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It Peaces!

On the Linguistic Significance of *Peacing* as Activity

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*The air here is so heavy with cries for peace.
The peace, the peace, where does the peace come from?
It doesn't come from mere demanding.
It only comes when we do it.¹*

Abstract

¹ Heller 1982: *Vom Schrei nach dem Frieden ist die Luft hier ganz schwer. Der Friede, der Friede, wo kommt nur der Frieden her? Der kommt nicht vom bloßen Fordern, der kommt nur, wenn wir ihn tun.*

This essay asks for the impact of grammar as *enframing* for the perception, interpretation and praxis of peace. It reflects the urge for a subject in all grammars of European origin since antiquity and discusses the colonizing consequences of *the* metaphysical peace as a singular in its transcendental context. This noun contrasts with action- and proceeding-oriented understandings of peace in many non-European languages. Such post-modern insight called the academic discipline of peace studies decades ago for the understanding of *peaces* as plural. This essay goes one step further and proposes *to peace* as a verb also for European grammars. It asks for the possibly de-colonizing and enlightening consequences of such an immanent notion in the still transcendental modern context.

Keywords

To peace as a verb; many peaces; peace grammars; immanence and transcendence; singular and plural.

Peace and Peaces

In 2015, I finished the third volume of my *Many Peaces* trilogy in its original German version (Dietrich, 2008, 2012, 2015). I thought then that with the third volume my *opus magnum* was written. Though the trilogy deviated in content, method and style from the idealistic mainstream of central-European peace research, even its German original has been well received. Initially still quiet doubts about whether this trilogy could really be my final contribution to peace research as a transdisciplinary endeavor afflicted me more loudly when the three books started to get translated into further languages.

The first translation was into English (Dietrich, 2012). The publishing house Palgrave Macmillan in London was impressed by the text, but the Sales & Marketing Department opposed the publication as a literal translation of the German original title. The plural *peaces* is not correct in English and a publisher of this standing could not accept grammatically incorrect titles. My argumentation that the unconventional plural would express the book's main thrust in a single word was not convincing. The debate resulted in a compromise. The experience as such, however, demonstrated that the assumed implicitness in spite of all the explanations between the bookcases is not that implicit at all. Namely, that peace is a sensible term only as a sensual perception. The plurality of social relations causes the plurality of peace interpretations.

This experience has been repeated with each further translation up to Arabic *salamat* (Dietrich, 2019). I observe students and even colleagues, who follow the lectures on *many peaces* enthusiastically falling back on peace as a *singularantum* in their own texts.

This did not make me doubt principally in the applicability of the approach, but it made me search for lacunas in the derivation of my arguments. Within the transdiscipline of peace studies such inquiry opens several options. Re-reading what I had written almost two decades before, I got fascinated again by the etymology of the term peace in various language games, which was the emphasis of the first volume of the *Many Peaces* trilogy, in English titled *Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture* (Dietrich, 2012).

The impulse came from my work experience in various cultural contexts, but the inspiration was the reading of Jean-François Lyotard (1984). In the light of untranslatable discourses of different language games that are still doomed to co-existence, he asserted, plurality would be the only available theoretical frame for postmodern cognition. He took the term *language game* from Ludwig von Wittgenstein (Lyotard, 1984, p. 118) in order to describe the formations of discourse that he understood as incommensurable modes of reason.

If peace research goes along with Lyotard's argumentation, it follows that *the peace* as a *singularantum* is but an unreachable ideal, a metaphysical imaginary – posed in front of human experience so that *the peaces* in real social encounters will not be perceived. *The peaces* are located in the relations between the individual and the common, whereupon the common must not be confused with the universal.

The idea of peace, however the essence is defined, cannot persist without a frame-giving narration of the concrete situational, relational and communicative contexts of experience. According to Lyotard, totalizing frame narrations do not have integrative legitimacy under postmodern conditions. Without the possible reference to such totalizing narration, there is never *the* peace, true and real, but only *a* peace. The term peace demands the liberation from the metaphysical stays of the *singularantum*, in which European grammars constricted it centuries ago.

In this vein, I inquired into the linguistic praxis, and with it, the way of life of different contexts regarding their use of the symbol peace. Since language games make only sense within the respective praxis, this must also be true for the interpretations of peace, I assumed. Therefore, I expected that the seemingly self-explaining *singularantum* within modern European languages would finally turn out to be a situational and relational plural. This was already sketched in my *Call for Many Peaces*, first published in 1997 (Dietrich/Sützl, 1997). It appeared so clear to me that I used and argued the plural for the trilogy. Finally, I used it as a vehicle for the *tour de force* through historical epochs, cultures and language

games, but I did not dive deeper into the implications of such doing in my own mother tongue. The debates with translators of various languages over and again throw me back onto this topic, which finally demonstrated a lacuna in volume 1.

Time paves the boulevard of regret with missed opportunities. Therefore, I wanted to close this gap before I withdraw from public academic life. I did this in 2021 with the book *Der die das Frieden* (Dietrich, 2021), only published in German so far. This essay is partly a translation, partly a paraphrasing report or resume of the key message of this book.

Peace is Not the Case

Peace is not the case. It does not manifest itself as an objective quality of world conditions but through perception and interpretation of interpersonal relations and *convirnonmental* circumstances. Neuroscience explained long ago that human beings are not Cartesian subjects who *make* their experiences, but the total of all their previous experiences *make* them those who they are in the respective now (Damásio, 2006; Singer, 2002, p.12; Singer, 2003, pp.73–75). Existence drafting itself in permanent communication with others principally precedes the essence of being, which can never close in on it.

A primordial and therefore formative experience of becoming human is being born into a so-called mother tongue. The question for the Ego is the epistemic raster for the Cartesian terminology of peace. However, the Ego is a linguistic figure who comes notoriously late in its own history. Before it can even say *I*, its language belongs to others. It acquires language by mimesis.

The ability to speak a language derives from a specific *convirnonment* that addresses the Ego before it can express itself. The principal individuation through others catches it without invitation before it could individuate freely. The baby is not born *into* the world as an essentially given Self, as an individual free soul. Much more, with all its vital needs it is born *from* a mix of pre-given relations – the world. It is not born *into* the world, but *from* the world and therefore into a language, whose patterns, forms and norms condition its thinking. Only from the primary experience of being exposed to such extent grows an Ego who claims language as an integrative requirement. Language invades the Ego and engrafts into it. Therefore, the Ego as a mental being always expresses itself *in* a language, not *by* or *through* a language.

Everybody becomes aware of him/herself and the surrounding things *in* a language. Language is the medium of awareness (Benjamin, 1977, p.142). The categories in which we are addressed first and then express ourselves define the perception and interpretation of the world – consequently also of terms and values

such as *peace*. We understand peace as speakers *in* the language that is pre-given, and we express ourselves towards others *in* it. Peace cannot be devised abstractly because the grammar of the language, *in* which it is conceived, preconditions the thought and its content semantically.

Thus, there is no surprise that after academic exercises of thinking *peaces* as a plural even enthusiastic audiences return affectively to the use of the singular, which is predominant in all modern languages of European origin. The designator obstructs the perception of the designated. Installing the designated within a new, eventually more useful designator requires cumbersome excavation, even if it might at first only mean the shift from the singular *tantum* to the plural form of the word.

Despite the emphasis on the interpretations of peace in history and culture in my *Many Peaces* trilogy, I obviously did not do enough of what postmodernism calls *archeology of peaces*. The volume (Dietrich, 2012) that drove me as an author, and consequently my audience through thousands of years and around the globe depicted the perambulated peace-sceneries and the respective experiences. But, paraphrasing Heidegger, the abundance of the depicted may have concealed the linkage of the semantic *enframing*, the mode of human existence that allowed me to confront myself with the excavated and assemble it to experience, insight and reality of permanency.

Peace does not unveil by simple exhibition of the excavated. For being accomplished it requires decoding its *enframing*. Today I presume that precisely this enquiry might be the deeper *raison d'être* of peace research as an academic transdiscipline because experience, findings and exhibitions are also subject of traditional disciplines. The particularity of peace research lies in its own *enframing*.

The peace doesn't come from demanding, it only comes when we do it... (Heller 1982), because peace is no essence, no object, peace is not the case and not even a noun but only an activity!

Peacing as the research interest I want to elaborate on now transgresses the concreteness of modern and postmodern interpretations of *the peace* and *the peaces*. It opens the perspective on human action within the relational wholeness, that I have called *transrational* (Dietrich, 2012, 2013).

Transcendence: Structuralism and Peace

The cries for peace probably have made the air heavy ever since human beings existed on Earth, but peace research as academic discipline gained its own rights only with the global consternation about the horror of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, that is, after World War II. In Europe, Johan Galtung (1930–2024) is usually

denominated 'father of peace studies', because in 1959 he founded the *Peace Research Institute of Oslo* (PRIO), which was the first academic institution for systematic research on peace, and in 1964 he created the *Journal of Peace Research*, the first academic periodical of this discipline (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2005, pp. 43–45).

The term *structural violence* that Galtung (1969, p. 169) once coined has been discussed so extensively that it is possible to presume that the debate is well known. However, as a starting point his famous definition be quoted once more:

Structural violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations. Peace is not only the absence of war, but the absence of structural violence.

One of Galtung's repeatedly proven talents was to mold complex topics or theories into simple forms. His definition of *structural violence* provided orientation and direction for European peace research. On the one hand, the concept of *structural violence* met powerfully the nerve of its time. On the other hand, it has been criticized for decades because it lifts the metaphysic notion of justice, that no human being can ever define exhaustively, to the core of its research interest, therefore making it *transcendental*. This implies the temptation to replace the love for God by the love for social justice and thus to worship it like a deity. Thereby *transcendental* dogmatism and methodology may return through the quasi backdoor into the principally *immanent* thought of Enlightenment.

In the course of its foundation, European peace research inherited a problem of interpretation by this regress to its Christian deep culture. Who, if not God, finally decides, and based on what criteria, whether *structural violence* is the case or not, whether justice is present or absent? The idea that *the science* could serve as contact point to a higher power beyond the human sphere is, in this context, as tempting as it is dangerous. *Sciencing* as an activity may reflect such questions. *The science* understood as such an absolute, singularetantic instance contradicts the enlightened self-concept of the permanently unfinished struggle for cognizance, and even worse, it inflates such science to a *transcendental* deity. Prominent authors such as William James, Karl Popper or Richard Rorty (1994, p. 185) to name a few, warned of such idealization.

The critique, consequently, came from those idealistically enlightened voices who asked for a binding definition of justice, neither rooted in the will of God, nor in the sense of a metaphysical truth, but based on a common resolution of human rationality. Galtung had to live with this critique until his postmodern

repositioning with the concept of *cultural violence* in the early 1990s, but it was raised even later (For example, Riekenberg, 2008, pp. 172–177).

The peace is a singular tantum in all modern European grammars and does not denote an essence in any of them. Galtung tried to deal with that by defining *positive* and *negative peace*, which gained global fame. Accordingly, *negative peace* is the absence of physical violence, and *positive peace* is the absence of *structural violence*, that is, injustice. As much as these categories were helpful for the analysis of peace imaginations they roamed within the traditional, *transcendental enframing*. This becomes obvious if one regards the accordance between Galtung's definition of *the peace* and the one offered by the popes John XXIII and Paul VI:

For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men (Paul VI, 2009, § 76).

Positive peace, not being an essence but only the absence of *structural violence*, transforms the interest of the transdiscipline peace research into a variable of its presumed opposite: violence. Calling *positive peace* an essence, not only an absence, considering and expressing it as a value per se without reference to its presumed opposite hence proves utmost impossible. What appeals simply to the one and only existing God in *transcendence* turns into a veritable definition problem in *immanence*.

One could argue that physical violence is such a distinct notion that *negative peace*, defined as its absence, can be unambiguously the case. There might be fair consensus on this if it comes to direct warfare, torture, murder or mutilation. However, the perception and definition of physical violence have changed remarkably since the 1960s regarding, for example, abortion, domestic violence, punishment in educational institutions and residential schools, physical, eventually sexual (#metoo) or racist (#blacklivesmatter) assault, climate issues (#fridaysforfuture), military drills, official acts of police and justice; public lockdowns like the ones in the context of COVID and so much more. *A peace* that has to negotiate how much of that has to be absent in order to be the case remains a delicately vague terminus.

This is not doubting Galtung's achievements. It is about the linguistic *enframing*, from which he could not escape in spite of his impressive multilingualism, because the semantic pattern is a common precondition of all modern languages of European origin.

Immanence: Systems Theories and Peace

While structuralism served as the epistemic entrance into peace research as a transdiscipline in Europe, General Systems Theory did the same in the USA. The term and the mode of thought came with Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1901–1972) during his two year stay at Stanford University in 1954/55. The first topic of the then-founded *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences* was the analysis and resolution of conflicts, which gave the direction for its further development.

With the aim of overcoming the isolation and specialization of academic disciplines they founded the trans-disciplinary *Society for General Systems Research*. The founding generation of peace studies in the USA varied from their European counterparts by rather relational-communitarian than individualistic-liberal concepts, which is partly explained by the approximation via General Systems Theory. From that natural rather than social scientific origin follows an *immanent* rather than *transcendental* view, though many of founding generation came from Christian peace churches such as the Quakers, the Mennonites or the Doukhobor.

Conflicts, according to them, reside in communication (Ruesch & Bateson, 1951). This sounds simple today, but it was revolutionary in its time, when they presumed that all elements of social systems, such as families, neighborhoods, companies, states, federations, unions, and the like, are permanently interconnected via processes of communication, wherein feedback loops would determine the condition and behavior of each individual element.

Consequently, a system is a wholeness of interacting elements, where the random change of just one element causes the change of all the others. They presumed that human behavior and condition to the extent of mental and somatic illness can only be understood by regarding the societal frame of reference. For peace studies this provided a crucial fundation for understanding human beings, relations, communication and conflict. Individual and collective wellbeing, peace, would result when the system communicated towards a balance of body, mind and society. If this balance gets permanently lost in one way or the other, physical and mental illness and interpersonal conflicts are the consequence.

The embedding of General Systems Theory into various scientific and ideological contexts resulted in a differentiation that recommends the use of the plural also in this case. Better do not speak of *the* systems theory but rather say *a* systems theory and explain in detail what you mean. In social sciences, systems are not empirically evident truths but models based on a series of presumptions on the systems' boundaries and their permeability. Since those can be rather deliberately

set, *a priori* presentation of the motivation, the perspective of modelling and the characteristics of presumptions are methodologically compulsory in this form of analysis.

In peace research, systems are usually imagined as open and holistic. Analyzing and operating in and with systems perceives *being immanent to existence* (Heidegger, 2010, p. 12). The beginnings of peace research coincide with the boom of broad scientific doubt in the *transcendental* world view of Plato and Descartes. Even more, those postmodern doubts only raised the call for a separate discipline researching peace as a basic human value, which should achieve new insights based on new paradigms. The *immanent* interpretation of General Systems Theory played a prominent role here.

In other words, since life is holistically designed as an open system of synergetic organizational units in material exchange with their *convirionment*, there is no *transcendental* beyond, no Kingdom of God, no paradise and no doomsday at the end of history. Therefore, there is no creator God hierarchically superior to the world. There is no creator behind creation. All individual beings are emanations, expressions of existence. Each synorganized organizational unit, each individual, in exchange of material with its *convirionment* is an expression of universal *existence*. Gilles Deleuze made this central topic of his postmodern philosophy and resumed the principle briefly in his very last writing (Deleuze, 2001, p. 27):

Immanence is not related to Some Thing as a unity superior to all things or to a Subject as an act that brings about a synthesis of things: it is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence. No more than the transcendental field is defined by consciousness can the plane of immanence be defined by a subject or an object that is able to contain it.

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else.

This liberates *peace* as a research topic from the stays of the *transcendent* singulartantum and opens the *immanent* space for individual and common, but not for universal and totalizing perceptions, truths and realities of *peaces*. The postmodern critique pointed out the fundamental difference between *transcendent* and *immanent* interpretations and applications of system theories, which was highly relevant for the further orientation of peace research.

The European and the American peace research did not develop independently despite the different starting points. The pioneer generation was also mobile, communicative, and eager to discuss, as exemplified by Kenneth

Boulding's *Twelve Friendly Quarrels with Johan Galtung* (Boulding, 1977, p. 75–86).

Among the important ambassadors between continents and approaches was Adam Curle, who had studied in Oxford and served in the British Army, before he directed humanitarian projects, founded the Harvard *Center for Studies in Education and Development* and finally, in 1973, was appointed the first full professor for peace research in Europe, more concretely at the University of Bradford (Woodhouse and Lederach, 2016).

With his appointment peace research was fully established and recognized as an academic discipline of its own rights in Europe. Curle instantly started to work on the profile of this new subject. He confined it from the only somewhat older International Relations, which has been founded after World War I, and more general, from Political Science. Of course, Curle also regarded their methodologies and state of the arts, but he stated that their canon has to be related and completed with those of at least ethnology and psychology. From Curle's minimum pre-requisites for self-aware peace research grew very fast the demand for a transdisciplinary endeavor that would know, master and apply as well as the methods and findings of law, literature and linguistics, philosophy, history, pedagogy, sociology, biology, economy, neuroscience, theatre, music, dance, sports and more (Mitchels, 2006, p. 22–38).

Along with this the question of the academic profile was raised. For Curle, a *multidisciplinary* patchwork of peace-relevant expertise was not enough. Neither the *interdisciplinary* cooperation of experts of neighboring subjects in common studies and projects. He defined peace research, and therefore, academic peace studies as perceiving and practically acting in a context that holistically combines methods, insights and potentials from as many disciplines as possible. The theme related with that assigned in Curle's work to psychology, more concretely to humanistic psychology, a prominent but not a sole importance (Curle 1990).

Like Freud in psychanalysis, the founding generation left a rich legacy of innovative methods and new ways of thinking, of handy formulations and suitable neologism for peace research, but they neglected the development of a special language of peace research. Therefore, the discipline finds itself linguistically in the subject-oriented tradition of idealistic political *sciencing*, and hence in an *enframing* that contradicts its very reason of being.

I propose, thus, that *sciencing of peaces* becomes aware of the colonizing purpose of subject-oriented grammar in all modern languages of European origin and turn therefore to activity- and proceeding-oriented speech. If one defines *peacing* like *sciencing* as an activity, it becomes obvious that its very nature is the deed as such. The noun and the subject as carriers of notion, whether in singular or

plural, consequently will be identified as an erroneous symbol of peace. It is neither about *study* nor about *studies*, but about *studying*, that is, neither about *peace* nor about *peaces*, but about *peacing*.

However, the grammars of modern European languages are not made for such activity- and proceeding-oriented speech. Their interpretative options are not systematically investigated. We do not know yet, what difference their consequent application would finally make in the development of theories and in practical conflict work. But is the investigation of yet unknown and testing the uncertain not the noble aim of all *sciencing*? Can *peacing* be the central theme and epistemic cornerstone of the sociolect of a *sciencing* that has to help itself more than half a century after its origins, maybe reluctantly but still, with the foreign language of its neighboring discipline?

Little Archeology of *the European Peace*

No one less than the author of the first grammar of a modern language in Europe, Elio Antonio de Nebrija, gave evidence of the colonial purpose of those rules of grammar. In the prologue to his text, addressed to the catholic queen Isabel of Castile in 1492, he praised his grammar. Its application could not result in anything different but *the flourishing of the art of peace under the rule of Castile*.² Explicitly he expressed his wish to make Castilian an instrument of empire:

*After Your Highness has subjected barbarous peoples and nations of outlandish tongues with conquest will come the need for them to accept the laws that the conqueror imposes on the conquered, and among them our language; with this work of mine, they will be able to learn it.*³

Since 1513, the Spanish conquerors called out the so-called *requerimiento* in the Castilian language, when they had first contact with indigenous groups. This was the demand for acceptance of *the art of the one peace* of their *transcendental* God

² *Después de la justicia y essecución de las leies: que nos aiuntan y hazen bivar igual mente en esta gran compañía que llamamos reino y república de Castilla: no queda ia otra cosa sino que florezcan las artes de la paz. Entre las primeras es aquella que nos enseña la lengua.* (ACAN, 2024)

³ *Que después que vuestra Alteza metiesse debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos bárbaros y naciones de peregrinas lenguas: y con el vencimiento aquellos ternían necessidad de recibir las leies: quel vencedor pone al vencido y con ellas nuestra lengua: entonces por esta mi Arte podrían venir en el conocimiento della como agora nos otros deprendemos el Arte de la Gramática latina para deprender el latín.* (ACAN, 2024)

in the form of the Christian religion and the recognition of the sovereignty of the Castilian queens and kings:

If you do so, you will do well, and that which you are obliged to do to their Highnesses, and we in their name shall receive you in all love and charity, and shall leave you, your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude [...]. But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.⁴

Since Nebrija considered grammar a powerful weapon and history confirmed his view, one has to ask for the mode of construction and the efficacy of such a weapon, because Nebrija did not invent something new. He just reinvented something already existing, the manner of speaking of the Castilian court, and he elevated it for compulsory and hence imperial deployment. The ingredients for that endeavor were available since antiquity.

Ever since Aristotle's *Organon*, European languages ascribe the quality of essence exclusively to the noun. Philosophizing, according to Aristotle, only begins with the possibility of evaluating a statement as correct or incorrect. A noun alone

⁴ *Si así lo hiciereis, haréis bien, y aquello que sois tenidos y obligados, y Sus Altezas y nos en su nombre, os recibiremos con todo amor y caridad, y os dejaremos vuestras mujeres e hijos y haciendas libres y sin servidumbre. [...]. Y si así no lo hiciereis o en ello maliciosamente pusiereis dilación, os certifico que con la ayuda de Dios nosotros entraremos poderosamente contra vosotros, y os haremos guerra por todas las partes y maneras que pudiéramos, y os sujetaremos al yugo y obediencia de la Iglesia y de Sus Majestades, y tomaremos vuestras personas y de vuestras mujeres e hijos y los haremos esclavos, y como tales los venderemos y dispondremos de ellos como Sus Majestades mandaren, y os tomaremos vuestros bienes, y os haremos todos los males y daños que pudiéramos, como a vasallos que no obedecen ni quieren recibir a su señor y le resisten y contradicen; y protestamos que las muertes y daños que de ello se siguiesen sea a vuestra culpa y no de Sus Majestades, ni nuestra, ni de estos caballeros que con nosotros vienen.* (BDCS, 2024)

does not provide that, but at least it denotes a meaning as such. Therefore, a sentence necessarily has to contain a noun in order to create a statement. From this follows the 'urge' of the ontological subject for the noun in the Indo-European linguistic usage. That is, saying something meaningful about *peace* requires the *enframing* of its essence in the form of a noun (Elberfeld, 2012, p. 200; Jaspers, 1955).

This is much more than the individual opinion of a substantial philosopher of antiquity. The specific parlance, in which they unfold, precondition the fundament of Aristotle's formal logics without alternative. Not only are the philosophical statements as such deep cultural property and self-conception of Europe, but also the *enframing* on which they are installed. All grammars that followed Nebrija build on this precondition.

While the noun is but a part of speech, the grammatical subject executes a function in a sentence. Not every noun is a subject. However, in modern European languages the subject appears as a noun, so much that the connection of grammatical and ontological subject has become almost a fundamental assumption of meaningful speech. That is, in all these languages the subject is almost always assumed as a person, a thing or a relation of both (Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 190-191).

A science of peace embedded into such speech necessarily has to make *the peace* an object that consequently has to be claimed, promoted, achieved, defended or made. The Ego is perceived as the responsible maker of *the peace*. The making legitimates itself by the absence of the singular-only constructed object of desire. Even this object made by a subject is linguistically constructed as a noun in order to designate its desired permanence – *the perpetual peace!* (Kant, 1986).

This connects with the ancient Greek legacy of personal pronouns and definite articles to figures of thought and expression of permanent identity as perpetrator-subjects in history. Ancient Greek was the only language in its orbit that used the definite but not the indefinite article. Only with the help of the definite article can one transfer sensual perception or abstract ideas into a metaphysical essence (Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 143–145). For example, only with the help of the definite article one can derive the metaphysical essence of *the beauty*, *the good* and *the true* from the aesthetic sensation that something is beautiful, from the ethical assessment that something is good or the rational conviction that something is true. The definite article fixes the ambiguity, sets it as an essence and transforms a variety of taken-for-true into *the* metaphysical truth. In this vein, the grammatical availability of the definite article as an assembly tool is the precondition of the semantic conceivability of *the peace*, which is by far not given in all languages.

By the same token, Plato could only install the anthropological dualism of the individual free soul as the organ of reason on this *enframing*. For the pre-

Socratic thinkers, *psychē* was spirit conditioned by the existence of a body, a vital soul that lives as long as the body breathes but without being identified with it (Galimberti, 2005, p.16).

However, Plato installed the soul individually, metaphysically and immortally. For him, it existed before and after the body and in nature while destiny was separated from it. Because of its individual immortality the soul is entitled to control the ephemeral body. According to Plato, the rational soul functions the best when not beclouded by hearing or seeing, neither by pain nor by lust, but when it is totally for itself and not connected with the surroundings.

Dia-bállein, diabolically separated from the body, this soul perceives itself as mere awareness of itself. Plato connects its destiny with its ethical decisions because this soul is able to grasp the metaphysical essences like *the* beauty, *the* good and *the* true (Plato, pp. 79–80, pp. 106–107). This diabolic imagination of an empire of spirit and love on the one hand and the empire of flesh and sin on the other finally defined history since the theology of the apostle Paul. In 1513, the Fifth Lateran Council codified the immortality of the individual soul as a tenet of faith (Galimberti 2005, pp. 26–53).

This individuality of the soul unfolds as a principle of occidental anthropology, of the Occident as *époque* and ideology. In this ideology notions determined by reason delimit the boundary of the soul and exclude the potential of any other sense. The soul not only contrasts the body, but the human being is identified with it and the body is reduced to a vehicle of temporary use.

The free soul constitutes the occidental Ego and thus demands grammars well into modernity in which the syntactic-formal subject is also ontological bearer of the statement. The subject becomes in the course of this development, also and precisely in the syntax of modern speech since Enlightenment, connected with the human as a self-ident person, an Ego or Self, which advances to the absolute subject of the expressed or thought and is able to act freely and self-empowered.

Transcendence subordinates this absolute subject to the question of correspondence between the mundane life and the laws the beyond, making *the* good and *the* evil nameable. Here, *the* good and *the* evil will not be negotiated relationally, and the world *is* not good or bad. *The* good and *the* bad make the Ego-ness of the subject essential before the metaphysical law of the beyond, before the will of the *transcendental* God.

The subject- and Ego-centered structure of speech and thought requires the need for accentuated personal and reflexive pronouns to facilitate everyday communication (Kordić, 1999, pp. 125–154; Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 78-79). As grammatical instruments they are not indispensable preconditions for a meaningful conversation but being charged by shortened and concealed imaginations of soul,

self and subject they solidify the subject-orientation of European speech. Nebrija encountered all of this already existing on the Court. His achievement lay in elevating the found linguistic instruments to tools of imperial domination.

All of that culminated in Descartes (Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 190-191). The renowned self-reflection of the Ego make the subject the focal point of European speech and thought. The subject, imagined as a person identical with itself, a Self, can act free and self-determined. This conscious, individual, perpetual and perceiving subject embraces everything existing (Elberfeld, 2012, pp.191).

Already in 1887, Friedrich Nietzsche argued enthusiastically against this temptation of language,

which understands, and understands wrongly, all working as conditioned by a worker, by a "subject." [...] But there is no such substratum, there is no "being" behind doing, working, becoming; "the doer" is a mere appanage to the action. The action is everything (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 27-28).

Disregarding such a call, there is a fair compulsion to the subject (soul) in European languages. Sentences without an explicit subject are almost always grammatically wrong. The nominative of the subject noun can at least be found by asking who or what, even if the subject is morphologically implicit in the verb form of the predicate. *The* peace that is not made by a maker or a group of makers can hardly be described in such speech. It can hardly be expressed.

Proceeding-Oriented Language Games

Language not only determines thought, as stated above, but it also advises ideas, or it even evokes them. Human speech is based on various and fairly incompatible deep structures. Languages that do not dispose of the described above grammatically standardizing body might deal with the perceived situationally, relationally and ambiguously (Snell, 1948, p. 208).

As early as 1906, Bertha von Suttner stated in her Nobel prize speech that one cannot simply desire or long for peace but that it must be done in order to be real (Von Suttner, 1906). For peace research, therefore, it might be refreshing to get, at least temporary, some distance from the almightiness of subject-oriented grammar and to engage in interpretations of proceeding-oriented speech. What is the consequence of asking for peace not as a noun but as a verb? *The* peace evoked by declarative sentences comes from another source than the one built in languages

that focus on proceedings, situations and relations and do not give that much prominence to the noun.

Elberfeld (2012, pp. 190–228) analyses in an exemplary, impressive and enlightening manner the respective sentence structures in Chinese and Japanese, and he warns against the reinterpretation of the different *enframing* in one's own categories. When reflecting and translating foreign languages this is an omnipresent temptation.

Buddhism, for example, detached itself during the axial age (Jaspers, 1955) spectacularly from the Indo-European tradition of Hinduism through the teachings of *anātman*. Meditative praxis analyzed and unveiled systematically the illusionary character of being to the extent of the insight that it is even and precisely the subject that is not of permanent substance. It is only an imagination that emanates from the dynamic interaction of various factors. In *anātman*, the ontological subject is realized as a proceeding, neither as an Ego nor as a soul or a Self. The subject cannot be decoded as something tangible or permanent if and because it unfolds only from the proceedings (Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 221–223). Thus, I am not, I happen!

Many non-European languages do not know the urge for the subject. If they use the verb as pivot point of expression, they tend to less declarative sentences and more focus on form of events, qualities of performance and relational constellations. They even know meaningful and correct sentences that consist only of verbs. They describe events and situations without the need for an operating subject. This subject is often a linguistic option. Its application is not mandatory for each expression.

However, even in modern European languages, one can find commonly used and correct sentence constructions with no clear denomination of the ontological subject. Some examples:

It became dark and cold.

There was lightning and thunder.

It is allowed to laugh.

There was much discussion.

In all these examples, the grammatical subject is *it* or *there*. The doer behind the deed is not immediately visible. In the first two examples, *it* or *there* stands for the vital energy of nature. In *transcendental* worldviews this is mostly ascribed to deities. When *it*, in this sense, flashes and thunders, *he* actually does it: Zeus, Jupiter, Yahweh, Thor, or another God thunders. *It* or *there* is but an acceptable substitute for the ontological subject. This grammatical observation unveils that the

psychology of the current debate on climate change might also be mixed with theological aspects, which cause some of the involved fervor and excitement.

Modern speech actually wants to get by without ultimate reference to God. Therefore, naming the doer behind the proceeding is not that easy in this example. Scientifically, thunder is a compression wave of condensed molecules that expand under the condition of high air humidity and can be perceived as a loud bang when breaking the sonic barrier. Causal but not responsible for this happening is the sudden temperature rise when a flash passes, which results for its part from the electrostatic charging of clouding water droplets. Thus, saying that *it thunders and flashes* is a colloquial simplification of a highly complex system process that does not indicate an individual originator of the phenomenon. Not a sane person would claim that the clouds, the water droplets, or the electrostatics purposely do flash and thunder.

The *it* of the third and fourth examples refer to an open group of people. The permission to laugh addresses a present group of natural persons. The passionate discussion characterizes a group of people in a specific temporal and spatial context. However, as networks of relationships these groups are open, neither identified nor limited. The *it* as a grammatical subject expresses a context that allows us to refrain from the exact definition of the ontological subject.

All these examples have in common that these sentences express what happens but not who does it. To emphasize the event as an event, no subject is necessary (Elberfeld, 2012, pp. 197-198). This becomes even clearer when a verb in substantivized form functions as the subject of a sentence:

Mediating of conflicts requires experience. In this case, the proceeding as such is the grammatical subject, while the ontological subject remains unnamed and exchangeable. The mediator behind the mediating is as irrelevant to the accuracy of the statement as the flash-maker behind the lightening flash.

This observation inevitably brings to mind the system theories' insight that each element of a system constantly influences the direction of the overall dynamics without ever being able to predict or even command them, while it finds itself permanently exposed to the effective power of the whole system.

Homeostasis does not circumscribe stagnation but the floating equilibrium around a pivot point, in which a system must never rest in order to sustain itself. In the flow of this system there are moments, relations and situations that expose some elements to pressure and stress. Individually they will perceive that as more or less comfortable, but *the* essential ideal condition beyond this happening would be nothing but the death of the system.

Modern European languages are characterized to a considerable extent by *transcendentally* designed individual subject nouns, but they do not exclude statements about *immanent* interdependencies completely. This allows for the conception and investigation of the dynamics of natural and social systems. From this follows the conscious perception of the floating dynamics of social realities that denominate, in their language games, situationally and relationally, more or less bearable contexts as sort of *peacing*. Precisely because the situations and relations in living systems have to change constantly the respective language games have to *enframe* the *peaces* as a plural if they are brought into the form of a noun at all. This may appear unbearable for the *transcendental* dogma, but I tried to demonstrate that it is not completely alien even to this *enframing*.

From all of that follows the possibility to talk in subject-less but still meaningful sentences of *peacing* alike snowing, raining, storming or laughing or discussing. Naming the grammatical subject is not necessary in natural and social systems because from the technical point of view it cannot be defined at all. Natural phenomena like raining, snowing, lightening, thundering, dawning, cooling are of an event character and do not allow the identification of an active or passive subject. These are processes that explain and satisfy themselves.

Peace research is usually about relations of social character. In social relations, it is possible that *it peaces* in subject-less or subject-open clauses because the focus of the research interest is rather on the quality of proceedings than on perpetual truths, causers or perpetrators. For the sake of clarity, subject-oriented grammars urge for the distinct denomination of the actively and passively involved in a happening, while proceeding-oriented speech rather expresses the phenomenon in subject-less clauses.

The proceeding-oriented research question for positive peace hence does not ask for an essence, and even less for an absence, but for a proceeding, a context that *peaces*. There are myriad situations and encounters in the world every day that would say, in a meaningful manner, that it *peaces* if the *enframing* only allowed it. However, since the subject-oriented syntax does not foresee such statement, the very perception has to be circumscribed as *it is peaceful*, *it prevails peace* or even *peace prevails*. The translation from proceeding-oriented grammar into subject-oriented demonstrates how this statement, so central to peace research, loses meaningful expression to the extent that the noun gains prominence until, in the end, one says that a singular entity, promoted to the subject, *prevails*. This is but a martial empty formula, which raises the question of what people who talk this way know about *peacing*.

Subject-oriented grammar creates a world of perpetrators and victims who have to justify their very existence through the activity of a metaphysic creator God.

The obvious presence and absence of their subjects who are linguistically constructed as everlasting entities require the imagination of an ephemeral world and an eternal beyond. The individual free souls of perpetrators and victims transcend the boundaries of perishability and eternity, according to this idea, without losing their subject character. This imagination on its part necessitates an explanatory narrative that constructs those souls and even the creator God himself as acting subjects of eternity, because this *enframing* does not know subject-less and still correct statements. The epistemological question within this *enframing* is: Who is responsible, merited or guilty?

Proceeding-oriented grammar can build subject-less statements correctly and therefore does not need transcendence, indeed it does not even permit it, because for this *enframing* everything that is happening, all contexts and relations of subjects are necessarily *immanent* to one undividable world. The obvious presence and absence of subjects in proceedings are not conceived as essential because everything and everybody emanates from this undivided world and consequently transforms, but nothing and nobody transcends into whatsoever beyond. The epistemological question within this *enframing* is: What has happened?

Conclusion: It Peaces!

Peacing, which does not come from mere demanding, is no object that could be held, aspired, achieved, defended or lost. Neither *the peace* nor *the peaces*. This suggests that a speech based on demanding is inappropriate in the context of *peacing*. Because nobody is able to satisfy such demand, the call for peace as such reinforces the condition that it seeks to overcome. It confirms the linguistic *enframing*, from which those forms arose.

Even if peace is not an essence but 'only' an activity, the preconditions and contexts, the attitudes and styles, the techniques and methods, the results and interpretations of this activity can be explored scientifically. One can research the logics and characteristics of this activity systematically, communicate the results intersubjectively and test them based on the methodology of various disciplines. If peace research understands itself in this manner, it naturally does not deal with a big absence, not with a singular-essence, not with ethical universalism, nor with a *transcendental* ideal. It does not stop with Wittgenstein's or Lyotard's

multitude of language games, but it turns towards the dynamics, relations and encounters of all beings, the proceedings in existence.

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