

IIPT Occasional Paper No. 4 (March 2006)

TOURISM AND PEACE: THE TRAVELLER

by

Sashana Askjellerud*

Abstract

The paper looks at the impact of travel on the individual traveller, reporting on the experiences of a group of Norwegian university students undertaking study in Spain. It traces the stages through which they moved, from anxiety and misunderstanding to a higher level of cultural and self-awareness. The author notes the positive influence of requiring the visiting students to act in host community roles, and the discomfort involved in questioning one's established beliefs.

Published by the Global Educators' Network of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT)

Series Editor: Ian Kelly (iankelly@picknowl.com.au)

(The IIPT Occasional Papers have been developed by members of the IIPT Global Educators' Network as resource material for educators, students and operators seeking to encourage forms of tourism which can contribute to the objectives of the Institute. There are no copyright restrictions on the use of the materials, but acknowledgment of the source is appreciated.)

** Sashana Askjellerud was born in Norway. With a background in education and social work, she received her PhD with a thesis in 'Tourism and Conflict Transformation' at the University of Brighton, UK. Sashana has her own consultancy, 'Face It Now' (www.faceitnow.co.uk) in non-violent conflict transformation (NVCT). She is a visiting lecturer at the International Tourism Institute where she uses a pedagogical approach based on NVCT. She currently lives in the UK.*

TOURISM AND PEACE: THE TRAVELLER

Sashana Askjellerud

Introduction

The individual actors in tourism must be the centre of attention.

There are few people unable to comment on tourism. Most people may not have specific knowledge about the different types of tourism but this does not prevent them having personal opinions based on tourist and host experiences. Likewise, in daily conversation we tend to talk about 'peace' as if the meaning of that is common knowledge. However, are there also different types of peace which are in accordance with individual experiences?

The present paper explores the complexity involved in the concept of peace with the aim of reaching a consensus which is relevant to tourism but which is also generally applicable and recognises the needs and opinions of the individual actor in the global system. It is submitted that if a relationship between tourism and peace is to be identified and encouraged - and the individual actor is included in the context of peace - the individual actors in tourism must be the centre of attention.

The two entities, tourism and peace, have at least one thing in common. They are not worldwide phenomena. No matter how global the tourism industry claims to be, there are people who cannot afford to be tourists. With respect to global peace, the problem itself is the lack thereof. There is a major difference, however, between tourism development and that of peace. With respect to tourism, there is on-going dialogue between promoters and opponents.

However, while the vast majority of people would claim to be in favour of peace, it is commonly argued that 'others' do not behave in ways conducive to a particular image of peace.

This indicates that we operate with different perceptions of peace. And yet, the idea of global peace suggests that, somehow, the different perceptions of peace need to fit together. An example of the complexity of this occurs when nations at war have their separate notions of peace, tied to the right to a particular piece of land or to live one's life in accordance with one's culture. Individuals and nations donating aid to war-stricken countries may have a third idea of what peace means. As much as it is a benevolent idea that sharing would save the world from much of its misery, an immediate problem arises when this notion of peace needs to fit with the particular interests of different parties.

It appears that the pursuit of different types of peace is extremely difficult to implement in a way that would serve humanity as a whole. Is it possible to construct a theory which embraces the different views and can serve as a global representation? As authors on tourism and peace issues, we are obliged to clarify for the reader the peace concept on which our discussion is based. In this regard, and with the help of modern peace research and psychodynamic theories, the present paper explores the impact and role of internal conflict in the quest for peace (see also Askjellerud, 2003b).

While it seems obvious that peace research must be concerned with conflict, tourism researchers find themselves in the fortunate position of being able to view conflict as always involving the Other. Is it possible to understand conflict as structures of violence that can be separated from tourism? In spite of the attractiveness of this option and regardless of what peace is understood to be, conflicts do exist. And they do not vanish by not giving them attention.

The theoretical discussion in the present paper is illustrated with examples from research undertaken at the International Tourism Institute (ITI) - a Norwegian educational institute in Spain. The quotations and references used are insufficient to represent the complete research undertaken on 'Conflict transformation through tourism' (Askjellerud, 2003a) but are meant to help illustrate and augment the theories reviewed in the paper. The respondents were Norwegian students in their early twenties, doing a four-month course in tourism management and Spanish. The quotations are collected from their diaries, interviews before and after the course, and my interaction with them as their teacher.

While these young people were students, there was also a strong tourism factor involved as Spain has been for many years an attractive tourist destination for Norwegians. The course was organised to include typical tourist activities mixed with an academic approach, and could be labelled tourism education or educational tourism. In the context of the present paper these students may or may not be understood as tourists. Of primary importance, however, is that they were individual human beings experiencing the Other.

Peace - a complex concept

There seems to be no way that peace can be discussed without reference to conflict.

An author writing on business tourism would make sure the readers were aware of the meaning of the term 'business tourism'. The same concern about meaning ought to apply also to tourism writers discussing peace.

Is it appropriate to consider that there might be more than one type of peace? Do we not perceive that there is a general condition called 'peace' which everybody is entitled to experience? However, we recognise that in international and intercultural contexts peace might be associated with other concepts such as justice and human rights, while in community contexts religious and political freedom could be the issue. In the context of ourselves as individuals, we might be concerned about the right to education and work in the name of peace. As individuals we may also yearn for peace as opposed to conflict in our family and personal lives.

Another concern is that in peace discussions references to justice and human rights are often accompanied by threats of or commitment to violence, an approach which differs substantially from one committed to non-violence.

Perceptions of peace may be as varied as the needs of human beings. The reader needs to know how the author relates to the peace concept as seen from the point of view of, for example, the so-called terrorist. Or are terrorists and other people who

behave in ways which the author believes to be obstructing peace (and tourism) excluded from the debate? If anybody is excluded from a discussion on global peace, that seriously undermines the very notion of such peace. In the same global view, if the discussion is concerned with one aspect of peace, for example, intercultural understanding, how does this fit with other equally relevant concerns, such as peace through the right to work and education? Another question could be whether the author's peace concept relates to social and political systems only. If so, how does the system relate to individual actors?

Even from this limited list, it is clear that the risk of ambiguity is high when the reader is left to fill in the blanks with his or her own concepts. Additionally, it seems fair to argue that whether a debate is based on the notion of a global peace concept or whether one definition is selected at the cost of others, there is a requirement to explain and justify the choice.

Finally, whatever peace definition is chosen, how does the author relate to conflict? Is it contradictory or perhaps even irrelevant to discuss conflict when the issue is peace? According to modern peace research there seems to be no way that peace can be discussed without reference to conflict.

Issue in Focus: Tourism and Conflict*

One of the sadder realities of humankind is that national, racial, religious, ethnic and cultural differences have been the root cause of conflicts of one kind or another throughout the history of our civilization. It is equally sad that the intensity of such conflicts has not abated, despite the growth in knowledge and technological capabilities of the twenty-first century. ... Looking back on the last century of the second millennium, however, it would appear that many of the technological advances of this period have been channelled into increasingly large-scale forms of destruction, rather than towards more constructive ends. Thus, ... ethnic hatreds are unleashed with such a force that ethnic cleansing has become a term as often present in the human consciousness as the global village which symbolises world peace, harmony and mutual interdependence (Tomljenovic and Faulkner, 2000: 18).

The authors note that the same technological advances have contributed to the growth in international tourism but question the claim that the interactions thus generated will enable people from different cultures to better understand each other and themselves, and thereby become more tolerant of diversity.

The scepticism with which this claim is received dates from the early 1960s when it was regarded by one commentator as naïve, and it has since been suggested by various others that

- an increase in such contacts may intensify and perpetuate misconceptions about foreigners;
- the presentation of tourism as a 'peace industry' is a ploy to disguise its true impact;
- the proposition that travel improves understanding is a Western, rather than universal perception; and

- attitude change at the individual level has little impact on policy development at the national level.

It is noted that the nature of most tourism-host contacts - shallow and short-term, biased by promotional material, restricted by enclave conditions, involving status and language differences, and displaced by a tourist focus on enjoyment and formation of in-group relationships - is not conducive to enhanced understanding and elimination of prejudice. On the other hand, it is argued that these views are based on the travel experiences offered by mass tourism, and that there are types of host-traveller contact which do make the desired contributions. These include, for example, student and cultural exchange programs which bring together people with common goals and shared interests. It is recognised that participants in these may be already predisposed to learning about other cultures and lifestyles.

In a review of studies reported in tourism literature, the authors confirm the inconclusiveness of the evidence, noting both an increase in negative views where the people involved were traditionally hostile (eg, Greeks visiting Turkey), but more positive impacts where such hostilities were not present.

Two studies were analysed in greater detail. The first involved three groups of Croatian high school students who each spent seven days in one of three European countries - Greece, Spain and the Czech Republic. Pre- and post-trip surveys were conducted. Survey responses indicated that the students were more interested in socialising and sightseeing than in acquiring more understanding of the countries visited. However, it was noted that the greater the number of contacts with host country residents, the more positive the change in attitude. There were negative responses to perceived unprofessionalism in the delivery of some services, and these appeared to reinforce pre-existing stereotypes.

The second study examined Australian students undertaking a four-week educational tour of Japan. Participants were generally well informed about the host country and its culture, and keen to exercise their language skills. Home stays and travel by public transport were elements of the tour. The students approached the trip with generally favourable attitudes towards the Japanese, but there was a small positive movement in these. However, pre-existing stereotypes remained largely unchanged. An important finding was the significant decline in intercultural anxiety after the trip.

Conclusions of value to the tourism industry are necessarily speculative, but the authors suggest that:

- tourism has the potential to promote and hinder intercultural understanding;
- the quality of services provided is a major factor in the development of attitudes towards the host community; and
- care should be taken to ensure that visitor-host contacts do not contribute to discomfort and anxieties.

* Based on Tomljenovic, R. and Faulkner, B. (2000), *Tourism and World Peace: A Conundrum for the Twenty-first Century*, in *Tourism in the Twenty-first Century: Reflections on Experience*, eds B. Faulkner, G. Moscardo and E. Laws, London: Conundrum.

Conflict - an element of reality

Conflicts do not exist separately from the people who experience them.

Modern peace scholars suggest that conflict somehow forms part of peace; not in the sense that peace could be the outcome of conflict but that conflict could be transformed in a non-violent way and therefore represent the development of peace (Galtung, 1996; Saunders, 2001; Väyrynen, 1991; Wallensteen, 1991).

With respect to cultural conflict, Galtung (1996) argues that this kind of transformation must take place in religion, law and ideology, language, art and science, in schools, universities and the media. He adds (p 32) that, 'In the inner space of the Self, this means to open for several human inclinations and capabilities, not repressing'. It is clear that conflicts do not exist separately from the people who experience them, and this section explores the nature and role of the individual conflict experience.

With regard to Galtung's argument, Fromm (1973) believes that ignored conflicts tend to reappear in other contexts that are not related to the conflict's original cause (see also Bunkholdt, 1996). With the focus on the individual human being, it is illustrative that Kofi Annan (2001:2), currently Secretary General of the United Nations, and Nobel Prize Laureate, holds the view that 'A campaign of ethnic cleansing begins with one neighbour turning on another', and 'What begins with the failure to uphold the dignity of one life, all too often ends with a calamity for entire nations'.

Kofi Annan indicates that conflicts, or differences, are not unchanging conditions but may escalate and grow into large-scale calamities. He also points to the way in which the individual is linked to social systems. Samuels (2001:23) supports this proposal by submitting that there is a link between 'the internal life of the emotions and political and social issues'. He adds that if this link were properly explored, it 'would contribute to the transformation of society for which so many yearn'.

Capra's (1982) hypothesis of how the process of interaction between individual actors and systems is fostered, throws additional light on the power of the individual human being. His view is that a system is formed by two tendencies which are at the same time opposite and complementary. From the point of view of the individual these are the desire to be integrated as a part of the whole while preserving one's individuality through self-assertion. When the friction between the opposite and complementary tendencies is perceived to be intolerable, the process may be halted and redefined as conflict, as in the case of the First Respondent quoted below. The Respondent was about to leave Norway to attend a tourism course in Spain.

I have to admit that I was very nervous before I left. One hour before I had to leave I was sitting in my bed, crying. And, of course, I started quarrelling with my dad - because I was so scared. I shouted at him and he shouted back ... he left me in anger, and both mum and I were crying and it all ended in a total mess. Very embarrassing ...

*It's the least of my problems to get to know people, I know that,
but it also gives me angst - I am not as strong as people think.*
(First Respondent)

To the First Respondent, Spain, or the imagined Other, had become a threat even though the geographical location was far away. The quotation demonstrates that the Respondent's conflict is not an isolated problem which can be understood separately from the process by which it emerges. Indeed, it appears that the problem is 'a manifestation of an underlying process' (Capra, 1982: 362; see also Galtung, 1996).

In this Respondent's case the process involved belief in his/her ability to integrate on a systems level, and a level of angst which had the opposite effect. The Respondent claimed there would be no problem in getting to know new people, but at the same time experienced an emotional reaction which differed from that judgment. Haddon (2002:4) argues that 'One of the most common blocks to emotional learning is anxiety' and Jandt (1998) claims that anxiety is the number one barrier to cross-cultural communication. Maslow (1999) suggests that the person has a tendency to be afraid of knowledge that could make her or him despise Self or feel inferior. Unfortunately, as Fromm (1973: 268) asserts, 'One of the most effective ways of getting out of anxiety is to become aggressive'.

It would be wrong to claim that the conflict experienced by the First Respondent, was not a part of her or his reality. However, is such a conflict relevant to the peace issue?

Psychologists have suggested that 'no other single phenomenon plays as broad and significant a role in human development as conflict is thought to' (Uhlinger, Shantz and Hartup, 1992:2; see also Dunn and Slomkowski, 1992). May (1972) concludes that the human being needs conflicts in order to experience personal achievements. May argues that every person has a certain power that needs to be actualised in order to turn possible violence to constructive use. In other words, May acknowledges a power which is potentially both constructive and destructive - or complementary and opposite - as argued by Capra.

If conflict does play a significant role in human development, it would be irresponsible to ignore how this may relate to the promotion of peace. Besides, conflicts do not vanish by not giving them attention. As noted above, there are peace researchers who suggest that conflicts can be transformed in such a way that they stimulate the process of peace.

Conflict between intellect and emotions

**Real understanding is possible only
when both thinking and feeling are
involved.**

One of the reasons the Norwegian students chose to do their tourism course in Spain, was the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of a different culture. The following quotation serves to represent them all.

*It is very important to tolerate each other. Only by understanding
others are we able to accept other cultures as our own.* (Second

Respondent)

On the basis of such a statement, it could be assumed that travel encourages peace, goodwill, and international understanding. However, this idea could hardly have been more irrelevant than it was during the first week of the Norwegian - Spanish encounter. The students' focus was more on themselves and their emotional experiences than on their environment. After one week the same student recorded the following:

Where is the moral? I am very irritated, it is 1.30 Sunday morning and I cannot sleep because the hotel director and his friends are shouting and singing in the reception area. Does he not know that one bad experience needs twelve good ones to be equalled, and does he not realise that we are his source of income? (Second Respondent)

To clarify the contradiction between the Respondent's two statements, it needs to be said that the night life in the area of the institute would rarely start before 1.30 am. The 'shouting and singing' could be the student's distorted definition of the 'flamenco mood' or simply a description of the Spanish way of communicating (loud) as opposed to the Norwegian way. The director reportedly apologised for the noise, but that information was given to me by somebody else. Three weeks later the same student wrote,

I was a bit ashamed to read what I wrote [the above] but I decided not to tear out the page. (Second Respondent)

The quotations show that not only are there gaps between theoretical knowledge and emotional experiences; there is also an element of not being able to form a theory about one's own behaviour. In other words, the aspect of not understanding one's Self was emerging. Raising the question of understanding the Other, then, seemed too much to ask.

From a psychological point of view, Goleman (1996: 42-44) claims that real understanding is possible only when both thinking and feeling are involved. This claim suggests it may well be possible to *intellectually* appreciate that it is important to value other cultures as much as one's own. At the same time, for the real understanding of it, *feelings* must somehow be involved. This view is supported by a number of other authors, such as Banks (1997); Bentley (1998); Gyatso (1999); Handy (1997); Maslow (1971); Orbach (2001); Mindell (1995); Moore (1998); Naess (2002); Samuels (2001); Spinoza (1993) and Williams (1998). The reason the student above felt ashamed was possibly that the immediate emotional reaction had been replaced by some degree of understanding. It is worth noticing that the conflict and the emotional upset preceded that realisation.

Peace researcher, Galtung (1996: 273) holds that the reason why the constructive force of a conflict should be acknowledged, 'is not only to avoid violence, to abstain from the irreversible, but to increase the entropy by emerging from that phase of conflict with more mature selves and more mature social formations around' (see also Naess, 2002). As indicated above, conflict transformation differs from the traditional conflict resolution. A resolution can be made by people who are not directly involved in the conflict. A transformation, however, involves both the intellect and the emotions and, therefore,

can be performed only by the person or people who experience the conflict. Mindell (1995) describes the experience of conflict transformation as 'sitting in the fire'. The expression indicates that the experience is not necessarily pleasant.

Conflict transformation

A confrontation with one's own emotions may transform the very structures of thinking.

In their encounter with the Spanish way of life, the Norwegian students were to experience several incidences of 'sitting in the fire'. Initially, though, 'cultural difference' seemed to be an abstract concept that could be safely discussed. Among the discussed cultural differences were typical tourist attractive peculiarities such as flamenco, bull fighting and the 'mañana syndrome'. A frequent reaction to these was that they were something to laugh or to commonly disagree about. As part of the course, the students conducted research on the more collectivistic way of life of the place they were visiting, as opposed to the individualistic tendencies of Norwegians (see Gudykunst, 1998). It is clear that all were capable of having a theoretical discussion about the cultural differences. However, this *knowledge* had little or no impact on the emotions of those students who felt uncomfortable in the Spanish context. Some of them would become visibly emotional over a topic such as bull fighting,

It was awful to get to know what bull fighting actually is. I don't like that they play with the animals, for it is a play with the bull and the horse that ends with death. It's actually quite sick! As a matter of fact, it is animal abuse. (First Respondent)

That kind of indignation, however, would easily give way to personal issues such as the problems caused by not having a table lamp in their hotel room, dislike of the Spanish food and a conviction that it is unhealthy to have scanty breakfasts and late dinners. This type of topic would invariably pop up, seemingly out of context. Nonetheless, on further examination, their reactions were understandable when seen in relation to their cultural background and personal agendas.

To enjoy a late dinner is the norm in the south of Spain. In Norwegian homes dinner time will normally be in the late afternoon, immediately after working hours and they may have a snack or a light supper later in the evening. The common understanding among the Norwegian people is that it is unhealthy to go to bed right after a heavy meal. The Spanish way of having little or no breakfast totally goes against what Norwegians are brought up to believe is healthy: a big breakfast which may contain wholemeal bread, eggs, cereals, fruit, cheese, tomatoes, cucumbers, jam - and other types of bread spreads based on meat and fish - and milk, juice, coffee or tea. The Norwegian attitude to the day's first meal is well represented in Marcussen-Kielland's claim (1988: 60, translated) that 'Never a day without breakfast Research has shown that both children and adults who eat a proper breakfast suffer fewer traffic accidents and produce better results in school and at work'.

In spite of the students coming from a country with a variety of ethnic restaurants providing a wide array of non-Norwegian meals, the experience of foreign food stirred up deep rooted emotions of belonging and identity. In this scenario, their ideas - that it is 'very important to tolerate each other ' and that 'by understanding others we are able to accept other cultures as our own' - remained no more than ideas.

The students' standpoints were roughly divisible into three separate categories - those who maintained they needed Norwegian food to be able to study, those who wanted Spanish food because the course was held in Spain, and those who seemed to be able to adjust to whatever they were faced with. An approach which enabled them to leave their theories behind for a while altered the rather aggressive scenario remarkably quickly.

The groups were asked to change roles with their 'opponents'. The assignment was not only to defend the views of the Other but to act the Other in the best possible way. The task was given in the context of studying cross-cultural communication, and not as an obvious and isolated attempt to solve a particular conflict. The element of surprise probably kept the anxiety level low and there was no time to ponder one's own arguments. They were given thirty minutes to prepare for the debate.

The actual debate lasted about ten minutes. The role play then dissolved into laughter as an expression of relief. One of the most Self-defensive among the students immediately exclaimed,

That was truly an a-ha experience! ... When I was sitting there trying to find arguments against myself I could see that some of my other arguments were ... not ... actually ... justified. (Second Respondent)

The Self awareness demonstrated by this student - and the courage to admit to faults - had a chain effect on others in the room who then also dared to reveal other sides of themselves, as the following student did.

I feel everybody thinks that I have got such a damned strong self confidence - sorry for the language - but I am not as brave as people think. (Third Respondent)

The quotations demonstrate how a confrontation with one's own emotions may transform the very structures of thinking. The nature of this type of change can be found in Chaos Theory. The key issue in transformation is chaos - not because transformation creates chaos - but because chaos is an integral element of transformation. Chaos represents instability, while 'stable systems resist change' (Kiel, 1994:140).

The events described above signified a turning point in the attitude of some of the students. Communication inside the group was considerably improved. Importantly, their attitudinal changes did not include changes in their food preferences. Their original likes and dislikes with respect to food remained, though some of them probably tried out new dishes during the course. The transformation revealed itself in their newly created ability to relate to their food problem without being aggressive and defensive - or at least less so. In Goleman's (1996) terms it could be argued that by facing the conflict, the students' emotional intelligence had been strengthened. According to Galtung's (1996) theory,

this growth in emotional strength is an act of peace because it occurred by transforming conflict in a non-violent and constructive way.

Another example of sudden Self awareness and its impact on thinking was demonstrated by the Fourth Respondent. The Norwegian students were Protestant, unacquainted with the Catholic Church, and the respondent's task was to explore Catholic rituals. The respondent was not familiar with the idea of actually doing anything in church other than sitting down and listening to a sermon or being an admiring tourist. The respondent appeared to be disturbed and stated:

... that was a very strong experience. I lit a candle in front of the Virgin Maria ... but I could not do more ... I felt like crying. (Fourth Respondent)

The student did not complete the task of acting the Other but some Otherness had obviously been captured in trying to do what the Others did. To explain the student's reaction is difficult. The reaction may have been awe for the different religion, or perhaps a response unleashed by some unconscious memory, or perhaps the respondent just felt very silly. Whatever the reason may have been, the experience made the student stop and reflect. New awareness had been created.

As the course moved on, it was demonstrated time and again how this Self-awareness had the remarkable power to also create awareness of Other. This was poignantly demonstrated by one of the students, who suddenly stopped short in the middle of a conversation on the Spanish culture,

I wonder what they think about me ...
(Fifth Respondent)

Peace development

The students' reactions to coming Home were startling. When leaving Norway several of them were concerned that something at Home might change in their absence. This worry caused considerable anxiety. On their return, however, the same students found Home boring because it had not changed.

... I felt that ... oh, my God, everybody had changed while I was away! But then I soon discovered it was me. I think I have completely changed my thinking. Many of my friends... it is not that I do not have anything in common with them... but I feel I am not interested in being with them as much as before. (First Respondent)

Strange to come home - but also nice
Q: What was nice about it, then?
The food (laughter). It was nice the first twelve hours; then it got very boring.

It was so strange when I first entered the hall into the house again...

Q: Was it that it was quiet?

No... it was just... when I thought about the house when I was down there in Spain... I made a picture of it, as it were ... and the colour of the floor was in a way different from what I had imagined

Q: So it was not changed in your absence

No, no (long pause)

Q: So, how had you seen it then, compared to how it actually was?

No-o... I think I had seen it as a ... paradise (laughter) ... but perhaps it wasn't.

(Sixth Respondent)

The quotations above demonstrate conflict between the students' perceptions of the Home they had left and their expectations of the reunion with that Home. A very confusing experience was that the Home of the Sixth Respondent was different from what she had perceived it to be during her absence. The First Respondent had been going through major changes ever since leaving Home. After the return Home, this student preferred not to be with old friends as much as before.

I am trying to explain it to my friends so that they shall not get offended... because there is nothing wrong with them ... but they do not understand me, some of them take it personally. Now, after one month, things are becoming more as before but not quite, we are not as much together as before. I don't know, I don't have the same need any more ... I need more to be at home than I did before.

This student experienced with surprise that it was now easier to communicate with a person who had previously not been among the close knit group of friends.

... we talk about all sorts of things ... why man has been created and such deep things that one normally does not think much about. She said she got very surprised when I started talking ... the way I talked; how I described things ... I don't know ... that I had become more mature. In a way, that frightens me. I find it very strange to find myself at home so often. My mother reacted to it. I am much more relaxed now after I came home. I don't have that urge to get out all the time. The first thing I used to ask when I came home before was 'Has anybody called?' Now I don't ask so much. It is not so important, somehow. If they call, then they call. It is very nice not to be so restless any more, that something has to happen all the time. My best friend reacted very much to it. 'How boring you have

become, you do not take part in anything'... I don't find myself boring! (First Respondent)

The students represented above tell of amazing changes. The First Respondent was shocked to realise that the perceived changes in Home and friends actually were a reflection of the student's own change. While it is reasonable to assume that people at Home also had changed in the student's absence, it is difficult to explain how the colour of a floor can change by itself. In other words, the perception of Home had changed because Self had changed. Likewise, other students could report a keen new interest in their own country, as if they had just realised that Norwegian culture also has certain traditions to be proud of or to question. For quite a few of them, the road to that point of awareness had meant sessions of 'sitting in the fire'. As already argued in the present paper, and according to Uhlinger, Shantz & Hartup (1992), Dunn & Slomkowski (1992) and May (1972), conflicts play a decisive role in human development. Arguably, the students' experiences of conflict and their commitment to live through some of them without aggression or other forms of violence were contributions to the development of peace.

Concluding discussion

A peace concept based on non-violent conflict transformation is an approach that does not exclude anybody.

Earlier in this chapter it was suggested that human beings need conflict in order to develop, and that conflicts - when handled in non-violent ways - have the power to develop emotional skills. From the point of view of peace research it has also been suggested that such constructive handling of conflict represents a movement towards peace.

The students' conflicts may appear insignificant to an outsider. A suspicious or longed-for food item or a missing table lamp hardly constitutes a threat to world peace. It is important to remember, however, that a fight between neighbours could lead to a campaign of ethnic cleansing. With this possibility it seems rather risky to maintain that resentment and aggression over a suspicious food item are insignificant. As the students' experiences have demonstrated, academic skills and general reasoning proved insufficient when it came to dealing with these problems. The conflicts had branched off from the personal contexts and threatened to destabilize the whole group and be projected into the visited environment. Dealing with the conflicts non-violently, however, had major impacts on their levels of awareness, first of Self and then of Other within the Norwegian group, and of Other in the Spanish environment. Eventually awareness extended to Other - or previously unseen peculiarities - in their Home environment. Notably, the process that led to these changes in attitude had started *from within*.

Regardless of race, religion, wealth, poverty, age or occupation, everybody experiences conflicts. In effect, a peace concept based on non-violent conflict transformation is an approach that does not exclude anybody. This is truly a global concept based on the individual. With regard to tourism, it is rather encouraging that we, as tourists - who more often than not come from parts of the world where open

war and violence are not daily experiences - can make direct contributions to peace by first of all minding our own conflicts.

This approach makes each of us directly responsible for peace in the world, and it provides a direct and practical way of initiating peace work. Self awareness, created by 'sitting in the fire' of our own conflicts, is an invaluable support in our communication with the world around us. Skilled emotions and clear thinking give promises of increased humility and sensitivity to Others' needs and ways of being.

By including conflict and conflict transformation in the debate on peace, the very peace concept changes from being a particular circumstance or a state of affairs, to being an *attitude* (Askjellerud, 2003). This attitude of the Self is one that has the courage to experience the presence of Other without reacting in a violent way. 'Other' will be anything and everybody that the Self perceives to be so. If peace is an attitude, then it is neither a particular branch of learning nor a business or an industry. And, arguably, the learning referred to in this paper demonstrated the value of peace education in which peace is not isolated as a theoretical, self-contained subject.



Action agenda: Making a difference*

For many years I have heard and read much about the humanitarian work being done overseas, never thinking that I would be involved in this work. In 1994 the opportunity presented itself. During a 7-day holiday with my husband Ron to the Indonesian island of Bali, we did the usual bus trips to all the recommended tourist sites, but we also ventured into the villages to see the "real Bali." The villages showed a totally different side from the one the tourists encounter. In fact I was stunned to see so many people living in poverty. Nearly everywhere I looked I saw emaciated dogs covered with mange and in many cases unable to walk through lack of food and/or illness.

I felt I wanted to help every breathing being, but there were so many people and animals in need. By the end of our holiday I flew back to Australia with mixed feelings. I had fallen in love with the gentle, spiritual people of Bali and I wanted to help make a difference in their lives, but how could I achieve this while living so far away? One thing I did know, I would be back!

I returned on my own two years later. By that time I had formed a friendly relationship through corresponding with a young man named Rama whom I had met at the hotel during my stay in 1994. He worked as a waiter and married Heni later that year. I felt less of a tourist and more of a family friend coming to visit. Rama, Heni and their baby son, Hendra, welcomed me into their home and included me in all their outings to visit their families who lived in the mountain villages. It was very obvious to me that the Balinese people take time to show their true feeling, and before this could be achieved we had to build a bridge of trust between us.

Ron and I decided that our first attempt to help would be to have Rama, Heni and young Hendra in better living conditions. They were then living in one room which would flood during the rainy season with the water coming up to their knees. To stay dry they would have to eat sitting on bed, Hendra had to stay on the bed as he would have drowned in that depth of water. Improvement was a joint effort involving Rama and

Heni's families, Ron and me. We supplied most of the money to buy the building materials with Rama, Heni and their relations all pulling together to build their new home consisting of four small rooms. During the following two years we also helped make living conditions easier for the relations who came to help Rama and Heni.

I then heard of two women in Sydney who had set up a registered charity to help the unwanted sick street dogs of Bali. I called them and asked if they would like my help, and this was the start of my becoming the Australian Coordinator for the Bali Society for the Protection of Animals which we formed in 1998.

This has seen a Rehabilitation Centre opened that takes in sick and injured street dogs, cared for by a team of local volunteer vets and a dedicated Balinese couple who live on the site as caretakers. The animals are then given foster homes and the new owners receive a 50% discount on all veterinarian services for the remainder of the animal's life. Through the Bali Street Dog Fund in Sydney we raise money for the centre's medications, rent and other running costs and many dogs have been placed into loving homes. We are at present in the throes of raising funds to house cats at the centre.

While involved with setting up the Centre, I was approached by John Fawcett who founded the Cataract Clinic in Denpasar. He asked me if I would be prepared to assist him in getting spectacle frames, wheelchairs and walking frames into Bali. I could not refuse this request and went about the task of contacting all the optometrists in Adelaide, a task which proved to be harder than I had expected. It took 6 months of perseverance for a trust to be formed and from then on it was exceptionally easy. I started a monthly run to pick up the old frames which people kindly donated, and then the hours of sorting and packing began. With the help of tourists holidaying in Bali who were willing to take boxes of frames with them, I managed to freight 20,000 pairs a year.

Then I set out to locate good wheelchairs and walking frames. After many hours without success I was given the telephone number for Largs Bay Rotary in Adelaide. One call to them fixed all my problems. A team of outstanding men who work every Tuesday in a humble iron shed repairing all sorts of aids for the disabled and pack them into containers to be shipped to third world countries, were more than willing to help me. They supplied, and still do, as many units as I need, even to the point of getting up at 5am loading their trailer and delivering them to the Adelaide Airport by 6am for my flight to Bali. They have supplied me with dozens of wheelchairs and walking frames over the last five years.

During those years I have also been involved in the collection and distribution of aids for the sight-impaired. So many of these people had never had a cane, having managed with a tree branch. To date, many fold up canes, talking clocks and other aids have been donated by the Blind Institute in Adelaide. It is delightful to see the letters of thanks coming from Bali to the people of Adelaide who have so kindly offered their help.

Over the years my trips to Bali have become less a holiday and more a humanitarian exercise. It seems that one only has to open their eyes to see many people needing help. In May, 2003, on one of my trips to Bali, I was approached within hours of arriving and asked if I would help a six-month-old boy with a severe cleft palate. It was explained to me that the family came from a very poor village and the baby's parents had been told they needed AUD3,000 for the first operation.

I experienced a brief period of panic. A year previously I had tried to help a four-year-old girl with a hole in the heart who desperately needed an operation. I

approached all the people I knew and asked for help but I was told she would be dead before her turn came up. This was heartbreaking and I dreaded being in the same position again, but there was no way I could turn my back on this boy.

I asked to be taken the next day to see the baby, Kadek, and his family. When I arrived at the family compound I was concerned to see their living conditions. They were indeed very poor. This little boy had hardly any top lip and his palate was far from perfect. Many babies with CP would be very thin and sickly by this age, but not this little man. He was chubby and smiling, and his mother clearly had to be commended for her patience and loving care. I knew I had to do something, so for the following 90 minutes, back in my hotel, I sent text messages on my mobile phone to everyone I knew, explaining about the plight of this baby and his family and hoping for donations.

I received many messages in return but to my disappointment no offers of financial help. I was becoming very despondent when I remembered a few phone calls and emails I had exchanged in the previous year with a Rotarian living in Perth. I quickly penned my thoughts on paper, then sat down and emailed him from my hotel. I had been in my room about 15 minutes when my mobile phone rang and I was informed that Rotary would be only too happy to help. I was directed to contact a representative from Nusa Dua Rotary Bali and to give him all the details. I did so and explained the situation. Twenty minutes after our conversation he faxed me with an appointment time for Kadek to see the Head of the Plastic Surgery Department at Sanglah Hospital in the following week.

The day arrived. The family had been given transport in a mini bus to travel to the hospital. Kadek looked so handsome in his spotlessly clean yellow fluffy rug and matching hat. Once the specialist examined Kadek, he stunned us all by saying that Kadek was to be admitted immediately and he would operate the next morning. He said that all credit had to be given to Kadek's mother who had done such a wonderful job of keeping the little boy well and healthy.

The rest is history. Kadek's first operation was an outstanding success and he now has a full top lip. While I was in Bali in August 2003 he had his second operation. His third and final operation will be when he is six years old.

Ron and I made a commitment to complete Kadek's family home which was just a shell and a damp one at that. Hopefully the workers will have the floors and the ceilings finished soon and Kadek will be able to crawl around without harming himself.

My heartfelt thanks go to the Rotary members for the work they do to help people in need. There is now one more family in Bali, who have Rotary to thank for their happiness. Garuda Indonesia have always allowed me free freight to move my goods, and without all these wonderful people I would never be able to do all the things I have so far managed to do.

At the moment I have three major projects to complete:

- the up- grade of the Animal Centre;
- completion of Kadek's home; and
- development of a home for the aged (the most challenging task).

I had six wheelchairs and four walking frames to donate when I arrived in Bali last year and went with the manager of a local home for the aged to distribute these to the residents. I was dismayed to find that the home did not have even one wheel chair or walking frame and was overcome by their tears of happiness and the knowledge that I had been able to give them some form of independence. I knew I couldn't walk away

and do nothing more. I had to make their lives more comfortable.

This home houses 50 people, 80 to 105 years old. One extremely large roof needs to be replaced as the beams are all rotten, and the roof leaks badly which is dangerous for the elderly people trying to walk on tiles that are flooded by the rains. Staff members cook all the meals on very old kerosene stoves. The residents have only one sheet and one sarong each and although the place is spotlessly clean the living conditions are very difficult. At present I am raising money to have the building repaired and the stoves replaced.

I wish to continue my work helping the people of Bali and I have now formed a foundation to continue helping these needy people.

It's amazing to think back on how all this started - a simple holiday as a tourist couple, but with a strong Buddhist background and a belief that all breathing beings should have unconditional love and nurturing.

* Helen Flavel

Helen Flavel Foundation

<http://www.helenflavelfoundation.org>

References

Annan, K. (2001) *The Nobel Peace Prize Lecture*, www.nobel.no/eng_lect_2001_b.html

Askjellerud, S. (2003a) *Conflict Transformation Through Tourism*. PhD thesis, University of Brighton, UK.

Askjellerud, S. (2003b) *The Tourist: A Messenger of Peace? Annals of Tourism Research*. 30 (3): 741-744

Banks, J. A. (1997) *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*. London: Teachers College Press.

Bentley, T. (1998) *Learning Beyond the Classroom. Educating for a Changing World*, London: Routledge.

Bunkholdt, V. (1996) *Psykologi - En innføring for Helse- og Sosialarbeidere*, Otta: Tano.

Capra, F. (1982) *The Turning Point*, London: Flamingo.

Dunn, J. and Slomkowski, C. (1992) *Conflict and the Development of Social Understanding*. In: Uhlinger Shantz, C.U. & Hartup, W.W. (eds) *Conflict in Child and Adolescent Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fromm, E. (1973) *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, London: Pimlico.

Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and*

Civilization, London: Sage Publications

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury.

Gudykunst, W.B. (1998) *Bridging Differences, Effective Intergroup Communication*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Gyatso, Tenzin, His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1999) *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World. Ethics for a New Millennium*, London: Little, Brown & Company.

Haddon, A. (2002) Making the Case for Emotionally Literate Schools. *The Antidote*, 11: 4-5

Handy, C. (1997) *The Hungry Spirit*, London: Hutchinson

Jandt, E. (1998) *Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*, 2nd edn, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kiel, L.D. (1994) *Managing Chaos and Complexity in Government. A New Paradigm for Managing Change, Innovation and Organizational Renewal*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Marcussen-Kielland, R. (1988) *Milkshake og Gammalost*, Otta: Landbruksforlaget AS og Meierienes Prøvekjøkken

Maslow, A. (1971) *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

Maslow, A. (1999) *Toward a Psychology of Being*. 3rd edn, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons

May, R. (1972) *Power and Innocence. A Search for the Sources of Violence*, London: Souvenir Press

Mindell, A. (1995) *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation using Conflict and Diversity*, Portland: Lao Tse Press.

Moore, S. (1998) Final Report, *Report*, January/February: 22

Naess, A. (2002) *Life's Philosophy. Reason and Feeling in a Deeper World*, London: The University of Georgia Press.

Orbach, S. (2001) The Antidote Manifesto, Antidote Brochure: *Developing an Emotionally Literate Society*.

Samuels, A. (2001) *Politics on the Couch: Citizenship and the Internal Life*, London:

Profile Books.

Saunders, H. H. (2001) The Virtue of Sustained Dialogue Among Civilizations, *International Journal of World Peace*, 18(1): 35-44

Spinoza (1993, revised) *Ethics and Treatise on the Correction of the Intellect*, London: Everyman.

Tomljenovic, R. and Faulkner, B. (2000) Tourism and World Peace: A Conundrum for the Twenty-first Century, in B. Faulkner; G.Moscardo; E.Laws (Eds.) *Tourism in the Twenty-first Century*, London: Continuum.

Uhlinger; Shantz, C.U.; and Hartup, W.W. (1992) (ed) *Conflict in Child and Adolescent Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vaärynen, R. (ed) (1991) *New Directions in Conflict Theory*, London: Sage Publications

Wallensteen, P. (1991) The Resolution and Transformation of International Conflicts: A Structural Perspective, In Vaärynen, R. (ed) *New Directions in Conflict Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Williams S.J. (1998) 'Capitalising' on Emotions? Rethinking the Inequalities in Health Debate, *Sociology*. 32: 121- 140.