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Conflicting Peaces: Engaging with Diversities in Friction

Florencia Benitez-Schaefer, UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies/University of Innsbruck, Austria
Shawn Bryant, Universitat Jaume I, Spain
Catalina Vallejo, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway
Noah Taylor, Universitat Jaume I, Spain

Abstract: While the central question of diversity has often been how to live in peace with difference, we approach the question — what happens when diversity also involves conflicting approaches to peace? This paper contains the authors' reflections on the colloquium with the same title held in the On Diversity Conference 2012 in Vancouver, where the authors and participants explored peace itself as an expression of diversity. We argue that an attempt to answer this question requires a change in focus; if there is no longer a unifying peace, how can we engage with diversity in a plurality of conflicting peaces? Mainstream peace and conflict studies literature understands conflict as opposite to peace. Supported in contemporary critical research, we argue that the concept of peace rather than being perfect, absolute and pure is in fact impure, diverse, and conflictive. Hence, an understanding of peace that attempts to embrace diversity will necessarily be relational, include conflict and engage with it, in contrast to silencing it or suppressing it. We argue that instead of being its opposite, conflict is in fact an essential component of peace. To elaborate on the argument, we deal with two of the possible interpretations of peace in history and culture: peace linked to security, understood as the eradication of threats from others and therefore recurring to ideals of perfection and homogeneity; and peace as an experience of harmony, highlighting mystical or musical harmony, which, far from being pure, emerges also out of conflicting tones. We conclude that both in traditions of mysticism and in security politics, diversities in friction lie at the core of experiencing and conceptualizing peace.

Keywords: Plurality of Peaces, Conflict Transformation, Diversity, Security, Violence, Mysticism, Harmony

Peace is a key term central to much religious doctrine, political debate, and social concern about enjoying a 'good life'. There can be little doubt that all human beings have a certain understanding of what 'peace' means. Nevertheless, we, the authors of this paper, have witnessed that 'peace', like any other equivalent concept, can mean something fundamentally different to different people. Proof of this diversity arose during the colloquium at the Twelfth International Conference on Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations held in Vancouver, Canada, on June 12, 2012, on which this paper is based. Moreover, this is a key result of postmodern research on peace, as is demonstrated in the work of Francisco Muñoz' *Paz Imperfecta* (Muñoz 2006) and the various articles in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective* (Dietrich *et al.* 2011). Based on the distinct ontological assumptions of the person in question, peace can mean anything from 'strong and secure borders' to 'fresh air'¹.

These diverse concepts of peace can be complementary and they can also be at loggerheads; they can present ostensibly intractable opposing positions, and they can also be aspects in constant interaction and friction. This paper attempts to summarize the activities of the colloquium, and elaborate some of the salient points generated in the discussions. By combining insights from the colloquium and inputs from the presenters, this paper intends to engage with diverse perspectives on peace, particularly exploring the consequences of this plurality in terms of the friction that this diversity of peaces might produce.

Because of the context in which this inquiry took place, as part of a conference on diversity, it is important to begin this paper with a brief record of the colloquium where this discussion happened. Importantly, this debate was ignited by and revolved around the experiences resulting

¹ "I still remember one class's bewilderment when a student from Burkina Faso said that the word for peace in his mother tongue meant nothing else but 'fresh air' [...]" (Dietrich 2012, 3). This point will be revisited later in the paper.

from theatrical exercises based on Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 2002) and further inspired by *Theatre for Living* of David Diamond (Diamond 2007). Importantly, this methodological choice was not merely devoted to be a rhetorical trick, neither was its aim to entertain the participants — although we all had certainly a lot of fun with this research. However, at the core of this decision for using the body in a discussion on peace and diversity goes back to a fundamental standpoint: we believe that engaging with diversity requires more than discussing about diverse objects outside of ourselves. Activating the human body seeks to acknowledge the diverse ways of experiencing and expressing our interaction with the world. In order to do this, if we, as researchers and persons interested in social change, aim to take the issue of diversity seriously, we need to incorporate diverse aspects of human experience, going beyond a mere conceptual or intellectual interaction.

The theatrical activities had a dual purpose. First, to activate the bodies of the participants with the unique memories and diverse experiences² they carry, enabling a discussion that went beyond conceptual exchange, and incorporated the most visceral experiences that shape our perspectives on life, peace, and diversity. At the same time, the exercises and games themselves created insightful subjective and shared experiences with important symbolic value that kick-started and nurtured our reflections on the concept of peace. This was the case with the first game we proposed, inviting the colloquium participants to get out of their seats, get into pairs, and, placing their hands on each other's shoulders, to push against one another in order to find a dynamic balance.³ The most important aspect of this game is that it gives physical expression to a dramatic moment at the core of diversity: two people engage with each other, searching in different directions, using different bodies, different strategies and different perspectives. Some aspects of the discussion that followed this dramatic encounter around the question of conflicting peaces in friction will be highlighted in the following pages. As we will see, the complexity at the core of engaging with a plurality of peaces emerged over and over again in different shapes.

Closing the colloquium with the same premise under which we started it, we invited the participants to make shapes representing our struggles with diversity and peace visible using their bodies and putting them into relation. Some of the characters that emerged from this found further expressions in voice and sound.⁴ Most importantly, the various images received multiple interpretations of the participants, creating different stories. The result was a human tableau that was more than a portrayal, a show or a re-presentation, but symbolic expressions of real struggles with peace and diversity, which are connected deeply with our bodies, our stories, our desires and our experiences.

As a structural consideration, we have chosen two important aspects of peace that emerged during the discussion of the colloquium to discuss with this paper, connecting them with Dietrich's (2012) formulation of the families of peaces, meaning five main groups of interpretations of peace in history and culture. In this line, we have elaborated on examples that show, firstly, concepts of peace out of security, connected with the "family of modern peaces", and secondly, concepts of peace out of harmony, connected with the "family of energetic peaces".⁵ At the end of the paper, we will present some concluding remarks.

² On body memory, see Walch (2007).

³ This 'gamesercise,' as Augusto Boal referred to different techniques within his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, can be found in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Boal 2002).

⁴ These are as well techniques of Augusto Boal's *Image Theatre*, a crucial part of his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, and can be found in his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Boal 2002).

⁵ For the purposes of this paper the full theory of five families of peaces cannot be elaborated. For further reference, see Dietrich (2012); Dietrich *et al.* (2011).

Peace in Security Discourses

“Well, if I don’t push, he’ll stamp me on the wall!” — this was one of the core reactions activated by the first *gamesercise*. As a consequence, the fear of security appeared over and over again in our discussion. Naturally, several of the characters portrayed in the tableau at the end of the colloquium expressed their will to “protect,” “save,” or “support” another character. In fact, the question of security is a central topic in current political discussions on world peace.⁶ Some amongst the various definitions of security in International Relations literature draw explicitly on peace, conceiving security either as a consequence of peace — “a lasting peace would provide security for all”⁷ — or as a precondition for peace when security is understood, for instance, as a “relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur” (Bellamy 1981).

Importantly, the understanding of peace out of security is a key engine for the on-going humanitarian efforts in conflict zones around the world, and therefore is directly connected to military deployments, public and private investments of economic resources, time and energy, as well as to the daily struggles of many human communities. In this sense, it is not surprising that one central aspect of peace that emerged in the colloquium was connected to the understanding of peace as correlative to security. While there exist a variety of approaches to peace out of security, we will pick up here on one of them which is particularly widespread in conflict studies and mass media. Since this certain common understanding assumes the need of this kind of peace for life itself, we will highlight some of the difficulties that this position presents, particularly in terms of social and cultural diversity.

Putting it simply, it is possible to say that this sense of peace is characterized by the certainty of one’s own safety from primarily physical but also psychological harm and from the scourge of war, echoing the argument that the best way to conceptualize security is to define it as “the pursuit of freedom from threat” (Buzan 1991, 19). In its last consequence and at a more abstract level, the search for security requires identifying a group that is to be kept secure (in peace) and another group that fulfils the given requirements to be considered a threat, the insecurity, the one that is disturbing the peace. As an example of this understanding of peace we can take an early meaning of the North Germanic *fridr*, which, among its early meanings, meant to treat others as one’s kin (Jacobsen 2011) and is the root of the contemporary term *Frieden* in German and the cognates in the Nordic languages.⁸ However, in the long run, rather than envisaging *all* others as part of one’s kin, and consequently elaborating on senses of equal human dignity, this approach to peace (that goes obviously beyond Germanic cultures) has shown a high potential to be used for the discursive division of groups of people into *us* and *them*, *my* tribe and the *other*, the *friends* and the *enemies*, producing the potential for facile justifications for structural violence and dehumanization.⁹

Amnesty International suggests that throughout much of history people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group — family, tribe, religion, class, community, or nation state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the “golden rule” of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects ascribed to Confucius are five of the oldest written sources that address questions of people’s duties, rights, and responsibilities. Similar examples can be found in the Americas in the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice as well as in the Iroquois Constitution. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition,

⁶ See for instance *Privatizing Peace: From Conflict to Security* (Gerson and Colletta 2002); *Keeping the Peace: The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace* (White 1997); *The Maintenance of Peace and Security: The Cooperation between the Security Council and Regional Organisations* (Pappagallo 2011).

⁷ Buzan (1991, 2). For further reference, see generally Buzan *et al.* (1998).

⁸ It may be noted that the Germanic terms for ‘peace’ derive from the names of Freyja and Freyr, the deities of fertility, and thus it implies, from another perspective, also an energetic understanding of ‘peace’ (also in Jacobsen 2011).

⁹ See generally Bernard *et al.* (1971); Savage (2009).

have had some kind of system of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members (Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA, 1998). While some type of organization is certainly key to social life, however, structural exclusion is neither inevitable nor universal.

In modern European and North American societies, the importance of stopping systematic dehumanization of *others*, and the realization of an equal consideration of everyone's dignity as requisite for any idea of peace, were articulated by the use of human rights charters, after the intense experience of discrimination and extermination epitomized by the Second World War. Besides extreme examples of exclusion as political strategy, such as the Nazi holocaust or the Rwandan genocide, many other acts of structural violence take place every day based on modern narratives of 'less worthy humans', or 'sub-humans' meaning a consideration of the other and otherness as wrong or inferior. These problematic narratives often play out, for instance, in public policies on il/legal migration and the global wars on drugs and terror. According to Charny, "what needs to be added to justify taking people's lives is the proof that the others are also a terrible threat to our lives and that it is their intent to take our lives away from us unless we stop them" (Charny 1999, 66).

This applies not only for cases of direct physical violence but importantly also for discursive discriminations of many kinds, at the core of which lies the rejection of an always conflictive diversity. Discourses of separation¹⁰ based on, for instance, mental illness/inability to adapt (Zimbardo 2008), security threats (Echavarría 2010) and individual ability to achieve social status (Kennedy 1990) amongst others, poorly consider the wider social dynamics that generate frustration and marginalization (Rosenberg 2003) and thus have a role in forming the webs of structural violence that are fed by stereotypes, myths and beliefs that fuel discrimination (Galtung 1996).¹¹ The collective commitment to achieve a social peace that both results from and generates security, or that is connected to the ideal eradication of all threats, can lead to the understanding that the needs of *the others*, are not necessarily to be respected since they are contextually defined as abnormal, incorrect, and inconvenient or, in the language of law, illegal (Galtung 1990). In contexts of securitized discourses of peace,¹² diversity can be threatening.

Importantly, it has been extensively discussed how constructing images of *evil* or inferior *others* makes their exclusion or marginalization easier.¹³ Bernard *et al.* (2003), for instance, argue that when it comes to killing or harming a person or group, offenders tend to de-humanize their victim in order to feel less regret for the act of causing damage to a fellow human, to another of the same kind. Criminalistics literature suggests that perpetrators of certain violent crimes often use diminishing adjectives or name people as animals for this purpose. "One of the more recurrent lexicons, often common to different cultures, is that of animals and hunting" (Semelin *et al.* 2009). According to biographer Lawrence J. Friedman, Erik Erikson coined the term 'pseudo-speciation' in 1966 to denote this phenomenon. "Humankind, while one species, has divided itself throughout its history — territorially, culturally, and politically — into various groupings that permit their memories at decisive times, to consider themselves, more or less consciously and explicitly, the only true human species, and all others as *less than human*" (our emphasis, Friedman in Strozier & Flynn 1996, 51).

As mentioned above, a powerful tool used in this kind of processes of dehumanization and exclusion of *the other* is language. Take for instance, the use of numbers instead of names to identify people in prison, while on account of the significance of names for the dignity and

¹⁰ Importantly, this logic of separation goes in line with other 'logic' divisions, which are equally characteristic to the modern post-Enlightenment world, e.g. the division between subject/object, rational/irrational, science/belief. All of them, beyond arguing a mere variety of approaches to life, are intertwined in a vectoral and teleological perspective of evolutionary development producing lastly a logic of separation and segregation.

¹¹ See generally Gittleman (1993).

¹² For a discussion on securitization see Wæver (1993).

¹³ See Charny (1999).

uniqueness of the person, having a name is a human right.¹⁴ Besides replacing names for numbers, also nouns and adjectives can play an important role: if a category such as ‘criminal’, ‘terrorist’, ‘prostitute’, ‘illegal migrant’, ‘bad soldier’ is excluded from *our* group, then it has a different social impact excluding a person or a ‘human’ who has a name, a story, feelings, potentials, shadows, capabilities and emotions. In this sense, the exclusion of the ‘terrorist’ is often perceived as a triumph of criminal justice (isolation, executions and death penalty can be justified-legal) while excluding the ‘good person’ constitutes discrimination (unjustified-illegal).

Even once dehumanization has resulted in structural violence, the treatment of the other in an exclusionary manner continues in the frame of creating discourses of a peaceful society out of security: a purified idea of peace that excludes the necessarily conflictive component of diversity. In this line, Judith Butler (2006) explains how, according to this logic, the life of dehumanized humans does not even deserve mourning since it implies knowing and valuing what an individual (or society as a whole) has lost, as well as respect for the deceased, and some sort of melancholia. Similarly, in the aftermath of the Nazi holocaust, observing rampant indifference towards death, Hanna Arendt said: “[e]verywhere it becomes apparent that there is no reaction to what has happened [...] and the indifference with which they move through the rubble finds its equivalent in that nobody mourns the dead” (Arendt 2005, 302, transl. by the authors). The identification of humans with a singular aspect of their lives such as nationality, social class, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, religion, amongst others, has inspired many narratives of the worthless human (Butler 2006).

Butler’s (2006) link between dynamics of dehumanization and mourning can be observed in contexts of armed conflict between state and non-state armed forces. For instance, when members of illegal armed groups die during military operations, at times images of their corpses are displayed by mass media as trophies provoking ‘national’ celebration. There are, however, forbidden and hidden processes of mourning in the context of armed conflicts, since the bodies of the ‘illegal’ are not related to a human being but to anti-values (Posada & Álvarez 2010). Mourning ‘their’ death becomes suspicious and politically incorrect.¹⁵

While there exist a variety of approaches to security and its relation to peace, it is important to realize that an important part of the understandings of peace out of security derives from an understanding of peace as pure, as free of conflictive energy. This is one of the many understandings of peace in history and culture,¹⁶ one which demands violence from the outset because it is exclusionary. As we have seen, at the core of this understanding of peace, there is a clear and static division between *us* and *them*, that, in effect, fuels a perspective on relations from a dichotomic perspective, where difference and conflict need to be excluded as long as it is impossible to integrate them. Importantly, the argument here is not to avoid distinguishing amongst our different ways to be, rather to consider the limitations of a binary structural division that does not allow us to see in ‘them’ anything more than ‘not us’, and in ‘us’, anything more than ‘not them’. The concrete consequences of this division are patent in contemporary violent clashes.

Peace as an Experience of Harmony

As academics and peace scholars, it is our job to think about peace. Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind the comment of one participant during the colloquium: “I don’t think about peace; I live peace.” Simple as it is, this statement recalls a central aspect of peace as a lived experience

¹⁴ “The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name [...]”Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 7. (United Nations 1989).

¹⁵ For some examples in Colombia, Israel and the USA, see Posada & Alvarez (2010); Ilan (2008); Freedomzone (2011).

¹⁶ For a comprehensive study of diverse understandings of peace in history and culture, see Dietrich (2012); Dietrich *et al.* (2011).

— subjective, visceral and irreducible to any intellectual construction. In a way, this approach to peace is intimately connected with the invitation of the colloquium facilitators to research peace through theatre exercises as a way to access this topic through physical interaction. This experience served as a link to many other experiences, not only because it happened amongst the participants and therefore linked them in that moment, but it also linked present experiences, past memories and positive or negative fantasies with each other. Experiential aspects of peace, although important in religious, spiritual, and mystic interpretations, are rarely included in discourses of peace through security.

Oddly enough, many approaches to understanding peace start with reflections on war, violence, and conflict understood to be the opposite of peace. It has been reiterated here that our proposal is that peace and conflict are not necessarily diametrically opposed or mutually exclusive. Peace as the opposite of conflict (the absence of war) is but one interpretation of peace that is often in friction with other interpretations. We aim to show that peace and conflict can be complementary and that they can, perhaps paradoxically, contain one another. In this sense, if war is understood in one of its historical meanings, primarily as an inner struggle (Dietrich 2012) and peace as an attitude, philosophy, or disposition towards the flow of life, the ostensible paradox transforms into a creative and productive process.

In friction with perspectives that start with war, one current in peace studies challenges this negative ontology by starting with peace itself, emphasizing that peace, like love, joy, frustration, anger, or other most powerful human capacities, is experiential. It is crucial to acknowledge this experience in order to know what it is that one wants to attain when one searches for peace. Naturally, the insight that peace is experiential is by no means novel, though it seems to be often forgotten in academic reflections and pragmatic project designs. Experiences of peace have been reported even under horrible conditions of violence and war (Lederach 2005). There can be a feeling of a deep lack of peace in the most idyllic conditions. It appears that the nature of what we call peace may be much more elusive and paradoxical than that which is envisioned traditionally in security thinking and international relations.

If we assume that a certain understanding of peace is innate, how is this innate understanding perceived? It is certainly not an articulate philosophical statement meticulously thought through but rather knowledge transmitted in a moment of presence, in the silence of repose.

If this is where our understanding of peace comes from, why then is there such difficulty in defining and understanding peace? In the most wide-spread intellectual understanding of peace, it is defined as being the absence of conflict, which is, however, an essential and potentially transformative force in human relationships. Based on this common understanding if we seek peace though avoiding or removing conflict we inhibit the power of conflict to be a transformative force in our relationships. Why the struggle to develop a positive and direct relationship to something that lies within each of our lives and occupies such central importance? This is the paradox: peace is an innate human urge (Bharati 2010); it is understood through experiences of peace. We propose, as a means to address this question, a different, though not novel, perspective on peace. Given the paradoxical nature of peace and its tendency to inhabit the realm between the tangible and the intangible, we suggest that the study of mysticism can further illuminate concepts of peace.

Mysticism as an ontological and epistemological perspective has had a long history of entertaining elusive subjects. Needless to say, this view on peace did not develop on formal academic ground. The mystic and mysterious aspects of peace seemed for a long time to be banned from academic debate, although the realm of the intangible and elusive is where most academic inquiries begin — they begin with a feeling, an intuition, an inspiration. However, science seems to be very oblivious of this creative experience seminal to any later rationalized research method.

Writer and pacifist Evelyn Underhill wrote at the beginning of her seminal work on mysticism that all who venture to use the term ‘mysticism’ will be “bound in self-defence to

explain what they mean by it” (Underhill 1961). Heeding to Ms. Underhill’s advice, we begin with an explanation of “mysticism” that allows us to connect human experience and peace.

Underhill came to understand mysticism as an “expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete *harmony* with the transcendental order; whatever by the theological formula under which that order is understood” (our emphasis, Underhill 1961). A seemingly straightforward definition reveals layers of meaning within the context of this paper. The interplay of unity and diversity here manifests in one of its most dramatic forms; the unity of the transcendent order and the diversity of “theological formulas” by which that order is understood. Left here, the definition would suffice to describe metaphysics or perhaps theology but, with its second component, it becomes mysticism. The key element is the one that brings the individual into relationship with the interplay between the unity of the transcendent order and the diversity of its expressions, namely the human spirit’s tendency to seek out a harmony with that order.

The subject that seeks harmony is the human spirit — ‘spirit’ derives its meaning from the Latin *spiritus* meaning ‘breath.’ It is in the breath that we again find the connection between peace and mysticism. The Sufi teacher and mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan elaborates on the power of breath: for the “mystic, breath is not only a science, but the knowledge of breath is mysticism, and mysticism to the thinker is both science and religion. The mystery of breath is not a thing that can be comprehended by the brain only” (Khan 1926). Beyond the realm of purely intellectual understanding is the mystery of the breath.

Dietrich, after being presented with a definition of peace from a student, for whom peace in their mother tongue was synonymous with “nothing else but ‘fresh air,’” asks the question, “can there be a better way to experience peace than breathing fresh air?” (Dietrich 2012, 3). A moment-to-moment reminder of the interplay of the relationship between unity and diversity is evident in each breath as it is the “most fundamental and indispensable act of all beings, for themselves and yet in necessary relation to each other, and thus the most alive measurement for peaces as such” (Dietrich 2012, 3).

This breath or spirit that seeks a relationship to the transcendent order strives for harmony. *Harmony*, a concept that came up during the colloquium as one of many possible synonyms for ‘peace’ has its roots in the Greek *harmonia* meaning a ‘concord of sounds.’ This understanding moves away from the traditional negative ontology of peace thinking where peace is understood as an absence of conflict, towards an understanding of peace out of concordance of the diverse, a “peace out of harmony” where peace begins with peace.

Summing up, it is possible to say that mysticism consists of a practice intentionally taken with the aim of re-establishing a relationship with a force beyond the individual — a harmonic relationship. Thus, different than an approach to peace out of security as the one we highlighted before, an understanding of peace that emphasizes its mystic aspects recovers the concept of harmony and reconnection of the individual and material with a cosmic and transpersonal principle.

Remarkably, this type of approach to mysticism and peace could serve as a starting point for the development of a mystic perspective within the academic field of Peace Studies. Moreover, from this perspective, mysticism, rather than being only an object of academic inquiry, becomes one mode of inquiry into the field of Peace Studies with its own methodologies. Needless to say, the very nature of this idea does not lend itself easily to harmonious resonance with more traditional academic work that aims generally to achieve objective conclusions as a result of linear models of logic and rationality. However, rather than seeing this conflict of perspectives as an obstacle, it is possible to approach it as an engine of creative tension for the emergence of a new way of conducting and using peace research, a peace research that because of its own premises needs to acknowledge and accept dissonances as part of the challenge and beauty of living in diversity.

However, if we accept the value of diverse approaches, if we recognize the life energy pulsating in moments of dissonance, the question that arises is how to engage with difference without oppressing it. In other words, how is it possible to engage with each other and achieve balanced relationships when we disagree? Out of this struggle resulting from the experiences made through the activity of pushing up against each other, the ideas of peace as balance in movement and peace as harmony in polyphony were discussed intensely during the colloquium. For us, an interesting way to approach these understandings of peace is provided by the realm of music, where polyphony, dissonance, resonance and harmony play key roles. In this sense, it is worth making a few notes on this metaphor for peace inspired by the research of Joachim-Ernst Berendt *Nada Brahma: Die Welt ist Klang* [(Berendt 1983; English: The World is Sound), and the musical work of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1996).

In fact, to be in perfect accord, we could all sing the same note — one beautiful, unified wave. We could even sing three different tones, a major triad, at different octaves. It would be perfect harmony and it would be beautiful. But for how long would that be satisfying? Importantly, the result would not be a song — a song requires tension. If we only sing those tones, it would be boring, static and monotonous unless we find the tensions amongst or within the tones we sing. A song is formed from the tension created from deviating and shifting from an established tone. It is like telling a story, where a struggle takes place and then the tension finds a resolution — or not.

Like a story, music takes us on a journey, but a journey of sensations. If the tone or chord never changes, there is no journey. In order to move, some kind of disharmonious element must be introduced to strain the original form; for a journey to take place, the system must be disturbed. Naturally, this tension can be increased and decreased creating the particular character of the music we perform, and, eventually, it will find its way home back into silence. But it can also happen that the tension created in the music never returns to the original tone or to absolute harmony. The story that the music tells may call for the tension to remain present still at the end of that particular journey, inviting the musical conflict to live on after the voices have ceased their chant.

In any case, the conflicting tones and the tension that they create, open the door for new sounds, and new chords to come. It is precisely the dissonant sounds, the unexpected tones that jump out of the major triad, that provide the possibility of moving to a new pattern, to find a new harmony, a new chord. It is an augmented tone that reaches for a change, a suspended tone that asks to return home, or stays and opens the door for new organization. The tensions in one chord lead to resolution in another, which, in turn, holds new tensions and still new possibilities for resolutions. Each note, each tone contains endless possibilities to step to a new pattern of order and to tell infinite stories.

In other words, the tones that create conflict in music are the elements that allow it to become alive. The tones that stress the harmony, a seventh, a ninth, that step out of what the Western listener is generally conditioned to accept as the beautiful, a perfect major triad, are precisely the tones that allow for innovation in music. They are not to be abhorred, eradicated, but are necessary for creating tension, for telling a story, and transitioning in the music. Notes that cause conflict have a central place in the making of music, because it is their relationship with the moments of stability that makes the music live and, most importantly, that makes the musician and the listener feel alive in a shared journey, connected by the intangible reality of resonance resulting in an elusive sense of communion. In other words, it is the constant game between musical stability and conflict that creates the sense of a lively harmony, and that, lastly, might let music be a profound experience of peace.

In sum, this rather poetic description of tensions and harmony in motion and interplay is intended to show that tension and conflict may be precisely what give *living* and *dynamic* elements to relationships. Certainly this in itself neither advocates nor condones violence. In the same line, part of the Peace Studies literature criticises any attempt towards the suppression,

denial, or avoidance of conflictive elements as means to conflict fixing/solving, and rather sees in the engagement with conflict the only source of transformation.¹⁷ The insights from this reflection on music play a counter point to the previous discussion on security; as tension and conflict are necessary to make a musical journey, it illustrates that limited security discourses — when seeking the physical and/or political elimination of threatening *others* — stifle the creative energies than can come from engaging with tension. While naturally, a perspective on peace that emphasizes harmony in an absolute way, can have as well destructive or oppressive consequences to the individual, the point here is to highlight the existence and value of this perspective on peace that is seldom reflected upon in academic discussions on contemporary peace and conflict.

Concluding Remarks

Moving away from the myth of one monolithic peace to acknowledging a diversity of perspectives on peace in friction, the colloquium and this paper evoked more questions than answers. In this sense, addressing the diversity of peaces as a conflictive topic might be a good sign. Because it is by recognizing the differences amongst our approaches to peace that we can acknowledge and respect them, engage in a true dialogue, where the aim is not to convince and change the other but to encounter the *other*. What *other*? Certainly, the one out there, but more radically, the other within ourselves that allows us to resonate with unexpected insights, that allows us to change, that allows us to develop empathy. In this sense, we would like to thank all participants of the colloquium, who were not afraid to engage with these conflicting peaces and shared with us their ways to engage with diversities in friction.

¹⁷ See for instance Lederach (1996).

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Florencia Benítez-Schaefer: Argentine-German jurist and core faculty member at the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies' MA programme in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. She has participated in various initiatives connecting law and cultural theory, e.g. with the International Investigation Center for Cultural Studies (IFK Vienna) and a DFG-Research Group at the University of Konstanz and published various articles on this field. Her main focus of interest lies on new approaches to social conflict transformation, particularly through scenic arts. In this line, she is currently coordinating and working with the international collective 'Arte y Paz'.

Shawn Bryant: Shawn Bryant hails from Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada and has studied Icelandic language at the University of Iceland. He holds two Master's degrees in peace studies from the UN mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica and the University of Innsbruck, Austria. He is currently working on his doctoral dissertation in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies from the Universitat Jaume I in Castelló, Spain. His areas of research include pedagogy, theatre, economics, and transrational philosophy.

Catalina Vallejo: Is a Lawyer from the Universidad Autónoma Latinoamericana (Medellín, Colombia) with a particular focus on public law, and MA in Peace Studies from Universität Innsbruck (Austria). Has worked for the Colombian public sector in projects related to land management, urban planning and human rights. Currently collaborates with the Chr. Michelsen Institute (Bergen, Norway) in various research projects with regional focus on Latin America, including studies on transitional justice, civilian-military relationships, and climate change lawfare. Author of *Plurality of peaces in legal action: Analyzing constitutional objections to military service in Colombia* (2012).

Noah Taylor: PhD Candidate at the Universitate Jaume I in Spain in International Peace Studies, he has also worked as a seminar leader for a Norwegian Peace and Conflict Studies Program held in Pondicherry, India. Currently researching the connections between Mysticism and Conflict Transformation, he is paying particular attention to the roles of narratives and the influence of spiritual experiences in understandings of peace and conflict in order to understand their role in transforming violent conflict. He is currently the Academic Director of Applied Conflict Transformation at the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies in Siem Reap, Cambodia.