Nonkilling Relationships

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Introduction

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This book, *Nonkilling Relationships*, is published as part of the nonkilling studies series of the Center for Global Nonkilling. Building upon Glenn D. Paige's societal quest for a nonkilling future, the contributions in this volume seek to understand how relationships are critical to build societies with no killing, threats to kill or conditions and conditions conducive to killing. Through different perspectives, contributing authors explore the importance of human contact, interconnectivity, affectivity, recognition, communication, conviviality, resilience, and a sense of belonging to the community, but alo restraint, ritualization and reconciliation.

While this book starts out from relationships that prevent intraspecific killings among humans, it also goes beyond by considering how relationships extend to encompass other living beings as well as nature and planetary life-support systems as a whole. The complex web of life in our planet demands for a more peaceful, respectful, inclusive and sustainable world, of which the chapters in this book offer a glance through an interdisciplinary, intercultural and international scope.

The first chapter, by Sonia París Albert, "Nonkilling Relationships: A Peaceful Alternative to Digitalization", reminds us of the dangers of current relationships framed in digital culture. In many ways relationships have lost personal, face-to-face, engagement with others and their emotions, relegating important aspects such as non-verbal communication. Lack of proximity can prevent empathising with or recognising others, keeping away from what is viewed as different or strange, instead valuing sameness and despising the rest. Throughout the chapter, París Albert stresses the importance of the presence and recognition of the other and of the differences between subjects of the same global community.

The second contribution "Dialogic Models for Nonkilling Relationships" by Benjamin A. Peters underlines the importance of intercultural communication in establishing peaceful relationships based on the science of nonkilling. This intercultural dialogue is set out in five structural pillars: horizontal equality, nonviolence, citizenship and governance, freedom of expression, and social cohesion. In turn, four supporting competencies are proposed, namely leadership and organisation, inclusion and representation, networks and coherence, and skills and values. Throughout the chapter, Peters proposes different dialogic models (the dignity model, nonviolent communication and intergroup dialogue) which have three main objectives: preventing conflict, achieving peace and protecting human rights to develop nonkilling relationships.

In "Imagining a Nonkilling World as a Learning Community", Pearl Chaozon Bauer, Egidio de Bustamante and Jennifer M. Murphy, show how a nonkilling world can be built as a learning community of one another in which interconnectivity, belonging and a new sense of being and relating to one another are paramount. Throughout the chapter, we are invited to imagine alternatives to the culture of war, hatred and exclusion in order to build together, from our human competencies, relationships based on nonkilling and peaceful coexistence. In this sense, the article focuses on indigenous onto-epistemologies that offer valuable concepts for human interconnectivity and embeddedness with nature, such as humility, the sense of belonging to the cosmos, active listening, mutual existence, union, integrity of body, heart and spirit, as well as the creation of safe, respectful and inclusive spaces for all.

Sofia Herrero Rico opens the fourth chapter called "The Power of Resilience in Nurturing Nonkilling Peaceful Relationships" in which she shows how important resilience is as a human characteristic for the promotion of peaceful nonkilling relationships. The role of resilience in tackling the various challenges is discussed in detail, including a change of outlook that breaks the naturalness of violence, the cultivation of affective relationships, generating positive thoughts, communicating peacefully, focusing on competencies, skills and strengths from a systemic perspective, not seeking revenge and committing to living in peace. The chapter ends with a breath of realistic hope for the future, for the planet and for humanity.

The chapter by Geneviève Souillac and Douglas P. Fry is entitled "How the Nordic Peace System Nurtures Nonkilling Interstate Relationships" and focuses on nonkilling from the intergroup sphere. The article highlights the characteristics of non-warring states and explores how they build healthy, convivial relations with their neighbours. In this sense, it highlights some of

the premises on which non-warring states are based, such as nonviolent communication, conflict management and resolution, values and norms, reciprocity and a common identity. As a practical example, the article draws on the experience of Northern European states (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), which could serve as benchmarks for advancing toward nonkilling societies. The chapter concludes that the Nordic peace state provides an example of how to create and maintain nonkilling societies whose characteristics and ways of relating could be applied to other social contexts and situations in the world.

Finally, the sixth contribution, "The Role of Ritualization and Restraint in Nonkilling Relationships" offered by Joám Evans Pim focuses on the 5 Rs that are characteristic of both human and non-human sociality and that broaden the understanding of nonkilling relationships from an evolutionary perspectiva. These 5 Rs would be Restraint, Ritualization, Relationship, Resolution and Reconciliation. Based on these 5 Rs, the article reflects on cross-cultural and cross-species mechanisms for ritualized and restrained aggression that help maintain nonkilling relationships. These capacities can serve in certain contexts as powerful tools to inhibit lethal and escalated aggression, with important implications for the design of strategies to prevent violence and build nonkilling societies.

Nonkilling Relationships
A Peaceful Alternative to Digitization

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Introduction

Digitization has taken over our lives with such force that it now underpins practically all our relationships. Social contact among younger generations especially is largely through social media, where they delight in the number of *likes* that give them a presence in the digital world. Today, therefore, our social lives are increasingly shifting onto digital platforms and as a result, face-to-face relationships are being relegated to a much more secondary position.

Through a philosophical reflection that draws on the thoughts of Han, this chapter questions the position that the values prevailing in modern societies have accorded to digitization. To this end, I propose to reinstate the value of personal relationships as *nonkilling relationships*, understood as relationships that prioritize attention to empathy and cooperative dialogue and in which, in turn, digitization must take a complementary position.

The arguments that take us toward this objective are developed in three stages. First, the transcendence of digital relationships is explored, relationships designated here as *killing relationships* due to the way they transform our social lives. Second, I argue that face-to-face relationships must be reestablished in order to bring back closeness and proximity, through attitudes grounded in empathy, dialogue and cooperation. The final section highlights the importance of working with educational systems that cultivate critical, ethical and creative thinking, thereby developing the capacity people need to question the digital world's all-consuming demands on their attention, and to have the skills they need to give it a much more secondary meaning.

The philosophical approach in the paper draws on a perspective of peace, by considering that reinstating face-to-face social contact always favors a more peaceful coexistence.

The killing nature of digital relationships through the lens of peace

The ways we relate to each other nowadays have changed to such a degree that we have replaced many of our face-to-face connections with digital ones (Han, 2015a; 2017a; 2017b; 2018; 2022), in which the need for physical contact has given way to its absence; in which the closeness of body, face and eye contact are now merely a secondary chance event. Now, as the digital world encroaches on our lives, and therefore our relationships, it is no longer deemed so important to look into another person's face and recognize their thoughts and emotions in their words, gestures and silences. Indeed, proximity is lost, while the sensations of touch, eye contact and voice are neglected and decay.

The digital communication that permeates our relationships takes for granted the physical absence of the other; their disembodied body; their unseeing eyes (Han, 2017a; 2022). It reduces contact, thus eroding the time we might otherwise have for listening and empathy; for taking sufficient care over what we say and how we say things. Communication through face-to-face contact with the other is undeniably more compelling, as we are more conscious of our responsibility for our words, gestures and silences (Martínez Guzmán, 2001; 2005). The compromises we make in attending to the other person's thoughts and feelings nurtures this communication; however, it also brings its own difficulties, especially because we feel obliged to pay closer attention to the messages we transmit and the ways we express them. In effect, empathy can flourish more frequently through face-to-face communication than through digital channels, and it also increases the opportunities for recognizing other people's positions and moving beyond our own. It goes without saying, therefore, that face-to-face contact is the basis for relationships that take the other into account; of relationships that bond us to others and allow us to recognize their otherness (Han, 2017b; 2018; 2022). Face-to-face relationships are therefore essential for nonkilling relationships, in which people come first; nonkilling relationships that emphasize peaceful coexistence and, therefore, will be the mainstay for peacemaking between cultures.

However, the bonds deriving from face-to-face contact are being rapidly replaced by digital communication, which manifestly correlates with the ur-

gent, precipitated nature of today's world where immediacy and speed are imperative in all situations. In direct contrast to calmer, less hurried times, instantaneous results are required in practically every area of modern life and any sense of order is threatened by the reduction of time to the sum of isolated moments (Han, 2022). Now matters more than tomorrow; there is less concern for the future than for what can be obtained instantly in the present. Digital communication, through the internet and social media, gives us immediate access to anything we want at any time, without the need to think. All we desire is just one click away, always within our grasp. This is one of the reasons for the shrinking lifespan of objects and the loss of stability. As soon as we have what we want, we toss it aside, barely used or enjoyed, and move on to the next thing; and so the cycle continues. It therefore becomes clear that digitization shapes the pace of time that correlates with the ways we understand use and usefulness in today's societies. Useful now equates to profitability; something is useful if it can produce and invest, economically, in the system (Ordine, 2017; París Albert, 2018a). By the same token, time must also be useful: it cannot be stopped for thought but must be constantly and continuously productive. Indeed, thinking is disparaged, as it is regarded as useless, irrefutably perceived as something we cannot *waste* on empty digressions; instead, everything needs to be clearly spelled out for us so we can have it in an instant. This is the 'hook' of social media, the reason why we use the internet so intensely, and why we consume, with no disdain, technological devices that do almost everything for us. Likewise, what prevails in our relationships are the dealings we have with the other thing, and with the other person, but more as objects that have a specific use or meet a particular need, and not as bodies with whom we interact and attribute an emotional value to our mutual contributions.

Thus, radical novelty prevails in this new century. Everything changes rapidly; our desire for fleeting things and information at every step of the way is what gives meaning to our relationships, digital relationships that override any other kind of relationship and that so successfully accelerate the pace of time because they occur without the need for active listening. Digital relationships are established, in a trice, with a simple click on the keyboard (Han, 2017a; 2022); clicks that become "like" relationships instead of ones based on the eye contact, touch, physical affection and words of nonkilling relationships.

Relationships measured in *likes* are thus encroaching on our lives, in the way we announce practically everything to the world on our social networks and our posts are valued according to the number of *likes* they re-

ceive. In other words, we are living in what Han (2015a) calls a *transparency society,* which obliges us to divulge everything, including our private lives, because if we do not reveal ourselves openly to other people, we might as well not exist. The transparency society demands our presence in the digital world—where the more *likes* we have, the better—by making us believe that our relationships depend on these *likes*. Vast numbers of people now make friends on Instagram, Facebook and other platforms, where communities of followers give digital encounters a much more vapid meaning. Indeed, the vaporous metaphor holds because the substance of digital relationships is vapid; they do not have their own form. These relationships actually feed on *likes,* which make them much easier than face-to-face relationships because tapping out a message on a keyboard is a far less complex interaction. Digital relationships are therefore vaguer because the care and attention necessary in close-up encounters with others are not as essential. It goes without saying that the implications of being physically present in the company of another person do not arise in digital relationships, because this proximity obliges us, perhaps unwittingly, to take care over what we say and what we do. Indeed, if we fail to nurture this care in our face-to-face relationships, a certain compromise emerges, clearly showing that it is not as simple to say some things while looking the other in the eye as it is from the comfort of the keyboard. For the same reason, digital relationships are also colder, making it more natural to voice hate and hateful discourses, and therefore to indirectly foment polarized societies in which constant confrontation between citizens becomes the norm as they manage their differences through violence.

As mentioned above, the momentum of these attitudes turns digital relationships into killing relationships, in which we have little, if any, contact with those who are different from us; rather, we limit our company to like-minded individuals (Han, 2022), to the extent that the *likes* we receive come from those with similar tastes and ideas, and we reciprocate, in our bubbles, with the same treatment. The interaction therefore becomes even more simplified, because we do not build digital connections with those who are different. Digital communication provides the opportunity to avoid the different; to stay away from anything that does not chime with our tastes, interests and ideologies. It allows us to escape from dialogue with other ways of thinking, thereby limiting our lives to our own comfort zone. As a result, digital relationships cause us to lose a good deal of our capacity to hear the other (Han, 2017a) and, in turn, *I* take precedence; that is, the public nature of ourselves as an object for like-minded individuals to con-

sume. In effect we continuously exhibit ourselves on social media through selfies and posts curated to show our best image, because what now prevails is the *appearance culture* (Han, 2017a). The profile we design in this appearance culture is only partial; rather than showing everything, we select only the aspects we want to draw attention to, normally an attractive face that our followers want to see. The result is a transparency society that is actually less transparent than it seems, and although it obliges us to constantly show ourselves, some parts remain hidden behind the scenes, generally those that do not meet societal demands: anything to do with pain, hurt, imperfection and so on. Undoubtedly, capitalist society has been constructed on the foundations of positivity (Han, 2015a; 2017a; 2018; 2022), in which every subject is necessarily focused on becoming successful. This is because it is a *performance society* (Han, 2015b), which demands continual productive output in the form of things with a useful value in a system that measures everything in terms of its economic performance. So, individuals are deemed successful if they are capable of performing at the levels that both capitalism and themselves demand, since in the performance society, it is not only the system that requires us to meet its demands, but we also place demands on ourselves, thus becoming our own slaves. Like it or not we have to perform, otherwise we are headed for failure. These demands clearly lead to success depression in a *burnout society* (Han, 2015b) where exhaustion spreads at every turn.

Digital relationships undoubtedly feed on these ideals, which is why we only tend to make public the most attractive sides of our lives. By doing so, we are accentuating this *power*, as opposed to *duty*, that nourishes the foundations of the burnout society and, of course, we continue exploiting ourselves and denying ourselves freedom almost without realizing. It is therefore clear that these digital relationships, so ubiquitous today, are killing relationships, not only because of their negative repercussions in interactions with other people, but also with ourselves, as relationships that drive us to exhaustion and loneliness. In sum, digital relationships foster more violent societies because of the very essence of the rituals they are identified by.

Nonkilling relationships based on peaceful face-to-face contact

People need each other. Our existence is nourished by contact with others. We are *intersubjective* (Martínez Guzmán, 2001; 2005), which means we need those around us in order to be who we are, so much so that our ways of being, behaving, thinking, feeling and so on are, in large measure, the re-

sult of the relationships we have with other people. We are not lone individuals, whose identity is constructed in isolation; rather, we are constantly influenced by our environment. To a large extent, we are a social construct. Kant (1992) spoke of *unsocial sociability,* and of how we often believe we do not need anybody else to be who we are, whereas in fact we will always be the fruit of our encounters with other people. Kant used a metaphor to explain this human condition, according to which there was a tree that felt very powerful because it grew taller than any of the other trees around it. However, this tree did not realize that its great height was due to its location in the middle of a large pine forest, which forced it to grow and grow upward toward the light. In other words, the tree, believing itself to be unsociable, was in fact the very opposite because its position among so many other trees was what made it stand out above the others in its pursuit of light.

Kant (1992) used this metaphor to illustrate just how often human beings do the same: we sometimes tend to think that we can exist in a vacuum, without needing anyone else. Yet, our intersubjective condition binds us to others and constructs our identity through interaction with them (París Albert and others, 2011). Indeed, what we are—our identity—is the result of these contacts, in that we are children in the relationship with our parents; friends as shaped by our relationships with friends; partners formed by our relationships with them, and so on. In other words, the traits of our identity align with the ways our relationships develop with the people around us (Comins Mingol and París Albert, 2019; París Albert, 2018b; París Albert and Comins Mingol, 2019). This is why it is so important to cultivate nonkilling relationships, why we must reinstate the *face-to-face closeness* in our relations with others, and why this must be our priority when dealing with the digital world, a world that seems to have engulfed our interpersonal contacts in recent years. Obviously, this should not be interpreted as a call to abandon all digital relationships; rather, we should look for alternatives so they are no longer a priority and, in turn, they become more of a complement to face-to-face contact. *This rationale leads me to posit that nonkilling relationships have a two-fold objective: first, to reinstate the value of face-to-face relationships, and then, to complement these relationships with digitization, but always in a creative way that prevents the digital from prevailing over the personal*.

Hence, from a perspective that stresses the importance of cultivating values for a peaceful existence, each person must be *empowered* to put their face-to-face relationships first; this must be the essence of nonkilling relationships, in which contacts are nourished by closeness and to which we

must have the opportunity to devote the time they need, thereby fleeing from the ways of being in the burnout society (Han, 2015b). As mentioned above, these ways of being force us to behave in accordance with accelerated time and at the same time prevent us from giving ourselves and others the attention we all deserve. These are, therefore, face-to-face relationships in which the truly useful takes its rightful place, because they pay particular attention to dedication and care and offer spaces for the simple things, the things that form part of our daily lives. It goes without saying that nonkilling relationships put people back in the center, and by the same token, they value this as a purpose in itself, in stark contrast to what usually occurs in digital relationships, where importance is given to the means that facilitates it, and largely turns individuals into objects of their own consumption, that is, their own goods (Han, 2022).

In line with the ideas set out above, with the role given to face-to-face relationships, in nonkilling relationships *dialogue* and *empathy* prevail. Such dialogue seeks to actively listen to the other, providing space for all voices and recognizing different positions (París Albert, 2009). It is therefore a dialogue in which different points of view can come together, allowing contact with otherness and having the means to accommodate it peacefully and learn to live alongside it. The communication paradigm of nonkilling relationships therefore strives to be mindful of the ways we transmit our words, gestures and silences, and to always keep in mind the Austinian reasoning that all speech is an act (Austin, 1976). There is no questioning the amount of good or bad we can do by speaking or keeping our silence. Likewise, our carelessness in face-to-face dialogues can lead to misunderstandings, mistakes and tensions. However, such carelessness is far more difficult when the other person is physically in our presence. Whatever the case, the nonkilling relationships advocated here aspire to face-to-face dialogue and advocate responsible communication that pays careful attention to the message and how it is transmitted, with the purpose of avoiding any form of violent discussion. In other words, they aim to foster linguistic understandings based on communicative agreements, determined by ways of going forward that recognize, in conditions of equality and freedom, all voices based on the premise that everyone must have the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions. The attitudes they put first are cooperation, recognition and empathy, attitudes that make it possible to listen to others, put ourselves in their shoes and move away from the limitations of our own horizons and merge them with others' horizons. In this case, the physical presence defended in nonkilling relationships causes us to be more

responsible in our communicative acts and leads us toward solidarity and cooperation. By contrast, violence and hate can emerge and develop more easily from behind the keyboard.

In light of all the above, before going any further I would like to reiterate that this paper does not set out to depict a simple image of personal relationships as relationships that always imply acting peacefully. We can undoubtedly be violent in our face-to-face contacts when our communication is inadequate. Here, however, *our understanding is that, on the one hand, violence can flourish more easily through digital communication and, on the other, all our face-to-face relationships demand we strive to nourish them through active listening and empathy, if we truly want them to be nonkilling relationships in the strict sense*.

Another essential quality of nonkilling relationships is the value of *feelings* derived from the role empathy plays in them. Feelings flourish constantly in our face-to-face relationships, due to the proximity that brings us closer to the other, and this proximity, albeit sometimes unwittingly, gives us greater emotional involvement, unlike the indifference that appears more easily from behind the computer screen. Personal contact helps us engage more with others; we react to the experiences we perceive; we feel our relationship as part of ourselves. In this way, personal contact arouses a great emotional charge, which we must recognize because the way we act is very often a consequence of what we feel (París Albert, 2009; 2020). Indeed, emotions have often taken second place to pure reason; as such they have generally been shunned in the public sphere and restricted to private spaces. However, many scholars are now calling for the reinstatement of emotions and feelings. On this issue, the work of Nussbaum (2015) is of note; she argues that love should have a place in alternative justice models that are sensitive to human welfare, and not only in the economic sense. She makes this claim in the context of her defense of the humanities (Nussbaum, 1998), where she also extols the value of emotions (Nussbaum, 2018).

The defense of emotions also feeds into the dialogue with the demand for an education of emotions; that is, being aware of the role emotions play in our behavior also makes us aware of the need for an emotional education that enables us to identify our feelings, the ways we react to them and the consequences of those reactions (París Albert, 2020). Similarly, emotional education must give us the skills to regulate our emotions, to stop us from being swept along by emotions that tend toward violence. On this point, due attention must be paid to managing hate and its discourses, which polarize and dichotomize our societies (Nussbaum, 2018; París Albert, 2020),

and to managing envy, anger and fear. In these cases, Nussbaum (2018) argues we should subvert these emotions in a positive way by, for example, turning anger into a transitional emotion that retains the strength of indignation, but shuns the desire for vengeance that characterizes vengeful anger.

In sum, emotions are an essential part of face-to-face relationships; emotions that can obviously trigger both peaceful and violent reactions. However, the rationale proposed in this chapter considers that violently charged emotions, such as hate, flourish more easily in digital relationships. Thus, although it is true that digitization implies less emotional engagement, it is also true that from the keyboard it is much easier to hurt, insult and criticize others. Therefore, *the challenge lies in fostering nonkilling relationships through face-to-face relationships in which violent emotions do not flourish and, if they do appear, we have the tools to manage them positively*. Such relationships must be able to accommodate the creative use of digitization, that is, using digital relationships as a complement to inform us and broaden our view of the world, thus preventing violence of any kind from arising. Therefore, our real aspiration is to empower people to ascribe a creative meaning to digitization, so the digital world is there to serve us, and we are not completely at its disposal.

Formal education as a means to nonkilling relationships

Looking to the future, education will be the most important tool with which to disrupt the current state of affairs and reinstate face-to-face relationships and the creative use of digitization. We must therefore continue to argue for educational models that cultivate thinking and nourish the critical, ethical and creative *ethos* (París Albert, 2018a). We need educational systems that pay attention to and nurture our capacity to analyze issues from our own point of view and evaluate them judiciously; systems that make us reflect empathetically, without ignoring different points of view; systems designed to enable us to learn how to put ourselves in the place of others. This must always be done imaginatively and with an emphasis on our potential to fantasize and invent, to be curious and look beyond our own expectations, without fear of moving away from the usual ways of thinking and acting; without fear of dreaming and lighting that spark that sometimes leads us to indiscretion, and, like true explorers, stimulates our curiosity for inquiry and knowledge. As explorers, we should observe with prudence, but always with our eyes wide open, constantly questioning, while at the same time looking for alternatives to the first option that

comes along. Needless to say, if we are capable of igniting our critical, ethical and creative *ethos*, we will be capable of questioning the ways in which digitization is now engulfing us, and of reinstating the real value of personal relationships. Crucially, we must use digital relationships appropriately, so they do not end up taking ownership of our social lives.

The capabilities referred to in the above paragraph can be stimulated through educational systems that subvert the relationships between their main agents (Freire, 1972; 1994; 2004); that is, through pedagogical models in which students no longer define themselves as learners and begin to identify as possible educators as well. Specifically, we must do away with the idea that students only come to class to listen to their teachers and repeat, preferably verbatim, what they are told. We must put an end to the perception that a good student is one who best regurgitates the teachers' message, as though teachers were exclusively a repository of knowledge, only tasked with passing it on. To challenge this, students should come to class knowing that they can also teach, through their own knowledge and experiences; they should also be aware that they must make their voices heard and that they can supplement the subjects they are working on with their own thoughts and opinions. To this end, they must have a much more active role, one that will enable them to escape from the widely accepted secondary position that they occupy in schools and universities at present (París Albert, 2017; 2018a; 2018b). Put simply, students must get used to making their own contributions in class because there is a lot they could say. Teaching methodologies should therefore be complemented with methods and techniques that encourage students' participation and do not limit their performance to curricula content; classroom dialogues and debates are essential, along with reflection and analysis of issues related to daily life. It is therefore so necessary to take inspiration from pedagogical methods that do not simply focus on the most traditional subjects on the curriculum, but also open doors to address other relevant topics, such as applying peaceful means to turn around conflict, gender, interculturality, peace, and so on. In sum, more traditional content remains part of the curriculum, but without ignoring other aspects that affect students' daily lives and which, therefore, must be approached critically, ethically and creatively. All of this is put into place in dialogue between formal, non-formal and informal education so the three areas work hand in hand to shape much more judicious students who know how to give personal relationships their due value and who will have a critical attitude to digitization, to the values

of the burnout society and the performance society, and to the opulence of the transparency and appearance cultures.

Likewise, teachers must also change their attitude in order to become facilitators of learning, but as a shared responsibility (Freire, 1972; 1994; 2004). Teachers learn from the experiences of their students and from all the opinions and diverse points of view that arise in the classroom. In the pedagogical models proposed here, teachers are no longer defined as a statutory authority (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Comins Mingol and París Albert, 2017), delivering grandiose dramatic monologues. Indeed, the traditional lecture, the focal point of their work for so long, should be seen as just another tool in the box to be combined with many other teaching techniques. Of course, this does not mean the traditional lecture must disappear, nor that the vital work teachers do should no longer be recognized; rather, it must be better balanced and in harmony with other classroom methodologies that take both students and teachers out of their comfort zones. Hence, both agents enjoy a much more active role because classes develop and evolve as new contributions arise. In sum, students are encouraged to contribute, explore, imagine, invent and think, while teachers are motivated to redesign each session to align with the students' participation, their insights and their interests. This process, at the same time, shapes a new formal education that rejects the typical characteristics of a hierarchical society, characteristics that are reflected in the classroom in the authority mainly invested in teachers. Thus, classes begin to be understood as a community of inquiry, regulated by the equal consideration of all voices; a community in which dialogue, empathy, cooperation and recognition play a leading role. This is what makes it a vital tool for promoting the values that underpin nonkilling relationships.

Critical, ethical and creative thinking is an essential capacity to cultivate in the pedagogies we propose (París Albert, 2017; 2018a; 2020). It fosters a liberating *ethos* by enabling people to go against the flow when they feel it is the right thing to do, always in a prudent, reflexive, fair, consequent and calm way. As a result, it offers a clear guide to raise younger generations' awareness of the role the digital world should play in their lives, and the skills to use it creatively, as a complement to their face-to-face relationships. It is precisely the critical, ethical and creative *ethos* that must steer us toward prudence and recognize at the same time the value of closeness and proximity, of knowing how to be and act with others, of caring and positively managing our emotions. Indeed, only if we are able to analyze these issues through questioning will we also be able to identify their value and work toward achieving them.

The end goal, after all, is to have the means to avoid being swept along by trends and know how to work out our limits by exploring all the possibilities. To achieve this in the frame of the educational systems proposed here, philosophizing is a perfect supplementary activity. For this reason, we will continue to robustly defend philosophy as part of the classroom experience.

Philosophical activity is inherent to human beings (París Albert, 2018a). It is a skill we have that drives us to ask questions; to want to know more about everything around us and that affects us. It is hugely motivated by curiosity and, therefore, stimulates unhurried reflection, the action of thinking without worrying we are *wasting* time by doing so. For this reason, philosophizing does not fit into today's definition of useful because, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it creates no economic benefit (Ordine, 2017). Rather, the activity of philosophizing gives us other skills that, if we overturn the meaning attributed to usefulness today, could be regarded as useful. Such skills would include the ability to inquire deeply into what are presented as facts, to appreciate things and people, to know how to choose, to question the structures we believe are unjust, to imagine peaceful alternatives that can transform the suffering of people and the environment, among others. In light of the above, and in the framework of the pedagogical proposals outlined, philosophical reflection on digitization can open our eyes and empower us to see, from a creative perspective, just how important it is in our lives, but also to recognize the importance of knowing how to use it properly. In other words, it can help us acknowledge the need for tools that enable us not to replace an affectionate gaze or touch with a computer screen, and to value talking in proximity and recognizing the relationships that make us consider others, with dialogue and empathy. In sum, it can help us not to kill our sociability, but rather, to strengthen it through nonkilling relationships that favor peaceful coexistence.

Conclusions

The allusion to philosophical activity in the previous section aligns with the same philosophically reflective approach I have attempted to take in this chapter. In the end, it is also about being fully aware of the scope of an activity—philosophizing—that stimulates critical, ethical and creative thinking. So much so that without the means and spaces for reflecting, analyzing and evaluating by considering all points in favor and incompatibilities, it is very difficult to break away from the mainstream, challenge unfair behaviors or come up with alternative ways of being and acting. This is precisely what

philosophy contributes in dialogue with more problematizing pedagogies, as referred to in the last section of the chapter; namely, it provides a space for inquiry and dialogue to think about the ways we are constructing our social lives. It provides an environment in which to gain the skills to know how to make proper and effective use of digitization. Specifically, it enables us to come up with scenarios to reflect on the advantages of the digital world, and on the dangers when our relationships become predominantly digital. We must be capable of thinking critically, ethically and creatively about the transcendence of nonkilling relationships, which must be underpinned by physical presence, and in which digitization should be a complementary tool. Hence, nonkilling relationships clearly understand and recognize the violence that can arise in face-to-face relationships, but in response, they strive toward the empathetic, critical and creative *ethos*, dialogue and co-operation, in order to favor peaceful coexistence and breathe life into our social connections.

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Dialogic Models for Nonkilling Relationships[1]

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In 2022, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Institute for Economics & Peace released a joint report, "We Need to Talk: Measuring Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Inclusion". In the report, the organizations define intercultural dialogue as

> a process undertaken to realize transformative communication that requires space or opportunities for engagement and a diverse group of participants committed to values such as mutual respect, empathy and willingness to consider different perspectives (2022: 10).

Noting that 89% of all current conflicts are occurring in countries with low intercultural dialogue, they establish a Framework to Enable Intercultural Dialogue and measure the relationship of the overall Framework and of its constitutive domains with three target outcomes: conflict prevention, peacefulness, and protections of human rights.

UNESCO and IEP's Framework to Enable Intercultural Dialogue consists of five structural domains (*horizontal equality, stability and non-violence, governance and citizenship, freedom of expression,* and *social cohesion*) and four supporting domains (*leadership and organization, inclusion and representation, linkages and coherency,* and *skills and values*) that policy makers, advocates, and members of civil society can work toward strengthening. The organizations establish measurements for each domain and analyze the relationship of the overall Framework and of the individual domains with the three target outcomes for 160 countries. One key finding is that strong overall framework scores for countries are linked with all three target outcomes – conflict prevention, peacefulness, and protection of human rights. Another finding is that

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of all nine domains, three show strong correlations with conflict prevention: *skills and values, inclusion and representation,* and *social cohesion* (2022: 17).

The three target outcomes of the Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue have important implications for nonkilling relationships. Preventing conflicts eliminates escalation of disagreement to aggression and aggression to violence, including killing. Likewise, peacefulness, which includes, in part, reducing and eliminating direct violence, is also a prerequisite for nonkilling relationships.[2] In addition, human rights, including the right to life and the right to live free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as enshrined, respectively, in Articles 3 and Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are understood by the United Nations Human Rights Committee to be protections against the death penalty, i.e., prohibition against killing by the state (UN Human Rights Office).

As a contribution to the promotion of nonkilling relationships and to the strengthening of *skills and values* that promote intercultural dialogue, this chapter introduces and provides an overview of three approaches to dialogue that may be used by individuals or groups to resolve conflicts, foster peacefulness, and honor dignity as the foundation of human rights. Few people receive explicit instruction or have intentional opportunities to practice approaches to dialogue that promote these three basic aspects of nonkilling relationships. What follows are introductory overviews to three such models: the Dignity Model, Nonviolent Communication, and Intergroup Dialogue. Depending on their cultural background and lived experiences, the reader may find one of these more applicable to their own relationships than the others. All of them, however, highlight the supporting domain of *skills and values* that can enable intercultural dialogue and, therefore, advance conflict resolution, peacefulness, and human rights, three fundamental prerequisites of nonkilling relationships.

The Dignity Model

The Dignity Model is a dialogic approach developed by Donna Hicks through her work as the Deputy Director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution (PICAR) at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, as a conflict mediator in places including Sri Lanka, Libya, Northern Ireland, and Syria. Hicks' dignity model

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[2] On the relationship between direct violence and peace, see Christie (2012) and Galtung (2012).

builds on Kelman's Interactive Problem Solving dialogue method (Kelman, 1992) and Burton's human needs perspective of conflict resolution (Burton, 1990), which she affirms are effective at bringing together people divided by conflict and at addressing their shared human needs for security, belonging, identity, and recognition (Hicks, 2018: 156). What her model adds is an understanding of the central role of dignity and methods to address dignity violations and restore relationships.[3]

The first step of the Dignity Model is learning what dignity is, how to affirm it, and how it is violated. Hicks defines dignity as "an internal state of peace that comes with the recognition and acceptance of the value and vulnerability of all living things" (Hicks, 2011: 1) and claims that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity regardless of their actions, which may or may not warrant respect. Understanding these distinctions between people and actions and between dignity and respect is crucial, Hicks argues to avoid dehumanization and to prepare to restore relationships. Everyone deserves dignity because of their inherent value and vulnerability, no matter what they do. Their actions, on the other hand, do not warrant respect when they cause harm. Still, even when people's behaviors are harmful, their dignity must be honored even if interventions are warranted to stop their harmful behavior (2011: 5). Hicks reinforces this imperative to honor others' dignity, even when their actions are harmful, by emphasizing the shared human capacity for empathy. Without understanding dignity as inherent and practicing empathy, people may dehumanize those who do harm and then commit their own harmful behaviors (Hicks, 2018: 157). The imperative not to dehumanize others and the goal of restoring dignity through the practice of empathy, therefore, promote nonkilling relationships.

Hicks argues most people have not received formal education about dignity and its role in relationships. Therefore, shared learning is the first step of the model, and participants in dignity dialogues learn how dignity is affirmed and violated. Hicks identifies ten ways to honor others' dignity: acceptance of identity, inclusion, safety, acknowledgement, recognition, fairness, benefit of the doubt, understanding, independence, and accountability (Hicks, 2011):

- *Accepting someone's identity* means affirming their authenticity without prejudice.

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[3] Hicks' emphasis on dignity aligns with its centrality in modern human rights discourse (See: Kretzmer and Klein, 2002 and Moka-Mubelo, 2016) and with the foundational role of dignity in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- *Inclusion* involves fostering a sense of belonging so that people know they have equal standing.
- Providing *safety* means putting people at ease physically and psychologically, in other words, eliminating fear of harm or humiliation.
- *Acknowledgement* is giving others your full attention, listening to understand, affirming their experiences, and responding to their needs.
- *Recognition* involves praising others' positive attributes and actions and paying them gratitude for what they have done.
- *Fairness* means treating others with justice according to impartial rules or norms that they have agency in creating or accepting.
- Giving people the *benefit of the doubt* is trusting that they are acting for the right reasons and are doing their best.
- *Understanding* means actively listening and believing that others' ideas, thoughts, and perspectives are meaningful.
- To uphold others' *independence*, empower them to act on their own behalf, to feel a sense of their own efficacy, and to pursue their own goals.
- *Accountability* means acknowledging any harm you have done, apologizing for it, and committing to change your behaviors.

The first step of the Dignity Model also requires understanding that when anyone feels threatened, they may have an instinctual reaction to violate others' dignity as a self-protective response. In the worst cases, these reactions are violent and even lethal (2011: 38). Hicks notes that while impulses for self-protection are innate, humans have the capacity to manage them, to choose how to act, and to decide to behave in ways that affirm others' dignity and, therefore, maintain and build relationships. Complementing the ten ways to honor others' dignity, Hicks identifies ten temptations to violate dignity: reacting to others' bad behavior with bad behavior of our own; acting badly to save face; failing to take responsibility for dignity violations you have committed; seeking praise, approval, or other forms of external recognition of your dignity; not taking action when someone violates your dignity; assuming that you have not contributed to a conflict when it is possible you have; resisting feedback from others; blaming others rather than acting with accountability; and allowing yourself to be lured into false intimacy, for example by seeking connection with others through behavior like gossip (Hicks, 2018: 162).

Once a facilitator has led participants through the process of learning about the essential elements of dignity, often through role playing violations

to their dignity they experienced as children in order both to confirm their understanding of dignity and to develop empathy for each other, the basic preconditions for addressing the conflict are in place. Signs that they are ready for the second step include some level of demonstrated trust and good faith among the participants and significant diminishing of adversarial dynamics or their complete absence. When these preconditions are met, the second step begins (2018: 165-166).

The second step of the Dignity Model is a sequence of five facilitated sessions through which the participants address their conflict for the first time and work toward reconciliation. The first session begins with Group A identifying dignity issues that are salient to their group in the context of the conflict. Without interrupting, Group B listens and then writes down each dignity violation they heard and seeks Group A's confirmation that the list is accurate and complete. Group A then may clarify or make additions. The second session follows the same procedure as the first, except Group B identifies dignity violations it experienced while Group A listens and confirms what they heard. Then Group B has an opportunity to clarify. Until this point, the two groups have not commented on the dignity violations that each has identified; they have only listened and confirmed their understanding of each other's dignity experiences.

In the third session, each group has a chance to respond to what they have heard. If it does not happen spontaneously, the facilitator may let them know that if there is anything they want to acknowledge or take accountability for, this is the time to do so. If the participants become solution-oriented at this point, the facilitator re-centers the groups on acknowledgments and apologies. In the fourth session, the groups reflect on what their respective groups can do to prevent further violations. That is, they come up with solutions that are concrete and to which they can commit (2018: 167). In the fifth session the facilitator leads the two groups through a reflection on what they have learned both about their own group and about the other group. The purpose of this final session is to use self-reflection to build a sense of responsibility without deflecting blame onto the other side.

Nonviolent Communication

Nonviolent Communication is a second communicative approach that helps develop the skills and values of intercultural dialogue and supports nonkilling relationships. Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a communicative approach developed by the American psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, who

developed it as a response to aggression and conflict he witnessed and experienced personally and as a method toward resolving conflicts through his work as a clinical psychologist, educator, and conflict mediator (Rosenberg, 2015). Rosenberg traced his use of the word "nonviolence" to "the term *nonviolence* as Gandhi used it - to refer to our natural state of compassion when violence has subsided from the heart" (2015: 2). The moral values of NVC, therefore, are compassion for ourselves and others. NVC consists of developing awareness of communication that blocks compassion and of practicing a four-step method of communication that enhances self- and other-regarding care. On one hand, becoming aware of communication that blocks compassion is a necessary condition for abstaining from communication that can lead to self-harm, aggression, dehumanization, and even killing. On the other hand, the four-step method provides an approach to compassionate communication aimed at ensuring the satisfaction of each person's salient needs, and research shows that the method has applications in settings as diverse as education (Koopman and Seliga, 2021), conflict resolution (Arieli and Armaly, 2022), ecological sustainability (Kansky and Maassarani, 2022), and clinical care (Kim and Kim, 2022) to name just a few.

Rosenberg identifies patterns of "life-alienating communication [that] stems from and supports hierarchical and domination societies" and observes that most people are socialized to communicate in these ways rather than in ways that help them become aware of what they are feeling or needing, awareness that is essential, he argues, for compassion for oneself and others (23). Prevalent maladaptive communication patterns are moralistic judgements or statements about "who is what" that imply someone is wrong or bad because their behaviors do not align with your values (15). Examples include expressions like "You are rude." and "I am unlovable." According to Rosenberg, moralistic judgments "increase defensiveness and resistance among the very people whose behaviors are of concern to us" and prevent us from recognizing our own salient needs, thereby preventing their satisfaction (16). When we make moralistic judgments of others, they may respond in the way we desire because they are acting out of fear, guilt, or shame–feelings that are harmful and that may promote violence (17-18).

Denial of responsibility is another pattern of communication that blocks compassion because it obscures our personal agency, conceals the choices we have, attributes the cause of our actions to outside forces, and helps us justify our harmful behaviors. Rosenberg references Hannah Arendt's observations about the use of responsibility-denying language by the former Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann to illustrate this point. During his trial, Eich-

mann recounted that he and other officers used statements like "I had to." "Superiors' orders." and "It was the law." to avoid personal responsibility (19). This example shows the ultimate danger of life-alienating communication, carrying out a policy of mass killing while deflecting responsibility to the dictates of authority rather than acknowledging personal responsibility. Rosenberg points out many examples of "the dictate of authority" by which we deny responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions. These include how we attribute what we do to vague, impersonal forces, the actions of others, group pressure, institutional policies, social identity roles, or uncontrollable impulses (20). A core component of NVC is becoming aware of and avoiding these communication patterns that block compassion for and obscure the responsibilities we have to ourselves and others.

The second component of NVC is a four-step process consisting of 1) observing without evaluating, 2) identifying and expressing feelings, 3) taking responsibility for and expressing the needs, values, or desires that create our feelings, and 4) making effective requests that respect others' autonomy. The four steps are utilized both when honestly expressing one's own experience in a relationship or conflict and when empathetically receiving communication from someone else about their experience. The first step in the structured sequence of NVC is observing without evaluating. Rosenberg observed that combining observations with evaluations decreases "the likelihood that others will hear our intended message" and makes them more "apt to hear criticism and thus resist whatever we are saying" (26). Take the observation of someone interrupting you when you speak. Simply saying, "You are rude" is both a moral judgment and a denial of responsibility, and it leaves unnamed and conflates the observed behavior with an evaluation of the person's character.[4] To observe without evaluating, the evaluator must describe the behavior objectively, i.e., "You interrupted me when I spoke." Then, the evaluator expresses feelings associated with the observation.

Socialization or a lack of practiced self-awareness may make it awkward to identify and express feelings. However, being able to name and express feelings may connect us with other people, help them understand how we

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[4] The example is a denial of responsibility because it denies the evaluator's responsibility for the evaluation. In other words, the evaluation that the person doing the observed behavior is "rude" depends on the evaluator's values or cultural standards regardless of the values or cultural standards of the person observed. Rosenberg identifies other common patterns of communication that mix observation and evaluation and, therefore, delay or prevent the resolution of conflict.

are experiencing something, and allow us to be vulnerable, all of which may help to resolve conflicts. To express feelings effectively, it is necessary to develop a vocabulary of feelings that provides clear information about emotions. For example, "When you interrupted me, I felt discouraged." Expressing feelings prepares others to receive information about the needs or values that gave rise to them, which is the third step of NVC.

Because our needs are our own, we are responsible for them and for the emotions we feel when they are or are not met. As Rosenberg puts it, "what others do may be the stimulus of our feelings but not the cause" (49). In this step, rather than blaming someone else for our feelings, we express our feelings and the needs that give rise to them. It may be as uncomfortable to express our needs as it is to express our feelings, but doing so gives us a better chance of having our needs met and is likely less uncomfortable than not having them met (53). Building on the first two steps and adding the expression of needs provides the example "When you interrupted me, I felt discouraged because I need acknowledgement and consideration of my ideas."

The final step is making requests. Rosenberg finds that requests made in "clear, positive, concrete action language" reveal what we really want and help to avoid confusion, thus making it more likely that the request could be obliged (70). "Clear, positive, action language" includes concrete information about what you need and requests for what you would like someone to do rather than what you would like them not to do. By making requests after making observations, expressing feelings, and identifying needs, requests are less likely to be heard as demands and, therefore, less likely to be obliged out of a sense of submission or rejected outright without consideration (79). Rosenberg recommends making requests through "would you be willing to" statements. Completing the example above with the fourth step results in "When you interrupted me, I felt discouraged because I need acknowledgement and consideration of my ideas. The next time I begin to share an idea, would you be willing to listen until I finish?" This request is concrete and actionable, and it provides the other person the opportunity to say whether they would be willing to oblige the request. If they are not willing to oblige the request, a different request could be made that would satisfy the need for acknowledgement and consideration.

Intergroup Dialogue

A third communicative approach that helps build the skills and values that support intercultural dialogue and supports nonkilling relationships is inter-

group dialogue (IGD), a vehicle for deliberative, participatory democracy that can be utilized in educational settings, in communities, and in workplaces (Schoem and Saunders, 2001). Thomson and Maxwell trace its broad origins to "the sociopolitical movements of the late 20th century, especially the Civil Rights and Feminist movements, as well as the Disability Rights and Gay Liberation movements" and to "social science critiques of the racial/ethnic and women's studies era as well as the progressive education philosophies and pedagogies of John Dewey, Myles Horton, and Paulo Freire" (Thompson and Maxwell, 2021: ix), and Gurin, Nagda, and Zúñiga (2013) note that IGD builds on earlier efforts by scholars and educators to develop anti-bias education and prejudice reduction programs in the U.S. after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in Brown v. Board of Education (Gurin, Nagda, and Zúñiga, 2013).[5]

IGD consists of a sequence of facilitated conversations among the same participants from two different social identity groups. Unlike the Dignity Method and NVC, which can be readily utilized in interpersonal relationships between as few as two people, IGD applies exclusively to intergroup relationships, although there are adaptations in other contexts, including one example below. IGD brings together roughly equal numbers of participants from two groups defined by different social identities, usually 12-14 participants in total (Hicks, 2021). Because its intended outcomes of mutual understanding, relationship-building, and conflict resolution or social change are process-oriented, the same participants join all sessions. Finally, trained facilitators, usually one from each of the social identity groups, plan and implement the session agendas. While training varies, facilitators should be knowledgeable about the historical relationship between the groups and the specific conflict at hand if one is in focus, understand how power is experienced differently based on specific or intersectional social identities, know and be ready to use skills for norm-setting as well as for supporting and challenging participants, model construc-

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[5] In the United States, development of intergroup dialogue has occurred across civil society and public sectors with higher education institutions as leaders in its formalization and application for advancing equity and inclusion. Early institutional leaders in the field included the University of Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR), the University of Washington School of Social Work's Intergroup Dialogue, Education and Action Center and Arizona State University's Intergroup Relations Center, and there are intergroup dialogue programs on dozens of campuses across the country and national umbrella organizations like the Difficult Dialogues National Resource Center.

tive communication processes, and, even check-in with participants after sessions (See Hicks, 2021; Maxwell, Nagda, and Thompson, 2011).

One common first-step approach is helping participants differentiate dialogue, discussion, and debate. Because of the prevalence of discussion and debate in U.S. culture, even if dialogue participants have not received explicit training in them, most are more familiar with and practiced at discussion and debate than at dialogue, so highlighting specific dialogue skills and values helps make them concrete. Each of the three – dialogue, discussion, and debate – has its own purpose and likely outcomes. Discussions include sharing information and exchanging ideas with the purpose of building knowledge or working toward a solution to a problem. Both casual conversations in which participants bring up and comment on each other's ideas and a conversation with a speaker after a presentation or lecture are examples. Alternatively, debates are conversations through which two or more people advance competing propositions or arguments while trying to advance their own position and find weaknesses in another's position. The focus of a debate may be contentious topics that arise spontaneously in an informal conversation or a predetermined topic in a formal setting. The goal is simply to prove whose reasons and conclusions are right. Finally, dialogue participants share their own and understand each other's perspectives and lived experiences, especially in the context of their different social identities. Listening empathetically, asking questions with sincerity, and validating feelings can help the participants discover points of agreement or shared meaning and deepen their relationships, thus helping to prepare them for collaboration toward social change. Honoring silence is another key aspect of dialogue, and it allows participants the time to process what has been said, prepare to speak, and be together without feeling pressure to know what to say in every moment (Hicks, 2021: 217).

Norm-setting by facilitators is another important aspect of dialogue. The author of this chapter is the Director of the Global Scholars Program (GSP) at the University of Michigan. GSP accepts seventy-five students each year from more than two dozen countries. The program requires each student to participate in a sequence of six dialogues of up to sixteen participants each. Students sign up for sessions through a first-to-sign-up, first-to-be-assigned system, so during each session, the group participants vary. Norm-setting helps participants orient themselves to specific skills they should practice and values they should cultivate, and in the first session trained peer Dialogue Facilitators introduce the program's "Guidelines for Dialogue":

1. Confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.
2. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.
3. We will not demean, devalue, or 'put down' people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.
4. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.
5. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.
6. Speak your discomfort. If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.
7. Move up, move back. Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.
8. Cultivate a 'brave space' where we can be vulnerable and take risks with support from one another.

Since students in GSP are globally diverse and hold many social identities, dialogue is a common experience for them to build relationships by sharing perspectives and lived experiences connected to critical global issues, which they study together in a credit-bearing course of which dialogue participation is a graded component. Through dialogue, they also acknowledge cultural differences or differences rooted in social identity with an aim of mutual understanding and respect. At the same time, it is not unusual for students unexpectedly to discover things held in common. Dialogue Facilitators introduce the guidelines during the first dialogue, but many students use them in other community spaces, which continues the process of relationship building through dialogue. Some students even use the guidelines and dialogic skills to address or transform interpersonal conflicts. Finally, many current and former students anecdotally report using dialogue in relationships in other contexts, for example with their families, friends, or coworkers.

During their first year in GSP, students live together in the same dormitory, take two sequential courses together on critical global issues, and participate in a Collaborative Group team internship with a partner nongovernmental organization (approximately eight students led by two trained Peer Facilitators). These, along with participation in the six required dialogue sessions give students a common experience, and the communicative skills and values they learn in dialogue carry over into the other community spaces. While the effects of the dialogue requirement have not been assessed alone, Table 1 shows pre-test (September) / post-test (April) assessment survey data of students' overall experiences in GSP that suggest they experience changes in confidence with intercultural and interpersonal skills that align with the practice and guidelines for dialogue.

Table 1. *Students' self-assessment of intercultural and interpersonal skills.*

Please indicate how comfortable and confident you are with each of these skills	2020 Pre-test Mean	2021 Post-test Mean	Change
Make relationships with people of different backgrounds and cultures	2.53	2.82	0.29**
Collaborate on work or projects with people of different backgrounds or cultures	2.71	2.94	0.23**
Explain the connections between local and global issues	2.38	2.68	0.30**
Use leadership skills in a diverse community	2.38	2.74	0.36**
Listen to understand people rather than to judge them	2.88	2.91	0.09
Talk about controversial issues with people who have different beliefs and values	2.50	2.68	0.18
Point out areas of difference and conflict without harming the relationship	2.47	2.76	0.29**
*Admit when I caused someone harm and work to repair the relationship**	2.73	2.82	0.09

t-tests performed on N=34 matched pairs
*N=33 in the final statement
**indicates a statistically significant change

Students took the pre-test and post-test surveys voluntarily and identified themselves only by recording their student identification numbers. An assessment specialist then analyzed the results for students who completed both surveys, resulting in thirty-four students for whom there were pre-test and post-test results. Analysis (t-tests) showed statistically significant changes on five items:

1. Make relationships with people of different backgrounds and cultures
2. Collaborate on work or projects with people of different backgrounds or cultures
3. Explain the connections between local and global issues
4. Use leadership skills in a diverse community
5. Point out areas of difference and conflict without harming the relationship

Considering the skills and values practiced in dialogue, its effects may be seen in students' self-assessed abilities to "Make relationships with people of different backgrounds and cultures" and "Point out areas of difference and conflict without harming the relationship". Practicing dialogue may have also had positive spillover effects on students' self-perceived ability to "Collaborate on work projects with people of different backgrounds or cultures", since Peer Facilitators trained in dialogue facilitation led the Collaborative Groups through which students completed their team-based internships. Further research is needed to determine if the program's dialogue requirement leads to improvements in skills across cohorts. The data above along with other anecdotal evidence, however, suggest that practicing dialogue may contribute to relationship-building across differences within a community of globally diverse young adults.

Conclusion

UNESCO and IEP's call for policy makers, advocates, and members of civil society to strengthen domains that enable intercultural dialogue is a global campaign to advance the goals of conflict prevention, peacefulness, and protection of human rights. Their analysis of 160 countries finds that a strong overall framework of structural and supporting domains is positively linked with all three of these goals and that three domains show strong correlations with conflict prevention: *skills and values, inclusion and representation*, and *social cohesion*. Effective conflict prevention, of course, disrupts the chain of escalation in conflicts that can lead from disagreement to aggres-

sion, from aggression to violence, and from violence to killing. Therefore, teaching, learning, and practicing skills and values that promote conflict prevention tacitly affirm and directly support nonkilling relationships.

Building on the UNESCO and IEP finding that the supporting domain of *skills and values* is positively linked with conflict prevention, this chapter presents overviews of three communicative practices, highlighting skills and values of each that can be learned, practiced, and applied in intercultural, interpersonal, and intergroup contexts to prevent and resolve conflicts and support nonkilling relationships. Regardless of social, cultural, or educational background, most people do not receive an introduction to or have opportunities to practice and apply a communicative approach that supports these aims. By presenting introductions to the Dignity Model, Nonviolent Communication, and Intergroup Dialogue, this chapter offers a starting point for policy makers, advocates, and members of civil society. Depending on culture or context, one or the another may be more useful. However, all three include skills and values that can be learned, practiced, and applied, thus contributing to conflict prevention.

The Dignity Model places the shared experience of our inherent human dignity as a central value in conflict resolution. Identifying ways to affirm dignity and knowing how to avoid harming the dignity of others are skills not only applicable in conflict prevention and resolution but in the promotion of nonkilling relationships. The focus on dignity throughout the five-stage process of the model also puts the inherent value of one's own and others' dignity at the center of the process, thus protecting against dehumanization and harm, including killing. Likewise, Nonviolent Communication is an approach with skills and values that can be practiced and applied in all relationships. Compassion–for oneself and others–is the guiding value of the approach, and, when practiced intentionally, NVC helps to avoid life-alienating communication, which can lead to harm and, according to Rosenberg, even killing. The four skills of making observations without evaluations, identifying feelings, expressing needs, and making effective requests can be practiced and applied in any relationship or context, and the approach's aims of compassionate, life-affirming communication, and avoidance of harm are prerequisites for nonkilling relationships. Finally, Intergroup Dialogue, designed to be practiced within the context of intergroup relationships, promotes the values of empathy, inclusion, and positive social change. These values as well as the skills that facilitators and participants practice, especially but not only norm-setting, modeling constructive communication process informed by agreed-upon guidelines, and checking in

with each other outside of dialogue sessions are key features, and they can be applied in other group settings, as the example above of the Global Scholars Program at the University of Michigan shows.

While these three communicative approaches–the Dignity Model, Nonviolent Communication, and Intergroup Dialogue–are not the only communicative methods with embedded values and skills aligned toward conflict prevention, peacefulness, and protection of human rights, they are approaches that may be applied broadly across cultures and contexts to support these goals. The concrete and practicable values and skills they include help to enable intercultural dialogue as per UNESCO and IEP's call for action, and, as this introduction argues, they can support the interpersonal and intergroup foundations of nonkilling relationships.

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Imagining a Nonkilling World as a Learning Community

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What we cannot imagine cannot come into being

In the United States, more than 17,000 people have been killed by gun violence so far in 2023 (Gun Violence Archive). Out of the estimated 250,277 gun-related deaths worldwide in 2019, 65.9% occurred in six countries, the top two, Brazil and the United States (World Population Review). Black US-Americans disproportionately experience gun violence – ten times the gun homicides, eighteen times the gun assault injuries, and nearly three times the fatal shootings by police than white US-Americans (Every Town); LGBTQIA+ individuals are also disproportionately impacted by gun violence (Every Town). Amplifying this further, more anti-trans legislation has been passed against trans people in 2023 than ever before (Ranaraja, 2023, p. 4) accompanying a global rise in anti-trans hate (Human Rights Watch). A majority of U.S. teens fear a shooting could happen at their school – a concern also shared by their parents (Pew Research Center). Compounding this violence, book bans which decide what can be read, taught and explored (Ranaraja, 2023: 4) surged to their highest levels in the U.S. in 2022 (American Library Association). Within this learning landscape, we need to imagine a world view that affirms the possibility of a society where killing is absent. But how? As bell hooks explains in her critical pedagogical work *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*, "what we cannot imagine cannot come into being" (Hooks, 2010: 59). We have to first believe we can imagine something else, and then we have to actively create and build it.

For the past thirteen years, we have been working to re-imagine both the form and content of the classroom space, centering relationships and relationship building. Intuitively, we wanted to create something different – to bring something else into being. Guided by critical academic caretakers thinking otherwise in postcolonial, decolonial, Third World feminist, queer, and abolitionist ways (Alexander, 2005; Carbado, 2007; Christian, 1998, 2007; Freire, 1994, 2000, 2004; Giroux, 1997; hooks, 1981, 2000; Keating, 2007, 2013; Kimmerer, 2020; Lorde, 1993, 2007; Moraga, 2015; Prakash and Esteva, 2008; Rich, 1986, among many others), we began to explore how to tear down the walls of suffocating classrooms to build awakened spaces of critical consciousness and aliveness (Carruthers, 2019; Castillo, 2014; Crenshaw, 1991, 2004, 2013; Davis et al, 2002; Illich, 2002; Loomba, 2015; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018; Oyěwùmí, 2001; Said, 1994; Santos, 2014). Although we each need to historically and politically situate our classroom communities in their places, to differing degrees, we can declare that common realities shape the rooms into which we walk – the racialization, the marketization, the gendered-colonial hyper individualization of space. Once again, bell hooks succinctly captures these entrenched social dynamics in her oft-quoted line, "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" and its values (1984: 248). When such values are de facto fused into space, it takes deep, intentional re-imagining to bring something else into being.

As dehumanizing forces tear at the fabric of relationship building in institutional school settings, what is the significance of centering relationships and relationship building in the work we do? Why do we consider this a radical act itself? Following abolitionists, we see the importance of the beloved learning community for radically re-imagining what we can create together as a learning community (Davis et al, 2022; King and West, 2015; Love, 2019). In the act of imagining and creating, we attempt to build that which we might not be able to see, which has yet to take shape. In the process of building, of creating, we center relationships; we give them time. Only then can we build. In the act of relating, we bring in the chaotic and tensional mess of relationality.

In the last seven years, our Peace and Conflict Studies background (Gigio and Jenny[1]), critical contemplative work and experience (Pearl) and postcolonial-decolonial-subaltern-critical race-pluriversal proclivities (Pearl, Gigio and Jenny) have pushed us further into untraveled terrain. Our previous attempts to bring another classroom into existence helped us under-

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[1] Gigio and Jenny are the nicknames that Egidio and Jennifer go by in their classes.

stand that we could not just critically "(re)think" the classroom and class-room relationships. We needed to imagine a different way of being, and thus relating, in the classroom: a holistic onto-epistemology of knowing, learning and creating. What would this different way of being look like? How could we imagine and then create spaces of radical relationship, inter-connectedness, and belonging? What would this entail? Although our criti-cal-relational approach to learning is also greatly influenced by the above-mentioned thinkers, practitioners and trailblazers, we would like to focus this chapter on Indigenous onto-epistemologies that have expanded our understanding of relationship-building in the classroom. Intuitively called and accompanied by our ancestors and freedom dreamers, we would like to share how we have reimagined and created classroom space otherwise.

Profound wisdom in reflexive humility

As non-Indigenous peoples, we often ask ourselves the following question: How can we share the profound wisdom we have learned from Indigenous onto-epistemologies for relationship building in the classroom (and beyond) without culturally appropriating ways of being and knowing that are not ours? By "not ours," we are not referring to ownership of ideas and prac-tices. We are referring to the danger of apolitical and ahistorical traveling of ideas and practices. Indigenous-onto-epistemologies are always situated in specific places and land, in struggles, pain and joys, and in everyday exist-ence and survival. So we question our intentions. Because we are aware and attentive to violent colonial histories of erasure and exploitation as well as uneven power dynamics, in a reflexive process, we ask ourselves if we are taking, excavating, extracting or if we are sharing, crossing over, and lis-tening. Many of the Indigenous thinkers we are reading are not writing to us; they are writing back to one another on their own terms. This is where recognition, humility and respect are essential because we are limited (Gomes, 2013; 2021). We have to find the thinkers and activists that were not taught to us. We then have to work with and through our own Western Euro-US conditionings to be open to ontologies and epistemologies of in-terconnection that may be wanting in our own teachings and learning.

This begins with our own settler-immigrant stories as well as our jour-neys within education and political institutions of secondary schooling and academia, despite shifts within them to "words such as reconciliation, inclu-sion and diversity" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021: xii). It involves our journey of de-colonizing our minds (Ngũgĩ, 2011) as well as our discourses and under-

standings, practices and institutions so that we may *know* the world differently (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021: xiii).   In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou, Māori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, captures and details an imperial Western worldview that projects and centers itself through objectivity, rationalization and distance, effectively colonizing conceptualizations of race and gender, the individual and society, and space and time in order *to make sense of the world*. US-American, political theorist Iris Marion Young explains what this *making sense of the world* of Western European "modern" discourse entails: a universal and neutral position in direct opposition to affectivity and the body; an account of the knower as autonomous, neutral, abstracted and purified of particularity; a purified abstract idea of formal reason, disembodied and transcendent (divorced from material reality); a presentation of nature as frozen in solid objects, which can be counted, measured, possessed, accumulated and traded; a seeing with the mind, a normalized and normalizing unstated "norm" – white, bourgeois, male, European; an equation of intelligence, rigor and rationality with strategic and calculative thinking, abstraction from particulars in order to formulate general laws of operation, logical organization of systems, mastery of formalized language, and systems of surveillances and supervision; and, a framing of scientific reason within the dichotomy of a subject and an object (subject/object duality) (1990: 125). These naturalizing theories were justified in biological physiological markings of difference and in and through the development of Euro-US scientific disciplines. Furthermore, the gaze of the scientific observer was applied to bodies, weighing, measuring, and classifying them according to a normative hierarchy. Constructed and seen in a medicalization of difference, we get deviant bodies, prostitutes, queers, and criminal and degenerate bodies, Blacks, Jews, Indigenous, poor, women, among others. All of this fused into the deep structures of social relations.

This inheritance is what we need to examine as Indigenous scholars and activists share their knowledges with us. For we have been steeped in abstraction, categorizing and hierarchizing, the coloniality of power/gender and anti-Black white supremacy (Lugones, 2008 and Yancy, 2017). What values, experiences, and perspectives have been presented to us as normative and universal? And, how might they affect our very understanding of Indigenous onto-epistemologies? We may miss the mark at times, but it is worth the risk to try to decolonize our classrooms and allow Indigenous onto-epistemologies to guide the way towards alternative methodologies. For this reason, we are not detailing here what Indigenous onto-epistemologies

are. Rather, as we dive more deeply into the offerings of Indigenous thinkers and activists globally, we examine how we might be reproducing colonial imaginaries in not only what we teach, but also how we facilitate (Chaozon Bauer et al., 2020; 2022; and 2023). Tuhiwai Smith asks us to confront the Western academic canon in its entirety, including pedagogy (2021: xii). We take this call to accountability seriously.

Just as we were collectively writing about walking the tensional line between humbly listening and arrogantly appropriating, a group of deer walked by our window and began to munch on tall spring grass and berries from low hanging branches. While we cannot avoid the conflictive nature of this terrain (nor do we want to), as the deer remind us to do, we can pay attention. We can listen, bear witness and actively participate in imagining what is possible to create and share. We resonate with Māori scholar-activist Makere Stewart-Harawira when she contends that traditional ontologies and epistemologies of the world's Indigenous peoples have a vital contribution to make for, in Māori style, singing our relationship to the world into being (2011: 78). She rejects an essentialist or a universalistic read of Indigenous onto-epistemologies and recognizes the particularities and historicality of Indigenous peoples and nations. At the same time, she highlights common themes within Indigenous onto-epistemologies like the importance of relationality, reciprocity and deep interconnectedness of being, underscoring the sacredness and interrelationship of all forms of existence (2005, p. 40). Within this world view, this cosmovision, a hierarchically-organized, removed and cold classroom that does not center relationships and interrelationality does not make any sense.

Breathing life into one another

At the heart of Indigenous onto-epistemologies across the globe is radical interconnectedness. There is no separation of the individual or the community from place, nature and "being-knowing." This deep relationality is expressed in the African Ubuntu saying "I am because we are, and because we are, you are" (Hord and Lee, 2016; Ogude, 2019 and Ramose, 2005); in the Lakota Native American saying, "*Mitakuye Oyasin*"- "We are all related" (Cajete, 2015); and in the Hawaiian greeting "Aloha" – "to share breath" (Meghji, 2021). We are human through the humanity of other beings. More energy than matter, this extends to everything imbued with spirit. Therefore, we begin each class with a collective hum, active listening and/or intentional breathing. Through the breath of imagination, we breathe creativi-

ty – together. We breathe our relationships into existence. We exchange breath. We may not press our foreheads and noses together, while inhaling at the same time as Kānaka Maoli do (Brown, 2016 and Chapin, 1984), but we recognize one another's vibration by vibrating together; we listen to each other and ourselves; and, we pay attention to our breath. We push back against the numbing, apathetic and objective forces that dehumanize us such that we cannot feel our own vibrations, hear our voices, and experience our individual and collective breathing. We recognize our humanity, our unique beings, and we breathe life into one another and into the space/place of encounter. We recognize our interconnectivity, and we begin to build relationships together.

The physical act of breathing, of living, is also a political act. The US Black Lives Matter slogan, "I can't breathe," represents resistance against state sanctioned murder, systemic racism and the inability to live, move and breathe freely as Black, Brown, Indigenous and Queer people in the US (although the slogan spread rapidly across national boundaries as well). When we breathe together, we are, as Makere Stewart-Harawira declares, "breathing life into the network of subtle interconnections" (2005: 38). Ultimately, when one breath ends and another begins is indistinguishable. We are all part of the grand cosmic web. And when we *know* this, that we are not separate, we believe it becomes more difficult to take life, to choke hold a fellow human to death. We are not naïve to the complexities of historically and politically situated direct, cultural and structural violences undergirded by the colonial nexus of race, class and gender (Chipato and Chandler, 2022; Lugones, 2008; Mignolo, 2000a, 2000b, 2008; Quijano, 1993, 1999, 2000). But we ask ourselves: How do we address the dehumanizing-extractivist, desensitizing and disconnected forces that work from below, within and beyond the classroom?

This separateness – separateness from nature, from human beings – has a colonial origin as well as a Western-Euro-US philosophical one. As described by Stewart-Harawira, people's alienation today has a "metabolic rift" (2011: 80) that can be traced back to the Cartesian mind/body split, which led to the expansion of cultural imperialism described by Young above. This splitting of mind from body, the separating of human from nature, the hyper-individualization of the individual, and the neoliberal marketization of all spheres of life, the social, the political, and the relational (Brown, 2005 and Harvey, 2007), has grave physical, mental and environmental health consequences. We see it in our students, in the increase in

anxiety, depression, and destructive practices, such as cutting, suicidal thoughts and other self-harming behaviors (Douclef).

These mental and physical health imbalances have also called us to re-imagine our classrooms and learning communities. When we recognize that we are all related, connected, and we consciously breathe together, the immediate response is not bliss and connection. In fact, at times, to the simple act of breathing we are met with much resistance because it is a vulnerable act. When we breathe, we know we are alive. It wakes us up. Like a foot that falls asleep or experiences hypothermia, it hurts to wake up, to come alive. When we breathe, we know we have a body. We feel tensions, maybe even fear for our safety as targeted bodies. When we breathe, our heart cracks open to the present moment and the long now of our ancestral-historical stories and future generations. When we breathe, we awaken our spirits and our life forces within as they connect without. Our minds, as conditioned by the Cartesian split, might try to get in the way and disregard as unimportant time dedicated to vibrating, listening and breathing; but in these acts, we begin to seek life differently, to relate and build relationships differently. Indigenous onto-epistemologies offer us a different way of *imagining* and *creating* the classroom and of *doing* learning.

Coming-to-know of mind, body, heart, spirit

In *Indigenous Community: Rekindling Teachings of the Seventh Fire*, Tewa Indigenous scholar and educator Gregory A. Cajete explains that among the Aztecs, the meaning of education was to find one's face, heart and foundation – a way of life through which "one could most completely express one's life" (2015: 10). Additionally, through this process of discovery, "as we are nourished, we nourish others in return" (11). Part of the circle and cycles of life, we pay attention to our holistic selves – the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. Mind, body, heart and spirit. For our classrooms, this four-fold orientation broadens critical thinking to holistic being together, which includes our minds, our bodies, our hearts and our spirits (however each individual community member understands that, God, spirit, nature, life force, among others). By broadening thinking to all our aspects of being – thinking-embodying-feeling-enspiriting – we expand our abilities to relate to one another and to build our relationships.

The holistic nature of Indigenous knowledges urged us to rethink critical thinking in the classroom. What happens pedagogically when critical "thinking" becomes thinking, embodying, feeling and enspiriting? What happens

when in coordination with the content of our courses, we consider and put into action our minds, our bodies, our feelings and our spirits (Koppensteiner, 2018 and 2020)? By this, we do not mean thinking in an abstract way about our bodies, our feelings and spirits. Each becomes a verb, and each verb is oriented toward our individual and collective imaginations and abilities to create that which we cannot see, yet. We start with our relationships to one another. We think; we critically analyze (deconstruct for transformative reconstruction). We embody; we are in our bodies. We feel; we are in our hearts. We enspirit; we awaken, lighting up meaning and purpose. Together, we come-to-know in constant motion, contraction and expansion – unlearning, unmaking, unforgetting in order to re-learn, re-make and re-member.

Cajete captures this process of coming-to-know as seeking life:

> In the practice of Native science, the more humans know about themselves – that is, their connections with everything around them – the greater the celebration of life, the greater the comfort of knowing, and the greater the joy of being. This relationship to space and time, and between living and nonliving things, is not just physical, but psychological and spiritual, in that it involves dreams, visions, knowing, and understanding beyond the simple objectified knowledge of something. In other words, it is inclusive of all the ways that humans are capable of knowing and understanding the world. (2000: 75-76)

This inclusivity of all of our ways of knowing is integral for understanding how we have reimagined the classroom. If coming-to-know and learning is about a coming-to-understand ones' relational place, then this "entails a journey, a process, a quest for knowledge and understanding" (p. 80). And then we ask ourselves, how can we "grade," "assess," "measure" holistic learning? It does not make sense. If the heart of our classrooms is not solely content and how to assess the accumulation and acquisition of such content, but rather our actual relationships, what happens? If learning involves our whole beings and getting to know our whole beings, what can we imagine and what can we learn and create together?

If the heart of classrooms are not our actual relationships – coming-to-know one another/ the beloved learning community – then we feel we are reproducing the illusion of colonial separateness, distance and linear progress. We can already hear the discomfort this reorientation might invoke. We hear loud challenges, worried calls to protect the rigor, seriousness and objectivity of knowledge and knowledge making. Accusations of relativism and bias and lack of sampling, operationalization and generalizability ring out, echoing colonial calls to protect scientific knowledge and knowledge

making. Indeed, centering relationships appears simplistic, but it is merely simple. Like a haiku, it reveals the heart of the matter. So, we have written three that express how we understand these relational processes:

> *Song of the spirit*
> *Hum of the Universe*
> *Singing wild and free*
> *(Pearl)*
>
> *Burning from within*
> *Healing in community*
> *Full and whole once more*
> *(Gigio)*
>
> *Curiosity*
> *The heart of transformation*
> *Sparks awakening*
> *(Jenny)*

In Indigenous knowledge fashion, we work to build awareness and critical-heightened consciousness – a dance of our inner and outer connections, the weave and the weaving of our relationships. But we can only do this by paying deep attention to and caring deeply about the spaces we create as well as the people in the room.

Queering safe(r), risky, brave space

In the 1960's and 1970's, Gay and women liberation movements and consciousness raising groups began to use the term safe space to establish an intention of creating a space free of judgment and harm (Kenney, 2001). It was then adopted by educational spaces in the US in the 1980's. In 1989, Gay & Lesbian Urban Explorers (GLUE) designed the above image of an inverted pink triangle enwrapped in a green circle to symbolize universal acceptance and spaces free of homophobia. The legacies of these freedom movements inspire the creation of our classroom spaces. However, we want to make clear that there is nothing we can actually do to make the classroom spaces safe, that they can be free of anything. Instead, we begin with the *intention* to create spaces where we feel safe, free of harm and danger. We strive to make our classroom spaces as safe as we can, to make them *safe(r)*. In our different contexts, there is much that we cannot control, that rips at the social fabric and prevents social connection. Therefore, we configure the classroom space as a sacred circle, physically if possible and metaphorically if not, where all is and all are welcome (Chaozon Bauer

and Murphy, 2020). We recognize that we form at once the fabric of our relationships and the space/place where we build them. We value our holistic selves in space created holistically (Murphy, 2018). We resonate with psychologist and mindfulness/heartfulness teacher and practitioner Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu who suggests that safety needs to be created through mutual vulnerability and connection to others (2018: 68; 2012: 96). Still, by inviting everything into the room, our classroom spaces become risky. And there is a lot at stake in our risk taking.

Figure 1. *Queer Symbol. Source: dictionary.com*
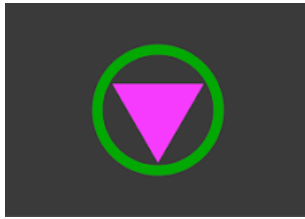
Ignorance is not bliss, and it always enters our classrooms. It injures. It harms. There is no way to protect against it, but we try anyway. We invite students to holistically and authentically position and express themselves in creative ways even as we know this is risky. People say, exhibit, and embody racist, sexist, and classist things. They deny privilege. They feel that they are being blamed and shamed for a world they did not create and what they do not see themselves as. All of the stereotypically contradictory reactions that can make "safe" space unsafe can happen. We live in social orderings and realities that encourage them consciously and subconsciously. As critical race educators Zeus Leonardo and Ronald K. Porter argue, "*violence is already there*" (2010: 149). Violence already exists in our classroom spaces; the terrorizing forces of white supremacy are present (hooks, 1992). Therefore, safe space discourses that focus on image and personal management (Thompson, 2003) at the expense of the perspectives and experiences of people of color create the very conditions that maintain the status quo and prevent authentic conflictive relationship building. We resonate strongly with Zeus and Porter that spaces that address white supremacy, its structures and how it structures relationships are "inherently risky, uncomfortable, and fundamentally unsafe" (Lynn, 1999 quoted in Leonardo and Porter, 2010). If, as Leonardo and Porter argue, pedagogies that meet dehumanizing power head on are most uncomfortable for those who benefit from that power and "people of color find themselves between the Scylla of becoming visible and

the Charybdis of remaining silent," what can we do as facilitators (Leonardo and Porter, 2010: 140)? Zeus and Porter urge us to acknowledge the tensions already existing in our learning spaces, to acknowledge that violence and hostility already exist in any social system because the very "struggle over power *structures* participation within the system" and perpetuates and enacts systematic relations of violence (146 and 148, emphases added). Expanding our notions of liberatory education, we still try to make space safe(r) through form and content. But this is inevitably risky. Consequently, our safe(r), riskier spaces require our bravery. Through conflictive relating, we aim to build our relationships more authentically. In so doing, we get our hands dirty and our classrooms also become braver spaces.

We understand brave space as space that we have not only reconsidered and re-architectured, but also one that calls for accountability. Rather than a place of vertical knowledge transmission, we remake the classroom as a place that invites creativity, embodiment, intersubjectivity and abolitionist socio-emotional skills (Abolitionist Teaching Network, 2020) that contest power and authority. We reconfigure our relationships towards companionship and political action. In our classroom spaces, feelings matter and are not to be discarded. We do not want to repress, for example, feelings of anger, sadness, and disgust or fear, joy and trust. We do try to create space and consciousness between our feelings and our (re)actions so that we may learn to act and not merely react. Supremacy systems push people inward towards psychosis (Fanon, 1963; 2008) and outwards towards reactively lashing out (Anzaldúa, 2012). Our aim for spaces we facilitate is to learn to create space so that we can act empowered. We acknowledge our inner landscapes and we exist outwardly, responding and creating in transformative ways through being-thinking-acting differently. This is messy space. Facilitating such space requires a lot of inner work on our part and critical awareness as it relates to our historically and politically situated outer realities. We want our learning communities to feel comfortable and safe, but we actively invite discomfort so that we do not reinforce dehumanizing power dynamics and jeopardize our ability to disrupt, trouble and transform dehumanizing systemic realties and how we relate to one another as we creatively re-imagine them together (Arao and Clemens, 2013). We relate with our brave minds, brave bodies, brave hearts and brave spirits so we can be accountable to one another and ask for accountability of each other (Martinez Guzmán, 2001).

Commensurate with an aesthetics of resistance and transformation (Murphy and Omar, 2013; Murphy, 2018), we queer our safe(r), risky and

brave spaces. Although the history of queer and its definition pose a much longer and complex debate, we focus here on the etymology of the term, its contemporary use and its reach across time and cultures for reimagining our classroom spaces. According to queer and gender studies thinker, writer and trailblazer, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the term "queer" finds its etymological roots in the Indo-European *twerkw*, which led to Latin *toquere* (twist) and English *athwart* (1993: viii). In the past centuries in the Anglo-Saxon world, the term queer changed in the nineteenth century from a self-definition of homosexual cisgender men to a derogatory slur used against gender *deviants* in the twentieth century. As it was reappropriated and reclaimed in reference to gender and sexual non-normativities in the past thirty years approximately, it transformed again (Taylor, 2012). Regardless of the etymological and sociological unfolding of the term, people who do not conform to mainstream gender identities have existed across history and cultures, with evidence in ancient Egypt and across the African continent, Greece and Rome, in Indigenous Americas (Abiya Yala), South and Southeast Asia, in the Pacific Islands and in the Islamic world. Today, queer functions as an umbrella term relating to the LGBTQIA+ community and also represents "a political or ethical approach, an aesthetic quality, a mode of interpretation or way of seeing, a perspective or orientation, or a way of desiring, identifying or disidentifying" (Taylor, 2012: 15). This approach is an invitation for us to rethink classroom space itself, to take a stance *against* normative arrangements of thinking, being and placemaking. Following US-American queer phenomenologist and Africana thinker David Ross Fryer and feminist writer and British-Australian scholar Sara Ahmed, we refuse to be normalized at the sake of our own identities (Fryer, 2016: 230-31), and we heed how our bodies inhabit spaces and bodily dwell with each other (Ahmed, 2006: 2). Therefore, we pay attention to the physical and spiritual spaces of our rooms as well as to the people, the holistic beings, who enter them. We strive to twist and reshape space *towards* radical and whole acceptance.

Elicitive Holistic Learning – Who is in the Room?

Stewart-Harawira contends that there is an "ontological rupture" at the heart of Euro-US modern societies as well as at the heart of the individual (2011: 79). She underscores the importance of being/knowing and this calls our attention to the people, the beings in the classroom. After peace and conflict theorist and practitioner, Jean Paul Lederach, we follow an elicitive approach within the classroom (Lederach, 2003; 2010; Lederach and Lederach, 2011).

This means that we believe the resources already exist in the room for whatever it is we are going to explore, regarding content, questions, curiosities. It is our job as facilitators to tease this out and weave together what each individual brings and what this means for our community. Following the admonition of Stewart-Harawira, no one in the room is a mere observer, set apart from nature or from what is observed (2011: 80). We are connected and so we need to get to know each other, the people in the room.

When we extend this conflict transformation elicitive approach to holistic learning, being and knowing, it becomes an even more powerful space for building relationships. We spend time getting to know one another. It is always surprising to us when students recount that this is the only class they have where they know each other's names. It is not possible to build relationships or a beloved learning community without knowing our names, possibly their origins, their meaning to us, how to pronounce them. Sometimes this getting-to-know process leads to our pronouns; it always leads to discussions of our identities, from our politics of location/positionalities (Haraway, 1991; Rich, 1986) to systemic intersectional analyses (Crenshaw, 1991, 2004, 2013; Hill Collins 2000, 2012). We create our own rituals; they come about organically. We laugh. We bring food and drink. We are serious and playful, embracing our inner children who know how to be both at once. We are humble. We are not afraid to ask questions. We come to realize that the relating is in the relating. Curiosity and creativity lead the way. We nourish our genuine curiosities to learn and unlearn, to be open, to explore, to wonder, to make mistakes. To not know.

When we merge an elicitive approach with Indigenous knowledge systems that move beyond data and materiality to also include the experiential and the intuitive in circular and spiral ways, rather than linear ones, we can tell and notice our stories differently (Stewart-Harawira, 2005: 41). As holistic beings in the room, each part of our beings relates our existence. Focusing in on the parts of the whole, we might discuss, for example, embodied experiences that implicate racism, colorism, sizeism/fatphobia, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, among others. We might do embodied work, dance, movement, meditation. We ask ourselves if it is hard for us to be in our bodies, freeing, empowering. Are we afraid of others hurting our bodies, of ourselves? Regarding the mind, we might enter the terrain of learning differences and disabilities, imposter syndrome, and mind-dominance (more comfortable thinking than embodying, feeling and enspiriting). As so much of our education is mind-focused, we reflect on the meaning of connecting our mind to our bodies, feelings and spirits (and why we have to do so

when many other cultures do not separate them). For some, this resonates with their intercultural backgrounds; for others, it is uncomfortable. We might lack language for feelings and emotions, so we explore our social emotional learning treasure troves. Music, poetry, active listening, nonviolent communication, active writing and reflection help us tap into our hearts. We acknowledge that humans are spiritual beings, enspirited through one another and with the natural world.

We enter space as holistic beings even if the structures around us try to deny this from us. Therefore, we actively and consciously bring our holistic beings to the fore. In our safe(r), risky, brave spaces, we tell our holistic stories, and we are accountable to one another. In so doing, we push back against flattening out and white-washing power dynamics and the conflictive terrain of colonial, dehumanizing and supremacist social realities. For example, we encourage our beloved learning community members to leave nothing at the door, to embrace their wild tongues, dress, appearance, among other things that might normally be code-switched out (Anzaldúa, 2012). Starting with who is in the room, we hear each other's layered stories. We bring in the mess, our intersectional and positional realities and the power lines running through them (Carrillo Rowe, 2013). We resist and transform dominating and power over systems and ignite our powers – to confront, to name and to create otherwise. Learning community members often remark that our classrooms feel therapeutic. We ask them if it is normal to leave most of themselves at the door in other classes. In our view, it feels therapeutic because the process and act of connecting and building relationships is healing, restorative and transformative. But creating learning community spaces for relationship-building is anything but easy!

While there is no guarantee that the classroom dynamic will lead to political change even if these political changes are of utter importance to these times, we still encourage students to bring into the classroom their authentic queer selves in order to promote holistic radical self-acceptance, validating our participation in debates, activities, and wondering from our locations and positionalities, and to unlearn prejudice as a budding form of solidarity politics (de Bustamante, 2022). By queering our safe(r), risky, brave spaces and by elicitively and holistically centering the people in the room and our learning together, we enable a different kind of togetherness and relationship building for imagining and creating non-killing political being and action. In direct opposition to Western scientific paradigms that only include and validate certain data and experiences while excluding others, we try to understand coming-to-know and our relationships within that knowing "from every gamut of in-

dividual and collective human experience," where all human experiences and forms of knowledge contribute to our overall "understandings and interpretations" (Stewart-Harawira, 2005: 36-37). As a beloved learning community, we create our classroom culture and values together, paying attention to how we want to learn and build relationships in the room. Similar to the holistic being/knowing/learning of Indigenous onto-epistemologies explored above, we have found that something shifts with this radical acceptance of who is in the room. Ultimately, we discover the sacred threads that connect us, the sacredness of our being and existence and our continuous acts of coming into being/knowing (Stewart-Harawira, 2005: 37).

Our vital sparks

According to Stewart-Harawira, *mauri* means vital spark or energy of life in all creation; she calls us to restore this life force (2011: 83-84). We bring this old wisdom of reciprocity and responsibility to our classrooms. There is something wrong with the vital sparks of our students when we see them bored with bowed, defeated heads; disinterested on their phones and computers; or stressed out, exhibiting destructive behavior; dulled, unable to resiliently troubleshoot, brush their knees off and try again from their intrinsic desires to learn and explore. We want to spark their sparks through their own creative capacities and imaginations, through creative living in the classroom together. At times, beloved learning community members resist becoming active learners, resist waking up, resist lighting their sparks. This too is part of the process and journey of coming-to-know.

Through the offerings of Indigenous onto-epistemologies, we have explored here the power of holistic learning of mind, body, heart and spirit. This re-orientation of learning itself helps us reimagine space and the way form and content are shaped within the classroom. It helps us imagine how to spark our sparks. Cajete explains,

> In Native languages there is no word for 'science,' nor for 'philosophy,' 'psychology,' or any other foundational way of coming to know and understand the nature of life and our relationships therein…For Native people, seeking life was the all-encompassing task. While there were tribal specialists with particular knowledge of technologies and ritual, each member of the tribe in his or her own capacity was a scientist, an artist, a storyteller, and a participant in the great web of life (2000: 2).

We light our sparks together by seeking life together as scientists, artists, storytellers and participants, through the simple and profound act of

acknowledging that we are all related and inter-related. We shift the focus of our learning communities from grades to the journey and process of learning, of breathing together. We come to know with our whole beings – our minds, bodies, hearts and spirits. We acknowledge our need for safety, while understanding the spaces we are building are risky, requiring our bravery and accountability. They need to be queered, twisted like a spiral of forever becoming and unfolding.

When learning spaces are imagined in ways that learning community members can and do become active participants, we really do begin to imagine and bring into being that which we might not yet see, but are trying to imagine communally. Many students describe our learning classrooms and communities as unconventional, different, or even outright weird. They reflect on how they were "skeptical at first," untrusting of a space configured physically, aesthetically and energetically so differently. For this reason, as an ending and thus new beginning, we would like to close our chapter with the reflections of our learning community members. Each one captures the main themes of this chapter.

Imagining that which we want to bring into being: *During our time together, I re-learned the self-accountability and intrinsic desire to learn for my own sake, something I will never be able to give enough thanks for. And I did not only do these things for myself but for those around me.*

Paying Attention: *I loved talking and listening during active listening, I'll miss it a lot. It made me sit back, be quiet, and listen to the person who was speaking and allowed us to see into each other's lives since we had to keep talking longer than we normally would in that setting.*

Coming-to-know: *We worked together as a class to approach and navigate such heavy topics and did it all with an open mind and heart.*

Queering safe(r), risky, brave space: *I feel like we got to be vulnerable and were really able to build trust with each other in the classroom. This is something I feel is so rare at our age and while coming out of the pandemic. Having been deprived of the social and human aspects of being in a classroom for two years, I found it really nice for us to all connect with each other in class.*

Who is in the room? *I loved that we started with self-reflections, too. Such an important part of learning that I feel is largely ignored in academia is self-exploration and understanding. I think it is crucial to understand who*

you are and what makes you you before attempting to learn about others and the world around us.

Our vital sparks*: I almost don't know how to put into words all it is I feel toward this class, but I know that I will remember how it made me feel and how much better equipped I felt to talk and think about the world after being in it.*

When we absorb these reflections, when we think about, embody, feel and enspirit the experiences of our beloved learning community members, we come-to-know that relationship building itself is always in the making – together. For this reason, we write, facilitate, plan, imagine and create collaboratively. Intuitively called by our ancestors and freedom dreamers and guided by Indigenous onto-epistemologies of radical interconnectedness, we will continue to reimagine and create classroom space otherwise. We are the people in the room, and we have the power to imagine a nonkilling world as a learning community. Simple, like our haikus merged in one, but straight to the mind, body, heart, spirit of the matter.

> *Song of the spirit*
> *Healing in community*
> *Sparks awakening*
> *(Pearl, Gigio, Jenny)*

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The Power of Resilience in Nurturing Nonkilling Peaceful Relationships

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Introduction

This chapter offers a glimpse to the human potential to cultivate peaceful relationships based on a nonkilling conviction by highlighting the power of people's resilience as a driver of change. It starts out discussing human fragility, fear and the fact that the future is uncertain and that we cannot control it: "this uncertainty overwhelms us and makes us vulnerable, and it is often more frightening than knowing the high probabilities of specific dangerous situations" (Rojas, 2010: 35). Our feeling of being incapable of planning for tomorrow and the more uncertain the future seems to us, the more space we leave open for stress, mistrust, insecurity and hopelessness. In the face of this uncertainty, fear and impotence can take over our daily lives. Thus, in this scenario of adversity, the idea of fighting, reducing, annihilating what threatens us has become a collective pattern, an everyday occurrence. Killing and threatening to kill thus becomes a 'logical' an inescapable fact, something natural and consubstantial to human relations with other humans, non-human animals and the environment.

But, as Dator points out:

> Anthropological and contemporary evidence makes clear that humans are not inevitably natural killers, but do under certain circumstances have the ability to be forced to become killers, usually at great psychic cost to themselves and others around them. Humans' desire and ability to cooperate, love, and be loved outweighs by orders of magnitude our desire to kill, maim, and cheat (2012: 14).

The states of crisis that life brings with it put us on alert, in tension, and in these situations the idea of defence at any cost can be unleashed, even if

it means attacking, annihilating or even killing whatever frightens us. And although there is tension and conflict in all societies, this does not mean that there is a need to kill. That is precisely what this article proposes, to cultivate peaceful relations based on the conviction not to kill, as Paige reminds us in his book *Nonkilling Global Political Science*:

> A nonkilling society is not a society without conflicts. The key characteristics are the absence of purposed killings among humans, technology for killing and social conditions, which depend on the use of lethal force for maintenance or change. A nonkilling world may now be unthinkable to most. To shift that way of thinking will require not only human dedication but also a solid basis of knowledge under which a nonkilling science can be elaborated, implemented and evaluated. This science must also have nonkilling problem solving and conflict transformation at its core. Global awareness, consciousness and mobilization are needed to work together for this important challenge (2012: 40).

With this in mind, this chapter explores the positive opportunities that fear, uncertainty and crisis have to offer, as all crises have two essential elements: danger and opportunity. Regardless of the danger of the situation, at the heart of every crisis lies a great opportunity. In states of alert and chaos, we can also have the opportunity to explore ourselves, to reflect and to realise our capacities and competences to look for alternatives that can help us overcome the adversities of life from a peaceful nonkilling premise. Because each person is unique, these alternatives are also distinct, different, peculiar, and each person is capable of finding his or her own solutions.

The question remains: what it is that, as human beings, pushes us to seek positive and peaceful nonkilling alternatives to overcome moments of crisis? Resilience can provide the answer. The term has been discussed by numerous authors (Cyrulnik, 2014; Cyrulnik and Anaut, 2018; Forés and Grané, 2008; Madariaga, 2014; Pourtois, 2014; Puig and Rubio, 2011; Rojas, 2010; Sierbert, 2007; Vanistendael, 2014) and Charles Darwin, in *The Origin of Species* (Rojas, 2010: 59), reminded us that it is not the strongest or most intelligent of the species that survive, but the most flexible and adaptable to change.

Resilience involves the capacity to adapt, that is part of our biology and relates to the mechanisms of natural selection and evolution, revealing the great human plasticity. Humans and the world around us are part of a process of permanent change to which we adapt thanks to our plasticity and flexibility. We become used to the demands of our body or the impositions of our environment. Over time, we become familiarised to both pain and pleasure. For this reason, strong sensations of pain or pleasure gradually

diminish over time and are therefore momentary. The capacity for human adaptation is enormous, even when it comes to highly stressful events, such as prolonged states of war or stagnant conflicts (Rojas, 2010: 144).

Defining Resilience

The concept of resilience is not new either in history or in academic research. Etymologically, resilience comes from the Latin *resilio* which means to go back, to return from a jump, to bounce, to jump back, to be repelled or to re-emerge (Forés and Grané, 2008: 27). Originally, the term began to be used in the field of physics to define the properties of elastic objects, such as a spring or a rubber ball, which absorb the impact of an external force or a blow, adapt and change shape without breaking, and when the pressure ceases, they recover their original shape (Rojas, 2010: 59). It was also used in the field of mechanics and metallurgy to refer to the ability of metals to with-stand an impact and recover their original structure. Similarly, in medicine, specifically in osteology, it was introduced to explain the capacity of bones to grow in the correct direction after a fracture (Forés and Grané, 2008: 27). And in edaphology, it is said that a soil is resilient when, after a disruption such as a fire, flora and fauna are able to recover, to come back to life, even if not in the same way as before, but with new forms (Cyrulnik, 2014: 31).

Later, the concept of resilience became part of interdisciplinary fields that deal with human behaviour, such as psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, biology and sociology (Puig and Rubio, 2011: 35; Forés and Grané, 2008: 27). In this extended use, resilience adopted a meaning very close to the etymological one: to be resilient is to be rebounded, to reanimate, to move forward after having suffered an adverse situation. It can be argued that resilience starts from the biological and evolves towards the affective, psychological, school, family, culture, politics, etc. (Cyrulnik, 2014: 33). Thus, human resilience is a natural and universal attribute of survival, which is composed of biological, psychological and social ingredients. It is part of each individual's personality and outlook on life, as well as the mechanisms and responses that people activate in situations of stress, fear, insecurity or uncertainty.

In general terms resilience can be defined as the human capacity to adapt, resist and recover from adversity (Rojas Marcos, 2010: 63). In these terms it makes use of two essential components: resistance –to situations of uncertainty, crisis, fear– and adaptation –the ability to adjust to a non-ideal reality (Cyrulmik and Anaut, 2018: 48). It is about using defence mechanisms to control anxieties, to drive them away and to distance oneself from

what is unpleasant in order to feel better (Cyrulmik and Anaut, 2018: 49). In short, resilience is understood as the process generated by people who face situations of adversity and which allows them not only to learn from the experience, but also to emerge stronger (Cyrulnik and Anaut, 2018: 9).

Undoubtedly, resilience is an ordinary and universal capacity that everyone can develop. However, being more or less resilient is influenced by various aspects, such as (Cyrulmik and Anaut, 2018: 84):

– The importance of early interactions, during the first years of life, before the acquisition of speech;
– The functioning of families, which may facilitate or hinder the resilience process;
– The social and cultural structures, such as schools, educational, health and cultural institutions, which support or hinder resilient development.

Resilience requires a shift in perspective

In this way, and taking into account the emergence of societal violence in history through the idea of killing as something natural, it is important to consider that resilience requires a change in our outlook, a change in the way we see life and people, and, therefore, a change in our personal, professional and other types of commitments. This change of outlook opens the door to new ideas and the inspiration of new practices (Vanistendael, 2014: 53), including those based on peaceful and nonkilling beliefs.

This is a new, open and contextual view that also builds awareness of the social transformations that are currently taking place, derived from the economic, ecological and ethical crises, which are causing a serious disarticulation of the social space. In this space, it is increasingly difficult to share and experience secure ties. The lack of empathy and understanding of such contexts often means that more attention is paid to statistics than to human beings and that individuals can be conceived outside of the community. But it is precisely in this space of crisis that new forms of resilience are also being generated at all levels. And this is precisely the great challenge, to realise that we need each other and the other, and that, by creating this common ecosystem of recognition, cooperation and care, in short, by generating peaceful nonkilling relations, we will be able to overcome adversity as humanity.

Different authors (Cyrulnik and Anaut, 2018; Vanistendael 2014; Cyrulnik, 2014; Puig and Rubio, 2011; Rojas, 2010; Forés and Grané, 2008) agree in defining resilience as the capacity of a person, or a group, to grow

in the presence of great difficulties. In this definition, three important premises should be considered:

- Resilience is not fixed, but varies over the course of a lifetime;
- It is never absolute;
- It is built through interactions with the environment;
- It is always in process and, beyond simple resistance, it builds or rebuilds life.

Adopting the paradigm of resilience requires us to shift our perspective in order to be able to face today's challenges in a society characterised by change and uncertainty. It also demands commitments and adaptations where everyone has something to say and something to do (Madariaga et al., 2014: 14). Thus, resilience implies not only coping, but most importantly, transformative learning and growth that goes beyond mere resistance to difficulties. Thus, we can interpret it as a combination of communicative, psychological, social, emotional and ethical dimensions (Madariaga et al., 2014: 15). The challenge of resilience consists of developing a creative initiative that allows us to move away from the past, morphing the suffering of the present and project new encouraging futures (Forés and Grané, 2008: 50). As Dator points out:

> We need to learn how to "surf the tsunami of change". If, as a society, we had paid serious attention to the waves earlier, we perhaps could have diverted them before they became tsunami, but they are now too close, too big, and no longer divertible. We need to surf them, to use their power to help us go where we want to go, and to enjoy the ride. All of these features, and more, need to be included in our attempts first usefully to envision and then practically to design and move toward a nonkilling world (2012: 13).

Considering the opportunities that resilience brings for the development of the person, as well as the skills it provides to overcome difficult situations, it can be understood as engine towards the construction and establishment of nonkilling relationships and cultures for peace. As Dator (2012: 16) stresses: "One cannot kill for peace, or use killing to achieve justice and equity".

Nonkilling not only includes not allowing the act of killing of humans, but also does not allow the threat of killing, the teaching of killing, preparations for killing, design and production of the means of killing, celebration of those who kill (even in 'self-defense' or in the defense of one's 'nation'), and all the other cultural, political, and economic factors that currently support,

encourage, require, and reward people acting as the nation's agent to kill (Paige, 2009; Dator, 2012: 21). Therefore, nonkilling must be taught and glorified in our societies. Nonkilling is not just the absence of killing, it is the positive understanding, nurturing, and healthy presence of the things that will thwart and ultimately prevent the many motivations strongly funded, glorified, and managed hat lead people to kill now (Dator, 2012: 21). Satha-Anand underscores how:

> The idea of nonkilling should be understood as both an invitation and a challenge. It is a challenge to the human mind to begin with a critical questioning of the existing killing myths, to search for knowledge necessarily complex and drawn out of different fields of study in order to find a nonkilling route towards nonkilling societies. It is also an invitation to the world to embark on this difficult and necessary journey for the whole of humanity (2012: 226).

In the next section, a number of challenges that we face as humanity in order to contribute to cultures of peace will be addressed (Paris and Herrero, 2023). This will be done exploring ways in which the paradigm of resilience (Cyrulnik and Anaut, 2018; Vanistendael, 2014; Pourtois, 2014; Madariaga et al, 2014; Cyrulnik, 2014; Puig and Rubio, 2011; Rojas, 2010; Forés and Grané, 2008; Sierbert, 2007) and the science of nonkilling (Paige, 2009; 2012) can help bring about change.

Nurturing caring relationships with others

Apart from the strength in ourselves, resilience also needs others, including family and social structures, as well as informal, formal and non-formal education. Multiple processes interact to develop the creative richness of human beings in the face of adversity. For this reason, some researchers have designated it *co-resilience (*Cyrulmik and Anaut, 2018: 33). In this sense, they define resilience as a transactional process, which is nourished not only by the individual's own characteristics, but also by the resources offered by the unique conditions of his or her relational context with the affective and socio-cultural dimensions that participate in its emergence. Resilience relies on what Cyrulmik and Anaut (2018: 88) call guides or accompanying tutors: people or institutions, families, communities, teachers, psychotherapists, social workers, etc. Resilience should be understood as a social construct, as a process that is constructed in and from social, relational and human ecosystems, even if this process manifests itself in individual, family, social, organisational behaviours (Madariaga et al., 2014: 12).

Thus, a necessary element of human resilience is the affective connection with others, creating interactions and bonds (Puig and Rubio, 2011: 104), even if it is only with another person. Our capacity for bonding is innate, since in order to survive we must connect with someone who cares for us. It has been shown that children mature more quickly and healthily when they are surrounded by communicative, loving, appreciative and accepting connections. As Rojas (2010) explains, affective bonds are fundamental for optimal development:

> The basis for resilience, and the characteristic that distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom, is our ability to establish communicative, affective and supportive relationships with one another. In all cultures people have always sought to unite with one another and language has been the best means to achieve this. Establishing synchronicities has been the basis for survival and human evolution, and this union is contagious, as we empathise with emotional states such as confidence, joy, enthusiasm, insecurity and fear. Therefore, receiving love, affection and support and having affective social bonds is key to resistance in the face of adversity and to forging our resilience (Rojas, 2010: 66-67; our translation).

Research shows that to be a resilient person certain factors are required. For example, a person who accepts another individual unconditionally, regardless of temperament, physical appearance or intelligence. Thus, it is essential to know that you can rely on someone and, at the same time, to feel that your efforts, skills and self-worth are recognised and encouraged (Puig and Rubio, 2011: 31). The most positive influence is placed on a loving and close relationship with a significant other (Puig and Rubio, 2011: 32). Resilience is not only a personal attribute, as the social dimension is an indispensable condition for overcoming life's setbacks. One needs more than oneself, a helping hand that offers an external resource, an affective relationship, a social or cultural institution that provides us with guarantees. It can be a person, a place, an event, a work of art or anything that facilitates this overcoming (Forés and Grané, 2008: 36). Thus, establishing affective relationships based on the nonkilling principle requires us to have such a vision of others and human relationships, including friendship and affection. Relationships that help us to learn to live with difference, to coexist peacefully. As Rupesinghe stresses:

> Learning to live together, to co-exist, to learn to accept difference, to make the world safe for difference will be one of the great challenges for the 21st Century. Coexistence is a term that have been used synonymously in several contexts and used as a key phrase in the emergence of a

> number of great social and political movements. The key characteristic in the definition of the word coexistence is the relation with the 'other' and the acknowledgement that the 'other' exists (1999: 67).

This emphasises the importance of cultivating healthy, tendering, caring, peaceful and non-threatening relationships.

Generating a positive outlook on life and others

A positive and favourable outlook on things is an essential ingredient of human resilience, as it gives us strength and hope to move forward (Rojas, 2010: 84). Positive thinking makes us want to live, to sensibly assess the advantages and disadvantages of the decisions we make and to fight against adversity without becoming demoralised (Rojas, 2010: 84). Our way of interpreting the world influences our state of mind and vice versa, so that those who are able to remain optimistic tend to have a positive emotional state (Rojas, 2010: 85). In short, an optimistic way of judging the vicissitudes of life helps us minimise the impact of misfortunes, while protecting us from defeatism and helplessness. Positive thinking stimulates pleasant moods, and people who are inclined to view the world through pleasant emotions tend to value themselves favourably. They tend to have more affective relationships with other people and to be stimulated by their own competence to achieve what they want (Rojas, 2010: 89). In this endeavour, it is essential to foster a more positive perception of others and relationships based on the nokilling paradigm.

Many people who have gone through a period of crisis and have developed resilience decide to dedicate part of their time or personal and economic resources to prevent similar tragedies or to help those affected by the same problems in an altruistic, supportive and cooperative way. In this way, they discover their capacity for the ethics of care, to feel for others, to care for them, to show affection and tenderness, which gives rise to a new affective energy, uniting them intimately with others (Rojas, 2010: 209). In this way, resilience allows us to contemplate the individual as life histories, considering each human being from a holistic point of view, as a whole being, full of meaning, vulnerable and improvable at each stage, connected to their social context (Forés and Grané, 2008: 66). Thus, resilience dignifies the recognition of the other, building respect, empathy and care. In this way it brings us closer to acceptance and an optimistic view of any person, a view that should concentrate on the virtues and aspects that favour their progress, rather than on the causes of their problems (Forés and Grané, 2008: 67).

Our own fragility is at the heart of resilience: the need to feel accepted as a person, beyond weaknesses and foolishness. This implies that others recognise you as you are, respecting and accepting weaknesses, even if they lead to behaviours others may not condone. Such form of recognition (Honneth, 1997) is crucial for the development of resilience: a deep and intimate acceptance of people, their frailties, their weaknesses and their potential, capacities and talents. This is why the promotion of resilience starts with recognition. It means recognising other people as legitimate, recognising them in their physical integrity, in their rights, including their basic right to exist, in their beliefs and in their cultures or lifestyles (Honneth, 1997). Futurist thinker Jim Dator also expresses this idea:

> We are primarily emotional creatures who need to exercise and celebrate our irrational exuberance in many nonkilling ways. I mean to capture that by the term "aesthetic expression"—urging each of us to develop and share ideas of beauty, balance, harmony, dissonance, chaos, in many personal and social (nonkilling) ways—how we adorn ourselves, dress, walk, swim, fly, dance, speak, sing, sculpt, weave, model, act, enhance, discipline—our aesthetic expression. Each person should be encouraged to develop her own schtick—to exhibit it, show off, adopt/shed/share identities, play and pray to our heart's content (Dator, 2012: 24).

Mutual recognition of the other as human is crucial in atrocious, extreme, adverse situations (Vanistendael, 2014: 65). Recognition of the other is indispensable in the construction of societies based on the idea of nonkilling, nurturing positive thinking about life and others.

Learning to communicate peacefully

The promotion of peaceful nonkilling relationships requires building our communicative skills: "nonkilling-based cultural resources and communications media have emerged, along with nonkilling political struggles, to bring about social transformation" (Morgan, 2012: 34). Communicating is good for the heart, as putting words to our worries, verbalising our concerns and fears, reduces their emotional intensity, helping us to calm down, relax and lowering our blood pressure. Rojas (2010: 138) points out that talking is not only good for the heart, but also for the mind.

Through speech, we unburden ourselves: freeing ourselves from stressful thoughts and relieving ourselves of distressing thoughts or negative emotions. Evoking, ordering and recounting memories, bodily sensations and overwhelming feelings of terror, pain, confusion, vulnerability or helpless-

ness, allows us to transform them, bit by bit, into coherent thoughts of manageable intensity. This helps to prevent that such feelings sink into the unconscious or emotional memory causing chronic anxiety, dissociation of our personality or depression (Rojas, 2010: 138).

Both the happiest experiences and the darkest misfortunes are made to be shared. Precisely in difficult times, the aim of communication is to alleviate burdensome thoughts and calm anxious fears (Rojas, 2010: 139). By sharing with others the painful or frightening circumstances that torment us, we become receptive to tangible signs of support and solidarity. It is through words that we can transmit and gain understanding, reassurance, welcoming and instilling hope. In this sense, words forge our relationships and play a fundamental role in building the first pillar of resilience: affective connections (Rojas, 2010: 140).

But communication can also involve interpellation, discrepancy, tension and even clashes due to our differences. This is why it is key to learn to communicate peacefully in order to build nonkilling societies:

> civility requires communication and the articulation of criticism when appropriate. Therefore, civility requires disagreement and dialogue, in addition to responsibility (…) Civil dialogue over differences is democracy's true engine: we must disagree in order to debate, and we must debate in order to decide, and we must decide in order to move. Civility does not require an overall consensus, civility and disagreement can, and should, exist together (Beitzel, 2012: 77).

The virtue of civility allows for dialogue independent of whether or not all parties agree on certain positions. Two aspects are involved in civil dialogue and civil listening: First, those who disagree may be misguided in their opinion and therefore can correct their position. Second, we ourselves could be wrong. It is the possibility of the second dimension, the possibility that the other person(s) may be right that requires civil listening Therefore, civility requires that "we express ourselves in ways that demonstrate our respect for others". To be civil is not to suspend moral judgment indefinitely, but it can mean tolerating differences in beliefs and behaviors (Beitzel, 2012: 84).

The power of solidarity is also of great importance. Solidarity involves feelings of brotherhood, attachment and understanding that encourage us to care for, support and encourage one another. Solidarity promotes trust, security, hope and fosters a more communitarian and less individualistic perspective on the world. It is nurtured by natural empathy, or the ability to connect with affection and put ourselves in the place of and engaging others.

Shifting the focus to competences, skills and strengths from a systemic perspective

The building of nonkilling societies requires a shift in understanding the human condition, putting the focus on the capacity for transformation. Human beings should be considered as an unfinished project, under permanent construction: we were born to change. The idea that killing is a consubstantial aspect of human relations can be changed to a view of peace, based on recognition, freedom, resilience and love for life and humanity.

We have capacities and competences to act peacefully (Martínez, 2005; 2009). Among these nonkilling capabilities a large scope of alternatives can be refereed (Paige, 2012: 78):

1. Public policies devoted to the contribution to nonkilling societies;
2. Social Institutions, which make efforts in support of a nonkilling world. For instance, we have created spiritual, political, economic and educational nonkilling institutions.
3. Nonkilling forms of expression, such as smiling and crying, and that very often serve to express peaceful values;
4. Cultural resources, such as artistic and intellectual creations that inspire humans to become involved in the reconstruction of non-killing societies (Paige, 2012: 89);
5. Nonkilling political struggles. In history humans have organized around the world in many different nonviolent movements to bring about social transformation (Paige, 2012: 89);
6. Historical roots. The study of history offers great examples of non-killing human capabilities even in tragic and violent periods such as wars, humanitarian crisis, and other conflicts. This can also be found in religious manifestations from Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, etc. (Paige, 2012: 91-92).

Another challenge for bringing about nonkilling societies is to change the way we look at situations, people, the environment and everyday life, making it more appreciative, centred on the person, their value, their appreciation and their well-being, maximising their potential. In other words, looking through a lens that appreciates capabilities, potential, resources, human development, solutions, positive aspects, greatest successes, strengths, possibilities, inclusion and coexistence (Forés and Grané, 2008: 68). This means reversing our current bias towards failures, shortcomings and weaknesses

(Forés and Grané, 2008: 71). To develop resilience, we must instead focus on competences, strengths, resources, desires and projects.

In this path, three dimensions to be taken into account for the development and promotion of resilience include (Forés and Grané, 2008: 93):

- An internal dimension or inner strength, encompassing positive aspects of our character and personality;
- An external dimension, encompassing external support from family, friends, professionals and institutional services;
- A social or interpersonal dimension, which includes interaction with others and the ability to solve problems.

In other words, resilience has a systemic dimension, which means that its process and development is woven from various levels that encompass the individual: the *ontosystem* (personal traits), the *microsystem* (i.e., family or school), the *exosystem* (community) and the *macrosystem* (the social systems and the culture that surrounds us) (Forés and Grané, 2008: 99).

Finding meaning in the existential project —committing to living in peace

How can we find reasons that encourage us to live in peace? Frequent responses include love in its various facets, a mission or moral duty, the personal determination not to give up in the face of adversity and the fear of death (Rojas, 2010: 97). Finding meaning in life is key, as the search for the *raison d'être* of things is the fundamental force that moves human beings. Finding such meaning makes us feel more secure and strengthens our motivation to live in peace and commit to nokilling. As Dator puts it:

> We live in a complex set of dynamically interacting institutions, behaviors and beliefs, and that by disturbing one factor we also influence the rest. Therefore, we need to proceed carefully but resolutely toward our non-killing goal, mindful of what impacts that might have on the rest of the world we live in (Dator, 2012: 12)

The meaning we give to life is subjective and varies from person to person. It is neither definitive nor permanent and can evolve with time and changes experienced through our lifespan, environment and events shaping our daily lives (Rojas, 2010: 90-91). Resilience is nourished by the reasons we harbour for living. Love, the fighting spirit or the determination not to give up are many of these personal reasons (Rojas, 2010: 92). Particularly after difficult moments, we can find changes in the meaning or philosophy

of life in general. Crises can make people give life a more meaningful meaning, more coherent with their circumstances and experiences, and more rewarding. Many say they have learned from life's adversities and reordered their priorities, learning to distinguish what is important from what is not. They even report enjoying things that they did not value before or that they did not notice (Rojas, 2010: 208). In this way, we learn to value small aspects of daily life, simple everyday moments, that previously went unnoticed (Paris and Herrero, 2023). Resilience teaches us how we can always continue to adapt, resist and thrive in new circumstances throughout our lives (Sierbert, 2007: 132).

The key to resilience is learning from the school of life (Sierbert, 2007: 134) as every life experience, both success and failure, joy and sadness, constitutes a lesson to learn and develop our resilience (Sierbert, 2007: 135). The school of life provides numerous opportunities to learn, to react to difficulties, to cultivate new skills and to develop new strengths. This shows how resilience is both a diachronic and synchronic process, where biological forces are articulated with the social context to enable personal transformation (Forés and Grané, 2008: 32). It is learning to live, emphasising the construction and reconstruction of the person from a proactive attitude (Forés and Grané, 2008: 34).

Learning to turn the page —without resentment or revenge

In order to generate nonkilling peaceful relationships we must learn to turn the page, to leave behind, even erase from our minds the anguish and misfortunes we have experienced and overcome them to open a new chapter in our lives. Patriarchal heritage has shaped societies based on masculine attitudes such as competition, domination, revenge and destruction. But in order to build nonkilling peaceful relationships we must consider and adopt attitudes, competencies and skills that, due to socialisation, have been relegated to women, such as care, compassion, respectful accompaniment and forgiveness. As Yee (2012: 170) explains, the "feminine aspect of human nature supports cooperation over division, reconciliation over war, and compromise over dictatorship":

> Masculine principles of competition, domination, and revenge as well as linear, sequential and abstract thinking have long overshadowed the perennial feminine principles of nurturing, compassion, forgiveness, holistic thinking, intuition and compassion. Such a paradigm has produced one of the most violent times in history, both in terms of human killing as well as

human killing of other species and mankind's current all-out decimation of the Earth's resources (Yee, 2012: 169-170).

In the process of creating nonkilling peaceful relationships, three skills are at the core: forgetting, adapting and forgiving (Rojas, 2010: 143). Forgetting heals many of the wounds that life inflicts on us. Natural forgetting, which occurs with the passage of time, diminishes the sharpness and intensity of images, sensations, ideas and emotions linked to adverse experiences. Memory tends to be selective, and it is easier to evoke positive experiences than bad ones. Forgetting is a natural mechanism that helps us gain distance from misfortunes or to bury them in the past, forgiving grievances and encouraging us to turn the page. The aim of forgiveness is to free oneself from the oppressive burden of entrenched resentment and the debilitating identity of the victim, in order to heal the wound, recover inner peace and concentrate one's energies on enthusiastically rebuilding a new life (Rojas, 2010: 146). Like forgetting and accepting, adapting not only allows us to acclimatise to change, but also motivates us to integrate new things into our daily lives and to open ourselves to the unknown.

In order to turn the page and overcome situations of fear, pain or uncertainty, many people turn to spirituality (Puig and Rubio, 2011: 108), to religion or to the world of the immaterial. Many people place their emotional shock in the context of universal values, such as love, hope, freedom, justice or solidarity. Ideals, values or concepts that are considered superior can motivate us to grow emotionally (Rojas, 2010: 203). But emotional growth does not occur automatically: it is the result of an intimate process of narration, reflection and interpretation of misfortune. In this sense, resilience is not only about overcoming adversity, but it also involves positive learning and personal growth. It entails a process of transformation in which people not only overcome an unpleasant experience, but also emerge from it psychologically renewed. In this struggle to turn the page and overcome adversity, people can discover healthy personality traits they were unaware of, reconfigure their scale of values and find new and valuable meanings in life (Rojas, 2010: 195).

Giving realistic hope for the future —for the planet and for humanity

To conclude, it is important to emphasize how the most important element that resilience brings is a new sense of realistic hope (Vanistendael, 2014: 65). Considering our analytical minds, it can be difficult to articulate the binomial hope and realism. We tend to separate them, perceiving these two

concepts as contradictory. But this analytical approach can separate us from life and what makes us live. Hope without realism leads to illusions separated from reality. Realism without hope leads to cynicism and a highly selective perception of life that is not realistic at all. That is why hope needs realism and realism needs hope. The articulation of these two realities is a fundamental challenge that makes us live. By not reducing human beings to their problems, but also allowing to discover their potential, opens a door to hope that is critical in bringing about resilience (Vanistendael, 2014: 66).

This is why resilience is related to oxymorons—rhetorical figures that bring together contradictory terms that mutually exclude each other (Forés and Grané, 2008: 111). An oxymoron is therefore an impossibility, like a miracle, something to do with magic. One of these antithetical puns is the realism of hope.

As for the future, hope is the essence of positive thinking (Rojas Marcos, 2010: 87). As Paige (2012: 103) reminds us: "Violence and war are not a prerequisite. We can choose how we want to act and, therefore, the possibility of nonkilling futures are within our reach". We live in a time of relentless change in which resilience is critical. Today's world is characterised by volatility and chaos and requires us to be much more resilient. But change can help us find new paths and open doors to new worlds (Sierbert, 2007: 21). Morgan pointed out how "the vigour of a civilization depends upon a positive and hopeful vision of itself in the future" (2012: 29). People possess an innate disposition to resist and benefit from change (Sierbert, 2007: 22). In the ongoing violent clash between industrial civilisation and the natural limits of the biosphere, resilience is even more necessary to address this civilizational conundrum. We live in a risk society that threatens the self-destruction of all life. In a time of dark forecasts, resilience is an alternative in the face of future challenges (Pourtois, 2014: 102).

According to Motlagh (2012: 103) the future emerges from the interaction of the four components described below:

- Images: They are positive visions of the future, reflected in the ideas, hopes, beliefs, values, and concerns about the future;
- Trends: Ordered data or measurable facts seen in the historical developments either up/down or cyclical and including new emerging issues;
- Events: Things utterly unknowable and out of the blue, occasions that may or may not repeat;

- Actions: Efforts which are based on the images of the future with the intention of influencing it.

In this sense, resilience is a path to build new ways of life considering alternative paradigms, such as degrowth, that can help humanity avoiding a disorderly and chaotic transition. This is why resilience must be developed at many scales: local, regional, national and international, at the family, community, organisational, business, political, urban and social levels (Pourtois, 2014: 3). Resilience must be reconsidered as part of a broader socio-political reflection that rethinks the structural causes of unsustainability, social injustice and the unequal distribution of power (Pourtois, 2014: 104). By doing this, we can contribute to the construction and establishment of cultures to make peace and respect nonkilling principles.

As Paige reminds us, "To educate for a nonkilling leadership and citizenship an educational revolution is needed" (2012: 119). The educational revolution to achieve a nonkilling world paradigm has different important aspects to be developed, including (Paige, 2012: 120):

1. To expose the horror of human lethality, in the past and in the present, so we can be aware of it and encourage ourselves and others to contribute to the end of the human motivation for killing;
2. To solidly present the global evidence for the human potential for peace and nonkilling;
3. To propose peaceful and nonkilling transformations at the individual, relationship, community and societal levels;
4. To offer a review of the human ingenuity for the creation of social and political institutions for the nonkilling societies we desire; and
5. To challenge human creativity for the conception of the characteristics of killing-free societies and of possible ways to achieve them.

A resilient individual understands that he or she will not be able to face adversity and emerge stronger from it if he or she does not first realise his or her reality, but at the same time, if he or she does not envision the hope of a better future. The goal is to be able to visualise a transformative image and, once we have seen ourselves achieving what we want, we must act to bring it about, making it our compass for the future. Barash and Webel (2009: 220) warn us that:

> The problem of peaceful accommodation in the world is infinitely more difficult than the conquest of space, infinitely more complex than a trip to the moon... If I am sometimes discouraged, it is not by the magnitude of

> the problem, by our colossal indifference to it. I am unable to understand why... we do not make greater more diligent and more imaginative use of reason and human intelligence in seeking accord and compromise.

This is how our energy is transformed and directed towards our desired futures, empowering us with hope. By doing this, we are metamorphosed creating something new, realizing our power to change things:

> being aware of the possibilities we have for change, and being committed to the power we have to do things in a different way that does not involve killing and other forms of violence is crucial. We know that we have capacities and competences for peace and cooperation. We need to be conscious, to build one's hopes and to start walking to contribute with our peaceful action to a nonkilling world (Herrero, 2017: 55)

Let us walk from realism towards hope (Forés and Grané, 2008: 113). As every great journey begins with a first step, in this voyage responsibility, commitment and hope are required for the construction of peaceful nonkilling relationships.

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How the Nordic Peace System Nurtures Nonkilling Interstate Relationships

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In this chapter we focus on nonkilling at the intergroup level, specifically on the lack of warfare in interstate relationships. There may be some implications for understanding nonkilling relationships at other social levels and in other contexts, but we will keep our focus in this chapter on exploring the nature of relationships among nonwarring neighbors. Elsewhere, we have defined peace systems as clusters of neighboring societies that do not make war with each other (Fry et al., 2021; Souillac and Fry, 2014, 2015). We could say that the neighboring societies within a peace system have nonkilling relationships with one another. Is it possible to discover what features characterize such nonkilling interstate relationships? Can we reach an understanding of how peace systems promote relationships among their members that are strictly nonkilling in nature?

Fry et al. (2021) point out that "the mere existence of peace systems is important because it demonstrates that creating peaceful intergroup relationships is possible whether the social units are tribal societies, nations, or actors within a regional system." At the same time, peace systems have received very little attention and much remains to be known about how to establish and maintain peace over time (Fry, 2009, 2012; Gregor, 1990, 1994; Kacowicz and Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000; Kupchan, 2010: 21). Coming from an International Relations perspective, Kupchan (2010: 2) discusses a very similar construct, *a zone of stable peace*, which he defines as "a grouping of nations among which war is eliminated as a legitimate tool of statecraft." Previously, Deutsch et al (1968) and Kacowicz et al. (2000) had viewed *security communities* as regional areas that reflect stable peace and hold a common identity. Whether called security communities, zones of peace, or peace systems, understanding how non-warring, nonkilling neighbors establish and maintain stable peaceful relations if critically important.

Domain	Nonkilling Peace Systems	Non-Nonkilling Peace Systems	Sample References (not an exhaustive list)
Communi-cation	Frequent	Less frequent or minimal	Deutsch et al., 1968
	Honest	Not necessa-rily honest	Gottman et al., 2014; New York Government, 2022; United States Government, 2022
	Multiplicity of topics		Archer, 2003; Fisher-Yoshida, 2014; Deutsch et al., 1968
Conflict Manage-ment and Conflict Resolution	Discussion	Avoidance	Davidson and Sucharov, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2014
	Negotiation	Coercive or Threatening	Archer, 2003; Lewicki and Tomlinson, 2014a
	Consensus-seeking	Domination-Oriented	Archer, 2003; Davidson and Sucharov, 2001; Dennis 1993
	Problem-solving focus	Winning or controlling focus	Archer, 2003; Gottman et al., 2014; Rubin et al., 1994; US Government, 2022
Values and Norms	Trust	Suspicion	Deutsch, 2014; Lewicki and Tomlin-son, 2014b; New York State, 2022
	Cooperation	Competition	Deutsch, 2014; Tjosvold et al., 2014
	Equality	Dominance	Kacowicz and Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000; Monnet, 1978
Reciprocity	Balanced and positive gifts, favors, help	Negative or not recipro-cated	De Waal, 2005; Kacowicz and Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000
	Active trade and exchange	Minimal trade and exchange	Davidson and Sucharov, 2001; Greg-or, 1994; Monnet, 1978; Tovias, 2000
	Free move-ment of peo-ple	Boundaries maintained	Deutsch et al., 1968; Myers, 1986; Norden, 2022
Common Identity	Friends, all "one people," Inclusive "Us," "We-feeling"	Enemies or at least separate people; "Us versus Them" view	Archer, 2003; Joenniemi, 2003a; Kup-chan, 2010; Myers, 1986
	Positive ex-pectations	Negative or no expecta-tions	Davidson and Sucharov, 2001; Deutsch et al., 1968

Table 1. *Features of Intergroup Relationships within Peace Systems Hypothesized to Support Nonkilling, Prosocial, Positive Behavior (as drawn from the interdisciplinary liter-ature on relationships).*

Aside from the important goal of saving people from the ravages of war, the maintenance of stable peace regionally and globally could greatly facilitate the international cooperation necessary for tackling the existential crises facing humanity in the twenty-first century (Fry et al., 2021; Fry and Souillac, 2021; Fry and Souillac, 2022).

Various disciplines, ranging from psychology and health sciences to sociology, anthropology, and political science contribute to our understanding of what constitutes positive, prosocial, or "good" relationships versus negative, harmful, or "bad" relationships. There seems to be substantial overlap between interpersonal and intergroup characteristics regarding what constitutes positive, prosocial, "good" relationships. A survey of the vast multidisciplinary literature on relationships suggests that positive, prosocial (certainly nonkilling) relationships should include consideration of communication styles, approaches to conflict, values and norms, reciprocity, and common identity (de Waal, 2005; Deutsch et al., 1968; Deutsch, 2014; Goldschmidt, 2006; Gottman, Gottman, Greendorfer, and Wahbe, 2014; Kacowicz and Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000; New York State, 2023; Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994; Tonkinson, 1978, 2004; United States Government, 2023). Table 1 summarizes features in the interdisciplinary literature that we propose are important in positive, prosocial ("healthy" or "good"), nonviolent, nonkilling relationships. Some sources explicitly include the absence of violence as a marker of what is "good" or "healthy." We posit that many if not all of these elements of positive, prosocial relationships will be evident within peace systems. In this chapter, we turn our attention to one particular peace system, the five Nordic nations, to further explore the nature of relationships among the participants in this nonkilling regional system.

Nonkilling Norden

The region sometimes called Norden consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as well as the self-governing areas of Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands. These countries and areas constitute a peace system; the countries of Norden have not waged war with each other for over 200 years (Archer, 2003: 5; Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 9). In the longer historical view, this was not always the case: "looking back over the 1,000 years, it is clear that the Nordic countries have fluctuated between periods of war and periods of peace" (Nordic Cooperation, 2023). Today, the idea that any of the Nordic countries would wage war against one another is absurd, so completely have these nations given up

the threat and use of armed force in relations with one another. Conflicts will always arise in human relationships including in the interstate relations in Norden, but among the Nordics today, "conflicts are dealt with in a way that makes them smaller rather than bigger and the process is dealt with by using pen and paper, discussions and agreements rather than by using weapons" (Herolf and Åkermark, 2015: 7). Taking a nonkilling, nonwarring approach to conflict has become a hallmark of the Nordic nations in their interaction with each other, clearly demonstrating that neighboring countries can live together in peace and cooperation over centuries.

Country	Positive Peace Rank	Global Peace Index (GPI) Rank	GPI Overall Score (1 -5)	GPI Safety and Security Domain	GPI Militarism Domain	GPI Ongoing Conflicts Domain
Denmark	2	4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2
Finland	3	14	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.4
Iceland	13	1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.0
Norway	4	17	1.5	1.3	2.2[a]	1.2
Sweden	1	26	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.2

Note: a. This militarism score of 2.2 for Norway is influenced upward by weapons imports and weapons export scores of 5.0 and 2.9, respectively. Sources: Institute for Economics and Peace, *Positive Peace Report 2022* and Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2022*.

Table 2. *The Ranks and Scores for the Nordic Nations on the Positive Peace Index and the Global Peace Index (GPI) for 2022. The Global Peace Index Overall Score is an average of the scores for three GPI domains. The total worldwide sample includes 163 countries.*

By comparative measures, the Nordic nations have low levels of violence and high levels of peacefulness (Table 2). The 2022 Global Peace Index ranks 163 nations in terms of external and internal levels of peacefulness-aggressiveness on a scale ranging from 1 -5, where 1 is most peaceful (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2022a). The five nations of Norden received scores between 1.1 and 1.6, specifically, Denmark (1.3), Finland (1.4), Iceland (1.1), Norway (1.5), and Sweden (1.6). By comparison, the scores for the vast majority of other nations were higher, for example, Afghanistan (3.6), Brazil (2.5), China (2.0) France (1.9), India (2.6) North Korea (2.9), United States (2.4), and so on (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2022a).

The Institute for Economics & Peace (2022b: 2) proposes that positive peace is "an optimal environment under which human potential can flourish," and has devised the Positive Peace Index to measure attitudes, institu-

tions, and structures that contribute to creating and maintaining positive peace. On this multidimensional assessment, Sweden receives the highest ranking for positive peace of all 163 nations in the Index, followed closely by Denmark, Finland, and Norway (ranks 2 -4, respectively), with Iceland ranking in 13th position worldwide (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022b). We can conclude that compared to most other countries around the world, a high degree of internal and external peace is present in Norden, including the highest marks for positive peace. Whether viewed in terms of direct physical violence or in terms of more insidious forms of structural violence, the Nordic region reflects a high degree of nonkilling and support for human needs and wellbeing (Eisler and Fry, 2019).

The Nordic nations have been perfecting the art and practice of maintaining nonkilling relationships in their region over the last 200 years, and as Archer (2003) observes, over this timeframe there have been crises and conflicts among the Nordic neighbors, but they have never resorted to war. "Opportunities when the Nordic states might have gone to war with each other were not taken up, with Norwegian independence in 1905 being 'the first Nordic *non-war*.' [They also] …avoided war with each other during the Frist World War and in the inter-war period the Åland Islands dispute between Sweden and Finland and the East Greenland case involving Denmark and Norway were both settled peacefully" (Archer, 2003: 5, emphasis in original). Karlsson (2003: 45) adds the case of Iceland gaining its independence from Denmark to the list of Nordic *non-wars*, writing, "Not a shot was fired in the entire struggle for the independence of Iceland. No one was killed, no one even arrested or kept in prison overnight. It is no doubt that the peacefulness of this development is basically due to the general attitude toward the solutions of disputes." We will now consider some of the prosocial, positive elements of Nordic interstate relationships that contribute their nonkilling, nonwarring peace system by examining, in turn, communication, conflict resolution, values and norms, reciprocity, and common identity.

Communication. The quality of communication among Nordic countries is excellent. There is an established pattern of working together with good communication across a multiplicity of spheres including environmental issues, economics, foreign policy, and so on (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019). At a formal level, the Nordic Council of Ministers meets regularly. Iceland stepped into the Presidency of the Nordic Council in 2023 and has announced a focus on peace, including how peace interrelates with human and women's rights, welfare issues, and environmental and climate protection (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2022). Less formally, the five Nordic

Foreign Ministers (the N5) meet to discuss and to coordinate matters of foreign policy. For example, the N5 sometimes issue joint statements at the United Nations (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 28, 29).

One concrete indicator of close Nordic coordination and communication is the policy of co-location of offices and embassies. In Berlin, for example, the Nordic countries purchased property jointly and each constructed an office. "Working and living side by side with a group of people over time provides a basis for increased information sharing and, where possible, deeper collaboration" (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 33).

Archer (2003: 14) points out that over decades, as joint decision-making came to center on consensus and problem-solving through discussion and negotiation, such communication patterns became habitual among the Nordic states, and to some degree also as the Nordics interacted with other European democracies. Within Norden, the communication pattern has been established for "decision-makers to contact each other informally, directly, and quickly without having to go through foreign ministries and embassies" (Archer, 2003: 18). For decades now, when tensions arise, Nordic leaders reach "for the telephone rather than the gun" (Archer, 2003: 14).

Conflict Resolution. Following hundreds of years of on-and-off warring in the Nordic region, much of it between the Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden, the peoples of Norden gave up the use of force in their regional relationships. The current Nordic styles of conflict management and conflict resolution did not develop overnight but progressively developed along with other factors: A shift towards peace norms and values in foreign relations; the enhancement of trust, the development of an overarching Nordic identity, the habit of working together in economic, social, and political arenas, and growing interdependencies.

One key event, in 1905, occurred when war was averted between Norway, then part of Sweden, and Sweden, as Norway sought independence. Johansen (Schweitzer with Johansen, 2016: 37, 38) notes that, with military forces mobilized on both sides, this "was a peaceful solution to an otherwise highly armed situation," and part of the successfully negotiated solution was a commitment by both countries "to solve all future conflicts through international arbitration." This outcome and the events that lead up to it signify a step away from the acceptance of armed force between neighbors in the region. Ericson (2003: 42) observed that by the 1930s, if not before, "Norway and Sweden were both clearly non-aggressive and had no internal quarrels that could be perceived to threaten the peace."

Following Norwegian independence, the next significant test of a new nonkilling orientation in Nordic interstate relations came just following WWI during a dispute over the largely Swedish-speaking Åland Islands, located in the archipelago between Finland and Sweden. As a diplomatic crisis emerged and Finland sent troops to the Islands, both countries agreed to put down their guns and instead turn the matter over to the newly formed League of Nations for arbitration (Joenniemi, 2003b). In the end, Sweden was unhappy with the decision that the Islands belonged to Finland, but abided by the decision of the arbitration agreement. This crisis, resolved by third-party arbitration, represents another milepost on the path toward replacing war with nonkilling conflict resolution as standard practice in Norden. The agreement has now been in force for just over 100 years. Åkermark (Herolf and Åkermark, 2015: 14) summarizes that:

> The Åland example illustrates the willingness of the multiple parties involved, at [the] national and international level, to stick to a compromise over time. … Åland is thus an example of a compromise which is legally, institutionally, constitutionally, and internationally entrenched, but which incorporates practicable rules and procedures allowing for revision and renegotiation while the core tenets of the system are maintained and respected.

The Nordic countries have become adept at dealing with conflict effectively and without violence in ways that preserve their positive, nonkilling relationships with one another. They seek to make decisions via discussion and consensus. They work out differences through a combination of dialogue, negotiations, and legal mechanisms. They are not averse to mediation or arbitration. Further, they have come to realize that their approach to international relations within their region (and more generally), which includes good communication, cooperation, and trust, while not unique, nonetheless is somewhat special on the world foreign policy stage. The overall approach can be labelled problem-solving through collaboration (Rubin et al. 1994). Archer (2003: 12) sums up the situation over the last 100 years: "Perhaps 1920 was the key date: by then, the Nordic states had accepted agreement and consensus as a way of setting demands for independence, home rule, and border disputes. From then on, it was hard for Nordic states to see these as a cause for armed conflict."

Attitudes and Norms. Fry et al. (2021) found nonwarring norms, rituals, and values to be of top importance in differentiating peace systems from nonpeace systems. Rituals can be seen as reflections of norms and values (Gregor, 1994). As Turner (1967: 36) explains, the ritual symbol gives "references

to the group, relationships, values, norms, and beliefs of a society." The Nordic countries share with one another a constellation of nonkilling, nonwarring norms and values, which anchor positive peace firmly within their societies and in their intersocietal relationships, expressed through institutions, policies, and customary practices. Non-warring, nonkilling norms and values are reflected in the types of prosocial communication patterns and in the methods of conflict resolution that flourish in Nordic interstate relationships. Pan-Nordic values and norms include nonviolence-nonwarring-nonkilling (peace), working together, equality, rule of law, human rights and women's rights, inclusiveness, human wellbeing, and democracy. On the other hand, militarism, dominance, excessive competition, exclusivity, favoritism, prejudice, misogyny, and authoritarianism are not embraced in Norden.

Here is but a small sample from a much larger pool of examples that illustrate how Nordic norms and values favoring peace, justice, rights, and human wellbeing are reflected in vision, policies, institutions, and customs across the region:

– Proposed in 2019, the Nordic Council of Ministers have a Vision 2030 to make Norden "the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030" (Norden, 2023).
– Iceland's Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdóttir and Minister of Cooperation Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson state that the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers will focus on "peace as the foundation of human rights, welfare, women's rights, and environmental and climate protection. …We are facing diverse and difficulty challenges which must be solved across borders. Iceland's presidency will focus on co-operation on these issues between the Nordic countries, both at home and in international collaboration, guided by democracy, human rights, and environmental protection" (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2022: 3).
– Denmark's Minister for Nordic Co-operaton, Louise Schack Elholm, captures several values when she expresses, "I completely agree that peace is prerequisite for preserving our shared Nordic values and welfare and look forward to participating in the presidency's international peace conference in Reykjavik" (Norden, 2022).
– "Feelings of affinity and trust have developed that tend to undermine efforts of portraying other Nordics as enemies or military threats," observes Archer (2003: 10).

- "Normally people in the Nordic countries trust the other side" (Herolf and Åkermark, 2015).
- It has recently been proposed that the Nordic nations have developed and should continue to develop their "Nordic Peace Brand" as a reflection of existing values and norms (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019). "The internal peace within the North relates both to the peaceful relationship between the Nordics, running back at least to 1905 with the non-war between Norway and Sweden as well as the peaceful living conditions within the Nordic countries, with welfare states, equality, and democracy securing low levels of structural violence" (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 15).
- Nordic nonwarring or peace-promoting norms and values are listed across a wide variety of sources as playing vital roles in Nordic peace culture. For example, Archer (2003) includes solidarity, belief in the rule of law, and consensus-building. Joenniemi (2003) adds support for neutrality and pacificism, as do Elgström and Jerneck (2000) regarding Sweden. Multiple observers emphasize values such as cooperation, problem-solving, consensus, compromise, trust, equality, democracy, rights, and peace as being central to Nordic culture (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019; Herolf and Åkermark, 2015; Karlsson, 2003; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2022; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2023).
- Former President of Finland and Peace Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Martti Ahtisaari (1937-2023) engaged as a mediator in helping to halt wars and seek peaceful solutions in Namibia, former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Ireland, and elsewhere. His approach reflects the Nordic value in trust and discussion. "His openness and directness create an atmosphere of credibility and trust around him. …Although difficult matters are discussed around the negotiating table, Ahtisaari is always cultivating personal contact with the leaders of both parties, supporting them and exuding trust" (Merikallio, 2006: 146).
- As Hagemaan and Bramsen (2019) explore the "Nordic Peace Brand," they consider the values that support peace and justice across the region. They refer to democracy, inclusion, and equality as "classic Nordic values" (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 17). They also report that a recurring theme expressed by Nordic leaders and policymakers is "strong cooperation by virtue of having shared interest in promoting similar values such as rule of law, gender equality, the inclusion of civil society, and international cooperation. For example, one interviewee stated '…there's a common foundation rooted in the common values:

support for democracy, rule of law, and peaceful conflict resolution'" (Hagemann and Bramsen, 2019: 37). Democracy, the rule of law, and nonviolent conflict resolution are also key features of modern, liberal democracies and mutually reinforce one another (Souillac, 2011).

Reciprocity. Balanced reciprocity, or exchange, is a hallmark of positive social relationships whether manifested through recurring gifts, economic trade, meeting social obligations, repayment of past debts and favors, and so on (de Waal, 2005; Gregor, 1990, 1994). Reciprocity across a variety of spheres takes place among the Nordic nations, reflecting the prosocial and positive tenor of interstate relationships. Engaging in balanced interactions, including not only trade but also reciprocal favors and support of various kinds, signals a lack of enmity and hostility and, to the contrary, the presence of trust, friendship, and prosocial positivity.

As Gregor (1990: 111-112) observes, related to the intertribal relationships within the peace system of the Upper Xingu River basin in Brazil, "Trade means trust. …Trade means mutual appreciation. …Trade is a social relationship that is valued in and of itself." A significant amount of trade takes place among Nordic countries. We used data available online on the top 25 export trading partners worldwide for 2021 to calculate for each Nordic nation the amount of their trade that was within Norden (Trend Economy, 2023; World's Top Partners, 2023). Of the 25 top trade partners (the top 10 for Iceland), 25.5 percent of export trade took place within the Nordic region for Sweden, 20.3 percent for Denmark, 14.5 percent for Finland, 12.1 percent for Norway, but only 3.84 for Iceland. Clearly the Nordic countries engage in most trade outside of Norden, but they also engage in significant amounts of trade with each other, except for Iceland. The likely reason for this low level of Icelandic trade with its Nordic neighbors is that most of what Iceland exports are fish (Trend Economy, 2023), and the other Nordic countries already have plenty of fish in their own waters.

There are numerous other markers of Nordic positive reciprocity. Since 1950, for example, there has been a common passport union to facilitate cross-border movement of citizens. The current Danish Minister for Nordic Co-operation advocates removing any remaining obstacles to freedom of movement so that Nordic citizens can study and work easily in any of the countries, two of which are not members of the EU (Norden, 2023). There are formal and informal mutually reciprocal agreements on a vast array of policies and practices ranging from foreign policy, economics, social welfare, policing and crime prevention, environmental protection, and so on.

Overarching Identity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first Nordic non-war was in high swing between Sweden and Norway, numerous antiwar demonstrations and meetings took place. Prior to the non-war, the *Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society*, had hosted the *Nordic Peace Meeting*, and Johansen reports that "solidarity with brothers and sisters in other countries was the main message from that meeting" (Schweitzer with Johansen, 2016: 31). So here in this quote we see a technique witnessed across cultures of applying kinship terms to non-relatives to symbolically reflect an existing or desired close relationship, as among family members. Relatives do not make war on one another, so if Norwegians and Swedes are brothers and sisters, then they should not war with each other.

We call this inclusive identity formation "expanding the Us to include the Them," or "normative identity," since it coalesces around norms, values, and practices, and tends to strengthen within peace systems over time (Fry, 2012; Fry et al., 2021; Souillac, 2012; Souillac and Fry, 2014, 2015). Deutsch et al. (1968: 129) also see the presence of a common identity as part-and-parcel of security communities, which they refer to as a "we-feeling" that includes sympathies and loyalties, trust and consideration, and at least some degree of common identity.

In the Nordic region, it seems that the development of an overarching identity, a "we-feeling," has long been in the making. Joenniemi (2003: 199) quotes Wæver that "no one can imagine a war between the countries anymore," and adds "the Nordic countries are seen as constituting a kind of 'family,' i.e., there are particular bonds between them restricting the unfolding of strife and conflicts." Joenniemi (2003) goes on to reflect upon Norden, with its blurred borders and strong sense of communality, as being a kind of inclusive "second nation," encompassing all the Nordic countries. He also again makes the explicit point that the common "we" identity makes it impossible for Nordics to perceive themselves as adversaries (see also Archer, 2003: 14). Herolf and Åkermark (2015: 5) agree, writing that "another conflict preventing factor is the common Nordic identity. Part of this is that people's level of knowledge of the neighboring countries is quite high so that the misunderstandings which are always present in conflicts will remain on a fairly low level." These observations support the proposition that expanding identity to include neighboring groups can have a major positive impact on peace and the promotion of nonkilling relationships.

Conclusions

A close examination of the Nordic peace system provides many insights about how to create and maintain nonkilling, positive relationships among neighboring countries. There are many parallels between what constitutes a "good relationship" between people and between nations, for instance, good, honest communication (trust); effective nonviolent conflict resolution and problem-solving; norms and values that are prosocial and peace-promoting (e.g., non-violent-nonwarring-nonkilling); balanced exchange across a variety of dimensions (positive reciprocity); and the development of a common, overarching identity. In this chapter, for clarity of presentation, we have separated these features as if they might exist in isolation from one another, but we suggest that actually these elements are synergistically interacting and mutually reinforcing stable peace and nonkilling relationships among nations. We have focused on the Nordic peace system, which provides many insights and illustrations for creating nonkilling relationships, but we certainly see the same peace-promoting features visible in Norden as generally applicable to other social contexts and situations (Fry et al., 2021; Fry and Souillac, 2021; Fry and Souillac, forthcoming). We have presented in this chapter a new form of peace ethics, understood as the promotion of transborder shared norms, values, and practices, which emphasize resolutely a nonkilling, prosocial, and life-affirming orientation (Souillac, 2012).

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The Role of Ritualization and Restraint in Nonkilling Relationships[1]

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Fry (2018: 250) argued that "a new paradigm is emerging that acknowledges the predominance of cooperation, restrained aggression, and peaceful behavior". This new paradigm –moving away from the violence-centric view that had been criticized by Sponsel (1996) and Paige (2009 [2002])– is characterized by the acknowledgement of the importance of what Fry calls "the 5Rs in human and nonhuman primate sociality": *R*estraint, *R*itualization, *R*elationship, *R*esolution and *R*econciliation. While the systemic bias of focusing almost exclusively on violence has aided the development of claims presenting killing and warring as an evolutionary adaptation (Dart, 1953; Chagnon, 1988; Wrangham and Peterson, 1996; for a critique, Fry, Schober and Björkqvist, 2010), the large corpus of mammalian data evidences how the *5Rs* shape the patterns of limited and controlled intraspecific aggression –particularly, by inhibiting or minimizing the likeliness of potentially lethal aggression. As Fry and Söderberg (2013: 271) point out:

> in mammals the killing of conspecifics is an atypical and infrequent form of aggression compared to displays, noncontact threats, and restrained aggression, so perhaps also for humans the development of an evolutionary model based on restraint as a widely documented phenomenon across species, rather than on rare killing behavior, merits consideration.

Fry and Szala (2013: 451-452) state that the idea of killing as an evolutionary adaptation becomes evidently flawed when considered in phylogenetic perspective, our own species ancestral Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness (EEA) and nomadic forager analogies, and, particularly if, "for

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[1] This chapter is based on the introduction of the author's doctoral dissertation *Verbal and Non-verbal Communication as Evolutionary Restraint Mechanisms for Nonkilling Conflict Management*, Åbo Akademi University, 2019.

a long-lived species, fitness costs and benefits of extreme or lethal aggression are considered vis-à-vis those of restrained agonism". On the contrary restraint presents itself as a core feature of the evolution of aggression in humans: "The species-typical pattern of agonism in humans IS the use of restraint, not an evolved proclivity toward homicide or warfare". In spite of the disproportionate attention given to escalated fighting and conspecific killing, agonistic behaviours actually span over a broader horizon that includes other competitive activities encompassing territoriality, threat and warning signals, spatial displacement and avoidance as well as the establishment of patterns of dominance and submission.

Fry and Szala (2013) defined four escalating categories of agonistic behaviours that are dependent on the risk of potentially lethal injuries: 1) *Avoidance*; 2) *Non-contact displays*; 3) *Restrained ritualized aggression*; and 4) *Unrestrained aggression*. In this chapter, cross-species examples of these categories are presented while more detailed examples of some of the common cultural manifestations are also provided. The classification is permeable and some behaviours span across different categories. For example, marking behaviours such as warning signals can fall within the scope avoidance mechanisms, although frequency, competitiveness and additional information conveyed by marks (i.e., size, age, social status) makes them equally relevant forms of non-contact display. Similarly, acoustic signals such as *Indri indri* spacing calls fall within avoidance, while escalated acoustic agonism such as Marsh wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) matched counter-singing or urban car 'sound-offs' fall within non-contact displays.

Agonistic behaviours that are less likely to lead to injury tend to present themselves more frequently across species than escalated aggression, but often a progression takes place when low-intensity agonism does not settle conflicts, leading to escalated forms. Among ungulates for example, red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) stags engage in roaring bouts at a safe distance to compete for sexual access during the mating season. If adversaries do not "settle for less costly –but less reliable– signals of quality" (Archer, 1992: 199), they may escalate to a form of non-contact display called parallel walking –involving a slow lateral display were two males walk in parallel– allowing adversaries to directly assess the physical characteristics of the opponent (Maynard Smith, 1982). If these forms of non-contact display fail to resolve the conflict, it will likely escalate to a form of restrained ritualized aggression consisting in antler wrestling –analogous to other forms of ungulate head-butting– that although energetically costly, rarely leads to serious injury (Fry, Schober and Björkqvist, 2010: 104-5).

Avoidance –just as escape– is a form of negative reinforcement aimed at reducing the likeliness of aversive stimulus –in this case, and particularly, of fitness risks from potentially lethal injuries. Flight and avoidance are extremely important components of agonism although usually downplayed in the face of rarer escalated aggression (Fromm, 1973: 36). Marking behaviours –whether associated to territoriality or not– are a key example of avoidance. Marks, as warning signals, convey information to conspecifics about the presence –sometimes past or recent– of another individual that may also be simultaneously making a claim to a given territory. Roamers or intruders will typically retreat or avoid the demarcated area or marked trail to minimize chances of potentially lethal aggressive response from the resident/s –this is the so-called mechanism of conspecific avoidance– or other roaming individuals in the vicinities (Giuggioli, Potts and Harris, 2011; Reynolds, 2007). Warning signals include non-visual scent marks through faecal, urine and cutaneous glandular secretions or depositions (Barja, de Miguel and Bárcena, 2005), visual marks through scratching, biting, rolling, clawing, and rubbing on trees, dens, caves, the ground and other surfaces (Burst and Pelton, 1983) or a combination of the above.

Across species, the establishment of boundaries[2] that are regularly marked significantly decreases the intensity, frequency and duration of contests and aggressive interactions among neighbours (Kokko, 2008; Sillero-Zubiri and Macdonald, 1998).

Ethnographic examples of intragroup avoidance and intergroup avoidance are common.[3] Using a sample of 21 simple hunter gatherers societies from the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS), Fry (2011) identified the presence of various forms of intra- or intergroup avoidance in 76% of the sample. Among the Ju/'hoansi (!Kung), for example, Lee noted the

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[2] Territorialism, although often seen as a causal factor of aggressive behaviour, actually serves to prevent potentially lethal engagements (Gottier, 1972). Territoriality transcends marking practices and also involves a variety of noncontact displays, from howling contests among howler monkeys (Alouatta caraya) (Garber and Kowalewski, 2011) to the Wagah-Attari evening border ceremonies among Indian and Pakistani guards. Although not all human societies display territoriality, the state system is based on boundary dynamics, often creating "sociopolitical black holes" in borderlands –areas were often many activities (settlement foundation, farming, hunting, etc.) were limited or avoided to minimize border disputes (Groube, 1981: 191).

[3] For example, walking away in anticipation of potential or actual conflict within fission-fusion atomistic societies (intragroup avoidance) or moving away from areas where other group's foraging or hunting activity is detected (intergroup avoidance).

common hunter-gatherer pattern of 'voting with one's feet', meaning "to walk out of an unpleasant situation" (Lee, 1972: 182) either as part of individual mobility or group fissioning. Individuals would rather move away with relatives in other bands rather than tolerating an unpopular leader or sustaining troubling or stressful relationships (Lee and Daly, 1999: 4). Group fissioning as a means to neutralize intra-group tensions has been considered as a crucial mechanism in the structuration of Bronze and Iron Age societies (Currás Refojos, 2014).

Noncontact displays are a second type of agonism where, rather than avoiding an adversary, confrontation without actual physical contact takes place, equally removing the risk of potentially lethal injury. These include barking, howling, yowling, stalking, screaming, roaring, rattling and grunting bouts, body posturing, push-ups, fixated staring, facial threats, chasing, spitting, belching, branch-breaking, urinating and defecating on top of adversaries, 'stink fights', genital displays, chest beating, pounding, thumping, head-tossing, lunging, piloerection, tooth displays, matched counter-singing, song duels, displays of anger, exchanges of insults, harangues, sorcery challenges, wealth contests, hunting, dancing battles, boom-car 'sound-offs', etc. Noncontact threats and other forms of displays that do not involve psychical contact "vastly outnumber actual contact events" (Fry and Szala, 2013) while the pattern of avoiding escalated fighting is a consistent strategy across species (Maynard-Smith & Price, 1973; Parker and Rubenstein, 1981).

To refer a few examples in non-human animals, among California male sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) most forms of agonism involve calling or chasing displays, giving the fitness risks from potentially lethal injuries that physical fights imply (Jacobs, et al., 2008). Just as red deer and other ungulates (Jennings and Gammell, 2013), "males of many antelope species show aggressive noncontact displays, and only rarely fight", particularly avoiding straight fights with peers (Blank, Ruckstuhl and Yang, 2015: 63). Wild pig (*Sus scrofa*) sounders witness very little intragroup overt physical aggression and damaging physical aggression between adults is rare, opting instead for noncontact parallel walking, 'heads up' or 'shoulder-to-shoulder' displays (Camerlink et al., 2016). Within the same species, intergroup aggression, in spite of often overlapping home ranges, is even rarer and "the strategy is usually one of avoidance" (Marchant-Forde and Marchant-Forde, 2005).

The variety of noncontact displays in humans is equally immense. Although some forms –including the song duels and counter-marking dis-

cussed in the three studies of this dissertation– share profound cross-species commonalities, others present great cultural complexity with adversaries competing "through displaying their most clever lyrics, haranguing endurance, hunting prowess, sorcery skills, and wealth amassment abilities" (Fry, Schober and Björkqvist, 2010: 108). Such competitions are not only serious but also important social institutions and mechanisms to resolve and manage conflicts. The *potlatch* of the peoples of North America's Pacific Northwest Coast (Mauss, 2002 [1925]; Codere, 1950) or Alorese 'wealth feuds' involving pig raising (DuBois, 1944: 124-5), where although "no one's pigs are safe" the "expression of personal hostilities" did not put human lives at stake, only prestige, status and esteem. These examples represent what Codere (1950) called "*fighting with property*" and Young (1971) labelled "*fighting with food*" (for other Melanesian examples, see Sahlins, 1963; Oliver, 1967 [1955]: 386-395), just as song duels as a way of *fighting with words*.

Restrained aggression, a third type of agonism, is a form of ritualized physical aggression that often occurs after the two previous strategies have been exhausted by the adversaries without settling the conflict. Restrained or ritualized aggression has also been described as 'non-damaging aggression' and characterized by absence of significant injuries as outcomes, in contrast with 'damaging aggression' which is characteristic of unrestrained contests (Camerlink et al., 2018) and where serious injuries are more likely. Although physical fighting does take place serious injuries are rare and mostly accidental.

By limiting or other-wise restricting the extent of physical contact (i.e, body parts that are off-limits for blows or bites, what weaponry is to be used and how, rules of engagement, etc.) the chances of potentially lethal injuries are greatly minimized, while motivations from which conflict arises, such as the establishment of dominance or access to resources, can still be settled, making escalated and potentially lethal physical fighting unnecessary to solve conflicts (Natarajan and Caramaschi, 2010; Fry, 2005: 78). As Lorenz (1966: 113) explained:

> When in the course of its evolution, a species of animals develops a weapon which may destroy a fellow member at one blow, then, in order to survive, it must develop, along with the weapon, a social inhibition to prevent a usage which could endanger the existence of the species.

This inhibition is channelled through restraint mechanisms and particularly agonistic alternatives to the use of potentially lethal weapons systems intended for interspecific predation. Fry and Szala (2013: 453; 460) point out how "Intraspecific agonism, including physical aggression, tends to be much less bloody that predatory aggression, and is rarely lethal in mammals", while "across the primate species –human and nonhuman– agonism reflects self-restraint as a central principle". For example, in a study that recorded over 15,000 agonistic events among rhesus monkeys (*Macaca mulatta*) only 0.4% represented actual physical fighting, while 99.6% consisted in restrained aggression (Symons, 1978: 166). Similarly, another study registered 1,314 sparring matches among pairs of male caribou with only 6 escalated fights breaking out (Alcock, 2005). In humans, overall patterns and differences in homicide rates among countries and territories illustrates the mammalian pattern of restraint being the norm.

This argument is evidenced through a study by Gómez et al. (2016) in which conspecific lethal violence in 1,024 mammalian species from 137 families was examined together with data from 600 human populations, resulting in an overall conspecific killing percentage of 0.30% in relation to all deaths. Although simple hunter-gatherer band societies matched phylogenetic predictions, certain historical periods and forms of social organization showed anomalously high levels of lethality compared to phylogenetic inferences.

In the face of potentially lethal injury, ritualized aggression is in the best interest of adversaries as even an evidently superior individual that would likely win over an opponent in an all-out physical fight may still sustain costs in morbidity and mortality, besides other loss of fitness due to time and energy costs or damage to relationships. Bernstein (2008: 59) argues that restraint mechanisms must be functional in any social unit to preserve the benefits of sociality that would be undermined by unrestrained aggression:

> If aggression increases the probability of injury to at least the recipient, then life in a social unit will require the development of means to prevent and control aggressive solutions to problems engendered by conflict and competition in socially living individuals. If aggression is elicited, then it must be limited, controlled, and regulated in such a way that it terminates with minimal risk of injuries.

Examples of restrained aggression include some of the above mentioned cases of ungulate sparring contests involving antler wrestling or

head-butting, but also neck fights among lizards, rattlesnakes and giraffes. Going back to Alorese 'wealth feuds' (DuBois, 1944: 124-5), pig amassment could escalate into mutual spear and stone throwing, although this was done in a ritualized way in which "no one was hurt". Escalation into unrestrained aggression among the Alorese could bring about homicide or feuding. The pattern of spear throwing and dodging is also present among the Tiwi of Australia (Paige and Paige, 1981: 51; Hart and Pilling, 1960: 80-83). Fry (1990, 2005, 2014) extensively documented the cross-cultural patterns of restrained wrestling and fighting, as evidenced among the Netsilik Inuit, Slavey, Dogrib, Ingalik, Siriono, Ona, Yahgan or Ache, to mention some simple hunter gatherer examples.

Unrestrained aggression, the last category, makes potentially lethal injuries more likely as the barriers set by ritualization disappear. In spite of cultural and scientific overrepresentation of such forms of extreme agonism, unrestrained aggression "is exceedingly rare among mammals" (Fry and Szala, 2013: 454). Unrestrained aggression poses high risks of loss of fitness, including potentially lethal injuries to self or kin, diversion of energy from critical activities including feeding, reproduction and avoiding predators and losing social support and valuable relationships. Detailed evidence has been put forward regarding the strong aversion of humans to kill (Grossman, 1996; MacNair, 2002), while some indications of aversion has been suggested for chimpanzees (Roscoe, 2007). Although aggression is natural in humans as in other animal species, uninhibited, escalated aggression with the intent to harm or kill is usually considered as pathological behaviour with different underlying neurobiological processes that distinguish it from adaptive aggression (Bedrosian and Nelson, 2012: 24-25). Giorgi (2009) and other scholars emphasize the distinction between violence as a specifically human cultural phenomenon from adaptive aggression that is rarely directed toward conspecifics with the intention of causing damage or death.

Miklikowska and Fry (2012), using the 'hawk-dove' game-theoretic model proposed by Maynard Smith and Price (1973), argued it is agonistic strategies that settle for restrained aggression that fare best, as overly-aggressive players are more likely to accumulate costs to fitness as the simulation continues in time. Maynard Smith and Price (1973: 15), although refraining from applying their model to humans, find that a behaviour analogous to restrained aggression, and not pure dove or pure hawk strategies, turns out to be the evolutionary stable strategy, as no other strategies provide higher reproductive fitness. Thus, following Blanchard

and Blanchard's (1989: 104) argument "successful individuals [in evolutionary terms] will be those with techniques which enable them to avoid agonistic situations involving serious possibilities of defeat or injury, while leaving them to continue in more promising situations." This idea is even accepted by sociobiologists (Alexander, 1971: 114), although instead of finding that ritualization inhibits potentially lethal aggression by its own merit, it is seen simply as an individualistic approach to evaluate if escalated lethal aggression would be in the self-interest of individuals (Ruse, 1985: 56; 1989: 48).

Roscoe (2007: 485) suggests that "the aversion to conspecific killing has its origins at a point in our past when it served to enforce the kind of 'ritualized', nonlethal fighting observed in many other species". If such forms of restrained aggression were relevant to increase the species' fitness in the past, the mechanism would have evolved "through homologous (shared evolutionary history) or homoplastic (convergent evolution) processes" (id., 488). Therefore, over extended periods of evolutionary time, natural selection would have strongly selected for behavioural patterns that channelled aggression through restrained mechanisms, while patterns of escalated unrestrained aggression would have been selected against on the basis of the higher fitness benefits of the former strategies and the higher fitness costs of the later.

Following Lorenz's argument (1966: 124), unrestrained aggression is most dangerous in those species where lethal capabilities are strongest, making it precisely in those species where mechanisms to curve such potentially lethal aggression are most needed –be it through restraint, aversion or other combinations of elements. For example, Oryx antelopes (*Oryx spp.*) use their lethal spear-like horns to cause lethal wounds on predators when defending themselves, but refrain from using them against their conspecifics during head-butting restrained contests (Zillmann, 1998: 7). Effective lethal capabilities, such as Oryx horns, do not predispose for intraspecific lethal behaviour. This explains what Fry and Szala (2013: 457) described as rule-based restraint behavioural proclivities even in escalated aggression, i.e., refraining from biting or gauging vulnerable body parts of an adversary or ceasing an attack once an opponent gives up (Maynard Smith and Price, 1973: 15).

Similarly, in humans, even if agonism spirals from ritualized aggression, and deadly weapons come into hand, restraint is often found within escalated non-ritualized aggression. In battlefields or close combat, soldiers will often shoot above or under the enemy in a well-documented cross-

cultural pattern (Grossman, 1996) that has troubled military leaders, concerned about actually getting their troops to kill in combat and managing the psychological falloff during the aftermath. Many cultures, instead, display comparatively harmless –or at least non-lethal or less-lethal– combat tactics including the use of war clubs "to stun rather than to kill an opponent" or arrows being "shot in the air rather that at an antagonist", or even, if unavoidable, "targeted on limbs or buttocks rather than on heads or torsos" (Roscoe, 2013: 478). Cases of severe lethal aggression across species often display disrupted natural patterns, including captivity, human encroachment and mental disorders. On the other hand, conspecific killing in humans often leads to psychological damage and disorders, particularly a subtype of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that had been designated Perpetration Induced Traumatic Stress (MacNair, 2002) or perpetrator trauma, with patients suffering higher severity than those suffering PTSD from other forms of traumatization.

Ethological insights on restraint and ritualization

While relatively understudied in humans, restrained and ritualized aggression among conspecifics is a widely surveyed phenomenon among non-human animals (Hinde, 1970). Huxley (1914) had used the term 'ritualization' to explain courtship displays among crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). The example evidenced how instrumental behavioural patterns are transformed into relevant metacommunicative signals –in this case, courtship signals. Later on, Huxley (1966: 250) defined ritual

> as the adaptive formalization or canalization of emotionally motivated behaviour, under the teleonomic pressure of natural selection so as: (a) to promote better and more unambiguous signal function, both intra- and inter-specifically; (b) to serve as more efficient stimulators of releasers of more efficient patterns of action in other individuals; (c) *to reduce intra-specific damage*; and (d) to serve as sexual or social bonding mechanisms. Ritualized behaviour-patterns can all be broadly characterized as *display*. [emphasis added].

Ethologists agree that restrained and ritualized aggression among conspecifics is an evolved behavioural mechanism that emerged through natural selection over time (Huxley, 1914, 1966; Tinbergen, 1959; Lorenz, 1966). Ritualized aggression often involves the transformation of patterns from a noncommunicative instrumental activity into highly stereotyped metacommunicative signals that convey information which is unrelated to

the original instrumental activity (a process called behavioural hetero-chrony). This was illustrated by Tinbergen (1959) in a study of ritualized aggression among lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*) where gull nest-building gestures were used to signal aggression and turn other gulls away without using 'overt' aggressive gestures. The use of sterotyped gestures minimizes potentially lethal aggression by sending unambiguous signals re-ferring to the restrained nature of the agonistic behaviour in question.

Ritualized behaviours are often exaggerated, emphasized, stereotyped and repetitive in a strictly regulated form to avoid ambiguity or confusion with the original phylogenetically adapted pattern or with the patterns of unrestrained escalated aggression. Song dueling and mark making can be seen as redirected responses, as the urban street culture examples in Study III illustrate. The fact that such practices are allegorically referred to with the lexicon of lethality –graffiti tags are 'bombed', break dance moves are 'bullets' being 'fired', freestyle rap is about 'battling' oppo-nents– reinforces the idea of redirection. Human ritualized displays such as song duels also exemplify the patterns of stereotyped, repeated and exaggerated behaviours, in this case developed from the basis of ordinary speech and prosodic vocalizations (Dissanayake, 1997: 37) and where the often rhythmic rigidity and the choral functions of the audience reinforces these characteristics.

Even when it is unrestrained or escalated aggression which is ritual-ized, stereotypy and adherence to rules are crucial to avoid ambiguity and potentially lethal escalation. For example, the display of weapons in simi-lar patterns as of actual attacks is common in mammal threat displays, i.e. bared teeth in *canidae* or weapons (horns) pointing toward the object of aggression in ungulates. Although postures are common to actual physical escalated aggression, their ritualized display does not involve potentially lethal fighting, but simply "intention movements" which usually "end with one animal backing off, thereby avoiding serious injury" (Rogers and Kaplan, 2002: 19). The same can be argued for the case of human cultural practices, including the already mentioned Alorese or Tiwi spear throwing which could become seriously dangerous without consistent rule-based restraint (rigidity).

One of the early explanations (Burghardt, 2018: 31) for the emer-gence of ritualization and displays is that of motivational conflicts where two competing motivation systems –i.e., approach/withdraw, attack/flee, or feed/look-out-for-predators– override each other. The possible behav-ioural upshots of motivational conflicts are redirected, displacement and

ambivalent behaviours emerging from conflicting stimulus responses. Displacement or redirection activities are frequent when animals experience agonistic situations. For example, territorial animals in boundary encounters will often experience conflict between approaching, attacking and withdrawing, and may instead opt for ritualized behaviours, as Tinbergen's (1959) gull study illustrates. The escalating options for restrained agonism displayed in Figure 2 represent a range of alternatives in such situations without resorting directly to unrestrained and deadly dangerous physical fighting.

Boyer and Liénard (2006) suggested that ritualized behaviour in humans operated as an evolved 'precaution system' aimed at detecting and reacting to inferred threats to fitness. Once external stimuli or self-generated thoughts reveal a potential hazard, safety motivation is triggered and appropriate action-sequences are carried out. Clues in the environment, such as a set of footprints or hostile attitudes from a particular individual or group signal that potential danger –including potentially lethal aggression– is likely or probable and should be addressed. Interpersonal intra-group aggression in human natural environments (EEA) is considered extremely dangerous due to dependence on conspecifics for access to resources, cooperation and information, which are all crucial to survival. Within this perspective restrained aggression such as song dueling or mark making is to be understood as a result of the activation of precaution and action-parsing systems. By addressing perceived conflicts within the safety of a rigidly ritualized song, dance, property, wrestling, tagging or other form of contest based on redirected activities, the dangers of escalation are curtailed. Similarly, ritualized marking of property or territorial boundaries prevent potential agonistic situations that could also easily escalate. Interestingly, Boyer and Liénard use ritualized behaviours commonly observed in patients with obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD) as an analogy to understand precautionary devices, i.e., cases of pathological avoidance out of fear of insulting or assaulting others.

In any case, ritualized and restrained aggression make intraspecific escalated fighting uncommon and killing rare among most vertebrate species, including primates (Scott, 1969; Gottier, 1972; Montagu, 1973b; Gómez et al., 2016). Examples of the predominance of ritualized displays over unrestrained physical aggression include elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*), where only 1 out of 67 aggressive encounters involved physical fighting, or the already mentioned rhesus monkeys (Symons, 1978: 166) and male caribou (Alcock, 2005) examples, were over 99% of aggressive encoun-

ters are non-contact displays or ritualized aggression. Gómez et al. (2016) after quantifying levels of conspecific lethality across 1,024 mammalian species from 137 families (including humans) concluded that for over 60% of the studied species there was no reported cases of intraspecific killing. Even if this pattern cannot be extended to invertebrate species in general, there are still thousands of arthropods species where no form of conspecific fighting occurs (Scott, 1969: 124).

As for humans, in spite of the dramatic overrepresentation of killing in the public discourse of Western industrialized societies, "conspecific killing in humans is species-atypical behavior" (Fry and Szala, 2013: 469), an assertion attested by global homicide statistics. For example, in 2016, the Macao Special Administrative Region of China, with a population of over 600,000, had one single incident of homicide, a number matched by Iceland that has about half the population. Japan, with a population of 126.6 million had 362 murders. We can certainly presume that considerably higher numbers of escalated fighting took place in all three territories, but the low prevalence of killing illustrates the effectiveness of mechanisms that inhibit intraspecific lethality in daily life. As argued by Miklikowska and Fry (2012: 50):

> although homicide rates vary tremendously from one society to the next and also change over time within the same society, the vast majority of people never kill or attempt to kill anyone. It is difficult to see how the proposition that natural selection has favored males that kill over those who do not explains this inter-societal and intra-societal variation in killing and the fact that most humans do not ever kill.

Eibl-Eibesfeldt (2017 [1989]: 375) argued that cultural evolution phenocopies phylogeny making cross-species examples of non-human animal restrained aggression "fully comparable to culturally ritualized human duels". Eibl-Eibesfeldt's statement does not imply adherence to any form of 'biological determinism' or 'genetic reductionism', particularly as it is widely accepted that human behaviours are shaped by complex interactions of environmental factors –including culture and its on-going transformations– and biological 'hardware' (Eisenberg, 1972: 126), which in humans is also culturally affected during ontogeny and early childhood, i.e., postnatal abnormal social exposure (Moya Albiol and Evans Pim, 2012: 182-184; Prescott, 2002). Although cross-species generalizations can be problematical –and therefore the term 'analogy' is preferred– common patterns can be explained on the basis of phylogenetic related-

ness and/or ecological and cultural convergence (Lockard, 1971: 172). Restraint mechanisms were indeed already present before the process of anthropogenesis emerged and therefore behavioural analogies or homologies can be traced back to hominid, primate, mammal and vertebrate evolutionary ancestors. Convergence, on the other hand, is especially evident among human cultural manifestations of restraint, i.e., Inuit and Bronx song duels/freestyle and harpoon marks/tags. If "natural selection favors non-lethality among conspecifics" (Fry and Szala, 2013: 468), it makes sense to expect similar or analogous behavioural mechanisms inhibiting intraspecific lethality in humans to those present in non-human animals.

Discussion

In 1963 Konrad Lorenz published his book *On Aggression* (the original title read *Das sogenannte Böse zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression*, "So-called Evil: on the natural history of aggression"). Some translations have included the subtitle "A Natural History of Evil". Ten years later he would receive the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, together with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch, "for discoveries in individual and social behaviour patterns". Although in his book Lorenz acknowledged the crucial evolutionary role of ritualization and restraint, enabling the transformation of destructive aggression into socially acceptable, beneficial or harmless forms of agonism, the focus of attention remained largely on aggression. By keeping such a focus, Lorenz mirrored what Sponsel (1996: 113-114, also see Sponsel, 2017, table 1) described as a "systemic bias" to violence.

If Lorenz, on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative distribution of cross-species behaviour, had emphasized restraint over aggression, a more adequate title could have been "On Restraint", but such a book is yet to be written. However, as many critics pointed out, Lorenz failed to transpose the applicability of the inhibitors to intraspecific lethality to humans, instead presenting a darker picture of human nature. While defending that species with greater lethal capabilities, particularly carnivores with powerful weapons systems, "possess sufficiently reliable inhibitions which prevent the self-destruction of the species" (Lorenz, 1966: 207) this would not apply to humans on the basis that, in the absence of built-in weapons systems, "no inhibitory mechanisms preventing sudden manslaughter were [initially] necessary". The sudden emergence of artificial weapons at a relatively recent point of human evolution would have "up-

set the equilibrium of killing potential and social inhibitions" (id.) bringing about the onset of carnage.[4]

But evidence presented in this chapter prove Lorenz wrong on this point and instead reinforce the cross-species validity (including humans) of his claims regarding the crucial role of ritualization in the controlled release of aggression as well as the applicability of the principle of correlation between lethal capabilities and more developed mechanisms for restrained ritualized aggression.

Our species has certainly proven its intraspecific destructive potential, but also its ability to develop mechanisms for restraint with great inhibitory capacity. In spite of the biased overrepresentation of lethality in Western culture and science, the effectiveness of inhibitory mechanisms is evidenced by our lower level of conspecific killing compared to the pan-mammalian average as well as the average for primates (Gómez et al., 2016) but also by the variations in homicide rates across countries and territories (UNODC, 2018) that suggest it is cultural and socio-economic factors rather than biological imperatives that explain the diverging patterns of human intraspecific lethality. Cultural variability in relation to human mechanisms for the restrained release of aggression is discussed in the next sub-section.

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[4] Although this is not what Lorenz referred to in his argument, in evolutionary terms the most recent 10,000 years of human existence have seen the emergence of species atypical behaviours in terms of intraspecific lethality, first in the Near East and then in other world regions, particularly coordinated intergroup violence (i.e., warfare) and political structures that support and expand inequalities (i.e., the State). Structural violence is coincident with social stratification and socio-political organization at the state level (Sponsel, 2010: 21). The distribution of this new pattern in geographical and historical terms has been uneven, from the first known transitions into the Neolithic occurring roughly 13,500-10,000 BP years ago during the pre-agricultural revolution (Knauft, 1991) to the current existence of a small set of small-band hunter-gatherer societies. In evolutionary time, however, the past 10,000 years –and much less time if we consider other world regions and particular societies– represents a very short period. This has led a number of authors to argue that, from an evolutionary perspective, we are not well adapted, at least neurologically, to cope with our current existence in large, hierarchical, competitive and violent communities where "the vast majority of human beings have become unhappy, ill and with limited material resources" (Giorgi, 2009: 117; also see Narvaez, 2013, 2014). The problem lies not with artificial weapons –which had existed as tools for hunting long before the Neolethic– but rather with 'artificial' societal arrangements.

Lorenz's (1966: 204) pessimistic view of human nature presented the capacity for conceptual thought and verbal speech as detrimental for the control of aggressiveness. While Eibl-Eibesfeldt (2017 [1989]: 375) considered human verbal capacity as a privileged output for ritualized fighting that allowed "the possibility to conduct conflict verbally", Lorenz argued that "the great dangers threatening humanity with destruction are direct consequences of conceptual thought and verbal speech". The extensive use of song duels and related forms of ritualized 'fighting with words', as well as other forms of complex species-typical ritual agonism (from potlatching to mock warfare) support the evolutionary role of verbal communication and indeed cognitive abilities in developing mechanisms to prevent potentially lethal aggression. Verbal and non-verbal communication (as part of the evolution of restrain mechanisms) should be considered not as detrimental to the minimization of potentially lethal aggression (as Lorenz suggested) but actually as a result of the evolution of restraint in humans.

In the face of such grim prospects, Lorenz trusted "responsible morality" as the only viable inhibitor to the hazardous combination of lethal instincts and weaponry, instead of emphasizing the relevance and potential of restraint to prevent violence. Trying to understand and address violence in terms of morality alone has been strongly warned against both in theory (Gilligan, 1997) and practice (see, for example, "Cure Violence"). Stephenson (2015: 20) cautioned that by ignoring the evolutionary implications of ritualized behaviour in humans we are failing to understand their importance, and also placing ourselves in peril. In the particular case of aggression restraint mechanisms, "the culturally constructed norm that makes killing a virtuous duty overrides the biologically formed ritualized behavior that dulls the edge of destructive violence in service of survival".

By emphasizing morality alone we are misunderstanding the relevance of ritualized aggression. As it has historically been the case, from *potlatch* bans to graffiti criminalization, this has often led to suppressing instead of culturally reinforcing restraint mechanisms that can serve as inhibitors for potentially lethal aggression. The disruption of such mechanisms likely entails greater danger of escalated violence than atypical or accidental escalation due to failure of the mechanisms of restraint. Although morality and coercion can be effective in addressing the human potential for lethal violence, evolutionary restraint mechanisms continue to emerge in contexts of state failure to tackle escalating potentially lethal violence. This is evidenced from the *gara poetica* of Sardinian shepherds to the *freestylin'* of Bronx youths. When states fail to provide conflict management mecha-

nisms to solve serious disputes (i.e., criminal justice system not operation-
al or trusted by gang members and marginalized communities, as in the
two previous examples) alternative mechanisms (re)emerge to address
the threat of unrestrained lethal aggression.

However, Lorenzian thinking regarding human aggression creates a
paradox. On the one hand cultural assumptions regarding the inevitability
of violence inhibit prevention strategies. If violence is considered inevita-
ble and/or acceptable there will be less of an urge to focus on strategies
that seek to understand and to address its risk and protective factors. On
the other hand, outlets for restrained aggression (such as Hip Hop) are
targeted and repressed for being considered precursors to escalated vio-
lence or a component of what is perceived as a violent (sub)culture. In
evolutionary terms the availability and usage of a wide and escalating array
of options for restrained aggression among groups where the risk of po-
tentially lethal intraspecific aggression is greater can be seen as natural and
positive, while a negative correlation should be expected between the
level of deployment of such mechanisms and the amount of unrestrained
aggression. If in any population at risk of escalating into potentially lethal
aggression we were to disrupt the mechanisms of restraint, the likely out-
come would be higher levels of unrestrained aggression.

In contrast with this hypothesis, some scholarly literature on Hip Hop
has often assumed the logical fallacy that correlation proves causation
(*cum hoc ergo propter hoc*) therefore suggesting a causal relation between
Hip Hop and violence. Just as Wilson and Kelling (1982) formulated the
famous 'broken windows theory' that established that the presence of
graffiti in urban environments inevitably leads to greater violence, other
scholars claimed that exposure to Hip Hop music was correlated with the
likelihood of engaging and accepting violence (Johnson, Jackson, and Gatto
1995; Tanner, Asbridge, and Wortley 2009). However, recent studies
(O'Brien and Sampson, 2015; Walker and Schuurman, 2015) concluded
that public denigration had no predictive power in relation to violence and
that no causal link could be established between graffiti and violence. Evi-
dence suggests a need to revisit assumptions regarding unrestrained ag-
gression in relation to the mechanisms of restrained aggression. This may
actually allow us to better understand how effective restraint mechanisms
can be in different settings and situations and transcend the rigidity of
moral solutions brought about by approaches to addressing violence that
are subject to the assumption drag of the inescapability of human vio-
lence.

In many contemporary cultures, ancestral forms of ritualized fighting have been transformed to a point that makes them almost unrecognizable. Just as Trobriand ritualized 'warfare' was transmuted into a peculiar adaptation of the game of cricket, wrestling as a social strategy to settle disputes has been ubiquitously institutionalized as a sport –roughly surviving in form but rarely in function in so-called 'folk wrestling. Although Xinguano 'peace festivals' where tribes simultaneously competed and traded (Gregor, 1990, 1994; Fry, 2012) are a form of intergroup restrained aggression analogous to ancient Hellenic Olympics, that allowed Greek city-states to compete for dominance without deadly warfare (Raschke, 1988: 23), the contemporary Olympic games, FIFA World Cup, or, for that sake, Eurovision Song Contest, may be seen as further removed from less complex evolutionary mechanisms for restrained aggression. However, the high stakes and equally high investments made in the Olympic 'theatre' of the Cold War by the United States and the USSR (Guttman, 1988) illustrate the seriousness of restrained intergroup aggression in the state context.

Conclusion

Across species, unrestrained aggression among con-specifics has been strongly selected against due to increased fitness costs, making intraspecific lethality relatively rare or atypical. Evolutionary selection has instead favoured mechanisms for rule-based ritualized restraint such as song duel display contests or mark-making practices related to territory. These mechanisms fall within an escalating fan of agonistic behaviours ranging from avoidance to various forms of non-contact displays and restrained ritualized forms of aggression.

'Talking,' 'singing,' 'marking,' or 'reading' oneself –and whole groups– out of potentially lethal aggression offer greater chances of survival than a pattern of unrestrained 'all-out' physical fighting. A pattern of formal and functional continuity of restraint mechanisms across cultures but also across species, may indicate a common phylogenetic origin. This suggests that restrained aggression can serve in certain contexts as a powerful tool for inhibiting escalated and potentially lethal aggression, with important implications for the design of violence prevention strategies.

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