanon, colonial subjects should be aware of complexities and nuances whenever they speak about colonial violence. For instance, Albert Memmi argued that racism could not be divorced from colonial violence because both work hand-in-hand to displace, dispossess, and dislocate the colonized subjects from their land, culture, values, worldviews, and identity:

Racism appears then, not as an incidental detail, but as a consubstantial part of colonialism. It is the highest expression of colonial system and one of the most significant features of colonialism. Not only does it establish a fundamental discrimination between colonizer and colonized, a sine qua non of colonial life, but it also lays the foundation for the immutability of this life. (Memmi, 1965, p. 74)
By the power that the colonizers wielded, they imposed their image of superiority on the psyche of the colonized subjects. When George Lamming, alluding to Franz Fanon (1967), laments, “Europe had trained black men [colonized subjects] to wear those white masks” (Lamming, 1994, p.xli), he was invariably suggesting that colonial education could be an effective ideological weapon to disempower and disenfranchise colonized subjects from knowledge being produced and validated in their own environment. Frantz Fanon, in *A Dying Colonialism*, observed: “colonial domination distorts the relations that the colonized maintains with his own culture” (Fanon, 1965, p.130). What can be gleaned from Fanon’s observation is that colonialism cannot be understood outside violence because the whole colonial encounter was a violent encounter. How is this understanding of violence relevant to decolonization?

In his foreword to Dei and Kempf (2006), Molefi Asante, a foremost scholar of Afrocentric education, contends that “if colonialism’s influence had been merely the control of land that would have required only one form of resistance, but when information is also colonized, it is essential that resistance must interrogate issues related to education, information, and intellectual transformation” (Asante 2006, p.ix). Therefore, decolonization requires breaking away from human condition as strictly defined and shaped by Western culture, values, and knowledge system. Decolonization is about one’s willingness to confront all forms of political, ideological, and socio-economic injustices, inequities, and unfairness that continue to shape the destinies and futures of colonized subjects.

Decolonization, first, requires oppressed bodies to unlearn their own internalization and inferiorization created through colonial ideologies and practices. Gramsci (1971) puts forth the idea of hegemony to explain ways in which power is maintained, not only through coercion but also through voluntary consent of those dominated. Antonio Gramsci’s construction of hegemony
teaches us one thing: since nobody is ever “wholly mystified” or “a complete dupe,” ideology can only succeed if those it characterises as inferior actually learn to be inferior, and some of them even prove to be brilliant students in the process (Eagleton 1991, p.xv). Decolonization requires a complete renunciation of whole colonial structures and its aftermath. It requires colonized subjects to confront colonial structures and apparatus in the same way Claudia of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* did to her blue-eyed Baby Doll:

The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish. I was bemused with the thing itself, and the way it looked. What was I supposed to do with it? ... I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that has escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs—all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. “Here,” they said, “this is beautiful, and if you are on this day ‘worthy’ you may have it.” I fingered the face, wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly teeth stuck like two piano keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy blue eyeballs, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable. (Morrison, 1970, pp.20-21)

For Claudia, there is a need to dismember the blue-eyed Baby Doll that everybody cherished and clamoured for. We need to dismember all dominant ideologies and practices within the school system that suggest that racialized, gendered, classed, disabled, and sexualized people can only succeed in a white supremacist, patriarchal, middle/upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied education if they reject who they are (see hooks 1992). Decolonization is about resisting the amputation, pathologization, inferiorization, and criminalization of blackness, homosexuality, and the Muslim religion. It is about reclaiming that which is distorted, falsified, forgotten, ruptured, stolen, and lost. It is about critical examination, interrogation, and refusal to consent to all taken-for-granted dominant ideologies in the texts, teaching curricula and pedagogical practices in schooling and education. Dei (2010, p.9) notes that decolonization is about inserting
one’s agency and self-autonomy to demand, construct, defend, and inscribe one’s knowledge, history, cultures, values, and worldviews in the school curricula and texts. In this sense, when Steve Bantu Biko wrote *I Write What I Like*, he was asserting his voice and knowledge within the violent schooling system in South Africa.

Second, decolonizing is about making visible all the violent conditions of marginalized bodies within dominant schooling and education. Aime Cesaire states an equation: “Colonization is equal to thingification.” In other words, colonialism turns racialized, classed, gendered, sexualized, and disabled learners into objects that are not fully human; therefore, any violent experience these learners encountered is rendered invisible. Playing victimization is a defeatist approach to violence. On the contrary, refusing invisibility is asserting one’s agency and resistance power. Decolonization is about refusing invisibility and disposability and not playing victimization. Thus, when racialized and classed students at the University of Toronto wrote to the Office of Equity to protest against the absence of race and class categories on the Equity Crossword Puzzle, they were not playing any victim card; they were plainly refusing to be relegated to the space of invisibility and disposability.

Third, decolonizing education also means searching for alternative ways of healing our wounds and reclaiming our collective self. Frantz Fanon had a radical, humanist, utopian vision of the world. Although Frantz Fanon fell short of telling his readers practical ways of making his vision a reality, it leaves room for contemporary and future anti-colonial educators to think and imagine new ways of addressing colonial violence of schooling. Today, many teachers are not willing to take risk in teaching against the grain, for fear that if anything goes wrong, nobody will come to their defence (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Part of decolonizing education is to image alternative ways to dialogue about schooling.
Spirituality and Activism: Creating a Synergy for Educational Transformation

Rene Descartes, who is the founder of Modern Western Philosophy, inaugurated a new moment in the history of Western thought. What Rene Descartes did is to extrapolate the Omniscient (all knowing) and Omnipresent (all presence) attributes of God to the European system of thought. Universal truth, beyond time and space, privileged access to the laws of the Universe, and the capacity to produce scientific knowledge and theory, is now placed in the mind of a Western Man (Grosfoguel 2001). Consequently, the Cartesian ‘ego-cognito’ (I think, therefore I am) became the foundation of Modern Western science (Grosfoguel, 2001, p.214). By producing a dualism between mind and body and between mind and nature, Rene Descartes succeeded to claim non-situated, universal, God-eyed view knowledge (Grosfuel 2001). Santiago Castro-Gomez (2003), the Colombian philosopher, refers to this as “point zero”; that is, a point of view that represents itself as being without a point of view. It is this “God-eyed view” that always hides its local and particular perspective under an abstract universalism (Grosfoguel 2001, p.214). Thus, not surprisingly, Western knowledge systems privilege continue to favour ego politics of knowledge” production over the geopolitics and the body politics of knowledge production.

By delinking body, soul, and spirit from a subject that speaks, Western forms of knowing are able to produce a myth about a truthful universal knowledge that can stand time and space. Consequently, Western epistemology has serious weaknesses because it tends to limit reality to anything whose existence can be established in a rational and objective manner (Nyamnjob 2001; 2002; 2004). The effect is that Western epistemology has accustomed itself to a form of knowing that is informed almost exclusively by what the mind (Reason) and the hierarchy of senses (sight, taste, touch, sound, and smell) tell about the world and social relationships. No wonder Western education is producing learners of bodiless heads and headless bodies (Thiongo, 1986).

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However, in other forms of epistemology like that of Indigenous people, there is a synergy between natural and supernatural, physical and metaphysical, rational and irrational, objective and subjective, scientific and superstitious, visible and invisible, real and unreal, explainable and inexplicable. One cannot exist without the other. What constitutes real is not only what is observable or what is cognitively sensible but also what is invisible, emotional, and spiritual (Okri 1991). Mbembe (1997, p.152) argues that understanding what constitutes visible is hardly complete without investigating what constitutes invisible. We misunderstand the world if we “consider the ‘observe’ and the ‘reverse’ of the world as two opposite sides with the former partaking of a ‘being there’ (real presence) and the latter as a ‘being elsewhere’ or a ‘non-being’ (irremediable absence) or a worse of the order of unreality.” The obverse and reverse are also linked by similarities which do not make them mere copies of each other but which unite and, at the same time, distinguish themselves according to the African “principle of simultaneous multiplicities” (Mbembe 1997, p.152).

The import of the philosophical thinking of Achille Mbembe is that the synergy of the mind, body, soul, and the spirit cannot be postponed anymore in critical education. Today, the assault of education is not only on the mind of learners but also on the soul and spirit of learners. In the school system in North America, we hear educators “bragging” about how education is making learners competitive globally; hardly do we hear the same educators speak about education that develops human souls and spirits (Miller, 1996). Not surprisingly, the academy continues to recruit intellectuals to defend this ego game of trying to become better than others or to attain one’s desire at the expense of others. However, the current trends of violence within schooling and education require an evocation of spirituality and spiritual knowing. The school system that daily expects learners to amputate themselves in order to survive education is
definitely a violent schooling. For anti-colonial education, there is a place for spirituality in schooling. Spirituality in education helps learners to heal and deal with emotional and spiritual violence. It helps learners to develop the self, not as a victim but as a resisting subject. Spiritual education destroys the self/other dichotomy and makes the self connects to the larger collective (Dei 2004). In today’s global relations where apathy and a sense of comfort are normalized, only spiritually centered education can disrupt this hegemonic trend and make learners responsible and accountable. For anti-colonial education, colonial violence needs to be fought not only on the front-line of the material but also on the front-line of the spiritual; hence spiritual education is central to schooling.
Howard Becker (1970) argued that methodology is too important to be left alone in the hands of researchers. Becker raised this legitimate point because the methodology of any research, to a large extent, determines the outcome of the research. Thus, transformative research needs a methodology that allows researchers to centre the needs of a research community above any other need. This is important because many leading anti-oppression researchers (Stanfied II, 1994; Scheurich and Young, 1997; Goldstein, 2002; and also see Dei and Johal, 2005) have argued that methodologies, theories, and ethos, guiding social science research in Western academy, are rooted in Eurocentric hegemonic worldviews, values, and cultures. In view of that, Stanfied II (1993) has recommended that when it comes to methodology in social science research, researchers need to make their research methodologies relevant to the community they are researching:

When it comes to methodology as it relates to conceptualization and testing of concepts in real worlds, we have to begin to search for ways to make our tools relevant. The dramatically changing world in which we live demands that we cease to allow well-worn dogma to keep us from designing research projects that will provide the data necessary for the formulation of adequate explanation for the racial dimensions of human life... What this implies is that if we can rethink traditional methodologies and revise them, and design and apply new ones, we will begin to see racial matters as they really are. (1993, pp.6-7)

What Stanfied II meant is that the planning and designing of research should be guided by research methodologies that exist outside the influence of Eurocentric systems of thought. Dei (2005, p.13) observes that there is institutional racism in mainstream social science research. This is shown in the topics of study; concepts and methodologies that are privileged, and who is allowed, legitimated, and validated to research what and how (also see Smith, 2001). Similarly, Tara Goldstein, a critical and performed ethnographer, contends that “contemporary educational
ethnographers have inherited a legacy of racism and colonialism that makes our research about racial and linguistic minority groups suspect” (Goldstein, 2002, p.2). In fact, Scheurich and Young (1997) have cautioned that the current epistemology guiding Eurocentric research is racially biased to the extent that even if a researcher is a strong anti-racist and uses an anti-racist epistemology, the outcome of the research will unintentionally be racially biased:

The error here is that racial critiques of epistemology of knowledge production have virtually nothing to do with whether an individual researcher is overtly or covertly racist. A researcher could be adamantly anti-racist in thought and deed and still be using an epistemology that....could be judged to be racially biased. (1997, p.5)

While George Dei, Tara Goldstein, James Scheurich, and Michelle Young may not be accusing any Western intellectual of committing any racial conspiracy or acting in moral bad faith, they are raising an important issue for research. That is, Western intellectuals define the world from their limited white, male, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied perspective; hence, their worldviews cannot be universalized. Thus, any research methodology that is centred solely on Western ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (how reality is studied), and axiology (what constitutes values) is incapable—either by design, plan, or by execution—of capturing oppressive relations and their dynamics. Within this context, researchers investigating marginalized groups such as indigenous, racialized, gendered, classed, sexualized, and disabled communities need to adopt different research methodologies that will push forward the transformative agendas of these communities.

Further, anti-hegemonic researchers have criticized and interrogated positivists’ assumptions that social science researchers need to adopt a neutral and value-free position in research (see Goldstein, 2001; 2002; Smith, 1999; Hertz, 1997; Reinharz, 1992; Ribbens & Edwards, 1998; Dei and Johal, 2005; Scheurich and Young, 1997; Standfied II, 1995).
Michel Foucault, a social and historical philosopher, traced the concept and nature of power through genealogical and archaeological knowledge systems and practices that dominate and permeate societies in a different historical context. Foucault sees the quest for power as lying at the very foundation of human existence. Michel Foucault’s work shows that in order for something to be established as fact or truth, other equally valid variables have to be discredited and denied (Mills, 2003, p. 67). Linked closely to the pursuance of power is the notion of knowledge production; these two concepts are intertwined and cannot be separated. For Foucault, “knowledge is a conjunction of power relations and information-seeking” (Mills, 2003, p. 69). Knowledge becomes a power resource. Therefore, it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, nor can knowledge be produced without power (Foucault, 1980, p.52). What does this tell us about the notion of neutrality in research?

It says that social science research has never been neutral nor value-free. The data of research do not speak; it is the interpretation of data that provides meanings. Since researchers always have vested interest in their research, the interpretation of research data has never been an innocent or a neutral exercise. As Berg (2001) argues, research is seldom, if ever, really value free or neutral because even the selection of a research topic is derived from a researcher’s oriented position.

All knowledge is epistemic because it is based on people’s understanding of realities. Frantz Fanon refers to knowledge based on people’s realities as “embodied knowledge” (Fanon, 1967; 1965) and some feminists call it “partiality of knowing” (hooks, 1989; 1984; Collins, 2000; Smith & Smith, 1980). I argue that rigour exists in research only when researchers recognize politics, if they are in operation, and admit biases when they are in operation. Further, rigour is
attainable in research only when researchers duly recognize the multiple, contradictory, and the disturbing voices of oppressed bodies that challenge hegemonic knowledge system.

**Antiracism and Anti-Colonial Research Methodology**

The dissertation anchors research planning, designing, and execution in antiracism and anti-colonial research methodology. As critical frameworks, both antiracism and anti-colonial research methodologies call for a critical engagement of “self” in the process of collecting, coding, decoding, analyzing, discussing, and writing research data. Both research methodologies view research as a process of self-recovery and self-examination and not a process of asserting one’s dominant views on research subjects (Dei 2005, Rogers-Huilman and Grane, 1999). Further, both research methodologies acknowledge that all knowledge is socially and politically constructed. Karen Potts and Leslie Brown (2005) ask: how do we know what we know? Although this question is epistemological, it cannot be shoved under the carpet if we are to understand the role of researchers in reproducing violence knowledge on marginalized bodies (see Smith, 2001, p.1). Stanfied (1985) argues that since many research are responsible for informing, shaping, and sustaining policies and practices that have disadvantaged gendered, racialized, classed, disabled, and sexualized bodies, it should be a concern when research is treated as neutral knowledge. Similarly, Tara Goldstein (2002) appeals to ethnographers who undertake language learning research in linguistically and racially diverse communities to think carefully about how they present the experiences of their research participants because:

Our research findings can be used to justify oppressive educational practices such as punishing students for not speaking the dominant language at home in order to provide their children with more practice in the dominant language. Given the risks associated with publishing ethnographic research, we need to think of ways to write up our findings about Other people’s language learning that work against policies and practices of colonialism and
racism. The way I have tried to meet this challenge in my own research has been to experiment with having the participants in my study represent themselves through genre of playwriting. (p.2)

Goldstein writes, it helps when researchers recognize that their research outcomes can be used to oppress or liberate their research community depending on how they report their research findings. As researchers, we need to ask ourselves: whose knowledge are we constructing through our research? Is it knowledge to promote oppression or is it knowledge to promote resistance? Antiracism and anti-colonial research methodologies call on researchers to be aware of power issues in research and the need to use this power to further the cause of marginalized communities.

Denzin (1997) advocated for a symmetrical power relation between researchers and research subjects. But this is a position that Young (1997) has critiqued as “neither possible nor desirable” (see Edwards & Mauthner, 2002, p.26); instead, Young (1997) has called for “asymmetrical reciprocity.” Explaining this position of Young, Edwards and Mauthner (2002, p.27) argue that “rather than ignoring or blurring power positions, ethical practice needs to pay attention to them.” The question is how does ethical practice guide ways in which power positions are taken up in research?

George Dei (2005) calls on transformative researchers to report research outcomes from the perspectives of marginalized communities especially if the research involves issues relating to social justice and oppression. For Dei, the power of a researcher must be exercised in a way that will challenge and not reproduce the pathologization, victimization, criminalization, labeling, and stereotyping of marginalized bodies within dominant discourses. Dei further argues that researchers have to exercise their power in ways that will not “disseminate knowledge that could
cause injury or undue harm to communities and social groups. Thus there are limits to academic freedom when reporting research outcomes. Researchers’ rights to free speech must be matched with appropriate responsibilities (Dei 2005, p.14). If research bestows so much power on a researcher, then rather than denying and ignoring this power, ethical obligation requires that this power be utilized responsibly to push the agenda and interest of the research community. This is exactly what I tried to do in reporting my research outcomes. Finally, both antiracist and anti-colonial research methodologies demand research techniques and tools that will make transformative research possible.

(a) Data Collection

In-depth individual interviews were conducted with 20 research participants already engaged in university school activism in Toronto, Canada, at least for the last five years. Of the twenty research participants, six were key informants. The six key informants, unlike the other research participants were selected not based on any demographic requirement but rather based on their in-depth knowledge and experiences in the field of university school activism and also their knowledge and understanding of the works of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. This does not suggest that the other research participants are not actively involved in university school activism. However, in terms of the years and experience in the field of the university school activism, the key informants are years ahead of the other research participants. Further, the key informants are what one will call “movers and shakers” of university school activism. They are always at the fore-front of almost every university school activism. This knowledge and experience serve very handy during the interview process. For instance, the key informants were sources of verification and crosschecking of information for the research any time an issue was
raised by research participants that required further probing. For instance, when the other research participants spoke about violence and non-violence as two opposite sides that have no relations, the key informants offered a different interpretation of violence and non-violence that reveals existing complex and nuanced relations between the two. The in-depth knowledge that the key informants brought to the research went a long way to shape and strengthen the research outcomes.

Further, the key informants contributed in framing and shaping the interview questions. After the initial interviews with the key informants, certain gaps were noted in the interview questions. The involvement of the key informants helped in reviewing and adjusting the interview questions to suit the research needs. Furthermore, the key informants helped in identifying other potential research participants. Given their central roles in university school activism, the key informants helped the researcher to identify all the potential research participants.

(b) Areas of Data Collection

My research was carried out in Toronto, Canada. Toronto is the provincial capital of Ontario. It is located in Southern Ontario, on the north western shore of Lake Ontario. Toronto is at the heart of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and it is part of the densely populated region in Southern Ontario known as the Golden Horseshoe. The 2006 population census in Canada indicates that Toronto’s population was slightly above 2.5 million residents. This makes Toronto the most populous city in Canada and the fifth most populous municipality in North America. As the economic capital of Canada, Toronto is considered as a global city and is one of the top financial centres in the world. The population of Toronto is cosmopolitan; thus, it is not
surprising that it has become the most important destination for many immigrants to Canada. Toronto is considered to be one of the most diverse cities in the world—if one is to assess it by the percentage of non-native residents born outside Canada (49%) (see, www.statcan.gc.ca). The interesting thing is that when these diverse immigrants come to Toronto, they also come with their diverse questions and opinion. Thus, Toronto has never been short of activists who are always demanding answers to new questions. The diverse nature of Toronto’s population and its high sense of social activism make it an ideal place for my research and this is the reason why I chose Toronto as my research population.

(c) Sampling Population

Using purposive sampling, the study selected six key informants and fourteen school activists who engaged in university school activism in Toronto. Purposive sampling technique is defined as a procedure by which researchers select a subject or subjects based on predetermined criteria about the extent to which the selected subjects could contribute to the research study (Vaughn, Schumm and Singagub, 1996). Bailey (1987) argues that purposive sampling allows researchers to use their own “judgment about which respondents to choose and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study” (p. 94). According to anti-racist and anti-colonial research methodologies, voices matter in research. We all come to know based on who we are; thus, researchers must ensure that those they call on to be research participants are reflections of the diversity that exists in the research community (see Dei and Johal, 2005). In other words, there is a need for researchers to account for difference when sampling research participants. Within this context, purposive sampling was a suitable technique for the research because it helped the research to draw a sampling population that fairly represented the diverse activists’
population in the university campuses in Toronto. However, the advantages of purposive sampling do not in any way suggest that the technique is not without limitations. For example, purposive sampling can be highly prone to a researcher’s biases (see Vaughn, Schumm and Singagub, 1996). However, this limitation can only be a problem to the research when a researcher’s biases are ill-conceived or poorly considered (Bailey, 1987). Although anti-colonial and anti-racism research methodologies urge transformative researchers to let their research help end marginalization, they do not give researchers free license to let their biases manipulate the research outcomes (see Dei and Johal, 2005). In the context of this dissertation, while my personal and political interests were not hidden (see Chapter One), several efforts were made to reduce ways in which these biases can inform and shape the research outcomes. For example, where I disagree with my research subjects, I still allow their voices to dominate the discussion and later interrogate them. In spite of the limitation of purposive sampling, it is a viable research technique for this research because it allowed me to sample research population that reflected the diversity, gender, class, religion, ethnic, sexual, and class differences that exist in Toronto.

Armed with this knowledge, the study selected the remaining fourteen research subjects along the line of class, race, gender, sexuality, and disability. As I have already indicated, the remaining six key informants were selected based on their rich knowledge and the influences they have on university schooling activism in Toronto and not based on their demographic differences. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) argue that research based on interviews often seeks to penetrate social life beyond appearance and manifest meanings. This requires the researcher to be immersed in the research field, to establish continuing, fruitful relationships with respondents, and through theoretical contemplation, to address the research problem in depth. The choice of six key informants facilitated my close association with the research participants as I worked with
them to develop theories and frameworks that could serve as building blocks for non-violent university schooling activism.

Here, I draw a line between a community activist and a public speaker. A public speaker is any scholar or individual who gets invited to speak to social issues at a public forum. A public speaker is not necessarily an activist. A public speaker speaks because he or she wants to be heard but an activist speaks because he or she wants to see a change. A public speaker may “talk the talk” but will not necessarily “walk the talk.” In this research, the key focus was on school activists and not on public speakers. The research was interested in people who do not only speak to social issues because they want to be heard but also act on social issues because they want to see structural and institutional reforms. The knowledge of the key informants helped in identifying university school activists in the community.

When one adds the demography of my six key informants with the demography of my other fourteen research participants, the following represents the racial, class, gender, disable, and sexual make ups of my research participants: seven identified themselves with white and thirteen identified themselves with black and brown; eleven identified themselves with women while nine identified themselves with male. None of my research participants identified themselves with gender neutral; five identified their sexual orientation with LGBTQ; ten identified themselves with heterosexual, and five did not declare their sexual orientation; six of my research participants identified themselves as having a form of disability; twelve of my research subjects identified with the working class. All my research subjects have been involved in activism for not less than five years. Although the reason why each of my research subjects engaged in university school activism was different, they all shared a common aspiration: to see that our society is grounded on principle and the practice of social justice, fairness, and equity. Most of my research
subjects got involved in activism because of an injustice they witnessed or experienced at a certain point in their lives. The discussion that follows shows how I selected my research participants.

(d) Gaining Entry and Access

Glesne (1999) notes that access is a process; it is an opportunity and permission granted to a researcher to enter into a community to gather information relating to his or her research topic. Therefore, Glesne (1999) highly recommends that researchers must always rely on the services of “an insider” (or “insiders”) who knows and can provide researchers with the internal politics and knowledge about a research community before they even start the field data collection. In my study, the key informants played a central role in helping me gain access to my research community. They also helped me to identify various activists, within the university community, who could be potential research participants.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to be part of many university school activism events within Toronto. I have, in the past years, served as the President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary of the Graduate Student Association at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I have also served as a voting member of the Graduate Students’ Union of the University of Toronto as well as of the Faculty Council of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. These active roles in schooling organizations and mobilization brought me in contacts with many people within the university schooling community who are committed activists. This knowledge served handy in identifying the key informants for my research.

When I got the ethical approval for the research, I personally approached six active and well-known activists within the school system in Toronto to serve as key informants for the
research. Since these informants were already aware of my work and commitment to school activism, they agreed to participate. After their acceptance, I followed up our conversation with formal letters, inviting them to participate in the research. At my request, the key informants pointed out various activists, within the university schooling system, who could serve as potential research participants.

Overall, thirty potential research participants were identified through the help of key informants. The key informants also provided me with the e-mail addresses and contact information of these potential research participants. I sent an invitation letter to each of the thirty identified potential research participants asking them to be part of the research. Overall, twenty-five replied to the e-mails expressing interest to participate in the research while the remaining five declined on the ground of having other engagements. I later understood from my key informants that they did indeed put in a word or two to the potential participants and that probably explained why I had a high number of positive responses. Although twenty-five activists agreed to participate in the research, only fourteen were needed to add to the existing six key informants. In order to select the fourteen, a quick survey about the demographic make-ups (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and religious affiliation) of the potential research participants was administered through e-mails. The survey helped in identifying the racial, class, gender, sexual, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of the potential research participants. This knowledge was important in selecting a diverse research sampling that fairly represented the city of Toronto. After the survey, fourteen research participants were purposively selected. An additional four were wait-listed to replace any participants who would drop-out of the research. Fortunately, nobody dropped out of the research so those placed on the waiting list did not participate in the research.
Once the fourteen participants were purposively selected, a quick e-mail was sent officially inviting each of them to be a part of the research. After their second reply, I sent out an information sheet explaining the purpose of the research and what would be done with the research outcomes. I then called all fourteen on the phone to schedule interview dates and times. I also sent out e-mails thanking the remaining participants who were not selected for the research interview. I promised to share the research outcomes with them when the research was completed. Finally, a letter was written to inform the four that were waitlisted that they had been placed on the waiting list and would be contacted should anybody drop out.

(e) Interview Procedure

My goal in the research was to solicit ideas from research participants to create non-violent tools that could be used for university school activism. Within this context, I adopted an interview structure that would make it effective and possible to the search for knowledge. A semi-structured interview format was used as a tool for data collection. The semi-structured interview technique was a suitable fit for my research because it provided me the flexibility and guidance needed to interact openly and freely with my research subjects, while maintaining a form of discipline that ensured that the interview process did not veer off the research topic. Although a non-structured interview format could have achieved similar results, it lacks the discipline and commitment of policing the interview process within the research topic (see Berg 2001). On the other hand, a structured interview format is too discipline-oriented to allow research subjects to speak freely and openly about the interview questions. Thus, the semi-structured interview format was the perfect pick for the research, given the research goal of soliciting the knowledge and understanding of university school activists about the possibility
and limitation of creating a non-violent working framework based on the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

The semi-structured interview technique also offered me room to adjust and modify the interview questions as the research proceeded. For example, after my initial interviews with my key informants, I noted that the interview questions needed modification in order to capture all the nuances and complexities of violence in society. Using the semi-structured interview format allowed me to adjust the interview questions; something I acknowledge would not have been easily achieved if I was using non-structured or structured interview format. Finally, the semi-structured interview format gave room to ask more probing questions that teased out some of the personal stories of the research subjects who were not forthcoming with the initial interview questions.

According to Fontana and Frey (2005, p.695), the claim that an interview is intended to only gather information cannot be entirely accurate because an interview is “inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically, and contextually bound.” In fact, Atkinson and Silverman (1997); Fontana (2002); Hertz (1997b); Holstein and Gubrium (1995); and Scheurich (1995) have all argued that interviewing is not merely a neutral exchange of questions and answers; rather, it is a collaborative effort between or among two or more people who are involved in the process of exchanging ideas and knowledge. Scheurich (1995) further maintained that “the conventional, positivist view of interviewing vastly underestimates the complexity, uniqueness, and indeterminateness of each one-to-one human interaction” (Scheurich 1995, p.241). Schwandt (1997, p.79) also noted that “it has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event on which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed.
by interviewer and respondent.” For Atkinson and Siverman (1997); Fontana (2002); Hertz (1997b); Holstein and Gubrium (1995); and Scheurich (1995), the interview process should be a relationship that has more enriching benefits than a mere collection of information.

What does this then say about interviewing as a research technique in my research? It means that as a research interviewer, I am an increasingly active participant in the data collection. Within this context, in the research interview processes, I did not only want to just collect information from research subjects, but also I wanted to build a relationship that would make them active partners of the research. For instance, the key informants played pivotal roles in the whole research process, from identifying potential research participants and helping me access the research community, to adjusting the interview questions as the need arose. Our healthy relationship allowed research subjects to trust me to the point of freely and openly talking about their personal experiences, although some of these stories were told with pain and tears.

Initially, I proposed to spend about 45 minutes on each interview section; however, during the actual interview process, some interviews lasted for over an hour while others lasted for just 30 minutes. The difference in the interview times was informed by the number of minutes it took my research subjects to answer an interview question. What I tried to do during the interview was to allow research subjects to talk freely and openly on an interview question without feeling that they were being constrained by time.

Audiotape was used to record all the interviews. Taping the interviews allowed my research subjects to speak more naturally. It also helped me to accurately record the interview proceedings. I noticed after a few interviews that taking notes was distracting. So I stopped taking notes during interviews and instead made notes of my observations and impressions after each interview. This made it possible to listen more attentively to my participants and to capture
their emotions and non-verbal cues. These non-verbal cues helped me to ask the right follow-up questions to seek clarification and, sometimes, more information. The notes I took became relevant and useful when analyzing the interviews because they informed the ways the research data were interpreted and analyzed. At the end of each interview, I played back the tape to the participants to find out if they wanted to change or add any information.

According to Berg (2001), when a researcher determines the type of interview format to use, she or he should also consider the kind of questions she or he may want to ask the research participants. Thus, it is appropriate that I discuss the types of questions I asked during the interviews.

(f) Interview Questions

According to Karen Potts and Leslie Brown (2005, p.264), questioning is the “mess-finding” stage in the research process as well as one that opens up possibilities. In the research interviews, I used a set of several questions to guide the interview process. The guided questions helped to start the conversation with the research subjects about “violence,” “non-violence,” and “spirituality” and their pedagogical relevance in the 21st century university schooling (see Appendix for the research questions). These open-ended interview questions were selected because many closed-ended questions would pre-empt the direction of the research and would prevent the research subjects from freely and openly speak to issues of violence, non-violence, and spirituality in university schooling. Further, probing questions and follow-up questions were asked to gather as much information as possible.

I approached the research questions from the premise that critical knowledge was there to be discovered on the field of research and not outside the field of research. Therefore, I claimed
not to know beforehand what to expect on the field of research. This is why the research questions were open-ended. This technique of gathering research data was relevant because it situated the research subjects as active partners in the knowledge building process while it positioned me (the researcher) as a learner and not the knower of the research. As a researcher, I am fully aware of the power I commanded in the research; therefore, any strategy that reduced the power dynamic in the research was welcoming.

After the initial interviews with key informants, I noted that my research questions needed some modification in order to capture the complex and nuanced understandings research subjects bring to the interview process. Probably, informed by my own politics of favouring a more non-violent approach to a violent approach in social mobilization and resistance, the initial research questions focused more on gathering knowledge about non-violence than violence. The initial interviews with key informants showed a need to readjust the interview questions to capture the nuanced and complex meanings and relationships that exist between violent and non-violent resistance. Bogden and Biklen (2003) have argued that researchers need to make appropriate adjustments to their interview questions especially if the initial interview questions are not helping them to pursue the salient themes of the research. In the next section, I discuss how the research data were analyzed.

(g) Data Analysis

The data analysis involved using a content analysis technique to organize everything I heard, saw, and read during the data gathering process so as to make sense of what I learned from the research subjects. Content analysis is any technique used to make inferences by
systematically and rigorously identifying special characteristics in messages (Holsti, 1968, p.608).

Immediately after the interview process, the interview data were transcribed and backed up on a Universal Serial Bus (USB) flash drive. The transcriptions were cross-checked with the research subjects to ensure that the transcribed data reflected exactly what was said during the interview. Once the transcribed data were confirmed by the research subjects, I set out to make sense of the data. I asked myself: what is this piece of information telling me? Who is saying it? What is being illuminated? How do I connect the stories? What themes and patterns can be developed from the data?

Armed with these questions, the first thing I did was to sort the transcribed data into analytic files. In order to achieve that, the transcribed data were read alongside the interview notes and existing literature that were applicable to the research objectives. I identified important and like-minded quotes from the transcribed data and existing literature that responded to the questions of violence and non-violence in university schooling and coded them into data clumps (categories). I further coded the contents of each major code clumps into numerous sub-codes (sub-divisions). I then placed the various data clumps into meaningful sequences to form themes for interpretation. The themes were developed to response to these questions: How can violence be defined to capture its complex, nuance, and myriad forms? And how can university schools redefine non-violence to accommodate the issues of tensions, dilemma, and resistance? What gets erased and discarded and whose experience is rendered invisible when university schools define violence as an individual act? What relevant lessons and limitations can be drawn from Gandhian and King’s interpretations of violence and non-violence? Some of the quotes were later transferred from their previous file into a new file to form a new theme. As Glesne (1999) rightly
noted, putting related quotes into a common file is a progressive exercise that continues throughout the data analysis.

In cutting the quotes, I noted that some of them were extensive and longer than needed, but as Glesne (1999) recommends, it is always better to cut the interview quotes into larger chunks than to cut them into smaller chunks where one has to return to the whole transcript to understand the context of data fragmentation.

Although qualitative researchers may have different techniques (example: coding, data displays, and computer software programs) to organize, classify, and to find themes in data, it is always the responsibility of researchers to make connections with data in ways that ultimately make meaning to the participants and to the readers. Wolcott (1994) noted that description, analysis, and interpretation are the three main means of data transformation, or of moving from data organization to data meaning. In the discussion that follows, I explain the process of reading meaning into research data.

(h). Data Display and Interpretation

In his article on James Agee’s Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, Hersey cited a comment made by Mrs Borroughs, a reviewer of Agee’s book. Mrs Borroughs is also one of the characters portrayed in the book: “And I took it home and I read it plumb through. And when I read it plumb through I give it back to him and I said, well everything in there’s true. What they wrote in there was true” (Hersey 1988, p.74).

One of the personal burdens of this research was to produce narrations that truly reflected exactly what my research subjects said, although I recognized the fact that all voices could be subjected to multiple interpretations. However, there is a meaningful difference between
interrogating what my research subjects have said and putting words in their mouths. Of course, I did not and could not agree to everything my research subjects said. However, my disagreement must reflect in the interpretation of the data and not in the presentation of the data. Having said that, I also acknowledge that presentation of research findings is not a neutral exercise; researchers can over-expose certain voices while consciously under-expose others in the research.

In order to proceed in the presentation of research findings, in ways that would be fair to my research subjects while adhering to research objectives, I was guided by these anti-racism and anti-colonial questions: Who are my key voices in the research and why do their voices matter in the research? How am I accounting for differences in the representation of voices? How do I allow the voices of my research subjects to interrogate and speak to each other? In what ways are subjects’ locations accounted for in the data display? How do I look out for subtexts and hidden meanings in texts? How do I give a context to every voice? And what are the political and intellectual dimensions to the voices of the research subjects?

In response to these questions, I adopted a triangulation method to interpret and analyze the data. I cross-referenced what research subjects said with interview notes and existing literature to tease out points of convergence and divergence as well as sources of tension and pedagogic relevance. In addition, I allowed the voices of key informants to interrogate what other research participants were saying and vice versa, as well as allowing the voices of my research subjects to speak to and, at the same time, interrogate what the existing literature says about the issue being discussed. As my readers will see in the data findings, the voices of my key informants dominated the discussion. This was not to suggest that other research subjects did not have anything relevant to say or that their voices were less important to the research—no, that was not the point. However, I acknowledge that given how the key informants were positioned
within the field of school activism and their in-depth knowledge of Gandhi and King, their voices gave historical depth to what was said. This does not necessarily mean that I agreed with everything the key informants said. In fact, there were instances where I absolutely disagreed with the key informants as the analyses on data findings show. This, however, even where I disagreed with them, I allowed their voices to dominate the discussion before interrogating them.

In addition, I worked hard to ensure that questions of differences were accounted for in the presentations of data findings. With the exception of the key informants, I was very particular about how different voices were accounted for, to speak to every issue discussed in the data findings. Thus, as the data findings show, brief profiles of all research subjects were provided before I introduced their voices. The intent was to help readers understand the subjective locations of my research subjects and the depth of knowledge they bring to the discussion. While these subjective positions do not necessarily grant research subjects the discursive power or authorial control over what was said, it at least helps readers to appreciate and understand the historical context of their voices.

Also, in order to meet my ethical obligation to the research participants, each research participant was given a pseudonym when reporting what they said in the data finding. In addition, their quotes were edited to remove pause words (such as "like," "uh," and "um") and, where necessary, grammatical errors were corrected to make the quotes read fluently. However, in editing the quotes, I ensured that I did not tamper with the substance of what was said. The discussion that follows provides a profile of the six key informants.
Profiles of the Key Informants

I have profiled the key informants because of the central role they played in the research. Also, since the key informants were not selected based on their racial, class, disable, gender, and sexual background, it is important that readers know what made them key informants for the research.

The first Key Informant is James (pseudonym). He is a doctoral candidate of African descent, from one of the universities in Toronto. James is actively involved in the works of CUPE. James identified himself as a very committed class and antiracist activist. And true to his words, James is very much involved in all activisms at university campuses in Toronto. James has been involved in school activism for the last fifteen years. He is also very knowledgeable in the philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. It is this knowledge of Gandhi and King and extensive experience in university activism that make James an important key informant of the research.

The second Key Informant is Anya (pseudonym). Anya is a tenured university professor, in Toronto. Being a person with a disability, Anya has spent most of her work at the university fighting the lack of institutional response to issues affecting bodies marked disabled. Anya has effectively combined her scholarship with university school activism. Although Anya confessed that she had not adequately read Gandhi, her deep and rich understanding of the philosophies and practices of Martin Luther King, Jr. added important knowledge to the research. Anya was chosen as a Key Informant because of the effective ways in which she combined her scholarship and activism—an act that the dissertation hopes to encourage in university schooling.

Lisa (pseudonym) is the third Key Informant of the research. Originally from South Africa, Lisa is what one would call “a born-fighter.” For Lisa, activism is not a hobby or a
voluntary act; it is her life because she was born a survivor. Activism is the only thing that ensures her visibility in the environment that treats her as not “belonging.” Lisa argued that the anti-black racism, classism, and sexism in the Canadian school system taught her to be a university activist. As a part-time graduate student, Lisa spent part of her time organizing university students to fight everyday racism and classism in the university schools in Toronto. Lisa is well acquainted with the works of Gandhi and King. She also relied on her knowledge of African culture, history, values, and worldviews to bring complex understanding to violence and non-violence in university schooling. Lisa was an important addition to the research.

I first met Emmanuel (pseudonym), the fourth Key Informant, eight years ago when a few graduate students met to protest against the decision of one of the universities in Toronto to increase tuition fee of International students. Although he was then a domestic student, I was impressed by the courage and selflessness of Emmanuel as he boldly condemned the university’s decision to increase the tuition fees of International students while, at the same time, pleading with the university governing council to vote against the decision. At that time, I could tell from the reaction of the members of the university governing council that they were not unfamiliar with the politics and activism of Emmanuel. Since then, I have seen and worked with Emmanuel on several activist issues on university campuses. As South Asian, Emmanuel was born into the teachings and philosophies of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Emmanuel’s involvement in the research helped in answering some of the research questions about the works and ideas of Gandhi and King.

The fifth Key Informant is Asti (pseudonym). Asti is an undergraduate student from one of the universities in Toronto. As a person of African descent, Asti has been involved in school activism since her High School days. Asti is a former executive member of the Undergraduate
Students Union and the Black Students Union. She is a strong voice in university school activism and has led many students’ campaign against university tuition fees increment. For Asti, her passion for human rights issues drove her to university school activism. Asti is knowledgeable in the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. She claimed to be motivated by Gandhi’s words: “be the change you want to see in the world.” Asti was useful to the research.

The sixth Key Informant is Mohammed. He got involved in activism during his High School days when he realized that he was gay. Being a Muslim and a gay person was something that did not come off easily for many people in Mohammed’s community. He became a target for many anti-homophobic threats and violence in his community. The drive to fight for survival made Mohammed a vibrant activist. Thus, it was not surprising that when he came to the university, he had to continue his activism. Mohammed is a courageous, anti-homophobic, anti-Islamophobic, and anti-racist university activist. For Mohammed, his location as a black, Muslim, gay person means that he has to fight against racism, homophobia, and Islamophobia each day. Although he is around twenty-five years old, Mohammed has experienced much more violence than many activists will experience in their live-time. He is experienced in the field of university activism and offered a useful understanding of violence and non-violence in society. Mohammed’s knowledge of Gandhi and King made his contributions very useful for the research. Before I introduce my readers to the research findings, here are some of the ethical issues that emerged in the research.

(I) Ethics and Politics of Research

Since this research involves human subjects, I took particular interest in making sure that the research met all ethical conditions. First, I assured the Ethical Review Board of the University
of Toronto that the subjects of my study (activists working within the school system in Toronto) were participating in the research of their own freewill and that there was no element of deceit, fraud, duress, or unfair manipulation to get them involved in the research. In view of that, I gave all my research subjects an informed consent form to sign and date before I interviewed them. The informed consent form detailed the following information: (a) A statement to the effect that the research subjects have been fully informed of their rights to withdraw from the research at any time they feel uncomfortable continuing it, without any consequence. (b) A statement to the effect that research subjects have been informed of their rights to refuse to answer any research question they feel uncomfortable answering. (c) A statement to the effect that the research subjects had been provided with all the information they needed to know about the research before they agreed to take part in it.

Second, I had to guarantee and show how I would maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of research subjects. Although “confidentiality” is sometimes confused with “anonymity” (see Berg 2001), they are not the same. “Anonymity,” in its basic sense, is all efforts to ensure that the research subjects remain nameless in the research data. In this sense, research subjects are given pseudonyms or case numbers when a researcher is reporting the research findings. “Confidentiality,” on the other hand, is an active attempt on the part of researcher to remove from the research records any element that might link the true identity of research subjects to their responses in a research. In other words, certain information about research subjects does not have to be relayed or communicated directly to readers. My duty in this research was to explain to the Ethical Review Board how I would protect the identity of my research subjects from getting known by a third party. In addition, I had to show how I would safeguard, store, and protect the data I collect from the research subjects.
After receiving an ethical approval for the research, it became my responsibility to carry out the research in ways that follow all ethical obligations. For instance, I had to ensure that I followed all proper ethical procedures in gaining access to the research participants. Thus, when my research participants agreed to participate in the research, rather than having them as a group for the information session, I contacted them individually, through telephone calls and e-mails, in order to protect their anonymity. The information sheets I sent out detailed the following information: the nature of the research, what it aims to achieve, and what will be done with the research outcomes. I also let them know of their freewill in participating in the research and, of course, their rights to withdraw from the research at any time, without an explanation. I also told them of their rights to refuse answering any question that they may consider uncomfortable. They were also informed of their rights to demand complete removal of any information they provided during the interview should they decide to discontinue in the research (see Chapter Eight for letters of informed consent and information sheet). My research subjects were assured and guaranteed that no element of deceit and/or manipulation was involved in the research. They were also assured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be protected at all times. I also included the telephone number and e-mail address of the Ethical Review Board of the University of Toronto for them to verify whether the research had been approved by the Board. The phone number and e-mail address was also to allow them to report any concerns they might have about the research.

(J) Some Personal Reflections on Data Analysis

I approached the analysis of the research data not only based on what was said during the interview but also on how and within what contexts they were said. This is where my field notes
became useful. With the help of my field notes, I was able to recall those moments during the interviews when certain comments were made. This helped me to engage certain comments in particular ways during the analysis. There were moments in the analysis when I felt I lacked words to adequately describe and analyse the comments from my research subjects. For instance, I was personally moved by a response from a research participant when I asked him why he was still involved in activism in spite of death threats and personal injuries. His response was emotionally and spiritually touching and I felt no amount of words could help my readers to fully capture the moment. Situations such as this really frustrated me in the analysis because I felt I had not done enough to convey the personal stories of the research subjects to the readers. In spite of such moments of vulnerability, I worked hard to ensure that I reported the voices of my research subjects as close to their reality as possible.

Arranging interview dates with my research subjects did not go as easily and smoothly as I initially anticipated. The research subjects virtually lived a life of activism. So while their desire to participate in the research was high, booking appointments for interview dates did not come easily. Some appointments were cancelled and rescheduled several times before I finally got the opportunity to do the interview. There was one instance when I became very frustrated and wanted to give up on one of my key informants because of the many times he was cancelling the appointments. However, when I finally had an interview with him, I knew why I wanted him to be part of the research.

Another challenge I encountered in the research was knowing when and where to draw a boundary for the research. Research is a data gathering process. However, there is a point in research where a researcher needs to close the chapter on data gathering. Closing the chapter on data gathering did not come easily for me as more and more interesting information was
emerging during the latter part of the research. At a certain point, I had to be extra disciplined and restrain myself from introducing any new material into the research, especially any additional material that could change the direction of the research.

Ethical issues are one of the challenges I encountered in the research. Although my participants were adults, I had to be aware of their vulnerabilities. Finch (1986) argues that when people of the same class, gender, or race interview each other, there is a high level of rapport built up. This may lead the participants to share more information than they normally would if the interviewer was from a different class, gender, and racial background. This also leaves research subjects vulnerable to exploitation. I noted in my case that all research participants were candid and revealing in their discussions with me because they knew me to be an activist at the University of Toronto. However, it is one thing speaking to an open and activist-oriented researcher and another thing saying things that could be taken differently when read in a public arena. So, when all my research subjects wanted me to use their personal names and not pseudonyms, I realized that my ethical responsibility included protecting my research subjects from external harm and also from harming themselves. Fontana and Frey (2005, p.716) ask: “Should the quest for objectivity supersede the human side of those we study?” For me, this question should be engaged not only on the level of ethics but also on the level of pedagogy. Our research outcome need not harm our research community and participants. After all, research wastes the time, energy, and resources of research subjects and community and the least we can offer our research subjects is to ensure that what they say or fail to say are not used to further exacerbate their struggling conditions. This means that the ethical obligation of our research work must be situated on the human side of the subjects we study. As Punch (1986) suggested, as researchers we need to exercise commonsense and responsibility. Our responsibility, to use the
words of Fontana and Frey (2005, p.716), is “our respondents first, to the study next, and to ourselves last.” It is within this context, that against the unceasingly demand of my research subjects to openly and freely attached their real names to their words, I decided to protect their identity even against their wishes, by giving them pseudonyms and also editing their personal stories and experiences to remove all traces that could give away their identities.
CHAPTER FIVE – RESEARCH FINDINGS

Anthologies of Violence: What Is It and What Is It Not?

As noted in Chapter Two, the task of defining or conceptualizing violence has never been an easy exercise. Part of the challenge is that depending on how one is located in society or one’s personal politics, violence can mean so many things. Scheper-Huges and Bourgois (2004) contend that violence is a slippery concept and can never be understood in its limited conception as physical force, assault, or the inflicting of pain to cause harm to another person or group. While the definition of violence may differ from person to person or from group to group, one thing that cannot be denied or doubted is that violence is endemic to human society and exists in myriad forms. Violence can be physical, economic, sexual, spiritual, and symbolic and can exist or happen at multiple levels in society. Thus, it is necessary that while we may differ on what constitutes violence, we must at least speak openly about violence and its impact on society.

In my research, I asked my research subjects to define, conceptualize, explain, or operationalize violence. My research subjects provided deep, complex, rich, and nuanced understanding of violence. The following are some of the responses:

Asti, a black female undergraduate university student who has been involved in university activism for the last six years, conceptualizes violence as any effort to remove physical, psychological, spiritual, economic, cultural, and emotional security from individuals and groups:

Violence is any force or attack that moves the physical, spiritual, economic, cultural, and psychological security around individuals. For me, I don’t see violence as only physical because there are other ways in which one can be aggressive. [File V08, p.55]

For Asti, there is a strong connection between violence and insecurity. When institutions of power neglect their collective commitments and responsibilities to members of society, they are
virtually committing violence against them. Within the public school system in Toronto, there have been several attempts to address youth violence (see Julian Falconer’s report, 2008). One of such measures is the introduction of law enforcement officers in some of the secondary schools in Toronto (see Joshi-Vijayan, 2008). But for Asti, safety and security must re-enforce each other; one cannot be achieved at the expense of the other. So, when the school Board invited law-enforcement officers to provide security for students, yet failed to provide resources that would adequately prepare learners to face and deal with the emerging challenges in the global world, the Board has not done enough to ensure the security of its learners.

Another way of reading into Asti’s definition of violence is that true violence is committed by institutions that neglect their responsibilities to the people and not by the marginalized individuals who fight these neglects. Fanon (1963, p.88) observes that “the violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity.” It appears that Asti and Frantz Fanon are speaking to the same thing, in different languages. Asti is helping us to understand that probably youth violence did not start when students took guns and weapons to schools (see Julian Falconer’s report 2008) but the real violence started when school, as an institution, failed to provide general security for students. Both Asti and Frantz Fanon are helping us to understand that there is an underlying tension and a sense of insecurity and vulnerability among youths who engage in violent acts. Thus, schools can respond to youth violence when they seek for causes of youth violence beyond community pathologization and criminalization.

Similar to the observation of Asti and Frantz Fanon, Mohammed, a gay Muslim undergraduate student who has been involved in anti-homophobic activism for the last twelve years, spoke about the centrality of power in the production of violence: “violence is about power
and how people use power to directly or indirectly make others feel unwelcome and undeserving” [File V017, p.127].

Hannah Arendt, the great philosopher, shares the sentiment of Mohammed about the relationship between power and violence: “If we turn to discussions of the phenomenon of power, we soon find that there exists a consensus among political theorists from Left to Right to the effect that violence is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power” (Arendt, 2004, p.236). Indeed, there is a rich lode of research material that points to the strong correlations between violence and power. Jean-Paul Sartre spoke about the relations between violence and power when he said that power is the ability to make others do one’s biddings (in Fanon 1963). Max Weber also argued that power consists of asserting one’s will against the resistance of others (Weber, 1946).

Although Hannah Arendt recognizes the relationship between power and violence, she, unlike Mohammed, Sartre, and Max Weber, does not see power to be synonymous with violence. On the contrary, she sees power to be antonymous with violence. Arendt (1970) contends that power and violence cannot dwell together; the absence of one is an indication of the presence of the other. Violence only appears in the absence of power.

Similar to Hannah Arendt’s argument, Michel Foucault (1982) argues that the more totalizing a configuration of power is, the less violent its techniques are. Power and violence are not the same. Power is a psychological and a moral force that persuades people into obedience. Violence on the other hand does not persuade; it enforces obedience through physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual coercion. While violence may have the ability to demand submission, its strength is only temporary and requires tenuous efforts to sustain it; when violence ends or the threat of violence lessens, victims of violence have less motivation to submit to rules. In a sense,
violence is the strategy for the weak and those who cannot command power. Violence rarely creates power; the only thing violence does is to destroy power. In a sense, both Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault are arguing that power does not need violence if it successfully proves its legitimacy. Violence becomes only necessary where power lacks legitimacy to exist. In this sense, power does not contribute to violence; it is the absence of power that contributes to violence.

Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault’s philosophical interpretation of power and violence while interesting, still does not explain what constitutes violence; although it raises a question about what Mohammed said about power and violence. In spite of the question raised about Mohammed’s definition of violence, Mohammed still teaches us something about institutional and structural violence. If power or the lack of power informed structural and institutional practices, then the search for violence must begin from structures and institutions. For instance, many educators and researchers have expressed concerns about the teaching curricula and pedagogical practices, within Toronto public schools, that make some students feel unwelcome (See Solomon, 1992; Palmer, 1997; Dei and Razack, 1995; Robinson, 1998; Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac & Zine, 1997; Fine, 1991). For Mohammed, this unwelcome environment constitutes violence. In Chapter One, I spoke about my experience in the university schooling system in Canada and the many times I felt like an outsider. Like Asti, Mohammed is of the opinion that an act of violence is committed when students are made to feel unwelcome or insecure in the school system. Thus, if my experience with the school system is anything to go by, then I am a victim of violent schooling.

While Asti and Mohammed provide a broader conception of violence, Annabelle, a white, lesbian, feminist, undergraduate student who has been involved in school activism for the last
seven years, narrows her conception of violence to biased teaching curricula and pedagogical practices:

Violence operates in a number of systemic level and personal level. To education, it can operate along many lines of system of operation, whether systemically through the kind of frameworks being taught in a particular class or whether being a particular dogma of research or theory that is inherently racist, sexist, homophobia, classist, and ableist. I mean I was in Psychology for a while here in University A and I found that framework of teaching and understanding very problematic and very trans-phobic. I remember sitting in one class that was teaching gender identity disorder and that was the turning point for me to quit that class. [File V08, p.59]

Curricula are rules and procedures that govern instruction, learning, and delivery. They also guide and dictate what should be taught, how they should be taught, why they should be taught and the conditions under which they should be taught (Giroux, 1983a; 1983b; Apple, 1986; McCarthy, 1990; Dei et al, 2000; Dei et al, 1997).

There is no doubt that school curricula influence students’ knowledge, skill, attitudes, and behaviours. However, not all curricula are made official and written down as formal educational procedures to be followed in delivering education. Some aspects of the school curricula are hidden. Hidden curricula refer to that content of educational knowledge, practices, and delivery that have traditionally and systemically been exclusive and marginal to certain bodies (see the entire edited collection of Giroux and Purpel 1983). Hidden curricula also include comments and ideas that remain unchallenged in the school or classroom environment which in turn are internalized by students to be acceptable and/or accurate. Annabelle was alluding to the hidden curricula within university education that continue to produce violence on certain bodies.

In earlier writings (see, Adjei, 2007; 2010), I spoke about my experience with the school system in Ghana and the number of times I felt violated and ignored by the Eurocentric curricula governing the education system in Ghana. In fact, other critical educators (see Giroux, 1983a;
1983b; Apple, 1986; McCarthy, 1990; Dei et al, 1997; 2000; 2010; Dei, 2004; 2008; Goldstein, 2001; 2003; Wane, 2000) have equally spoken about the schooling system in North America and its colonizing tendency to produce, reproduce, and maintain a particular dominant ideology and perspective of seeing the world. For Annabelle, this violent form of schooling cannot be ignored and must be interrogated. Oftentimes, schools do not pay attention to the violence they are perpetuating against students.

Annabelle’s strategy of walking out of the class, when she felt unwelcome and excluded by what her professor was teaching in the Psychology class, reinforces what has already been delved into by many researchers and educators that students’ drop-outs and disengagement go beyond the question of a lack of support from home (see Dei et al, 1997). Dei further argues that the idea of “push-out” is not to suggest that teachers are physically pushing students out of the school system. Rather, the “push-out” manifests in the schools’ unwillingness to address issues around differences (class, gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion, and ethnicity).

Other researchers such as Solomon (1992); Palmer (1997); Dei and Razack (1995); Robinson (1998); Dei et al (2000) and Fine (1991) have spoken in agreement with Annabelle that the failure of the school system to interrogate issues around teaching, learning, and the administration of schooling is responsible for the many stories of “push-outs” and students’ disengagement in our schools.

Similarly to Annabelle, Asti had a troubling story to tell about biased teaching curricula in university schooling:

Last week in a Political Science class, a professor said that Africans were not enslaved but it was very much trading. That Europeans did not set up any formal political system in Africa because they were afraid of diseases of Africans and that Africans just sold out their own people to Europeans. So I told him he is a liar and that it is irresponsible for him to spew such lies in a classroom. I challenge him that if he is talking about Africa and he does not know,
he should contact other Africans who have written on the subject to get information. I told him you are lying to society. I told him that if African history is something you don’t know, then don’t teach African history and teach what you know. Although he felt insulted, I feel he deserves that [File V08, p.60]

Asti felt that her sense of being, her history, and her experience have been violated when her professor taught a distorted history lesson about Africa. But unlike Annabelle who walked away from the class and never returned, Asti challenged her professor and remained, although she was aware of the implication of challenging a white male professor, as a black female student. The truth is that not many students have the courage of Asti, to challenge their professors. Besides, students like Asti often get label as “trouble-makers” and depending on their location can get punished for speaking against the status quo.

But beyond Asti and Annabelle, there is a third kind of student. These are students who will neither walk away from biased curricula (as Annabelle did), nor will they challenge biased curricula (as Asti did) but will stay silent and accept everything being taught, even if what is being taught is harming their sense of being or personhood. This third kind of students often leaves the school system feeling violated and spiritually and emotionally wounded. This is why the notion of academic achievement has to be critically interrogated (see Dei with Butler, Charania, Kola-Olusanya, Opini, Thomas, and Wagner, 2010). Annabelle and Asti’s experiences clearly show that statistics about successful academic completion does not tell the entire story. Sometimes, students have to amputate themselves in order to survive in the spiritually wounding academy.

Asti and Annabelle’s experiences of violence of schooling reveal the subtle and not so subtle ways in which violence manifests itself within university education. Of course, these students are not necessarily suggesting that there is a conspiracy within our universities to weed
out certain students. However, when university professors teach racist, classed, gendered, and homophobic curricula, they are invariably telling certain students that they are not welcome in the university environment. Understandingly, schools may have the best of intentions for students but the best intentions do not necessarily guarantee fairness, equity, and justice. There are several ways students can feel threatened, unwelcomed, and unwanted in the school system, and the biased curricula and pedagogical practices are some of the ways.

Asti and Annabelle’s understanding of violence also teaches us that teachers and university professors are not just teaching subjects and courses at the university; they are teaching about issues that border on people’s identity, history, culture, and experience. Sometimes, following instructional manuals can make teachers and university professors forget that they are teaching human beings first and subjects second. How educators position their pedagogical practices, in ways that are accountable and responsible, is a question that cannot be ignored if violence of schooling is to be addressed in contemporary education. For Asti and Annabelle, school unfortunately has become a battlefield where learners are each day getting wounded and maimed, by violent curricula and pedagogical practices.

Asti and Annabelle’s conception of violence clearly show that violence is not only about physically harming others but also about subtly, and not so subtly, ignoring differences when it is there to be recognized. There is always contradictory response to differences in the school system. On one hand, schools pride themselves for being open to diversity and differences—universities and colleges use their diverse student population to market their schools—yet schools are not willing to account for and be responsive to the diverse needs of their students. I argue that when schools admit black, gay, lesbian, disabled, working class, Muslim, female, and Jewish students and use these bodies to market their schools to the rest of the world, they should also be
prepared and be willing to answer their black, gay, lesbian, disabled, working class, Muslim, female, Jewish questions. Universities and colleges in Canada cannot use diversity and differences to market their institutions but punish students who raise questions about diversity and differences.

Contrary to the views of Asti, Annabelle, and Mohammed, Lisa, a black female graduate student and a mother of two children, saw violence of schooling not in what is taught but what is not taught and the effects of that on the individual learner and his or her community and environment. Lisa contends that violence is committed when schools fail to adequately prepare students against the emerging complex and sophisticated issues facing human growth and development:

Education as we see it for the most part is not really teaching us to be better citizens, or is not helping us to improve our community and ourselves and in fact it is not even helping our families. The kind of education that most of us are used to is education that teaches us to follow rules even if rules have been manipulated to work against us; we are supposed to accept it and even be grateful for it and not assert ourselves in challenging those rules—who made them and why? [File V08, p.102]

Education is a major investment that is supposed to prepare, equip, and shape learners for the future. It is also a means of transmitting values, culture, worldviews, and accumulated knowledge from one generation to the other (Akbar, 1984). Without education, there is no guarantee that the future generation will be well-informed and prepared for their expected roles and responsibilities in the development of society. But Lisa is concerned that the university schooling system in Canada, at the moment, is not adequately and effectively preparing learners to face the challenges of the future.

In his book *Pedagogy of Freedom, Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, Paulo Freire argues that an educator with a democratic vision or posture has to instill, develop, and maintain in
learners the capacity to be critical, curious, and autonomous about their world. For Paulo Freire, education must incite the curiosity of learners to explore the limits of creativity, “maintain alive the flame of resistance that sharpens their curiosity and stimulatess their capacity for risk, for adventure, so as to immunize themselves against the banking system” (Freire, 2001, p.32).

Lisa argues that this kind of education, the one Paulo Freire describes, is what is missing in the university schooling system in Canada. Instead, the schooling system in Canada is governed by what Ayi Kwei Armah, the famous Ghanaian literacy writer, refers to as “a formula that consecrates the partnership of deceitful teaching and gullible apprenticeship” (Armah 2010, p.30). Students are not supposed to raise questions about what is being taught, even if what they are being taught is not for their well-being and development.

But Lisa did not leave the construction of violence to only what is not taught in the schools but also how schools, through what is taught, are not helping learners to improve the social conditions of families and communities. In a sense, Lisa was arguing that the inability of the school system to contextualize standards and excellence to the needs and conditions of local people has resulted in an intelligentsia with little or no stamina in addressing needs within their local communities.

Although Lisa did not speak about the violence of amputation in schooling—the way schooling forces students to give up part of their identity, culture, religion, values, and worldviews before they can survive in the school system—other works have spoken about this amputation in the school system. For instance, in the Song of Lawino, the protagonist in the story, Lawino, lamented about the loss of her husband, Ocol, to the violent university schooling in Uganda: “The reading has killed my man in the ways of his people. He has become a stump. He abuses all things Acoli; he says the ways of black people are black” (P’Bitek, 1986, p.113). In my
earlier writings (see Adjei, 2007; 2008; 2010), I also mentioned my violent experience with the colonial school system in Ghana. I argued that I left the school system in Ghana feeling that part of my being had been sacrificed on the altar of colonial schooling. In fact, many learners today leave the school system feeling that part of their being is lost to the school system because, rather than bridging learners to their community, the school curricula continue to encourage and enforce students to consume knowledge, history, culture, and worldviews that set them against their families and communities (see Dei, 2004; 2008; Wane, 2006; Thesee, 2006; Solomon, 1997; Iseke-Barnes, 2004).

Lisa further identified what she saw as the root cause of the violence of schooling. In the opinion of Lisa, the framework upon which the schooling system was established allowed certain forms of violence to be perpetrated. When the very framework and ideology that govern the school system are rooted in Christian, patriarchal values and ideologies, no one should be surprised that schooling is producing violence:

I think also education comes from a very conservative, Christian, patriarchal framework, so there is obviously a problem with that particularly because it is within capitalism framework. Also, we learning to be slaves and oppressors and we are not learning to be a better human being and to engage in our spiritual self, so there is so much disaster in education, we are hearing every day crisis in terms of drop-out rate, expulsion rate, people don’t have access to quality education. There is at least two or three tiers education depending on socio-economic status. There are many problems within education. [File V08, p.102]

Lisa’s comment throws light about the need to rethink alternatively about the current school system. If the foundation of schooling is violence, then, probably, the best way to address the violence of schooling is not to build on what we already have, but rather think about a new form of schooling that is open and inclusive. But what was even more troubling about Lisa’s comments was the mention of different tiers of education that exist in the school system in
Toronto. It seems the school system in Toronto is running a class system where those of better socio-economic status are allowed to access better quality education while those of lower socio-economic status are denied access to good education. Lisa’s comment is in agreement with the research findings of Roslyn Thomas-Long, who noted in her earlier research that different funding formula within the universities in Toronto was creating different tiers system (see Thomas-Long, 2010). For Lisa, this tiers system and violent amputation (see Fanon, 1967; Dei, 2008) in the school system epitomize the nature of violent schooling in Toronto.

In agreement with Lisa, Anya, Asti, and Mohammed, Michael, a white male, disabled university professor, argues that to understand violence, one has to put the term “violence” in a verb form: “violate” and “violating.” What is being violated? Who is being violated; how is one being violated? For Michael, putting violence in a verb form reveals the hidden meaning in the term, especially when one looks at how bodies marked disabled are disenfranchised and dislocated in society:

The history of the world is filled with these examples of violence. For example, when you violate somebody’s rights to be who they are; for example, disabled people’s rights to be what they are and what they need to be, first their right to exist. Having a gene project to ensure that disabled people are not born into the world is an act of violence, or acts of violence like a conception of disability that may be medical. Like people with disability should be rehabilitated and be in Special Education, that is an act of violence. [File V08, p.150]

In his piece The Individual and Social Models of Disability, Mike Oliver criticizes what he considers as the medicalization of disability. Oliver (1990) argues that disability is a social state and not a medical condition; therefore, it is highly inappropriate and violent-oriented when medical doctors are granted discursive power to treat and deal with disability as if it is an illness. Disability does not reside in the body; it exists in the environment. When society fails to provide
ramps and elevators for buildings in public spaces, disability, through mobility, is created. Similarly, when schools fail to produce school texts in Braille for students with visibility challenges, disability, through sightedness, is created. Within this context, disability is hardly an individual problem; it is a social problem because society has not done enough at the structural and institutional levels to provide resources to enable people with mobility, sighting, hearing, and learning challenges to function and perform to their full potential. So what happens when medical doctors try to use their acquired skills and knowledge to treat disability as an illness? It is within this context that Michael criticised the power given to medical doctors to name, track, prevent, cure, and rehabilitate disability as if it is an illness. Of course, Michael is aware that when people with disabilities are sick, they need medical doctors to cure them. Also, there are some illnesses which may have disabling consequences, so his argument is not to dismiss or discount the relevance of medical doctors in our society nor the efforts to reduce illnesses that have disabling consequences. However, disability is not an illness. It is a social problem. Therefore, medical doctors should not be tasked to diagnose, treat, and cure disabilities.

Similar to Asti who noted that violence can make a person feel unwelcome, Michael argues that people with disability are made to feel as unwanted beings and social burdens that do not deserve to exist. Elsewhere, I argued that the language used to describe disability is the same language used to describe that which is considered inept, inferior, unwanted, and irrelevant in society (see, Adjei, 2010). So phrases, clauses, and words like “Are you blind?” “Are you dumb? “Are you deaf?” Watch out for your “blind spots,” “This is crazy,” “You are crippling the project,” “Are you retarded?” and “She or he is a handicap,” are used to describe that which is unwanted and inept. For Michael, these social negative attitudes towards disability can be attributed to the institutions of medicine, psychiatry, and psychology that treat disability as
illness rather than as a social condition. Is Michael suggesting that if there is an opportunity to improve the sighting condition of a person, it should not be pursued by the field of medicine, or if there is an opportunity to improve the mobility condition of a person, medical doctors should abandon that project? Obviously, this is not what Michael was implying. We all need rehabilitation sometimes in our lives, but medicine draws a whole new picture about life and how people should live. When a person’s embodied identity is portrayed as unwholesome and unwanted, the individual sense of being is violated.

Given that disability is medicalized, the discourse of “overcoming disability” has gained political and intellectual currency within public discourses. According to Simi Linton, the social interpretation of “overcoming disability” implies that “an individual’s disability no longer limits her or him; that sheer strength and will power has brought the person to a point where disability is no longer a hindrance. Another interpretation to “overcoming disability’ can be that a person has risen above society’s expectation for that person with a disability” (Linton, 1998, p.17). The problem with “overcoming disability” is that it makes disability an individual issue and blames individuals, with a disability, who have not moved beyond their disabilities, as not being strong or brave enough. What does all this say about the comment of Michael? Basically, Michael is arguing that when people with disabilities are not allowed to name and define themselves; when that power to name and define oneself is taken away and is given to an “expert” who does not embody the identity of disability, an act of violence has been committed.

Speaking in agreement with Michael and Asti, Anya, a white female, disabled university professor who has been an activist in the area of disability for the last twenty years, noted that violence occurs when marginalized bodies are made to feel unnoticeable to structures of power:
In my context, making some bodies not thinkable. You don’t have to imagine the presence of some people. You don’t have to think about who is missing. I think that necessarily put structural policies and interactional to milieu of violence.... And toilet, sort of washroom represent that because without adequate facilities, and you can take adequate facilities as a metaphor for a whole bunch of things: computer, classroom, curriculum, but if we just look at washroom as adequate facilities, it is not just we exclude others but also hurt others, so if you cannot pee or if you need to think about which building people using wheel chair can use as washroom. When people using wheel chair has to sit in a van and drive around till they find a church close to campus in order to pee, then it is not surprising that these people have bladder infection and cannot come to school in winter time or are hospitalized because of some of the ramifications of not having a drink of water or eat that day so that they can go to school. I just thought this a most radical way of treating bodies in educational environment while at the same time not even noticing that we done that. [File V08, p.8]

As already alluded to in Chapter One, Hurricane Katrina revealed the emergence of a new kind of politics—one in which an entire population can be considered a disposable and unnecessary burden on state coffers (Giroux, 2006, p.173). For Anya, just as Hurricane Katrina revealed black and poor bodies as examples in the new biopolitics of disposability, the university institution has rendered disabled bodies as disposable material that does not deserve any support. For instance, Anya noted that there was a time in the history of the university at which she is teaching that some of her students using wheelchairs had to sit in a van and drive around campus to search for a place to urinate, because most of the washrooms in her school were not accessible to students using wheelchairs. In Anya’s opinion, given the fact that her university had what it took to provide accessible washrooms for every building on the campus, the only explanation for this lack of accessible washrooms on campus was that the university did not care about people with disability. Perhaps, not providing accessible washroom for students with disability is the university’s way of saying that disabled bodies are not welcome. In a sense, just as “Katrina lays bare what many people in the United States do not want to see—large numbers of poor black and brown people struggling to make ends meet” (Giroux 2006, p.176)—the lack of accessible

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washroom on university campuses lay bare what universities do not want to see—a large number of disabled students on the university campuses. Therefore, not having accessible washrooms on university campuses is a subtle way of discouraging disabled students from applying for admission to the university.

Although my research subjects offered myriad meanings to the term “violence,” they also offered a theoretical understanding of violence that can help us to work with non-violence. To my research subjects, violence is the power to remove the emotional, social, cultural, psychological, material, and spiritual security of the individual to the point where the individual is made to feel emotionally, culturally, psychologically, materially, and spiritually unwanted. Further, violence is the power to make others feel neglected and non-existent. However, it is not the neglect alone that makes violence an endemic issue to be discussed in the field of education; it is the sense and understanding that one deserves to be neglected because one’s history, culture, experience, knowledge, personhood, and sense of being are not important. As the personal stories of my research subjects show, violence can deny and silence its victims of any right to seek emotional, psychological, material, and spiritual recourse. Violence can make its victims abandon their personal dreams and ambitions. The question to be asked is: if violence is so broad, why is violence read in the dominant interpellation and lens? The next theme speaks to this issue.

**Thinking Differently About Violence**

The general comments from Asti, Mohammed, Annabelle, Anya, Michael, and Lisa clearly show that what constitutes violence, as legislated within the Criminal Codes of Canada, is not adequate to capture violence in its myriad and complex forms. So, I asked my research
subjects how they understood violence outside what is legislated within the Criminal Codes of Canada. The responses of my research subjects suggest that violence exists in myriad forms and hardly represents what is legislated in law.

For Nadia, a white female graduate activist in the area of classism and sexism, the salient question is not whether what is legislated as violence in the Criminal Codes of Canada is different from what activists think about violence, but whether it is enough for activist to rely on the legal system to define what constitutes violence. Nadia contends that institutions of domination cannot be relied on to define violence inclusively because these same institutions are highly implicated in acts of violence. Therefore, they will always define violence to exclude their own acts of violence:

I don’t necessarily see violence as a term that can be owned or legitimated by the realms of law or education. I think it should be defined by working groups, activist groups, and community leaders because they really know what constitutes violence. And they experience the most harmful and numerous forms of violence on a systemic level. I don’t think violence is broadly defined by the realm of education, law, or science because they see themselves as inherently implicated in violent acts, so that itself becomes problematic. [File VD07, p.42]

Nadia further contends that one of the pitfalls of looking up to institutions of domination to define violence is that violence will always be seen as an individual issue rather than as a social issue:

I guess, the term violence that is defined institutionally is very Eurocentric, and violence is seen as an individual problem versus a social and systemic problem that is continually being created by the system that is defining it. [File VD07, p.42]

Nadia’s objection to an institutionalization of violence is not to say that our institutions have nothing to say about violence; however, she is concerned that the current institutional definition of violence neglects the implicit and complicit roles of structures of power in perpetuating
violence. To Nadia, violence is rooted in institutional and systemic policies and practices; thus to make violence an individual issue is to neglect that which actually causes violence.

Indeed, many critical educators have argued in support of Nadia’s observation that violence is rooted in the activities of education and justice institutions (see Fanon, 1963; 1967; Giroux, 1983a; 1983b; Apple, 1983; McCarthy, 1990; Dei et al, 1997; 2000; 2010; Dei, 2004; 2008; Goldstein, 2001; 2003; Wane, 2000; Henry et al, 2006). For instance, as already noted in Chapters One and Two, school as a site of power often-times treats violence as the physical, psychological, and emotional harm committed by students against students, yet the violence within the teaching curricula and pedagogical practices are oftentimes excluded from any discussion of violence within education (see Giroux 1983a; 1983b; Apple 1986; McCarthy 1990; Dei et al 1997; 2000; 2010; Dei 2004; 2008; Goldstein 2001; 2003; Wane 2000; Henry et al 2006).

This sentiment of Nadia is equally echoed in the comments of James, a class and antiracism activist and a graduate student at one of the universities in Toronto:

But again who defines violence? Usually it is the dominant forces and legal codes that tell us what constitutes violence. Even the work we do even as workers at the university not having access to pension plan and other benefits that full-time workers have access to; those acts of discrimination are acts of violence but we will not define it as violence. We will say that it is neo-liberal ways of creating precarious work so that they can operate their system on moral efficiency in terms of cost. [File VD07, p.112]

Like Nadia, James is concerned that violence as legislated within the legal codes of Canada barely speaks to the everyday violent experiences of marginalized communities.

But even more troubling is the manner in which the institutions of domination have controlled the language of violence. Often-times, institutions of domination sanitize the language of violence in ways that exclude the dominant acts of violence. For instance, when language such
as “ethnic cleansing” is used instead of “acts of genocide”; “pre-emptive strikes” instead of “invasion”; “economic downsizing” instead of “labour lay off”; “bigotry” instead of “racism or homophobia”; “collateral damages” instead of “the killing of innocents”; the real violence is shielded away from public knowledge and the true effects of violence are sanitized. Thus, for Nadia and James, the challenge of fighting against violence in university schooling is a definitional issue especially the question of who has the power to define what constitutes violence and what does not constitute violence.

The observation of Nadia and James is very important to any discussion of violence. In the Introductory Chapter of the dissertation, I argued that there appears to be a contradictory and paradoxical response to violence in our society. On one hand, every member of society condemns violence when it occurs, yet in our every day dealings with one another, violent acts are committed. For instance, law enforcement agencies may be passionate to fight violence in our society, yet some of the activities of law enforcement agents, such as racial profiling, are violent. Similarly, teachers condemn violence that occurs among students but leave out the inherent violence in the school curricula and the pedagogical practices. The observations of my research participants clearly show that if violence is to be understood in ways that can help us work towards non-violence, then violence must be defined outside that which is legislated within the Criminal Codes of Canada. The observations of my research participants also unpack a series of questions: Given the different manifestations of violence, what will really be a non-violent space? Is there a space called “non-violence” given the endemic nature of violence within institutions and structures of domination? Is non-violence about a state of mind? In short, what is the practicality of non-violence in a violent world? The discussion that follows addresses these questions.
Towards a Comprehensive Conception of Non-Violence

In his *Gandhian Concept of Non-Violence*, Stuart Nelson contends that there are various interpretations of “non-violence” that simply suggest that non-violence is the absence of physical force in a personal or a group encounter (Nelson 1975). This non-elaborative conception and interpretation of non-violence, no doubt, leaves profound doubt concerning the effectiveness of non-violence to create or achieve social change. Mahatma Gandhi contends that non-violence is not a single virtue or a single quality of life; it is a congeries of qualities or virtues; it is a spirit, a way of life, a religion or as he would say, “the law of one’s being.” Mahatma Gandhi perceives non-violence as something far beyond the mere absence of physical contact or harm to one’s opponent. For Gandhi, non-violence is a state of mind and being. It includes what transpires in thought and speech. In fact, a non-violent practitioner cannot engage in acts of deception and hatred. Thus, the Gandhian conception of non-violence includes love, compassion, kindness, gentleness, courage, fearlessness, and humility. Mahatma Gandhi’s position on non-violence reveals many complex questions: Where is the place of rage in non-violence? What does disturbing the peace and entrenched stability mean in terms of non-violent activism for social change? How do we capture inner feelings and thoughts that simultaneously harbour resistance and struggles for justice at the same time as we seek love, common humanity, compassion, and kindness? In my research, I asked my research subjects how they would conceptualize non-violence in the context of their activist work. Here are some of the responses I received from my research subjects:

James argues that the gap between violence and non-violence can be so blurred that attempting to create a purely non-violent space can be a defeating endeavour:
People’s understanding of non-violence is where people may not engage in physical acts of violence against their oppressors. They will do active resistance, direct action, but not one that involve the destruction of property. And you can see who is privileged when we do not want to necessarily destroy property. That we do not consciously engage in acts of physical violence against the body of a person. You may engage in psychological violence because of the fear and the marches you may do. People can define direct action as acts of violence because of the fear they instigate but a non-violent activist will not see it as violence but rather as putting pressure on people to change their behaviour. But even as revolutionaries, we realise that the context sometimes shape what type of action we do. Non-violence does not involve physical harm to the oppressor or public depends on the context we are fighting. [File NV012, p.77]

James contends that context as well as the interpretation determines whether an act is violent or non-violent. What the dominant may consider as violence may in actual fact be a non-violent resistance. For instance, the disturbing and discomforting voices of marginalized bodies can be misunderstood or misinterpreted by the dominant as a threat of violence. In the opinion of James, non-violent resistance should not and cannot guarantee any personal comfort for the oppressor. Similar to James’ observation about the general misunderstanding of non-violence, Lisa noted that the traditional definition of non-violence actually encourages apathy and moral distancing and does not bring any transformation to the structures of power:

I have heard from the traditional definition of non-violence as when you consciously choose not to take up a weapon to inflict violence on another body. Non-violence is also that which does not disrupt. Non-violence is what allowed the status quo to continue the way it does. [NV012, p.107]

Both James and Lisa’s comments bring back one of the questions raised earlier on: Is there really a non-violent space, given the endemic nature of violence within institutional structures and knowledge? The answer, in the opinion of James and Lisa, is a definitional issue. If non-violence is to be understood as a fight for social justice and equity and not necessarily “not violence,” then there is definitely a space for non-violence in a violent world. In fact, the violent
nature of today’s world makes non-violent resistance an inevitable option for activists. Oftentimes, there have been misunderstandings about what constitutes a non-violent act. There is an impression that non-violence is about peace, tranquility, and harmony and that tension and disturbances have no place in non-violent activism (see King, 1963 to read his impression about this issue). However, James argues that tension and disturbances are necessary in non-violent activism. James’ comment about the role of tension and disturbances in non-violent activism was echoed in a response of Emmanuel, an Asian male graduate student whose area of activism is immigration:

I don’t look at non-violence and violence as two sides of a separate coin. I think both are put in the same framework. I think that non-violence is just as important as defining violence. Non-violence is not the absent of tension, there is always tension in non-violence. It is like thinking that because there is a cease fire between Israelis and Palestinians, there is non-violence. [File NV012, p.89]

Emmanuel, like James and Lisa, recognizes that non-violence is not the same as “not violent.” It is possible for tension, misunderstanding, and conflict to be present in non-violent resistance. Therefore, non-violence should not be seen as the mere presence of harmony and tranquility; it is possible for justice, equity, and fairness to be absent in an environment of harmony, stability, and tranquility. Therefore, the benchmark for non-violence is the presence of justice, equity, and fairness.

Mina, a female graduate activist in the areas of antiracism and classism, also recognizes that the line between violence and non-violence can be blurred sometimes. Mina does not understand why resistance works should be misread as violence. For Mina, there is nothing violent when one defends his or her rights to justice and equity. Mina contends that true violence is committed by those who guard the status quo and try to put marginalized bodies at the
periphery, and not those who fight to right what has been wrong. Mina’s comment is in line with the concerns of Frantz Fanon that violence emerging from resistance should not be treated in the same way as violence emerging from oppression (see Fanon 1963). Mina, like James and Emmanuel, contends that when non-violence is understood as mere absence of violence, it allows oppressive regimes to go unaccounted for their acts of violence and injustices:

But I will argue that if you are fighting with someone, it is self-defense to fight for what is yours and it is necessary that if you are being forced to engage in certain practices, then you should not be the one to get labelled as being violent, which is what the oppressors and system do. They perpetuate violence against us through their practices of gate-keeping, segregation, policies, and practices and when we fight against them or even think against these forms of violence, we get labelled as intolerant and anti-establishment, yet we are just instinctively doing what is naturally within us based on the conditions and environment and of things being done to us. [File NV012, p.139]

Mina further argues that self-defence is not a violent act; if anything, it is the commonsense thing for any human being to do. However, Mina’s interpretation of self-defence moves beyond the physical acts of defending oneself against physical blows from one’s opponents. Mina interprets self-defence in the context of resistance work. Mina contends that non-violence is about resisting oppressive practices that can harm a person. Therefore, those who fight back or speak back to power should not be accused of committing violence; if anything, society should applaud people who stand up to an oppressive regime. Mina’s conception of non-violence agrees with Mahatma Gandhi’s analysis of non-violence. For Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence is a social instrument in the struggle for justice and freedom. The major initiations in non-violence have always come from people who passionately strove towards the freedom of humanity from social injustice (Vettickal, 1993, p.64). It is this passion for freedom and justice that drove Mahatma Gandhi to challenge racial segregation in South Africa after he was pushed out of a first class compartment of a train by a white official, at the railway station in Pierermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, in
1893. As Gandhi (1954, 78: p.282) noted after he was pushed out of the train: “I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights to go back to India, or should I go to Pretoria without minding the insults? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship I was subjected to was superficial—only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process.”

Mina, like Gandhi, views non-violence as a process of fighting back against injustices and oppression within society. If in the process, the dominant views it as intolerance and anti-establishment, she owes no one an apology.

While the responses of Mina, James, and Lisa clearly show what “non-violence” cannot be, they do not tell us categorically what “non-violence” can be. Emmanuel, however, offers a suggestion about what non-violence can be. According to Emmanuel, non-violence is an understanding of how the dominant uses power to silence and devoice marginalized bodies, and a way to confront and dismantle these structures of power so as to give voice to the voiceless:

On a more systemic approach, it is hard to define non-violence. I think non-violence is about understanding how power dynamics function to disengage bodies and work to dismantle the power dynamics like White Supremacists, racism, patriarchy. It is about dismantling those types of power structures. [File NV012, p.89]

It is this confrontation and open attempt to dismantle the structures of power that make non-violence something that is erroneously associated with tension and disturbance by some people (see King 1963). Unfortunately, this tension is misread as violence by those in power. Taking the discussion of non-violence one step further, Asti uses an African concept Obuntu to explain her understanding of non-violence.

Non-violence is everything we do, from concepts like Obuntu, we as African people are the greatest humanist and it is our purpose in life to bring peace and embrace people and to bring
joy and harmony to the rest of people. This is the value system we were raised within. Everything we do is essentially non-violent. [File NV012, p.60]

Etymologically, *Obuntu*, in the Bantus’ conception, means “an inner feeling of a person that involves the feeling of oneness, love, tenderness in one’s ‘heart,’ and care for other humans” (Batuuka & Nkanda, n.d., p.65). Within Bantus axiology, human beings must strive for the collective good of society rather than individual, selfish ambitions. The Bantus believe that all humans have two types of ego: the selfish ego and people-centered ego. The selfish ego seeks its own good and does not usually care about the collective; therefore, a person with selfish ego is assumed to lack *Obuntu*. According to Batuuka and Nkanda (n.d., p.67), “for a person to qualify to have *Obuntu*, one must be considerate or kind, empathize with others, show respect to others, and have a feeling of belonging to communities of intelligible beings. *Obuntu* also refers to a set of principles or rules that guide, conduct, and regulate behaviours including sanctions and taboos that forbid certain kinds of conduct.” Africans’ conception of *Obuntu* epitomizes non-violent relations in many ways. Just as *Obuntu* does not shun efforts to condemn and sanction acts that are considered to lack *Obuntu*, in the same way non-violent activism does not derail any effort to condemn acts of oppression and injustice. Within *Obuntu* customs, acts that are motivated by selfish ego are not considered to possess an element of *Obuntu*. In non-violence, selfishness is considered to be a product of violence and needs to be challenged at all time (see Gandhi 1961). Acts of *Obuntu* are motivated by love and a sense of community. Similarly, non-violent resistance is born out of love for one’s opponent. Thus, by associating non-violence to *Obuntu*, Asti is suggesting that non-violent acts must eschew apathy, silencing, and moral distancing in the face of injustice and oppression. What this implies is that non-violence is about action to bring about a positive change. Its intent is always to correct what has been wrongly established
by institutions of domination. Non-violence, as understood by Asti, is different from the positions of “non-resisters” and “selective non-violents” who are generally apathetic and will not engage in any kind of confrontation even if the confrontation will create positive change (see Sharp 1959, pp.46-59).

Reading more into non-violence as a tool of resistance, Michael argues that non-violence is daily choices we make to break away from the centre to reach out to those at the margin. Using the “Ivory Tower” as a metaphor for domination, Michael argues that non-violence is about the daily decisions and actions activists take to fight for the voiceless and the less privileged:

It is interesting because I think sometimes there is cultural conception of the university and its relations to the broader community and one concept we use quite often here is the thing about the Ivory Tower. We don’t often hear the other needed Towers but we hear about the Ivory Tower and [I] suppose that make some reference to the colour of Ivory; some Western notion of purity and a tower that cannot be accessed by many people and the work we do as academic community is particularly relevant to the community. So the subset already is a separation between the community and the academy, a separation that shows that the things we do in the academy is not relevant to many people. So I think it is the understanding that it wasn’t so much the Ivory tower as it was a barricade that only a kind of scholars that were allowed in the academy. Scholars who are doing conventional works were allowed in the academy. Scholars of a particular colour; scholars of a particular kind of embodiment, scholars of a particular kind of gender were not allowed in the academy. So non-violence it seems to me will have to be some sense of what I do or what any academic does to always make our work and space accessible to many people. [File NV012, p.17]

Asgharzadeh (2007, p.13) noted that the tongue, voice, and language are techniques of the body; nonetheless, these bodily properties are shaped and conditioned by a variety of physical, social, cultural, and political forces. In his discourse of biopower, Michel Foucault explored this position of the body as a mechanism of or for control and surveillance—looking at the body as a source of power, life, and living being (Foucault 1984). Foucault noted that the notion of biopower emerged in the 17th century when “Western man gradually learns what it means to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an
individual and collective welfare-forces that could be modified” (Foucault 1984, p.264). Under this condition, critical thinking is discouraged and frowned upon, and the few people who take up such risk of thinking critically and asking critical questions are made to suffer as an example to deter others.

Michael argues that the school system through its acts of “gate-keeping and gate-guarding” had become a site and the means of policing, punishing, and disciplining certain bodies for thinking, speaking, and acting against dominant ideologies and practices. Therefore, non-violence in the field of university schooling is about the daily choices critical educators make—although risky choices—to help learners to not only “think outside the box” but also to disrupt and dismantle the box. For Michael, refusing to conform or caving in to the pressure of the dominant ideologies and discourse is an act of non-violence.

On another level, non-violence, according to Michael, is about making the Ivory Tower accessible to those excluded from the tower. “Can the subaltern speak?” (Spivak, 1980) is a question Gayatri Spivak posed in the late 1980s. She answered the question: “The subaltern cannot speak” (Spivak, 1988). Spivak concluded that the subaltern cannot speak not because she believes the subalterns are rendered speechless, voiceless, or tongueless, but because the discourse at the centre of learning is so controlled and manipulated that there is no space for the subalterns to voice their conditions and experiences of marginalization. For Spivak, these questions must be answered: Who has power and privilege to speak and to speak for whom? What are the various political, social, economic, and psychological conditions within which one is rendered voiceless? Can educators in the Ivory Tower truly and honestly speak for historically oppressed and silenced racialized, gendered, classed, sexualized, and disabled bodies? Spivak concluded that the degree of oppression was simply so intense and overwhelming that the
subalterns cannot simply speak. Although Gayatri Spivak is aware that the subalterns are already speaking in their own enclaves, she is, however, concerned that the subalterns may not be speaking in the sophisticated and technical language that we so often use in the Ivory Tower.

According to Michael, our task, as critical educators, is to help the rest of the world hear the discontent, the disruptive and discomforting voices of the subaltern (those excluded from the Ivory Tower). In this era of neo-conservative mobilization and “conservative modernization as the new hegemonic bloc” (Apple & Buras, 2006, p.12); in an era of the new biopolitics of disposability (Giroux 2006), helping the rest of the world hear the subalterns speak, or making the violent conditions of the subalterns visible at the centre of knowledge production, validation, and dissemination, is a significant feat. And this is what Michael sees as an act of non-violence that has to be encouraged within university schooling.

From what my research participants have said so far about non-violence, it appears that non-violence, to my research participants, is more about action-oriented strategy to create positive change than it is a way of life as Mahatma Gandhi may want his followers to believe. My research subjects conceptualize non-violence as any action or inaction that is intentionally or unintentionally designed to achieve equity, fairness, social justice, and environmental protection. In this sense, actions and inactions that are informed by anti-homophobic, anti-sexism, anti-classism, anti-anti-Semitism, anti-Islamophobic, anti-ableism, anti-racism, and environmental protection measures can be defined as non-violence. This definition of non-violence departs from the structural-functionalists’ definition that sees harmony and peaceful co-existence as the true markers of non-violence. In fact, for my research subjects, tension, and disturbances are important components of non-violence. Non-violence is not about the absence of tension and disturbances but rather the presence of justice, fairness, and equity.
For Asti and, to a large extent, Mina, Emmanuel, Lisa, and James, the overall goal of non-violent university school activism is to challenge institutional policies and practices that constantly marginalize and oppress students of different and diverse backgrounds (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and religion). If in the process of challenging oppression, conflict, tension, or disturbances occur, it should not be read as violence. My research participants contend that when non-violence is understood in context of resistance, then it must be clear that tension and disturbances are necessary to achieve results. Martin Luther King, in his letter from a Birmingham jail, noted that freedom in human history has never been given on a silver platter by those in power; freedom at all times must be demanded by the oppressed and marginalized (King 1963). When Martin Luther King Jr.’s statement is juxtaposed to what my research subjects said, then what remains clear is that non-violence is not the antithesis of violence. If anything, the two are intertwined and work together.

But if non-violence and violence are intertwined then where does one place the non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.? Are my research subjects contradicting Gandhi and King? The answer once again is a definitional issue. Of course, my research subjects partly agree, and disagree, with Gandhi’s interpretation of non-violence. This will be discussed later. However, my research subjects contend that non-violence can only be understood in the context of violence. If violence is the use of power to deny other people’s rights to social, material, emotional, psychological, and spiritual security, then non-violence is all attempts to resist institutional power and practices that continue to marginalize others. In a sense, non-violence should not be misinterpreted as “not violence”; instead, it should be understood as resistance. Non-violence is about resistance to amputation and invisibility. It is about open defiance against the policies and practices of university schooling that marginalize and
discriminate against certain students because of their racial, class, gender, sexual, religious, and disabled backgrounds. In the discussion that follows, my research subjects explain the relevance of Gandhi and King to schooling and education

**Possibilities of Gandhi and King to University Schooling**

Nearly half a century after the unfortunate deaths of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. society still continues to mourn their loss. Today, the names Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. are held in higher esteem, and memorials and holidays have been instituted in India and the United States in honour of these men. Yet, these men were not beyond limitations. One of the issues this dissertation has struggled with right from the beginning of this research is how to study the works of Gandhi and King in the 21st century. Several factors account for this tension, contention, and dilemma.

First, it is undeniable that these men spoke about non-violence from different historical and geographical epochs; therefore, there are limitations in bringing their ideas to a different time and space. Second, non-violence as a resistance strategy began as an experiment for Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi repeatedly argued that non-violent resistance was about his experiment with the Truth. Thus, his desire was never to be consistent with his previous words or actions; rather, he sought to be consistent with the Truth as he saw it fit at any given moment. Even later when Martin Luther King, Jr. chose Gandhi’s ideas of non-violence, he needed to modify them to suit the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The challenge of the dissertation has been how to make Gandhi and King’s ideas and practices of non-violent resistance applicable and workable in social and political mobilization of university activists who desire transformation within university schooling.
In my research interviews, I asked my research subjects to explain what they consider to be possibilities and limitations of thinking about and using King and Gandhi’s ideas in school activism. Overall, my research participants saw the relevance of Gandhi and King to schooling in four different ways: (1) their ideas of civil disobedience in activism; (2) their ideas of “truth” in activism, (3) “their concepts of love in activism, (4) their idea about negotiation in activism. The discussion that follows addresses each of these ideas.

**Civil Disobedience as a Tool of Social Change**

Civil disobedience as a resistance strategy did not start with Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In fact, throughout human history, several individuals and groups have one time or the other used civil disobedience to fight injustice. For instance, Henry David Thoreau, an American transcendentalist, a philosopher, an abolitionist, a naturalist, an essayist, and a poet, in his thought-provoking essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, which was first published in 1849, challenged marginalized groups to withdraw their support for any government and state institutions that oppress marginalized people. Thoreau took his idea of civil disobedience into practice by refusing to pay tax to a government that was engaging in slavery and other forms of injustice. Consequently, Thoreau was jailed for tax evasion. Although Thoreau was soon released when his friends and family members paid the tax he owed, he was content to be in jail: “under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison” (1849/1960, p.34). Ironically, Mahatma Gandhi read Thoreau’s *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* (1849) when he was jailed for committing civil disobedience. Although Thoreau’s ideas were not entirely new to Mahatma Gandhi, the reading of *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* somehow confirmed and reinforced Gandhi’s own ideas about civil disobedience.
In fact, Gandhi described Thoreau’s civil disobedience as a “masterful treatise” that “left a deep impression on” him (Fischer, 1954, p.38).

However, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. have been credited with the concept “civil disobedience” because they took a known practice to another level in how they mobilized the masses to collectively disobey laws of the state that unfairly targeted racialized and colonized bodies, in their times. Perhaps, the most famous of all Gandhi’s civil disobedience is his “Salt March” in the early 1930. Salt at the time of Gandhi, was an essential commodity and was taxed in most societies because it was one of the few trade goods. The British government, who was the colonial master of India, had made salt a monopoly of the government. This decision of the British government affected businesses in India and made life difficult and unbearable for everybody, especially the poorest villages (Hunt 2005). In fact, the British control of salt was symbolic and a physical humiliation for India. In response, Mahatma Gandhi, at the age sixty-one, walked 240 miles, for twenty-four days, to the ocean to pick up a crust of salt in defiance to the British law (Hunt 2005). Gandhi’s action encouraged the rest of Indians to also break the British law by collecting salt. Within a few weeks, the British government had arrested over 50,000 Indians, including Gandhi, who had disobeyed the British law on salt. Writing about the “Salt March” and its impact on India, Jawaharlal Nehru noted, “It seemed as though a spring had suddenly released... And we marvelled at the amazing knack of the man to impress the multitude and make it an act in an organized way” (Nehru, 1958, p.160).

It is Gandhi and King’s organizational skills and effective ways in which they successfully implemented non-violent civil disobedience that made their ideas attractive to my research subjects. Asti argued that Gandhi and King are relevant to school activism when one looks at their non-violent strategy of open-defiance against institutional domination:
Civil disobedience is important and useful and not to the point of bringing harm to people and threatening the lives of others. As activists, sometimes in our attempts to use civil disobedience, we fail to separate between bad laws and good laws. What do we gain as activists when in our attempt to make our demand heard, we block the road to prevent ambulance carrying a sick person to the hospitals from passing? Or we block highways to prevent motor vehicles, who have nothing to do with our issues, from passing? [File CD08, p.58]

Asti acknowledged that school activists, to some extent, are already utilizing civil disobedience as a resistant strategy. However, she is concerned that many school activists do not distinguish good laws from bad laws; the effect is that civil disobedience has become less effective in creating social change. In a sense, Asti’s reference to “good laws” and “bad laws” implies that there is a need for activists to distinct between issues they are protesting, against from issues that have no bearing with the protest. For instance, students may protest against a university’s policy of increasing tuition fees, but if in the process of the protest, they block the road to prevent easy traffic movements, they are breaking a “good law.” In other words, stopping traffic on a highway may have nothing to do with a policy that increases tuition fees. Revisiting Gandhi and King’s ways of using civil disobedience can help contemporary university school activists learn the limits and possibilities of civil disobedience as a tool for social change.

**Negotiation as a Tool of Social Change**

Negotiation is central to any non-violent resistance work. Ideally, negotiation involves the following sequence: recognizing the truth and false elements in each side of the argument to form a new side, then through negotiation, each side continues to revise and redefine its position until both parties reach a compromised position (Adjei 2007). In spite of the relevance of negotiation to bring about change, Annabelle warned that whenever negotiation fails to follow the tenets of
dialogue, negotiation stops being negotiation. Annabelle noted that the attitudes of institutions of power to negotiation are not something rooted within the tenets of dialogue:

For me, the area of negotiation can be useful, here how do you negotiate with the oppressor if sometimes the oppressor is not willing to negotiate with you. Again, how do you negotiate with the oppressor when your voice is being silenced? How can there be negotiation when already the oppressor is the one setting the agenda and deciding the terms and conditions of things. For me, negotiation that does not involve conversation as equal parties is difficult to accept as negotiation. They [university administrators] are making decisions behind closed doors and forcing them down our throat and calling them negotiation. Where is our voice in these decisions making processes? So, you see the process of negotiation itself, is violent on bodies because it is designed to silence and delegitimize our voices. [File N010, p.62]

Annabelle argues that true negotiation is established within the spirit of dialogue. While each party is free to express his or her view within negotiation, an individual’s view is expressed within the environment of respect, mutual cooperation, and desire to seek amicable solution to the issue. Unfortunately, decision making within university schooling is not grounded on the spirit of negotiation. For Annabelle, as much as negotiation is relevant in university school
activism, activists should be aware of the power dynamics and how they function to silence and delegitimize other voices during negotiation. If negotiation is not carried out within the spirit of dialogue and mutual respect, then that decision cannot be accepted as an outcome of negotiation.

**Ahimsa as a Tool for Social Change**

Love is central to the works of Gandhi and King. While Gandhi uses the term *ahimsa* to explain his understanding of love, Martin Luther King uses the term “beloved community” to speak directly to love that must exist in activism. *Ahimsa*, in the Sanskrit language, literally means non-harm or more fully, not to intend harm to one’s opponent. Mahatma Gandhi once explained the connection between *ahimsa* and the search for Truth in this parable:

> It appears that the impossibility of full realization of Truth in this mortal body led some ancient seeker after Truth to the appreciation of *ahimsa*. The question which confronted him was, “shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or shall I destroy them? The seeker realized that he who went on destroying others did not make headway but simply stayed where he was, while the man who suffered those who created difficulties marched ahead, and at times even took the others with him. The first act of destruction taught him that the Truth which was the object of his quest was not outside himself but within. Hence the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, he neglected the enemy within. (Gandhi, 1957, p.5f)

Gandhi develops *ahimsa* from two religious traditions: Jain religion and Christianity. Within Jain faith, violence is not encouraged, not because one has sympathy or empathy for one’s opponent but because violence corrupts the soul. Within that context, Jains stay away from violent resistance because they do not want to stain their soul. Although Christianity preaches love, Gandhi’s *ahimsa* was not borrowed from the teaching of any church or evangelist; rather, it was Leo Tolstoy’s radical application of love that caught and attracted Mahatma Gandhi to love as a tool of resistance.
Count Leo Tolstoy was a Russian Aristocrat, a writer, an educational reformer, a Christian anarchist and a pacifist who had a profound impact on the non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. In *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, Count Leo Tolstoy engages in a literal interpretation of the ethical teachings of Jesus with a particular focus on his *Sermon on the Mount*. Tolstoy literally took Christ’s teaching on “resisting evil” to openly condemn the government, churches, education, and any other institution that he believed were aiding the ability of the rich and the most powerful to inflict a “tyranny of force” over the poor and the marginalized (Glifford, 1982, p.56). Leo Tolstoy’s book had a profound impact on Gandhi and demolished any lingering faith he had about violence (Brown, 1989, p.78). Gandhi (1957, p.137) later wrote, “Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* overwhelmed me.” Armed with Jain’s religious practices of love, Leo Tolstoy’s radical interpretation of love, and the traditional Sanskrit’s interpretation of *ahimsa*, Mahatma Gandhi developed *ahimsa* as a resistance strategy in the pursuit of justice.

For Mohamed, Gandhi and King’s conception of love is relevant to school activists because love is one means through which oppressed bodies can regain their sanity in the face of overwhelming violence in society:

Within the education system, I think Gandhi’s conception of *ahimsa* will be ideal for the work we do. I remember when I was in high school; the level of violence for me was so dangerous. And the way we organized the gay students group and we have to meet in secrecy because of the level of violence against gay men. Without love for ourselves and even people who hate us, we would not have made the progress we have made within the TDSB. Today, we have an open gay community within the TDSB. Although there are still challenges to be openly gay and lesbian within the TDSB, I believe the way forward is fighting back with love for those who hate us. Not only love for those who oppose us but also love for ourselves. [File G014, p.94]
Mohamed’s understanding of *ahimsa* is very interesting and engaging. For Mohamed, love must be expressed, not only for the benefit of others but also for the benefit of oneself. Thus, apathy and a sense of victimhood is not a product of love but a product of hatred. Therefore, resistance is a product of love.

Bell hooks (2000) observes that self-love that is expressed through self-assertiveness and self-regard must not be seen as the same as the narcissistic hedonism that flourishes within the realm of possessive individualism. Unlike the “possessive individualism” that requires a subordinate and distant other in order to secure an understanding of the “dominant self” (Johal 2005, p.276), self-assertiveness is the willingness to stand up for oneself—becoming true to oneself in an open-manner and learning to treat oneself with respect in all human encounters (hooks, 2000, p.58). Hooks’s understanding of self-assertiveness should be seen in context of reclaiming one’s sense of being and sanity in the face of systemic and institutional violence. Aime Cesaire (1972, p.28) once articulated that “it is not the head of civilization that begins to rot first. It is the heart.” This means that the destruction of the heart can only lead to the destruction of the whole body. Thus, the only way to defend oneself against any external destruction is to protect the heart. And one way of protecting the heart is to surround it with love. The love being discussed here is not necessary sentimental or affectionate; it is love born out of goodwill and strong passion to maintain one’s sanity in the face of colonial juggernaut that constantly holds oppressed bodies as victims of violence. Hooks (2000, p.87) noted that love ethic requires that everyone has the right to be free and to live fully and well. Thus, for Mohamed, love for oneself is one way of acting responsibly and accountably. Love allows oppressed bodies to walk away from a place of victimhood to a place of fighting back. Without love, oppressed bodies will accept their state of victimhood and will not challenge their daily marginalization.
**Spirituality as a Tool of Transformative Activism**

In *Chapter Three* of the dissertation, I argued that even the most devoted and well-intentioned activism that ignores spirituality often unintentionally ends up reproducing other forms of violence on other people. Spirituality was pivotal in the lives, ideas, and struggles of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Their spiritual knowing empowered them to pursue social justice, equity, fairness, and respect for human dignity. In my research interviews, I asked my research subjects about their understanding of spirituality and how it informs their sense of university school activism.

Given that spirituality and religion are powerfully connected, a discussion of spirituality usually evokes religion (Dei 2002). Leela Fernandes (2003, p.101) noted that the politicization of spirituality produces grave consequences through the actions of various religious nationalisms—conservative violent social ideologies and wars of and against terrorism all cast in the name of religion. Therefore, it is not surprising that many progressive intellectuals and activists, more than ever, adhere to a secular framework for social justice and political action. James’ quick evocation of his atheist affiliation on the subject of spirituality clearly shows how religion can sometimes be confused for spirituality:

> I should say I am an international card-carrying member of atheist. I know people talk about the difference between spirituality and religion but I am yet to get convinced of the difference. But I know spirituality is a psychological thing and not necessarily one’s association to a higher being or a higher calling. So for me, my spirituality is psychological thing. For me spirituality is an ideology; an ideology that compels me to hold to a principle and fight social injustice and equity. [File S012, p.3]

Although James did not openly denounce religion in the interview, his body demeanour and the sudden change in the tone of his voice, when he was speaking about spirituality, clearly showed that he did not appreciate the idea of religion or spirituality in university schooling.
activism. However, many critics of secularism have argued that encouraging secularism may not necessarily be the best option to address religious diversity and conflicts in schooling (see Zine 2000; Fernandes 2003). In fact, what is sometimes presented as secularism is itself steeped in the ethics and values of Evangelical Christian tradition. Within the school system, many of the holidays are rooted in the Christian traditions. Therefore, in spite of the several attempts to secularize the school system, it is a fact that religious values and worldviews continue to shape and guide schooling in Toronto.

While religion may differ from spirituality, it still does not show that the two concepts are mutually exclusive. In fact, a person can be highly religious but may not be spiritual, or a person can be highly spiritual but not religious. Yet, for some people, their religion is an entry point to their spirituality and may not even separate them. Within this context, what should matter for this dissertation is not whether an individual conflates or deflates religion with spirituality but how an individual is utilizing spirituality in his or her activism. Although James had a different understanding and interpretation of spirituality, he still acknowledged that something other than himself (whether ideology or psychological) compels and propels him to speak up against social injustice, inequity, oppression, and environmental degradation.

Anya, on the other hand, although not a Christian, drew her understanding of spirituality from the Catholic concept of “grace” and the African concepts of *Obuntu*. For Anya, these two concepts helped her to understand spirituality in ways that humbled her while making it real:

> You see, in most states, I don’t think I know anything, but I have been perplexed by some of the things I have learned about *obuntu*, because I exist because you exist, which is very close to phenomenology where I come from. And I have never understood the concept of “grace” within Catholic religion, but have always been haunted by that concept in so far as something like you participated in something much bigger than you are and it gives you life. You are not the source of life; something else is the source of life. I try to right that with the
understanding that I am participating in something much bigger than me. I don’t know if that is spirituality or not? [File S02, p.12]

Earlier on, I discussed Lisa’s interpretation of *obuntu* and its relevance to her conception of non-violence in university schooling. Within *obuntu’s* ways of viewing the world, no one is an island to himself or herself. The individual cannot be separated from the collective and the collective is incomplete without the presence of the individual. The “I” and “you” are mutually connected and what happens to “I” or “you” is a concern for “we.”

The concept *grace* within Catholicism is an interesting yet a philosophical topic. “Grace” in Biblical, classical, and modern language exists with a fourfold manner. For the purpose of Anya’s comment, the first two understanding and interpretation of the concept *grace* is relevance. *Grace* subjectively signifies goodwill and benevolence. Objectively, *grace* implies favours that come from a benevolent and a very gratuitous gift (*donum gratuitum, beneficium*). The difference between *subjective grace* and *objective grace* is that in the former sense, *grace* requires a higher personality or a higher being to bestow undeserved kindness upon those below him or her; while in the latter sense, *grace* is a form of charm—attractiveness that pours from the lips of one person to another as in Psalm 45:3. The recipient of *grace* (in both senses) equally reciprocates with sentiments of gratuity and thankfulness (see *Catholic Encyclopaedia 1914* for detailed doctrine about *grace*). Whenever Catholics speak of *grace*, they are in reference to a *supernatural grace* that lies far beyond all rightful claim and strenuous efforts of the receiver (see St. Paul’s argument: “And if by grace, it is not now by works: otherwise grace is no more grace.” Romans 11:6).

For Anya, the concept *grace* grants her a sense of humility and responsibility. If she is part of something bigger than herself, then there is a responsibility on her part to think not only
about her limited self but also about others. When the African concept of *obuntu* is combined with the Catholic concept of *grace*, it gives Anya a new understanding of what is expected of her—she has to right what she sees as wrong in society. It also commits her to think and act on behalf of the vulnerable and the silenced voices of those at the margin of power relations. Although Anya claimed that she did not know if her understanding of *obuntu* and Catholic *grace* is what constituted spirituality, she knew that her sense of activism was deeply informed by the concepts of *grace* and *obuntu*.

Anya further argued that knowing that her activism was about participating in something bigger than herself, she approached activism with humility of knowing, and deep conviction that she cannot claim to know all the answers. She therefore avoids working with scientific tropes that suggest certainty of knowing. She tried to understand issues from its complex perspective before making decisions.

I think so, because the activities of attempting to understand is a kind of respect for or participating in something that is bigger than you. So I try to resist thinking that I am God, and I am thinking I have the truth and I try to void scientific approaches to treating human as things and I try to say how can I find ways of working; may be new methods of working to allow me to show respect to the human acts of understanding, so I think that is one way spirituality inform my work. [File, J02, p.12]

Anya’s understanding of spirituality is closely related to Lisa’s interpretation of spirituality. Lisa argued that spirituality is a part of African values, worldviews, and a sense of being. To deny any sense of spirituality in the ways of Africans is to deny the existence of Africanness. Lisa was, however, concerned that the assault on spirituality through European colonialism had endangered that which held Africans united and granted them any sense of sanity and dignity:
Spirituality is that which is about our other self; it is not that which is tied to the physical but that which elevates to the environment and physical world. We Africans are endowed with spiritual things; that is why we were the first people to live on this planet. It is not a coincidence that we have to have a spiritual sense of being in order to understand and negotiate with the process of creating our world which will be shared by so many different people. Unfortunately, our sense of spirituality was violently disrupted with colonialism and apartheid, slavery and the current capitalist society, so spiritual thinking is our greatest source of strength, it is not institutional and it is not religion. It is what helps us enjoy the physical world and help ourselves elevate us to see beyond it to see a whole level of being that ties to our level of consciousness in terms of a greater force, knowing who we are and interconnectedness with human beings on this earth. So we pray, meditate, we sing, we eat, we beautify ourselves; all those things are part of spiritual maintenance. [File S015, p.106]

Cynthia Dillard, Daa’Iyah Abdur-Rashid, and Cynthia Tyson argued that while spirituality may be an option for some people, it becomes violent when those whose cultural norms, values, and worldviews are centred on spirituality are asked to abandon or ignore it (Dillard et al 2000, p.449). Wane (2002, p.136) rightly noted that African spirituality is neither spoken nor written; it is part of Africanness. Spirituality helps Africans to maintain a constant connection with the universe. Lisa spoke in agreement with Njoki Wane, Cynthia Dillard, Daa’Iyah Abdur-Rashid, and Cynthia Tyson when she argued that spirituality dictates ways in which Africans pray, meditate, sing, eat, cry, beautify, laugh, and do everything. Thus, to ask Africans to set aside their spirituality is like asking fish to give up water, or fire to give up oxygen. Lisa also noted that African spirituality was violently interrupted by colonialism, slavery, and apartheid.

Indeed, colonialism that came in the form of Christianity and Islam largely disrupted and interrupted the African sense of spirituality. While this historical fact cannot be denied, there is also a salient question to be answered: “can the spirit be colonized?” Two Trees argues that the spirit cannot be colonized; although it can be ignored or silenced. In Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today, Joan Chittister (1990, p.206) told a story:
Once upon a time, a preacher ran through the streets of the city shouting. ‘We must put God into our lives! We must put God into our lives!’ On hearing him, an old monastic rose up in the city plaza to say, ‘No. Sir, you are wrong. You see, God is already in our lives. Our task is simply to recognize that.’

This monastery’s story teaches us something about spirituality. It exists within us; all we need to do is to recognize its presence.

Like Lisa and Anya, Michael equally argued that his sense of spirituality enabled and empowered him to think beyond what society tells him is his body limitation as a person with visible disability. Michael argued that the current medicalization of disability implies that bodies marked as disabled are seen as undesirables and social burdens. These forms of labelling can immobilize and de-motivate individuals. Thus, Michael’s sense of spirituality allowed him to see things beyond “scientific mis/interpretation of the body” to that which connects him to the rest of the world:

We need to know that we are more than flesh and bones and some of us with flesh and bones have been told that there is something wrong with our configurations and therefore we need somebody to configure us. I don’t see spirituality as something necessarily ruptured in religiosity or religious ideology. However, I do think that there is some genuine desire for justice, equity, and fairness, and then there is something spiritual about it. Why then do we have this desire for justice? There is something that compels us to not think exclusively about ourselves but to think in a broader way that connects others. That is what keeps us going, the possibility and faith to think that our world can be a better place is what keeps us going in the face of challenges. [File S020, p.159]

Parker J. Palmer (2003, p.377) argues that a form of spiritual crisis arises when educators find themselves in the grip of something larger than society’s expectation or the ego’s needs. For Palmer, the soul represents something deep. While Western ontology and epistemology may argue that all power resides in the outward and visible world, history has shown, time and time again, that “the inward and visible powers of the human spirit can have at least equal impact on
the individuals and collective lives” (Palmer 2003, p.378). Spirituality is not a commodity to be acquired; it is an experience to have. Therefore, when we say a person is spiritual, what does that mean? The answer arguably lies in a person who has developed the soul to think critically about the world and its social relations. It is the strength that emanates from within that empowers individuals like Michael to fight social injustice, inequity, and unfairness. Michael argued that spirituality allowed him to focus on things that build the inner self rather than the outer self. Thus, for a person with visible disability, spirituality allows him to discern the connection that exists among all creatures. A spiritually endowed person does not separate her or his scholarship from her or his activism; rather, she or he constantly examines her or his own actions to see if it is contributing to human degradation or restoring human dignity. Spirituality ensures that all actions restore balance and harmony to the universe. A spiritually-centered person is not afraid to confront and challenge racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, Islamophobic, and anti-Semitism in our society.

**The Pain is Real: The Risk, Cost, and Peril of Doing Anti-Oppression Activism**

Michel Foucault argues in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* that systems of domination perfect their acts of regulating bodies by reproducing what happens in psychiatric asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory, the approved school and, to some extent, the hospital:

Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere: 'A considerable body of militia, commanded by good officers and men of substance', guards at the gates, at the town hall and in every quarter to ensure the prompt obedience of the people and the most absolute authority of the magistrates, 'as also to observe all disorder, theft and extortion'. At each of the town gates there will be an observation post; at the end of each street sentinels. Every day, the attendant visits the quarter in his charge, inquires whether the syndics have carried out their tasks, whether the inhabitants have anything to complain of; they 'observe their actions'. Every day, too, the syndic goes into the street for which he is responsible; stops before each house: gets all the inhabitants to appear at the windows (those who live
overlooking the courtyard will be allocated a window looking onto the street at which no one but they may show themselves); he calls each of them by name; informs himself as to the state of each and every one of them - 'in which respect the inhabitants will be compelled to speak the truth under pain of death'; if someone does not appear at the window, the syndic must ask why: 'In this way he will find out easily enough whether dead or sick are being concealed.' Everyone locked up in his cage, everyone at his window, answering to his name and showing himself when asked - it is the great review of the living and the dead. (Foucault, 1977, p.295)

The essence of prisonification is to produce subjects who will not require any real force to constrain or regulate. Prisonification forces subjects to self-regulate and self-censor themselves so as to abide by the rules and laws of the system. Foucault (1977) further noted that systems of domination function to create binary labelling: sane or insane, dangerous or harmless, normal or abnormal, good student or trouble-maker, desirable or undesirable, patriot or dissident. The strategy of this dualism is to coerce and regulate bodies to conform to the rules and norms of the status quo. Those bodies who may want to challenge the systems of domination are quickly isolated and punished to serve as deterrent for any would-be resister as it is practiced in jails and schools. As Foucault puts it:

The lepers are treated as plague victims; the tactics of individualizing disciplines are imposed on the excluded; and, on the other hand, the universality of disciplinary controls makes it possible to brand the 'leper' and to bring into play against him the dualistic mechanisms of exclusion. The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise. All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive. (1977, p.299)

What can be gleaned from Foucauldian analysis is that the ritual exclusion of “lepers” provides a general model for confining activists considered to be a plague of society. It also becomes an avenue to initiate disciplinary projects for activists marked as trouble-makers. Just as a leper “was
caught up in a practice of rejection, of exile-enclosure; he was left to his doom in a mass among which it was useless to differentiate” (Foucault, 1977, p.297), activists marked as peace-disturbers have to be confined to spaces of silence and invisibility.

In my research, I asked my research participants to narrate some of the risks and prices they had paid as a result of university school activism. All my research respondents (100 percent) had stories to tell about their experiences of violence as a result of engaging in university school activism. According to James, his years of involvement in activism had taught him that there is a huge price to pay if one wants to be a university school activist. James argued that given the trend and how things are unfolding, he will indeed be surprised if his commitment to university school activism does not lead him to jail or sudden death:

So this is the situation, when you stand up against a larger power interest, there is an assassin bullet, machete, or a prison cell with your name written on it, and they are keeping it warm for you. You soon realized that even your tax returns are being monitored. This is the situation for activists since time immemorial. The punishment and fear is always used against you. For me, because of my history and my active role in activism, I will be surprised if I don’t end up in jail, I will be surprised if I grow up to live to my rocking chair stage of my age. So for me, I expect all these to happen, to me there is nothing they could do that will scare me. [File RPC012, p.6]

Harper (1984, p.40) argues that although non-violence is a resistance strategy to break the cycle of fear, it is not without its own risks. In fact, personal injury, legal sanctions, public vilification, and caricaturing are always possibilities in doing anti-oppression work. According to Gandhi (1961, p.56), while non-violence does not require its users to co-operate in humiliation, it demands of them to refuse consent and conformity to anything they consider to be a threat to a struggle, even if it means dying or getting injured in the process. James’ experiences with violence and threat of violence have taught him that the risk of doing anti-oppression work is unbelievably high and real. For James, it is no more a question of whether his life is in danger or
not because of university school activism; it is a question of when this danger will happen. In spite of this knowledge of the threat of violence, James is resolute in his passion for social justice and equity.

James’ story resonates with many other stories of my research subjects. In fact, almost 80 percent of my research participants confirmed that their activism has led to losses of jobs and promotions at their workplaces.

In addition to losing jobs and promotions, activism can lead to physical violence. Naomi, a community activist, recounted her experience of police brutality:

I have been physically assaulted by a police officer and that came out of publicizing an abuse that I witnessed in the community. Even though somebody shouted out while this abuse was taking place that I have seen what you are doing which caused this police officer to stop, the person never came forward to be a witness, the person never came forward when I brought my case before the police board. There were more than 30 people who witnessed the abuse, nobody came forward. It was a traumatic event for me because I have never experienced anything like that. There was a thought in my mind that he has a gun and could kill me and nothing will be done. There has been financial, physical, and there is also, fear of the fact that these are people who are licensed to kill. And they can do that with impunity so my life is in danger for speaking out. And those are some of cost of being in a heightened state of awareness. When I am standing on the street waiting for the bus or street car, and I hear police siren, I go back more distance back. And there are people who have had worse experience than I have, and I don’t know how they cope. [File RP013, p.90]

Naomi’s story also speaks about the manner and extent to which some Toronto police officers can be very physically abusive when they are dealing with activists. For instance, the recent incidence of police brutality during the G20 Summit in Toronto gives credence to Naomi’s story. Commenting on the police brutality during the G20 Summit, the host of The Agenda on TVO, Steve Paikin, told a parliamentary committee how he watched a “chippy” journalist get punched and elbowed by police when the man objected to having his credentials removed: “If one defines police brutality as the thoroughly unnecessary, over-the-top implementation of violence to
achieve something that otherwise could have been achieved without it, then I saw that that night” (Brennan, 2010, para.3). But what is even more intriguing in Naomi’s case is the absence of eye-witnesses to testify against the police officer in spite of many people (thirty) presence. Could it be that these eyewitnesses were afraid to come forward for fear that they may be endangering their own lives by testifying against police officers?

While there may not be a straightforward answer as to why many witnesses fail to testify against the police officer, the emotional and psychological impact of this trauma on Naomi cannot be underemphasised. Although Naomi recounted to me this incidence which happened almost 10 years ago in an enclosed room during the interview, one could still tell, from the tone of Naomi’s voice and her general body language when she was sharing her story, that the incidence has had a dramatic impact on her.

Similar to Naomi’s story, Lisa also noted that her work as an activist has not only cost her certain jobs and opportunities but also has cost her family and friends. While some of her friends had been killed, others had abandoned her because she was seen as a booming calamity that needed to be avoided if one did not want to court trouble from institutions of power:

I think we lost people, literally. I am a survivor of many forms of punishment. I have been denied jobs, pushed-out of certain spaces because people know me and they know I will challenge certain things so I have been put away from certain things whether financial and even certain research.... I lost colleagues and friends because I was labelled as a trouble maker and my works for publication were rejected. ...My son was experiencing so much racism issues in school, which has been since he came to Canada in 2001, so that is where my activism started to get him into a healthier academic frame. [File RP015, p.108]

Lisa admitted that her sense of activism had come at the expense of her own family. Lisa’s story also shows the level of sacrifice that comes with university school activism. Sometimes, activists sacrifice their own families for the collective good of the struggle. It is a known fact that
Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. sacrificed their families in their pursuits of social justice and equity. For instance, at the time his family was going through financial challenges, Martin Luther King, Jr. when he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, against the advice of his family, donated the cash prize to an activist group (Nojeim 2004). Mahatma Gandhi also sacrificed the comfort of his family for his activist agenda. The question is, should activism come at the expense of activists’ families? The answer is no. There must be a balance between taking care of one’s family and committing oneself to activism. However, what also remains true is that activism demands much sacrifice and this is the underlying reality of my research participants. In fact, Mohamed did not mince words when he spoke about the time-consuming nature of activism. Mohammed argued that even beyond the physical assault he had experienced, activism has consumed his time and energy and, in many instances, his sense of activism has come at the expense of his academic and professional career:

There is a quote I read somewhere that the busyness and time-consuming nature of an activist life is a form of violence. I have to sacrifice my academic life and family life for my work as an activist. Keeping us busy is part of the systemic strategy. I have experience violent directly through my activist work. Like there was a death threat against me. Police watch me for a while because there was a newspaper article when I was 21 years about my being a Muslim gay and Somali youth and it was covered by a newspaper and shown in the Toronto Star with a picture of me with a bold caption being Somali Muslim Gay youth, something to that effect and it was bold, and I immediately started receiving death threat from the Somali community, people started photocopying the article and passing it from door to door in the Somali community and Mosque in the community. At that time I was involved in a production work so I have to go into the community handing out needles and condoms on the street so I had to be out there. Somebody would come and pat me because I was openly gay. I have experienced violence in many forms; I have been bashed [physical injured] many times. I have four stitches on my forehead and another three stitches inside my lips. These were separate attacks. I was attacked not only because I was gay but also because of my activist work. [File, RP017, p.134]

Mohammed’s personal stories speak to the reality of activists’ lives. Activism is about speaking the truth to power and whenever those in power feel threatened because of an individual or a
group’s resistance, they devise ways to fight back. Usually, institutions of domination utilize threats, coercions, and rewards to silence activists. When threats of violence and promise of rewards fail to silence activists, those in power indeed carry out acts of violence to stop, silence, or discourage resistance work.

While the threats of violence and violence itself are real to my research participants, it is also encouraging to notice the resilient and defiant attitudes of my research subjects. All my research subjects (100 percent) were of the opinion that in spite of the threat of violence, the risk, the cost, and the peril of doing anti-oppression activism, they had no intention of abandoning their sense of activism. The risk of not doing anything is even more dangerous than the price of doing something. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted that injustice allowed anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. What it means is that if activists who have the voice to speak the truth to power fail to do so, they are invariably encouraging violence to be perpetuated against the voiceless and the vulnerable. The nature and politics of today’s domination does not give resistance groups the comfort and luxury to choose between neutrality and engagement or between remaining silent or speaking up. For many of my research subjects, their activism guaranteed their survival within the university school system because they were not meant to be where they were in the first place. The personal stories of my research subjects show that the price of anti-oppression activism is very costly; therefore, anti-oppression activists need to weigh the cost and ask themselves if they are willing and prepared to bear the consequences.
CHAPTER SIX – THEORIZING RESEARCH FINDINGS

My research findings raise many central questions and provide some answers about how violence is conceptualized and operationalized in university schooling. The discussion in this section is guided by these questions: How can violence be defined to capture its complex, nuanced, and myriad forms? And how can universities redefine non-violence to accommodate the issue of tensions, dilemma, and resistance? What gets erased and discarded and whose experience is rendered invisible when universities define violence as an individual act? The discussion in this section is tailored to respond not only to these questions but also to answer the four key research questions posed in Chapter One.

Searching for Common Grounds for Violent and Non-Violent Resistance

The research findings clearly show that the gap between violence and non-violence can be blurred and, in some cases, difficult to distinguish. Indeed, more than four decades ago, Kirby Page noted that it is not easy to determine where violence ends and where non-violence begins:

Our difficulty comes, of course, in deciding where ethical coercion ends and unethical violence begins. None of [all the] possible ways of dealing with social injustice can entirely prevent or remove human suffering. ... The policy of wisdom is to use that method which involves a minimum of suffering and offers a maximum of redemption. (Page, 1963, p.53)

Like Kirby Page, the responses from my research subjects clearly show that the gap between violence and non-violence may not be crystal clear. Perhaps, James’ comments about the difference between violence and non-violence generally epitomize what my research findings say about violence and non-violence: “I don’t look at non-violence and violence as two sides of a separate coin. I think both should be put in the same framework. I think that non-violence is just
as important as violence‖ (File E03, p.15). In plain sense, what my research findings are suggesting is that both violence and non-violence should be seen to exist along a single continuum of political action with “pure” non-violence (as conceptualized by Gandhi and King) existing on one extreme end of the spectrum while “pure” violence (as guerrilla warfare, nuclear attack, physical torture) is existing on the other extreme end. In this sense, non-violent activism cannot be successful without a certain level of violence. Indeed, the idea that there can exist a purely non-violent activism can only exist in theory and not necessarily in practice. According to Mahatma Gandhi, “no activity and no industry are possible without a certain amount of violence no matter how little” (Pontara, 1978, p.29). Thus, one of the tasks of modern day non-violent activism is to know how to walk between the fine line of violence and non-violence. If violence and non-violence are so related, then what will make an action or in-action violent or non-violent?

Michael J. Nojeim (2004) argued that one way of determining whether an action is violent or non-violent is to look at the intent: “with violence, therefore, the intention is to inflict more pain and suffering on the opponent than the opponent can absorb suffering. But with non-violence, the objective is to use methods of self-sacrifice that are designed to melt the hardest of hearts in the opponent and convert the opponent to your way of thinking” (p.10). Michael Nojeim’s distinction between violence and non-violence presents a challenge when it is read within the conceptualization of violence and non-violence. If violence and non-violence are defined by intent, then how does one deal with unintentional acts that have elements of violence? Within the university schooling system, many unintentional acts have produced violent results. For instance, as already argued, when George Dei and his team of researchers contend that the school system is “pushing” outs black and Aboriginal students (Dei et al 1997), they were not by
any means suggesting that teachers and school administrators conspire to remove these students from the classroom. Instead, they were alluding to every day unintentional and sometimes confusing acts of teachers and school administrators that disenfranchise and disengage black and Aboriginal students. Thus, for my research subjects, if violence is to be conceptualized and theorized as only intentional acts, then there are many violent acts (refer to section on violence in Chapter Five) that will go unaccounted for.

My research findings suggest that there is an inherent danger of universalizing and depoliticizing violence and non-violence as though violence and non-violence are flat, un-nuanced, and uncritical. Thus, rather than focusing on the “intent” of an action to determine whether it is violence or non-violence as Michael Nojeim argues, the emphasis should be on the context of the action.

There is a meaningful difference between “context” and “intent.” Intent is about the original state of the mind before an action is taken while context is the reason for the occurrence of an action. Intent does not always correspond with expected outcomes; when an action fails to produce the expected outcomes, an individual can hide behind intent to deny accountability and responsibility. Within the legal codes, mens rea (intentionality) has become a legitimate means of denying culpability for wrongdoings. Context on the other hand does not deny accountability and responsibility. Context provides justifiable explanations for an action. In attempting to separate violence from non-violence, the emphasis should be placed on the context of an action and not the intent behind the action.

Social justice is not about intent; it is about the consequences of an action. There are actions that are designed to oppress people and there are actions that are designed to resist oppression. When marginalized bodies resort to the use of force to resist injustice and oppression
that action cannot be classified as violence. On the contrary, when institutions of domination resort to the use of force to stop resistance works, that action constitutes violence. Research findings show that context always determines whether an act is violent or non-violent. Violence and non-violence do not exist in natural states; there are always reasons for them. And the reason must determine whether an act is violent or non-violent. There are situations where rage and violence are justified and rational and these are situations where rage and violence are absolutely unnecessary and unacceptable. According to Hannah Arendt (1970) rage and violence become irrational only when they are directed against substitutes instead of the actual things. For instance, violence becomes irrational and unjustified when it is directed towards innocent people or property that have nothing to do with the cause of the problem.

Further, my research findings observe that non-violence cannot exist and function in isolation of violence. There is no doubt that both Gandhi and King were serious students and advocates of non-violent resistance; however, there were other violent resistance groups that worked separately to somehow compliment their non-violent efforts. For instance, the Black Panther group of the United States played a pivotal role during the Civil Rights Movements. This means that although Gandhi and King did not use violent campaign, the violent resistance offered by other groups made their non-violent campaign a better option for the oppressor to deal with. This example raises an important question: Is there any place for physical violence in non-violent school campaign? To this end, my research subjects argue that when one situates the discussion within university school activism, then it is possible that non-violent campaign can achieve results without the use of physical force. In fact, 65 percent of my research subjects were against the use of physical violence in any form of activism. For instance, James argued that changes created through physical force can be limited especially if power is not decentralized. According
to James, when power is centralized in violent resistance, power is acceded to only those who have the ability to inflict the most pain and the masses are usually ignored.

Further, the research findings note that violence goes beyond the superficial physical contact to include acts that have negative emotional, psychological, economic, spiritual, material, cultural, and symbolic effects on marginalized bodies. Violence also includes actions and inactions that are intentionally and unintentionally produced in order to deny other people their rights to civil liberty, social justice, fairness, and equity. In this sense, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, ableism, and human acts that destroy the environment and the cosmo systems are all forms of violence. Violence can also be interpreted to mean any methodological and pedagogical strategy that excludes, disengages, disenfranchises, and dismembers learners in the classroom. Within this context, the dominant process of producing, validating, and disseminating only European system of thought while delegitimizing, devaluing, and de-privileging other systems of thought constitute violence in university schooling.

**Theorizing Internalized Violence**

Paul Gilroy in his famous work *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* noted that “mugging, robbery, drug charges (are) understood to be the material expression of black culture which is defined as a cycle in which the negative effects of black matriarchy and family pathology wrought destructive changes on the inner city by internally breeding deviancy and of deprivation and discrimination” (Gilroy, 1987, pp.109-110).

How did black and brown bodies become the recipients of daily violence without any form of accountability or demands for explanations? Aime Cesaire offers an explanation: colonization
“thingifies” human beings; it reduces humans to the level of things that the violent experiences of such bodies are rendered invisible (Cesaire, 1955). My research findings suggest that the violence of oppressed and marginalized people is a reflection of their daily violent conditions. To this end, the dissertation agrees with Franz Fanon that in order for the marginalized bodies to fully liberate themselves from oppression and injustices, they must first fight among themselves: “The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing wave of crime in North Africa” (Fanon, 1963, p.52). In this sense, “black-on-black” violence or “brown-on-brown” violence in Toronto should be read more within the context of mundane brutality of institutional and systemic racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and Islamophobia that exist in our society than within the context of biological defects of communities.

My research results find it problematic when violent experiences of marginalized communities are medicalized and pathologized as though violence is a product of the biological defects of communities. Although the research findings make no excuses or justification for gang violence in schools and communities, they call for a new reading of violence that goes beyond community pathologization. The research findings also noted that there is a danger of individualizing violence. If anything, the individual acquires his or her violent tendencies from the structures of power. As students witness the use of power every day, to decide the fate and destinies of learners, they learn an important lesson: Power can get one whatever one desires. So rather than using power for the general and collective good of communities, they use the same power to produce acts that may have negative effects on society. If violence is cyclical then the research asks: from where do our students acquire their violent habits? The research concludes
that marginalized communities acquire their violent tendencies from their daily oppression. How then do we read and respond to violence in marginalized communities? The research opines that rather than blaming and pathologizing communities when violent incidents occur, society should flip the issue upside down and look within structures and institutions of power for answers. The violence of marginalized bodies is a mirror reflection of their everyday violent conditions. If dominant bodies hate and abhor the violence of marginalized communities, then they have to hate themselves and their policies and practices that put marginalized communities in conditions of violence.

**Resistive Violence vs. Oppressive Violence: Is Separation Necessary?**

The debate about individual and structural violence bring a new question: must resistive violence be treated in the same way as oppressive violence? There appears to be two fundamental sides to this debate. Representing one side of the debate is Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. and finely representing the other side is Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X. In the opinion of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., an absolute non-violent approach to resistance is the way forward in social activism. Violence is always wrong whether it is resistive or oppressive (Gandhi, 1961; King Jr., 1986).

Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, on the other hand, call for a distinct analysis of oppressive violence and resistive violence (see Fanon, 1963; 1967a; 1967b; Malcolm X, 1956). These men insist that the separation between oppressive violence and resistive violence is necessary and crucial if society is to understand violence in its myriad and nuanced forms. Both Fanon (1963) and Malcolm X (1964) argue that through acts of violence, Europe and North America have succeeded in destroying the language, culture, values, worldview, and identity of marginalized
bodies. In fact, colonial violence has turned colonized subjects into beasts: “At times this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him [or her] into an animal. In fact the terms the settler uses when he [or she] mentions the native are zoological terms” (Fanon, 1963, p.42).

Both Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X had theoretical dilemma about violence and non-violence. They are of the opinion that the violence sustaining oppressive relations is along the line of race and class. The effect is a “Manichaean World” finely divided between oppressors who are working in cahoots with the elites of marginalized communities and the marginalized subjects. Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X were worried that the involvement of the privileged elites in the struggle for emancipation was worrying, given the fact that the elites stood to gain more under an oppressive regime than under a democratic regime. Therefore, resistive violence is the only way of separating “friends” of the struggle from “enemies” who walk in the clothes of friends. In a sense, resistive violence creates trust and dedication to the cause of freedom among oppressive bodies. In the face of this reality, only privileged elites, who stand to benefit most from oppressive system, will agitate for non-violent response and consensual resolution to oppression when it is obvious that if the last shall be first, then it will require only a murderous and decisive struggle between two protagonists of the colonial drama (Fanon, 1963, p.61; Malcolm X, 1964). Thus, for Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, violence is a cleansing force not only for the oppressed bodies but also for the struggle itself. Through resistive violence, the oppressed bodies are able to rid themselves of not only oppressive structures but also the elite bourgeoisies who come in the form of “a friend” but deep down are filled with venomous hate for the oppressed bodies. What exactly were Fanon and Malcolm X implying?
These men saw how European and the North American violence dehumanized oppressive bodies and rendered them useless. For instance, after the 1967 riots in the United States, by the black community, a Commission was set up, by the then President Johnson, to investigate the causes of the riot. The Kerner Commission concluded that what white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Black community can never forget—is that white society is complicit to the ghettoization of blackness. White institutions created, maintained, and condoned ghetto life. In a sense, ghettoized bodies can only redeem themselves when they attack and destroy the very institutions of power that created, maintained, and condoned ghettoization. It seems the Kerner Commission findings vindicate Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X. Violent resistance appears to be the only available option for oppressed bodies to reclaim their sense of being. As Fanon (1963, pp.36-37) puts it, “decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the “thing” which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself.” In this sense resistive violence is a healing mechanism for oppressed bodies.

Frantz Fanon’s strong and irreconcilable stance on violence seems antithetical to his desire for new humanism. Robert Bernasconi mocks Fanon’s “new humanism” as he argues, “new humanism” is only “new” for Frantz Fanon because it is created through revolutionary struggle, and it is therefore impossible to know what it will look like. Therefore, Frantz Fanon’s “silence” in describing the new humanism is purposeful; it is out of a “logic which necessitates that it be left as an empty maker” in order to restore the “unforeseeable to its place within historical becoming” (Bernasconi, 1996, pp.120-121).

This is where Robert Bernasconi had unfortunately misunderstood and misinterpreted Frantz Fanon. Fanon’s comment on violence was not an endorsement of violence in general but
an explanation of the sudden eruption of violent resistance in the European colonies, especially that of France. It should be remembered that after practising medicine for sometime in France, Frantz Fanon became disenchanted with mainstream medicine and psychiatry and therefore took up a post in the then French colony of Algeria in 1954. Frantz Fanon’s arrival coincided with Algeria’s War of Independence that was led by Front Liberation Nationale (FLN). Fanon encountered racism in Algeria that seemed to have eluded him in Martinique and even in France. Fanon was both horrified and appalled by the level of brutality of the French Army against the Algerian resistance group. Moreover, for somebody who had served as a combat soldier with the Algerian forces in the French army during the World War II, Fanon was already aware of the French racist separation and differential treatments of White troops from Black and Brown soldiers who were serving in the French army. Fanon struggled to understand how Europe could, on the one hand, condemn and commit troops to fight German fascism and their notions of racial purity, yet on another hand, continue to mistreat other people in its colonies because their skin colour was supposed to make them less human and inferior. World War II and the Algerian liberation struggle influenced Fanon in understanding violence differently. Fanon, therefore, wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* as a psychiatrist, a political analyst, a pedagogue, and a social activist to remind and warn Europe that just as it committed its people and resources to fight German fascism, colonized bodies would not sit idly for their history, cultures, values, worldviews, identity and resources to be destroyed by Europe without fighting back. In fact, Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, elaborates further on the point to which Fanon was alluding:

> In psychiatric terms, they [oppressed bodies] are ‘traumatized’ for life. But these constantly renewed aggressions, far from bringing them, thrust them into an unbearable contradiction which the European will pay for sooner or later. After that, when it is their turn to be broken
in, when they are taught what shame and hunger and pain are, all that is stirred up in them is a volcanic fury whose force is equal to that of the pressure put upon them. You said they understand nothing but violence? Of course, first, the only violence is the settler’s, but soon they will make it their own; that is to say, the same violence is thrown back upon us as when our reflection comes forward to meet us when we go toward a mirror. (Satre, Cited in Fanon, 1963, p.17)

Frantz Fanon is aware that the violence of oppressed groups, far from being a cathartic release, is a necessary act not just to win liberty and freedom from oppression but also to cure the internalization of inferiority and inaction (Fanon 1963, p.94). In plain terms, it is through violence that the oppressed bodies will rediscover their human selves. Therefore, oppressed bodies resort to violence not because they delight in it but because violence is the only language they understand; a language that was perfectly taught by oppressive structures. In a sense, oppressed bodies, until their encounter with oppressive institutions, did not know what violence was. Oppression “taught” oppressed bodies how violence could be used to forcefully take what belonged to others. Thus, if today marginalized communities are using violence to reclaim that which was forcefully taken away from them, they are only applying what oppressive institutions had taught them. Thus, resistive violence is a ‘counter violence.’ Its desire and intent is to destroy the chains of oppression. It is a cleansing force that restores the humanity, self-worth, and self-respect of oppressed subjects, while casting away any sense of inferiority complex and repressed anger.

Thus, it is analytically unsound and unfair for any individual to put resistive violence within the same breath as oppressive violence. Sharawy (2003, p.6) argues that every oppressive relation produces material and moral violence that can only be confronted by revolutionary violence. In this sense, the violent resistance of oppressed groups is an expression of their
collective consciousness—a suppressed fury that must find an outlet to recreate a sense of humanity and self-respect.

Although my research findings fully agree with the assertion that resistive violence needs to be separated from oppressive violence, they also ask some fundamental questions: What are the fatalities of resistive violence in modern day struggles, to create transformative university schooling? If institutional violence of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and Islamophobia generate unearned privileges to individuals (see Carbado 2005), then given the intersection of differences, who has legitimate right to use resistive violence in the fight for justice and equity? If there is a justification for sexualized subjects to use resistive violence to fight homophobia in our society, then where is the right of racialized subjects to fight violently against racism in society? This is where the discussion becomes interesting. Given the intersections of differences, who indeed should be the target of resistive violence? Where is the justification for marginalized students who use weapons in schools to fight bullying, racism, classism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism? Is resistive violence motivated by desires for liberation or desires for revenge? These questions are not in any way attempting to deny accountability and responsibility, but to raise awareness about the effectiveness of resistive violence in creating change. Although my research findings do not deny the legitimacy of resistive violence (indeed many situations demand for resistive violence) they question the effectiveness of resistive violence in creating change in contemporary university schooling. Sometimes, having justifiable reasons for something does not necessarily make it politically and strategically effective. Of course, there are justifiable and excusable reasons for oppressed bodies to use violent means to resist their daily conditions of injustice and oppression. Yet, this justification does not make resistive violence the most effective strategy for marginalized bodies.
As Hannah Arendt, earlier on noted, “in a contest of violence against violence, the superiority of the government has always been absolute” (Arendt, 1970, p.48). This means that resistive violence almost always invites massive state-delivered violence that far exceeds the initial violence. In fact, recent studies of Adrian Kartnycky about How Freedom is Won has shown that one in every five top-down transitions, from an authoritarian to a democratic system, in the last three decades, saw newly won rights later withdrawn. But in three of every five bottom-up transitions when the people won their own rights, those liberties were upheld after the transition (Karatnucky, 2005). In other words, freedom and liberties achieved through non-violent strategies stand a better chance of lasting longer than freedom and liberties gained through violent resistance. Not that this study is telling us anything different from what Hannah Arendt noted more than four decades ago:

Anyone looking for some kind of sense in the records of the past was almost bound to see violence as a marginal phenomenon. Whether it is Clausewitz calling war for ‘the continuation of politics by other means,’ or Engels defining violence as the accelerator of economic development, the emphasis is on political or economic continuity, on the continuity of a process that remains determined by what preceded violent action. (Arendt, 1970, pp.8-9)

Thus, while there may be enough justification for resistive violence, it does not necessarily make resistive violence the most effective option for oppressed bodies.

Further, the research findings also note that the argument that resistive violence creates healing for marginalized bodies exists only in one’s imagination and not in reality. Indeed, Frantz Fanon, who spoke about resistive violence earlier, later on admitted that violence dehumanizes both the perpetrator and its victims (Fanon, 1963; Also see Memmi, 1965). Thus, if violence dehumanizes the perpetrator and its victims, then at what point does violence start healing? Indeed, Frantz Fanon’s own works catalogue the damage of violence on the victims of
colonization (see Fanon, 1963; 1967). Presbey (1996, p.287) contends that rather than healing, violence stubbornly positions individuals against reform, reconciliation, and transformation. Hannah Arendt delivered it best when she argued that if resistive violence can create healing, then it is true that revenge would be the cure-all for most of our ills:

This myth is more abstract, farther removed from reality, than Sorel’s myth of a general strike ever was. It is on a par with Fanon’s worst rhetorical excesses, such as, ‘hunger with dignity is preferable to bread eaten in slavery,’ No history and no theory is needed to refute this statement; the most superficial observer of the processes that go on in the human body knows its untruth. (Arendt, 1970, pp.19-20)

Of course, Hannah Arendt misunderstood Frantz Fanon’s metaphor about hunger and dignity, but the reality is that violence does not create any healing. If anything, violence leaves bitterness and unforgiving scars that are waiting to explode again when an opportunity arises. Violence is almost always cyclical. This is why the research findings suggest alternatives to resistive violence.

**The Means and the Ends: Does the End Justify the Means?**

In Starhaws’s novel *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, the wise old woman, Maya, argues that “the end don’t justify the means ... The means shape the ends.” Contrary to those who may think that the use of physical force is potent enough to resist oppression and injustice, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. argue that it is the force of love and pity and not the force of arms or brute force that can bring about genuine change to the oppressor. Gandhi and King insist that social change is as a result of spiritual change—a transformation of the soul will be the basis of a new and truly just social order (Gandhi 1961; King 1958). The real and lasting change can only be achieved not through violence but through the principle of *Ahimsa* or non-violence. Therefore,
the way to awaken the conscience of oppressors is not through the acts of retaliation or body harm and threat but through the non-violent acts of civil disobedience—“soul force” as opposed to “body force” (Gandhi 1961).

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. are aware that injustice and inequity always evoke responses from oppressed bodies. However, rather than violent confrontation, they recommend that marginalized bodies need to utilize non-violent strategies to fight injustice and oppression, because the end of violence or the aftermath of violence is bitterness; whereas the aftermath of non-violence is reconciliation and the creation of “a beloved community” (King Jr. 1958). In the opinion of Gandhi and King, “means” is as important as “ends”; therefore, any form of violence, whether its intent is to stop injustice and inequities or to further oppress and marginalize others, is wrong and has to be condemned. Although one may hate acts of injustice and inequities, it is still possible to separate an evil deed from an evil doer: “A man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. One may hate the sin but cannot hate the sinner” (Gandhi 1957, p.276) [emphasis mine].

Similarly, in his book, Power Under: Trauma & Non-Violent Social Change, Wineman develops an extensive scholarly framework for understanding the complexity of violence. Wineman sees violence as a “social toxin” of sorts that “through the mechanism of trauma literally makes people sick” (Wineman, 2003, p. 203). At the heart of his working theory is the belief that trauma causes “massive personal suffering,” which if “left to its own devices” becomes a self-perpetuating impediment in the achievement of social change. His work, therefore, seeks to understand how traumatized people can “harness” and “contain” their
traumatic experience and transform it into a non-violent counter-force, one strong enough to break the cycles of violence and domination. The transformation of powerless rage into constructive rage is thus, according to Wineman, an essential process for individual recovery from trauma and for societal liberation:

In order to promote the practice of non-violence, we need as many people as possible to critically reflect on their experiences of traumatic powerlessness and rage. This is true not only in relation to the trauma of September 11, but also to the extraordinary breadth and depth of traumatisation in a society that is saturated with domination and brutality, at both the personal and institutional levels. It is not a new idea that brutality begets brutality. The question that needs much more conscious attention and investigation is exactly how this happens, both psychologically and politically. My contention in this book is that the internalization of powerlessness is a central link in cycle of violence. Becoming conscious of how our subjective powerlessness can lead us to dehumanize and violate others is one of the keys to breaking these cycles. (Wineman, 2003, p.14)

What does Wineman’s argument say about Gandhi and King’s conception of love as unavoidable tool for social change? It says that if violence dehumanizes and corrupts both the oppressor and oppressed, then it is through the acts of love (ahimsa) that the oppressed can liberate themselves and the oppressor from dehumanization.

Gandhi and King’s unshakeable stands on “the means and the ends” have attracted much serious criticism from many theorists and activists. The radical environmental activist Derrick Jensen has actively rejected Gandhi and King’s ethical stands on the “means” and the “ends.” Jensen contends that certain situation requires the use of violence to stop it. Thus, Gandhi and King’s deontological stand—an ideology that places much emphasis on the rule of procedure and process instead of the outcome—ignores the reality of living an abusive and psychopathological life. In fact, Jensen insists that Gandhi and King’s deontological stand “is one of the worst things you can say to anyone in an abusive situation, and one of the things abusers most want to hear” (Jensen, 2006, p.688). Jenson did not hide his soft spot for violent resistance when he argues that:
The pacifist argument that the ends never justify the means ...[is] nonsense when it come to self-defense... We’re not playing some theoretical, spiritual, or philosophical game. We’re talking about survival. We’re talking about poisoned children. We’re talking about the planet being killed. I will do whatever is necessary to defend those I love. (Jensen 2006, p.684)

Like Derrick Jensen, Ward Churchill, an American scholar and a political activist, is adamant in his conviction that oppressed people should use whatever strategy they consider best (including violence) to stop injustice and oppression. In fact, Ward Churchill insists that an obstinate dedication to non-violence, without any consideration to violent resistance, is nothing than a deliberate posture of self-disempowerment (Churchill, 1998, p.19). The sentiment of Derrick Jensen and Ward Churchill is echoed in the words of Malcolm X.

Speaking in favour of the proposition *Extremism in Defence of Liberty Is No Vice; Moderation in the Pursuit of Justice Is No Virtue*, Malcolm X, in the Oxford University Union Debate in December 3, 1964, defended the use of violence of any form to resist injustice and oppression in society. Malcolm X (1964) argued that whenever a group of individuals come to the conclusion that a government which they have supported proves itself unwilling or unable to protect their lives and property, then that group has justifiable grounds to use any means necessary, including violent acts, to defend their civil liberties:

I don’t believe in any form of unjustified extremism. But I believe that when a man is exercising extremism, a human being is exercising extremism in defence of liberty for human beings, it’s no vice. And when one is moderate in the pursuit of justice for human beings, I say he is a sinner. .. . And in my opinion the young generation of whites, blacks, browns, whatever else there is—you’re living at a time of extremism, a time of revolution, a time when there’s got to be a change. People in power have mis-used it and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built and the only way it’s going to be built is with extreme methods. (Malcolm X, 1964, n.p.)

For Malcolm X, self-defence and self-preservation are not only commonsensical but also a fundamental law of human survival. Malcolm X believes that it is indeed a criminal act to teach
people not to defend themselves when they are the constant victims of oppression. Malcolm X concludes that there is nothing unjustifiable when marginalized people use extreme violence to defend their civil liberty.

While Hannah Arendt agreed that all violence requires justification; she, however, mocked the idea that the “ends justifies the means.” For her, the distant end is totally unknowable—thus, means will always overwhelm ends because the end of human action, in contrast with the products of fabrication, can never be reliably predicted; the means to achieve political goals on the other hand is, more often than not, of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals. For Hannah Arendt, glorifying violence for some vague and distant ends is dangerous (Arendt, 1970).

The idea, that violence cannot create power but can only destroys it, raises questions about violence as a technique of control and as a revolutionary solution. Understandingly, violence can help accelerate the destruction of systems of exploitation; violence does not help in recreating new structures that can sustain change. For example, The French riots of May 1968 although they succeeded in bringing about a revolutionary situation, the hypocrisy and vulnerability of the political system was revealed thereby accelerating the system’s deterioration. The riots ultimately failed to produce an actual revolution because they did not offer a substantive vision for what was to come next.

My research findings reject Gandhi, King, Fanon, and Malcolm X’s strict interpretation of violence and non-violence. In fact, Gandhi and King’s strict adherence to non-violence, without any consideration to the context of violence, raises questions about the practicality of their non-violent resistance in today’s global world. Similarly, the violent theory of Malcolm X, Derrick Jensen, and Ward Churchill leaves resisters with nothing concrete to work with after the removal
of the oppressor. My research findings suggest that if non-violent advocates like Gandhi and
King faulted in providing only one solution to fighting injustice and oppression (recommending
an absolute use of non-violence at all times), then those who are also justifying violent resistance
without looking at alternatives are equally faulted for suggesting only one answer for all
questions. The fundamental question to grapple with is not whether the “ends” justify the
“means” or the “means” justify the “ends” but rather, when is it appropriate to use violence and
when is it not appropriate to use it? Hannah Arendt once again offers a suggestion: Violence can
be an effective tool of social change if it is applied in the short term. And even with that, no one
can predetermine the outcomes because violence can only dramatize grievances and bring them
to public attention, or in contemporary times, make its perpetrators celebrities. However, hardly
does violence lead to positive social transformation; at best, violent resistance most often leads to
a more violent world (Arendt, 1970, pp.79-80). The contemporary examples of the vicious cycle
of violence—in the Middle East and Africa, between Israel on the one hand and
Hamas/Hezbollah on the other, the United States/Canada/Britain on the one hand and Jihad
fundamentalists on the other, Gaddafi’s forces on one hand and rebellion groups on the other
hand—clearly raise questions about violence and whether violent means necessarily justify the
ends.

In spite of the reservations my research findings have about violent means, they reject the
moral argument of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. concerning the use of violent
resistance. There is nothing immoral about the use of violence to fight oppression and injustice.
Thus, contemporary university school activists have to use non-violent resistance, not on the
grounds of morality but because violent resistance may be the least effective method of creating
lasting change in university schooling.
Non-Violence and Self-Defense: Reading Between the Lines

My research findings note that love is a pinnacle in the pursuit of social justice. Without love, non-violent activists risk objectifying and dehumanizing their opponents and possibly themselves. According to my research findings, humanizing one’s opponent is a product of self-love. Its desire is to contain one’s rage that can lead to bitterness and revenge. While the subject of love will be discussed later, the research findings raise a key question about non-violent resistance: “where is the place for self-defense in non-violent campaign?” Do non-violent activists have the right to protect and defend themselves from any external aggression and violence?

There seems to be a general misunderstanding between “self-defense” and “retaliation.” Self-defence is about warding-off an approaching attack. Self-defense is only applicable in the process of an attack; after the attack, any violent response to the attack is not anymore self-defense but retaliation. The essence of retaliation is paying back the pain and violence one has received in the previous attack. Usually, for retaliation to be effective (ensuring that a second attack is not committed) one has to be willing to attack an opponent with a greater scale of violence than the previous attack. For example, if “A” cuts “B” with a knife or a machete, in order to prevent any further attack, “B” should be willing to use an axe or a gun on “A.” If perchance “A” survives the attack, then “A” can over-power “B” again if “A” has and must be willing to use a weapon that can cause more harm than an axe or a gun. Consequently, retaliation does not end violence; if anything, it makes violence cyclical. In this sense, after an attack has already occurred, any violent response is not self-defence; it is retaliation or revenge.

The research findings note that self-defense can be taken up differently. One way of reading self-defence is to view activism as a form of self-defence. Martin Luther King, Jr. once
noted that if self-defence is about protecting one’s self against external aggression, then activism is a form of self-defence:

It is always amusing to me when a Negro man says that he can’t demonstrate with us because if someone hit him he would fight back. Here is a man whose children are being plagued by rats and roaches, whose wife is robbed daily at overpriced ghetto food stores, who himself is working for about two-thirds the pay of a white person doing a similar job and with similar skills, and in spite of all this daily suffering it takes someone spitting on him or calling him a nigger to make him want to fight. Conditions are such for Negroes in America that all Negroes ought to be fighting aggressively. It is as ridiculous for a Negro to raise the question of self-defense in relation to violence as it is for a soldier on the battlefield to say he is not going to take any risks. (King, 1966/1986, p.129)

In the opinion of Martin Luther King, Jr., there is something fundamentally wrong and contradictory when marginalized bodies refuse to take up action that can liberate them from their oppression because non-violent campaign does not encourage retaliation and revenge. For Martin Luther King, Jr., apathy and inaction is the ultimate endorsement of violence. My research findings perfectly agree with Martin Luther King Jr. that if there is any desire for genuine self-defense, then all oppressed bodies must, everyday, engage in acts that will challenge their daily marginalization.

Within the university schooling context, self-defense could mean arming one’s self with knowledge, values, history, and culture that can challenge the daily assaults of students’ identity. In this sense, resistance is a form of self-defence. Challenging racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and ableism is self-defence. Maintaining self-respect, self-dignity, and self-esteem are acts of self-defence.

Another way of reading self-defence is taking actions that will not mimic the violent behaviour of the oppressor. If violence dehumanizes and corrupts the soul of the perpetrator and its victims, then non-violent resistance is a form of self-defence. Non-violent resistance asks a
new question: How can I defend and protect myself from becoming like the oppressor? Paulo Freire insisted that the oppressed, bodies having experienced humiliation, depravity, and dehumanization of oppression, will never reproduce the same violence on the oppressors. Instead, they will oppose the oppressors’ violence, lovelessness, and injustice with love:

Any attempt to “soften” the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. ... As individuals or as peoples, by fighting for the restoration of their humanity they will be attempting the restoration of true generosity. Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? (Freire, 2007, pp.44-45)

In other words, if violence dehumanizes and rots the soul and body of the oppressor, then fighting acts of injustice and oppression in non-violent ways is a way of saving one’s soul from destruction and corruption. Non-violent responses to oppression destroy hatred that is built on the psychology of disassociation. Wineman (2003) noted that the practice of “othering” is rooted in hatred culture and practices that deny, disown, and split off anything within ourselves that in fact we have in common with other people that we may not like. To avoid this pitfall of destructive rage and move toward liberation, marginalized bodies must arm themselves with political and emotional self-awareness that move beyond denial and disassociation and any other socially constructed divisions among humans (Wineman 2005). This feat cannot be achieved unless the politics of marginalized bodies is grounded in non-violent strategies. As the research findings show, love is a pinnacle in the fight against oppression. Without love, we cannot see the human side of the oppressor. While non-violent activism does not excuse acts of injustice and oppression, it asks a different kind of question about how a particular person becomes an oppressor.
Truth in Non-Violence: The Tensions and Contestations

The search for Truth is the pinnacle of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King’s non-violent philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi and King conceptualize Truth from a religious perspective; they argue that the ultimate Truth is God. Mahatma was so obsessed with the search for Truth that he once noted that his aim was not to be consistent with his previous statements on a given question but to be consistent with Truth as it might present itself to him at any given moment: “At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at the given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth” (cited in Attenborough, 1982, p.93). What is the practicality of Mahatma Gandhi’s conception of Truth in the 21st century university schooling activism?

Michel Foucault both heightens and sharpens our problems with truth. For Foucault, truth can be presented in a particular way that discards and dismisses other understanding and interpretation of truth. Foucault refers to this form of truth as “the regime of truth”:

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanism and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, p.131)

At the heart of the Foucauldian interpretation of truth is an understanding that truth is not found nor does it “come” to us from any place beyond our worldly realities. In a sense, truth is made; it is produced and, like all forms of production, truth requires an imposition of power and politics of constraint to construct, maintain, and promote a particular gaze about truth. Once this gaze
about truth is constructed by the dominant, it becomes a regime; a structure of political control that determines what kind of discourse functions as truth; how one establishes and sanctions truth within such discourse; which techniques are authorized as legitimate paths to truth, and how the truth-tellers within a regime are regarded (Walsh 2010).

If Foucault’s devaluation of truth, to the power grab of various regimes, is at all on target, then Mahatma Gandhi’s argument that “Truth is God” is in deep trouble. If the Truth is God, then who is better positioned to tell the Truth than those who claim to know and are closed to God? In this sense, religious leaders and devoted followers of any religion can claim not only to know the Truth but also to represent the interest of the Truth. When one recognizes the extent to which modern day religions have contributed to chaotic relations in the world (because each religion claims to know and represent the truth more than the others) then Gandhi’s conception of truth cannot be taken lightly, especially in a dissertation that seeks a non-violent approach to social justice, equity, and fairness. How then do we unmask the power-grab involved in the construction of Truth? How do we deconstruct the silenced, marginalized, and delegitimized voices about other forms of truth? What truth claims are being made and what does this mean for the discourse of dialogue and collective understanding of true justice? If nobody can claim to know the truth, then who decides who is telling the truth?

Understandingly, there is a form of legitimacy in post-structuralist and post-modernist’s critique of the concept of Truth (see Foucault 1980; 1982). This dissertation is not about to dismiss the legitimate claims of post-modernists and post-structuralists. Indeed, it has been shown in the dissertation that what constitutes the truth is subjected to different interpretations and explanations. Each party to an issue has a strong and, probably, a legitimate claim to an aspect of the truth. Notwithstanding, there is a danger of entering into a terrain in public
discourse that dismisses any claim to the truth, and as non-violent university school activists, we have to watch out for such seductive intellectual gymnastics. Antiracism education poses the question: while we may all not agree to know what justice is, can we all at least agree on what injustice is? Although what constitutes the truth may be a subject of debate within public discourse, at least can we all agree that “the actual truth” exists within the arena of multiple truths? It was Galileo Galilei, an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, who once noted that “All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.” Thus, non-violent educational campaign must start with an understanding that “the actual truth” exists somewhere even if we all do not know where it can be found. Within this context, the search for “the actual truth” must be done in non-violent ways. It must be done within the spirit and understanding that our opponents also represent a particular side of the “actual truth.” Therefore, it is through dialogue and genuine respect for one’s opponent that a non-violent activist can arrive at the “actual truth.”

Mahatma Gandhi, in all humility, admitted that because all humans are caught in a mortal body, nobody can claim to know the ultimate Truth; therefore, the search for the truth should be done in non-violent ways, given the fact that each faction may represent a particular side of the truth. For Gandhi, while it is true that humans are too mortal to encounter the Truth, there are certain elements that must exist when humans encounter the Truth. And that element is that wherever there is the Truth, there is also true knowledge. True knowledge from the Gujarati language means Chei. True knowledge can also mean ananda (unlimited happiness). This means that the ultimate Truth exists in an environment of unlimited happiness. Within this context, can unlimited happiness exist in the environment of social injustice, unfairness, inequity, and
oppression? If the answer is no, then people desiring to seek the Truth must connect their search with social justice, fairness, equity, and human civil liberty.

According to my research subjects this understanding and interpretation of truth becomes relevant for the 21st century university schooling activism in two ways: First, the search for truth must be linked to the fight for social justice, equity, and fairness. Second, truth exists in multiple ways therefore the search for truth must be within the spirit of accepting different and diverging opinions even if one does not like or agree to what is being said. It also means that truth should be pursued within an environment of non-violence, respect, and mutual cooperation. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa once observed that truth always has three sides: your Truth, my Truth, and the actual Truth. Within this context, university school activism must be pursued with equal understanding that activists may not have answers to all questions about social justice, equity, and fairness. Therefore, university activists have to be humble in their approach to social justice work. University schooling activism is not a site to acquire personal fame and glory; it is about making things better for the marginalized and voiceless. Therefore, university activists ought to be respectful in their approach to social justice knowing that their opponents are not their enemy but people with whom they simply disagree. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1965) rightly noted that the goal of non-violent resistance is not to defeat or humiliate an opponent but to seek justice, fairness, and equity.

Ahimsa as a Non-Violent Tool of Change

As my research subjects noted in Chapter Five, one of the relevant contributions of Mahatma Gandhi is his concept of ahimsa. Ahimsa is central to Mahatma Gandhi’s conception of non-violence (see Chapters Two and Five of this dissertation). To be fair, Gandhi did not invent
the idea of *ahimsa*; it has existed since at least the sixth century BCE as part of the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and later Christian philosophical traditions. However, Gandhi took the notion of *ahimsa* from religious traditions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Christianity) and showed practical ways the world can use *ahimsa* to create social change.

*Ahimsa* in a literal sense means “not harming” but at the deeper level, *ahimsa* also means loving one’s opponent to the point of not wishing him or her any harm. Although *ahimsa* requires love for one’s opponent, this form of love goes beyond sentimental and affectionate feeling. It is love born out of goodwill for one’s opponent. According Martin Luther King, Jr., signs of our time clearly show that the date of reckoning and justice is drawing nearer; therefore, the best gift one can bestow to his or her opponents is to advise or warn them of the changing times and why it is necessary for them to abandon their old ways of injustice and oppression:

Now the fact that this new age is emerging reveals something basic about the universe. It tells us something about the core and heartbeat of the cosmos. It reminds us that the universe is on the side of justice. It says to those who struggle for justice, “You do not struggle alone, but God struggles with you.”... There is something in this universe that justifies Carlyle in saying, “No lie can live forever,” there is something in this universe which justifies William Cullen Bryant in saying, “Truth crushed to earth will rise again.” (King, 1957/1986)

My research findings confirm, with the position of Martin Luther King, Jr., that when activists challenge injustice and oppression in society, they are showing the highest form of love. The research noted that apathy and moral distancing in the face of injustices and oppressions are the highest forms of hatred and selfishness. In her chapter “Refusing to Be A Victim: Accountability and Responsibility” in *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, bell hooks calls on marginalized bodies to shift from a location of victimhood to a location of accountability and complicity:

All marginal groups in this society who suffer grave injustices, who are victimized by institutionalized systems of domination (race, class, gender, etc) are face with the peculiar dilemma of developing strategies that draw attention to one’s plight in such a way that will
merit regard and consideration without reinscribing a paradigm of victimization. When African Americans locate our concerns about racism and white supremacy within a discourse that centres around victimization, we may gain the attention of whites while surrendering a focus on self-determination. It is no accident that the voice that speaks loudest against the evocation of a framework of victimization is the most often the one that focuses on the need for racial separatism, for black folks to assume total responsibility for improving our lot. Both discourses are totalizing. A renewed organized struggle for black self-determination is needed to shift the focus from a framework of victimization to one of accountability. (hooks 1995, pp.58-59)

Love shifts the discussion from any sense of victimhood to that which demands accountability and responsibility. Rather than slipping into a state of helplessness and hopelessness, marginalized bodies, informed by love, ask questions about the conditions of their marginalization: who is responsible for them, and actions that need to be taken to change the conditions. This form of self-love is critical in non-violent school activism. For one cannot give what one does not have; if activists do not love themselves, how can they be expected to love others? If individuals show apathy and moral distancing in the face of injustices and oppression that affect them, what guarantee does society have that these same individuals will openly challenge injustices and oppression that affect others.

Further research findings suggest that self-love in the context of transformative university schooling is an acknowledgement of complicity when it exists. Self-examination is the first and most important step towards critical school activism. Critical educators lose trust and credibility when they ignore their own limitations while highlighting the weakness of others. As activists, we have to be aware of the roles we have played in our own oppression. We have to start the process of activism by openly decolonizing our mind and soul. We need to unlearn our own internalized violence and oppression. We need to reclaim our silenced voices from the margin to the centre. We also have to acknowledge our privileges and power in relation to oppression that
affects others. bell hooks (1994) once remarked that part of doing critical work is to start with oneself. Sometimes, the hardest part of anti-oppression work is one’s ability to courageously examine and critique oneself or to graciously accept criticisms that are targeted at one’s own “undemocratic, socio-cultural baggage” (Asgharzadeh, 2007, p.19). The personal is always rebellious and unwilling to change. bell hooks talks about her own upbringing and the difficult hurdles she had to climb as a black woman growing up in the South—a location where black bodies, especially black women, were supposed to be “tongueless” unless they had been asked to talk (hooks, 1989). For bell hooks, her activism needed to start from within—within her community where suppression of women’s voices was normalized. Hence, the emergence of “bell hooks—a sharp tongued woman, a woman who spoke her mind, a woman who was not afraid to talk back” (hooks, 1989, p.210). In her letter to Professor Cornel West, bell hooks writes:

We bear witness not just with our intellectual work but with ourselves, our lives. Surely, the crisis of these times demands that we give our all. Remember the song which asked “Is your altar of sacrifice late?” To me, this “all” includes our habits of being, the way we live. It is both political practice and spiritual sacrament of a life of resistance. How can we speak of change, of hope, and love if we court death? All of the work we do, no matter how brilliant or revolutionary in thought or action loses power and meaning if we lack integrity of being. (hooks, 2003, p.166)

Reminiscent of bell hooks’ comment is a story that is told of Mahatma Gandhi. A mother came to seek the support of Mahatma Gandhi to counsel her son to stop eating sugar. Gandhi told the mother to return with her son in a week’s time. When the woman returned a week later, with her son, Gandhi told the child to stop eating sugar. Perplexed by the behaviour of Gandhi, the woman asked Gandhi why he did not offer the same advice the week earlier. Gandhi responded that he could not have offered that advice the week earlier because he too was then eating sugar. He is
offering the advice now because he has been able to stop eating sugar, so with openness of conscience he can now tell the young man to also stop eating sugar.

There is a moral lesson to this story: We cannot advise others to stop doing something if we are guilty of doing the same thing. For my research subjects, the essence of non-violent activism is to start the work with ourselves. As non-violent university school activists, we cannot, for instance, object to racial injustices while we court homophobia sentiments; we cannot fight classism while we embrace sexism; we cannot fight ableism while we harbour Islamophobic thoughts; we cannot condemn ethnicity while we keep silent over anti-Semitism. Love-oriented activism implies that we challenge not only injustice and oppression in others but also injustice and oppression within us. There is a need for self-implication, self-criticism, and self-reflexivity as we engage in anti-oppression work. How are we complicit in Western hegemony? How do we deal with the questions of complicity, accountability, and responsibility? How can we genuinely claim to be activists when we only recognize injustice when others are doing it or when it is affecting us directly but not when we are doing it to others? There is a danger in evoking something that we do not actually practise. Our commitment to the fight against oppression will be hypocritical, if the only issue we are interested in fighting against is that which affects us but not those which affect others.

Further, Gandhi’s *ahimsa* in context of university school activism could mean that one has to approach anti-oppression activism in a non-violent way. In *Chapter One*, I spoke about my personal journey into the field of school activism. I spoke about my own internalized homophobia and Christian privileges as a person who was raised in Christian traditions. I spoke about the years it took me to decolonize myself in the areas of homophobia and Islamophobia. I acknowledge the patience and understanding others had with me to unlearn this violent
knowledge. Therefore, I start my activism from a belief that change in others is possible. I make this claim not unaware of the material investment that comes with oppression and the fact that not everybody may want to walk away from these privileges. However, if there is no hope or possibility for change, then our work as activists is in vain. When our work is centered on love, we have faith and hope in the ability of others to also change. Furthermore, love-inspired activism differentiates a system of oppression from the individuals who work within that system. This point is not to deflect accountability and complicity. The truth is that while non-violent activism may abhor and openly criticize systems of domination, it harbours no hatred for the individuals who work within these systems of domination:

Then we had to make it clear also that the non-violent resister seeks to attack the evil system rather than individuals who happen to be caught up in the system. And this is why I say from time to time that the struggle in the South is not so much the tension between white people and Negro people. The struggle is rather between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And if there is a victory it will not be a victory merely for fifty thousand Negroes. But it will be a victory for justice, a victory for good will, a victory for democracy. (King, 1958/1986, p.31)

Pedagogically speaking, Martin Luther King Jr. wants educators to pursue social justice with an openness of mind and respect for the opponents even if one disagrees with them or does not like what they are doing. From the responses of my research subjects, true social change cannot materialize in positive ways unless individual activists are willing to listen and work with the opponents. An activism inspired by love always looks for room for dialogue. Personal attacks and incendiary comments are eschewed in non-violent activism.

Moreover, *ahimsa* in context of university schooling also means fighting for the voiceless and the marginalized. The reality of today’s global relations demands that we daily speak out on behalf of those who do not have the means and the power to speak out against their daily
conditions of marginalization. Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that injustice allowed anywhere is a real threat to justice everywhere (King Jr. 1963/1986, p.85) and that the world is becoming a dangerous place in which to live not because of the vitriolic words and actions of “bad” people but because the appalling silence of “good” people who watch those things happen. Indeed, the world today is filled with self-centred individuals who show apathy to issues that affect others. Consequently, injustices and iniquities have been allowed to flourish globally, today. But as university school activists, our task is to help the rest of the world hear the silenced voices of those under the sink of global repression.

Rage and Non-Violence: The Paradox and Nuances

The discussion raised about love and its relations to non-activism brings an important question: Is there a place for rage in non-violent activism? This question may sound ironic given the fact that the rage of marginalized bodies is often depicted within the dominant discourses as a pathological condition that needs cure (see Grier and Cobbs, 1968; hooks, 1995). More than a decade ago, the black feminist writer, bell hooks (1995), contended that there was a place for rage in love-centered activism. My research findings agree with the assertion of bell hooks. In the opinion of my research subjects, the rage of the oppressed is a propeller that forces them to openly and defiantly challenge injustice and oppression. Rage of the oppressed, contrary to the negative meaning the dominant have of it (see Grier and Cobbs, 1968; hooks, 1995), helps the oppressed not to forget or feel complacent about their conditions of marginalization. Rage is the only place where marginalized bodies are allowed to reclaim their emotional subjectivity (see West, 1994). Without rage, marginalized bodies will easily be turned into what Cornel West (1994) refers to as nihilism—a state or condition where the individual accepts, as normal,
conditions of “horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and, most importantly, lovelessness” (West, 1994, p.23). The nihilism of marginalized bodies is a relief to the oppressor because it deflects any accountability and responsibility. Nihilism denies marginalized bodies of any agency and resistance power. It makes marginalized bodies play the victimhood-card instead of standing up to their oppressors.

When one examines rage in context of non-violent school activism, one easily detects that rage is not the antithesis of non-violence. In fact, the rage of marginalized bodies is the cornerstone of non-violent school activism. Rage is the only friend of activists that wake them from inaction and apathy. It is the only emotional experience that unchains oppressed bodies from any sense of comfort and complacency. It is the role of rage to exercise resistance that makes it synonymous with self-love.

There is also the other side of rage that requires some reading. While the rage of marginalized bodies is useful to challenge and rupture nihilism, the same cannot be said of the rage of the privileged bodies. In fact, the rage of dominant bodies is a rage of defence—defence against the status quo, defence against their selfish interests, defence against structural and institutional change. When the dominant release their rage, the effect is counter-productive; its intent is to silence marginalized voices, and any form of resistance. While the rage of marginalized bodies is born out of self-love, the same cannot be said about the rage of the oppressor. The rage of the oppressor is born out of self-hatred. The dissertation contends that any rage born out of the desire to guard the status quo is a rage rooted in selfishness, and selfishness is a product of hate and not love. Those who are rooted in hate always produce hatred. No wonder Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon noted earlier on that if oppression violates the oppressed bodies, it equally rots the oppressor.
In some sense, the rage of marginalized bodies is a healing mechanism not only for themselves but also for the oppressor. When in operation, the rage of the marginalized bodies releases the oppressors from their acts of injustice—a condition that can lead to self-destructiveness and self-hatred. Thus, the rage of the oppressed helps the oppressor to walk away from self-hatred. This is why the rage of marginalized bodies is central to any non-violent resistance in university schooling activism.

**Negotiation as an Irrevocable Condition for Social Transformation**

One of the most important contributions of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. to the 21st century university school activism, according to my research findings, is their concept of negotiation. The fundamental goal of a non-violent activist is to seek negotiation with his or her opponents. As my research findings show, non-violent resistance is not about securing change through the use of force or coercion but to convert the opponents from the side of injustice to the side of justice. Therefore, dialogue is an important part of converting an opponent from the side of injustice to the side of justice. According to Gandhi (1961), negotiation is an ideal way to resolve conflicts between two parties. Every conflict, to some degree, is a struggle between different angles of vision illuminating the same truth. One should therefore approach a conflict with an open mind and willingness to reach a compromise, while adhering to all sides of the truth. According to the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, his life experience in Robben Island Prison taught him that sometimes the most effective intervention, when dealing with those in power, is the intervention that utilizes dialogue and negotiations:

A lesson I already knew but had disobeyed out of desperation—that publicly challenging an official’s authority was not likely to achieve positive results, and that a superior officer was particularly unlikely to override his subordinate in public. “The best way to effect change on
Robben Island was to attempt to influence officials privately rather than publicly. I was sometimes condemned for appearing too accommodating to prison officials, but I was willing to accept the criticism in exchange for the improvement.” (Wineman 2003, p.249)

My research findings show that activism goes beyond open demonstrations and attendance at rallies. While these strategies are important and have roles to play in activism, sometimes, they are not the most effective ways of securing structural and institutional transformation. In fact, my research findings note that sometimes the whispered words in the corridors of power are better and more effective than thundered voices on the streets of power. University school activists have to be aware that, in most situations, there are options to securing structural and institutional change. This is why the choices and strategies we adopt, as university school activists, matter because they determine the line between constructive actions that produce positive results and destructive actions that produce negative outcomes.

Although violent resistance or non-violent strategies, such as civil disobedience and non-cooperation, have the power to raise awareness to social conditions, they do not by themselves solve them. For one always needs a democratic engagement and meaningful negotiation to find a solution to a problem. Negotiation always seeks for ways to open the door for dialogue. Negotiation acknowledges that truth exists in multiple forms; therefore, only through dialogue can one arrive at the ultimate truth. Ideally, negotiation involves the following sequence: recognizing the truth and false elements in each side to form a new side, then through negotiation, each side continues to revise and redefine its position until both parties reach a compromised position.

In an era where the word “compromise” has become a dirty word, in political and social discourse, negotiation as a non-violent strategy helps activists to understand that compromise is
not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. The late President John F. Kenney, of the United States, once argued that negotiation is always better than open conflict and violence: “Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate. Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belabouring those problems which divide us” (Kennedy 1961, n.p).

Negotiation as a non-violent strategy must be understood in context of dialoguing. Unlike debating, dialoguing searches for strengths in the opponent’s argument for consensus building. Debating, on the other hand, is about identifying weaknesses in the opponent’s argument so as to dismiss it. Joshee (2006, p.9) argues that “whereas debate is constructed as a contest between two opposing ideas, dialogue suggests the possibility of many approaches and ideas being brought together. Taking a side in a debate tends to increase our attachment to our original position; participating in a dialogue ideally allows us to be open to new and different ideas.” While the desire for dialoguing is to secure compromise, the intent of debate is to appear the winner. Debating is about competition; dialoguing is about completion. Debating seeks to deny and dismiss the voice of others; it suggests the “other” has nothing relevant to say and the only voice that matters is one’s own voice. On the other hand, dialogue seeks for the strengths in the opponent’s arguments and common grounds to build consensus. Paulo Freire (1970) argues that the process of dialoguing is also the process of learning and knowing. If non-violent activism is about the search for truth, then since one party cannot claim to have and know all the answers, it is through the process of dialogue that the ultimate truth can be reached.

Negotiation, through dialoguing, must be approached with openness of mind knowing that one side does not have all the answers. Paulo Freire wisely observed that when two sides meet to dialogue, there can never be “utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting together to learn more than they now know” (Freire, 2007, p.90). Negotiation
must start from primarily understanding that all parties are in it to listen and learn more about the position of the other. It is through acts of listening that all parties can understand areas of differences that need to be ironed out and areas of similarities that can be built on. Further, not knowing all the answers implies that negotiation must always be guided by humility of knowing and humility of not knowing. Paulo Freire again contends that because dialogue is:

[T]he encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s “depositing” ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants. Nor yet is it a hostile, Polemical argument between those who are committed neither to the naming of the world, not to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own truth. (2007, pp.88-89)

Learning begins not when activists learn what they do not know but when they recognize that they do not have all the answers, and their opponents also have something relevant to say. Negotiation, as dialogic strategy, must start with the humility that we do not know everything. The humility of not knowing helps activists to eschew arrogance and any sense of self-righteousness.

Another central point to note about negotiation is the recognition of the existing asymmetrical power relation between the oppressor and the oppressed. This is where Foucault’s interpretation of power can be limited. Although Foucault recognizes that power tends to be concentrated towards those at the higher echelon, he does not see power to be an exclusive possession of those in control of structures and institutions of domination. Instead, power flows simultaneously through multitudinous, usually, unexamined rules that govern social interactions and thereby mould the bodies and minds of people in different directions and different volumes, according to the various forms of “power relations” in the “network” of power exchange.
If one takes Foucault’s analysis of power seriously, it leaves one to wonder about the nature of justice in society and who is to be held responsible and accountable for injustice in society. The idea that power is saturated among the people ignores the difference between individual power and power that emanates from the institution of domination. My research findings suggest that negotiation cannot be carried out in an environment where power is centered and controlled by those manning the institution of domination. What is oftentimes presented to the masses as an outcome of negotiation, between those in powers and the marginalized, is, in actual fact, a top-down decision being pushed down the throats of the masses. Power, in negotiation, must be understood not only in context of those who are allowed to speak but also in context of those who can refuse to listen. One cannot expect any positive results from negotiation when the views of one party are completely disregarded and dismissed.

Although non-violent school activists are expected to be meek and respectful during negotiation, their humility and meekness should not imply acquiescence and weakness. The strength and courage of non-violent university activists is their insatiable desire to seek justice at all cost.

Another point to note is that there must be a place in negotiation where activists can dialogue among themselves. This is the period of self-reflection and self-examination. The essence of dialoguing with oneself is to address these questions: whose interest is being served as negotiation carries on? Are the terms and conditions set for negotiation truly representative of the masses or are they just representation of the activists’ personal interest? Where do activists place their personal agenda vis-à-vis the agenda of the oppressed group? These questions are important to negotiation because the only thing that leadership possesses, which matters most in non-violent campaign, is the integrity and transparency of leadership. What made Mahatma Gandhi, Martin
Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama strong and remarkable individuals in negotiation is their integrity and sincerity of thought. Surely, people may not agree with everything an activist represents in non-violent campaign, but one thing that cannot be doubted is the integrity and sincerity of the activist. In negotiation, leadership can destroy the trust of the people if it exhibits any sign that raises questions about its integrity and sincerity of thought.

Thus, non-violent activists do not deceive their followers or the opponent in negotiation. An element of surprise is not one of the strategies of non-violent activists. Saul Alinsky, in his 1971 classical work *Rules for Radicals*, contested against the idea of openness and transparency in negotiation. In rule one, Alinsky contended that power, in any resistance work, is not only about what one has but also what his opponent thinks one has. For instance, if members of a social movement are small in number, the resistance group needs to hide the number and rather create an impression that it has a huge following (Alinsky 1972). Saul Alinsky’s strategy of keeping one’s weakness to him or herself makes more strategic sense than voicing it out to one’s opponent. This means that when it comes to negotiation, non-violent activists have to play according to their strengths and, where possible, withhold their weaknesses. Keeping one’s weaknesses to oneself is not the same as deceiving one’s opponent but rather being smart in one’s approach to negotiation.

**Non-Violent Direct Actions as Resistance Strategy**

Non-violent direct action is one of the most important and effective non-violent strategy in activism. Although it is supposed to be the last strategy in non-violent activism, its effectiveness in opening dialogue and negotiation cannot be understated. According to Martin
Luther King, Jr., non-violent direct action is intended to force the opponent back to negotiation after dialogue has initially failed to yield the desired results:

So the purpose of the direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation...You may well ask, ‘why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc. Isn’t negotiation a better path? You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has refused negotiation is forced to confront the issue. (King 1963, pp.86-87)

Non-violent direct actions can be categorised into non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

**Non-Cooperation**

Non-cooperation is not about denying one’s adversary all forms of cooperation; rather, non-cooperation is limited to areas on which one disagrees with the opponent. This means that activists can cooperate with the opponent in many areas in which they agree. Non-cooperation, when examined in a broader sense, can mean a renunciation of all benefits one can gain from a system of domination. Non-cooperation can mean refusal to cooperate with institutional practices that continue to marginalize oppressed bodies. Devon Carbado, in his work on *Privilege*, argues that those who participate in enjoying the benefits of oppression are equally accountable for injustice and oppression in society (Carbado 2005). If Devon Carbado’s argument is anything to go by, then non-cooperation must begin with open rejection of privileges that exist in structures of domination. Perhaps, the Montgomery Bus Boycott gives us a practical example of Devon Carbado’s argument. On December 5, 1955, over 90 percent of Montgomery’s black citizens boycotted the use of the city bus services. This lasted for 13 months until their demand for desegregation in the Alabama state was met. Speaking in defence of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr. argues:
And you know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July and left standing amid the piercing chill of an alpine November. There comes a time. ...And we are not wrong; we are not wrong in what we are doing. ...If we are wrong, justice is a lie, love has no meaning. And we are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. (King 1955, n.p)

Martin Luther King, Jr., by his admission, was suggesting that non-cooperation is the right strategy to use when all avenues have been sought and seemed to be of no avail. My research findings agree with this assertion that non-cooperation should be a last resort for non-violent school activism.

Non-cooperation is the highest form of sacrifice in non-violent activism. It is about denying oneself all the comfort’s one enjoys from an oppressive system in the pursuit of justice. Although non-cooperation is an effective non-violent strategy, it requires much discipline, patience, persistence, self-sacrifice, and resilience for it to be effective. Further, non-cooperation requires more participants for it to make an impact. This means that leadership in non-violent activism must at all times involve the masses in the negotiation process in order for the masses to offer their support during non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Unless followers are fully aware and informed at every stage of negotiation, they will never fully participate at the stage of non-cooperation.

Within university school activism, non-cooperation can include, but not to be limited to sit-ins, refusal to attend lectures, or to participate in classroom lessons and extra-curricular activities, refusal to submit class assignments, and peaceful disruption of classes and other school activities. In a sense, students’ drop-out and constant classroom interruption can be the students
way of non-cooperating in the violent conditions of schooling. It can also be their way of calling for a change within structures and administration of schooling.

The essence of non-cooperation is to provoke a response from those in power, even if it means the response will result in violence or harsh punishment. Thus, when non-cooperation fails to provoke a response—bringing parties back to negotiation—non-violent school activists move from non-cooperation to civil disobedience.

**Civil Disobedience**

Civil disobedience is the last non-violent direct action. My research findings note that given the effects of civil disobedience on the society and the groups implementing it, it should be used judiciously. Mahatma Gandhi shares this research finding: “[civil disobedience] is like the use of a knife to be used most sparingly if at all. A man who cuts away without ceasing cuts at the very roots will find himself without the substance he was trying to reach by cutting off the superficial hard crust” (Gandhi, 1961, p.173). Civil disobedience is often used when state institutions become lawless and do less listening. Civil disobedience involves a variety of methods. These include but are not limited to strikes, demonstrations, picketing, bonfires of documents or clothing, public speeches, marches, boycotts, and illegal crossing of borders. It also includes, more threateningly, infringement of certain laws and open rebellion.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, civil disobedience is not about wreaking anarchy but about imprisoning conscience; it is not about breaking every law of the state, but it is about breaking laws that are unjust and immoral. Martin Luther King, Jr. defines an unjust law as a code that the majority inflicted on the minority, which is not binding on them. In a sense, an unjust law is a code inflicted on minority, in which the minority has no part in enacting or
creating because such law violates their rights (King 1963/1992, p.90). On the other hand, a just law is a code that the majority compel the minority to follow and that they (the majority) are willing to follow as well. In his letter from a Birmingham jail, Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963/1992, p.89) wrote: “One may well ask, ‘how can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?’ The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are just laws and there are unjust laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine that ‘an unjust law is no law at all.’” In the opinion of Martin Luther King, Jr., it is a moral responsibility of good citizens to disobey any law of the land that their consciences tell them is a wrong and unjustifiable law. My research findings support the argument of Gandhi and King that civil disobedience should not be confused for anarchy. While anarchy intends to make the state ungovernable, civil disobedience is about disobeying laws that are considered unjust and unfair.

The research findings also note that civil disobedience is and should be a strategy of every person of the state with good conscience. The Nuremberg trials, after the Second World War, brought a new and an important question: Can an individual be absolved of any responsibility when she or he follows an order that causes violence on others, or when she or he fails to act to protect the weak and vulnerable because she or he is abiding by the rules and laws of the state? The guilty verdict against the Nazis during the Nuremberg trials clearly suggests that individuals are legally liable to an act of violence if they fail to disobey orders of their political or military superiors, especially when they fully know those orders violate the human rights of others. In his essay *Civil Disobedience in a Democracy*, Gene Sharp, argues that when people have a deeply-felt moral conviction about something, it is dangerous and wrong to ask them to suppress it and to do nothing about it. The reason is that when people passively submit to what they morally know is wrong, they invariably reduce and damage their ability ever to act responsibly and be
true to their best conviction (Sharp, 1975, pp.43-44). The Nuremberg verdict teaches us that just as it is the responsibility of any good citizen to obey a just law; it is equally a moral responsibility of a good citizen to disobey an unjust law.

Harris Wofford, Jr., a former member of the faculties of the Howard University Law School and the University of the Notre Dame Law School, agrees with this proposition. This is how he articulates it:

But I am arguing that under our social contract, man is to be free and a free man should look on each law not as a command but as a question, for implicit in each law is the alternative of obedience or of respectful civil disobedience and full acceptance of the consequences. Once men no longer believe that they as good citizens must obey any law passed by the legislatures, no matter how bad, then they must ask themselves of each law: is this a law that I should obey? Is it a just law? Is it so unjust that it needs to be resisted from the very inception, and cannot wait the slow process of parliamentary reform? This choice we always have to make. Is it the choice which makes us free? (Wofford, 1957, p.31)

In a sense, patriotism is defined not only within the context of supporting and defending every action of the state, but also within the context of dissenting. Sometimes, rights and wrongs within democratic states are not necessarily defined by the decisions of the majority but by what can pass the benchmarks of justice, fairness, and equity. History abounds with many examples that show that the majority can be wrong sometimes. The Nuremberg verdict also clearly vindicates the idea that passivity and neutrality, in the face of injustice and oppression against others, are dangerous and should not be encouraged.

What do these tell us about civil disobedience as a non-violent direct action for university school activism? They simply say that civil disobedience can be the highest expression of human qualities, for there is no greater virtue than when one is willing to suffer for the advancement of others and society. Civil disobedience helps society to look, re-think, and debate its own laws and
ask a central question: Is a particular law of the state fair, just, and equitable to all members of society?

My research findings note that if civil disobedience is to arouse the conscience of the people, then there are two things that must be present in civil disobedience: First, non-violent activists should be willing to accept punishment that comes with breaking unjust laws. Martin Luther King argues that “an individual, who breaks a law that conscience tells him or her is unjust and willingly accepts the penalty by staying in jail to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the very highest respect for the law” (King, Jr. 1963/1986, p.90). People who are afraid to accept punishment that comes with breaking unjust laws cannot use civil disobedience as a non-violent strategy.

Recently in Canada, the Federal and Provincial governments have used their constitutional powers to pass “Back-To-Work Legislation” to force many workers, who have labour disputes with the government, back to work (see CBC News, 2011). “Back-To-Work Legislation” is a special law passed by the Federal or Provincial government that compels an end to a labour-management dispute. For instance, in April 2007, the Federal government passed Bill C-61 “Back-to-Work Legislation” to end the strike action of 2,800 drivers, yardmasters, trainmen and yardmen, at Canadian National Railway Company. The Bill C-61 stipulated that should individuals representing labour or the employer fail to comply with the “Back-to-Work” orders, they should be fined a sum to the tune of $50,000 per day and $1,000 a day for the individual worker ignoring the “Back-to-Work” order.

If one is to apply Gandhi and King’s concept of civil disobedience to labour disputes, then labour will remain defiant when the government insists that they should return to work. In fact, labour will refuse to be forced back to work or pay any fine. Instead, labour will gladly accept

My research findings suggest that only when resisters openly and willingly submit themselves for punishment that civil disobedience can force the public and the state to reflect on its laws and its illegitimacy to exist. For instance, when seventy-five people were arrested and imprisoned during the Atlanta “sit-ins” in October 1961, in the United States, The Washington Post wrote in the October 26, 1961 edition: “So the question to be asked is not whether the law is broken but whether the law makes sense. The law of Georgia will have to give way to what is right.” Again, when twenty-one students were arrested for refusing to leave a bowling alley in Hyattsville, Maryland in October 21, 1961, The Washington Post once again wrote this editorial on October 22, 1961: “The managers were within their legal rights, of course. But they will never be able to take much pride in having enforced them.”

Second, the concept “civil” in civil disobedience should be maintained at all cost. The use of civil disobedience will be healthy, necessary, and effective only if “civil” in the “civil obedience” is maintained throughout the struggle. Gandhi (1961, p.173) noted that “disobedience” without “civility” and “discipline” makes any non-violent campaign a destructive venture. My research findings note that although civil disobedience is a non-violent strategy, it is not immune from violence. It is sometimes expected that the state and institutions of power will use brute force and coercion to stop individuals and groups from disobeying the states laws. In spite of that, non-violent activists must at all times and costs remain civil and non-violent, even to the highest form of provocation. In non-violent civil disobedience, resisters express their disobedience in respectful and orderly manner. There is no destruction of property and lives by non-violent activists in civil disobedience. In fact, it is the profound respect that non-violent
activist have for the laws of the state that they submit themselves to be punished when they engage in civil disobedience.

In the context of university school activism, civil disobedience could mean disobeying school laws that limit the teaching of the curricula to only Europeans perspectives and worldviews. Henry Giroux, whose critical works, to a large extent, have contributed to shaping critical teaching and learning in education, has argued that school is not simply an instructional site but also a cultural site that represents arenas of interests and struggles among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups (Giroux 1983). School, as a space of knowledge production, is a contested site for different interest groups who are competing for a claim in what is defined as legitimate knowledge. As my research findings suggest, there is a constant ordering of knowledge within Euro-American/Canadian universities schools through the process of assigning legitimacy and recognition to the experiences and worldviews of some groups while delegitimizing and dismissing the experiences and worldviews of others. Universities within Euro-American/Canadian society are not simply reproducing existing power relations through subtle production, validation, and distribution of the dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977a). They are also ignoring those ideological and cultural spaces that speak to resistance and the promise of a transformative critical pedagogy. Thus, civil disobedience means taking positions and risks that the academy frowns upon. In this sense, Louis Owens (2001) laments that Aboriginal and Indigenous students in a Western academy are compelled to master European and Euro-American literature and that if they fail to be familiarized with Shakespeare, Chaucer, and other Eurocentric scholars, they will not be taken seriously and probably will not earn a university degree. Non-violent activists applying civil disobedience will refuse to conform to such academic demands and accept the consequences.
Like the late Steve Biko of South Africa, non-violent activists applying civil disobedience in the academy will write what they like without bothering about penalties.

Civil disobedience in context of schooling will also mean refusing academic demands that violate the identity, cultures, values, experiences, and worldviews of students. Thus, when a Muslim sister refused to remove her hijabs during a sports game, at a school in Ottawa (see Ottawa Citizen 2007; CBC News 2007; BBC News 2004), she was expressing true civil disobedience. In some sense, when students become disruptive and make classroom lessons unmanageable, they are invariably refusing to consent to the disenfranchised and disengaged teaching curricula and pedagogical practices.

The idea of creating “a safe classroom” can mean something different for different bodies. For marginalized students, the idea of a “safe classroom” can only mean they should be quiet and docile as they swallow violent theories and knowledge that thingify (see Cesaire 2000, p.69) and render them as easily disposable material (see Giroux 2006). According to Ng (1994, p.45), “to speak of safety and comfort is to speak from a position of privilege, relative though it may be, for those existing too long on the margins, life has never been safe or comfortable.” My research findings suggest that “a safe classroom” requires the answering of these questions: Who is allowed to speak? Who gets listening audiences when she or he speaks? Who has the power to refuse to listen to others? Whose experiences, history, culture, values, and worldviews are worth teaching and whose experiences, culture, history, and worldviews are discounted in the classroom? A “safe” classroom must allow for constructive confrontation, disagreements, and a critical interrogation of how difference is sometimes positioned in ways that make no difference.

My research findings suggest that conflict in the classroom should be viewed as a pedagogical opportunity to challenge normalized forms of behaviour and thinking in schooling.
and not necessarily something negative to avoid. This means that schools should read and treat classroom disruption by students as an open protest against exclusive, violent, and rigid school curricula and practices. Within this context, students with the so-called labelled, “behaviour problems” may just sometimes be expressing their non-cooperation and civil disobedience to violent school curricula.

Again, civil disobedience, in context of school activism, requires that teachers take bold steps to “teach against the grain.” Marilyn Cochran-Smith observed in her essay, Learning to Teach Against the Grain that the task of teaching critical issues outside the prescribed curricula is very challenging and sometimes discouraging for even the experienced teachers. Thus, for the young and inexperienced teachers who are struggling to understand the politics of schooling such venture remains unattractive (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p.284). My research findings clearly suggest that part of school activism is teaching oppositional knowledge that challenges traditional paradigms and cannons in education. bell hooks (1994) argues that learning and teaching counter-hegemonic knowledge is a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white, racist colonization. My research findings dovetail with the assertion of bell hooks and even extend the argument further that teaching oppositional discourse in the classroom is a form of civil disobedience.

In fact, civil disobedience can occur in research. For instance, when Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2001) demanded a decolonized approach to research, she was invariably inviting civil disobedience in academic research.
**Self-Suffering as a Political Act**

Self-suffering is one of the central argument of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, in non-violent campaign. Gandhi recommends non-violent activists to openly accept death if that is the only way of achieving change:

[General Dyer, the British commander] wanted us to run away from this fire, he wanted us to crawl on our bellied and to draw lines with our noses. That was part of the game of “frightfulness.” When we face it with eyes front, it vanishes like an apparition... The might of the tyrant recoils upon himself when it meets with no response, even as an arm violently waved in the air suffers dislocation. (Gandhi 1961, p.57)

In the opinion of Gandhi, if resisters are willing to accept death, they have broken the cycle of fear that usually encourages apathy and inaction.

My research findings reject Gandhi’s idea that self-suffering can be used as a tool to win an opponent’s heart. The research submits that Gandhian interpretation of self-suffering is a product of self-hatred and not self-love. Self-hatred illicits pity and pity does not challenge power and domination. My research findings, on the other hand, dovetail with bell hooks’ argument that self-love can be used as a resistance strategy to fight injustice and oppression: within a white supremacist society, “loving blackness is rarely a political stance that is reflected in everyday life. When present, it is deemed suspect, dangerous, and threatening” (hooks, 1992, p.10). When one juxtaposes Gandhi’s argument to that of bell hooks, what becomes obvious is that, bell hooks calls for self-love that defies the oppressor, while Mahatma Gandhi recommends self-suffering that arouses the pity of the oppressor. Which of these strategies are more effective in securing change in the 21st century?

Although my research findings reject Gandhian’s interpretation of “self-suffering,” there are other readings of “self-suffering” that can be considered. One such reading is that “self-
“suffering” could mean “self-sacrifice.” In a sense, denying one’s self any comfort and privilege for the sake of fighting injustice, though it is “self-suffering,” is the highest form of sacrifice. However, this type of “self-suffering” is not born out of the desire to arouse the pity of an opponent but born out of the desire to defy the opponent. “Self-suffering,” born of defiance, breaks the culture of fear that often prevents oppressed bodies from taking action. In today’s Eurocentric hegemonic university schooling—where marginalized bodies are taught to amputate themselves from their culture, history, values, knowledge, and identity—nothing can be more effective as counter-productive act than a political stand that refuses to consent to what one has been taught-to hate or amputate. This form of defiance is a product of self-love, but it is self-love that has consequences.

Another reading of self-suffering can be taken from Martin Luther King Jr. King expresses the value of self-suffering in the often repeated phrase “unearned suffering is redemptive” (Groves 2000, p.208). For King, self-suffering is a virtue made out of necessity; an act that is needed to redeem the oppressed groups from bitterness and hatred that may cause them to seek vengeance and retaliation. In Stride Toward Freedom, Martin Luther King Jr. recorded in detail the threats on his life, the bombing of his house, his fear for himself and his family, and his near-breakdowns when there was intense pressure of him to stop the Montgomery Bus Boycott. King recounted his growing awareness of the cost of non-violent resistance and his new-found strength to continue.

Although Martin Luther King, Jr. understood self-suffering from his Christian perspective—often linking the redemption of the oppressed to Christ’s suffering on the cross—he did not treat self-suffering as a theological commandment. Instead, King treated it as a process of self-discovery: “Recognizing the necessity for suffering, I have tried to make of it a virtue. If
only to save myself from bitterness, I have attempted to see my personal ordeals as an opportunity
to transfigure myself and heal the people involved in the tragic situation which now obtains”
(King Jr., 1963, p.154). King Jr.’s comment revealed self-suffering as a necessary process that
any future activist will need to undergo. “Self-suffering” is a process of “self-discovery” and
“self-discipline.”

In a sense, “self-discovery,” “self-discipline,” and “self-sacrifice” are synonymous with
“self-suffering” in non-violent university school activism. The academy knows how to reward its
loyal subjects while punishing the disloyal ones. There is a price to pay for choosing to act
against the status quo and this is seen in the stories of pain, suffering, and tribulation of my
research participants as they engage in non-violent activism (see Chapter Five). The pain that
comes with speaking truth to power is real. Spivak (1990) reminds university school activists to
be aware that the task of changing the academy is difficult, and only when one begins to take a
whack at shaking the structure that one sees how the opposition is well consolidated. There are
emotional and psychological prices to pay when we engage in activism. In fact, the lives of
activists are lives of insanity. Sometimes, there are no sane words or language that can help
activists to unmask, name, track, and theorize their experiences of pain and violence, as they
participate in anti-oppression work. Patricia Williams (1991) poignantly observes that even
activists who are aware of the consequences of doing anti-oppression work, are made to feel the
pain of homophobia, class exploitation, Islamophobia, sexism, anti-Semitism, disability, and
racism:

There are moments in my life when I feel as though a part of me is missing. There are days
when I feel so invisible that I can’t remember what days of the week it is, when I feel so
manipulated that I can’t remember my own name, when I feel so lost and angry that I can’t
speak a civil word to the people who love me best. There are times when I catch sight of my
reflection in store windows and I am surprised to see a whole person looking back… I have
to close my eyes at such times and remember myself; draw an internal pattern that is smooth and whole. (p.228)

Thu, resistors of oppression need to weigh the cost and peril of doing anti-oppression work and ask themselves if they are willing and prepared to pay the cost. Without individuals and groups’ willingness to commit to self-suffering, non-violent activism will not produce the desired results.

**Spirituality and Resistance: Imperative for University School Transformation**

Spirituality was approached in the research with the personal understanding that it means different thing to different people (see Wane 2002; Vogel 2000; Shahjajan 2005). I am also aware that many academics are concerned that when they broadcast openly their spirituality, they face the danger of being ridiculed and dismissed as not being intellectually serious; therefore, many educators have assigned their spirituality outside the walls of the university corridors (see hooks, 2003; Two Trees, 1993; Laibe, 2000). In fact, Dillard, Abdur-Rashid, & Tyson (2000, p.449) noted a decade ago that “given the reward structure and cultural milieu of the academy, spiritually minded academicians have often received the implicit message to hang their spirituality outside the doors of the university and to pick it up again (if they are still inclined to do so) on their way out.”

In spite of what appears to be a hostile and unwelcome response to spirituality, my research findings note that spirituality still matters in the lives of university school activists. Having spiritual understanding of activism reminds us that we are part of something bigger than our egos and personal ambitions. Thus, spirituality is a pivotal subject in school activism because the pursuit of social justice, equity, and fairness is about healing emotional and spiritual wounds. Spirituality is about cleansing and healing spiritual wounds sustained through violent schooling.
Leela Fernandes observes that “in a world marked by violent ethnic, racial, and religious conflict and deepening social and economic inequality, any possibility of social transformation also requires a spiritual revolution, one which transforms conventional understandings of power, identity, and justice” (2003, p.11). Edmund O’Sullivan (1999, p.259) notes that spirituality is central to achieve social transformation that challenges power relations based on race, gender, class, and culture: “I believe that any in-depth treatment of ‘transformative education’ must address the topic of spirituality and that educators must take on the concerns of the development of the spirit at a most fundamental level. Contemporary education suffers deeply by its eclipse of the spiritual dimension of our world and universe.”

My research findings agree with Edmund O’Sullivan and Leela Fernandes that if non-violent university school activism is to be fully transformative, then it must tie with spiritual awakening and revitalization of activists. If all things in our world are spiritual, then, logically, everything is related and must be balanced in order to achieve harmonious and peaceful co-existence. History has shown that even the most progressive social movements that rest on the assumption that spirituality has no role in resistance work, often end up reproducing another form of social oppression while addressing one form of oppression (see Fernandes, 2003). For instance, the well-intentioned attempts of Western feminists to speak on behalf of global women’s oppression have often implicated them in colonial and racialized discourses that have stereotyped Third World countries as backward and oppressive (Fernandes, 2003, p.12).

The truth is that without spirituality, educators risk turning activism into cynicism and criticism that only use intellectual weapons to dismantle the mistakes of others without creating paths for a different way of thinking and learning. Spiritual revitalization helps us to regain our sense of humanity. It helps us to examine the oppressors and realise that they too are victims of
ideas, misinformation, and conditions in their own life, culture, and society. According to Albert Memmi, “oppression is the greatest calamity of humanity. It diverts and pollutes the best energies of oppressed and oppressor alike. For if colonization destroys the colonized; it also rots the colonizer” (1965, p. xvii; also see Fanon 1963; 1967). Thus, resistance work should not be about committing harm to the oppressors, but rather it should be about rescuing the oppressors from oppressive structures that continue to violate and dehumanize them. This can be achieved when the gap between scientific progress and spiritual progress is bridged.

One of the greatest problems of humanity is that we suffer from a poverty of spirit that stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually. This is the more reason why the synergy between spirit, body, soul, and mind cannot be delayed anymore if current school activism is to be transformative. According to Parker Palmer (1999, p. 3), the idea of teaching sacredness, respect, compassion, and the connection of the self to the world and to others is a spiritual education. Spirituality and spiritual development are inherent in all people (not just religious people), and all we need to do as educators is assist students to nurture it. Without spirituality in our academy, there is a price to pay. This is illustrated by Parker Palmer:

I have seen the price we pay for a system of education so fearful of soulful things that it fails to address the real issues of our lives, dispensing data at the expense of meaning, facts at the expense of wisdom. The price is a schooling that alienates and dulls us, that graduates people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both vex and enliven the human spirit people who are spiritually empty at best and spiritually toxic at worst. (2003, pp.379-380)

Today’s neoliberal education has pitted its tent of individualism and unnecessary competition in the classroom. Therefore, it is not surprising that “the self” is constantly amputated from the collective. We need to revive the dull system and bring the “self” more into
the classrooms in order to provide meaningful education for the benefit of the collective community. Spirituality helps us to depart from this hegemonic conditioning of “me” that constantly interfere with our ability to relate to others. Thus, educators must work towards the spiritual development of students and inspire them to dedicate their lives to the struggles against social injustices, inequity, and unfairness that affect every member of society. Universities have moral obligations to teach all students to be aware of the scourge of racism, sexism, classism, disability, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and heterosexism. If children are innocent, then schools which are custodians of this innocence have an obligation to protect and sustain the continuity of this innocence.

Therefore, the school’s teaching curricula and pedagogical strategies must gear towards the spiritual awakening of learners to dedicate their lives towards the struggle against social injustices, inequity, and unfairness in our society. Spirituality is about resistance and political agency. It allows non-violent activists to speak boldly and openly against injustices and oppression in society without harbouring any sense of hatred against the oppressor. Spiritual knowing helps activists to openly acknowledge and take responsibility for their limitations. It helps activists to ask the question: how can I challenge the injustices of the oppressor in the environment of love and humility.

**The Limitations of Gandhian and King’s Non-Violent Strategies in the 21st Century**

Gandhi and King expressed their ideas of non-violence within a particular historical and geographical epoch; therefore, to borrow their ideas wholesale and apply them in the 21st century could pose certain problems. Over 80 percent of my research participants identified Gandhi’s insistence that a non-violent advocate must commit to the vow of brahmacharya (chastity) and a
life of voluntary poverty (Tendulkar 1951, p.1:76) as the most disturbing limitations to Gandhi’s non-violent philosophy.

Mahatma Gandhi has a different way of reading his concept of non-violence. In Gandhian’s view, non-violent resistance is not just an epistemological term for scholarly exercise but a way of life that requires a life-long commitment. Just as Buddha imposed the “Eightfold Path” on Buddhism, and Patanjali imposed “Eight Limbs of Yoga,” Mahatma Gandhi also developed eleven (11) vows for members of his Satyagraha Ashram. These vows included a life-long commitment to the search for Truth, _ahimsa_ (non-violence or love), chastity, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession (poverty), physical labour, _swadeshi_ (service to one’s immediate neighbour), fearlessness, removal of “untouchables,” and tolerance or equality of religions (Gandhi, 1928). For Mahatma Gandhi, every follower of non-violent resistance has to experiment with these vows or do anything to abide by them.

Although my research findings agree to the relevance of these vows: [the search for truth, non-violence or love, non-stealing, physical labour, _swadeshi_ (service to one’s immediate neighbour), fearlessness, removal of “untouchables,” and tolerance or equality of religions] to non-violent activism, they reject unequivocally Mahatma Gandhi’s claim that non-violent activists have to make life-long commitment to poverty and chastity. For the dissertation, Gandhi’s position on life-long commitment to poverty is the antithesis of non-violence. How can one commit to lifelong poverty when poverty is a form of violence? Indeed, besides the British colonial domination, one other challenge that India had to deal with was the huge gap between the rich and the poor. The so-called “untouchables” were daily humiliated not only because of the caste system that dehumanized them but also because of the poverty conditions that immobilize them in India. Thus, for Gandhi to demand all non-violent activists to make a life-long
commitment to poverty was a way of legitimizing and rationalizing the poverty conditions of the “untouchables.” No wonder Nirad Chaudhuri (1987, p.28) describes Gandhi’s idea of a life-long commitment to poverty as not only extreme but as even crude and irrational: “It appeared to me,” Chaudhuri said, “that his [Gandhi] entire ideology was driven by a resolve to abandon civilized life and revert to a primitive existence.” Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a leader of the “untouchables” of India, warned the “untouchables” to stay away from Gandhi’s ideas: “The ‘untouchables’ must still hold that the best way to safeguard themselves is to say ‘Beware of Mr. Gandhi,’” because his entire philosophy was primitive and irrational. If followed, it meant “back to squalor, back to poverty and back to ignorance for the vast mass of people” (Ambedkar, 1946, p.295; Ambedkar 1970).

Indeed, Max Weber, in his thesis Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, noted that protestant ethic is one of the elective affinities that led to modern capitalism. Weber argues that Puritan ethics largely influenced capital accumulation. When religion encouraged its followers to reject worldly possession and postpone present happiness for future gratification while asking its followers to support worldly activities that lead to economic gain—seeing them as endowed with moral and spiritual significance—then the stage is prepared for the development of capitalism. To illustrate and provide an example, Weber quotes an ethical writing of Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of American democracy:

*Time is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides. "Remember, that credit is money. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it. "Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and three pence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it,*
the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding-sow destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds.” "Remember this saying: The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the raising of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend's purse for ever. (Franklin, 1748, pp.375-377)

Max Weber noted that this philosophy of former President Benjamin Franklin is not just a statement inspired by mere greed but a statement laden with moral language. Indeed, Franklin claimed that God revealed to him the usefulness of virtue (Weber 1930). What does this say about Mahatma Gandhi’s call for followers of non-violence to make life-long commitments to poverty? It means that not only is the stage being set for capital exploitation—a fertile ground for neoliberal society—but also it ignores the reality that poverty is a form of violence that is confronting many people in society. Here is the contradiction of Gandhi’s argument: on the one hand, he expects his followers to resist any form of exploitation and violence, which of course should include class exploitation, while on another hand, he expects his followers to accept poverty as an ethical and a moral condition. If classism is a form of violence, then Gandhi’s demand that followers of non-violence have to make life-long commitments to poverty cannot be accepted and encouraged in the 21st century school activism.

Further, my research findings note that Mahatma Gandhi’s claim that followers of satyagraha must make the vow of chastity is another challenge to his non-violent philosophy. Gandhi saw the vow of chastity as absolutely vital for non-violent activism. In fact, when Margaret Higgins Sanger Slee (September 14, 1879 – September 6, 1966), an American sex educator, birth control activist, and the founder of the American Birth Control League, urged
Gandhi to promote birth control clinics in India, he responded with a declaration that the millions of Indians would profit more by learning self-control than birth control (Jack 1956). It appears that Gandhi worked with a traditional Indian psychological theory that suggests that psychic energy may be either concentrated by asceticism and used for spiritual ends or wasted through sensuality, particularly by loss of semen (Hunt, 2005, p.63). Gandhi contends that true non-violent activists have no room for private affectionate bonds (Hunt, 2005, p.64).

It seems Gandhi’s position on sexuality bears some similarities to the practice of celibacy among certain priesthood. However, my research subjects critique Gandhi’s attempt to connect activism to sexuality. In fact, Erik H. Erikson, in Gandhi’s Truth, interrupted his analysis to write a personal letter to the long-dead Mahatma Gandhi. Erickson urged Mahatma Gandhi to reconsider his decision for the sake of future generation: “for the future it is important to affirm unequivocally that what you call satyagraha must not remain restricted to ascetic men and women who believe that they can overcome violence by sexual self-disarmament” (Erikson 1964, p.234). Like my research subjects, Erikson questions the rationale for sexual repression in a non-violent resistance. Indeed, Hunt (2005, p.64) asks Gandhi to explain the place of sexuality in a non-violent activism: “To what extent is the sensual compatible with the disciples of truth and non-violence?” My research findings see no compatibility between sexual repression and non-violent activism. The truth is that Mahatma Gandhi’s strong stand against sexuality is partially linked to an incident that occurred when he was 16 years old. Gandhi never hid his secret admiration and respect for his father (see Gandhi 1957). When his father was sick, Gandhi became his chief nurse who massaged and tended him. Once, while nursing his father, Gandhi had sexual thoughts about his own wife, so when his uncle relieved him from his nursing duties, Gandhi went home to have sexual intercourse with his wife who was already pregnant. While
Gandhi was with his wife in the bedroom, a servant came to inform him that his father had died. Gandhi felt ashamed and guilty believing that his lustful desire and selfishness robbed him the honour of being beside his father in the last moments when he needed him most. This is how Gandhi described the incident:

If animal passion had not blinded me, I should have been spared the torture of separation from my father during his last moments. I should have been massaging him, and he would have died in my arms. ... this shame of my carnal desire even at the critical hour of my father’s death, which demanded wakeful service. It is a blot I have never been able to efface or forget, and I have always thought that although my devotion to my parents knew no bound and I would have given up anything for it, yet it was weighed and found unpardonably wanting because my mind was at the same moment in the grip of lust. I have therefore always regarded myself as a lustful, though a faithful husband. It took me long to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it. (Gandhi 1957, pp.30-31)

This particular experience greatly affected Gandhi and largely explained his hard and stubborn stand against sexual intercourse. The dissertation asks, is it fair for Gandhi to expect contemporary non-violent activists to pay the price for his sense of shame and guilt? The answer is absolutely “no.” Surely, the dissertation understands and shares the pain of Gandhi in relation to his father’s death; however, this painful experience of Gandhi should not be translated into a rigid and unnecessary interpretation of sexual intercourse. Gandhi’s argument that if a person succumbs to the temptations of the flesh, then his or her mind would be captivated by the desires of the flesh this does not fly in the face of logic and commonsense. The dissertation argues strongly (and as repeated by my research participants) that sexuality and the vow of chastity or brahmacharya is an unnecessary condition that Gandhi set, and contemporary non-violent activists need not pay any serious attention. Like his vow to poverty, the vow of chastity has no place in today’s activism. Not surprisingly, Martin Luther King, Jr., when he adopted Gandhian
non-violent philosophy, totally ignored Gandhi’s demands for the vow of chastity and life-long commitment to poverty.

In addition to these two limitations, there is one other challenge to using non-violent ideas of Gandhi and King in the 21st century. Gandhi and King’s idea of non-violent resistance is predicated on an assumption that mass media will always be fair and unbiased in their reportage, and that the media at all times will pursue agenda that suits the collective interest of society. Thus, with this regard, non-violent activists can fully rely on the media to educate the general public about the aims and aspirations of non-violent campaign. Unfortunately, the 21st century media cannot be completely relied upon to report fair and unbiased news. In fact, “the watch dog’s role” of mass media for society has been turned into “a guard dog’s role” for those in power, and in the process have made a mockery of the tag “free press.” Most mass media, far from performing an independent and adversarial role in society, have actively framed issues and promote news stories that serve the needs and concerns of the institutions of power and domination. In their much celebrated work Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman critically examine the works of contemporary mass media. Herman and Chomsky (1988, p.1) argue that “in a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest,” the mass media “serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p.xi). The authors noted that the operations of corporate-owned mass communication media—print, radio, and television—are subjected to commercial competition for advertising revenue and profit and in the process have killed any legitimate desire to report fair and unbiased news. Not surprisingly, many mass media of contemporary times continue to report biased and distorted news, write bias editorials, and tailor news—what types of news to report, who should report them, how to report
them, and whose interest the news should serve most—all with the goal of appeasing big corporations. Meanwhile, few members of mass media who desire to report accurate and unbiased news over profits are relegated to the margins of the market and today are folding up business. Consequently, only stories with a strong orientation towards the agenda and propaganda of institutions of domination can pass through contemporary mass media filters unobstructed.

In the face of this reality, how can 21st century non-violent activists rely on mass media to report news to the public in fair and unbiased manner, especially the unjust acts of corporations and other institutions of domination in society and to begin to address the questions of complicity, responsibility, and accountability? For instance, after woeful mishandling of the crisis of Hurricane Katrina, rather than holding President Bush’s administration accountable for what happened in New Orleans, some of the mass media, especially the right-wing media, blamed the victims of Hurricane Katrina for the crisis. Rick Santorum, a former US Senator and a contributor to Fox News, stated in an interview that the poor and black people who did not heed the evacuation warnings should be penalized (Hamill 2005). In fact, Fox News host, Bill O’Reilly, on September 13, 2005’s broadcast of The Radio Factor, even went one step further by saying that poor black people in New Orleans who could not escape the crisis were drug addicts who did not evacuate the city because they would not have access to drugs in their new place.

What does this example say about mass media as a source and guide of public conscience? The answer is obvious: contemporary mass media cannot be relied upon to report fair and unbiased news about a non-violent campaign. They cannot be relied on to truthfully, openly, and fairly inform and educate the general public about the goals and aspiration of non-violent campaign, especially if the target of resistance is big corporation. Within this context, the dissertation argues that if non-violent campaign is to be successful, then non-violent activists
cannot rely on the mass media to carry their message about non-violent campaign. Instead, they have to rely on non-traditional means of communication—blogs, *You tube*, the internet, community newspapers, flyers, e-mail lists, and posters—to carry their messages of non-violence to the general public.
CHAPTER SEVEN - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The history of Western societies has largely been the history of self interests. The prime concern of those who are in authority has always been about promoting the interests and agenda of the groups they represent. Initially, it was the land owners, then it shifted to industrialists and other organized pressure groups. Today, it is the interest of multinational and transnational corporations that institutions of power continue to support. Not surprisingly, the state institutions have been preoccupied with the agenda of special interest groups—the rich and the affluent of our society—and in the process, have woefully ignored the plight of the voiceless majority. The research noted that the greater majority of people are today experiencing a high level of anxiety because state institutions have woefully failed to provide living conditions that are reasonably free of poverty, injustice, violence, and crime. The effect is widespread violence and conflicts in society.

The research findings also noted that violence and non-violence are not mutually exclusive, as already known. Instead, the two exist on a single continuum of political action, with one extreme side representing Gandhi and King’s understanding of non-violence and the other extreme side representing physical violence such as the destruction of human lives and property. However, what constitutes a practical understanding of non-violence, in contemporary school activism, may exist between the two extreme ends of violence and non-violence. In a sense, one cannot define non-violence without first understanding what constitutes violence. The research further noted that what have been defined as “violence” and “non-violence” within the field of education had eschewed the daily emotional, material, and spiritual violent experiences of marginalized bodies. Violence occurs in more places than one can imagine. Homes, schools,
churches, Mosques, Synagogue, streets, workplaces, and courtrooms are some of the places where violence occurs every day. Within this context, school activism should redefine violence in a way that includes the institutional and systemic violence against marginalized bodies. The research finally observed that violence can be a form of resistance against constant marginalization and oppression. Thus, violence emerging from resistance cannot be treated in the same way as violence emerging from oppression because, while the latter is intended to maintain injustice and inequity, the former is intended to restore justice and equity. In this sense, violence is not the mere presence of tension, disagreement, disharmony, confusion, and pain but the absence of justice, fairness, and equity.

My research findings also established that love, humility, discipline, and spirituality are pivotal in non-violent school activism. Love as identified in my research is not necessarily an affectionate or sentimental feeling but goodwill and empathy towards an opponent. Love born out of non-violent activism stimulates kindness, compassion, and humanity for the opponent while simultaneously harbouring resistance and passion for justice and equity. This same love separates the oppressor as a person from oppression. For love born out of non-violent activism, the oppressor is equally a victim of the systems of domination.

Although my research findings recognized the inevitability of self-sacrifice in non-violent activism, they rejected Gandhi and King’s notion of self-suffering as a non-violent strategy to appeal to the conscience of the opponents. Self-suffering, as a non-violent strategy, is the antithesis of the notion of self-love. Self-suffering in Gandhian sense only elicits pity from the opponents, and pity bears the mark of power and domination and not any sense of inner transformation. The changes that can bring about transformation in schooling and education must emerge from within and not through pity of the oppressor. Similarly, my research findings reject
Gandhi’s argument that every non-violent activist must commit to life-long vow of poverty and chastity. The research noted that commitment to chastity and poverty brings nothing to non-violent activism. Further, my research findings established that non-violent activism is not just a one-day show; it is a life-long commitment. Once a non-violent activist identifies something that constitutes violence, she or he fights until the condition of violence is removed. Also, activism is broad and goes beyond street protests. In fact, sometimes, the secret activism that is done strategically within the corridors of power can achieve more far-reaching results than the open protest against power, on the street.

**Six Key Steps in Non-Violent School Activism**

As already noted in the research objectives, the dissertation was intended to identify ideas and criticisms that can help design a non-violent working framework for school activism. Based on the research findings, six key steps have been identified to be pivotal in non-violent school activism. Although these six key steps were identified based on the research findings, it has to be mentioned that the six key steps are not blue-print for every non-violent act. In fact, these six key steps are limited in many ways, if they are applied broadly outside the schooling system. Thus, the six key steps should be seen as a working framework that needs modification and adjustment in different contexts and conditions. The discussion that follows outlines and explains these six steps:

1. **Violence Should be Defined Within the Context of Justice and Equity**

   The first step towards non-violent activism is redefining what constitutes violence. The concept *violence* is broad and exists in myriad forms—violence can be physical, emotional, psychological, economical, symbolic, material, or spiritual. However, it is not the myriad forms
of violence that make the definition of violence difficult. It is the tensions, contentions, and nuances that exist between resistive violence and oppressive violence that make the definition of violence a risky endeavour. In order to address this tension, the dissertation submits that the definition of violence must be done within the context of justice, equity, and fairness. Any definition of violence must begin with this basic question: in what ways has power been used to deny or support the individuals’ rights to justice, equity, and fairness? Violence is always about power. However, it is not the power, per se, that makes something violent but the power to make others feel less important and less deserving. Power as entity is not wrong; it is the use of power that can make an action violent or not. If power is applied to rectify the existing inequities and injustices in society then the use of power cannot be defined as violence. This means that any interpretation of violence must be done within the context of history. If power is used to rectify historical wrong-doings then that action cannot be considered as violence.

This understanding is very important because there is always a tendency for those with senses of entitlement to cry “victim” when the wind of justice and equity blow against them. For instance, in research conducted by Michael I. Norton and Samuel R. Sommers about antiracism measures to address racial injustices between Whites and Blacks/Browns in the United States, many Whites who participated in the research were of the opinion that they were now new victims of racism (Norton and Sommers, 2011). Weighing on the research, Victoria Plaut, an assistant professor at the University of California-Berkeley Law School, noted that her earlier research with other colleagues revealed similar results—that many Whites felt excluded by multicultural initiatives that intended to address racial barriers between Whites and Blacks/Browns (see Plaut et al, 2011). Similarly, Dei et al (1997; 2000) noted, in their research in the Toronto public schools that some White students felt the current multicultural programs
within the TDSB, such as the celebration of “Black History Month” and “Asian History Month,” were discriminatory against them. My research findings noted that equity and social justice measures cannot be considered as violence because those actions are designed to restore historical inequities that have tilted the pendulum of justice against certain bodies by virtue of their race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability. In order to restore a fair level playing field for everybody, power and privilege must be decentralized to reach those at the periphery of society. Therefore, equity measures, despite the fact that they can make some (the privileged) feel left out, cannot be considered as violence.

This means that non-violent campaign must begin with the recognition of violence. Activism takes people’s time and energy; therefore, one has to be sure that her or his goals of fighting injustice and oppression are clear. This is important because non-violent school activism is a mature political campaign. Opponents always need to know that they are being resisted because there are legitimate reasons for resistance. Non-violent campaign is about securing change; once it starts, the only thing that can stop it is the total removal of the violent act. Within this context, at all times, activists need to be fully convinced that a violent act has been committed before making a decision to intervene.

2. *Truth Must Guide Non-Violent Campaign*

In spite of post-modernists and post-structuralists’ legitimate concerns about the dominant control of the definition of “truth” in society, the research findings show that the sense and desire to know the truth about justice, equity, and fairness should always guide non-violent campaign. The post-modernists and post-structuralists’ contention about truth is not about the fact that truth exists or does not exist; rather, it is about the fact that truth is always presented as an abstract,
isolated entity that exists outside social influence and control. Without denying the legitimate concerns of post-modernists, can we, at least, begin the discussion of truth from the basic understanding that there are always several angles to truth? If this premise is accepted, then any search for truth about justice, equity, and fairness in non-violent campaign must begin with the humility of knowing and the humility of not knowing all the facts. Non-violent activism always recognises that the opponent also represents a particular side of the whole truth, even if it does not agree with the position of the opponent. Within this context, arrogance of knowing, name calling, caricaturing of opponents, and incendiary remarks are not encouraged in non-violent activism.

Further, non-violent activism always bears witness to all forms of truth. Non-violent activism cannot show interest in certain forms of truth while virtually showing no interest in other forms of truth. This means that the understanding of truth must not be exclusive to only one particular form of social justice. Understandingly, many school activists may have certain areas on which they may want to focus their campaign against social injustice. The contention is not the fact that activists choose certain areas they want to focus their campaign against social injustice; it is the selective remembering and forgetting of what constitutes injustice and oppression that cause a problem. The point is that choosing to focus on a particular issue in school activism does not inoculate anyone from accounting for her or his privileges and power in relation to oppression that affects others. In Chapter Three of this work, I argued that the change that non-violent activists seek, in university schooling and society at large, cannot happen unless the change starts from within. The strength of non-violent school activism does not reside in the thunderous voices of its members; it is the integrity, sincerity, and the humility of knowing of its members that make non-violent campaign a strong activist strategy. This means that non-violent
activists cannot operate with this sense of perfection and arrogant attitude that somehow everybody else is the oppressor and not themselves.

This submission is not to re-inscribe the often repeated rhetoric that “we are all oppressed and privileged,” in the conversation. Although privileges and power exist in different and multiple levels, and the intensity of oppression is not the same for everybody, the fact is that given the multiple identity locations, it is possible for one to simultaneously inhabit a location of privilege and power with regard to certain identity markers while also being oppressed in other areas. Thus, having a commitment to all forms of truth implies that one acknowledges her or his privileges in certain areas of oppression while calling on others to account for their privileges in other areas of social injustice. Often-times, it is this refusal to understand and respect other people’s rights to speak openly against their oppression that raises questions about the integrity and sincerity of school activism. For the research, one of the concerns about school activism is the lack of support, and even resistance among some school activists, when certain equity issues are tabled for discussion. Non-violent school activism cannot achieve the desired results if equity issues are made to compete with one another. Non-violent activism must have a collective burden to end all forms of violence in society.

3. Love as Resistance Strategy in Non-Violent Campaign

Love is the third and an important strategy towards non-violent school activism. Love exists in four different ways within Buddhist tradition. These include maitri, love born out of kindness and the desire to make others happy; karuna, love born out of compassion; mudita, love that stresses joy and upeksha, love that produces freedom, justice, and equity. These four Buddhist interpretations of love are relevant in any non-violent school activism. Although the
personal is always political and the political is always personal, a love-centred activism separates the oppressor from oppression. Love, in activism, starts from the premise that the oppressor is equally a victim of a corrupt system, and since oppression corrupts and dehumanizes the oppressor as well as the oppressed, one can conclude that both the oppressor and oppressed are victims of injustice and oppression in society. Thus, karuna—love born out compassion—always seeks to not only liberate the oppressed bodies but also to redeem the oppressors. When karuna combines with upeksha, they produce creative tension that stops at nothing until a true change has occurred. Just as any good parents will do everything possible to save their child from impending danger, non-violent activism seeks for ways to redeem both the oppressor and the oppressed from a corrupt system. Karuna and upeksha seek for ways not only to change conditions that produce marginalization but also to prevent any future reproduction of marginalization.

Without karuna and upeksha, non-violent school activism will produce destructive tension. Destructive tension does not separate the oppressor from oppression. Destructive tension works with an assumption that only the complete removal of the oppressor can guarantee true justice and equity. Destructive tension produces a cycle of violence. It leaves room for revenge and retaliation. It does not create healing to either the oppressor or even the oppressed. Although Frantz Fanon argues that for the oppressed bodies, violence is a means of healing and redemption (see Fanon’s chapter on “Violence” in the Wretched of the Earth), his later chapter (see Fanon’s chapter on “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” in the Wretched of the Earth) clearly shows that true healing can never be obtained through violence, retaliation, or revenge. When one combines karuna and upeksha with mudita, one produces a love-oriented activism that eases human suffering. Mudita acknowledges that suffering has no place in true love. If social injustice,
inequities, and oppression are sources of suffering to humanity, then non-violent activism must work to remove oppression and injustice. Further, if oppression corrupts and dehumanizes the oppressor and the oppressed, then fighting injustice and oppression is another way of easing human sufferings. Love-centered activism harbours no hatred against the oppressor although it may hate the oppressive deeds of the oppressor. Love-centered activism wishes no harm to the oppressor, yet it does not allow the oppressor’s deeds to go unnoticed and unaccounted for. Further, to reduce human suffering in love-centered activism is also about loving oneself. So much has been said and written about loving one’s opponent; however, loving oneself is equally important. This love for the self is not born out of selfishness and personal greed; rather, it is born out of a desire not to emulate and mimic the violent behaviours of the oppressor. A non-violent activist is aware that, by emulating the violent behaviour of the oppressor, she or he is becoming like the oppressor. This is why non-violent activism does not seek for retaliation or a means to destroy one’s opponent.

4. Negotiation as a Strategy for Non-Violent School Campaign

As the research has reiterated several times, negotiation is a central pillar in non-violent campaign. Without negotiation with opponents, non-violent activism cannot arrive at the ultimate truth. Within this context, non-violent school activism makes negotiation a central part of its campaign. In order for negotiation to occur, there are eight important factors that need to be considered:

First, negotiation should always begin with minimal demands. There is no need for non-violent activism to draw a long list of demands that they know cannot be met. Minimum terms are important because too many demands can sometimes create confusion at the negotiation
table. The demands must be fair and reasonable to both parties. To ensure fairness and transparency, non-violent activists have to dialogue among themselves to agree on the minimum demands that have to be submitted for negotiation. Second, once the demands have been agreed upon, non-violent school activism has to clearly and concisely state their demands to the opponents and, where necessary, should convincingly explain reasons behind their demands. Third, in non-violent school campaign, the strength of every negotiation is the support and sympathy of the public. Therefore, school activists should do everything within their means and power to communicate their demands and reasons behind their demands to the general public. Public education is important because without the public understanding of the issues, they will likely give their sympathy and support to those in power especially if those in power have the means to draw the support and sympathy of the public to their side. Non-violent school activism has nothing to hide; therefore, secrecy is not part of non-violent school campaign, for secrecy only destroys communication and invites unnecessary suspicions. There are several ways in which the general public can be educated about issues. The use of radio, television, newspapers, blogs, posters, conferences, workshops, mass e-mails, journal, and book publications are some of the means of educating the general public in non-violent school activism.

Fourth, the terms of demands should also be communicated effectively and clearly to followers of the struggle. One of the common mistakes many contemporary activists make is that they do not spend time to educate their followers. In both Gandhi and King’s situations, much effort was put in place to train and educate followers of non-violent movements about the issues. Educating followers about the aims and goals of non-violent school activism serves three purposes: one, it consolidates the movement and brings all members of the resistance group to the same page. This makes it easier for the group to be mobilized for non-violent direct action,
should negotiation fail; two, it prevents the opposing sides from planting confusion and internal divisions within the group; three, followers can be used as agents to educate the general public.

Fifth, all negotiation should be done with honesty, fairness, and be free from slanderous statements, incendiary remarks, and “in-your-face” rhetoric. Falsehood, slanderous statements, incendiary remarks, and insults do not push negotiation forward; rather, they germinate and flower entrenching positions that derail and delay negotiation. They also tend to deflect attention from the actual issue. Six, humility of knowing and humility of not knowing must guide negotiation. Pride, arrogance, and the pursuit of personal glory have no place in non-violent school activism. The desire of non-violent school campaign is always about the search for the truth. Since truth has multiple sides, with each side illuminating a particular form of truth, a non-violent school campaign is always willing to listen and learn from the other side of the truth. In view of that, non-violent school campaign wards off self-righteousness and close-mindedness during negotiation. The ultimate desire of non-violent school campaign is not only to remove violence from schooling and education but also to convert the opponent to the side of justice and equity. Therefore, non-violent school activists always try to understand the points of view of opponents and seek ways to convert the opponents. Having humility of knowing and humility of not knowing all the facts also implies that whenever a mistake is made during negotiation, non-violent school activists should not be afraid to admit the mistake and apologize for it. It also implies that non-violent school activists will be guided by these seven Ps: Polite, Persuasive, Persistence, Political, Patience, Position, and a sense of Possibility. As non-violent activists, we have to be polite during negotiation. The lack of respect and decorum for our opponents does not push negotiation forward; if anything, it creates entrenching positions that make change difficult. Persuasive, because non-violent activists should know exactly what they are saying. We must
speak with facts and substance. Even when our opponents disagree with us, it should not be based on lack of understanding of our arguments. We must also be persistent in our position and passion for social justice work. We should not give up easily during negotiation. This is why we have to be patient during negotiation. We should not be easily discouraged nor should we give up hope. We must have a sense of possibility—a strong belief that change is possible and our opponents can change their ways. Finally, non-violent activists must be political in their approach to negotiation. We have to be aware of where we are positioned during negotiation. This last point leads us to the seventh principle of non-violent negotiation.

Seven, non-violent school activism should be aware of the power dynamics and how they play out during negotiation. Although non-violent school activism carries no secrecy or insincerity and is open to negotiation, the same cannot be said of the opponents. Sometimes, those in power may adopt several strategies to make negotiation work in their favour. The use of threats and promises of rewards can be some of the strategies an opponent uses during negotiation. Although non-violent school activists approach negotiation with humility of knowing and humility of not knowing all the facts, they are neither weak nor afraid to negotiate with power. Non-violent school activists cannot be forced or persuaded to accept any decision that compromises the truth. The desire of non-violent school activists is always to be one with the truth.

Eighth, while negotiation is ongoing, non-violent university school activists make it their duty to prepare for a non-violent direct action should negotiation fail to yield the desired result. Preparation for direct action, even at the stage of negotiation, is essential because non-violent resistance needs to keep the momentum of the struggle alive at all times. Since the goal of non-violent direct action is to create intensive crisis that will compel the opponents back to
negotiation, non-violent direct action is not immune to violence. Even if non-violent school activists are committed to non-violence, the opponents may not share the same philosophy. Within this context, any non-violent school campaign needs to prepare its followers against possible violent attacks from the opponents. This means that followers of non-violent school activism need to learn and acquire the skills of courage, non-retaliation, and humility before embarking on non-violent direct action.

5. Non-Violent Direct Action

Non-violent direct action is arguably the most demanding aspect of non-violent activism. Given the energy, time, resources, and commitment non-violent direct action takes from activists and society, the dissertation recommends that it should be used judiciously. As already repeated in the dissertation, non-violent direct action should be the last resort taken when everything else has failed to yield the desired results. The essence of non-violent direct action is to force opponents back to negotiation. Non-violent direct action is in two parts: non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Non-cooperation and civil disobedience can further be broken down into boycotts, strike actions, open demonstrations, blockages, peaceful disruptions, and other forms of non-violent civil disobedience. Non-violent university school activists can use one or more of these non-violent direct actions to achieve the desired results. There are nine things non-violent university school activists have to note before using non-violent direct actions:

First, non-cooperation or civil disobedience is the last resort in non-violent activism. It is not the first weapon of non-violent school activism; it is the last weapon. Therefore, non-violent activists should only use it when all other non-violent strategies have failed to create the desired change.
Second, non-cooperation or civil disobedience has no time frame. In other words, once set in motion, it can only be stopped when opponents have accepted to negotiate again or have changed for the better. This means that it may take days, weeks, months, or even years for non-cooperation or civil disobedience to yield the desired results. Non-violent university school activists will not back down until change has occurred. Consistency, resilience, and persistency are three important elements of non-violent direct actions. Non-cooperation or civil disobedience cannot be implemented intermittently; once set in motion, nothing but a change on the part of the opponents can bring it to stop.

Third, given the time, resources, energy, and effort that it takes, leaders of non-violent university activism have to assess themselves and their members to see if they are willing to commit to non-violent direct actions. There is no doubt that institutions of power will fight back with violence, threat of violence, and even offer rewards to selected members of aggrieved groups in order to break the rank-and-file of the resistance groups. If members are not fully committed to the course of justice, many will back off and will even be used by institutions of power to fight against the interest of the group. Thus, it is important that non-violent university activists know themselves very well before they take up issues of social injustice and oppression in education.

Fourth, non-violent direct action is about fighting against only unjust laws and not necessarily every law of the state or institutions of power. Therefore, non-violent university activists have to channel their energy of non-cooperation and civil disobedience to only laws, rules, decisions, and actions of the state that are unjust. Non-violent university activists are law-abiding citizens. They only disobey laws that their conscience does not allow them to obey because they are unjust, unfair, and inequitable.
Fifth, non-violent direct action is about forcing the public to look at themselves, their unjust laws, rules, thoughts, and actions in a mirror and ask themselves whether those laws, rules, thoughts, and actions, have a place in a just, fair, and equitable society. This can only happen when non-violent school activists are willing to accept punishments that come with breaking unjust laws. This means that if members of non-violent university school activism are not disciplined enough or trained enough to accept punishment for breaking unjust laws, then non-violent activism will have minimal effects.

Sixth, even in non-violent direct action, the concept of love and truth are still integral parts of the campaign. This implies that while non-violent direct actions are intended to fight unjust laws, they do not target or harm people. There are no insults, curses, names calling, incendiary remarks, and caricaturing of opponents in non-violent direct actions. No non-violent school activism will label its opponents as “Hitler” or “devil’s incarnate.” Non-violent university school activists may hate what their opponents are doing, but they have nothing but respect and love for them.

Seventh, non-violent direct actions demand humility and fearlessness from activists. Non-violent university activists are humble but fearless in their approach to non-cooperation and civil disobedience. They respect their opponents but are not afraid of them. The courage of non-violent university activists lies in their passion and desire to search for the truth and to let truth rule supreme at all cost. Therefore, they are not afraid of what their opponents can do or will do.

Eighth, non-violent university activists do not take their opponents by surprise. At all times, they let their opponents and the general public know what they are going to do ahead of time. This point defies the art of war. Although non-violent school activism is about fighting injustice, it is not a war against the opponents. Non-violent university activists wish no ill nor do
they desire bad omen for the opponents. This is why they will not take advantage of their opponents. They will never take their opponents unaware but in every step of the way, they will let their opponents know what they are going to do. As I have already said, non-violent university activists say what they mean and mean what they say.

*Ninth*, non-violent direct actions are not about the personal egos or self-aggrandisement of activists. Therefore, at no point should any non-violent activists make non-violent direct action a personal battle. The struggle is about the group or the community on whose behalf a non-violent direct action is being initiated. Therefore, people who seek personal glory or are egocentric cannot use non-violent direct action. All decisions relating to non-violent direct action should always be in the interest of the group and should have the collective support of the group. Once the majority of non-violent university activists make a decision, every member should abide by it. Opponents will not hesitate to deal a striking blow to the group once they notice any sign of disintegration or disunity. This is why the group must appear united and resolute at all times. This also means that rules within non-violent school activism should always be fair, transparent, equitable, and just. If there are any act of injustice, unfairness, lack of transparency, and inequity among non-violent activists, the group cannot hold together and things will disintegrate.

6. *Our Souls Bear Witness to Violence*

The last key important element to note about non-violent school activism is that our soul must always bear witness to violence. I acknowledge that Cynthia Dillard, Daa’Iyah Abdur-Rashid, and Cynthia Tyson first used the phrase “My soul is a witness” in their essay about how three African-American scholars/teachers were using a spiritual pedagogy in their teaching (see Dillard et al 2000). Alan Briskin in his thought-provoking work *The Stirring of Soul in the*
Workplace and Kathleen Manning in her essay *Infusing Soul into Student Affairs: Organizational Theory and Models* have both called for the infusing of the soul in public and educational institutions (see Briskin 1996; Manning 2001). Although the arguments in this section of the essay are based on the research findings, I also acknowledge that Briskin, Manning, and Dillard et al had earlier on spoken about “the soul” in education.

I use the concept “soul” not in a religious sense but from a spiritual perspective. Briskin (1996, p.11) traces the definition of the “soul” across ancient traditions. The ancient Greeks viewed the “soul” as “a place of depth and shadowy realities.” Hebrews associate the “soul” with vitality, animation, essence, and renewal (Manning 2001, p.28). For the Taoists, the soul is the place of union between two opposing forces: spirit and matter, light and dark, good and evil, and conflict and reconciliation (Manning 2001). Hasidic Jews call the soul “the spark of divine in every being”; the Quakers call it the “inner teacher”; Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, calls it “true self” and the Secular humanists call it “identity and integrity.” According to Bolman and Deal (1995), the soul contains a spark of the divine. What can be gleaned from these different understanding of the soul is that the soul is a place where negative and positive forces have a harmonized relation. The soul is a site where the mind, representing reasoning—the material, the physical, the seen, the felt, the heard, the smelled—interacts with the spirits representing the emotion—the unseen, the unheard, and the unknown. This is not to suggest a split between the body, the mind, and the spirit but rather to show how these aspects of our beings interact to make sense, meaning, and to understand everyday social relations. How does a soul bear witness to violence?

In our world, especially in schooling and education where we are constantly being asked to abandon the soul and spirit and focus on the desires of the body and mind, it is important that
violence is seen from the location of the soul. Manning (2001, p.29) noted that in many institutions, individuals are expected to be professional and objective—meaning their actions and inactions should be “devoid of emotion, feeling, and personal concerns.” In fact, Frederick Taylor (1911), the father of the efficiency-obsessed models of scientific management, viewed feelings—any sign of showing one’s humane side—as superfluous in corporate practice. What does this tell us about activism? It simply says that in the world where many people lack interest and moral courage to vehemently oppose corporate and transnational violence against marginalized communities, the soul must be allowed to bear witness to global violence. A soul that bears witness to violence cannot be bought or silenced. After all, what will profit a person if she or he gains the whole world and loses the soul? There are several lessons to be drawn when our souls bear witness to violence:

First, we become one with other people’s experiences. At the level of the soul, there are no identity makers and the social construction of identity is ineffective. In fact, the soul is raceless, classless, and gender-neutral; it has no sexual orientation nor does the soul belong to any ethnic or religious group. In fact, the soul is bigger than any limitation of the body. At the level of the soul, we are all one. The “we” is in “I” and the “I” is in “we.” Therefore, there is no selective response and reaction to oppression at the level of the soul. One person’s pain is another person’s pain; one’s sorrow is another’s sorrow. In the same way, one’s victory is the victory of the whole. The soul does not know how to compete; it only complements others. When the soul bears witness, it does not use space to displace and dislocate other equity issues. When the soul bears witness, it does not allow a threat of suffering and pain or a promise of rewards to stop one from speaking up against injustices and oppression. The soul is not selfish and does not seek self-
interest. When the soul bears witness, the African concept of *Obuntu* becomes the bench-mark of activism: “I” exist because “we” exist; in the absence of “we,” “I” is meaningless.

*Second,* there is a place within soul-centered activism where justice is not sought as retribution but as a healing process, for both the victims and perpetrators of violence. Many social scientists have, in recent times, expressed some reservations over the ways power is used as a tool or weapon to dominate others. Of course, Michel Foucault has contended that power is more like a network of small capillaries that control behaviours, attitudes, and identities among members of society (Foucault, 1978; 1980). Although Michel Foucault’s interpretation of power raises many questions when it is read within the context of Fanonian conception of power (see Fanon 1963; 1967), the dissertation opines that power needs to be envisioned beyond the limited sense of the material. Power needs to be conceived also in the realms of the soul. How will powers, emerging from the soul, inform non-violent school activism? The dissertation submits that soul-centered activism redefines social justice. Oftentimes in activism, social justice is wrongfully perceived as a zero-sum game where the winner takes everything (refers to Norton and Sommers, 2011; Plaut et al, 2011; Dei et al 1997; 2000). Consequently, rather than bringing healing and transformation, social activism has mistakenly drawn entrenching positions that do not progress social change. When the soul bears witness to violence, social activism elicits hope, forgiveness, love, healing, reconciliation, and a change of heart. Social activism is perceived not as an endeavour to take from those who have to give to those who do not have, but as a process of creating healing and reconciliation. In fact, power is perceived as not a weapon to exploit others but as a weapon to empower others. Power is conceived within soul-centered activism as that which adds and multiplies and not necessarily that which divides and subtracts. Although Sir Lord Acton had noted earlier on that “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” it
is the opinion of this dissertation that power does not corrupt; rather, it is the fear of losing power that oftentimes corrupts those who wield it. Those who abuse power oftentimes do so because of a sense of insecurity and inadequacy. Soul-centered activism starts the pursuit of justice from the understanding that the oppressor is also a victim of a corrupt system. Therefore, its target is to heal, reconcile, and transform both the oppressor and the oppressed. In soul-centered activism, the desire for retribution for past injustices and oppression gives way to the desire for healing and reconciliation. In soul-centered activism, the oppressor is not seen as an enemy; she or he is just an opponent who stands on the wrong side of justice.

Finally, soul-centred activism brings activists to the place where “trilogue” is practised (see Dei 2010). There is a point in soul-centered activism where the mind, the soul, and the spirit interact with themselves. At the point of “trilogue,” “the self” is not treated as an isolated whole but as something that is connected to the collective. Here, the individual is seen as having a special responsibility in creating change within the structure of domination. At the stage of “trilogue,” self-examination, self-criticism, and self-transformation are linked to actions that can create change in the larger structures of oppression. The stage of “trilogue” will always ask the Fanonian questions: “Have I not, because of what I have done or failed to do, contribute to an impoverishment of human reality?” “Have I, at all times, demanded and brought out the man that is in me?” (Fanon, 1967b, p.3). Frantz Fanon’s questions call for self-implication, self-reflexivity, and self-critical examination as we engage in non-violent school activism. How are we complicit in Western hegemony? How is the question of complicity, accountability, and responsibility dealt with in non-violent school activism? bell hooks (1994) rightly asserts that part of doing critical anti-oppression work is to start with oneself. As I have already noted, self-examination is the most critical point of non-violent school activism because the “self” is always stubborn and
selfish. The “self” always sees the weaknesses and limitations in others; however, it always takes a great effort and perseverance for the “self” to admit its limitations and work towards change. Soul-centered activism begins with the self; it shields itself against self-righteousness and arrogance.

Further, at the stage of “trilogue,” activism becomes a daily task. This is the responsibility Frantz Fanon (1967a, p.232) saw when he charged his body to make him a person who questions things: “Oh my body, always make me a man who questions!” For Fanon, there is a place in activism where the self constantly asks new questions about entrenching positions in society. There is a responsibility for educators to connect their scholarship with activism. The idea that knowledge can be produced for knowledge sake does not exist in soul-centered activism. If knowledge cannot compel action, then what is the use of knowledge in creating and shaping social transformation? The question, of how to transform schools in the context of post and anti-revolutionary class, gender, race specific initiatives, is paramount. After all, activism is more than walking on the street with placards to protest against institutional practices. Moving beyond the discursive prism of activism to the site where activism becomes part of our daily agenda and practices is very important.

**Looking into the Crystal Ball: Beyond the Dissertation**

The dissertation sets out to identifying pedagogical frameworks that can ensure non-violent social mobilization of university students for transformative university education. Based on the research findings, the dissertation has outlined six key steps that can support educational activism in university settings to achieve transformation. As already indicated, these six key steps are not necessary blue-prints for all social and political transformation. In fact, it is advised that
these key steps must be seen as a working framework that requires further reforms and adjustments to suit every social condition. Thus, depending on the context and time, the framework will need some modification to meet the need of the time.

Further, the goal of the dissertation was to identify non-violent strategies that can ensure effective social mobilization of university students for social transformation; therefore, much attention was not paid to aftermath of a resistance movement when the oppressor is finally removed. Therefore, the subject of compensation, atonement, apology, and reparation for the victims of violence was not discussed or raised in the dissertation. This is not to suggest that reparation, atonement, and genuine apology to the victims of violence are not required or needed. In fact, true healing and reconciliation can genuinely be achieved, when the issue of reparation, atonement, and sincere apology to the victims of violence is taken care. By reparation, atonement, and healing, I do not mean any cosmetic face-saving symbolic gesture but genuine and valuable compensation to the victims of violence. In the future works, the question of reparation, atonement, and apology in non-violent resistance works will be explored in detail. Future works will also examine the possibilities and limitations of the six key steps in the pursuit of social transformation outside the field of university education. In particular, how can these six key steps serve any political and social interest in the on-going occupy movements in the globe.

Even after 50 years of their demise, Gandhi and King still inspire the rest of the world. John Haynes Holmes, one of the founding fathers of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in 1909 and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 1920, once wrote: “When all else is forgotten or indifferently remembered of this age, when its resplendent names of kings and conquerors are dimmed even as their bodies are turned to dust, Gandhi will still be ‘a burning and shining light.’ This time will be recorded as the time
of the Mahatma, as ... the first century is recorded as the time of Christ” (Holmes, 1953, p.137). Although as this dissertation has established, not everybody in the present generation or even generations to come will agree or admit to the greatness of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther Jr. as John Haynes Holmes may want us to believe. However, one thing that cannot be denied or doubted is that remarkable, ethical personalities once lived in India and the United States. Their central ethical concerns: freedom, right to justice, fairness, equity for all, and respect for human dignity, abolition of poverty and injustice, and non-violent response to injustice and oppression will remain vital to the future of humanity. For what they believed in and what they stood and died for, humanity, especially those who share their ideals, can never forget Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. But how does one remember these personalities in the 21st century? For this dissertation, there is no better way to remember and celebrate the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. than attempting to implement their ideas in creating change in the 21st century.

Both Gandhi and King had a radical humanist approach to social change. Their desire was to extend human dignity, freedom, love, compassion, humility, care, and justice to all who are daily exploited. These men, at all times, urged oppressive bodies to uphold their integrity, even in the face of institutional and structural violence. They encouraged oppressive bodies not to be caught in the culture of revenge and retaliation that had led humanity to this disturbing cycle of violence. Their hope was for society to adopt new ways to create change outside the cycle of violence. Henry Giroux (2006, p.5) recently said that if in the age of terrorism, society lacks the courage, language, desire, determination, and visions to raise questions about who we are as people and what we want to accomplish, then we all run “the risk of compromising any vestige of democracy as part of our lived politics.” Henry Giroux’s concern is in line with the thoughts and
aspirations of Gandhi and King. If humanity lacks courage to explore alternative means, outside violent confrontation, to address differences that exist among us, then the future holds less promise for humankind. Humanity reserves the right to imagine and dream of a new world and a new possibility; the new world that strives for dialogue and negotiation and not guns, fists, and missiles to settle differences; the new world that will name, track, and challenge human injustice and environmental degradation; the new world that will allow us one day to name our three millennia of violence as the prehistory of the new humanity. And, attempting to implement the non-violent ideas of Gandhi and King, is arguably a new way of beginning the journey towards the new humanity.

Post Scripts

At the time of writing this conclusion, few topical related issues are emerging around the globe that at least require some comments from this dissertation, even if the comment is going to be brief. First, let me begin with something that happened at the local scene: the dissertation recognizes the passing away of a great warrior in the African-Canadian community in the person of Elder, Dudley Laws. Known in the community for his rallying words, “No justice, no Peace,” Elder Laws was fearless and consistent in holding the law enforcement agency in Toronto accountable for their excessive abuse of power when it comes to their work in the black community. In 1988, after a number of black men were shot and killed in confrontations with Toronto-area police, Elder Dudley Laws co-founded the Black Action Defence Committee along with Charles Roach, Sherona Hall, Lennox Farrell and others to push for independent police oversight. Elder Laws became a tough and vocal critic of the Police Force, often accusing them of unfairly targeting the black youth. In 1990, Laws called on then Premier, Bob Rae, to establish
an independent body to investigate police shootings after Toronto Constable David Deviney was acquitted of the shooting death of Lester Donaldson during a confrontation. In response, The Special Investigations Unit, which looks at all police shootings, was formed (Winsa 2011).

Elder Laws also founded Black Inmates and Friends Assembly (BIFA) to provide sustainable support for Black inmates. For instance, when the Black inmates were being abused by the prison guards, Elder Laws was there to take the matter to the authorities. Elder Laws suffered many persecutions in the line of his work. The dissertation will be short-changing Elder Dudley Laws if it does not reproduce some of the tributes that were paid to him:

Philip Mascoll, a former Toronto Star journalist, has this to say about Dudley Laws: “He [Dudley Laws] did many things that we could not because he was untiring and completely fearless....There are those of us who chose not to be activists because we have to raise families and do other mundane things. Dudley took all the risks for all of us. He fought City Hall. And he didn’t care if he won. He made sure they knew there was a fight” (Winsa, 2011, para.7-8). The Toronto Deputy Police Chief Peter Sloley described Dudley Laws as a tireless working individual who had the general well-being of the black community at heart: “Clearly the man’s public life and a large part of his private life were dedicated to trying to ensure greater levels of justice. Ultimately he . . . wanted to see more justice. I don’t think anybody could take away the intent behind it. ...There were times when we had to agree to disagree, but in terms of the overall arch of his life and the arch of where we would like to go as a service, there was more alignment than there was less” (Winsa, 2011, para.9-10). Hamlin Grange, a journalist, businessman, and a member of Toronto Police Board also said this about Dudley Laws and his contributions to the black community: “He was absolutely necessary, because while he and others took to the streets, it allowed others in the black community—the so-called moderate voices—to work behind the
scenes to make change” (James, 2011, para.18). “Like a father, he encouraged me in my pursuits,” recalled Danielle Dowdy (James, 2011, para.19). Lawyer Selwyn Peiters credited Elder Dudley Laws for opening his eyes to the social injustices in the Police Force: “[Dudley Laws opened] my eyes to social conditions of inequality and racism in policing in Toronto.” Marie Clarke Walker of the Canadian Labour Congress said that Dudley Laws “made it seem okay to challenge systems that those of us who came from the Caribbean were taught not to challenge” (James, 2011, para.23). Finally, at his retirement gala, Toronto’s first black Deputy Police Chief, Keith Forde, praised Dudley Laws for helping to pave the path that led to his advancement in the force: “I know what you were doing was effective because any time when I socialize with my friends from the suburbs they would always say, ‘Thank God for Dudley.’ However, publicly they would be quiet” (James, 2011, para.19).

So, like other warriors gone before him, Elder Dudley Laws took the beatings—the police wiretaps and super-surveillance; the conviction for smuggling immigrants (later stayed by the Crown) the back-stabbers, he sought to help, who later went public to denounce him “Dudley Laws does not speak for me” declaration—just to fight for the weak and vulnerable. Today, there are less random Toronto Police Officers shooting of black men although, admittedly, there are more guns in the hands of young black men today than there were in the 1970s and 1980s when Buddy Evans, Lester Donaldson, Marlon Neal, Wade Lawson and others were killed or wounded by police officers. The black community owes it to Elder Dudley Laws. Arguably, of all the tributes paid to Elder Dudley Laws, these short words of Royson James, a city columnist, stood out: Dudley Laws “was a constant companion to those denied fair treatment; a lion of Judah to the dispossessed; ballast against inequity. He was a rock and is an irreplaceable treasure” (James, 2011, para.22).
The dissertation recognizes the valuable services of Elder Dudley Laws not because he was simply an activist in the black community. No, Dudley Laws embodied the ideals of non-violent resistance which the dissertation has been trumpeting. Although known by many as a student of Marcus Garvey, there is no doubt that Dudley Laws exhibited qualities that equally made him a student of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. His sense of humility and care for everybody who went to him was second to none. Even his vehement “enemies” could not deny his care and love for everybody who went to him for help. Although he was a public critic of the Toronto Police forces, he never turned down any invitation by the police force to work with them to address the problem of police brutality. Dudley Laws worked with the Toronto Police Force to establish what has become the greatest civilian oversight body—The Special Investigations Unit (SIU)—that monitors and checks the activities of law enforcement officers in the communities. Indeed, these few words penned by this dissertation do not do justice to the life and struggles of Elder Dudley Laws in the field of activism. I challenge any future researcher who is looking for new questions to explore to consider doing a thorough investigation about the life, philosophies, struggles, and challenges of Dudley Laws in his pursuit of justice in Toronto. Elder Laws, “May your soul rest in perfect peace.” *Damirifa due* (great farewell).

The second issue emerging in the global world is the recent civil disobedience in Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Iran, Libya, and Syria. It all started on December 17, 2010, when tens of thousands of self-immolating unemployed graduate students in Tunisia embarked on a series of street demonstrations to protest against mass unemployment, food inflation, general poor living conditions, corruption, and the stifling of freedom of speech by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali’s administration. After 28 days of constant public defiant demonstrations, in spite of the state’s efforts to stop them (see BBC News, 2011), President Zine
El Abidine Ben Ali, who had ruled Tunisia for 23 years, finally resigned from power. The Tunisia’s demonstrations and riots sent strong dramatic waves of social and political unrests in the Arab World with ordinary citizens demanding political reforms and asking their governments to resign for non-performance, corruption charges, general poor living conditions, and mass unemployment. In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak, after the initial use of police force to stop the resistance—killing of 300 protestors and injuring 4000—finally resigned as the President of Egypt after 30 years of ruling the country (BBC News, 2011). In Jordan, King Abdullah II, bowing to public pressure, fired his government and tasked the new Prime Minister to create reforms in government that will accommodate the concerns of the citizenry.

These success stories in Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan have further encouraged ordinary citizens in Algeria, Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, Syria, and Libya to openly call on their governments to step down and create institutional reforms. At the time of writing the postscript, the non-violent protest in Libya had turned into a civil war with rebels and Western powers (Britain, France, Canada, Italy, and the United States) on one side and Gaddafi and his loyal armies on the other side. What is happening in Libya and what happened in Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan raise a salient question about the best way to pursue social transformation. At the moment, social scientists are struggling with this question because the answer is not simply lagging somewhere. Of course, there are reasonable justifications for the protests in Libya to turn into open war, but is it the best and smartest decision? Again, was the military intervention of the West the best option? While these questions may linger on for a longer time, there are few observations the dissertation has about the subject under discussion.

First, it is very ironic and interesting, the “holier than thou” approach adopted by the media and politicians in the West concerning the crises in the Middle East and Africa. There has
been a huge public outcry, and justifiably so, about the brutal and violent manner in which these despotic leaders are handling the activist groups in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria. Of course, the dissertation fully objects to this appalling treatment of these civil right groups who are just exercising their democratic rights. However, it is important that the conversation about Libya, Egypt, and the Middle East does not turn into another bashing of Africa and the Middle East as primitive societies that do not cherish freedom of expression. We all know that Western democracy has not been all that tolerant of free speech. The recent G20 Summit, hosted by Toronto, and the manner in which the Canadian police force mishandled and abused Canadian citizens who were exercising their democratic rights, attest to the fact that we have our own “Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria” here in Canada. Further, these leaders who are today being touted by the West as the worst tyrants the world has ever seen were until recently, the darlings of the West. For instance, President Hosni Mubarak was a strong ally and friend of the United States. So the question the dissertation begs to ask is, at what point did the West realize that these leaders were tyrants and needed to be removed? Surely, this is not the first time the rest of the West is hearing about the abuse of power of these leaders. Thus, for the West to suddenly speak about these leaders as though it is just recently that they are seeing their despotic leadership style—when in actual fact the United States, for instance, since the President Clinton era has been working closely with President Hosni Mubarak for renditions, a covert program in which the C.I.A. snatched terror suspects from around the world and returned them to Egypt and elsewhere for interrogation, often under brutal circumstances (see Mayer 2009)—is very hypocritical. Meanwhile, available evidence clearly points to the fact that many of these police officers, in Egypt and Libya, who are torturing protestors, were trained in the West (see The Telegraph,
2011a; The Telegraph, 2011b; Rippert, 2011). What does this say about our own democracy and “open intolerance” towards dissenting views?

Second, the crisis in Libya, and the lack of meaningful progress in spite of the many weapons and supports the West has offered to the rebel groups, raises many questions about the effectiveness of violent resistance in securing immediate social change. Although the context in Egypt and Tunisia may not be the same as that of Libya, there is a worrying concern that the use of violent resistance in the case of Libya has not made any necessary inroads in removing Gaddafi. If anything, the violent resistance has exacerbated the already volatile situation in Libya. Today, the West is bombing Libya everyday in an effort to support the rebels to remove Gaddafi, but the real casualty of the war is the ordinary Libyans who have been caught in the cross-fire. Libyans are today fleeing the war to seek refuge in other countries. Everything Libyans have gained over the years may get lost through the war. But even more troubling is the cost of rebuilding Libya after the war. Who is going to bear that cost? One thing that cannot be denied is that for every infrastructure destroyed through the bombing, it will need and take Libyan resources to rebuild them. Sometimes, one wonders about the wisdom of bombing and destroying key infrastructures and property of a country that we claim to be “helping” when the country will need more resources to rebuild them when everything is over. What has the destruction of key strategic infrastructures in Libya got to do with the removal of a tyrant leader like Gaddafi? Could it be that the West is eager to destroy because it sees economic benefits in rebuilding them when the war is over? These questions are not to challenge the war strategy of the West, but it arouses curiosity when similar trends were seen during the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Third, the discourse about Libya, Egypt, and Middle East is about people who are yearning for Western democracy and freedom. The impression here is that those of us who lived
in the West ought to cherish our freedom and democracy; albeit, be more grateful to the state for creating a peaceful and tolerant society. Understandably, the political situations in Canada and the United States may not be as volatile as it is in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and the Middle East. However, this relatively peaceful and tolerant society is a product of the false sense of comfort, complacency, and apathy gradually creeping into our democracy rather than any hard work of government. What else can explain the silence and lack of responses from the masses when social programs affecting the poor and middle class are indiscriminately being cut by the local, provincial, and federal governments in Canada? If it is not apathy and a false sense of complacency, then how can any government that constantly over-tax the middle class while giving tax break to the rich get away with accountability? The fact that everyday institutional racism, classism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism go unnoticed clearly shows what has happened to our democracy. Probably, the discussion about Libya, Egypt, and the Middle East should have been: When will Canadians and Americans take a cue from Libya and Egypt? The uncontrollable widening gap between the haves and have-nots is our Egypt. The racism, Islamophobia, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and classism in our education are our Libya. The new bio-politics of disposability is our Middle East. The only difference between the democracy of Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and the Middle East and the West is that the masses over there are alive while those of us in the West constantly wallow in our false sense of complacency and security. The Libyans and Egyptians are tired of their status quo while we constantly accept the status quo as the unchangeable norm.

These countries have shown that non-violent resistance can secure change even against a tyrannical leader like Hosni Mubarak. When the masses are resilient and committed, nothing can stop the course of justice. When the masses shake off the chains of apathy and victimhood to
speak truth to power, no amount of intimidation and threat of violence can stop the tide of justice and equity. The Late President of the United States Abraham Lincoln once noted, “And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.” The current generation owe it a responsibility to stand up against the tide of injustice and oppression growing in our society. After all, the only chain to lose is the chain of apathy and moral distancing. Perhaps, the astute words of Martin Luther King, Jr. are something for us to think about: “Cowardice asks the question ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question ‘Is it politic?’ But conscience asks the question 'Is it right?’ And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but because conscience tells one it is right.” For this dissertation, the time for humanity to take position against global injustice and oppression is now.
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ETHICS REVIEW PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM FOR
SUPERVISED AND SPONSORED RESEARCHERS
(For use by graduate students, post-docs and visiting professors and researchers)

SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT
SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: IN SEARCH OF NON-VIOLENCE WORKING FRAMEWORK FOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOLING ACTIVISM IN CANADA

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Investigator:
Title: Mr. Name: Paul Banahene Adjei
Department: Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Mailing address: 1624 Bloor Street, Apt 100. Mississauga, Ontario. L4X 2S2
Phone: 647-866-4551 Fax: Email: padjei@oise.utoronto.ca or paul.adjei@utoronto.ca

Level of Project
Faculty Research □ Post-Doctoral Research □
Student Research: Doctoral □ Masters □ Student Number 992560554

Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor:
Title: Professor  Name: George Sefa Dei
Department: Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Mailing address: 252 Bloor Street, Rm. 12-242, SESE, OISE Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6
Phone: 416-978-0460  Fax: 416-923-4651  Email: gdei@oise.utoronto.ca

Co-Investigators:
Are co-investigators involved?  Yes ☐  No ☒

Title:  Name:
Department:
Mailing address:
Phone:  Fax:  Email:

Title:  Name:
Department:
Mailing address:
Phone:  Fax:  Email:

Please append additional pages if necessary.

3. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Health Sciences ☐  Education ☐  Social Science & Humanities ☒

Please consult http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html to determine which Research Ethics Board your proposal should be submitted to.

4. LOCATION(S) WHERE THE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED:

If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring administrative approval/consent (e.g. in a school), please include all draft administrative consent letters. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of approval are required, and to obtain approval prior to starting the project.

University of Toronto ☐  Hospital ☐  specify site(s)
School board or community agency ☐  specify site(s)

Community within the GTA ☒  The research will be conducted among students leaders at CUPE 3902, 3907, Graduate Students Union (GSU), and Association of Part-time Students Union (APSU) at the University of Toronto and York University. It will also include professors teaching within University of Toronto and York University. Finally, individuals working with activist organizations (either voluntary or paid) (e.g.: No one is illegal, Food Banks, and environmental groups will also be included in the research.
International □ specify site(s)
Other □ specify site(s)

The University of Toronto has recently reached an agreement with the University-Affiliated Teaching Hospitals, regarding ethics review of hospital-based research. Based on this agreement, certain hospital-based research is now exempt from ethics review at the University of Toronto. If your research is based at a University-Affiliated Teaching Hospital please consult the following document to determine whether or not your research requires review at the University of Toronto http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_where_tahsn.html.

5. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL(S)

(a) Does the research involve another institution or site? Yes □ No ☒
(b) Has any other REB approved this project? Yes □ No ☒
If Yes please provide a copy of the approval letter upon submission of this application.
If No, will any other REB be asked for approval?
Yes □ (please specify which REB) No ☒

6. FUNDING OF THE PROJECT

(a) Please check one:

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If one protocol is to cover more than one grant, please include all fund numbers.

(b) If waiting for funding, do you wish to postdate ethics approval to the release of funds?
Yes □ No ☒

(c) For funded research, will more than one protocol be submitted to cover all research funded by the respective grant? Yes □ No ☒
If Yes, this is # of

7. CONTRACTS

Is there a funding or non-funded agreement associated with the research?
Yes □ No ☒
If Yes, please include 3 copies upon submission of this application.
8. PROJECT START AND END DATES

Estimated start date for this project: May 20, 2009
Estimated completion date for this project: August 30, 2010

9. SCHOLARLY REVIEW

Please check one:

☒ The research has been approved by a thesis committee, or equivalent (required for thesis research)
☐ The research has undergone scholarly review prior to this submission for ethical review
   (specify review committee)
☐ The research will undergo scholarly review prior to funding
   (specify review committee)
☐ The research will not undergo scholarly review apart from this ethics review

10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

(a) Will the researcher(s), members of the research team, and/or their partners or immediate family members:
   (i) Receive any personal benefits (e.g. financial benefit such as remuneration, intellectual property rights, rights of employment, consultancies, board membership, share ownership, stock options, etc.) as a result of or in connection to this study?  Yes ☐  No ☒
   (ii) If Yes, please describe the benefits below. (Do not include conference and travel expense coverage, or other benefits which are standard to the conduct of research.)

(b) Describe any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information (during or at the end of the study) that has been placed on the investigator(s). This includes controls placed by sponsor, advisory or steering committee.

No restriction has been placed on access or disclosure of research information by any individual or organization during or at end of the study.

However, in order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of my research participants, I will respect any request from my research participant to exclude any information she or he will share with me during the interview that she or he does not want to be part of the final research findings. I will also remove any information share by any research participant who wants to discontinue
the research from the final research findings. With the exception of such requests, I do not anticipate any request that will restrict access and disclosure of research information.

(c) Where relevant, please explain any pre-existing relationship between the researcher(s) and the researched (e.g. instructor-student; manager-employee; minister-congregant).

There is no pre-existing relationship between me and my research participants. However, having university of Toronto as part of my research community, I expect some of my research participants to be my fellow students at the university. Some of the research participants may end up being university professors, but they will not be among university professors I have taken academic course with them or have had any academic relations that may affect the research.

SECTION B – SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Please include a list of appendices for all additional materials submitted.

11. RATIONALE

Describe the purpose and background rationale for the proposed project, and, if relevant, the hypotheses/research questions to be examined.

The last four centuries have witnessed protracted and intractable violence in ways that defile human logic and common sense. This can be attributed to the fact that the various social institutions and structures set up to satisfy basic human needs have, unfortunately, been used as tools of exploitation, political exclusion, and unequal distribution of resources. The nature of social relations is based on the politics of “zero sum game,” where those who control power and privilege continue to seek their own interest at the expense of the marginalized and the disadvantaged. Burton (1990) has rightly argued that any set of institutions and social relationships that deny the identity, social recognition, autonomy, and preconditions for human
development, create an environment of conflict. From the viewpoint of Burton, the existence of injustice and oppression within established power structures is a seed for violent confrontation; although one can also argue that the presence of injustice and oppression itself is violence. Frantz Fanon argues that colonialism—that is, injustice and oppression—cannot be separated from violence; they both go hand in hand (Fanon 1963). However, violence also teaches the oppressed to resist. Thus, for the oppressed groups, violence is a necessary choice; not just to redeem their freedom from oppressive regime, but also to cure the internalization of inferiority created through colonial encounter (Fanon 1963). One could assume from Fanon’s articulation that violence is a cleansing force that frees the oppressed from despair and inaction. In this case, the violence of the marginalized is not intrinsic, but rather instrumental because its goal is to remove the chains of oppression.

Understandingly, the oppressive relations should be halted at every cost, and I do not intend to take Frantz Fanon on for recommending strategies to halt oppression. However, we need to ask that since violence dehumanizes both the perpetrator and its victim, at what point does violence start healing? Gail Presbey (1996) contends that for the victim of violence, it is hard to say that there is any healing taking place. In other words, there is no retribution enough to help victims of violence to forget their pain and suffering, let alone obtain healing. Indeed, Frantz Fanon’s own works catalogue the damage to the physical and mental well-being that violence brings to a person (Fanon 1963; 1967). Presbey (1996) argues that rather than healing, violence; instead, stubbornly position individuals against reform, change, and even healing (p.287).

This research will offer an epistemological shift to the discussion on the role of violence in creating structural and institutional change. Although the research does not to condemn those
who use violence as tool of social change; it, nevertheless, explore alternative path to violence and the possibilities and pitfalls of using non-violence framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century.

The learning objective will be: to solicit comments, suggestions, ideas, and criticism from university school activists (anti-racists, anti-sexists, anti-classists, anti-homophobia educators, disability studies, union workers, and environmentalists) on the possibilities of borrowing, modifying, and developing the non-violence frameworks of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr to create a working framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify differences and similarities in how various university school activists (anti-racists, anti-sexists, anti-classists, anti-homophobia educators, disability studies, union workers, and environmentalists) conceptualize and operationalize violence.

2. To identify the limits, boundaries, risks, peril, and cost of borrowing, modifying, and using Gandhi and King’s philosophy of non-violence to create a working framework for university schooling activism.

3. To identify the role of spirituality in university schooling activism.

The research will be guided by these three questions:

1. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) describes violence as symbolic. Nacy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (2004) describe violence as something that defies easy categorization. Franz Fanon (1967) sees colonialism as violence. For Linda Smith (2001), research and knowledge production can be a form of violence. Thus, given the complex interpretation of violence, in what ways will antiracists, feminists, disabilities studies educators, anti-homophobia scholars, anti-
classists, environmentalists, and community activists conceptualize and operationalize violence within their field of studies and practices?

2. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. relied deeply on spirituality in the pursuit of social justice. Is there any role for spirituality in university schooling activism in the 21st century?

3. What are the opportunities, possibilities, risks, boundaries, and pitfalls in adopting and modifying Mahatma Gandhi’s and Martin Luther King Jr.’s non-violence framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century?

12. METHODS

Please describe all formal and informal procedures to be used, settings and types of information to be involved, as well as how data will be analyzed.

Attach a copy of all questionnaires, interview guides or other non-standard test instruments.

1. The research will involve qualitative, semi-structured, interviews of twenty purposively sampled social justice and anti-oppression workers operating in the Greater Toronto Area. These will include union leaders, community activists, environmentalists, student leaders, and educators. The qualitative, semi-structured interview is a suitable method for this research because it allows enhanced interactions between a researcher and research participants, which will allow me to gather detailed information from the research participants (See Berg 2001).

2. Sampling methods

Guided by purposive sampling method, I will select twenty social justice and anti-oppression workers—union leaders, community activists, environmentalists, student leaders—and critical
educators (antiracism, feminists, and anti-classism, anti-homophobia, and disability studies) operating in the Greater Toronto Area. The twenty selected individuals will be evenly distributed according to each organizations and equity interest groups that participate in the research.

3. **Interview procedure**

The interview questions were meant to draw out open-ended stories and responses, and where necessary, follow-up questions were posed for further clarification. Each interview will not be more than 45 minutes. Audiotape will be used to record the interview process. Taping the interviews allows people to speak more naturally without being distracted by someone taking notes and it will also ensure an accurate recording of responses. The interview will later be transcribed for data analysis. I will not be using questionnaire because I believe most of my research participants may not have time to respond to many written questions. Secondly, some participants may not put much thought to some of the answers they will give in response to questionnaires. For this reason, interviews seem to be the best option because it will give me considerable control over the situation. Anderson (1990) suggests that interview enables the researcher to pick up useful non-verbal cues that cannot be done with the use of questionnaires.

4. **Questionnaire**

I will have a set of questions to guide the interview (see Appendix A for set of question).

5. **How the data will be organized and analyzed?**

First, I will transcribe the research data. I will then read through the transcribed data in relations to the questions asked to identify what the data saying. Who is saying it? How many people are saying the same things? I will look out for commonalities, contradictions, and uniqueness of content in what each research participant is saying in relation to research questions and code them accordingly. The frequent appearance of a given code will indicate how most of my research
participants think along the same line. Out of these commonalities, research themes will emerge. I will then create a file for each category. I will then do content and discourse analysis of the data. In addition, I will also critically examine those responses that are unique in thought and argument. I will explore further why and how those thoughts emerge in the interview and the pedagogic possibility they offer in theorizing.

**13. PARTICIPANTS OR DATA SUBJECTS**

Describe the participants that will be recruited, or the subjects about whom personal information will be collected. Where active recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personal information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include.

All the research participants will be recruited within GTA. Since the research is using purposive sampling, an invitation letter will be sent to identify individuals (antiracism educators, feminists, anti-homophobia workers, anti-classists, disability studies educators, environmentalists) and organizations doing activist works. The organizations include CUPE 3902, 3907, Graduate Students Union (GSU), and Association of Part-time Students Union (APSU) at both University of Toronto and York University; No one is illegal, and Food bank. The invitation letter will spell-out the purpose of the research and what will be done with the outcome of the research. Please find the attached, a copy of invitation letter in the [appendix B](#).

30 people will be recruited for the research. Out of the 30, I will select twenty to participate in the research. The 20 research participants will be selected in ways that ensure that I have had a broad and fair representation of all equity interest groups (feminism, antiracism, disability studies, anti-classism, environmentalists, and anti-homophobia), and also activist organizations (CUPE 3902,
The research will not collect any personal information from my research participants. The information that will be collected will be the expert knowledge on activism.

14. EXPERIENCE

For projects that involve collection of sensitive data, methods that pose greater than minimal risk to participants, or involves a vulnerable population, please provide a brief description of the researcher’s/research team’s experience with this type of research.

This research does not involve collecting any sensitive data from research participants. In addition, the proposed methods to be used in the research will not pose any risk to research participants. However, in terms of experience, as a doctoral student who has worked as a research assistant to Professor George Dei, Tara Goldstein, and Njoki Wane; I have acquired enough training and experience on research works that involve human subjects. Thus, I am familiar with the safest ways to collect, handle, and store research data involving human subjects. I will apply the knowledge acquired working with these professors to collect, handle, and store my research data.

Finally, the research does not involve any research assistant.

15. RECRUITMENT

Where there is formal recruitment, please describe how and from where the participants will be recruited.
Where participant observation is to be used, please explain the form of insertion of the researcher into the research setting (e.g. living in a community, visiting on a bi-weekly basis, attending organized functions).

**Attach a copy of any posters, advertisements, flyers, letters, or telephone scripts to be used for recruitment.**

All the research participants will be recruited within GTA. Since the research is using purposive sampling, an invitation letter will be sent to identified individuals (antiracism educators, feminists, anti-homophobia workers, anti-classists, disability studies educators, environmentalists) and organizations doing activist works. The organizations include CUPE 3902, 3907, Graduate Students Union (GSU), and Association of Part-time Students Union (APSU) at both University of Toronto and York University; No one is illegal, and Food bank.

The invitation letter will spell-out the purpose of the research and what will be done with the research outcome. **Due to the work I do as a community activist, I often come across these individuals and even have their contact addresses. Thus, I will be contacting them personally and not through the organizations they work for.** Please find the attached, a copy of the invitation letter in **appendix B**

**Twenty potential participants** will be recruited for the research. The **twenty** research participants will be selected in ways that ensure that I have a broad and fair representation of all equity interest groups (feminism, antiracism, disability studies, anti-classism, environmentalists, and anti-homophobia), and also **representatives of CUPE 3902, 3902, GSU, APSU** at both University of Toronto and York University, No one is illegal, **and** Food bank. **As indicated earlier, because I am familiar with the works of these potential participants, I am able to tell at the recruitment stage which of the potential participants fit into each equity category.**
Once these individuals accept to participate in the research, information letter will be sent to each potential participant. The information letter will provide detailed information about the research. I will also provide my personal telephone number and e-mail address on the information letter so that any research participant who has questions about the research can call or write me for answers (see Appendix C for the information letter).

The interviews will be conducted at the convenient place of the research participants. The research does not involve attending any organized functions of the organizations in which my research participants are members. Also, I do not need to visit them weekly or bi-weekly.

16. COMPENSATION

(a) Will participants receive compensation for participation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) If Yes, please provide details.

There will not be any form of compensation.

(c) Where there is a withdrawal clause in the research procedure, if participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

Since there is no compensation involve in the research, there will not be a need of dealing with compensation should any research participants decide to withdraw.

SECTION C –DESCRIPTION OF THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

17. POSSIBLE RISKS
1. Indicate if the participants as individuals or as part of an identifiable group or community might experience any of the following risks by being part of this research project:

(a) Physical risks (including any bodily contact or administration of any substance)? Yes ☐ No ☒

(b) Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious or upset)? Yes ☐ No ☒

(c) Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation)? Yes ☐ No ☒

(d) Is there any deception involved? (See Debriefing, #21) Yes ☐ No ☒

2. If you answered Yes to any of the above, please explain the risks, and describe how they will be managed and/or minimized.

18. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project. Comment on the (potential) benefits to the scientific/scholarly community or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.

There is no potential direct benefit of this research to the research participants, but since these individuals research participants are activists, any research that is intended to explore opportunity to have a working framework for university schooling activism is a welcome development. Besides, the research findings will be part of the teaching material to guide future activism.

SECTION D – THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS
19. THE CONSENT PROCESS

Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain informed consent. Please include the experience of the team member with this participant population and/or training that this person will receive prior to recruitment. If there will be no written consent form, please explain (e.g. discipline, cultural appropriateness, etc.). Please note, it is the quality of the consent, not the format that is important. If the research involves extraction or collection of personal information from a data subject, please describe how consent from the individuals or authorization from the custodian will be obtained.

For information about the required elements in the information letter and consent form, please refer to [http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_best.html](http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_best.html).

Where applicable, please attach a copy of the Information Letter/Consent Form, the content of any telephone script, letters of administrative consent or authorization and/or any other material which will be used in the informed consent process.

As already noted, the research does not involve hiring or use of research assistant. As a doctoral student who has worked as a research assistant to Professor George Dei, Tara Goldstein, and Njoki Wane for the past 5 years; I have acquired enough training and experience on research works that involve human subjects. Thus, I am familiar with the safest ways to collect, handle, and store research data involving human subjects. I will apply the knowledge acquired working with these professors to guide the collection, handling, and storing of research data. The research will not involve collecting any personal data from research participants. In spite of all these, the letter of consent will include: information on the purpose of the research, the rights of research participants to withdraw from the research at any time, their rights to demand that all the information they shared in the research be removed out of the research findings, their rights to
demand that certain part of their interviews should be excluded from the research findings, their rights to refuse answering questions they feel uncomfortable answering, how the data will be stored, the conditions around participation, issue of confidentiality and anonymity, and how the final outcome of the research will be reported. The consent letter will be signed by principal researcher, with the full name and place of working. A space will be provided for research participants who agreed to be interviewed to sign, and print their name, and finally the contact address and telephone number of the Ethical review board of the University of Toronto for the research participants to contact should they want to verify if the research has been approved by the university. Please find the attached (Appendix C) for the sample of the letter.

20. CONSENT BY AN AUTHORIZED PARTY

If the participants are children, or are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission/information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the alternate consent as well as the assent process for participants.

The research does not involve children or a person not competent to consent.

21. DEBRIEFING

(a) If deception will be used in the research study, please explain what information/feedback will be provided to participants after participation in the project.

Please provide a copy of the written debriefing form, if applicable.
The research does not involve any deception. All information concerning the research will be provided to the research participants once they agree to do the research. I will also send information letter to all research participants. The information letter will provide detailed information about the research. I will also provide my personal telephone number and e-mail address on the information letter so that any research participant who has questions about the research can call or write me for answers (see Appendix C for the information letter).

(b) How will participants be informed of study results?

When the research interviews are transcribed and analyzed, copy of the transcription and draft of the research findings will be given back to research respondents for comments and feedback. At this stage, the research participants reserve the rights to demand the removal of any part of the research data they do not want to be part of the research findings.

22. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

(a) Where applicable, please describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project. Outline the procedures which will be followed to allow them to exercise this right.

The participant will be informed at the recruitment stage their rights to withdraw from the research at any time in the study. They will also be told of their rights to refuse any question they feel uncomfortable answering. This information will also be repeated when research participants are being brief about the research. It will also be on the consent form they will sign.

(b) Indicate what will be done with the participant’s data and any consequences which withdrawal may have on the participant.
All interview tapes will be stored and locked in a cabinet at my house. Data about participants who withdraw from research will be expunged from the research data and destroyed.

(c) If participants will not have the right to withdraw from the project at all, or beyond a certain point, please explain.

A research participant has the rights to withdraw from the research at any time without any restrain or constrain. She or he also has the rights to demand that the information she or he has shared is removed from the research data at any time within the research.

SECTION E –CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

23. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) Will the data be treated as confidential?  Yes ☒  No ☐

(b) Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants or informants, where applicable, or the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of results.

The names of the research participants and their institution will not be reported. Pseudonyms will be picked for research participants. Participants will have the opportunity to ask me not to record particular interactions or remarks. They will also have the opportunity to ask me not to include particular interactions or remarks that have already been recorded when reporting the findings of the study. In each of these cases, participant’s requests will be granted. The data and tapes of the research will be stored and locked in a cabinet at my house. The audiotapes, transcripts, and questions will be destroyed 10 years after the research.
(c) Explain how written records, video/audio tapes and questionnaires will be secured, how long they will be retained, and provide details of their final disposal or storage.

All written records, audiotapes, and questionnaires will be secured, stored, and keyed in a cabinet at my house. The data will be kept for 10 years and then destroyed.

(d) If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, please explain.

The names and identity of my research participants will be protected and kept confidential in the research.

Although this research does not pose any harm to anybody, one never knows or can predict how information share by research participant can be used against him or her in future by someone else. This is why anonymity and confidentiality cannot be treated as something less important in research no matter how harmless a research may appear.

24. PRIVACY REGULATIONS

For research involving extraction or collection of personal information, provincial, national and/or international laws may apply. My signature as Principal Investigator, in Section G of this protocol form, confirms that I understand and will comply with all relevant laws governing the collection and use of personal information in research.

SECTION F – CONTINUING REVIEW OF ONGOING RESEARCH

RISK MATRIX: REVIEW TYPE BY GROUP VULNERABILITY AND RESEARCH RISK – check one:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research Risk</th>
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<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1 ☒</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

305
See the *Instructions for Ethics Review Protocol Submission Form* for detailed information about the Risk Matrix.

Briefly explain/justify the level of risk and group vulnerability reported above (max 100 words):
The research does not pose any risk to any individual or research participants. The research is just gathering the knowledge of the research participants on activism. The information they will provide will not pose any harm to them or anybody. If anything, it will increase people’s knowledge on activism.

**Review Type**

Based on the level of risk, please submit the appropriate number of copies of the Protocol Submission Form for Review Type:

- **Risk level = 1**: Expedited Review
- **Risk level = 2 or 3**: Full Review

Information about individual REBs, including the number of copies required for each review type, can be found here: [www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html](http://www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics/eh_rebs.html)

Please note that the final determination of Review Type and program of Continuing Review will be made by the University of Toronto REB and the Ethics Review Office.

**SECTION G – SIGNATURES**

All researchers and their respective Departmental Chair/Dean or designate must sign below:

As the **Investigator** on this project, my signature confirms that I will ensure that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted in accordance with all relevant University, provincial, national and international policies and regulations that govern research involving
human participants. Any deviation from the project as originally approved will be submitted to the Research Ethics Board for approval prior to its implementation.

For student researchers, my signature confirms that I am a registered student in good standing with the University of Toronto. My project has been reviewed and approved by my advisory committee (where applicable). If my status as a student changes, I will inform the Ethics Review Office.

| Signature of Investigator: | Date: |

For Graduate Students the signature of the Faculty Supervisor is required. For Post-Doctoral Fellows and Visiting Professors or Researchers, the signature of the Faculty Sponsor is required.

As the Faculty Supervisor of this project, my signature confirms that I have reviewed and approve the scientific merit of the research project and this ethics protocol submission. I will provide the necessary supervision to the student researcher throughout the project, to ensure that all procedures performed under the research project will be conducted in accordance with relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human subjects. This includes ensuring that the level of risk inherent to the project is managed by the level of research experience that the student has, combined with the extent of oversight that will be provided by the Faculty Supervisor and/or On-site Supervisor.

As the Faculty Sponsor for this project, my signature confirms that I have reviewed and approve of the research project and will assume responsibility, as the University representative, for this research project. I will ensure that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted
in accordance with all relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

As the **Departmental Chair/Dean**, my signature confirms that I am aware of the proposed activity. My administrative unit will follow guidelines and procedures which ensure compliance with all relevant University, provincial, national or international policies and regulations that govern research involving human subjects. My signature also reflects the willingness of the department, faculty or division to administer the research funds, if there are any, in accordance with University, regulatory agency and sponsor agency policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Departmental Chair/Dean (or designate):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Departmental Chair/Dean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or designate)</td>
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</table>
Appendix A: Guide questions for the interview

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. How, when, and why did you get involved in activism?
3. What informs your sense of activism?
4. How will you conceptualize violence?
5. How does your definition of violence incorporate the work you are doing as activist?
6. What do you know about Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr?
7. What do you know about their non-violence framework? [NB: I will explain it to any research subject who is not familiar with the framework]
8. How do you see, if any, the ideas of Gandhi and King on non-violence being used to develop a working framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century?
9. How do you consider love a central component of activism?
10. How do you connect your struggle to end injustice with other struggles?
11. What are the challenges, if any, you envisage in developing such framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century?
12. What are the possibilities, if any, you envisage in developing such framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century?
13. What do you know about spirituality?
14. How do you see the role of spirituality, if any, in university schooling activism?
15. Is there anything else you want to say that I did not ask you?
16. Do you have any question for me?

Thank you for participation
Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Date:

Dear

My name is Paul Banahene Adjei, a doctoral student at Sociology of Equity Studies of Education (SESE) of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of University of Toronto. I am conducting a study for my doctoral dissertation on “Social change in the 21st century: In search of non-violence working framework for university schooling activism in Canada. The research is supervised by Professor George Sefa Dei of Sociology and Equity Studies of Education (SESE) of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of University of Toronto.

The research will involve qualitative, semi-structured, interviews of twenty purposively sampled social justice and anti-oppression workers operating in Toronto Area. These will include union leaders, community activists, environmentalists, student leaders, and critical educators. The interview questions are meant to draw out open-ended stories and responses, and where necessary, follow-up questions will be posed for further clarification. Each interview will not be more than 45 minutes. Audiotape will be used to record the interview process. Taping the interviews allows people to speak more naturally without being distracted by someone taking notes and it will also ensure an accurate recording of responses. The interview will later be transcribed for data analysis

You have been purposively selected as one of the experts to be interviewed in this research because of the central role you are playing in university schooling activism; especially in the area of disability studies. Your participation will help this research to produce a working framework that can guide future university schooling activism in Canada.
If you are interested in participating in the study, please let me know by replying to this e-mail invitation. Should you accept the invitation to participate in the research, a letter containing detailed information about the research will be sent to you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Paul Banahene Adjei
Ph.D. Candidate, OISE
647-866-4551

Appendix C: Information

Date: ………………………

Dear ……………………………………………………..

Thank you for accepting to be part of the research. As indicated on the invitation letter, my name is Paul Banahene Adjei, a doctoral student at Sociology of Equity Studies of Education (SESE) of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of University of Toronto. I am conducting a study for my doctoral dissertation on the possibilities, opportunities, limitations, cost, peril, and consequences of borrowing, modifying, and using the non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr to create a working framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century in Canada. The research is supervised by Professor George Sefa Dei of Sociology and Equity Studies of Education (SESE) of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of University of Toronto.

The goal of the research is to solicit comments, suggestions, ideas, and criticism from research participants on the possibilities of borrowing, modifying, and developing the non-violence frameworks of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr to create a working
framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century. The research will explore questions such as what are the various ways critical educators (antiracists, feminists, disabilities studies, anti-homophobia scholars, anti-classists, and environmentalists) and community activists conceptualize and operationalize violence? What are the opportunities, possibilities, risks, boundaries, and pitfalls in adopting and modifying Mahatma Gandhi’s and Martin Luther King Jr.’s non-violence framework for university schooling activism in the 21st century?

This research has become necessary because the last four centuries have witnessed protracted and intractable violence in ways that defile human logic and common sense. This can be attributed to the fact that the various social institutions and structures set up to satisfy basic human needs have, unfortunately, been used as tools of exploitation, political exclusion, and unequal distribution of resources. This research offers an epistemological shift to the discussion on the role of violence in creating structural and institutional change. Although the research does not condemn those who use violence as tool of social change; it, nevertheless, explore alternative path to violence and the possibilities and pitfalls of such path in creating social change in the 21st century.

Data gathering

The research will involve qualitative, semi-structured, interviews of twenty purposively sampled social justice and anti-oppression workers operating in the Greater Toronto Area. These will include union leaders, community activists, environmentalists, student leaders, and educators. The interview questions were meant to draw out open-ended stories and responses, and where necessary, follow-up questions will be posed for further clarification. Each interview will not be more than 45 minutes. Audiotape will be used to record the interview process. Taping the interviews allows people to speak more naturally without being distracted by someone taking
notes and it will also ensure an accurate recording of responses. The interview will later be transcribed for data analysis.

**Storage of Data**

The tapes and transcriptions of the interview will be stored in locked filing cabinets at my home to ensure confidentiality. The tapes will be destroyed 10 years after the study.

**Participation**

Participation in the research is voluntary. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the research you may do so. If you also do not want to answer specific question, you may do so without any probing on my part to find out why. All collected data of the research participant who will withdraw from the research will be destroyed and excluded from the research reports. When the research interview is transcribed, you will be given a copy of the transcription to read and comment if the transcription clearly captures what exactly you want to say. You reserve the rights to demand that any part of the transcription you are uncomfortable with be excluded from the final research findings.

**Confidentiality**

Participation in this research is confidential. Your name and anything that may give away your identity will not be included in any part of the final manuscript. If at anytime during the interview, there is something you do not want me to record, just tell me and I will not record or include in the report.

**Reporting the results**

The outcome of the research will be used as a doctoral dissertation. The manuscript will also be submitted to a publisher for publication for scholarly purpose. The first draft of research
findings will be given to you to read. If there are any sessions of the interview you may want to be removed from the final draft, it will be done.

**Debriefing**

This research does not contain any element of deception. Everything about the research has been told already. However, should the need arise for additional information or inquiry, please feel free to contact me by my number: 647-866-4551 or send it to my e-mail: padjei@oise.utoronto.ca

**Contacting the Ethical Committee of University of Toronto**

As a way of helping you to verify whether this research has been approved by the ethical review committee of my school, I have included the contact address of the University of Toronto to help you verify this research:

Dean Sharpe  
Research Ethics Officer,  
Social Sciences & Humanities  
416-978-5585  
Simcoe Hall, 27 King's College Circle,  
Rm 133S University of Toronto  
Toronto,  
Ontario M5S 1A1

I am very excited about the research and I hope that you will want to participate. Many thanks for your interest and co-operation.

Sincerely,

Paul Banahene Adjei  
Ph.D. Candidate  
OISE, University of Toronto  
647-866-4551  
padjei@oise.utoronto.ca
Appendix D – Letter of Consent

Dear Paul,

Re: Social change in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century: In search of Non-violence working framework for university schooling activism in Canada.

I----------------------------------------------- (Please print name) has read the letter on research information describing the research project you plan to undertake, and I agree to be a participant in the study.

I understand the interview with me will take place at a mutually convenient location for a period of about forty-five minutes. I also understand that our conversation will be tape-recorded with my consent, and that I may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time during the interview until I indicate that it may be turned on again. I understand that my contributions will remain confidential, that my participation is voluntary, that my identity will remain anonymous, and that I am not required to share any information that is not comfortable for me to volunteer. I also understand that refusal to participate in the study or withdrawal from it will not in any way affect me academically, professionally, or personally. I also understand that the information that you will collect during our talks is only for the research that you are doing and it will never be used for anything else. I also understand that the outcome of the research will be used as a doctoral dissertation. The manuscript may also be submitted to a publisher for publication for scholarly purpose. The first draft of research findings will be given to me to read, that I reserve the rights to demand removal of any sessions of the interview that I do not want to be part of the final draft, that my request will be followed. I also understand that the research does not contain any element of deception. That everything about the research has been told already. That should the need arise for additional information or inquiry, I can contact you by the
number: 647-866-4551 or send it to your e-mail: padjei@oise.utoronto.ca That I reserve the rights to contact the Ethical Committee of University of Toronto by the address provided below to verify whether this research has been approved by the ethical review committee of your school:

Dean Sharpe
Research Ethics Officer,
Social Sciences & Humanities
416-978-5585
Simcoe Hall, 27 King's College Circle,
Rm 133S University of Toronto
Toronto,
Ontario M5S 1A1
# Annual Renewal of Ethics Approval Application

## 2. Title of Research Project

**Social change in the 21st century: In search of non-violent working framework for university schooling activism in Canada**

**Protocol Reference #: 23904**  
**Original Approval Date: March 25, 2009**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Previous Renewal Date</th>
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## 2. Investigator Information

**Investigator:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name: Paul Banahene Adjei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T):** Sociology and Equity Studies in Education

**Mailing address:** 1750 Bloor Street, Apt 401, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 1S9

**Phone:** 647-866-4551  
**Email:** paul.adjei@utoronto.ca

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral Research</td>
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**Student Number:** 992560554

**Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name: George Sefa Dei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T):** Sociology and Equity Studies in Education

**Mailing address:** 252 Bloor Street, Rm. 12-242, SESE, OISE Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6

**Phone:** 416-978-0460  
**Email:** gdei@oise.utoronto.ca

## 5. Location(s) Where the Research Will Be Conducted:

- University of Toronto
- Hospital specify site(s)
School board or community agency □ specify site(s)
Community within the GTA ☑ specify site(s) Racialized Female teachers working with Toronto Catholic Schools living in Greater Toronto Area

International □ specify site(s)
Other □ specify site(s)

4. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL(S)

a) Does the research involve another institution or site? Yes □ No ☑

b) Has any other REB renewed the ethics approval for this project? Yes □ No ☑
If Yes, please provide a copy of the approval letter with this application.

5. FUNDING STATUS

a) 

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<td>Agency:</td>
<td>Submission date:</td>
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Unfunded □
If unfunded, please provide an explanation why no funding is needed?

*b) If funded, are funds administered through UofT Research Services? Yes □ No ☑

c) If “No,” what site/institution administers the funds?

6. PROJECT INFORMATION

a) Have there been any changes to the study protocol, consent process or documents since the most recent approval? Yes □ No ☑

If Yes, please submit an Amendment Form with your application. Revised procedures may not be used until approved. Please note that this does not refer to already approved amendments.

b) Have there been any changes in research personnel who interact with participants and/or have access to personal data? Yes □ No ☑

If Yes, please list former/new personnel and position:
c) What is the current status of the study?

☑ Research participants are currently being recruited/participating.
  Provide start and end dates (estimated): June 2009 - June 2010

☐ Research participants will be recruited/participate.
  Provide start and end dates (estimated):

☐ Research participant involvement has been completed.

☐ The study is closed. (Please complete the Study Completion Report)

☐ This study involves secondary data analysis only.

If Annual Renewal 4 of 4: If recruitment or data collection continues beyond 5 years from your original ethics approval, you will be required to submit a new application for review by the appropriate REB. Please refer to your 5-digit ethics protocol number in the title of your new ethics submission.

d) How many research participants are currently in the study? 20

e) How many research participants have completed the study? 12

f) Did any research participants actively withdraw from the study? Yes ☐ No ☑

If Yes please describe circumstances below, use additional page(s) if necessary.


g) Since receiving original ethics approval, have any ethical concerns (minor or major) arisen?
   Yes ☐ No ☑

If Yes, please describe concerns in detail, use additional page(s) if necessary.

h) Have there been any adverse or unanticipated events?
   Yes ☐ No ☑

If Yes, please submit an Adverse/Unanticipated Event Report Form as soon as possible.

7. STUDY SUMMARY, PROGRESS AND RESULTS
Provide a brief summary of study progress, and results. Use additional page(s) if necessary.

So far, I have written to all the research participants. Those who have agreed and have been selected to participate in the research have already gone through the information sections. 12 of the agreed and selected research participants have already been interviewed. I am in the process of interviewing the remaining 8 research participants. Looking at the agreed timetable with the remaining research participants, I anticipate to complete the interviewing process by June 2010.
8. SIGNATURES

My signature certifies that the above information is correct and that no unapproved procedures will be used on this study.

➢ U of T Office of Research Ethics accepts e-mailed or scanned submissions as long as it is sent from a faculty researcher's/supervisor's institutional e-mail account. Please send the completed documents via e-mail to ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

Signature of Investigator: ____________________________ Date:

AND (if applicable):

Signature of Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor: ____________________________ Date:

Instructions:
A suspension of approval may occur if we do not receive the annual renewal form at least 14 days before date of expiry. Suspension of approval may have implications for administration of funds and compliance with University policy. You may email your Annual Renewal Form to ethics.review@utoronto.ca or fax it to 416.946.5763. You may also drop off one hardcopy of the form to our office at the address listed in the footer.