

Daniela Lehner

Peace in a Defutured World

Rethinking Ontology, Relationality and the Pluriversal Imagination

ABSTRACT

In these uncertain and violent times, I want to explore the deeper conditions that shape and limit our capacity to imagine, enact and live peace. Drawing on the concepts of defuturing, relationality and pluriversality, I argue that today's crises are not only multiple and complex, but also profoundly ontological. They are rooted in an ontology of separation that positions humans as autonomous and the world as a commodified resource. A different ontological grounding might be found in relationality and pluriversality. Relationality emerges as both an ethical orientation and a mode of being that foregrounds interdependence, care and co-creation. Pluriversality expands this by rejecting the logic of a single world and embracing the existence of many worlds, knowledges and ways of being. This shift requires not only conceptual rethinking but also a transformation in how we relate to the world and to one another. Peace cannot remain merely a normative ideal; it requires a more grounded, embodied and imaginative engagement. It is an ongoing and fragile practice, deeply entangled with the stories we live by and the futures we choose to nurture.

Frieden in einer defuturierten Welt. Ontologie, Relationalität und pluriversale Vorstellungskraft neu denken

In einer Zeit wachsender Unsicherheit und verschiedener Formen von Gewalt stellt sich die Frage, unter welchen Bedingungen Frieden noch vorstellbar, lebbar und erfahrbar ist. Ausgehend von den Konzepten des Defuturing, der Relatio-

nalität und der Pluriversalität argumentiere ich, dass die gegenwärtigen Krisen nicht nur vielfältig und komplex, sondern zutiefst ontologisch sind. Sie entspringen einer Ontologie der Trennung, die den Menschen als autonomes Subjekt positioniert und die Welt als verfügbare Ressource rahmt. Eine alternative ontologische Grundlage könnte sich in relationalen Weltverhältnissen zeigen, in denen Fürsorge, Interdependenz und Mitgestaltung nicht als Ausnahme, sondern als Voraussetzung gedacht werden. Pluriversalität erweitert dieses Denken, indem sie die Idee einer einzigen Welt zurückweist und die Ko-Existenz vieler Welten, Wissensformen und Lebensweisen anerkennt. Ein solcher Perspektivwechsel erfordert nicht nur begriffliche, sondern auch leibliche und zwischenmenschliche Transformationen. Frieden kann nicht bloß normatives Ideal bleiben. Er ist eine imperfekte, unabschließbare Praxis, die sich in den Geschichten entfaltet, die wir leben, und in den Zukünften, denen wir uns zuwenden.

| KEY WORDS

defuturing; pluriversality; relationality; peace education

Defuturing; Pluriversalität; Relationalität; Friedenserziehung

| BIOGRAPHY

Daniela Lehner is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Educational Research and Teacher Education at the University of Graz and a lecturer at the Center for Peace Research and Peace Education. Her research focuses on peace education as well as relational and pluriversal pedagogical approaches.

ORCID  0000-0002-1965-6291

Email: daniela.lehner@uni-graz.at

1 Introduction

In the current global context of war, climate change, economic inequality, and systemic racism, it is clear that we live amid interconnected crises. These crises are accompanied by a growing moral ambiguity about peace and violence. Particularly the neoliberal economic dimension, the commodification of the world and life itself, is often overlooked in its far-reaching impact. These crises are too often reduced to isolated symptoms or summarized in rather simplistic ways, which obscures their structural interconnectedness and the depth of their underlying causes. They are not discrete events, but manifestations of deeper structural and ontological conditions that call on us to fundamentally rethink the way we relate to the world and what peace could look like. When I use *we* and *us* in this text, I am aware of the danger of reproducing the universalizing tendencies of Western modernity. The *we* is not meant to be neutral but refers to those entangled in the dominant ontology of colonial modernity. At the same time, I hope that there can also be a pluriversal *we*, grounded in relational ethics and historical contexts, as well as multiple onto-epistemologies that coexist without subordination.

Discourses and realities are shifting, and even traditionally pacifist parties or circles now debate the legitimacy of military interventions. In these times of violence and uncertainties, we must not only ask what peace means or looks like, but also what kind of ontology sustains our capacity to imagine peace at all. We are certainly living in times of political and moral uncertainty. We can see how basic rights disappear and how things that we could not even have imagined a few years ago are becoming the new normal. Talking about, acting towards and educating about peace is ridiculed, while violence, militarization and readiness for war are established as the unquestioned norm.

The risk of reducing the world to one perspective

Peace is not only about treaties, diplomacy or international agreements. It begins in the ways we think, relate, know and imagine. It is about the stories we live by and the possibility of telling different ones. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) reminds us in her TED Talk that the danger of a single story lies in the risk of reducing the world to one perspective, one truth or one way of being. These single stories create the condi-

tions for separation, exclusion, hierarchy and violence. To think about peace is therefore also to resist the dominance of singular narratives and to open up space for multiple truths, voices and worlds. In this regard, it is important to clarify key terms used in this text, such as ‘ontology’, ‘defuturing’, ‘relationality’, and ‘pluriversality’. These terms refer to fundamental assumptions about the nature of being (ontology), the active undermining of the possibility of liveable futures (defuturing), the understanding of life as fundamentally interconnected (relationality) and the existence of multiple, coexisting worldviews and realities (pluriversality).

A different story of life and reality

Today’s challenges are not just about politics, economics, or morals but also about how we know the world and how we are and engage in the world. While the dominant paradigm is premised on the radical separation of subjects and objects, of selves from the environment, relationality and pluriversality offer a different story of life and reality, and therefore a different point of departure without the illusion of a final answer. In this paper, I will first explore the ontology of separation and how it defutures us, then consider relationality and pluriversality as openings toward new narratives and futures, not to provide final answers but to reclaim space for imaginations and possibilities.

2 Defuturing and the ontology of separation

Reading Arturo Escobar, Michal Osterweil and Kriti Sharma’s (2024) book *Relationality. An Emergent Politics of Life Beyond the Human*, I was deeply affected by the thought that we are being actively defutured. Drawing on the concept developed by design theorist Tony Fry (2020), defuturing refers to a mode of existence that systematically undermines the very possibility of a liveable future. It is a way of living that consumes not only material resources but also the imaginations and structures needed to sustain life across generations. Defuturing seems to be the trajectory of our times and means literally “the negation of world futures for us, and many of our unknowing non-human others” (Fry 2020, 10). In particular, defuturing is a condition of loss and the product of our ontologies of separation, of anthropocentrism and of a condition in which self-interest

is expressed through actions that have come to define our species and now turn back upon themselves (Fry 2020, 10). Defuturing is not a side effect of our current social inequalities, ecological destruction, or political conflict, but the underlying condition of modern existence.

Treating the world as a commodity

Fry (2020) and Escobar (2018) use ‘design’ as both an analytic and a critical lens, arguing that the contemporary world is designed in the service of capital. This economic logic, which treats the world as a commodity, has fundamentally shaped how we relate to each other and to the Earth. It not only structures our institutions and policies but also deeply informs our perceptions of value and life itself. The drive for accumulation and extraction, central to capitalist economies, reduces both human life and the natural world to resources for profit. Ailton Krenak, drawing on the experience of the Krenak people in Brazil, argues that since the beginning of the modern colonial project we have been submerged in a world “where order, progress, development, consumerism, and capitalism have taken our entire existence, leaving us only very partially alive, and in fact almost dead” (Krenak 2023, xii). Life and Earth have been made useful, measurable, exploitable and disposable within the logic of the colonial project. Mignolo (2011) emphasizes that capitalism is not separate from colonialism and constitutes an epistemological program that ranks life according to economic rationality.

Our difficulty to imagine other (more peaceful) futures is not accidental but relates to the very systems, epistemologies and material cultures that surround us. The enduring system of domination established during colonialism continues to structure and hegemonically organize economies, social relations and epistemologies, often in ways that remain unarticulated, unacknowledged and unrecognized by most people (cf. Murrey/Daley 2023). This multidimensional web of power includes the control of economy (labor, land, exploitation of nature, capital), control of authority (institutions, legal state, military), control of gender and sexuality (imposing Western norms), and control of knowledge and subjectivity (privileging Eurocentric ways of knowing and being, especially in education). These domains are racialized and persist through global capitalism, epistemic dominance and institutional structures that reproduce colonial logics (cf. Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2011).

At the core of this defutured condition lies an ontology of separation as a deeply embedded worldview, enacted and reproduced daily through our social institutions, economic systems and dominant epistemologies. Within this ontology, the human being is imagined as autonomous and self-contained, facing a world of objects that exist outside and apart from it. The natural world is seen either as a resource or threat, an object to be managed rather than a partner in co-existence (cf. Escobar 2018; Fry 2020; Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024). As Fry states,

“we need to remind ourselves that the future is never empty, never a blank space to be filled with the output of human activity. It is already colonized by what the past and present have sent to it. Without this comprehension, without an understanding of what is finite, what limits reign and what directions are already set in place, we have little knowledge of futures” (Fry 2020, 10).

This reflection highlights how futures are not neutral or untouched horizons but are already shaped and constrained by inherited structures and dominant paradigms.

The ontology of separation is not neutral, it is historically produced by colonial and capitalist modernity. It is shaped by the legacies of conquest, genocide, slavery and extractivism, framed as a civilizational project. This project privileges a singular, universalizing epistemology that denies relationality and justifies domination. We see it as the only way the world can be, but it is a historically produced hegemonic story that is maintained through power. The ontology of separation, understood as the systematic production of non-relational worlds, cannot be disentangled from the histories of colonialism, capitalism, slavery, and the genocides that accompanied them. This means that the very ways of being and knowing shaped by separation, which render subjects, communities, and ecologies as isolated or disconnected, are not neutral or accidental but were actively produced through colonial, capitalist, and racialized systems of domination. These processes separated people from their lands, disrupted ways of living and forms of community, and recast relations with the more-than-human world into logics of appropriation and exploitation. Through mechanisms of accumulation and the imposition of patriarchal and white supremacist structures, nonrelational ways of being, knowing and creating were systematically enforced, eroding the fabric of interconnected existence (cf. Maldonado-Torres 2006; Andreotti

2021; Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024, 4). The economic dimension is especially crucial. The commodification of land, labour and life itself has transformed the world into a marketplace governed by profit, efficiency, and extraction. This mode of production has not only generated immense inequality but has also eroded the imaginative and relational capacities needed for peaceful coexistence.

Even the future becomes an object to be managed and controlled.

Within this logic, even the future becomes an object to be managed and controlled rather than a space of possibilities. Additionally, the way we imagine the future as a narrative of linear progress is not neutral, but shaped by power structures and histories of exclusion. Future-making is very much tied to colonial modernity and its practices of control and universalization (cf. Tsing/Rosenberg/Harding/Masco 2005). To be defutured is not only about destroying life on Earth, but also about losing the capacity to imagine and enact different and diverse ways of being and knowing that are more about relationality, connection, care or co-creation. It is not only about environmental destruction, climate change or various forms of injustice, but also our loss of relational grounds that make collective life and hope possible. This ontology of separation places humans as autonomous individuals above or outside the webs of life in which we are, in fact, deeply entangled (cf. Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024, 4). This alienation is not merely physical but also spiritual, epistemological and emotional. Krenak (2020) dissects the myth of a single humanity as Eurocentric and universalized, built historically on the oppression and erasure of other ways of being. The *Humanity Club*, as he calls it, is a select group that dictates the narratives, economies and definitions of what is valuable, while the rest of the world is seen as sub-humanity, as is the case with Indigenous people. Yet, their counter-practices based on communal decision-making, reciprocity with land and holistic epistemologies offer examples of lived peace that diverge from state-centric or institutional notions. They are vital to the ongoing resistance against the homogenizing forces of colonial modernity and the continued expansion of our civilization of death. Death, of course, is part of our interconnected existence, but the civilization of death signifies something entirely different (cf. Krenak 2020).

3 Unstaging war and reclaiming imagination

Walter D. Mignolo (2011) sees us immersed in a civilization of death, which he describes like Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2008) as the dark underside of Western modernity with its promises of progress, reason and enlightenment. This death is not only physical but refers to centuries of genocides, slavery and imperial wars. The colonial matrix of power that underpins Western modernity defines who counts as fully human, who is entitled to knowledge and who is disposable. This is built on racism, patriarchy, epistemicide and capitalist extraction. It operates through a system of separations, human from human, human from nature, reason from emotion, mind from body, the West from the rest and through these separations, it legitimizes domination. The normalization of war and military interventions are consequences of this ontology, sustained by global media, political rhetoric, and educational institutions. Implementing change requires not only critique but transformation of the epistemic and affective structures through which war is made acceptable. The civilization of death is a form of world-making that erases, assimilates or marginalizes other ways of being, knowing and relating. It installs a singular epistemic code, which Mignolo (2011) calls the *Western code*, as the only valid framework of truth, development or governance. Everything else is either rendered invisible or subjected to a logic of correction, improvement or elimination. This system benefits only a small part of the global population and is perpetuated through the accumulation of wealth, knowledge, power and territory at the cost of human and more-than-human life. It is

“driven by economic and social success, paying enormous costs in wars, refugees, unemployed, new forms of slavery, rather than a civilization driven by the collective desire for well-being and the celebration of life in general, not human life as a singular privilege” (Mignolo 2011, 117).

War in both its visible and invisible forms has become an existential condition in these global dynamics. War is no longer an interruption to peace but a permanent state embedded in political, technological, environmental and epistemic systems: “war has become a permanent and omnipresent global condition of variable intensities from the subliminal to the intense” (Fry 2019, 11). Fry’s (2019) call for *unstaging war* does not suggest that we can end all violence but demands that we start disrupting

the normalization of war that renders violence thinkable, legitimate and even invisible.

Starting to disrupt the normalization of war

Dominant representations of war conceal its ontological, ecological and epistemological depth. *Unstaging* means unlearning the cultural norms, institutional logics and material conditions that make war appear natural, necessary or unavoidable and peace as utopian and naive. It also means exposing the way in which language, media and even peace discourse itself are often complicit in reproducing the logic of war. Transformation begins with how we see, name and relate to the world. War is not only a geopolitical phenomenon but an ontological orientation that can be unmade (cf. Fry 2019, 6–8). The loss of imaginations and futures is a loss of our values (cf. Fry 2019, 13). War defutures not only through violence and destruction but through making it harder to believe in the possibility of alternative and peaceful worlds. To unstage war we need to reclaim imagination and collective futuring as acts of resistance and peace as an ontological stance toward life. In this context, radical imagination becomes significant. This imagination is not concerned with improving existing systems through technical fixes or more sustainable innovations, rather it attempts to challenge the very foundations upon which our current systems are built on. It is not a question of what we can fix but what kinds of futures we are capable of imagining and bringing into being. Such imagination expands peace from an ideal or institutional goal into an everyday, creative and relational act of shaping plural and liveable worlds. Relationality is not simply the idea that everything is connected, but the recognition that we are constituted by our relations. We do not stand outside the world observing it — we are the world, shaping and being shaped by the countless webs of interdependence that make life possible. It is also a choice to reject the myth of the isolated individual and realize that we create the future together through our everyday practices of living, being and knowing. This may sound naive, as if calling for peace or peaceability even in times of threats and war, but it is a politically grounded invitation to confront the deep structures of disconnection that underlie our present crises and to begin weaving new, life-affirming stories (cf. Steiner 2022; Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024). Defuturing is not a destiny but the result of choices, systems and beliefs that are made and therefore can also be unmade. There are also a mul-

tiplicity and contingency of futures that are being enacted in everyday practices, artistic expressions, resistances and local imaginaries. These are not futures “to come” but futures that already live within the present (cf. Tsing/Rosenberg/Harding/Masco 2005).

Identifying and supporting the places where alternatives already exist

Therefore, cultivating radical imagination also means identifying and supporting the places where alternatives already exist, like subaltern groups or grassroots movements experimenting with relational and decolonial ways of being. In *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary* (2019), several examples show how radical imagination materializes through grassroots efforts. The concept of Buen Vivir, drawn from Andean Indigenous cosmologies, offers an alternative to Western development models by centering community well-being, ecological balance and reciprocity, resisting both extractivism and anthropocentrism (cf. Chuji/Rengifo/Gudynas 2019). The Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico, for example, has created autonomous zones governed collectively, grounded in indigenous worldviews and forms of justice that resist colonial state logic (cf. Leyva Solano 2019). In Bangladesh, the Nayakrishi Andolon (New Agriculture Movement) mobilizes peasant communities to reject industrial farming in favor of biodiversity-based agriculture, emphasizing a relationship with nature that is ethical, reciprocal and embedded in community (cf. Mazhar 2019). Similarly, the African philosophy of Ubuntu redefines personhood through interconnectedness and communal care “I am because we are” — challenging individualistic, Eurocentric epistemologies (cf. Le Grange 2019). In India, the evolving notion of Swaraj embodies self-rule not only in the political sense but also as ethical self-governance embedded in community and nature, reflecting deeply relational and anti-colonial values (cf. Shrivastava 2019).

4 Pluriversal futures and the ethics of relationality

Relationality is not merely a philosophical position but a lived worldview and an ontological orientation that sees all life as co-constituted, interdependent and emerging through interaction. Beings and phenomena are always already entangled, made through relationships and incapable of

existing in isolation. This worldview radically redefines what it means to be human, to act ethically and to engage in the making of a world. Relationality can open up practices of life and reopen the future as a mode of worlding that centers care, reciprocity and responsibility as ontological foundations. I am convinced that imagining and living peace requires building life on radical interdependence, not as an abstraction but as a daily practice grounded in the awareness that we are already entangled in each other's lives and wellbeing (cf. Škof 2015; Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024).

What if interdependence is not a metaphor but our reality?

Andrew Stone Porter (2021) extends this perspective by grounding relationality in cosmology. He draws on quantum theory and Albert Einstein's discovery that we are "not separate entities but are interdependent and relative to one another" (Porter 2021, 383) together with the contemporary scientific understanding of the cosmos, which shows that planets like ours and the carbon-based life forms who inhabit them were formed out of stardust from explosions that occurred billions of years ago. This invites us to rethink our place in the universe. What if interdependence is not a metaphor but our reality? This has deeply ethical implications because if we are entangled from the start, then responsibility and care are not optional but ontological necessities (cf. Porter 2021). We can reclaim the future as a space of co-creation in which many worldviews are possible and at the same time resist the normalization of violence (cf. Escobar/Osterweil/Sharma 2024).

Mignolo (2011) calls not for reform but for delinking as a movement toward other ways of knowing and being rooted in pluriversality, not to find a better version of modernity but to imagine and enact alternatives together. This means recovering silenced histories, valuing embodied and localized knowledges and building communal futures that center life (cf. Mignolo 2011). The vision and concept of the pluriverse is a critique of the universalist worldview or hegemonic ontologies imposed by colonial modernity. The pluriverse highlights the existence of multiple coexisting worlds instead of a single world. It is inspired by the cosmologies of Latin American political movements, especially the Zapatista notion of a world where many worlds fit. Engaging with the pluriverse also implies a commitment to create institutional and communal infrastruc-

tures that enable these worlds to thrive. This may involve supporting Indigenous land rights or community-based economies. This concept revolves around a multiplicity of worlds, rather than a multiplicity of perspectives on a single world. This means that various forms of life and world-making can exist side by side without subordination in favor of dominant logics of a certain kind of development, modernization or globalization. The pluriverse is based on relational ontologies rather than dualistic understandings of existence. There are territorially grounded visions of well-being that are not oriented toward an extractivist and homogenizing capitalist life but toward the reproduction of communal life, ecological integrity and autonomous self-organisation. The question is not only what exists but whose realities are legitimized or suppressed by dominant systems of knowledge and power. Engaging with the political and cultural struggles of communities seeking to enact their own autonomous realities is part of creating the pluriverse. Therefore, it is an ethical and political commitment to cultivate the conditions under which multiple worlds can coexist (cf. Escobar 2018; Steiner 2022; Fitzgerald 2023; Krohn/Pauls 2023).

A process of living well together in many worlds

In this sense, the pluriverse does not only represent an ontological critique of universalist modernity, but also opens up a political and ethical horizon that is profoundly relevant to how we think about peace and peaceful living. If peace is no longer seen as a fixed state to be achieved through institutional negotiation or normative frameworks, but rather as a process of living well together in many worlds, then the pluriversal imagination becomes indispensable. It invites us to think of peace not as singular or final, but as multiple, ongoing and deeply situated within the fabric of everyday life. Such a perspective resonates with approaches to peace that are attentive to context, grounded in relational ethics and open to the coexistence of diverse worldviews and ways of being (cf. Dietrich 2012; Wenders/Zournazi 2013; Steiner 2022; Azarmandi/Pauls 2024). Muñoz's (2006) concept of imperfect peace becomes particularly significant, reframing peace not as an unreachable perfection but as a lived and evolving process within human connections, emphasizing local circumstances and actions that promote peace on a smaller scale. Epistemologically, the concept of imperfection shifts us away from objective, fixed and dogmatic visions of peace and brings us closer to intersubjective,

conflicting, yet necessary understandings that remain open to debate, much like the subjects of perception themselves. Peace encompasses a wide range of small, specific and often competing or even contradictory lived experiences that all contribute to its broader meaning (cf. Muñoz 2006; Škof 2015). These multiple understandings suggest that conceptual unity may be less important than cultivating shared values across different contexts, highlighting the complexity of peace as a lived reality whose evolving nature is shaped by human motivations and societal structures (cf. Muñoz 2006; Williams/Bermeo 2020).

Unexpected alliances and the messy coexistence of human and more-than-human beings

Anna Tsing's (2015) reflections on "collaborative survival" in damaged landscapes provide an idea of what peace might mean in conditions of uncertainty and precarity. Her rejection of survival fantasies that rely on conquest and self-sufficiency challenges the dominant modern imaginary of the autonomous subject. She frames survival as always already relational, depending on forms of help, support and interspecies encounter. In her ethnographic journey following the matsutake mushroom through devastated landscapes, she asks what forms of life continue, adapt and even thrive when global systems of progress collapse. She describes these spaces not as voids, but as patchy ecologies that are zones of relational entanglement, uncertainty and renewal. Instead of assuming linear improvement or systemic coherence, life works in unexpected alliances and in the messy coexistence of human and more-than-human beings. Her work can be seen as a concrete manifestation of pluriversal imagination, grounded in localized resilience and humility toward the non-linear rhythms of life. What Tsing's (2015) book shows without ever mentioning peace, is what it means to take seriously the possibility that peace, like mushrooms in industrial ruins, might grow in places of breakdown not through missions to create order or a civilization but through relationality, care and attentiveness. This is the labour of staying with the trouble of difference, of becoming-with others in ways that interrupt purity and invite vulnerability. Peace does not require wholeness or consensus, but depends on the generative frictions of plural worlds that learn to live together without needing to become the same (Tsing 2015).

Just as radical imagination refuses to repair dominant systems and instead envisions world-making from relational groundings, Tsing's work

resists the paradigm of development and invites us to dwell in the precarity of the now. Futures can also be cultivated from below, in broken places. We have to question how futures are made, by whom and to what ends. Future is not a neutral terrain that simply unfolds but a political one because futures are designed, narrated, predicted, planned and governed through institutional, technological and scientific discourses. Especially future-oriented narratives often justify extractive economies, surveillance regimes, wars and interventions in the name of stability, civilization or peace while Indigenous and subaltern visions are delegitimized (cf. Tsing/Rosenberg/Harding/Masco 2005; Hussak 2023). Peace is inseparable from this politics of time. It is not a utopian state to be achieved but a fragile assemblage, a commitment to stay with the trouble of difference and to nurture worlds within worlds. As Tsing puts it, “to appreciate the patchy unpredictability associated with our current condition, we need to reopen our imaginations” (Tsing 2015, 5). Reopening imagination is not escapism but a political and ethical necessity in a defutured world.

5 Conclusion

My aim in this paper was to reflect on the idea that peace is not just a political goal or a moral ideal, but a matter of ontology, of how we exist in the world and with each other. If we are being actively defutured, then peace is not what comes after violent conflict, but what resists the very structures that inevitably produce violent conflict. It is a refusal to live by the logic of separation, domination and control. But this refusal must go beyond critique. It must become a practice. Approaching the world through relationality and pluriversality is not merely theoretical. It orients us to the texture of our relationships, to everyday ethical practices, and to the futures we embody in our gestures, habits, and stories. It also invites learning from the margins, dwelling with the fragility of difference, and honoring the multiple worlds already being lived and imagined. Implementing these ideas might require commitment at multiple levels: from personal choices and educational practices to political activism and community-building. Initiatives rooted in Indigenous knowledge, decolonial pedagogies, grassroots peacebuilding and ecological regenerations offer concrete pathways toward enacting a pluriversal peace. These practices remind us that transformation begins with relationships, with the

Earth, with others and with the stories we choose to live by. What would it mean to live as if peace were already among us, not as perfection or resolution, but as a fragile and situated weaving of care, memory, resistance and imagination? Perhaps the question is not whether peace is possible, but whether we are willing to reimagine ourselves in ways that make peace imaginable again. Peace is not a destination but a practice and a willingness to unlearn the violent ways and imaginations of being in the world. To live peace is to cultivate the courage to remain vulnerable in a world that is built on separation and control. It is to nurture relations that do not seek sameness, but interdependence. And maybe the most radical gesture we can make is to believe that other ways of being are not only possible, but already happening, especially in the margins, in forgotten practices, in the quiet resilience of those who continue to choose life, again and again.

References

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2009), The danger of a single story [Video]. TED Conferences, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWF2JBb1bvM> [06.04.2025].
- Andreotti, Vanessa de Oliveira (2021), Hospicing modernity. Facing humanity's wrongs and the implications for social activism, Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
- Azarmandi, Mahdis / Pauls, Christina (2024), Coloniality of peace, in: Virtual Encyclopaedia – Rewriting Peace and Conflict, <https://rewritingpeaceandconflict.net/2024/09/24/coloniality-of-peace/> [06.04.2025].
- Chuji, Mónica / Rengifo, Grimaldo / Gudynas, Eduardo (2019), Buen Vivir, in: Kothari, Ashish / Salleh, Ariel / Escobar, Arturo / Demaria, Federico / Acosta, Alberto (eds.), Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 111–114.
- Dietrich, Wolfgang (2012), Interpretations of peace in history and culture, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Escobar, Arturo (2018), Designs for the pluriverse. Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Escobar, Arturo / Osterweil, Michal / Sharma, Kriti (2024), Relationality. An Emergent Politics of Life Beyond the Human, London: Bloomsbury.
- Fitzgerald, Gemma (2023), Pluriversal peacebuilding, in: Virtual Encyclopaedia – Rewriting Peace and Conflict, <https://rewritingpeaceandconflict.net/2024/03/07/pluriversal-peacebuilding/> [06.04.2025].
- Fry, Tony (2019), Unstaging war, confronting conflict and peace, Cham: Springer.
- Fry, Tony (2020), Defuturing. A new design philosophy, London: Bloomsbury.
- Hussak, Melanie (2023), Exploring self-in-relation. UnDoing epistemic and ontological violence in the context of indigenous peace, *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik* 39, 1/2, 101–117.
- Krenak, Ailton (2020), Ideas to postpone the end of the world, Toronto: House of Anansi.
- Krenak, Ailton (2023), Life is not useful, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Krohn, Juliana/ Pauls, Christina (2023), Friedensbildung otherwise? Überlegungen zu einer dekolonial informierten Friedensbildung, *Zeitschrift für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* 12, 5–30.
- Le Grange, Lesley (2019), Ubuntu, in: Kothari, Ashish / Salleh, Ariel / Escobar, Arturo / Demaria, Federico / Acosta, Alberto (eds.), Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 323–326.
- Leyva Solano, Xochitl (2019), Zapatista Autonomy, in: Kothari, Ashish / Salleh, Ariel / Escobar, Arturo / Demaria, Federico / Acosta, Alberto (eds.), Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 335–338.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2006), The topology of being and the geopolitics of knowledge. Modernity, empire, coloniality, *City* 8, 1, 29–56.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2008), Against war. Views from the underside of modernity, Durham: Duke University Press.

- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson (2020), Notes on the coloniality of peace. Fondation Frantz Fanon, <https://fondation-frantzfanon.com/notes-on-the-coloniality> [06.04.2025].
- Mazhar, Farhad (2019), Nayakrishi Andolon, in: Kothari, Ashish / Salleh, Ariel / Escobar, Arturo / Demaria, Federico / Acosta, Alberto (eds.), *Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 247–250.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2011), *The darker side of Western modernity. Global futures, decolonial options*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Muñoz, Francisco, A. (2006), *La paz imperfecta*, Universidad de Granada.
- Murrey, Amber / Daley, Patricia (2023), *Learning disobedience. Decolonizing development studies*, London: Pluto Press.
- Porter, Andrew Stone (2021), Spookiness, sea sponges, stardust, and the sacred. Theological ethics and quantum entanglement, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49, 4, 612–639. DOI: 10.1111/jore.12353.
- Quijano, Anibal (2000), Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America, *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, 3, 533–580.
- Shrivastava, Aseem (2019), Prakritik Swaraj, in: Kothari, Ashish / Salleh, Ariel / Escobar, Arturo / Demaria, Federico / Acosta, Alberto (eds.), *Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 283–286.
- Škof, Lenart (2015), *Breath of proximity. Intersubjectivity, ethics and peace*, Cham: Springer.
- Steiner, Stephanie Marie Knox (2022), *Decolonial, Pluriversal, Vitality-Centered Pedagogies. (Re)Orienting Education Toward Serving Life*, Carpinteria: Pacifica Graduate Institute.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt (2015), *The mushroom at the end of the world. On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*, Princeton University Press.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt / Rosenberg, David / Harding, Sandra / Masco, Joseph (eds.) (2005), *Histories of the future*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wenders, Wim / Zournazi, Mary (2013), *Inventing peace a dialogue on perception*, London: I. B. Tauris.
- Williams, Hakim Mohandas Amani / Bermeo, Marie Jose (2020), A Decolonial Imperative. Pluriversal Rights Education, *International Journal of Human Rights Education* 4, 1, 1–33.