POESIS OF PEACE:
AN INTRODUCTION

"Peace is not merely an absence of war, but a virtue that springs from force of character,"[1] wrote Spinoza in his assessment of different forms of government in Political Treatise. If the subjects are prevented from waging war solely by fear, he claims, this could not yet be called peace; the same holds true for circumstances in which they are too lazy (Spinoza literally calls that "inertia") to do so. Peace, he claims, is always an action, and obediently refraining from war in a civic state must not be enforced or endured, but actively sought for: "for obedience is the constant will to execute what, by the general decree of the commonwealth, ought to be done."

The issue of peace in the contemporary world brings us closer to Spinoza's rather sobering insight. As it has all too often been demonstrated in too many different locations around the globe, peace that is enforced or endured has a limited staying power. Neither military nor civil repression can stop the fighting for a prolonged time and such enforced peace that is merely endured by a populace often proves to be no more than a ceasefire that ends when the repression loses its efficacy. The peace that could have a chance to persist needs to be based on active citizen participation, education for peace and many related attempts to put peace – so to say – into practice. Such a particular understanding of peace-making – the practice of peace – brings us to the particular conceptualisation of the process of "making" that the ancient Greek philosophers referred to as *poiesis*. *Poiesis*, "making" is indeed the root for words like "poetry", "poetics" etc., but the variety of meanings in ancient Greek contexts is much greater and can be applied to any human process of deliberately bringing something into existence. In addition to its application as obtaining either descendants (by procreation) or fame (by bravery), it is only when poiesis is joined by virtue that it becomes the highest possible way a person can "make" things, as

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[1] Spinoza, B. (2013), *A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise, transl. R. H. M. Elwes, Courier Corporation, p. 314.*

explained by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* (209). The idea of *poiesis* as a disclosure of Being was further developed by Heidegger; thus also being brought closer to *poesis*, or poetry. The process of establishing peace is intrinsically connected on one hand with the notion of "making", of human action and agency, and on the other with the particular importance of *poesis*, or more generally put, of the arts. Both *poiesis* and *poesis* are part of the process of peace-making both within a person and in the web of interpersonal relations: society, state and the world at large. The reflections on the processes of the establishment of peace also provided a starting point for the *Poesis of Peace* conference that took place in May 2014 in Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia. Organized by the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska and chaired by prof. Lenart Škof, the conference provided a setting for discussions between more than thirty participants and invited a wide range of interesting presentations and debates on the topic. This volume includes a selection of the papers presented at the conference.

The first paper in the volume, by Janko M. Lozar, sets out to rethink Heidegger's assessment of Nietzsche. The author starts from the notion of restlessness as opposed to peace and provides an interpretation of Zarathustra's "riddle of all riddles", showing not only that the two thinkers are closer than they might seem, but also that Nietzsche's Zarathustra, having articulated the groundless attunements, marks the birthplace of a new measure. The second paper in the volume, Yūjin Itabashi's "No Effort, Just Peace" also approaches the problem of groundless-ness, but from the perspective of a philosopher of a very different provenience. He analyses Kitarō Nishida's *An Inquiry into the Good*, exploring Nishida's idea that peace does not – as is usually thought – need a common ground, but can be established by relying instead on the self-creativity of the immediate experience. The following two papers extend the interpretations of the notion of peace into the field of ecology. Tomaž Grušovnik's paper proposes a reconsideration of the expansion of the moral domain to subjects other than humans. It shows that humans are already capable of sensibility to non-human suffering and that this sensibility need not be introduced, but can rather be uncovered by environmental and animal rights' education. In the fourth text in the book, Nadja Furlan introduces an eco-feminist perspecti-

ve in her criticism of theological traditions that reinforce relations of domination and victim-blaming approaches. She advocates instead a reconsideration of the so-called religions of the Goddess and their contemporary revivals. The following three texts then bring us closer to the title of the conference, dealing with the issue of peace in art – in painting and in music. In the fifth paper, Carlo Chiurco explores images of metaphysical peace in Venetian renaissance painting of the early 16th century (Giorgione and the young Titian) and compares them to those of the older Italian Quattrocento. Lev Kreft in the subsequent text brings an analysis of the imagery of peace in art three centuries closer to our time. He chooses an interesting example, Jacques-Louis David's late painting *Mars disarmed by Venus and the three Graces* to discuss David's particular attitude towards European peace in the time of great changes, just a decade after the fall of Napoleon. In the third paper on the notion of peace within different art forms, Maja Bjelica analyses the peace-making potential of the process of "musicking" – engaging in the making of music – and offers an interdisciplinary reconsideration of the relationship between music and peace. The last two texts in the selection relate the notion of peace to self and the connection between the inner and the outer peace. Sebastjan Vörös' text on the autopoesis of peace is based on the contemporary paradigm shift in cognitive science and explores the possibility of a sustained (auto)poiesis of peace based on the approach to life (mind) as co-determined and thus empathically open towards the other. In the last paper in the book, Alen Širca approaches the topic of peace from a view of Christian mysticism while comparing it to the ideas of Buddhist spirituality, thus coming to the topic hermeneutics of peace and its intrinsic interculturality.

As is evident from the short overview of the papers included in this book, debates on peace can begin from a variety of angles and spread into many different disciplines. It is debatable whether all different approaches on peace actually talk about the same notion. Is inner peace so closely related to social peace as the use of the term suggests? Can Nishida's meditative notion of groundless peace be compared to the commonality induced by the practice of playing music? Is there one peace or can there be many? Spinoza's peace in the above quote was of a political or even social type, but it can still be read as a more general

insight that opens the common ground of debates in this book. Peace might not be *merely* the absence of war, conflict, disturbance or unrest, but it still *is* primarily that, with an important addition – it requires a process – and virtue – to keep achieving it.

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