Embracing paradox and contradiction

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What is the value of embracing paradox and contradiction? Do the arts enhance our capacities to embrace the paradoxes inherent in seemingly contradictory phenomena? In what ways do discernment of the paradoxical nature of things and capacities to maneuver within paradoxical situations help us address complex global challenges?

Paradox can be defined in several ways. Definitions include: "a statement contrary to common belief….a statement self-contradictory in fact, and hence necessarily false, and finally …a statement that seems contradictory, unbelievable, or absurd, although it may be true in fact" (Ackermann, 1991). The last part of this definition is particularly important to note: paradoxes do not imply falsehoods – indeed they can be highly revelatory.

Thinkers from different eras and regions have identified paradox as an indicator of the limits of logical thought, and a pathway to discover new – possibly deeper – perspectives to a given question(Gaim & Wåhlin, 2016; Kimmel, 2000; Lederach, 2005; Lewis, 2000; McGilchrist, 2019). The presence of logical inconsistencies and opposing facts does not mean that only one of them may be true, or that the process by which one came to the paradox was faulty. Paradox often points to critical tensions between opposing poles (tradition/innovation, public/private, freedom/discipline, stability/change, etc.), and leads the way to discovering new levels of truth that can reconcile the tension, a new synthesis. In the words of John Paul Lederach, paradox "refers to something that is outside or beyond common belief as opposed to something that is an outright contradiction of what is perceived to be true. The concept of a paradox suggests that truth lies *in* but also *beyond* what is initially perceived. The gift of paradox provides an intriguing capacity: It holds together seemingly contradictory truths in order to locate a greater truth" (Lederach, 2005).

Embracing paradox and contradiction can lead to important insights and help navigate complex challenges. Paradoxes speak to incoherencies in logical systems, and – at a more macro level – to tensions in actions, behaviors, choices, and systems operating in society. Being familiar with paradox can make one more sensitive to the contradictions inherent in modern life: the more connected we are through media, the more isolated we can feel; the more we fear failure, the more likely we are to fail; the more monitored a society, the less safe it feels; higher defense budgets do not lead to greater security; economic growth can also lead to greater inequality; greater wealth often leads, paradoxically, to less satisfaction in life; more choice does not lead to greater happiness; populations in high-income countries have longer lifespans, but high rates of physical and mental illness.

Many of society's more complex challenges thus have to do with negotiating contradictions, and finding deeper or higher-level truths that reconcile the tension between poles. Carl Jung notes that "the greatest and most important problems of life are all in a certain sense insoluble. They must be so because they express the necessary polarity inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown"(Jung, 2020). This resonates with E F Schumacher's definition of divergent problems, which do not have a single solution, may involve different philosophical positions, and are typically concerned with *living*, dynamic systems. "Divergent problems cannot be killed…They can however be transcended" (Schumacher, 1995). Divergent problems are often compared to "wicked" and complex problems, and are examined in studies addressing different modern challenges, such as sustainability, education, or energy *(see memos on Rationality, Context, and Complexity)*. Transcendence is a term also used by management scientist Marianne W Lewis: she writes that "thinking paradoxically" is the capacity to learn from tension to make

major changes, breaking out of reinforcing cycles and assumptions to develop a more complex "repertoire of understandings and behaviors that better reflect…intricacies"(Lewis, 2000). In a related paper, management scientists Gaim and Wåhlin (2016) note how paradox can invite us to go beyond either-or thinking and look for synthesis at a higher level: "both-and thinking". Synthesis recognizes the "coexistence of competing demands", and through employing different "framing" and creativity, finds "a new perspective that eliminates the disparity" (Gaim & Wåhlin, 2016).

In the context of conflict resolution, John Paul Lederach cites the tension between justice and peace for example. "Justice says, "How are we going to make right what was wrong?" (… It) requires that wrongdoing be accounted for. Peace, on the other hand, is about reconstituting the well-being of the community in the form of harmonious, proper relationships. Again, these two are not easy to hold together …[yet these] … paradoxes are at the heart of reconciliation in its deepest sense "(Lederach, 2001).

What is the relationship between the arts and paradox? Arts engagement can raise sensitivity to contradictions and tensions, help represent them back to the world artistically, and employ creative thinking to find higher-level syntheses that transcend polarities. Artists can be highly sensitive to the contradictions and tensions that – when viewed through logical frameworks and concepts – are paradoxical. They can make us aware of the tensions that exist in paradoxical systems or situations, whether in Nature, in society, or within the individual. Being able to step out of the realm of logical reasoning for at least part of the process the artist can work with polarities and contradictions and represent them back to their audience creatively. To paraphrase Dagmar Reichert (see corresponding draft memo), paradox "only exists in the world of logic, it does not exist in the world of art". She finds that asking artists to discuss paradox can be "like asking a fish what it is like to learn how to swim" (Dagmar Reichert, personal communication, April 2021). Gaim and Wåhlin identify creativity and design thinking as being key to transcending the tensions inherent in paradoxical situations, helping find new higher-level forms of synthesis resolve them (Gaim & Wåhlin, 2016). The arts are also powerful ways of layering several meanings into a single unit, superimposing seemingly contradictory ideas, perspectives, or narratives which can be perceived in relation to one another. This multiplicity of perspectives and ways of sense-making is important to contend with paradox and transcend it. The poet Keats praised how the great achievements of artists like Shakespeare were by cultivating faculties that allowed them to work with "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Green, 1973).

Case study: Banksy

A contemporary artist whose work and life are associated with paradox and contradiction is UK-based Banksy. Despite being a world-famous and wealthy artist, his identity remains unknown and his attitude towards wealth and the arts industry is deeply critical. He showcases the artist's ability to sense tensions in society, and using his creative freedom (unrestricted by the rules of logic), brings them to life, highlighting the paradoxes and absurdities he sees in the world. He uses this skill to great effect in order to make powerful social commentaries. Figure 1 contains pictures of some of the works mentioned in this article, and Figure 2 contains two additional examples of social commentary employing paradox from the world of comics.

Banky's street graffiti famously underlines social tensions. For example, he made a mural of Steve Jobs as a refugee. It was painted in Calais, France, a major port of entry during the European "migrant crisis". Jobs, the creator of the world's most highly valued company, was also the son of a Syrian immigrant. In "Bench Birmingham" he filmed a bearded and bonneted homeless man getting ready to sleep on a street-side bench during the Christmas holidays. On the wall behind the bench, he painted a mural with reindeer and harnesses, making the overall scene reminiscent of Santa Claus and his sleigh. The song "I'll be home for Christmas" plays in the background to the short video.

In "Dismaland" Banksy curated an exhibition taking the form of a theme park – in his words, a "bemusement park" – which made powerful social commentary that significantly employed paradox and the absurd. It was intended to be a "theme park whose big theme is: theme parks should have bigger themes…"(Brown, 2015). Dismaland included a children's play area whose bright slides and seesaws were marred by the surrounding pollution; an Orca whale leaping out of a toilet, through a hoop, and into a miniature inflatable pool; attendants who wore pink uniforms and mickey mouse ears but looked depressed and did not help visitors; an advertisement for "pocket money loans for children" with a 5000% annual percentage rate stating "we'll help you buy the things you can't afford"; a toy boat with miniature figures of refugees on it, while others appeared to be floating dead on the water; and a public fountain coming out of the water canon on an armored police vehicle. The following video provides an overview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ig8Lnmoy_Gs (Purplex Marketing, 2015).

Concluding remarks

Embracing paradox and contradiction is an important ~~tool~~ capacity that can give insight on our inner and outer worlds, and help navigate complex challenges, revealing tensions in actions, behaviors, choices, and systems that exist at an individual and collective level. The arts involve and encourage sensitivities to tensions and polarities, and allow us to represent them symbolically, rendering their contradictory and paradoxical nature explicit. They can develop and layer multiple perspectives and ways of understanding, encouraging the kind of creative thinking needed to find a higher-level synthesis that transcends the polarities inherent in paradoxical systems. Thus, in their own way, the arts can help us contend with paradoxes, and cultivate the means by which to transcend them.

Figure 1: Select pictures of Banksy murals and Dismaland [1]

Figure 2: Comics illustrating contradictions[2]

Two comics illustrating i) the contradictions inherent in identity politics, and ii) how the oil and gas sector only supports climate change mitigation when it suffers the consequences – that too, in order to get back to a business that greatly contributes to climate change.

Author Biography

Ameer Shaheed is a researcher, project manager, and cultural actor. He combines a background in public health and international development with a lifelong passion for the arts. He is deeply intrigued by the role played by the arts and culture in the wider world, including how they can help address developmental, philosophical, and social concerns. His educational background is rooted in science, with a BSc in Biochemistry, an MSc in

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[2] Top (Chappatte, n.d.), bottom (Leunig, n.d.)

Environmental Engineering, and a PhD in Public Health (water, sanitation and hygiene). He grew up in the multicultural hub of Geneva, Switzerland, and has worked in 14 countries across Europe, Asia and Africa, primarily focusing on public health research and communications projects. He has maintained a keen interest in the arts, primarily as an event manager and musician. His events work spans different disciplines, including photography (e.g the African Photography Biennial in 2019) and music (e.g Bamako Jazz Festival 2019, Mali Afrobeat Festival 2018). He is now bridging his interests: working with the Geneva Water Hub on creative reflections around water and peace in the Sahel; writing articles for UNESCO's Art-Lab on cultural responses to humanitarian challenges; and collaborating with IMPACT on various research topics.

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A capacity of art: embracing paradox and contradiction

Dagmar Reichert

We often talk about the art's capacity of embracing the paradoxes and contradictions that "normal" or scientific reasoning is struggling with. The following chart is a collection of material that tries to explore the claim about such a potential of the arts. It is not a finished argument, and this is partly due to my limited capacity (another attempt would certainly be needed), but might in part also be due to an impossibility of precise reasoning about the arts.

The chart is in three columns. After a first section of quotes and their reformulations in all three columns (in italic), there is a path of thinking, a text, in the left column, and parallel to it in the middle column definitions of terms used in the text, and parallel to those again, there are commented references for these definitions in the right column.

Some of what the chart may show is that from a logical point of view, contradictions and paradoxes are different things. I also try to argue, that the human mind has different capacities, and arguing from a logical point of view is just one of them, and not necessarily one that is able to do justice to the arts.

Just now, in the last sentence, I wrote that "I try to argue that… arguing is not able to do justice…": Paradoxes draw our attention to the need to be aware of the position from which we relate to a phenomenon in the world, and to be aware of the capacity of the human mind we employ from this position. It is not enough to say that the arts are able to embrace paradox and contradiction (or are not able to do that). We need to consider where we stand when saying something like that, and on which of our mind's capacities we rely in doing that. And here it is that I would argue (from a logical point of view) that if the arts would (from a logical point of view) seem to have the ability to embrace paradox and contradiction, this is an ability that is completely irrelevant for the arts themselves, an ability that is "nothing", when relating to the world from the position of the arts. It is, as if you would ask a fish what it is like to learn how to swim. Or as if you would tell the fish that you appreciate its ability to swim. (From a logical point of view,) it would seem that the fish would not understand that. And that the fish is a fish, because it would not understand it.

Maybe I am wrong. So, may you take the following chart as material to work with and depart from.

"Often, what we seek to understand in the dialogue with victims of extreme violence, and also with perpetrators, is something that lies beyond understanding."	*Reformulated from a <u>logical</u> point of view…*	*From a <u>logical</u> point of view…*
	We want to understand what we know is impossible to understand.	*A contradiction.*

"Through our projects with refugees we want to strengthen their capacity of self-initiative."	*Take self-initiative!*	*A paradox.*
"They are stuck in seeing themselves as victims, because it gives them some power."	*Being powerless is being powerful?*	*A contradiction.*
"In order to heal from violence, people have to remember and reappraise their history, yet, they also have to go ahead and forget about the past."	*We should remember and we should forget.*	*A contradiction.*
"In our work for transitional justice we encourage people to speak about the unspeakable."		*A contradiction.*
"What they had experienced was impossible to share, and yet it was sharing and being in community they needed more than anything else."	*Speaking about what cannot be spoken about.*	
		No problem.
"As an organization from the Global North we benefit from the very structures of an economic exploitation of the South that our organization criticises."	*Not be being able to get what one would need.*	
"Sustainable conflict transformation requires legal justice, and a comprehensive disclosure of truth. But how do you get people to reveal the truth if they are in the position of defendants at court?"[3]	*You accept in order to criticise what you accept.*	*A paradox.*
		Partly in contradiction.

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[3] "You find very quickly, when you work with virtually any level of human conflict, (… that) it's not easy to connect the voice of mercy with the voice of truth. (…) In the context of conflict, the truth is oriented towards saying, "What actually did happen?" Whereas mercy is saying, "There has been failure, but we have to provide a new start." Mercy wants to permit relationships to move forward again, to find some way to bring redemption. So how one holds together at the same time an encounter between truth and mercy is one of the most difficult things that we face in working constructively with conflict. (…) The same is true with justice and peace. Justice says, "How are we going to make right what was wrong?" (… It) requires that wrongdoing be accounted for. Peace, on the other hand, is about reconstituting the well-being of the community in the form of harmonious, proper relationships. Again, these two are not easy to hold together. (… Yet) these were exactly the four things that we were trying to work on, but they were so hard to hold together. These **paradoxes** are at the heart of reconciliation in its deepest sense." J.P. Laederach In: https://www.baylor.edu/ifl/christianreflection/ForgivenessinterviewLederach.pdf

"The more I wanted to produce a particular result, the more I failed it."[4] *"We tried to reach the aim of promoting change by working without an aim."* *"In order to abolish the discrimination between the ethnic groups of Mingrelians and Abkhaz in the labour market we have set up a special program for Mingrelians."*	*To realise aims that are – at least partially – mutually exclusive* *If more, then less.* *You reach an aim if you don't want to reach an aim.* *To use a category in order to get rid of this very category. / To draw a distinction in order not to draw this distinction.*	*A paradox* *A paradox.* *A paradox.*
In everyday language It is hard to think about the long and difficult paths of individuals or societies from violent conflict to peaceful co-existence without employing terms like "paradox", "antinomy", "contradiction", dilemma, or "double-bind". And we often meet these terms in the discourse about conflict transformation or peacebuilding. In such descriptions of the paths towards peace, these terms are often used synonymously, describing a **tension** that is – at least in the first instance – difficult to get around or to resolve. That rather vague use of terms is usually sufficient. We understand what is meant, since: isn't it easy to imagine that situations of violent conflict just bring out more acutely what	By a "**tension**" we mean– first and foremost – a bodily sensation, the sensation of being pulled into two different directions at the same time. We metaphorically transfer this sensation to	eg.: In *The Moral Imagination, J.P.* Laederach goes back to the Greek etymology of "Paradox" and describes it as having the capacity of holding together "seemingly contradictory truths in order to locate a greater truth" (p.36). He speaks about the practice of **paradoxical curiosity** which "approaches social realities with an abiding respect for complexity, a refusal to fall prey to the pressures of forced dualistic categories of truth, and an

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[4] In *The Moral Imagination* John Paul Lederach describes a "**nagging paradox**" of his work in peace-building: "The more I wanted intentionally to produce a particular result, the more elusive it seemed to be; the more I let go and discovered the unexpected openings along the way, (…) the more progress was made. I found myself reflecting on the notion that my greatest contributions to peace-building did not seem to be those that emerged from (…) 'intentional purpose'. They were those that happened unexpectedly."

we feel is our basic human condition: that our existence unfolds in the inescapable tension between life and death, desire and impossibility, or confinement and infinity, and that this tension actually forms a source of energy for living.

In logical analysis

When we step back from every-day conversations and reflect about terms like "paradox", "antinomy", "contradiction", dilemma or "double-bind", we notice that they stem from the field of **logic**, from logically reviewing the meaning of sentences, acts of speech, or behaviour.

Logical analysis examines what we think, say, or do, depending on its formal quality, as rational or not. It's field of operation is that of **concepts**. Capturing the world in concepts, we do not only make it more general and easy to deal with, we also try to make sure that the things we think or talk about do not change while (or even because) we think or talk about them. In practical life, it would be difficult to communicate otherwise. The moments of standstill which concepts create may be extremely short, but for thinking and talking to get a grip on the river of life, this flow is frozen.

For thinking and talking (and the kind of knowledge based on it) to be useful in practice, logic formulates two further rules that, in their taken-for-grantedness, we usually don't notice any more: First, that in our thinking and in the way we talk about the world, something and its opposite cannot be the case at the same time. Contradiction is prohibited. And secondly, that in our thinking about the world there are just two possibilities: either something is the case, or it is not the case: the world is such that the only options are "yes", or "no" (and maybe different degrees of yes and no between them), but saying 'no' to a no always means saying yes.

describe the state of the mind, when having to decide between alternatives we cannot decide about.[1] It seems that "paradox", "antinomy", "contradiction", dilemma, or "double-bind" are first experienced as a need -, but also impossibility to decide, and thus as a tension.

Before considering the content of a thought or sentence, its **logic** refers to the form that has to be followed by it, if it wants to be understood as "making sense". This basic form is described by 3 ground rules (axioms).
The first axiom, the axiom of identity, describes what are the basic elements that the world of rational thinking and speaking consists of: it is the world of **concepts** (Begriffe). Concepts are stable thought- elements or words used in a fixed, defined way, that bring together and stand for many and manyfold experiences. They are abstractions from our sensory contact with the world, some of them perhaps also innate (a-priori).

Maybe the 3 axioms of logic can easily be understood when described as the three ground rules of a mapmaker who wants to draw your position on a map:

inquisitiveness about what may hold together seemingly contradictory social energies in a greater whole. (…) Paradoxical curiosity seeks something beyond what is visible, something that holds apparently contradictory and even violently opposed social energies together" (36).

[1] In the case of a tension, the transfer between body and mind is not just a metaphorical one of a term, but also one of direct effect, of the interrelation between mind and body.

This is a description of "classical" or "Aristotelian" logic, of its laws of thought. For a short description of the three axioms of Aristotelian logik, see: B. Russell (1912, Ch.VII)

The underlying ontology of the axiom of identity is a Parmenidian one, in which the basic element of the world (and hence of thought) is "being". This contrasts with an alternative ontology, a Heraclitan one, in which the basic element is

The extent to which we take these rules for granted is such that we can hardly imagine we could communicate anything meaningful about the world (what is the case, how should we act, what should we belief in) without it. And yet, the reign of logic and of the human **faculty of reason,** as a way of proceeding through argument (in different types of rationality) is not the only capacity of the mind. Other **capacities of the mind**, such as perceiving, imagining, or dreaming lie outside the realm of logic and do not have to obey to its laws. (This raises the question whether something that does not function according to the rules of logic can adequately be described by means of an "instrument" based on logic, i.e. by means of reasoning.)[5]

(2) Either you stand in this place, or you don't stand in this place, it cannot be both.
(1) You must not move while I draw where you stand!
(3) Either you stand in this place, or you don't stand in this place, there is no other possibility.

This, so called two-valued logic has no position for the thinking mind itself, ie. no place for the position from which the distinction between the two values is drawn.

The distinction between the human **faculty of reason** (Vernunft) and rationality (Verstand, often also translated as "faculty of understanding") goes back to I. Kant. Other authors use the terms differently, sometimes even as synonyms. W. Welsch (1995) takes up the Kantian distinction and emphasizes the "transversal" function of reason, i.e. its ability to differentiate and connect **different types of rationality**. This was already a function of reason in Kantian philosophy, namely to differentiate and connect three rationalities, a cognitive rationality, a moral-practical rationality, and an aesthetic rationality.

When describing the manifold **capacities of the mind,** different authors use different terms and

"becoming" (and stability is a result of movement).
For overview, see, eg.: J. Danaher (2004)

(2) Axiom of non-contradiction
(1) Axiom of identity
(3) Axiom of excluded third

In Western Philosophy G.W. Hegel challenged two-valued logic through the logic of dialectic: It allows for two forms of negation: the classical "no", that leads back to the "yes" and the negation of the duality between yes and no in the so called "Aufhebung" (sublation). This "challenge" is not declaring the two-valued logic as invalid, it is just extending it.
(For a philosophical classic on this, see eg. G. Günther, 1979)

G. Boehm: „Die Grenzen des Verstandes sind noch lange nicht diejenigen der Erfahrung." (1993, p.359) (transl. DR: The limits of rationality are still far from being those of experience.)

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[5] E.g.: Can a curve be adequately described by a series of (very small) straight lines (integral)? Can movement adequately be described by a succession of stills? Can social processes adequately be described in the language of physics? Can a work of art be adequately described by words? Can swimming be adequately described by movement outside of water?

	even among those, who reject a division between body and mind, there is no basic agreement about the meaning of- and distinction between faculties like imagination, perception, knowledge, reasoning, memory, intentionality, will, emotion, intuition, or instinct. (The language in which they write adds to the difficulty: e.g. the German term "Geist" and the English "mind" are also not completely synonymous.) One more note on the faculty of reason: In order for individual beings to live together in community, there has to be some **coordination**. For the source of this coordination, many – and in the realm of human societies, so called political – models exist, e.g. coordination may come from one source (eg. a binding religious script, a feudal ruler, …), or it may emerge from public debate (eg. open society, parliament…). In the latter case, the faculty of reason and its foundation in logic becomes the ultimate authority for determining what the community takes to be the case, what it considers as acceptable behaviour, and what it ultimately believes in. In such a community or society, the faculty of reason is most likely be seen as the most important capacity of the mind.	For an influential critique of the western distinction between body and mind, see: G. Ryle: The Concept of Mind. F. Nietzsche: …»Geist, Vernunft, Logik usw. (…) das gibt es alles nicht: es sind *fingierte Synthesen und Einheiten.» (*Nachgelassene Fragmente, NF-1887,11[145])) (transl. DR)
Going rough Let's stay in the field of logical analysis for a moment, because it is here, where terms like "contradiction", "paradox", "antinomy", or "double-bind" are at home. Let's try to describe what they mean.		

But first a warning: The terms we want to clarify do not and cannot have one precise, generally accepted meaning. Terms are tools. The terms we are interested in function as keystones in texts that respond to quite different questions, ones that vary fundamentally in horizon and abstraction. These factors shape the respective definition of their terms. So even within the clear and precise realm of logical analysis, what can be described as general is just very rough.

Let's start with the most simple (or so it seems):
The term "**dilemma**" characterises a situation: one in which we need to choose between alternatives that are all equally unacceptable.
A dilemma is not a matter of logic, of the structure of thinking, but comes from what we think about, from the alternatives we see. The chance for getting out of a dilemma lies in either rejecting the obligation to choose, or in inventing further alternatives. Art may help!

The term "**contradiction**" characterises a statement or proposition, that says something and, at the same time, says its complete opposite.
In the realm of logic, contradictions are not allowed. They violate its second axiom. Still, they may happen even in logic and shake it's solid foundation: something that leads us the terms "paradox" and "antinomy".

The term "**paradox**" differs from that of "contradiction", since it does not refer to a statement, but to a process or movement. The process is one of logically correct reasoning (from "if" to "then") that turns out to contradict itself. It sets out from some proposition and ends, through correct inference, at a proposition that contradicts the one started

Dilemma example: Should one negotiate with warlords (and thereby perhaps confirm their status) or refuse to talk with them (and risk a continuation of violence). The task: differentiate and multiply the alternatives.

Logical **contradiction** examples:
- The defendant tells the truth and lies.
- These refugees are powerless and powerful.
    Faced with such logically meaningless statements, our automatic reaction is to divide it into two moments or two aspects. We tend to make sense by considering it – not as a contradiction, but as useless generalisation (categorising).

"Dilemma" vs. "**conflict**": A conflict is a tension or contradiction between two alternatives, an apparent impossibility to reconcile them. It is not a dilemma. But a dilemma includes a conflict, namely that between having to choose and not seeing a choice that is acceptable.

The technical term "**proposition**" refers to a statement of which it is possible to say whether it is true or false.

out from: "If something is the case, then it is not the case." In the eyes of logic, such a sentence is meaningless.

Even if everyday conversations often use the term "**antinomy**" as a synonym of "paradox", most authors suggest to just use it for a very specific kind of paradoxes, namely for paradoxes occurring in the formal statements of mathematics or logical notations (and even for such paradoxes, some authors use "antinomy" only for their "crisis-producing kind").

Paul Watzlawick a.o. (1985, p.174) follow this suggestion, when they distinguish between three kinds of paradoxes:
1. antinomies,
2. semantic paradoxes (paradox definitions), and
3. pragmatic paradoxes (paradox requests for action).
This distinction runs parallel to the three dimensions of human communication described by the study of signs (semiotics), ie. roughly, its grammar, its meaning and its use. All these dimensions of communication can, of course, be analysed in terms of their logic, and in all of them there can be contradictions or even paradoxes.

The most famous example of a semantic paradox is the sentence "I am lying.", which, if true, is a lie, and if a lie, is true. In order to re-install reason into the self-referential form of such semantic paradoxes, logical analysis invented a further rule, namely the distinction between language and meta-language, with meta-language being the language for speaking about language. Thus, once phrased by means of quotation marks as "I say the sentence "I am lying."" the paradox is dissolved.

So, every paradox includes a contradiction, but not every contradiction comes from a paradox.

Logical **paradox** examples:
- If the defendant tells the truth, then he lies.
- If these refugees are powerless, then they are powerful.
> Faced with such logically meaningless statements, our automatic reaction – if we decide to take them seriously - is to **question** our initial understanding of the terms that are used. E.g. in this case the terms "truth" or lie", for example by thinking: "Maybe what is meant is that even our highest effort in trying to say what is true will still be insufficient in capturing the full or absolute truth." Usf.
> This is important, because it shows how paradoxes, together with an acceptance of logic, form a powerful source for learning or for change.

Semiotic analysis may be directed to the formal relation of signs in a sentence (syntactic dimension), the content or meaning of signs in a sentence (semantic dimension), or the meaning

Watzlawik a.o. (1985, p.171) define the paradox as a contradiction, that results by logical deduction from contradiction-free premises. (Transl. from: "ein Widerspruch, der sich durch folgerichtige Deduktion aus widerspruchsfreien Prämissen ergibt. ")
See also: W. Heitsch. 1976, p.293.

In his book "The ways of paradox" (1966) W. Quine proposes "to accept the ordinary, comprehensive use of "paradox", and then to distinguish from it the crisis-producing kind (that which compels revision of ingrained principles) by calling them antinomies"(1985, p.215 - transl. from German).
W. Stegmüller (1957, p.24) is wider in his use of the term: He defines "antinomy" as a logical statement that is both contradictory and provable. (Transl. from "eine logische Aussage, die sowohl kontradiktorisch als auch beweisbar ist"(1957, p.24). As such, logic considers it as meaningless.

Examples of a semantic contradiction:

A frequently occurring pragmatic paradox is, for example, the request "Be spontaneous! It is a request that demands something that contradicts what it would mean to obey to the request: If one follows it, one does not follow it, and if one refuses to follow it, one follows it.	of the sentence within the wider setting of a communication (pragmatic dimension).	- The blue sky was without any colour. - I will go yesterday.
The term "**double-bind**" was used in the 1950ies by G. Bateson and colleagues in socio-linguistic studies about the reasons for schizophrenia. Watzlawick a.o. (1985) take it up as something that is of the same structure as a pragmatic paradox: In a setting where one has no choice but to obey, an action is requested that refers to itself in such a way that it contradicts itself. An example they give is the untenable situation in which persecuted believers were put: They were forced to renounce their religion with an oath in which they had to invoke the god they were forced to renounce. In an inevitable situation they had, within a certain frame of reference (their religion) to say something about this frame of reference that negated this frame. Would such an oath be binding or not?	The distinction between **(object-)language and meta-language** to dissolve semantic paradoxes is a move that is similar to the theory of logical types that was introduced by B. Russell to dissolve a set-theoretical antinomy (syntax dimension). It would seem, that in both cases the occurrence of paradoxes was excluded by a rule that came from outside the respective dimension of analysis (and thus marked its limit). So, eg. to resolve semantic paradoxes, the rule to distinguish between object- and meta-level is one about the use of signs (pragmatic).	Example of a pragmatic contradiction: -In the context of being stung by mosquitos: "Oh, how I love these animals!" (Irony: we create meaning but not because we would be able to interpret what is said pragmatically. Rather, because we cannot interpret what is said, we interpret the gesture of saying it as irony.)
	Again, this paradox can be dissolved by a distinction between one setting of communication and a meta-communication about this setting in which the request would be rejected. This means a distinction between taking part in a social setting (or frame of reference) and changing it.	For a discussion of pragmatic paradoxes, see Watzlawick, a.o., 1985, p. 178ff.
		Example given in see Watzlawick, a.o., 1985, p. 186ff.

	Here "inevitable situation" means a situation, in which an escape from a frame of reference through meta-communication is impossible.	While by far not all dilemma situations are based on a double bind, a double bind is a situation of dilemma.
Conducting an argument Wanting to conduct an argument – like in this text - we need reasoning, and it is the realm of logic that we have to enter if we want to argue that **art** – or an aesthetic relationship to the world (to be more precise) – may have a particular strength when it comes to supporting a journey from war to peace, and if we want to be as precise as possible when trying to describe this strength. In this realm we have to distinguish and explain what we mean by the very different kinds of tension that lie in the paradox, the antinomy, the contradiction, the dilemma, or the double-bind, so that the capacity of art appears with clarity and distinction. Because we try to argue that one of the central capacities of the art is that it is able to embrace paradox and contradiction. Entering the realm of logical analysis in order to conduct this argument with clarity and precision, we meet a warning. It comes as a consequence of the understanding of "art" that our attempted argument starts out from: If "art" is seen as the realm of aesthetic practice, how could an explanation that is based on a logical, analytic, conceptual relation to its object ever do justice to a process that depends – at least to a significant part – on a completely different faculty of the mind? On a faculty that is not irrational, but extra-rational, maybe even in a highly sophisticated manner. At this point reason may offer us two choices: One is, "just stop. It is logically impossible to do justice to aesthetic practice in an argument based on logical analysis. Why don't	The term "**art**" is used here to refer to an aesthetic practice. This under-standing evades the separation of art and crafts, that is intrinsic to Western traditions, and also encompasses all activities commonly called artistic, from music, to literature, performance, film, etc. Considered as an aesthetic practice, art is an activity characterised by a specific relationship to the world, lead by a type of rationality that differs from scientific or technical rationalities: It operates on the level of sense-perception rather than just on that of conceptual notions, it brackets a functional relation to the world, and a sharp distance between the subject and object of experience. While it is important to discuss different conceptions of "art", and also our suggestion that the understanding we use here might be especially useful in the realm of peacebuilding, "art" as aesthetic practice is taken here as a presupposition for the text.	This, roughly is a common ground of many formulations of the specificity of the aesthetic relation to the world. It is particularly informed by the works of Th. Adorno (1973), M. Seel (2003), J. Küpper and Ch. Menke (2003), and Ch. Menke (1991, 2013). See also e.g. Reichert (2011).

you allow art or aesthetic practice to speak for itself, to show its potential?"
The other choice that reason offers us it is more "egocentric", still more interested in itself. It says: "Why don't you continue trying to do what logic says, is impossible! It may be a way to find out more – not only about journeys to peace, but also about contradictions, and perhaps about paradoxes, and antinomies and other "monsters"."

This is where I stand at the moment.
With a vague feeling that this might be the moment
when the living human being
("me" in this case)
enters the lifeless sphere of the logical realm.
By showing human infinity through reaching its limits, or
by recognising itself in a "but", in the insistence on the
*   logically impossible.*
And I have the feeling that these two options converge.
I have the feeling…
This is where I stand at the moment.

("Ethics and Aesthetics are one":)
If someone "could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. (…) This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. (…) But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it." (L. Wittgenstein, Lecture on Ethics)

Author Biography

Born in Vienna, studied Geography and Philosophy in Vienna, Toronto, Stockholm and Cambridge (Mag.phil., MA, phD, habil.) and followed an academic career as visiting professor at the University of Bologna, the University of Salzburg and ETH Zürich, and as a full professor for Cultural Geography at the University Kassel. She resigned from this University in 2006 to work as independent consultant and initiated artasfoundation the Swiss foundation for art in regions of conflict (www.artasfoundation.ch), where she currently serves as an Executive Director. Since 2001 Dagmar Reichert teaches theory at the Fine Arts Department of the Zürich University of the Arts. She lives and works in Zürich and Basel. Dagmar is partnering with IMPACT on different levels, including co-convening virtual Learning Excahnges, exploring possibilities for regional hubs.

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