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**Contesting the Liberal Peace: Temporal Disruption and  
Youth Agency in Peace Education Frameworks**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis critiques institutional peace education frameworks – particularly those developed by UNESCO and UNICEF – for reproducing liberal hegemonies that constrain youth agency and erase structural violence in conflict-enduring contexts. Grounded in decolonial theory and critical pedagogy, this argument shows how peace frameworks govern youth through timelines of emotional regulation and civic readiness, casting resistance as immaturity and peace as a deferred reward. Focusing on Palestine as a case study, the thesis analyzes institutional programs such as Global Citizenship Education (GCED), the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), *Learning for Peace*, and the *Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme*. These initiatives, while framed as empowering, often impose depoliticized curricula that obscure the structural conditions shaping young lives. In response, the thesis proposes the Temporal Disruption Model: a pedagogical framework that centers youth storytelling– subversive, testimonial, and speculative– as a mode of temporal resistance. This model challenges the liberal peace’s scripts of emotional maturity and delayed agency, reclaiming memory, refusal, and imagination as valid and urgent forms of political presence.

## **Section 1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Foundations of Peace Education**

Peace education has long been presented as a tool for building more just and peaceful societies. Commonly defined as the process of teaching about the roots of violence and strategies for nonviolent conflict resolution, it spans both formal schooling and informal community learning. These efforts often aim to cultivate empathy, civic responsibility, and cooperation (Harris 2004).

Historically, peace education drew from diverse intellectual traditions. Maria Montessori emphasized moral development in early childhood; Paulo Freire (1970) framed education as a radical, political act grounded in dialogue and critical consciousness; Elise Boulding (2000) advocated for participatory, imaginative engagement with the future; and Johan Galtung (1969) introduced “positive peace” as not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice and equity. These foundations positioned peace education as not only about personal transformation, but also about societal reimagining.

Yet today, institutionalized peace education often reduces this radical potential to technocratic, depoliticized aims. Rather than confronting injustice, many programs emphasize social harmony, in which peace is a personal behavior rather than collective struggle.

This thesis begins from a central concern: that peace education, as currently structured by major international institutions, does not merely fall short of its transformative promise– it actively constrains youth agency, obscures institutionalized injustices, and regulates how young

people are taught to move through time. In spaces where youth live under occupation, displacement, or ongoing precarity, peace education does not function as liberation, rather, it becomes a form of governance.

## **1.2 Youth, Institutions, and the Liberal Peace**

While peace education is often framed as a universal good, its institutional forms target one of the most underrepresented demographics: youth. However, formal education systems and internationally sponsored curricula are saturated with the idea that young people are both uniquely vulnerable to violence and uniquely capable of transforming society— if properly guided.

Youth are imagined as ideal subjects for peacebuilding: flexible, educable, and integral to long-term stability. This assumption is embedded in global policy frameworks such as UN Security Council Resolution 2250, which calls for youth inclusion in peace and security efforts. Yet this inclusion is rarely political. Instead, youth are positioned as future citizens-in-training— not yet ready to act, but always preparing.

In institutional peace education programs, youth agency is not presumed— it is something to be earned. These programs are designed to teach students how to manage trauma, demonstrate tolerance, and perform civic behaviors. Young people are taught to rehearse belonging in systems that have yet to make space for them. Ethical conduct and behavioral conformity are framed as markers of progress, with peace imagined as a future reward. Political critique, by contrast, is rarely encouraged; it is often cast as incompatible with the goals of tolerance and reconciliation.

This pedagogical approach reinforces a power imbalance: youth are not encouraged to interrogate or resist the systems that shape their lives, but rather to adapt to them. Emotions like grief and anger are framed as opportunities for emotional management, rather than as sources of political insight or agency. At the institutional level, peace education teaches youth to govern their emotions—ultimately shaping them into governable subjects aligned with the goals of social cohesion and tolerance.

These pedagogical logics reflect what critical peace theorists describe as the liberal peace paradigm: a model that prioritizes civility and governance over structural change. Institutions like UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) promote frameworks such as Global Citizenship Education (GCED), the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), and *Learning for Peace*—all of which imagine peace as a process of moral and emotional development, not political transformation.

To fully understand how youth are shaped by these frameworks, we must look not only at what they are taught, but when they are permitted to act. Institutional peace education does not just discipline behavior— it disciplines temporality. This is where the critique must turn next.

### **1.3 Rethinking Peace through Time and Agency**

If institutional peace education governs youth through behavior, it also governs them through time. Across frameworks like GCED, ASPnet, and Learning for Peace, peace is imagined as a linear process: from conflict to reconciliation, trauma to healing, marginality to inclusion. Education, then, is framed as a developmental journey toward civic maturity.

This vision of peace is not simply pedagogical— it is temporal. These frameworks unfold in an orderly, staged progression where justice is always in purview. Time itself becomes the hegemonic tool of governance— especially disempowering in contexts of occupation, displacement, or legal erasure. Youth are asked to wait for justice, and in the meantime, rehearse civic belonging in systems that actively exclude them, all the while regulating their emotional responses to ongoing violence. The present is not treated as a legitimate site of agency, but as a transitional phase to be endured— framed as a necessary sacrifice for the common good.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that liberal peace frameworks are designed to defer conflict resolution by imposing narrow temporal constraints on youth. These programs do not ask what conditions make peace impossible today; instead, they ask how young people can be prepared for peace at some indefinite point in the future. Temporality, then, is not neutral— it is both pedagogical and political. Time is partitioned into stages of development, emotional readiness, and civic acceptability, and students are taught to follow these timelines as moral pathways toward an imagined future of peace and progress.

Additionally, this thesis argues that reclaiming youth agency requires reclaiming time itself. If youth experience time as fragmented, recursive, or suspended, those temporalities must be seen not as deficits, but as forms of knowledge. These lived temporalities— shaped by occupation, displacement, and structural violence— are not obstacles to peace, but critical vantage points for understanding where liberal frameworks fail. Recognizing them as epistemologies in their own right challenges the assumption that peace must unfold through linear, donor-defined timelines, and opens space for a pedagogy grounded in presence, memory, and rupture. A liberatory peace education must begin by refusing the linearity that structures institutional frameworks— and by restoring the political present as a space of voice, memory, and resistance.

### **1.4 The Temporal Disruption Model: A Decolonial Intervention**

If institutional peace education disciplines youth through linear time, then a transformative pedagogy must begin by disrupting that temporal logic. This is the aim of the *Temporal Disruption Model*— a framework that centers youth storytelling as a form of temporal

resistance. Rather than treating narrative as an emotional outlet or illustrative case, the model positions storytelling as a political and pedagogical practice: one that imagines liberatory futures beyond the embedded scripts of institutional peace.

The model draws from three intersecting bodies of thought. First, critical peace theory reveals how education often operates as a technology of liberal governance—reframing justice as civility and re-coding dissent as emotional immaturity. Second, decolonial theory—such as the work of Michalinos Zembylas, who integrates these insights into pedagogical practice—challenges the universalist frameworks of liberal modernity and calls for epistemic disobedience: the reclamation of knowledge systems, identities, and temporalities erased by colonial rule. Third, narrative inquiry offers both a method and a pedagogical orientation. It treats storytelling not as a chronological account of development or reconciliation, but as a site of rupture, speculation, and survival—where memory and imagination become tools of resistance.

In this model, youth are not passive learners preparing for civic participation nor compliant recipients of peace; they are temporal agents speaking from suspended presents, fractured futures, and memories that institutional curricula attempt to forego. Through testimonial, imaginative, and political narrative, youth reclaim time as something lived and not staged—and assert agency not as future potential, but as present force.

The model is decolonial in both method and intent. It insists that youth experiencing occupation, displacement, or structural violence already inhabit plural, nonlinear temporalities—temporalities that cannot be reconciled with the standardized timelines of institutional peacebuilding. These lived relationships to time are not obstacles to peace; they are the very conditions from which any meaningful peace pedagogy must emerge.

The urgency of this intervention is most visible in contested territories like Palestine, where existence, citizenship, history, and culture are daily sites of erasure—and where peace education is often deployed in tandem with ongoing colonial violence. In these contexts, students are asked to perform emotional recovery within systems that have never acknowledged their dispossession, and to engage in democratic activities under repressive conditions that marginalize and surveil them. The Temporal Disruption Model does not aim to “fix” these students. It seeks to vindicate them—by creating pedagogical spaces that honor memory, validate resistance, and respond to the realities of protracted violence.

## **1.5 Roadmap and Relevance**

This thesis proceeds in six sections, each building toward the central argument that peace education frameworks, as currently constructed, discipline youth through linear time and shape them into emotionally compliant but politically passive subjects—while narrative disruption offers an alternative, decolonial pedagogy rooted in agency, memory, and presence.

Section 2 reviews the literature on peace education, liberal peace theory, and youth agency. It situates institutional programming within broader critiques of governance and identifies key tensions in existing scholarship around youth inclusion, emotional resilience, and decolonial responses. While much of the literature calls for more inclusive or trauma-informed programming, this thesis argues that inclusion alone cannot address the deeper temporal and epistemic logics at play.

Section 3 outlines the methodological approach and case selection. It explains why Palestine is a critical site for this analysis— due both to its history of colonization and the presence of extensive institutional peace education programming. It also frames institutional documents not merely as policies, but as discursive texts that encode ideological, temporal, and pedagogical assumptions.

Sections 4 and 5 present the core analysis. Section 4 traces how programs such as GCED, ASPnet, *Learning for Peace*, and the *Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme* construct youth subjectivity through timelines of development, recovery, and civility. Section 5 expands this critique, showing how structural violence is erased, grief is privatized, and political agency is re-coded as emotional dysfunction. These sections argue that peace education does not simply neglect time— it governs it.

Section 6 introduces and illustrates the *Temporal Disruption Model*. Drawing on Palestinian youth narratives – fictional, testimonial, and speculative – it explores how storytelling operates as a pedagogical challenge to linearity, emotional discipline, and depoliticized futures. Rather than offering a universal blueprint, the model proposes a new orientation: one that affirms nonlinear time, validates grief and refusal, and recenters the present as a space of political meaning-making.

Ultimately, this project does not ask how youth can be better integrated into existing peace frameworks. It asks what youth – through their stories, resistance, and temporal insights – can teach us about dismantling those frameworks altogether. In contexts where futures are foreclosed, reclaiming the present becomes a radical act.

## **Section 2. Critical Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Liberal Peace Paradigm: Foundations and Critiques**

The liberal peace paradigm has dominated peacebuilding discourse since the end of the Cold War. Rooted in assumptions of progress, civility, and market democracy, it frames peace as the achievement of political stability through good governance, rule of law, and institutional reform (Richmond 2006; Mac Ginty 2011). In this vision, violence is treated as a disruption of

order, and peacebuilding becomes a technocratic process of state-building, economic liberalization, and normative transformation.

Numerous scholars have critiqued the liberal peace for reproducing Western-centric and interventionist logics. Rather than addressing the structural conditions that give rise to conflict, liberal peace strategies often export prepackaged solutions designed to produce legible, governable subjects (Richmond and Franks 2008). As Mac Ginty (2011) argues, the language of participation and empowerment in these frameworks masks a deeper agenda of control—where “local ownership” is celebrated only when it aligns with externally defined outcomes.

A growing scholarly discourse identifies the depoliticizing effects of liberal peacebuilding. Duffield (2007) shows how post-conflict populations are governed through risk management and humanitarian intervention, not democratic accountability. Jabri (2013) critiques the framing of peace as a post-political and post-ideological space— one in which historical grievances are bracketed in favor of technical solutions and forward-looking governance. Within this logic, peacebuilding is not a prescription for political struggle, but a process of institutional normalization. Armed conflict is treated as a rupture to be sealed, not a symptom of deeper structural injustice. In practice, then, the root causes of violence— occupation, inequality, exploitation— are sidelined in favor of managing emotions, behaviors, and bureaucratic reform.

This shift is not merely strategic, but epistemological. Liberal peace frameworks are built on teleological assumptions: that societies move toward peace in knowable, sequenced stages. Resistance, disruption, or delay is treated as underdevelopment, immaturity, or failure to integrate. Peace is not imagined as struggle, but as convergence.

This thesis builds on these critiques, but shifts focus toward the temporal and pedagogical logics of liberal peace. While many scholars have exposed how these frameworks depoliticize through institutional design and donor agendas, I ask how they shape these subjectivities particularly through education. *What kinds of people do liberal peace frameworks aim to produce? And what kinds of temporal assumptions govern their transformation?*

In asking these questions, I foreground youth not as passive recipients of peacebuilding, but as central figures through whom liberal peace is imagined, managed, and deferred. Thus, it is necessary to explicate how these dynamics manifest in institutional education frameworks— particularly those claiming to promote global citizenship, social cohesion, or reconciliation.

## **2.2 Liberal Peace in Pedagogical Form**

Peace education has historically been imagined as a means of fostering justice, empathy, and nonviolence. Foregrounded by foundational thinkers like Johan Galtung, Paulo Freire, and Betty Reardon, the field encompasses diverse strands— including conflict resolution, human rights education, and global citizenship— that emphasize both personal transformation and

structural change. Harris (2004) outlines five central aims: to explain the roots of violence, teach alternatives to violence, promote social justice, recognize the inevitability of conflict, and envision peace as an evolving, participatory process. These visions are rooted in dialogical learning, democratic participation, and an ethic of care.

Yet once institutionalized— particularly by global actors such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and INEE— these emancipatory foundations are frequently diluted. Peace education becomes a mechanism for managing behavior and stabilizing fragile contexts, rather than enabling students to confront systemic injustice. The United Nations’ efforts and visions, like Global Citizenship Education (GCED), materialize into programs that promote ideals such as tolerance, resilience, and social cohesion, but often sidestep questions of historical violence, dispossession, or inequality.

Several scholars trace how this shift unfolds. James Page (2004) identifies a persistent philosophical tension: while peace education is widely endorsed in global declarations, it is rarely interrogated for its underlying political assumptions. He critiques a conservative logic that favors gradual reform and national unity over structural transformation— reflecting an implicit belief that social cohesion will emerge naturally through steady civic development. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009), writing from the context of protracted conflict, similarly argue that peace education often avoids engaging with contentious histories. In such cases, the emphasis shifts from justice to coexistence, from reckoning to reconciliation— ultimately privileging social harmony over political accountability.

This pedagogical logic mirrors the broader temporality of the liberal peace: future-oriented, linear, and developmental. Students are encouraged to imagine reconciliation but are rarely given tools to interrogate the present or reckon with the past. Terms like “resilience” and “cohesion” function as technocratic stand-ins for political agency—encouraging emotional adaptation over structural critique.

Critics such as Campbell (2011) and Richmond (2006) trace how these discourses operate beyond education. In Afghanistan, Campbell shows how language like “dialogue” and “capacity-building” is framed as empowering yet remains bounded by donor-defined mandates—producing what he calls “pacified agency” (47), where participation is only permitted within liberal peace logics. Similarly, Richmond critiques the concept of “human security” as a vehicle of liberal governance: rooted in ideals of dignity and well-being, it often translates into biopolitical control, where behavioral markers and emotional regulation replace structural analysis (292–294).

Peace education reflects these same patterns. As Cox, Orsborn, and Sisk (2017) show, contentious terms such as “justice” or “reconciliation” are often replaced by emotionally neutral concepts like “cohesion”—a vagueness that enables programming to continue without naming inequality or power. In such frameworks, education becomes a tool for normative regulation, not

transformation. As Mac Ginty (2006) and Richmond (2010) observe, the language of empowerment is easily absorbed into institutional scripts of pacified participation, where dissent is rewritten as instability and grief as immaturity.

When embedded within this framework, peace education reproduces the normative architecture of the liberal peace. It privileges stability over struggle, behavior over redress, and institutional legibility over lived experience. In doing so, it assigns youth into predefined roles compliant with donor timelines and policy outcomes.

My analysis unpacks these critiques by turning directly to temporality as a mode of governance—examining how institutional peace education constructs forward-moving timelines of recovery, integration, and reconciliation, and how these timelines shape who youth are allowed to become.

### **2.3 Liberalism, Temporality, and the Politics of Becoming**

If liberal peace frameworks impose a developmental, future-oriented model of peace, then youth occupy a particularly precarious place within that vision. They are positioned as both the promise and the problem of peace: potential peacemakers in the making, but not yet political actors in the present. Across peacebuilding and educational discourses, youth are framed as future citizens to be shaped, guided, and prepared. Agency is permitted only when it conforms to the logic of liberal temporality: future-facing for democracy.

Even when youth are formally recognized in peacebuilding policy, they are rarely seen as political subjects in the now. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015)—often celebrated for affirming youth participation—emphasizes protection, prevention, and reintegration, but within a securitized logic that instrumentalizes youth in service of peace. As Berents and Mollica (2022) argue, youth are consistently cast in binary terms: as threats to be managed or victims to be empowered. Their complexity, dissent, and historical consciousness are rendered illegible within liberal frameworks that seek order and compliance.

This construction is embedded in the temporal logics of liberalism, which imagine peace as something achieved through sequences. Oyola and Mueller-Hirth (2022) describe this as a conflict between institutional time and lived temporalities. Peacebuilding programs rely on standard timelines for healing, reintegration, and progress. However, these timelines often clash with the nonlinear or recursive experiences of youth living with ongoing violence.

This temporal disciplining is especially acute in peace education. As McIntosh (2023) argues, liberal peace operates through what he calls chrononormativity: the expectation that individuals move through life – and through reform – on a fixed schedule.

Political subjecthood becomes a function of timing: one becomes legible only by following the correct sequence: democratize, reconcile, develop. For youth, this means being treated as symbolic figures of futurity, rather than present political actors.

My thesis asserts that this erasure of the political present has deep consequences for peace education. The classroom becomes a site of temporal containment, where concepts like “social cohesion” and “resilience” are deployed to move students forward, smoothing over grief, protest, and structural critique. Temporality is not just background—it is pedagogically enforced. Youth are taught to become peacebuilders only in a distant future, and only by aligning with institutional scripts.

Despite this—youth resist. In conflict-enduring contexts—particularly under occupation or systemic violence— young people assert their presence. As Berents (2015) and McEvoy-Levy (2011) show, youth peacebuilding is not simply a deferred national project. It takes place through everyday acts of care, narrative, and refusal. These are not marginal behaviors; they are counter-temporal practices— rejecting the timeline imposed on them. Berents describes the “everyday peace” as something that emerges not through policy inclusion, but through affective, embodied, and relational practices that refuse to wait.

Youth are not merely future citizens— they are the living embodiments of conflict’s enduring presence. Their everyday lives are shaped by historically imposed political conditions that they must constantly navigate. As such, they are not outside of politics— they are produced by it, positioned within the timelines, silences, and logics of liberal peace. What emerges, then, is a significant theoretical insight: to understand youth agency as lived, embodied, and narrated, must also be understood as a struggle over time. Liberal peace frameworks operate through a dual mechanism: they silence structural conditions while advancing sequential, future-oriented trajectories that make agency visible only when it aligns with their developmental script. In contrast, when youth narrate their lives outside or against these imposed timelines, they enact a decolonial resistance. Youth are not merely becoming— they are already building, already remembering, already resisting. Any peace pedagogy that fails to account for this temporal politics risks reinscribing the very exclusions it claims to undo.

## **2.4 Toward a Decolonial and Temporal Reorientation**

If the liberal peace model constructs time as a linear path toward stability— through democratization, reconciliation, and institutional reform— then decolonizing peace education

requires a fundamental reorientation of how time, agency, and power are imagined. Peace pedagogy must center temporal multiplicity, embodied experience, and epistemic resistance. A decolonial orientation rejects the teleologies of liberal governance and reclaims peace as a situated, ongoing, and contested political process.

This shift is not merely theoretical— it carries urgent implications for how education is structured, for whom, and toward what ends. It requires confronting liberal peace by affirming rupture, collective and historical memory, and relational forms of knowing. Youth must be understood not as future participants in peace, but as present actors— living through, navigating, and contesting violence in real time. They inhabit temporalities shaped by recurring conditions— checkpoints, surveillance, political precarity— that have long preceded them but persist in their everyday lives. Recognizing this means reorienting peace education to engage with lived structures of violence, not abstract ideals of post-conflict order.

Scholars such as Michalinos Zembylas (2020) and Basma Hajir and Kevin Kester (2020) expose how peace education frameworks often mask Eurocentric and liberal assumptions beneath universalist language. Zembylas critiques the ways emotional regulation and moral compliance are normalized in classrooms, calling instead for a decolonial ethics grounded in embodiment, positionality, and border thinking. Hajir and Kester extend this critique through their notion of border cosmopolitanism— demanding that peace education not simply include subaltern voices, but actively challenge the knowledge hierarchies that marginalize them. In their view, pedagogy is never neutral; it either reproduces liberal governance or resists it.

Time, in this reframing, becomes a central battleground. Dijkema, Avoine, and Koopman (2024) critique the binary assumptions of mainstream peacebuilding— war/peace, trauma/recovery, conflict/resolution— which impose externally defined timelines for healing. Drawing from the concept of *cuerpo-territorio* (body-land), they call for peace education grounded in local temporalities: timelines that are non-linear, memory-rich, and resistant to donor cycles. Healing does not unfold on a schedule— it moves with land, body, and community.

Cheryl Duckworth (2015) echoes this with her call for memory-centered pedagogy. Against the institutional impulse to manage trauma and suppress emotion, Duckworth argues that peace education must confront history's "hardest questions." Grief, anger, and dissent do not disrupt learning— they must be part of it. For Duckworth, the classroom must shift from behavioral correction to political reckoning.

This convergence of narrative, memory, and resistance is sharpened in the work of Nicoson et al. (2024), who return us to praxis. Drawing from Freire and bell hooks, they argue that peace education must name structures of violence, cultivate discomfort, and build tools for refusal. Without this, peace education becomes pacification: disciplining students rather than liberating them.

My thesis builds on this work to call for a temporal and decolonial reorientation of peace education. Three key shifts are necessary:

1. Time must be reimagined— not as a linear path toward reconciliation, but as a plural, contested terrain of memory, rupture, and becoming.
2. Youth must be recognized not as peacebuilders-in-training, but as political subjects enmeshed in, and resisting, the temporalities of governance.
3. Pedagogy must become the prospect of resistance; one that holds space for grief, affirms counternarratives, and equips students to imagine otherwise.

These are not minor adjustments, but instead, a rejection of the pedagogical deferral that defines liberal peace. Peace education must stop teaching students to wait. It must teach them to remember, to resist, and to reclaim the present on their own terms.

## **Theoretical Framework**

As John Paul Lederach (2004) urges peacebuilders to exercise “moral imagination,” this thesis follows that call into a less examined terrain: time. Institutional peace education frameworks often focus on values, attitudes, and behavioral change, but they also embed unspoken assumptions about temporality. Peace is typically framed as a linear sequence— conflict gives way to reconciliation, trauma is followed by healing, and rupture leads to closure. These temporal scripts are rarely interrogated, yet they quietly delimit what forms of peace are imaginable and permissible.

This thesis does not argue that temporality is the foundation of liberal peace, but that liberal peace frameworks are structured by temporal logics— ones shaped by commitments to order, resolution, and closure. However, for youth living under occupation, exile, or settler-colonial domination, time does not unfold linearly. It is fractured, suspended, and recursive marked by conditions that are not behind them, but with them.

When peace education relies on tidy developmental timelines, it risks functioning as a tool of liberal governance. As McIntosh (2023) argues, time itself becomes a mode of control: the past is reduced to a lesson, the present is treated as transitional, and the future is imagined as civility and closure. Youth are expected to move along this sequence— regulating emotion, demonstrating resilience, and becoming legible to institutions— regardless of whether violence has ended. Oyola and Mueller-Hirth (2020) describe this as temporal violence: the imposition of institutional timelines that demand healing and reconciliation while harm persists. In this framework, grief is pathologized, resistance is misread as immaturity, and refusal to “move on” is treated as failure.

This imposed chronology sanitizes memory and enforces a normative temporality that aligns with institutional goals. Peace education becomes a form of narrative discipline, smoothing over complexity in the name of social cohesion. This thesis asks: *what would it mean to design peace education around temporal disruption, rather than closure? What if peace were not a sequenced endpoint, but a contested process unfolding within the tensions of the present?*

By answering these questions, this thesis's framework draws on Foucault's (1977) concept of counter-memory— the idea that marginalized groups resist dominant historical narratives by asserting subjugated, nonlinear, and disruptive forms of knowing. It is also shaped by Edward Said's *After the Last Sky* (1986), where the fragmented structure of the text mirrors the disjointed temporality of displacement and erasure. For Said, narrative rupture is not simply stylistic; it reflects the impossibility of linear coherence under conditions of occupation and dispossession. In both cases, memory becomes a political refusal: a challenge not just to hegemonic content, but to hegemonic time.

Building from this foundation, this thesis understands storytelling, testimony, and speculative imagination as more than expressive tools— they are pedagogical and political acts. These forms of narration interrupt the demand for coherence and reject the assumption that peace must follow a scripted, linear timeline. They allow youth to articulate temporalities grounded in memory, loss, survival, and refusal— foregrounding the insistence that the present matters. Peace cannot be imposed through the sanitized premises of social cohesion or tolerance in service of stability. Grief and dissent must be welcomed into the classroom, not pathologized or postponed.

Furthermore, this study draws from Luisa Gandolfo's (2022) work on pluritemporality in Palestinian spaces to ground this concept in lived experience. Here, pluritemporality is defined more broadly as the rejection of singular, institutional time in favor of layered, contested, and nonlinear ways of being in and with time.

Bringing these strands together, this thesis positions the *Temporal Disruption Model* as a decolonial refusal of institutional time. It centers their political present: unfinished, resistant, and alive. Through subversive memory, testimonial grief, and speculative narration, the model proposes a pedagogy that does not resolve rupture but invites it. It does not prescribe harmony, but makes space for refusal, for relationships rooted in collective memory, and for radical imagination.

### **Section 3. Methodology**

This study adopts a critical qualitative methodology grounded in decolonial theory and narrative analysis. Institutional peace education frameworks are treated not as neutral policy tools, but as textual artifacts that encode visions of youth, peace, and time. These documents are

read critically for how they construct normative timelines of reconciliation, emotional recovery, and civic participation— timelines that often reflect the assumptions of liberal peacebuilding.

At the core of this methodology is a commitment to both temporal and decolonial critique. Liberal peace frameworks rely on linear chronologies— narratives of progress, recovery, and reconciliation that unfold in orderly sequence. A decolonial approach resists these imposed timelines by foregrounding pluritemporality: lived experiences of time that are layered, nonlinear, and contested, shaped by the enduring realities of occupation, displacement, and structural violence.

To trace how these temporal assumptions are embedded in policy, I use narrative critique. This method examines not just what the documents say, but how they say it: what arcs are imagined, what emotional scripts are encoded, and what kinds of futures are authorized. Particular attention is paid to rhetoric, metaphor, affective framing, and sequencing— terms like “resilience,” “reconciliation,” or “cohesion” are read as temporal signals that prescribe behavior and limit agency.

My primary dataset consists of over a dozen institutional documents from UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). These include global frameworks, teacher training materials, and programmatic toolkits published between 1999 and 2023. Texts such as UNESCO’s Recommendation on Education for Peace (2023), the Futures of Education ASPnet report (2021), and UNICEF’s Learning for Peace (2012-2016) were selected based on their institutional authority, pedagogical influence, and explicit focus on youth, citizenship, and peace in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

In parallel, I analyze Palestinian literature, testimony, and cultural production as a counter-archive— not as illustration, but as theoretical intervention. Drawing from Foucault’s notion of counter-memory and Edward Said’s use of narrative rupture, I treat these works as disruptions to institutional time and are read for how they construct temporal disjuncture. I approach these texts with the same narrative lens— analyzing structure, metaphor, and temporality— to understand how disenfranchisement is articulated under conditions of erasure.

By reading institutional frameworks alongside these counternarratives, this methodology traces the disconnect between imposed timelines and lived time. This is not just a critique of content, but of form— of how peace is staged, how youth are sequenced, and how memory is handled. In doing so, I aim to resist the liberal peace assumption that education produces stability through civility. Instead, I center youth as political narrators whose stories resist the timelines that have long governed their lives.

#### **Section 4. Palestine as a Case Study**

We pivot to Palestine as a case study to ground the thesis’s theoretical and

methodological commitments in a context where the contradictions of liberal peace education are most exposed. Palestine is not treated here as a symbolic case, but as a critical one of temporal disruption where youth live under prolonged occupation and where institutional frameworks most visibly fail to account for pluritemporal experience. By focusing on Palestinian youth, this case study illuminates the gap between institutional narratives of peace and the lived experience of fragmentation, erasure, and refusal. This case study serves as the interpretive lens through which the subsequent critical analysis (Section 5) will unfold.

#### **4.1 From Occupation to Fragmentation: The Political Landscape**

Palestine's political status remains one of the most enduring and contested in the international system. Despite its 1988 declaration of independence and the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) recognition of a state within the 1967 borders, Palestine continues to exist under prolonged Israeli military occupation. The 1993 ceasefire between Israel and the PLO marked the start of the Oslo Accords, which aimed to lead to a permanent resolution. Yet more than three decades later, no final-status agreement has been reached. Although the United Nations General Assembly granted Palestine non-member observer state status in 2012, this symbolic recognition has not translated into sovereignty or protection.

The territory remains politically fragmented: the West Bank is governed in part by the Palestinian Authority (PA), while Gaza has been under blockade and subjected to recurrent bombardment since 2007. The expansion of settlements, denial of return for refugees, and ongoing restrictions on movement and access continue to violate international law and obstruct Palestinian self-determination. Palestine cannot be understood as a post-conflict setting. Rather, it is a case of protracted and asymmetrical occupation, in which education, mobility, and daily life are structured by systemic violence.

#### **4.2 Peace Education Beyond the State: Time, Imagination, and Everyday Resistance**

This political context is not peripheral—it is foundational to any analysis of peace education in Palestine. Palestinian resistance has never solely been about achieving statehood—nor can Palestinian futurity be reduced to the institutional logic of diplomacy. As Nayrouz Abu Hatoum (2021) argues, the future for Palestinians is not something deferred or external—it is enacted through “stubborn forms of imagination” and “practiced in the everyday” (5).

This anti-statist imagination reclaims futurity not through institutional recognition, but through presence: in acts of memory, mobility, artistic expression, and the refusal to be erased. In this framing, the everyday becomes a site of both violence and resistance—a terrain where peace is not prescribed but practiced. For Palestinian youth, this can transform the classroom from a site of rote instruction to a contested space that imagines beyond the timelines imposed on them. A peace pedagogy attuned to this reality would offer the tools and space that allow students to reinhabit time and space on their own terms.

Dominant institutional frameworks treat peace as ethically neutral or future-oriented yet fail to account for the lived realities of youth who grow up under occupation. Time itself is weaponized under settler-colonialism, where waiting, restriction, and spatial confinement disrupt not just mobility but futurity itself. In Palestine, the Israeli state manipulates time as a form of control—delaying permits, prolonging checkpoints, suspending access to education or healthcare, and fragmenting space through the wall and settlement expansion. These practices do not only inconvenience; they disorient. They impose a sense of suspended animation, where life is perpetually deferred. Under such conditions, the future becomes a tactic of governance.

For Palestinian youth, temporality is not linear, instead it is, as Gandolfo (2022) describes a condition of pluritemporality, where young people simultaneously live through fragmented pasts, suffocating presents, and deferred futures. Time under occupation is not simply delayed—it is actively manipulated. Abu Hatoum’s ethnographic work shows that checkpoints, walls, and house demolitions do not merely obstruct movement; they “corrupt and gaslight Palestinian relationship[s] with time” (4). In such settings, educational initiatives that center future goals like “global citizenship” and “social cohesion” ring hollow, as they rely on access to a coherent temporal horizon that youth are structurally denied.

For Palestinian youth, identity cannot be depoliticized. It is formed through dispossession and sustained through acts of survival, mourning, and creativity. Palestinian youth are not a homogenous category, but a generation marked by deep political, geographical, and class-based fragmentation (Hilal 2007). Still, what links them is a shared condition of disenfranchisement and an enduring identification with national struggle.

### **4.3 Classrooms Under Occupation**

The disconnect between institutional frameworks and lived reality is especially stark in the classroom. Palestinian students often describe their formal education as irrelevant, disempowering, and alienating—delivered through curricula disconnected from the daily realities of occupation (Ramahi 2022). In this light, schools become instruments of dissonance: spaces where students are taught to aspire toward abstract futures that feel categorically unreachable.

Yet classrooms are not only sites of contradiction—they are also sites of refusal. For many Palestinian youth, simply attending school becomes a dignified form of resistance against an apartheid regime (Nguyen-Gillham et al. 2008). Youth resilience, then, is not about coping with occupation; it is about continuing despite it. It is a form of forward motion through and against imposed time. This makes resilience a temporal struggle as much as a psychological one. In this context, resilience becomes a refusal to let time be colonized.

Peace education, therefore, must reconceptualize resilience not as emotional regulation or civic adaptation, but as temporal disruption: a collective assertion that presence, dissent, and futurity still belong to those made to feel abandoned by time.

#### **4.4 From Temporal Experience to Framework Critique**

This case study does not aim to generalize Palestinian experiences, but to surface the deep disconnect between institutional peace education and lived political realities. The insights explored here— particularly around temporality, identity, and narrative— serve as a critical lens through which the following section conducts document analysis. By examining how global education frameworks frame peace, youth, and the future, we can better assess whether these pedagogies engage or obscure the conditions described here.

Palestine is not simply an application. It is a site of theoretical disruption— where liberal peace assumptions break down under the weight of occupation, and where youth demand a reorientation of how time, education, and resistance are understood. The following analysis traces how this mismatch plays out across institutional materials— from manuals to frameworks— and how these documents reproduce, obscure, or attempt to resolve the tensions this case brings into view.

### **Section 5. Critical Analysis— Institutional Frameworks and the Temporal Governance of Youth**

This section critically examines peace education frameworks to show how they regulate youth through time— casting them as not-yet-ready subjects who must rehearse emotional and civic maturity before being granted political legibility. Using Palestine as a lens, it exposes the disjuncture between institutional narratives of peace and the lived realities of occupation, displacement, and refusal. Across manuals, curricula, and initiatives, the analysis traces how liberal peace frameworks depoliticize youth agency by translating structural violence into emotional development and participation into performance.

#### **5.1 Peace as Disposition: The Moral Framing of Peace**

This section begins the critical analysis by examining how institutional peace education frameworks frame peace not as a political reckoning or structural transformation, but as an individual moral disposition. Documents like the *1999 UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace* and UNESCO's *2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development* promote a vision of peace that is deeply personal, emotionally managed, and temporally deferred. By privileging emotional regulation over historical redress, these frameworks subtly displace youth from the present— positioning them as aspirational peace-carriers rather than political actors.

The 1999 Declaration outlines eight action areas for fostering a “culture of peace,” yet embeds peace firmly within the liberal international order. Article 1(b) affirms “full respect for

the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States,” implicitly precluding the possibility of challenging state violence— even in contexts where that violence is foundational. For Palestinians, whose dispossession is directly tied to state structures and international complicity, this definition forecloses the possibility of contesting systemic harm. Peace, in this framing, cannot disrupt injustice— it must comply with existing political orders.

This logic extends into Article 3, where peace is imagined as the endpoint of a developmental sequence: education leads to democratic governance, which leads to economic development and, finally, peace. The linearity is clear and subtly reflects colonial assumptions— casting non-Western societies as lagging behind an idealized arc of modernity. Initiatives like “capacity-building” and “good governance” are framed as technical steps forward, but function as instruments of managerial containment, emphasizing procedural order over transformative justice.

The timeline embedded in these documents is pedagogical. The “culture of peace” promoted in the Declaration lays the groundwork for peace pedagogies led by UNESCO and UNICEF, which teach youth to practice civic behaviors and emotional habits in anticipation of a future peace they are meant to realize. The launch of the “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World” (2001–2010) makes this explicit: children are cast as future peacebuilders, regardless of whether they are already subjects of political struggle.

UNESCO’s 2023 Recommendation deepens this framing. Section III promotes “self-awareness,” “empathy,” and being “at peace with oneself” as core educational goals, casting emotional maturity as the precondition for civic belonging. Political presence is replaced with psychological readiness. While Section IV.24 briefly references “legacies of violence, exclusion and colonialism,” these are treated not as systems to be dismantled, but as emotional burdens to be personally processed. The burden of peace is relocated onto the learner’s interiority.

For Palestinian youth, this curriculum is not just disconnected—it is disqualifying. It reframes injustice as emotional instability that can be resolved through democratizing behaviors such as civic engagement and participation. By reinforcing idealized forms of peacebuilding through linear framings, what begins as affective pedagogy becomes a form of governance through time: youth are not prepared to act but trained to be model citizens of a future tasked with upholding democratic values and social stability. In contexts of ongoing colonial violence, this model of peacebuilding risks functioning as erasure through delay.

## **5.2 Civic Virtue Without Rights: GCED and the ASPnet Program**

While emotional development is framed as a prerequisite for peace in 5.1, this logic is extended in GCED and ASPnet, where emotional maturity becomes the basis for civic participation. Peace is no longer just internal—it becomes a staged performance of readiness for

future citizenship. Expanding on the moral framing, this part of the analysis explores how peace education frameworks operationalize civic inclusion as moral performance. Focusing on UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), I argue that these programs invite youth to rehearse civic virtue while withholding political legibility. Peace is imagined as a personal posture, earned through ethical comportment and emotional regulation—not as a political condition grounded in redress or recognition.

UNESCO's GCED, as implemented through ASPnet, frames peace as a civic identity rooted in global belonging, empathy, and cooperation. With over 12,000 affiliated schools in 182 countries—including Lebanon, Somalia, Myanmar, and Palestine—ASPnet is not a marginal initiative, but a global architecture for shaping youth subjectivity. These materials promote an aspirational vision of peace yet rest on liberal peace assumptions that equate agency with emotional readiness and reduce justice to behavioral discipline. Youth are not invited to engage with conflict as political actors; they are positioned as future citizens who must first internalize the values of civility and restraint.

In *Schools in Action: A Guide for Students* (2016), global citizenship is defined through emotional and interpersonal markers such as “respect for diversity,” “democratic participation,” and “empathy,” organized across six concentric spheres: self, home, school, community, country, and world. This design encodes a forward-moving civic trajectory, where youth must first cultivate inner harmony and local cooperation before they are deemed ready to engage nationally or globally.

In the “My Country” section, students are prompted to explore national issues such as xenophobia or discrimination. However, structural injustice is acknowledged only to be reduced to matters of personal bias or individual perception. Rather than encouraging systemic analysis, the curriculum directs students to complete word searches using terms like “tolerance” and “cooperation.” In the context of Palestine, where daily life is shaped by settlement expansion, segregation barriers, and movement restrictions, this framing is not merely inadequate—it is profoundly disorienting. What does “tolerance” signify when apartheid structures dictate the social and political order? What becomes of youth agency when injustice is reframed as a misunderstanding rather than a condition to be named and resisted?

The *Futures of Education: Perspectives and Insights from ASPnet* (2021) report, based on youth focus groups in 26 countries, further reinforces this orientation. Students are encouraged to “grow inward,” “act responsibly,” and “become more human.” While these messages appear to support civic engagement or collective ethics, the framing ultimately redirects such impulses through the affective vocabulary of liberal peace. Projects include environmental campaigns and awareness initiatives, yet the space for political struggle is softened into personal responsibility and emotional restraint. In one example, a student from Bangladesh asserts that youth must act “sensibly” before engaging politically—an echo of liberal

peace paradigms that equate rational self-regulation with readiness. This sequencing of sensibility before participation mirrors the deferred timelines embedded across these frameworks. Political agency is not affirmed in the present but conditioned on emotional maturity – reinforcing the notion that youth must become “ready” before they can act.

Empirical studies confirm this pattern. Schweisfurth (2005) and Davies (2008) found that ASPnet materials were selectively implemented in conflict-affected settings, with educators routinely omitting content related to colonialism, racism, or state violence. In many cases, maintaining classroom cohesion required the deliberate avoidance of politically sensitive topics. The result is a striking disconnect: citizenship is taught as a pathway to tolerance and inclusion— even in contexts where no formal statehood exists— yet the root causes of statelessness and exclusion are left unaddressed. GCED, despite its inclusive rhetoric, narrows youth agency by offering scripts of global citizenship without rights. It disciplines young people into temporal deferral, where political legibility remains perpetually out of reach. In contexts like Palestine, this is not empowerment— it is pedagogy through symbolic participation, where students are positioned as future citizens but denied recognition in the present.

### **5.3 Civic Duty as Performance: The 4Rs Framework and Empty Participation**

Building on the moral and civic framing, the 4Rs Framework introduces the language of justice— yet this inclusion remains largely symbolic. Participation is permitted only within the boundaries of ethical behavior, not political action. This section examines how the 4Rs – recognition, redistribution, representation, and reconciliation – translate structural justice into behavioral performance. While the language appears more justice-oriented than other liberal peace frameworks, it ultimately disciplines youth into symbolic participation without material change. Political demands are reframed as moral conduct, reinforcing a pedagogy of deferral.

UNICEF’s *Learning for Peace* initiative (2012–2016), implemented in 14 conflict-affected contexts including Palestine, Myanmar, and South Sudan, framed education as a tool for long-term peacebuilding. At its center was the 4Rs Framework, which referenced the need for redress and recognition. But in practice, these ideas were filtered through a focus on emotional regulation and civic responsibility. Structural violence was acknowledged in theory but not addressed in practice. Youth were encouraged to demonstrate inclusion through participation, politeness, and self-control.

Citizenship education became the main mechanism for implementing the initiative. It was meant to instill democratic values, but in many sites, youth were not citizens in any recognized way. Stateless Palestinian students, undocumented youth in Myanmar, and internally displaced adolescents in South Sudan were asked to perform national belonging before they had any political standing. This created a backwards logic: students had to act as if they belonged before being allowed to belong.

Cardozo et al. (2015) show how this contradiction plays out. In Lebanon, students said that civic education felt disconnected from the corruption, displacement, and sectarianism in their lives. In Northern Ireland, teachers avoided topics like political identity or communal violence, calling them too controversial. As Cardozo and colleagues argue, the result is often “symbolic recognition and token participation” (37): students are seen, but not heard. Participation is permitted only when it follows the rules of civility—not when it challenges power.

These contradictions are especially clear in Palestine, where *Learning for Peace* was implemented in schools operating under military occupation. Students are taught to “recognize diversity,” “participate responsibly,” and “reconcile difference,” even as they live under movement restrictions, segregation, detention, and statelessness. In this context, the framework’s focus on reconciliation and civic values becomes a form of internal discipline. Recognition is symbolic, representation remains out of reach, redistribution is not delivered, and reconciliation becomes a behavior to perform rather than a process of justice.

This is not a transformative model. It is what Richmond (2010) calls “peace formation” as adaptation—training students to fit within the system rather than question it. The framework acknowledges injustice but delays any response. Students may learn the vocabulary of rights, but not how to use it. They are told they are included, but not given the means to act.

In short, the 4Rs framework presents justice without the tools to pursue it. It reframes political participation as ethical behavior, filtered through a liberal peace timeline where action is always delayed. In Palestine, this is not empowerment—it is peace as a performance for future approval.

#### **5.4 Feeling Peace: When Reconciliation Replaces Resistance**

Building on the critique of civic and affective peace in earlier sections, this analysis turns to how institutional frameworks position healing as the endpoint of peace—often in place of structural redress. I argue that documents such as the *Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme: Skills for Constructive Living* (2005) and UNESCO’s *Intercultural Competences Conceptual and Operational Framework* (2013) deploy therapeutic logic to convert political grief into personal recovery. Through emotional sequencing and psychological adjustment, youth are taught not to challenge violence, but to metabolize it.

The Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme, developed by UNESCO, UNHCR, and others, remains one of the most widely used resources in the INEE archive. Despite being published in 2005, it continues to inform peace education globally, including in

Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Liberia, and Somalia. While the manual claims cultural flexibility, it relies heavily on Western psychological models that prioritize inner harmony over collective transformation.

Activities emphasize emotional readiness, empathy, and behavioral control—defining peace as an affective state achieved through interpersonal repair. One core exercise guides students through a sequence “from denial to forgiveness,” mapping reconciliation as a linear, inward journey. This mirrors liberal temporality, in which conflict is treated as past, grief as a phase, and peace as something that follows emotional resolution. Furthermore, the manual warns against clinging to “habit, pride, status, or culture” (80), casting these as obstacles to peace. Moreover, the manual explains how reconciliation cannot be met until one is able to let go of these personal inhibitors. Yet in places like Palestine, pride and cultural identity are not emotional excesses— they are forms of political continuity and survival.

The same logic appears in how the manual frames traditional mediation. While it references customary practices and elders (80), these are sidelined in favor of “modern” dispute resolution that are better equipped to achieve personal disclosure, rational exchange, and emotional openness— hallmarks of Western therapeutic culture. Indigenous or collective methods are tolerated only if they align with liberal ideals.

This flattening of scale – treating interpersonal conflict and colonial violence with the same emotional vocabulary – is the manual’s most dangerous move. It erases the difference between structural harm and private grievance. Students are taught to regulate their responses, not to examine their causes. Peace becomes emotional balance, justice fades into the background.

UNESCO’s *Intercultural Competences Conceptual and Operational Framework* (2013) follows a similar logic. It urges students to “free themselves from their own logic and cultural idioms” to better relate across differences (5). Though framed as intercultural understanding, this effectively asks marginalized youth to suspend worldviews that challenge dominant political orders. In Palestine, this becomes a demand to let go of memory, land-based identity, and anti-colonial struggle. Attachments to lineage, resistance, or grief are recast as barriers to pluralism.

Taken together, these documents do not simply promote healing— they discipline it. They offer youth a narrow script of reconciliation that equates peace with psychological adjustment. Moreover, these frameworks do not equip youth to confront the systems producing harm. Instead, they teach them how to endure unresolved violence while appearing emotionally composed. Peace becomes something youth must perform— not

something they can claim. Youth are asked to heal while harm continues, to let go while the cause remains. What is framed as peace education ultimately functions as emotional training under occupation.

### **5.5 Systematic Silences and Temporal Imposition**

In synthesizing the core argument, institutional peace education frameworks avoid confronting structural injustice by substituting political redress with temporal discipline. Across curricula, training manuals, and implementation strategies, peace is reframed not as a political demand but as a future-oriented achievement. In doing so, these programs erase the present and condition youth into waiting. A consistent pattern emerges: occupation, legal precarity, and settler-colonial violence are replaced with language of tolerance, emotional growth, and civic harmony. Rather than being seen as political actors navigating conditions of harm, students are framed as future-ready learners—recognized only once they exhibit civility and self-regulation. The classroom becomes a space for managing affect, not confronting power.

This logic is sustained not only by ideology, but by time. Peace is mapped as a linear arc: from trauma to healing, from division to reconciliation, from instability to civic participation. But for youth under occupation or displacement, time is not linear— it is fractured. In Palestine, checkpoints, detentions, and school disruptions produce a lived experience of suspended time. Teaching these students to “move forward” denies the temporal violence they inhabit.

This is not simply a design flaw— it reflects the deeper logic of liberal peacebuilding. By placing peace in the future, these frameworks remove it from the realm of present struggle. This thesis argues that such framing is not only depoliticizing— it is a form of ontological violence. It limits not just what youth can learn, but who they are allowed to be. The student becomes a deferred subject: always preparing, never acting; always adapting, never resisting. What begins as peace education becomes a mechanism of containment.

The *Temporal Disruption Model* is proposed in direct response. Rather than revising content within existing frameworks, it challenges their underlying structure. It rejects institutional timelines, affirms grief and memory as political, and centers youth not as future citizens, but as present actors embedded in struggle. Peace is not a distant goal— it is something to be contested now. The danger is not that these frameworks fail to support peacebuilding— but that they erase the lived realities they claim to serve.

## **Section 6. The Temporal Disruption Model**

This final section introduces the Temporal Disruption Model (TDM), a pedagogical framework that challenges how peace education constructs time, youth, and transformation. It emerges directly from the critiques developed in earlier sections: that institutional peace frameworks operate through temporal governance, scripting peace as a future condition and

positioning youth as subjects-in-waiting. These frameworks do not merely omit political struggle. Instead, they restructure it into effective rehearsal and civic performance. As shown throughout Sections 4 and 5, youth are taught to process trauma, demonstrate tolerance, and rehearse citizenship—not to inhabit the present as political actors, nor to name the violence that defines their daily lives.

The TDM rejects this pedagogy of deferral. Drawing from decolonial theory, critical peace education, and narrative inquiry, it reframes storytelling as a method for interrupting institutional timelines, reclaiming nonlinear and resistant temporalities, and affirming youth agency in contexts of structural harm. Where institutional programs demand coherence, regulation, and developmental progression, this model invites fracture, memory, and refusal. It does not seek to “improve” liberal peace curricula. It offers a different temporality altogether—one grounded in the lived dissonance of youth under occupation, exile, and erasure.

This model is rooted in Gandolfo, Oyola and Mueller-Hirth’s concept of pluritemporality—a refusal of singular, linear time in favor of layered, disrupted, and resistant experiences of time. In contrast to the chrononormativity described by McIntosh, which recognizes agency only when it aligns with sequenced reform, this model foregrounds youth as already political, even in grief, even in stasis, even in rupture.

In what follows, I outline three narrative orientations that constitute the TDM:

1. **Subversive** narration, which unsettles institutional scripts
2. **Testimony**, which sustains memory and refuses closure
3. **Speculative** imagination, which creates futurities unbound by hegemonic timelines.

The three narrative routes below are not fixed genres but overlapping strategies of temporal disruption. Each engages time differently: subversive narration unsettles dominant histories; testimonial storytelling asserts presence through memory; and speculative fiction imagines futures beyond institutional control. Together, they form a pedagogy of refusal—challenging liberal peace frameworks not only in content, but in when youth are allowed to speak, remember, and imagine.

These are not literary devices but pedagogical acts. They reclaim time in peace education by refusing closure, affirming uncertainty, and asserting narrative agency. This model does not resolve conflict—it teaches youth to speak from the wound, write through rupture, and imagine otherwise.

## **6.1 Subversive Storytelling: Disrupting Linear Histories**

Subversive storytelling is the first narrative route in this model. It directly challenges the timelines imposed by liberal peace frameworks, which script conflict as something to be overcome through developmental progress and emotional regulation. Drawing on decolonial theory and critical peace education, this mode of narration refuses causality, closure, and reconciliation— and instead affirms memory, rupture, and epistemic dissent.

Liberal peace education operates through chrononormative storytelling: trauma leads to growth, conflict to civility, healing to inclusion. However, for youth in contexts like Palestine, time does not unfold this way. These institutional timelines are not neutral— they are tools of governance, designed to contain resistance and postpone political legibility. Subversive storytelling interrupts this logic by breaking from linear narration and embracing fragmentation, repetition, and contradiction.

In this view, storytelling becomes a form of temporal disobedience. It rejects the demand to “move on,” and instead lingers, returns, and refuses resolution. Ghassan Kanafani’s *All That’s Left to You* (1966) exemplifies this form. The novella fractures temporality and subjectivity through shifting narrators, including nonhuman perspectives like Time and the Desert. These narrative choices aren’t stylistic flourishes; they mirror the disorientation of life under occupation. Hamid’s journey ends in ambiguity, Maryam’s trauma remains unresolved, and Zakaria’s betrayal lacks closure. The story mirrors a political reality where healing is structurally foreclosed.

Subversive storytelling does not aim to make sense of violence, rather, it insists on its ongoingness. It makes visible the temporal violence embedded in settler-colonial conditions, where memory is suppressed, resistance is framed as regression, and history is rewritten to favor liberal scripts of reconciliation.

In the classroom, this narrative mode becomes a pedagogical practice. Students might be encouraged to write stories without beginnings or endings, to narrate from nonhuman or disjointed perspectives, or to structure narratives as loops rather than arcs. These exercises teach that coherence is not required for truth— and that peace does not require resolution. The goal is not to master storytelling, but to refuse the story peace education expects them to tell.

Through this practice, students develop a critical historical consciousness. They are not positioned as passive inheritors of peace, but as agents who interrupt the narratives that erase them. Subversive storytelling does not just disrupt form— it challenges what counts as knowledge, whose stories are legitimate, and how time itself is governed. In doing so, it opens space for memory, for grief, and for political presence in the now.

## 6.2 Testimonial Narratives: Memory as Political Presence

The second narrative route within the TDM affirms memory as a form of political presence. Testimonial storytelling does not process the past into closure, but it insists on its unfinishedness. Where liberal peace frameworks treat trauma as an obstacle to overcome, testimony positions grief, remembrance, and embodied history as forms of agency. Drawing from Foucault's concept of counter-memory, testimonial narratives function as ruptures and refusals of coerced resilience and timelines.

The demand for emotional closure in the classroom can discipline students into silence. Testimonial storytelling aims to break this silence. It holds space for pain without demanding its resolution— and in doing so, it asserts the right to remain wounded in public.

Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) exemplifies this testimonial mode. The novel traverses generations and geographies— Jenin, Beirut, Philadelphia— through flashbacks, dreams, and apostrophe, rendering time nonlinear, embodied, and diasporic. Characters speak to the dead, grieve across decades, and live within overlapping temporalities. This narrative form refuses both political and emotional closure. In one of the novel's most haunting moments, Sara writes, "*They murdered you and buried you in their headlines, Mother... Is this what it means to be Palestinian?*" (282). This is not an elegy. It is a political demand: to be seen, to be remembered, to grieve in defiance of historical erasure.

Such storytelling directly challenges the timelines of liberal peace. Where donor frameworks promote reconciliation as a staged, forward-moving process, testimony refuses to move on. It does not ask for recognition through civility or coherence—it asserts it through memory. This is what Zembylas (2020) calls for a decolonial ethics of remembrance: a pedagogy that affirms positionality, relationality, and unresolved pain as forms of knowledge.

In practice, testimonial pedagogy invites youth to become witnesses to their own history. Classrooms informed by this model might include memory fragments, letters to the dead, or intergenerational narratives rooted in familial experience. These practices not only validate grief—they equip youth to resist timelines that demand they forget. Testimony thus becomes a form of counter-archiving: a refusal to let memory be privatized or depoliticized.

Within the TDM, testimony is not simply a mode of expression—it is a tool of interruption. It destabilizes the narrative arcs of global citizenship curricula, where peace is rehearsed through affective control. Instead, it insists that memory is not what students carry—it is what they wield. And in wielding it, they mark themselves as present: politically, historically, and effectively alive.

### 6.3 Speculative Fiction: Refusing Foreclosed Futures

The third narrative route within the TDM turns toward futurity— not to predict the future, but to liberate it from institutional constraint. Where subversive storytelling fractures dominant histories and testimonial narratives reclaim memory as political presence, speculative fiction opens a different front: the right to imagine. In contexts where youth are denied even the present, speculation becomes a decolonial act of temporal resistance— a refusal to inhabit only those futures authorized by liberal peace. Within dominant peace education frameworks, the future is scripted as achievable through civic development, emotional maturity, and behavioral readiness. Youth are prepared to enter a post-conflict world defined by hegemonic timelines and global citizenship ideals. For young people living under occupation, exile, or legal erasure, these futures are often structurally inaccessible. Speculative fiction interrupts this foreclosure. It dislodges peace from preordained trajectories and insists that justice can be imagined on radically different terms.

The anthology *Palestine +100* (2019), which invites writers to envision Palestine in the year 2048, exemplifies this narrative mode. These are not utopian visions. They are fractured, haunted, and insurgent. In Rawan Yaghi's *Commonplace*, the protagonist relives her brother's death through a memory implant chip. But rather than healing, the technology deepens her refusal to let go. She chooses to remain in that memory— not as escape, but as resistant suspension. Her refusal mirrors the refusal of liberal peace: to forget, to reconcile prematurely, to inhabit a timeline that denies loss.

In Saleem Haddad's *Song of the Birds*, temporality itself collapses. Past and future bleed into one another, refusing the forward motion that reconciliation narratives demand. The story does not resolve. It does not redeem. Instead, it makes space for grief that lingers and survival that does not look like peace. These fictions do not offer closure— they offer possibility beyond what the present allows.

Speculative fiction, in this light, is not fantasy— it is temporal insurgency. It detaches the future from technocratic peacebuilding and reclaims it as a site of radical imagination. As a pedagogical tool, this approach invites youth to become world-makers. In classrooms shaped by the TDM students might be asked: *What does justice look like in your imagined future? What kinds of memory survive occupation? What forms of care and resistance might still emerge?*

These exercises do not ask students to resolve conflict, rather, they ask them to narrate beyond it. Speculation becomes a way of asserting that youth are not just recipients of peace— they are authors of time. They need not wait for inclusion. They can write toward liberation on their own terms, in their own registers, and within their own temporalities. This is the essence of pluritemporality: futures that are layered, nonlinear, and politically unruly.

In the TDM, speculative fiction is not an escape— it is method, memory, and manifesto. It insists that peace is not the absence of violence, but the presence of imagination; and for youth whose futures have been administratively stalled, the act of imagining otherwise is itself a form of resistance.

In the context of Palestine— where temporality is manipulated through erasure, surveillance, and indefinite occupation— this model insists that education must not prepare youth to endure time, but to interrupt it. Subversive, testimonial, and speculative storytelling are not only narrative strategies— they are survival strategies, where youth reclaim agency in a world that denies their past, forecloses their present, and disciplines their future.

### **Conclusion: Disrupting Time, Reclaiming Peace**

This thesis has argued that institutional peace education frameworks operate not only through content, but through time. By scripting peace as a future achievement and youth as subjects-in-waiting, these frameworks discipline political agency, erase structural violence, and reframe grief as developmental delay. Under the liberal peace paradigm, young people are taught not to resist injustice, but to prepare for a civility that remains structurally inaccessible. This is not a pedagogical oversight— it is a form of temporal governance.

In response, the Temporal Disruption Model offers a different orientation. It does not aim to improve peace education by adding new themes or content. It proposes a refusal: of linear timelines, emotional pacification, and pedagogies that mistake discipline for empowerment. By centering subversive, testimonial, and speculative narratives, the model treats youth not as students rehearsing inclusion, but as authors of time— capable of remembering, grieving, and imagining on their own terms.

This model is grounded in the lived conditions of youth in contexts like Palestine, where time is fractured by occupation, futures are administratively foreclosed, and classrooms often ask students to rehearse peace without naming the systems that deny it. In such settings, to teach youth to wait is not neutral— it is violent. What is needed is not more emotional regulation, but pedagogical tools that can hold rupture, legitimize refusal, and affirm memory as a site of presence and resistance.

Peace education cannot be salvaged by better content or broader inclusion. It must be reimagined as a space where time itself is contested. The Temporal Disruption Model does not offer healing through closure or empowerment through performance. It offers a space for what liberal frameworks cannot hold: unfinished grief, radical imagination, and the right to resist the timeline. That, too, is peace.

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