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Making Music, Learning to Be

**Elicitive Facilitation and the Experience of Music as a Space for
Personal Unfolding during Childhood**

In order to obtain the degree Master of Arts

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Introduction

As I write the introduction to this thesis – which is, paradoxically, my last step in this writing process – I am entering my fourth month of work at the Academy for Conflict Transformation. During this time, I have repeatedly received reactions of surprise from the participants of the academy’s courses, pointing at the difference between what they thought a training in peace and conflict work would look like, and what they actually experienced. Yet, those facilitators and experienced practitioners who come to provide future peace and conflict workers with the necessary tools for their task continue to emphasize, maybe even to my surprise, the same skills: empathic understanding, listening, self-awareness, self-care, and connection to the parties.

Taken out of the context, these skills could appear basic and even simple. However, they seem to be the foundation of peace work – and so I will argue this throughout my research. I feel again confronted with an idea first arose while I myself was completing the Master in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation of the University of Innsbruck, for which this thesis is written. The idea that a peace worker is, simply, a human being who is in contact with herself and others. I myself, after the academic and life experiences of the program, feel connected to myself in a more authentic, truthful manner than I could feel before. Rather than feeling able to build peace somewhere else, I feel more at peace with myself.

There is one thing that has clearly contributed to my own finding of peace in my life: music. Playing it, listening to it, sharing it, witnessing it. There is also one thing that I realized to be missing, starting from an early age: the spaces to find that peace. I seek to find the spaces to learn, to listen, to understand, to connect, and to feel myself, beginning all the way from childhood – and not only thanks to an education in peace and conflict work. These are the bridges I explore and cross during this research.

When I look at where I am today and how I see peace and conflict work, I believe that I have come to a place where I can establish links between peace, being human, self-awareness, connection, music, childhood, and becoming. By establishing the links, I

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have come to live the spaces where they can be fostered. Now, through this research, I want to share my understanding of those relationships and the way in which they can be lived and fostered, with the hope that someone else might resonate with it in her or his own way.

1. Author's Perspective

There is an old video tape in the now outdated VHR format, which might still be lying inside some moving box in a garage of one of my relatives. It includes a clip of me as a child with two of my childhood best friends during one of my birthday celebrations. I must have been around six years old, I was wearing my favourite blue dress and I had a very distinctive hair ribbon that my mum used to patiently tie into place every day. My two friends were wearing very similar outfits in different colours – it seems to have been the fashion of 6-year-olds at that time – and we were sitting on a straw toy chest in my room.

The video, recorded by my cousin, begins with me encouraging my friends to sing a song. We begin to sing, rather slowly, and gradually pick up the pace. We keep on singing, so the family in the background begins to deviate their attention from our song, and they begin talking and chatting, causing the sound of the video to be disturbed. We keep on singing, but soon my friends decide they are tired of it and I am left singing alone. I do not remember that moment but, from what the video depicts, I do not seem to care. I keep on singing and singing and singing. At one point, the voice of my cousin next to the camera suddenly overshadows everything else with a dramatic “Tres años más tarde...”¹. He says this in a humoristic tone which is very characteristic of him. I just keep on singing and singing. The tape ends, but I keep on singing.

That short extract of my life at six years of age seems to me very representative of who I am in relationship to this thesis. I am many different things, and I am constantly becoming so many others. Sometimes, I look at the past and I do not even recognize myself in a certain situation. It is that awkward feeling of looking at an old picture and thinking: ‘is this really me?’. Describing who I am would not make sense to me. That is why I decided to give you, dear reader, a completely subjective account of the context that has seen me being born and raised, as well as a blurry snapshot of the idea I have of the person that I am, today, in this moment, the person I have been, and the person I

1. "Three years later..." (Translated by author)

want to become.

1.1. My (fluid) roots

I was born in Córdoba, a beautiful city in the south of Spain with an incredibly rich history, laid-back culture and delicious food. My parents and, as far as I know, all of my family come from that same city. At the time, my mother was a secretary and my father a young civil servant, both uneducated, happily married and ready to give their children the middle-class lives that they could not have. Two years after I was born, they had a baby with very fat and red cheeks who became my brother, a person I have loved since birth and very much admire today. My bigger family was not too big by Spanish standards, but not too small from my recollection. I remember that, throughout my childhood, I was surrounded by cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends of my parents, the kids of the friends of my parents, neighbours and school friends, all of whom contributed to a very active social life that tends to represent the rule in the Andalusian culture.

One day, at some point during the ninth year of my life, my father arrived home and entered the kitchen, where my mother was cooking for me and my brother. My father opened a letter that he had just collected from the mailbox, talked shortly to my mother, and then announced full of excitement: “Kids, we are moving to Europe!”. Rather than excitement, my first reaction was confusion. From what I had learned in school, Spain was already in Europe, so either I had learned it wrong or my father had not paid that much attention during his own schooling. Later, I understood it better: my father had been offered a job in Brussels, where the four of us moved one year later. He named it Europe because, from his point of view, the cultural and societal life in Córdoba was very different from the European lifestyle of central European countries – an opinion that I would come to agree with very soon.

At the age of ten, I moved with my parents and brother to Brussels, a city that has very little in common with Córdoba. I came in contact with things that I had never seen before: the snow, the underground, women wearing hijabs, dozens of different skin colours, different languages, different food, different ways of interacting. From that moment on, I grew up in a completely different world, and I very much noticed that difference each

time I travelled back to my city of birth.

Without the need to establish a comparison nor argue in the lines of ‘better’ or ‘worse’, it is important to highlight some of these changes. The wide social circle in which our lives were embedded in Córdoba remained there, and we inevitably stepped out of it. This was replaced by a different social circle in Brussels, but even until this time in my life I have never again been embedded in that feeling of community, of family, of belonging. Maybe this is just the effect of my idealisation of the past, or maybe it is a real cultural difference. The truth is that, the way I experienced it, I began to see myself as outside of that circle rather than as a part of it. A small longing for that feeling remains within me still today – a topic upon which the next section touches in further detail.

Another important difference is linked to the main reason why we moved to Brussels in the first place: opportunities. What a word! I could use pages of this research to delve into the meaning of it. For the moment, I will remain with what my parents saw as enough reason to change their whole lives: providing me and my brother with the chance to get to know different countries, learn different languages and have access to more renowned schools, things which would have been nearly impossible in the social class and financial conditions under which we lived in Córdoba. Indeed, today I speak four languages and I have lived and studied in six different countries. I am extremely grateful to my parents for contributing to the cultural richness that I enjoy today.

At the same time, this “opportunity” implied changing from a traditional, Catholic middle-class school, where we used to wear uniforms and go to mass each week, to a liberal European School. The new school had 2,500 pupils of seven different mother tongues, more than a dozen different nationalities, and a tangible pressure to keep up with the high rates of success of its graduating students. In Córdoba, our main concern had been who would dance which part of the song in the end-of-the-year performance. In Brussels, I began to wonder whether I should buy a Longchamps bag (at the age of eleven) to look like the other girls.

All in all, it might seem like this change was nothing extraordinary in the globalized and interconnected world that we live in today; rather the contrary, it might even seem

expected. Yet, I am realizing more and more that, for me, it was indeed a very significant change and that this moving, like many other aspects of my life, contributed to my worldview, my interests, my strengths and my flaws.

I also realize, more and more, that I am part of a privileged minority. I have had the chance to travel, learn, work, think, meet people and take the time to reflect on all of my experiences. I have not only always had my basic needs fully covered, but also had access to numerous possibilities of living new experiences and taking the time to learn from them. In this research and, more importantly, in my life in general, I acknowledge that I am constantly speaking from the point of view of the privileged² person I am and thus from an experience of life, understanding and view of the world that is heavily shaped by this privilege.

1.2. Belonging (or not)

It was when I first arrived to the MA Program in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation that I was led to think about the word 'belonging', its meaning and its roots. The first thing that struck me was the word 'longing' on its own. It perfectly captures the emotion between missing and desiring something that I so often feel. For those who know me, it is needless to say that I am a very sentimental and emotional person – some would even describe me as histrionic – and anything that has to do with a poetic expression of feelings and emotions makes me vibrate. The resonance I felt with the meaning of the word 'longing', did.

What I also found striking was the 'be' in the beginning of the word and all of its implications. Belonging is the longing for being, and as the relational beings that we are, we can never be alone, but always be with others, thanks to others, through others. Belonging is the human need to be, when we understand being as being part of something.

Again, without even asking for it, I found the words to describe a feeling that I had never even attempted to describe before. Growing up in Córdoba, I felt like I belonged.

2. I am aware of the subjectivity of the word 'privileged' and the problematic it implies. I refer to myself as a privileged person because I did not grow up being part of a minority, I never suffered from exclusion, poverty, or other forms of structural violence. My basic physiological and emotional needs were always covered.

It was my place to be, I was there because all the people around me wanted me to be there, because there was something bigger that had placed me in the right place in the right time. When we moved, and for many years later, I constantly felt like my place was not in one city nor the other; there was no space for me in either of the social circles I knew. My need for belonging was not met. During my teenage years, I reacted to that (and, well, many other things, for that matter) with a lot of anger and rage, often directed towards 'Spain' or the 'Spanish society'. Instead of dealing with my desire to be part of it, I pushed it away from me, claiming that it was something I would never want to be part of.

The beginning of my Bachelor studies in Maastricht in European Studies became the perfect opportunity to fill that gap: I was studying in a multicultural environment constructed under the agenda to foster European identity, with people who did not know me at all. I had studied in the European School of Brussels; I was the perfect fit for that community! I could probably say that it was two years of belonging in many ways. Yet at the same time, I still felt like that was not really it. Some part of me still wanted, or, rather, still needed, that feeling of community that I linked with my roots in Spain, that sensation of sticking together with the people around, like family. I still wished I could do small things like dancing sevillanas, which is a very representative of Andalusian people³.

Later, I understood that, for me, there are at least two different ways of belonging: one is cultural, the other is emotional. My cultural belonging is based on the cultural identity of a bigger group, such as the people from Córdoba, Andalusia or Spain, and it implies feeling identified with the characteristics of those groups. Let us take an example that I have often encountered: the Spanish crisis. As much as I would want to identify myself with the suffering of the people in Spain during the crisis, and as much as I do have a Spanish nationality and Spanish family, I am not part of it. I do not belong there because I was not there, I have never faced the same difficulties and I have not undergone the same circumstances. I can, however, feel the cultural identity fostered by the European

3. Just for a matter of clarity, I would like to differentiate here between Flamenco – a very complex dance that forms part of the Spanish 'cliché' and which, in fact, very few people know how to dance – and the Sevillanas – a much easier typical dance that, contrary to the 'cliché', a great amount of people in Spain, especially in Andalusia, actually do dance during several cultural celebrations.

Studies community in Maastricht – contrary to most European people I know. As critical as I can be of that community or the European Union or any of its pillars, it is undeniable that I have widely benefited from the European Union and everything it has offered to me and my family. I have grown up in an environment in which that feeling of community was not only an aspiration, but a reality in daily life. That is, to me, cultural belonging.

Then, there is a kind of belonging that is slightly different in words, but very different in the way that I feel it. It is belonging to a group of people, no matter their background, culture, language... it is belonging with other human beings in a moment of time, as if in that moment we were all holding each others' back; as if that connection made us a family. That is the kind of belonging that I used to feel as a kid in Córdoba. That kind of belonging requires presence, a presence I inevitably lost when we moved to Brussels. The blessing in disguise was that I then found that kind of belonging in other situations, with people with whom the only thing in common I had was that absolute presence in a given moment in time.

An especially relevant life experience was my time in the Philippines, where I moved for five months in order to do an internship after completing my studies in Maastricht. There, I spent precious moments with people with whom I never thought I could have that kind of deep connection with, that feeling of belonging. Contrary to my expectations, people with completely different backgrounds, who had lived completely different lives, and with whom I could not even speak in the same language, were capable of making me feel like they had my back at that given moment in time. We shared a full presence that led to connection, to unity, to belonging.

1.3. The songs I sing

One of the moments when this feeling of belonging was most tangible was the favourite Filipino hobby: karaoke. In the Philippines, karaoke is everywhere: in bars, restaurants, shopping malls, street kiosks and even on bicycles. Singing karaoke is not only a daily social activity, it is also the means to express and process emotions and find resonance in the emotions of others in the karaoke session. One day, a man I met in one of Manila's poorest neighbourhoods who told me, "Karaoke helps us to survive". That is what Karaoke

does in the Philippines, and that is what helped me understand the relationship I have, and have had, with music throughout my whole life.

I have loved music as long as I can remember. As the first anecdote in this author's perspective shows, I loved singing and very soon after began writing my own songs and recording them on a red and blue radio cassette recorder with microphone, the best present I could have ever received from my family. My grandmother was the only one in the family who shared this passion with me, so she was the one teaching me (mostly religious) songs and repeating them day after day. I remember spending entire afternoons doing only that with my grandmother: learning songs.

I have a vivid memory of the first song I wrote and still remember the melody to which I used to sing it. Such a long time has passed that I sometimes wonder whether it is really a memory or a fruit of my imagination, but it is very clear and present in my mind. At home, we would always watch the 3pm news on TV. It made me very sad to listen to all the reports on wars, killings, natural catastrophes... but I never dared to express out loud that I felt very sad about it. So I decided to write it down (and, of course, hide it, as if it was the most important secret in the world). The part of the song that I remember went like this:

¿Y por qué tenemos que oír

todos los días que

alguien muere otra vez?

¿Y por qué?

¿Y por qué?

¿Y por qué?

Tantas preguntas yo me vuelvo a hacer⁴

The song was longer, and I still remember the pop-like rhythm and melody, but no more lyrics. This memory is by no means an account of how talented I was as a child; far from that and even rather the opposite. I am not an exceptionally good musician or composer

4. "Why do we have to hear every day that somebody dies again? And why? And why? And why? So many questions I keep on asking myself. (Translated by author)

and yet, I can clearly relate back to the feeling of how free it made me feel to be able to write what I was experiencing. It gave me a channel of expression for something that was significant for me at that time, and it allowed me to explore more of what and how I was feeling.

At the age of five, I insisted that my parents enroll me in the music conservatory in Córdoba, which began accepting children for the first module at the age of six and was highly competitive. I would have to complete different tests that would determine my musical ability and would be accepted depending on my score and age (the younger the better). My parents only believed that my wish was real after three years when, at the age of nine, they decided I had insisted long enough to answer to those wishes. I then completed the tests with a score of 9.8/10, which made me very proud at the time. However, I was left off the acceptance list due to my age – it was already too late for the system to allow me to learn music. Due to my high score, they accepted me as an observer for one year, which turned out to be enough, since we moved the following year to Brussels and to a system where I could enter a music academy without any trouble. Anyway, being an observer had been enough for me. I had accomplished the first dream of my life: I was becoming a musician.

The excitement of the first year in the music academy was followed by a rollercoaster of emotions in my relationship to music, which I remained involved with for the following ten years. I played viola in the school's orchestra and string quartet, I took theory, singing and composition lessons, I switched instruments to guitar, I began writing my own songs and I played in various concerts in front of large audiences. There were times when I hated my instrument and the pressure of having to pass exams and get grades; there were times when I got extremely nervous before concerts and audiences, and there were also those many times when music gave me access to a kind of peace that I did not know in any other form.

Of course, I never even imagined dedicating myself to music professionally. It had been stated very clearly to me by parents, family, friends and teachers, that music was a hobby. It could give me the benefit of having a side job during my studies – as it actually

did as I taught guitar to children – but that was it. Nothing else. Looking back at it, I do not even know if I would have liked to dedicate myself to it professionally, but I could have never found out because it was always out of the question.

As a hobby, then, I left the music courses when I moved to Maastricht and began exploring music in different forms, on my own. That is when I dedicated more time to writing my own songs and finding in music not only the means of finding peace and harmony within myself, but also a way of expressing what I had inside. My songs were my way to communicate to the outside those things that a rational wordy explanation could not.

It is worth saying that it was not until I began the MA Program, when I felt again a connection with people, embedded in a feeling of belonging, that I dared to share some of those songs for the first time. I believe this is extremely representative of what music means to me and how it is connected to my life: my songs are the expression of the deepest core of myself, and that expression only feels free to be when I belong, when I feel that connection to the group of people that surrounds me. That is why the feelings of belonging I experienced in the Philippines or in the MA program are not linked to cultural ties or identification signs, but rather to the essence of being human and what it means to have that expression of the deepest self of different human beings in a temporary, meaningful, presence-full connection.

Just like that feeling of belonging, my experience with music is one that is extremely hard to describe with words. At the same time it is extremely powerful, in experiential terms, in my life. That may partly be the reason for this research; it is also a personal quest to find the vocabulary to articulate the impact that music has had in my life, through which I hope other people can also find the terms for their own experiences.

1.4. The things I was (not) taught

The other essential element of this research is linked to the concepts of childhood, learning and education. At a very young age, I began babysitting for some of my parent's friends and this soon evolved to giving guitar and music lessons. I then began working as a sports instructor for holiday camps and assisting my judo teacher with the youngest judokas. I

do not really know how to explain it, but I have always had a special ability for working with children. It is an inherent skill that makes me know what to do and how to do it without any major effort and which has resulted in a lot of satisfaction from the children, their parents and myself. It is simply something very enjoyable for me and, from what it seems, for them as well.

My interest in the concrete topic of learning processes and education comes from those times of joy that I have lived while working with children, a joy that evolved very organically and seemed to fit naturally in the moment of their lives they were in. Together with this came the somewhat uncomfortable reality that it was all taking place within the frame of holidays, during free time or, at the very most, as hobbies – an environment created outside of, and completely separated from, school. School was to be taken seriously; I was the part that was ‘only for fun’. School - the place where we spend the greatest part of our time from the day we turn three or four years old until we are able to decide that we want to stop studying (and then we start working for most of our days to earn money in order to be able to enjoy free time – but that is a topic that I will only address tangentially) - of course that was serious! The joyful organic processes that I was living with those children were only something on the side of it.

When I was in school, none of the questions addressed in this research were an issue for me. I was always a very good student; a model student, I would dare to say. Teachers constantly repeated to me that I would have a bright future, they insisted that I join the most demanding courses (usually sciences, which I politely declined on the grounds that I simply did not like it) and my friends’ parents used me as an example and called me to tutor my own friends. What a wonderful and bright future was awaiting me! How great that I did not commit to the crazy stupidity of choosing something like music as my priority! (Please note the irony here).

During my teenage years, I found that many of my concerns were not even touched upon in school. While I diligently learned every detail of the First and Second World Wars, I remained wondering: What is my purpose in life? What is friendship? What is love? Are the things I am feeling right or wrong? How am I supposed to feel about

this person? How should I react to this situation? Why can I not concentrate and stop thinking about that thing that happened? What is jealousy? Why am I feeling it? Is it all right that I care so much about what others think? How do I stop it? Am I insecure? Why do I feel insecure? And many, many more questions, partly fostered by the hormonal revolution that was surely taking place inside my body at that age. Yet, I never even expected to find the answers in school. I found some comfort in music, poetry, judo, the first weekend encounters with alcohol and parties, and even some TV shows where I witnessed people wonder about the same questions I did. Still, for most of my day I had to sit in a classroom with dozens of people wondering about very similar things, but all too restrained by the situation to ever voice any of it.

Some of my friends and colleagues found in that system a real enemy. As I previously mentioned, my school was extremely concerned about maintaining its high success rates and quality standards. That is why the smallest sign of academic failure resulted in severe punishments, including exclusion from the school system. Four of my classmates were expelled in the last years of school, including one of my best friends who really struggled to finish school. Many other people found their refuge in drugs and partying. Those for whom the system did work indeed found the brilliant futures my teachers referred to, and are now young, well-paid workers of renowned banks or international organizations.

I began to follow an equally successful path when I began my studies at Maastricht University, a place that not only allowed me to shape my promised future, but which furthermore quenched some of my thirst for living, thinking and seeing differently. The methodology in my first university encouraged debate and discussion, independent and critical thinking, respect for all opinions and an “agree to disagree” approach. Intellectually, it was extremely challenging and satisfying. However, all other aspects remained untouched. My mind was, throughout the three years of my Bachelor Degree, always active and fit, getting stronger and wiser each day with all the input and interactions I received from interesting colleagues. My body, my heart, my soul, my spirituality, and all of the existential questions that remained with me were things that I should rather keep to myself and maybe work on... during my free time.

During those years when I was also waiting for my brilliant future to come, I always felt oddly inspired by Nelson Mandela's famous quote: "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world". Now that I have different ideas of what the terms 'brilliant' and 'future' mean, my feelings towards the sentence have also changed. There is something that remains unchanged: I am convinced that the first years of life, the way in which we are raised and the environment in which we up, shapes our vision of the world, our mindset, the way we learn to feel and to relate to ourselves and to others. I extensively develop my ideas on education and learning in the following chapters, but for the moment let me present the question that I very often asked myself before beginning this research, and which led to it: If the way in which we grow up is so determinant of the person we become, why do questions about joy, sadness, feelings and emotions remain almost untouched during the decades, where we spend more than a quarter of each day in school, we grow up?

Slowly, through my time in university, my time travelling, the many people I met and the connecting power of the internet, I came in contact with ideas and streams of thought that proposed a different reality from the one I had lived. I also gradually realized the dangers of generalization, and I began to acknowledge the wonderful diversity of the world, which makes it impossible for me to claim that things are a certain way or to propose a one-size-fits-all solution. That is exactly why I believe this author's perspective is so important. I am not writing anything that has not been invented yet, nor am I claiming that what I write is feasible, needed or even worth reading for anyone. Much to the contrary, I am only writing from my experience, from those many years of upbringing that shaped me, the opportunities I had, the challenges I encountered, the people I met and how they influenced my life. I am writing something that begins in my experience and is developed through the thoughts and feelings of the person I am. The way that it does or does not resonate in different contexts and for different people is something that I leave for each individual to assess.

1.5. Scientifically proven: Struggles

The underlying questions of my research emerge from this upbringing in an environment where an immense value is placed on rationality. One of the key sentences with which I have always had a difficult time is the expression 'scientifically proven'. The way I was educated in school, the way that people around me engaged in debates and the way that the media and influences surrounding this upbringing portrayed facts were all departing from the assumption that, as long as something could not be 'scientifically proven', there would be no reason to believe that it existed. Everything that had been 'scientifically proven' was a reality. Anything else was nothing but a belief, hypothesis, or speculation but could never be used as an argument or as a way to reach understanding.

This vision of reality and truth was for me always reflected in the connotation given to many other things. For instance, when certain subjects had to be taken in school in order to qualify you for one study path or another, it was always implied (and even explicitly manifested) that natural sciences and economics were the tough subjects, meant for more intelligent people. Social sciences, languages and humanities were the weak subjects, the ones that everyone was able to pass and therefore meant for the least intelligent people. Needless to say, an even more significant implication (or consequence, depending on the analysis drawn) was the fact that boys were expected to choose the path of natural sciences to a much larger extent than girls, whereas girls were first expected to choose social sciences or languages.

From an early age, then, I spent most of the day time in an institution where I was taught what to learn. Everything that was worth learning could be written in books divided into subjects, and none of it had anything to do with things like music, aesthetics, friendship or love. This resulted in many aspects of my personality being neglected. Among everything that was actually worth learning, the classes I enjoyed the most were considered to be the easiest ones, the ones meant for less intelligent students. Since I have always considered myself an intelligent person, this raised many questions in me and began to open a certain criticism towards the connotations that my interests, subjects and concerns carried. This is when I began to wonder whether everything needed to be

‘scientifically proven’. Many things that seemed to be right in the eyes of science did not quite match the way I was feeling.

As I grew up, moved away and lived my life, I began to see the deeper implications of the presentation of certain things (like choosing subjects in school), and the wider meaning that it had for the whole vision of the world. I became aware that the world, as it had been presented to me for many years, was divided into categories, polarized into dichotomies, and based on absolute truths. Everything was made to fit into a box, and all boxes were given a moral value. Everything that was not yet ‘scientifically proven’ was given the same validity by a carefully designed value matrix of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or ‘right’ and ‘wrong’.

During my Bachelor studies, this led me to never-ending dilemmas and arguments within myself. This turmoil was sometimes related to political and social issues but, more importantly, also to personal topics and internal questions. My sexuality, my religion, my relationship towards others or the next steps to take in life were only some of the questions I could not find answers to. It was very difficult for me to find my own, personal opinion and feeling towards something and to get to know myself at a deeper level. It was a constant struggle to separate external influences from the person who I wanted to discover that I was.

My initial reaction was to state my opinions and positions even more strongly, as if I had to convince others about something when, in reality, the only person I wanted to convince was myself. Some of the more personal topics soon developed into very unhealthy patterns and I went through some time of a rough relationship with myself. The inability to get to know myself deeply, as well as the many open questions I did not even dare to pose, evolved into frustration and, later, into a growing inability to love myself. If I had to bring all the complexity down to a nutshell, I would dare to say that it kept coming back to the issue: Who am I, really? Who do I want to be? And how can I get to know those answers?

I am not so naïve as to think there is ever an answer to those questions! However, the key difference for me, and the reason why I began to feel better about myself after a time

of self-doubt, questioning and lack of confidence, was twofold: first, I actually allowed myself to be confronted with those questions; and second, I initiated the processes to begin learning about how I, personally, could cope with those questions. I admitted that I needed to do things that I had before seen as weaknesses: I went to therapy, I began to write, cry, sing, listen, feel – and I began to accept that I was doing all of that.

A difficult decision that I had to take was to reject a paid internship offer from an NGO in the Philippines. Instead, I was able to recognize that I needed to dedicate time to myself at home and returned to Brussels. Shortly after beginning the introspection phase that was new to me, I serendipitously arrived at the MA Program in Peace, Security, Development and International Conflict Transformation, which helped me to make sense out of some of the feelings and thoughts that had been with me the previous years.

As I write this part of my Master Thesis, I am living in Cologne starting a new working life. Throughout the writing process, I have lived in Berlin for one year, worked as a language teacher, gotten to know dozens of new people, secured a job, travelled back and forth to Spain and Brussels, written hundreds of verses of songs and fallen in and out of balance repeatedly. No matter when you, dear reader, come in contact with this text, many of those things will have repeated themselves over and over again; I will probably be a different person in many senses and exactly the same in others. What you know from me through this text until now is especially relevant because this research is based not only on what I have lived, but on who I am today. It is both the questions that have been so present for me in the last years, the means that I have found to be able to cope with them, and some of the answers that I have so far been provided with.

2. Research Puzzle

We call for artistic works, but we rarely fashion environments that can truly support and inspire them. We call for parental involvement, but are loathe to share ownership, responsibility, and credit with parents. We recognize the need for community, but we so often crystallize immediately into interest groups. We hail the discovery method, but we do not have the confidence to allow children to follow their own noses and hunches. We call for debate, but often spurn it; we call for listening, but we prefer to talk; we are affluent, but we do not safeguard those resources that can allow us to remain so and to foster the affluence of others. (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998)

The quote of this American educator expresses the frustrations that I experienced in the system in much greater detail and puts into words the experience, I began to realize, that many of us share. From his perspective as an educator, he blends together the institutional shortcomings of school with its impact on the experience of children as the human beings they are, to in the end expressing what I believe is the underlying puzzle that gave origin to my research: the concept of being a child implies the need to go to school, and school is therefore understood as the answer to prepare children for adulthood, for real life. Yet, the way the school is produced as a system inevitably leaves untouched those questions that are crucial for children, adults, and everyone in between – for human beings in general.

2.1. The Puzzle

Although this is an underlying topic of this research, it was not the source of origin of my ideas. When I began thinking about research that would fulfil me, I thought about children. Children – not as the product of school, but as human beings who have not yet had the time to be consumed by modern society or by a rational system of interactions; children - who therefore represent for me many of the beautiful things in life: improvisation, feeling, passion, expression, joy, artistic creation, love, rage, trust, eagerness, authenticity, enthusiasm, tears, laughter. I began thinking about my research interest as wanting to explore why and how, in the course of life leading to adulthood, this authentic, deep experience of life that I believe children represent gets, to some extent, lost. This statement, of course, comes only from my personal experience and is not the

absolute truth - it is simply a snapshot of the questions, concerns and passions that are in my mind and heart due to my lived experiences, and which guide me to this research¹.

It was when I approached one of my best friends with my ideas that my first frustrations arrived. After I finished telling her about my interests, she was very clear: how could I look at children and childhood, and the processes leading into adulthood, without entering into an evaluation of the school system? Coming from a law and politics background (from a Spanish University and thus, I would argue, very representative of the rational emphasis I am talking about), she insisted on the need for a careful analysis of the school curriculum and how it influences everything I meant to study. After some discussion, she finally said something that made a lot of sense to me: children spend most of their time in school. Except for exceptional cases, the countries where I have lived and been raised share mandatory institutionalized school systems, obligatory until the age of 15 at minimum. She was right; how could I possibly leave out such a relevant part of our lives?

There was my first dilemma and then, source of inspiration. I did not want to enter into any debate about the school system because I believe that children are so much more than what can be taught in such a rigid institution as a school. “What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught. Rather, it is in large part due to the children’s own doing as a consequence of their activities and our resources” (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998, 67). That was it for me! Interactions with friends, family, neighbours, with the toys, alone in their rooms, thinking, singing, playing... All those moments are the moments that shape a person.

There it was again! Of course schools were relevant in my research, because schools are the place where most children spend a great amount of their time. Schools, from how I saw it, did everything but encourage those moments and interaction that shape a person and make him or her flourish. In Holt’s view, school is “something that some

1. In order to guide the reader towards my research question, I consciously use sentences that are generalizations and even exaggerations. With this awareness in mind, I invite the reader to keep my personal perspective, as written in the previous chapter, in mind, taking into account that all of those statements arise from my personal livings and experiences. The next invitation would be to trust that in the upcoming chapters I will open up the room for the pertinent discussions with different authors and theories and come to specify and concretize those generalizations.

people do to others for their own good, molding and shaping them, and trying to make them learn what they think they ought to know” (Holt 2004, 1)². The complexity of that sentence and the idea that schools are not *per se* a good or necessary thing (but perhaps the contrary) were probably the reasons for my initial impulse to look in the opposite direction. Slowly, I came to reflect on statements like this one and came to realize that, without the need to position myself in that regard yet, I had to accept that schools are a very significant part of the topic that I was interested in researching.

The school system then entered the equation. Without wanting to demonize anything still as vague as the concept of school or education, I began to take into account the way in which I had experienced school. I began searching for part of the reason why all of that joy and authenticity, all of that fullness and richness of life that I have always witnessed in children, slowly become lost on the way to becoming an older human.

Being aware that I would not be able to provide a definite answer to anyone, I nevertheless looked for possibilities in my own experience. What had helped me get to know myself better? What had allowed me to pose those questions to myself which were not spoken out loud during my upbringing? What contributed, and still contributes, to making me feel better about myself? And later, how can this possibly be integrated into the current understanding of schools?

One of the many answers, and an especially powerful one, is music. Powerful because of the effect it has on me, but also because of the beautiful realization that it also has a similar effect on most people I have met through my life. From what songs, writings and popular sayings tell me, music also has this effect on many more people in the world. “The lovely thing with the music is that we don’t have to be limited by the way that words are limited by our rational minds” (Parker 2016, 00:01:38 - 00:01:44).

This is because music, despite the powerful effect it is known to have on the human experience, is one of the subjects relegated to the background by the institution of education. Music, just like arts, is given one of the smallest roles in school curricula,

2. Although, as I also discuss in further chapters, Holt’s views rather lean towards a more extreme vision of schools than the one I share, I still believe his strong statements add value to the understanding of the picture that I want to convey

a structure justified by the still governing “idea that the arts are somehow intellectually undemanding, emotive rather than reflective operations done with the hand and somehow unattached to the head” (Eisner 2004, xi). The education system generally discourages children from pursuing anything that is linked to music, from thinking of it as anything else than a hobby, and even from spending time engaging with it (Narey 2008).

Music, for me, is the answer as well as part of the problem. It is paradoxically used by the same system to justify itself and its validity. Nevertheless, it did allow me to discover new avenues that I was never shown by that very system. This is where a new problem arises: music, as it is taught and presented in school, is not the kind of music I wanted to talk about in this research. I want to talk about the goosebumps I feel when dozens of unknown people join in to sing a song at a street karaoke. About the unique moment of connectedness I feel when singing together around a fireplace. About the means of expression that my guitar provides me with, giving me the ability to express all the feelings that words, tears or shouts could never. All of that is, by no means, the way I learned music in school or the conservatory. Much to the contrary, the music of the school curricula is often carefully built to follow a system of ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ and encourage competition, discipline and perfection – an exhausting walk on the never-ending path towards society’s ideals.

That frustration led me, again, to a new source of inspiration. What was the link missing between the factors in my equation: children, education and music? I know there are shortcomings in education because I have lived them. I know there is potential in music because I have experienced it. I know the relevance of the first years of childhood because I trust in human nature as a positive energy. I asked myself: if all of those factors are in constant interaction with one another, what was I missing in the bigger picture? It is in the person that I have become today that I began to feel part of that answer. In the experiences that I have had seeing people work with children and groups (and from being a part of those groups), I found the other part.

As I explained before, the skill that I have with children is not something I have consciously chosen; it is simply part of who I am. I am sure that many people share this

natural joy for working with children and groups in general. I could never articulate what the key is to making things work when I interact with a group of children (or adults, for that matter) because it is not a specific thing. Much to the contrary, it is the openness to accept that it can be anything. It is a feeling, an intuition, a willingness to let it flow.

My own learning processes, my own experience of who I am and my spaces for growth have most fostered when the conditions for an opening, understanding, empathic space have been in place. Ever since I was very young, I remember having teachers, mentors or family members with whom I felt I was able to be myself; that made me find peace with who I was and gave me the strength to experience more of it. In this research, I wanted to explore what it is, from the side of the person with whom the child is interacting, that opens up the room for the child to trust herself, to be herself, to experience herself. That way of doing things, or simply being, fostered a different kind of learning: a learning understood as the non-judged experience of life, with whatever that might entail. I wanted to look at what possible ways there might be for this to happen, and whether (as was the case for me), music can play a positive role in these situations.

In the search for a methodology or terminology that would describe that skill, that feeling, I came across the idea and deeper understanding of Elicitive Facilitation – a way of providing a group with the space to dive together into a process; a manner to guide the flow of things without interfering with it; a way of being. It is simply a proposal of an approach which, I believe, can bridge the elements of music with the frustrations of personal unfolding during childhood. Whether or not it does, and to what extent it does is what I explore in this research.

2.2. The Research

The research question that guides the red thread throughout my research is the following:

**How can the experience of music, facilitated in an elicitive manner,
contribute to personal unfolding during childhood?**

Within the process of answering this questions, and with the purpose of facilitating it, I will pay especial attention to the following two subquestions:

2. *Research Puzzle*

1. In which ways can music accompany, especially during childhood, the processes of self-awareness and contribute to a fuller understanding of ourselves and others?
2. How can elicitive facilitation be understood and integrated within the framework of learning and education?

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research, the way I elaborated the questions, and the manner in which the links are drawn are a reflection of the underlying ontologies and etymologies presented later as the foundations and departing points of this research. I have chosen research methodologies and methods that consider the individual as a whole, complex human in constant relation with others and the environment, and not only a subject to be studied or investigated. I choose modes of conducting qualitative research that enable me to observe and convey the interconnectedness of systems and the complexity of phenomena.

“Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 3). With this objective, I am not fixed to one path. In the process of putting the pieces of this research together, I see myself as a *bricoleuse*¹, in the idea of the concept that Denzin Lincoln (2005) and Kincheloe (2001) proposed. The word of French origin usually describes a handywoman who makes use of whatever tools are at her disposal to create or repair an object (Kincheloe 2001).

In research, the *bricoleur* is the interdisciplinary researcher who understands the complexity of life and tries to dive deeper into it by bringing together different methods, modes of knowing and research presentation (Kincheloe 2001). “The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 5). Strategies, methods, materials, tools, and techniques are deployed, created, and pieced together as the *bricoleur* considers it necessary throughout the research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), with the objective of deepening the understanding of the reality that the *bricoleur* perceives.

For me, another thing is essential about the technique of *bricolage*, in addition to

1. *Bricoleuse* is the feminine term, in French, for *bricoleur*. Please note that, in this specific case, I use the feminine to refer to myself as a woman. However, throughout the rest of the text, I use the feminine and masculine pronouns interchangeably as a way to face the debate on grammatical gender dominance.

the integration of different tools and methods: the acknowledgement that the qualitative researcher, the *bricoleur*, or, in this case, myself, will not reach a definite truth. “In this dynamic context, bricoleurs work to avoid pronouncements of final truth. Because of the changing and impermanent nature of the world, bricoleurs propose compelling insights into their engagement with reality and the unresolved contradictions that characterize such interactions” (Kincheloe 2005, 327). Accepting, embracing, and working with contradictions and paradoxes are an essential element of my research, my ontology, and my way of working through the data.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) metaphorically equate the terms of ‘montage’ or ‘jazz improvisation’, among others, to the idea of *bricolage*; terms that depict processes in which “Many different things are going on at the same time - different voices, different perspectives, points of view, angles of vision” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 5). I personally would extend the metaphorical validity of jazz improvisation to all kind of music composition. To me, *bricolage* is to research what composing is to music: it is the act of creating a unique song with different instruments. Each song varies in the way it is composed, in the number of instruments that are played, the way they are played, and the style in which the sound flows. Each song is also different, depending on the ear of the listener; it can be interpreted in as many ways as people listen to it. When listening to a song, many of us may recognize a sensation of knowing exactly what the composer was going through when writing it; a sensation of relatedness to what is being played, as if that particular song had been written for us. Songs do not intend to be the best, one, or only in the world, but simply exist to be one more piece of music that contributes to an expression of the human experience, of emotion, of life. This research is a composition, created with the tools I can best use, that aims to convey a reality and an experience in the deepest, most comprehensive way I can. I hope that it will resonate in the hearts and minds of some readers as if it had been their own.

I have engaged with Participatory Action Research, with ethics that strongly resemble those proposed by Indigenous Research. The way of collecting data or, as I would prefer to call it, of assembling knowledge, include introspection, interviews, intuitive drawings

made by children, and empathic understanding. Let me now try to explain how all of these methods were integrated to compose the song.

3.1. The Workshop

In order to look into my research question, “How can the experience of music, facilitated in an elicitive manner, contribute to personal unfolding during childhood?”, I considered it necessary to actually work with children and music in parallel to reading literature and writing about it. Furthermore, it was the perfect opportunity for me to return to something that I had once truly enjoyed doing: working with children.

Instead of simply identifying an existing job or project involving children and music, where I would need to compromise my vision with the needs or requests of an organization, I decided to develop my own concept and project proposal. The proposed project involved a five-session workshop on music for exploring the inner world of emotions and working on trust, self-confidence, and the relational aspects of the group through the experience of music.

Based on Gabrielle Roth’s understanding of life processes (which include group processes as well), she proposed five stages through which such processes tend to go: flowing, staccatto, chaos, lyrical and stillness (Roth 1998). Although I did not follow her understanding of these steps in detail, I do resonate with the idea that, in a group, one first gets used to being there, with the group, in the space. Then she prepares for the peak of the process to arrive and begins to feel confident about being part of that particular group. Afterwards, a time of constant interactions, actions, happenings and confusion (internal and external) begins. The energy then transforms, the tension dissolves and joy is allowed. Finally, the process fades and leaves room for a new one - and so it happens constantly in life².

My idea was to use image of a wave in which processes happen in order to shape the workshop content and understand the group dynamics and energies better. I wanted it to be a process with a beginning and an end - even if short, I believed it could still be enriching

2. More detailed information on this concept of life as a wave and the five different stages can be found in her books *Sweat Your Prayers* (1998) and *Maps to Ecstasy* (1998)

to bear that understanding in mind. This is how I developed the first draft of how this five-session workshop would look like. I submitted the proposal to eight international (French, English, and Spanish speaking) schools in Berlin and received positive answers from 4 of them.

After considering the different possibilities, I decided to move forward with the first person I came in contact with: Karole Gizolme, a journalist and mother of two children at the Judith-Kerr-School, a French-German school in Berlin. She was, above all, a person who believed in my initiative and demonstrated true interest in exploring what could emerge from it with me. When I met her in February 2017, she had already been facilitating, extracurricular French classes for about one year, for children who do not speak French at home and who can, therefore, feel insecure in school or are even discriminated against by other children because of their language skills. More than just teaching French classes, Karole created safe spaces for children to feel confident in interacting with other children in French, to improve their language skills, and to play and have fun without the fear of not being good enough. She was working two groups of children, aged six to ten, with whom she had one session per week. She offered me the opportunity to come to her sessions and see for myself if I thought I could bring the musical element into these groups.

After accepting this great opportunity, I visited Karole's activities, got to know the children, had a few talks with her and revisited my concept and idea of the workshop. We agreed on hosting five sessions with two groups, where one-and-a-half hours would be dedicated to the music workshops. In this research, I will refer to one of the groups as 'Group V', out of the word *vendredi* in French, for that group that took place on Fridays, and to the other as 'Group M', for the word *mercredi* in French and, thus, the group that took place on Wednesdays. It is also important to take into account that, in order to respect their anonymity, I have substituted the real names of the children by fictitious names.

3.2. Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was developed as an attempt to shift the whole paradigm of research; it was a new way of understanding research in which the people involved would not only be the subjects of study or investigation, but they would also be considered as human beings actively involved in the process of researching. They would have a voice throughout that process (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). To me, PAR can be put simply as a way of doing research *with*, instead of doing research *about*.

PAR takes place when the researcher enters into the natural sphere where the research takes place. She comes into contact with the people who are involved with a conscious awareness that they are whole human beings who interact with each other and with herself; the research begins from there. “It involves learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 564). It is a research on a certain reality, on certain things that are taking place and do take place. The research is an attempt to deepen the knowledge of that reality.

Before beginning the workshops, I went to Karole’s sessions as a participant, to get to know the children and to get to know her, her way of working, and the way she interacted with the children. I was aware that I was a new element in the constellation and, as such, I would have an impact on whatever we would do together. It was crucial for me to try to keep this awareness during the time that the workshop took place. Before each music session, we would all have something to eat together, just like Karole and the children typically did at the beginning of her sessions. It was also important for me that Karole was still present, as my co-facilitator but especially as a reference person for the children.

“In doing participatory action-research (PAR), you enter into the process as an ignorant. You start by recognizing your ignorance and working with it” (Ornelas 1997, 140). This ignorance is what allows the researcher to find common meaning with the people involved. If research begins with an answer in mind, or with certainties in the head, it is very difficult to remain open to what the research might bring and especially to what other people might bring to the research. This openness and recognition of my own ignorance about the world of those children was crucial to actually deepen into what we

lived, instead of remaining on the surface of what was already on my mind.

Another key topic, that remained present throughout the time that I worked with the children, was trust. “This is one of the major questions of PAR. As an outsider, you will always be marginalized until the group trusts you. That trust will be built by working with the group, living with them, doing what they do” (Ornelas 1997, 143). Outside of research, in my life, trust is also one of the most complex issues to me; not only because of how hard it can be to build, but also because of all the complexities that trust entails in a relationship. In this case, I was aware that the trust needed to be worked on, and I believed it was crucial to build this trust in order to really *see* them and so that they could *see* me. Not only by looking with our eyes, which is the usual understanding of ‘seeing’ someone, but most importantly by understanding each other with our hearts. We needed to get to know one other and truthfully share our experiences instead of our masks.

In this regard, collaborating with Karole, whom the children truly seemed to trust, helped me a lot. She invited me to activities outside the framework of the workshops, mostly school-related activities, in which I not only got to know the children better but I could also get involved with their environments, their families, their interests and their daily lives. This was essential and I felt that with each passing week they trusted me more and more. By the last session, they showed me that the trust had evolved into love. Trust was challenging and, like most challenging things, it was beautiful.

Once the key factors are in place and the basis for substantial work to be done *with* a group is established, the process of research continues. Denzin and Lincoln describe this process in PAR as a succession of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, then doing this again and again. Indeed, I can see this reflected in how I conducted the workshop. The carefully laid plan that I had for the five weeks was nothing more than that: a plan. In reality, what we actually did continued to change according to the observations I made during the workshops and the reflections that were given by the children and Karole. “In reality, the process might not be as neat as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests. The stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 563).

This happened because I was aware of my own ignorance and open to listening, and responding, to the needs and requests of the group. This is very much related to one of the key issues that occupy this research: elicitive facilitation. At the same time, it is intrinsically related to what PAR actually is: recognizing individuals as such and, therefore, recognizing their voice. “PAR aims to help people recover, and release themselves from, the constraints of irrational, unproductive, unjust, and unsatisfying social structures that limit their self-development and self-determination” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 567). Had I not listened, reflected and changed those initial plans, I would have done nothing but reproduce those same structures.

I do believe it is easy to fall into it: I think I have an answer for how to do things better, I come into an environment to demonstrate how it works, and I unconsciously end up reproducing the kind of model that ignores the voices of those involved. That is why, throughout the research, it was always crucial for me to keep in mind that I do not have the truth in my hand. I come with doubts, I come in contact with other human beings whose trust we have to mutually earn, and I remain open to change, reflection and re-planning.

There is an added difficulty to this when working with children, coming from the widespread assumption that children are not yet prepared to take their own decisions wisely – an idea on which I will elaborate in the upcoming chapters. Having found myself unable to find an ethic of research when working with children that I agree with, I utilize the foundations of Indigenous research, which I believe are applicable when conducting research with any group whose voice has been tamed or is considered “not as...” as the researcher, be it civilized, smart, knowledgeable, or experienced.

3.3. Ethics

In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2008), Linda Tuhawai Smith elaborates on the idea of how “the West” has made reason, rationality, and science the ultimate point of reference for truth. Through this claim, “the West” has managed to make universal its own differentiation of what is acceptable or unacceptable in terms of knowledge, research tools, methodologies, ontologies, epistemologies, and everything else that can contribute

to creating an idea of the world. “The globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of ‘civilized’ knowledge” (Smith 1999, 63).

Smith’s book is focused on how this supremacist self-perception has ended up underestimating, repressing and, ultimately, eliminating the voices of indigenous research. “The effect of such discipline was to silence (forever in some cases) or to suppress the ways of knowing, and the languages for knowing, of many different indigenous peoples” (Smith 1999, 69). I find the terminology “languages of knowing” especially beautiful as it depicts the concept of utilizing different means to reach deeper understanding. As well, I find it an illustrative coincidence that the same terminology reappears in later chapters of this thesis, when talking about the book *The Hundred Languages of Children*, describing the Reggio Emilia approach. It is indicative of the many similarities that I see in Tuhawai Smith’s analysis with the attitude that is taken towards children and conducting research with (or, in many cases, *about*) children. Many of her ideas and ethical foundations match my own beliefs and the ethics on which I have carried out this research.

To give a more concrete example of how I establish this parallel, let me highlight Smith’s observation on the difference between ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’ beings that “the West” establishes.

The arguments of different indigenous peoples based on spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape and to stones, rocks, insects and other things, seen and unseen, have been difficult arguments for Western systems of knowledge to deal with or accept. These arguments give a partial indication of the different world views and alternative ways of coming to know, and of being, which still endure within the indigenous world (Smith 1999, 74)

I believe that children, regardless of origin, see the meaning in many of those things as well. During childhood, the capability of relating to inanimate beings or inexplicable phenomena remains virtually intact. Imagination, drawing, playing, coming in touch with the natural environment, story-telling... all those aspects of childhood are ways of understanding the world that, in Western systems of knowledge, simply do not merit to be considered at the same level as science. This is why I would reduce “the West”, as used

by Smith, to a figure of the Western adult who considers science and rationality to be the only admissible truth.

In this sense, my most important ethical concern is not to fall into the belief (in which I have been raised and educated) that I, as a researcher, necessarily “know better” than the children with whom I am researching. I may or I may not, but it is not a given that simply emerges out of the fact that they are children. At the same time, I cannot forget that I am the one doing the research, integrating all the different elements, and creating the rhythms to put all the instruments into the song. In order to be able to keep both things in mind, I have used tools that allow me to give the children the voice they have while, at the same time, blending their voices with my own and with what I have to say and what I have experienced.

3.4. Tools

3.4.1. Intuitive Drawing

Vygotsky, a theorizer on children’s imagination, proposes that drawing is, until the age of nine, the best means of expression for children (Vygotsky 2004). Since their vocabulary and capacity to synthesize is not yet fully developed, drawing becomes the path into their inner worlds. Michael and Rajuan (2009) agree with him: “drawings, more than verbal modes of expression, provide the best means for projection of the unconscious levels of the individual’s inner group” (Michael and Rajuan 2009, 74). Furthermore, I believe that other modes of communicating the inner experience require a lot of openness and trust as, for instance, with interviews. By drawing, we are able to express ourselves without needed to convey any explicit idea. The possibility of abstraction, the room it leaves for imagination, and the opportunities for expressiveness make drawing an ideal tool for children to express themselves.

These reasons are why drawings were an important part of the communication between me and the children during my research, and why they are also important between the children and the reader. After each session, I gave the children the possibility to draw whatever they wanted in that moment. I would play some calm music in the background

or play a piece on the guitar myself. We had colour pens, pencils, crayons, finger paintings and sometimes even foam rolls and brushes to let them enjoy themselves in the process. Although most of the times they drew individually, I did ask them to draw big communal pictures on two different occasions. They did not have to agree on what to draw but simply share the space for expression. Many of the pictures produced are presented in this thesis. While I do not aim to interpret them, I do like to provide the reader with the background and context on which they were drawn. I leave the rest open to individual interpretation.

3.4.2. Empathic Understanding

Following my ethics and objectives, I do not want to read into the experience of the children as something that deviates from their true experience. However, as I do have to draw conclusions and put words to their deepened understanding, I make use of empathic understanding and listening skills in order to remain as in contact as possible with what is actually there. By keeping an authentic, empathic contact with others, I intend not to get lost in my own interpretations and let the children have their own voices.

Hart (2000) describes empathy as “understanding and ‘feeling into’ another’s world” (Hart 2000, 2). What he calls “empathic distress” is the feeling that one has when something happens to another person, as if it had happened to her. This is something that babies show – it is simply human to feel as others feel. “Empathic understanding”, however, requires for him the awareness of the experience. It is the “empathic distress”, together with the awareness that it is not happening to oneself, that creates an empathic experience. That is the kind of empathic understanding that I use for this research.

Without being able to explain how or why I am able to do this, I think that simply having worked with children for some time now, and enjoying doing it, helps me to relate to them at this level. Maybe I simply cannot understand what exact tool it is that I use because “deep empathy is not a technique but a way of being” (Hart 2000, 17). We can all understand empathically, it is within ourselves and our innate ability to relate to others (Rogers 2004). The key is to bring this ability to our awareness - and that is what I do. Within my research as well as in daily life, I practice daily awareness, presence, and full

attention, in order to understand in an empathic manner and drift away from my own interpretations and projections.

One thing that I do consider crucial for this deep empathy to take place, and which I did apply during the workshops, is presence: being there for the children, for Karole, for the parents, for everyone involved in the research. “Listening or paying attention permits empathy” (Hart 2000, 17). Using empathic understanding allowed me to feel into the world of the children in order to, in turn, convey it here.

3.4.3. Interviews and Conversations

During the time that my research was taking place, I had regular conversations with Karole Gizolme, my co-facilitator and the person of reference to the children and parents. She gave me constant and deep feedback and shared her opinion on how things were going, how children were or were not changing, what was new for her in their behaviour, and what was not. As she has known the children for much longer than I have, her feedback was extremely valuable for me, as she could relate the things that we sensed and felt to the previous experiences of the children in the group. Being able to compare and having another opinion on what we were doing was enriching for my process during the workshop. It is also reflected in the research presented here.

3.4.4. Introspection

It was important (although not always easy) to me not to forget why I was doing this research and how I am related to it. Music was the essential bridge to answer this question. Throughout the research, workshop, and writing processes, I continued to play guitar, sing, compose, and attend concerts – all that I usually do. However, this time, I turned on the internal observer that made me constantly aware of what was happening to me in relation to music, and how that contributed to this research.

4. Theoretical foundations

4.1. Peace Philosophy

The underlying philosophy of this research, which accompanies every step, every argument and every conclusion, is based on Wolfgang Dietrich's *Many Peaces* philosophy and the idea of *transrationality*. In an attempt to identify two dominant ways in which peace could be viewed, Dietrich conducted a long, deep and wide research based on his field experience in peace and conflict work and the different interpretations of history and culture. The result of that search for two major understandings turned out to be a (imperfect and fluid) classification of what he calls the *five peace families*: five worldviews that can serve as lenses to understand peace, or five different ways in which peace can be conceived (Dietrich 2012).

Based on a complex set of historical, cultural, scientific, empirical, and philosophical arguments, Dietrich argues that those predominant understandings are: energetic, moral, modern, post-modern, and transrational. He clarifies that they do not imply any chronological order, but rather that they are ubiquitous, and that this classification is not finished or absolute. Much to the contrary, it is only an attempt to group an idea which, he recognises, has as many different interpretations as people on earth (Dietrich 2012).

This classification is relevant not only to understand the acceptance of diversity and subjectivity from which I depart, but especially to get a grasp on the transrational philosophy that floats silently throughout the research. It is important in order to open up the paradoxes, embrace the plurality, and accept the question marks that remain throughout the paper. In full acknowledgement of the complexity of the philosophy of the many peaces, I now turn to a simplified explanation of what the key aspects of each of these interpretations are to me, as well as how I understand *transrationality*.

4.1.1. Many Peaces

The classification of the different understandings of what peace means is based on different ways of looking at the world (Dietrich 2012). The energetic understanding of peace departs

from a worldview with "no ultimate values, but only dynamic relations" (Dietrich 2012, 30). Systems, people and relationship are in constant transformation, always tending to balance themselves with their own resources. If things are let be, they gravitate towards balance, so that there is no need for absolute ideas of 'right' and 'wrong' or what there 'ought to be' (Dietrich 2012).

Dualities are, from this perspective, non-existent. Everything is contained within everything else. There is no just 'good', because in all the 'good' there is 'bad'; similarly, nothing is only 'bad', because in all the 'bad' there is always 'good'. All of those, which could be considered dualities, actually exist *within* each other, so that no separation is possible (Dietrich 2012).

Energetic peace is thus never a state and it is not tied to objective conditions. This peace begins on the inside of the self and spreads from there as a harmonious vibration into society, nature, and the universe. The human being who does not first look for peace within herself will not find it on the outside, because there is no objectifiable peace there. (Dietrich 2012, 56-57)

An energetic understanding of peace is, therefore, probably the hardest one to grasp for the rational mindset. It is the acceptance of a dynamic balance, the dissolution of dichotomies, the correspondence of the inside and the outside. It is peace out of harmony.

It differs in form and substance (although it does not constitute an antagonism) from the moral understanding of peace, which can be best identified in the morality proposed by monotheist religions. The figure of God justifies the definition of the 'rights' and the 'wrongs', and the 'goods' and the 'bads' simply from its existence (Dietrich 2012).

Such dualities are necessary from a moral understanding, because a moral superiority requires standards to guide itself through. One has to strive to do 'better' and regret having done 'bad'. "The worst has to lie in the past, and the better in the future" (Dietrich 2012, 114). Peace is therefore understood as the justice that comes when those who do 'bad' are punished and those who do 'good' are rewarded.

In the moral understanding, those standards and absolute truths are justified by God. In a modern understanding, those truths are logical deductions that come from the rationality of man, here considered to be a flawless instrument. There is a search for the one and only truth, and the fact that truth is singular is possible because if all men are

endowed with reason, this reason has the power of guiding men to full knowledge of the world.

The notion of many peaces is inaccessible for such an approach. All human beings have to be objectified so that their commonalities can be found. There can be only one peace here, which is as codified and uniform as the human rights that form the core principle of this modern image of humankind. (Dietrich 2012, 147)

It is important to note that, when I use the notion of 'modern' throughout this research, I am referring to this idea of modernity as the worldview in which rationality is placed as the highest quality and resource of man. It is the worldview with which I am most familiar and which dominates in most of my surroundings and, as I argue throughout this paper, in academic debates, schools and political discussions.

The post-modern approach, which I can also resonate with, is the doubt and questioning of this worldview through that same quality of reason and without the ability to provide a satisfactory alternative (for the person holding that view). "Posmodernity does not relate to an epoch but to a mentality and state of mind, namely the one in which people do not believe in the great narration" proposed by modernity (Dietrich 2012, 162).

A key point here is that modernity is not eliminated as a possible truth or dominant paradigm; it is not completely rejected but simply put into doubt in a profound way. The main difference with modernity is that, although it remains accepted as a possible truth, it is not the *only* truth. Many other truths are accepted, encouraged and welcomed as possible realities. Peace is the result of this acceptance, of this plurality.

4.1.2. Transrational Perspectives

It is in this acceptance of plurality, in this recognition of the many possible truths, that the transrational understanding of peace has its origins - and reaches beyond it. The word 'transrational' originates from the term 'transpersonal' in 'transpersonal psychology'. That school of psychology originated in the 20th century as a response to the dominance of the Freudian theories in the field of psychoanalysis. The word 'trans' stand for 'going beyond'; in this case, beyond the person, beyond the individual. It was a turn to those aspects of psychology that had been dismissed or even labelled as 'psychosis', such as spiritual experiences (Hartelius and Friedman 2013).

Transpersonal psychology is "an ambitious effort to redefine ourselves as humans and the world as we know it" (Hartelius and Friedman 2013, 3). I consider transrationality, in peace studies, an effort to redefine the way in which peace is understood and that, of course, means redefining the human being and the vision we hold of the world.

Transrational peaces share the postmodern commitment to plurality, but also reintegrate the spiritual component. Transrational implies having passed through the rational, but without clinging to its purely materialistic perspective. Reason is acknowledged as one possible mode of perception, among others. (Echavarria 2014, 63)

A transrational understanding of peace is the acceptance and integration of the different cosmo-visions that one holds, and the acknowledgement that there can be many more held by other people, without excluding the others. This implies that the person is much more than its rationality; it is a whole, complex and unique human being, for whom peace begins at a personal level.

These are the foundations of not only my understanding of peace, but consequently and necessarily my (limited) understanding of the world, human beings and relationships. Having set these foundations, I now move to a more extensive explanation of where I situate myself within this understanding and elaborate on the key points that are necessary to understand my research.

4.2. What it means to be human

Humanistic psychology, the foundations on which I lay down my personal idea of what it means to be a human being, found its golden years between 1954 and 1973, when the writings and contributions of this stream were prolific and numerous authors added themselves to the movement. Its origins can be located in the frustration with, and rejection of, the reductionism observed in previously developed philosophical theories and psychological practices, such as the Freudian understanding of the person or the behavioural stream of thought (Schneider, Bugental, and Pierson 2014).

In an attempt to propose a holistic, integrated understanding of the human being, which would shed some light on mental health and stop focusing on mental illness, Abraham Maslow placed his centre of interest in what he considered were the greatest

achievements of humanity: the most capable individuals, those who had developed their skills and talents to the best of their abilities. He turned to a series of empirical studies with such individuals and proposed his idea of self-actualization, which would later pave the ground for other thinkers in the movement to develop their theories (Schneider, Bugental, and Pierson 2014).

One of these thinkers was the psychotherapist Carl Rogers. Departing from the same fundamental assumptions on the nature of human beings, Rogers produced numerous writings from the conclusions he drew from more than fifty years of experience as a psychotherapist and counsellor. Throughout these years, he developed ‘client-centered therapy’, which was a ground-breaking way of working, and which “provided the central clinical framework for the humanistic therapies” (Schneider, Bugental, and Pierson 2014).

The writings, theories and ideas of these two authors constitute the basis for the conceptual foundations of this thesis. Their idea of the human being, the process of life and the strive for self-actualization are cornerstones in the understanding of my research question. Many others contributed to the overall picture of humanistic psychology and there are other streams and theories relevant to the ideas presented in this thesis. It is, nevertheless, with the writings of Maslow and Rogers that I can best identify myself, with which I can resonate and relate to my own life experiences. What they write corresponds with the life I live, and the way they express it matches how I live it.

4.2.1. Becoming a person

Out of his years-long experience as a therapist, Rogers observes that all his clients – and he believes, all human beings – no matter what problems they initially come to therapy with, always end up asking themselves one question, which ends up being at the core of everything else: Who am I, really? How can I get in touch with this real self, underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself?" (Rogers 2004, 108).

That quest is what he calls the process of ‘becoming a person’, and it is one of the central questions of humanistic psychology. It is the desire to find the true nature of oneself. Rogers believes that this is at the very origin of the rest of the problems that we face in our lives (Rogers 2004). It is a part of being human to have an inner need to

become “that self which one truly is” (Rogers 2004, 166).

A person who finds his true self becomes, according to Rogers, a ‘fully functioning person’ (Rogers 2004) or a ‘fully growing’ and ‘self-fulfilling person’, in Maslow’s words (Maslow 1968). This is “the one in whom all his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed or denied” (Maslow 1968, 5). The suppression and denial, these authors observe, often comes from ideals imposed by society, cultural influences and expectations from the environment. They are ideas of how a person should be that are taken in and, ultimately, form a barrier between the person herself, what we could call the core, and what the person forces herself to be in order to meet those ideas. The ‘fully functioning person’ is, of course, a hypothetical ideal that both Rogers and Maslow believe would reflect the best of what human nature is capable of: a person able to let go of all those ideas and expectations and feel what she is at the core.

For Maslow (1968), here lies the key for the distinction between his concept of a sick and a healthy person, which somewhat differs from the traditional understanding. He challenges the usual distinction that posits the mentally ill as people who suffer from depression, internal struggles or other so-called ‘symptoms’, and brings forward the understanding that all of those are essentially human in nature, and that mental illness is caused by the suppression of such feelings. Let us take a person suffering from depression as an example. For Maslow, this is not a mental illness: it is the natural outer reflection of emotions that a person feels on the inside. To him, it is a part of human life to go through times of sadness, and this is not inherently wrong. Mental illness is, in Maslow’s eyes, the repression of this sadness, the pressure created by the idea that it should not be there. The depressed person is therefore not mentally ill: what creates the cycle of suffering is the idea that what they are going through is wrong.

This can be extended to all of those feelings and emotions that are considered unpleasant and are often avoided. From his point of view, being sad, angry, weak or enraged is nothing but the core of human nature and does not constitute mental illness on its own. It is the repression of it, coming from the fear of societal exclusion and lack of belonging,

which often gives birth to evil in the long run. This is what he calls mental sickness (Maslow 1968). Departing from this standing point, Maslow decided to deviate himself from what psychology had been mostly interested in until then, and he focused on the study of the mentally healthy. His studies and researches took place with people who had reached, according to his observations, a level of self-knowledge that had allowed them to bring out the best of their capabilities.

This is the focus of my interest: what makes it possible for a person to reach this kind of deep self-knowledge that will allow her to bring out the best of her abilities? Can music and elicitive facilitation be two contributing factors? Just like Rogers and Maslow, I focus on exploring the possible ways to get to know our true selves, to reach the core of our being, to accept it as what it is, to feel fulfilled and mentally healthy. Maslow calls this process ‘self-actualization (Maslow 1968, 1997), which is very similar to what Rogers calls ‘becoming a person’. Other thinkers of the stream of humanistic psychology have also come up with different terms to designate the same idea. “Growth, individuation, autonomy, self-actualization, self-development, productiveness, self-realization, are all crudely synonymous, designating a vaguely perceived area rather than a sharply defined concept.” (Maslow 1968, 24). As Maslow himself explains, it is not even desirable for the purposes of humanistic psychology to concretely define the concept. What is essential is to be aware of what the area indicates and work with the idea as it adapts best to our own understanding of being human (Maslow 1968).

In an attempt to gather the characteristics of that area to the best of his knowledge, Rogers observes, especially at the beginning of his clients’ therapy sessions, how they clearly move *away* from something – regardless of what they are moving toward. They move away from the masks, from what they are supposed to be, from every part of their personality that they have built in order to be the person that society considers acceptable. In all of his clients, Rogers can identify the need to move away from the façades that have allowed them to fit into society, but which mostly do not correspond to how they feel inside, to who they are, and to the person they are trying to find. The acknowledgement of those influences is when the masks that cover their true selves begin to fall. “Thus

to an increasing degree he becomes himself – not a façade of conformity to others, not a cynical denial of all feeling, nor a front of intellectual rationality, but a living, breathing, feeling, fluctuating process—in short, he becomes a person" (Rogers 2004, 114).

For both, Rogers and Maslow, it is the creation of the masks, the suppression of the original feelings and emotions, and the adaptation to society that they see their clients move away from. They focus on studying this process of 'unlayering', slowly peeling off the personality traits that were built for fitting into the idea of what one *has* to be. The person who engages in this process is, to Maslow, a mentally healthy person; it is "the one in whom all his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed or denied" (Maslow 1968, 5).

This is a frightening and tough process that implies an initial lack of confidence and making mistakes (Rogers 2004). "Self-actualization does not mean a transcendence of all human problems. Conflict, anxiety, frustration, sadness, hurt, and guilt can all be found in healthy human beings" (Maslow 1968, 210). Accepting oneself is non-detachable from accepting all those unpleasant aspects that conform our nature. At the same time, it leads to an amount of freedom, autonomy and fluidity that allows for the reward of self-appreciation, value and acceptance. It allows to "live more intimately with their feelings of pain, but also more vividly with their feelings of ecstasy; that anger is more clearly felt, but so is love; that fear is an experience they know more deeply, but so is courage." (Rogers 2004, 195).

The significance and importance of engaging in this process does not only lie at the individual level, in the personal acceptance of oneself, but it is also reflected on a communal and societal level. "Sick people are made by a sick culture; healthy people are made possible by a healthy culture. But it is just as true that sick individuals make their culture more sick and that healthy individuals make their culture more healthy" (Maslow 1968, 6). It is for this reason that, just as I agree with Rogers and Maslow that self-actualization is an inherent characteristic of human nature, I argue that engaging with the process of becoming the best version of ourselves is, for each of us, a necessary

step in order to lead a life of appreciation and acceptance towards ourselves and others.

This research takes the idea of 'becoming a person' from these foundations of Rogers' and Maslow's research. I do believe that we are shaped by our environment and I share their idea that, often, ideals and expectations make us build *façades, masks or layers*: the personality traits that we acquire not because they are who we are, but because they are what is expected from us to be¹. The process of self-actualization or of 'becoming a person' is, to me, the process of becoming aware that those traits exist and being willing to get into contact with oneself as one is without those masks and layers. I do agree with these authors, as well, in the idea that the human being desires to engage in this process and to get to know herself; it is an endeavour that we all share, even though allowing it is a choice. For my research question and work with children, it is especially relevant to bear in mind that the masks build as the person grows up. This means that the key is not only to get in touch with the true self and let the masks fall, but also and perhaps most importantly, to grow up in a way in which that contact is not lost.

Rogers and Maslow dive deeper into the exploration and ask themselves: How does this process occur? How can one let the masks fall? What conditions are necessary? And what happens after the masks have fallen? In my opinion, it is both impossible and purposeless to differentiate between the means that leads towards the falling of the masks and the consequences that derive from it. They are all intertwined. They are all part of a general idea of the characteristics seen in the clients of the authors, and which I also very personally observed in myself and in the people close to me. They are all part of a generalization of what this process looks like, which at the same time is very personal for each individual. The next sections deal with the qualities that the process of self-actualization seem to gather, and attempts to give a more detailed explanation of what the concept of getting to the core of the self really means.

1. I do acknowledge the problematic of using the impersonal form for such a statement. Maslow develops further on *who* creates this expectations in his books *Motivation and Personality* and *Toward a psychology of being*. Although it extends to the whole environment that we interact with, I believe it is especially relevant to name, as examples, our parents, the culture in which we grow up and the people with whom we have a daily direct contact.

4.2.2. Openness to Experience

An essential characteristic shared by the clients who engage in this process, Roger argues, is an increasing openness to experience. Consciously or unconsciously, the person begins to lose the fear of feeling those emotions that seemed dangerous, or those which he did not allow himself to feel before. He lays down the masks and the defensive attitude filtering the emotions arising in him, and begins to let those feelings come forth naturally (Rogers 2004). This openness tends to bring forward the surprising realization that those emotions, if they are let be, are not destructive, but accepted. The realization is that "experience is a friendly resource, not a frightening enemy" (Rogers 2004, 173).

Rogers talks about a hypothetical "optimal therapy", in which the client would explore the range of all emotions that arise in him (Rogers 2004). This would include (especially) those that seemed to be dangerous or unknown; those he tends to repress and whose repression, according to Maslow, ultimately lead to evil (Maslow 1968). "He finds himself experiencing these feelings fully, completely, in the relationship, so that for the moment he is his fear, or his anger, or his tenderness, or his strength" (Rogers 2004, 185). He would experience himself and realize that he is still unconditionally accepted, first and foremost by himself and then by the world. Through this realization, he would be able to constructively change his behaviour and stop fearing the experience of himself, of what he truly is. (Rogers 2004).

4.2.3. Awareness

The experience of emotions can only work as a transformational force if it is accompanied by awareness of what is happening inside oneself. This goes hand in hand with the other. The individual can only be open to experiencing different emotions once he realizes that the emotion is there, allowing himself to feel angry when anger arises inside and allowing himself to feel sad when sadness arises inside. Openness to experience only results in constructive change of behaviour if the individual is aware of what happened. He allowed himself to feel sad and the sadness was not destructive: he was still accepted.

Awareness is crucial. This includes awareness of what happens inside oneself "at an organic level" (Rogers 2004, 115) as well as awareness of reality as it is. Increasing

awareness opens up the room for the individual to understand the world outside of the preconceived categories that form part of our socialization, the same socialization that helps to shape our masks. Awareness of reality means the perception of reality as it comes to our senses, without the need to distort it to fit the patterns we hold. Consequently, the individual becomes "far more realistic in dealing with new people, new situations, new problems" (Rogers 2004, 115).

Goleman (1996), who elaborates on the concept of "emotional intelligence" in his book *Emotional Intelligence - why it can matter more than IQ*, draws a very plausible argument, from my point of view, on the importance of awareness. He believes that awareness is the realization of our own feelings as they come, and he supports the idea that, without this awareness, there is no room to control, change or deal with our emotions. Even more relevant when applied to the principles of humanistic psychology: no room can be opened for getting to know ourselves and how we feel.

When we say 'Stop that!' to a child whose anger has led him to hit a playmate, we may stop the hitting, but the anger still simmers [...]. Self-awareness has a more powerful effect on strong, aversive feelings: the realization 'This is anger I'm feeling' offers a greater degree of freedom –not just the option not to act on it, but the added option to try to let go of it. (Goleman 1996, 48)

This significance of awareness and the importance of reaching it will be present in my research and my experience in the workshop.

4.2.4. Trust in Oneself

This openness to experience, this awareness, this realization, leads to an increasing acceptance of the self, of the own organism, as something to rely on; as a trustworthy source. "The individual increasingly comes to feel that this locus of evaluation lies within himself. Less and less does he look to others for approval or disapproval; for standards to live by; for decisions and choices" (Rogers 2004, 119).

The acceptance and value of oneself comes from what one truly is. It is self-explanatory, self-justified. It comes together with the acceptance and value of reality for what it is (which is preceded by awareness) and with the acceptance and value of others as they are, for what they are, as well as their experiences. It is all closely linked

and goes back to the fall of the masks (Rogers 2004). What falls together with the masks is the 'shoulds', the norms (spoken or unspoken), the preconceptions, the categories, and the 'rights' and 'wrongs' that are brought about in a natural manner by our process of socialization.

Both Rogers and Maslow think this trust in the individual's organism is intrinsically linked to creativity. Rogers exemplifies this with notable figures such as El Greco, Hemingway or Einstein, whose creations were initially seen as acts of craziness by others, but who managed to rely on their own organisms and maintain trust in themselves. They believed in themselves for what they were and they took in their experiences as they came, without the need for external approval. They "dared to feel their own feelings, live by values which they discover within and express themselves in their own unique ways" (Rogers 2004, 175).

Maslow, in a very similar line, challenges the traditional understanding of creativity and explains how he feels about the creative processes of housewives, carpenters and other ordinary people. They are self-actualizers who show, through the way they carry out their daily tasks, how they "can see the fresh, the raw, the concrete, the idiographic, as well as the generic, the abstract, the rubricized, the categorized and the classified" (Maslow 1968, 137). In his eyes, the essential characteristic they share is that, in whatever they do, they have no fear of ridicule or judgement and trust their own self – just like El Greco, Hemingway or Einstein.

The relationship to music here is very direct: music is a creative act and, as such, I explore the potential that that act of creation and creativity has for allowing people to discover the freshness and rawness in life and their own cores.

4.2.5. Peak Experiences

Throughout his research, Maslow went through a redefining of what he calls the Self-Actualizing person, a process that he leads us through in his book *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968). At the beginning, his division of society into self-actualizers and non-self-actualizers is much stricter. Later, after his study on 'peak experiences', he comes to argue that the personality type (being a self-actualizer or not) is not rigidly defined, but

that every single person undergoes life experiences in which he gets to know himself and transforms. In other words, we are all self-actualizers in some moments of our lives, and not in others (Maslow 1968). The question then becomes to what degree and with what frequency does each person allow herself to be a self-actualizer, to live these experiences.

Self-actualization can happen in many ways. One of them is what Maslow calls 'peak experiences'. He describes them as "moments of greatest maturity, individuation, fulfilment—in a word, his healthiest moments" (Maslow 1968, 97). They are wonderful moments of happiness or ecstasy – for instance, the experience of being in love or the feeling inspired by a book or painting.

Maslow's observations of and interviews with the people taking part in his studies lead him to the conclusion that, during these moments, the person was integrated, was more himself. All the previously mentioned conditions for self-actualization are fulfilled: the individual is "more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, more fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending" (Maslow 1968, 97). It is during these episodes that self-actualization takes place, that the individual is "more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities closer to the core of his Being, more fully human" (Maslow 1968, 97).

For Maslow, these experiences are accessible to everyone – that is to say, everyone can undergo self-actualization. The difference for him is not whether one is a self-actualizer or not, but rather how often one goes through these experiences, with what kind of intensity and how far one allows it to go. The operative word is 'allow', because openness is the key point. However, for Maslow, this is not all that plays a role in determining the frequency and transcendence of a person's self-actualizing experiences.

4.2.6. Growth

Self-actualization, in Maslow's terms, is dependent on his theory of human needs. He categorizes needs in a hierarchical manner through what he developed as the 'Pyramid of needs', with basic physiological needs (food, water) at the base, followed by the need for safety, then love and belonging (friendship, family), followed by the need for self-esteem

and appreciation and, at the top of it all, the search for a life meaning and higher morality or, in other words, self-actualization (Maslow 1997).

From Maslow's point of view, self-actualization "implies also the gratification, past or present, of the basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect, and self-respect, and of the cognitive needs for knowledge and for understanding" (Maslow 1997, 126). Although it remains unclear to Maslow "whether this basic gratification is a sufficient or only a prerequisite condition of self-actualization" (Maslow 1997, 126), it is in any case necessary to have fulfilled these needs before being able to achieve self-actualization. A person must have her basic needs covered, that is to say, the physiological needs and the feeling of belonging, in order to be able to get in touch with and then unfold her capabilities. This does not mean that every person whose basic needs are satisfied will become a self-actualizer, he argues, but he does believe that self-actualizers can only be those who do not suffer deficiencies at the physiological and emotional levels.

For the purpose of this thesis, I reduce this to Maslow's own simplification of that premise, represented in the diagram below. Only if a person feels safe will she be able to grow². The forces that draw towards growth are opposed to the ones that draw towards safety. Only if a certain safety level is achieved will a person be able to let himself be drawn towards growth.

Safety < ————— > **Growth**

Figure 3.1: Relationship between safety and growth according to Maslow. Created by Author.

This premise is built on a linear understanding of growth and implies, therefore, a linear understanding of the process of becoming a person. Through this implication it seems to me that Maslow does not do himself any favour in support of his own overarching theories. In my opinion, while he recognizes the complexity of human life and the need

2. The term 'growth' can be a controversial one. From a developmental approach, it implies the move towards something better, the aspiration towards improvement. Maslow himself is ambivalent in the way he uses the term and he sometimes equates it with self-actualization. The implication that self-actualization is something greater to aspire to is consistent, in this case, with his theory of needs. Since I will not engage with this developmental debate in this research, I here use the term 'growth' in the same way as Maslow does for practical matters.

for an understanding that escapes the rational logic, he fails to apply this recognition each time he attempts to scientifically prove his beliefs and create logical sequences that support his theories. Following Lederach's idea of circularity (Lederach and Lederach 2011), which I can better resonate with, and with which I engage more deeply in the next chapters, I believe that linearity leads to an oversimplification of human experiences and life. This is one of the points in which Maslow seems to me overly scientific and rigorous with regard to the search for a rational explanation. I propose that there can be moments of growth peak experiences, glimpses of self-knowledge or self-actualizing experiences that are not necessarily preceded by the satisfaction of basic needs.

As an example, I would like to introduce one of my experiences in the Philippines which, coincidentally, is also related to music. It was in a very poor neighbourhood where I experienced a moment that I definitely consider a peak experience for myself, a moment that showed me what I would consider characteristics of a self-actualizer in others. The fact that it was a poor neighbourhood is not important because of the connotations that accompany that adjective; rather, they are important as I know that the people that we encountered did not have their basic needs covered: there was no drinking water, a tornado had been predicted for the upcoming days, and the neighbourhood was located next to the river. Yet, it was in that place and under those conditions that I encountered an old man on the street. He invited me to sing karaoke with him and I shared with him, without the need for any other common language than music, an intense moment of connection. This, for me, was a peak experience. I cannot talk for him, but the attitude, presence and strength with which he interacted with me was what I would describe as self-actualization. This is just a small example that illustrates why I firmly believe in a circular, intertwined, complex process rather than a linear understanding.

At the same time, and bearing in mind my rejection of linearity, I do see some value in the linear understanding of growth. The lowest needs in Maslow's pyramid include food, water and physical integrity. This constitutes one kind of safety, which can arguably be very easily attained during childhood – at least when talking about a privileged neighbourhood in a rich country. The parents and community take care of

satisfying the basic needs of children at all times. Growth, therefore, if only dependent on this kind of safety, could easily take place. Nevertheless, the pyramid of needs continues, and the strive for acceptance, love, belonging, and self-esteem constitute another layer of safety that is required, according to Maslow, to achieve to self-actualization (Maslow 1968).

Again, although I do not in any way consider this a step-by-step process, I do believe that meeting these needs is intrinsically linked to the qualities of acceptance, awareness and openness to experience, identified by Rogers. I do believe that it is necessary to feel safe in the place and time one is in, to trust the environment, and to trust oneself, in order to open up to the experience. In turn, opening up to experience brings about a lot of trust in oneself, others, and one's surroundings. All these qualities of the human being are inevitably linked, intertwined, and inseparably connected in a network that constitutes the whole, ultimately allowing for "fuller" experiences, or experiences that can bring one closer to what one really is.

4.2.7. Children as self-actualizers?

Having laid the basis for my understanding of human nature and that it allows one to get closer to the knowledge of the person that one is, a question arises which is necessary for understanding the research topic of this thesis: what about children? Are they also driven by the need to get to know themselves as they really are? Is that also a need for them, as Maslow believes it is for adults?

In many of his writings, Maslow uses children to exemplify the way in which a healthy person looks at the world: a fresh, natural, raw look. He describes children as perfect examples, particularly in terms of growth and creativity. Self-actualization should happen, he claims, just the way that growth happens in a child. "Growth is not in the pure case a goal out ahead, nor is self-actualization, nor is the discovery of the Self. In the child, it is not specifically purposed; rather it just happens" (Maslow 1968, 45). With regard to creativity, he compares the creativity of SA (self-actualizer) subjects to "childlike" creativity, in so far as it is not guided by what the outer world dictates is right or wrong, or real or invented, but by what is inside the imagination of the person, or what is closest

to the core of the self.

Does this imply, then, that children are natural self-actualizers? If this is the case, why then are adults not? The answer to this question is more complex than a simple yes or no. The natural drive for self-actualization is a species-wide need, according to Maslow, shared by all human beings, children or adults. However, this does not mean that it is always at our reach – also not for children.

Maslow explains that mentally healthy children will grow in a healthy manner if they are allowed to follow their inner drives and explore their spontaneity, while being kept in a safe and accepting environment, where they can choose their experiences. If this is the case, children (because of their human nature, and not simply because they are children) will choose the steps that seem more delightful, more complex, and more rewarding to their curiosity. This is the way in which they grow and in which they learn to trust themselves, their organism, their environments (Maslow 1968).

Nevertheless, this is the description of a sterile, ideal type of environment. In reality, the influence of the environment has a huge impact and these conditions are rarely met. Maslow believes that choices of the child begin to be limited from an early age, when those parts that are considered mentally ill or socially wrong begin to be rejected. The conditioning of the child leads to a decrease in the choices that the child can take. "Both active and passive repressions [of the inner, deeper nature, of impulses, capacities, emotions, judgements, attitudes, definitions, perceptions. . .] seem to begin early in life, mostly as a response to parental and cultural disapprovals" (Maslow 1968, 192). The lack of safety, acceptance and love of the child for what it is in its core mostly shape the self-rejection and prevent the qualities of self-actualization from being present.

According to Maslow and Rogers, the question is then not so much whether children have the need for self-actualization or not. As human beings, we are driven by our desire to get to know ourselves better and make the best use of our potentialities and abilities. This process of self-discovery, of acceptance, of unfolding the center of what we are, comes much more naturally during the first years of our lives. The question then becomes in which ways do we, in the process of growing up, become conditioned in our way of feeling,

thinking and acting? What external conditions oblige us to choose between safety and growth? How do we gradually stop unfolding and begin bumasks? How do the first years of our lives draw us further from our core and closer to our façade?

4.3. Childhood and Education

The answers to these questions, if ever to be found, require a closer look into the period of time that we are looking at: the first years of our lives.

In 1960, the French historian Philippe Ariès published *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, later translated to English as *Centuries of Childhood*. He develops his thesis on the history of childhood as a concept. More specifically, he draws the reader's attention to the *lack* of the concept of childhood during Medieval times. Interestingly enough, he uses the French term '*sentiment*' instead of concept, a word which, in French, means 'feeling', and which in his book is used as a hardly translatable mixture of feeling and concept. The most accurate translation I can find from my own knowledge would be 'having a sense for' something.

Laying his foundations on the record of medieval paintings, art pieces, clothing, games and activities, he proposes that childhood was, before modern times, nothing but the idea of the first stage of life. It did not have any further implications in terms of the particular nature of children – they were dressed like adults, treated like adults and considered smaller adults. He argues that the need for a distinction between childhood and adulthood – and thus, the birth of the concept of childhood itself – only developed during the 17th Century, bringing with it the sentimental connotation that the term carries with it since then (Ariès 1975).

Ariès's thesis unleashed a long-lasting debate among historians and scholars, many of them arguing against the lack of rigour of Ariès's evidence and attacking his arguments; some of them defending him (Acocella 2003). I will not go any further into the lengths of this debate, which brought about very substantial research as the two main debating positions can be summarised in the point raised by David Archard in his book *Children: Rights and Childhood* (1993).

Archard³ argues that the main point of discussion is built upon a misunderstanding: the difference between a *concept* and a *conception*. “To have a concept of ‘childhood’ is to recognise that children differ interestingly from adults; to have a conception of childhood is to have a view of what those interesting differences are” (Archard 2004, 27). There has, according to Archard, always been a *concept* of childhood as differentiated from that of adults. It has, nevertheless, changed throughout time and across countries, giving rise to different *conceptions*. From his point of view, Ariès was not able to clearly state this subtle difference between concept and conception and he mistakenly threw everything into the same box.

I agree with Archard in what I consider to be the underlying idea taken from the debate on the evolution of childhood as a concept: there is, indeed, a particular conception of childhood that he calls a ‘modern western conception’ (Archard 2004). He concedes that it is not necessarily a unique and consistent view, but rather a plurality of diverse, and sometimes contradictory understandings of childhood. Nevertheless, he does identify the underlying common characteristic:

Ariès is at least right to observe that the most important feature of the way in which the modern age conceives of children is as meriting separation from the world of adults. The particular nature of children is separate; it clearly and distinctly sets them apart from adults. Children neither work nor play alongside adults; they do not participate in the adult world of law and politics. Their world is innocent where the adult one is knowing; and so on. We now insist upon a sharp distinction between the behaviour demanded of children and that expected of adults; what is thought appropriate treatment of children is distinct from that of adults. There is a marked division of roles and responsibilities (Archard 2004, 37)

Archard wrote this in 1993. I believe this holds true for the contemporary western world even today. Although there might be different conceptions of childhood, there is a very established, clear division between childhood and adulthood. Children are, from this modern perspective, not ready to be adults yet. All working mechanisms of our societies hint towards this. For instance, laws, rights and duties are not the same for children, because a child is not considered “able to make informed free choices for which she can

3. It is important for me to clarify that I generally disagree with Archard’s social, political and ideological postures. Nevertheless, I find that he makes a sound argument in this book and, like him, I find it important to differentiate on the nuances of the terminology.

be held personally responsible” (Archard 2004, 37).

From my perspective, the evolution of the conception of childhood into the modern one seems to very much fit into the historical context in which the modern understanding of peace, as proposed by the five peace families, was formed. The turn to science and rationality as a point of reference inevitably brought about the developmental model as the only valid cognitive premise. This stream of thought would argue that children are not always rational; they are only the first stage of an evolution into a more autonomous, knowledgeable, rationally guided person. From such a modern perspective, they represent immaturity and the need to be taken care of by a more and better evolved version of the human – the adult. “Childhood in relation to adulthood mirrors the primitive in relation to the civilised and the modern [...] This development is an inevitable and invariant process driven by a biologically rooted structure which the child inherits” (Archard 2004, 44). To me, this fits perfectly into the overall historical context and the understanding of peace brought about by modernity⁴.

The parallel can be established between this idea of development of the human being and the idea of development of societies as proposed by Sachs (2010), and which also fits (historically as well as conceptually) in the understanding of modernity. "To think of development - of any kind of development - requires first the perception of themselves as underdeveloped, with the whole burden of connotations that this carries" (Sachs 2010, 3). Societies that have not reached the standards of industrialized modernity are considered underdeveloped; children understood as an earlier stage of adulthood are considered to be in process of development.

“On admet désormais que l’enfant n’est pas mûr pour la vie, qu’il faut se soumettre à un régime special, à une quarantaine, avant de le laisser rejoindre les adultes”⁵ (Ariès 1975, 313). The child needs to undergo a process before becoming an adult, a developed human being (Ariès 1975); just like during Sach’s ‘age of development’ societies needed to undergo a process of industrialization and economic boost in order to match

4. Modernity understood as the idea proposed in Ch. 4 Sec. 1.

5. It is thereby accepted that the child is not mature enough for life, that he needs to undergo a special regime, a quarantine, before letting him join adulthood. Translated by the author.

the capitalistic standards and to be considered developed (Sachs 2010).

These ideas seem to be even more closely related to each other if we introduce the factor that draws the direct link: schools. Schools are that 'special regime' to which, according to Ariès, children need to enter. Schools, according to Sachs, became instruments to foster economic development: "privileged places to shape experience and modes of thinking in terms of the social order" and increase "socialization and subjection of people to dominant norms, as well as their insertion into the machinery of capitalist production" (Sachs 2010, 146-157). This last author claims that the idea of development has become obsolete in the international sphere, and thus calls for a paradigm shift. My research is based on the idea that the conception of the child as a human 'yet-to-be-developed' is just as obsolete and I explore how that paradigm shift could look like through the concrete example of music and elicitive facilitation.

4.3.1. Education

Let me begin this section on education by sharing my own experience of school: the ones I attended as a child, both in Córdoba and Brussels, compared to the one I experienced as an educator in a Gymnasium of a suburban, middle-class area of Berlin⁶. This last one was a very good school, according to my colleagues and employers, with a progressive curriculum and a focus on arts. It started implementing a new initiative bound to reduce the number of hours that pupils dedicated to homework after school. The solution was to substitute those hours by 'flex-hours' in school; these were hours that the students could dedicate to their homework, or where they could choose one of the subjects they wanted to deepen their knowledge on. My job was to facilitate those hours.

It was as if I had never left school: subjects were still divided the same way (Maths, English, Geography, History, etc.). There were different rooms devoted to each of the subjects, with chairs and tables aligned in rows, all facing the teacher and the blackboard. The school times were roughly the same, with a long lunch break and a couple of shorter recesses. The school years were just the same and success was still determined by grades.

6. I worked for one semester, two days a week, in the Gebrüder-Montgolfier-Gymnasium, hired through the Lernstudio Barbarossa. My job was to accompany and supervise classes of children between 11 and 13 years old during the time they could dedicate to their homework or group learning.

All in all, the concept of what a school is remained very much unchanged since the time I was there and, from the descriptions of my parents and elders, it seems like the stagnation has lasted longer than even I have been able to witness.

It is valid to argue that I am fairly young. I only left school seven years ago, and I was working with children who were only twelve years younger than me. Nevertheless, that argument loses its ground as soon as I look at how other things have changed since the time I was their age. It was hard to ignore how far the children's interactions were marked by the use of the newest smartphones and social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, the most influential Youtubers (whose names were unheard of for me), and other phone apps I did not even know existed. The classrooms were equipped with smartboards that pupils were more skilled in using than the teachers. The English vocabulary they learned came from Spotify songs, not from course books. The impressions they gathered about other cultures and places were a fruit of their weekend trips abroad with their parents on flights that are now affordable to a large majority of people in Germany. They had been able to learn from walking down a street full of Turkish shops, adjacent to another with plenty of Korean restaurants, and not from Geography class.

In a world like this, in a city like Berlin, in the year 2017, I witnessed how phones were forbidden in an attempt to demonize technological progress, only feeding the temptation of what cannot be done. Social interaction was discouraged during school hours, leaving it to the reductionist purpose of recreation during breaks, as if the value it brought to the learning experience was nothing compared to the silence in which they immersed themselves in books. Furthermore, the moral authority, the source of knowledge, the point of reference, could only be found in the teacher or the book, as if both had been given a sort of divine understanding of the world that the pupil could do nothing but aspire to achieve one day, after years of school attendance, homework, tests, and discipline.

Let me illustrate what I mean with this beautiful quote by Howard Gardner delineating the paradoxes that he encounters as an educator in America—and which, I believe, can hold its validity throughout most schools in the world:

We pride ourselves on being focused on children, and yet we do not pay sufficient attention to what they are actually expressing. We call for cooperative learning among children, and yet we rarely have sustained cooperation at the level of teacher and administrator. We call for artistic works, but we rarely fashion environments that can truly support and inspire them. We call for parental involvement, but are loathe to share ownership, responsibility, and credit with parents. We recognize the need for community, but we so often crystallize immediately into interest groups. We hail the discovery method, but we do not have the confidence to allow children to follow their own noses and hunches. We call for debate, but often spurn it; we call for listening, but we prefer to talk; we are affluent, but we do not safeguard those resources that can allow us to remain so and to foster the affluence of others. (Gardner 1998, xviii)

If I try to view the topic with naive and uncorrupted eyes, it would seem to me that schools, in their duty to facilitate the process of becoming a person and of growing into adulthood, would provide children with an environment in which they could develop their emotions, openness, awareness, acceptance, creativity and trust. My new experience in school did nothing but confirm that its *modus operandi* were, on the contrary, cutting off many parts of that experience or, at the very least, shaping it in a very concrete direction.

4.3.2. Alternative Paths

It would be inaccurate to state that no significant efforts have been made since the creation of schools to improve the education system. Many scholars, teachers, educators, psychologist and the like have devoted their lives to the study of children, trying to determine the magic formula for the creation of the most favourable environment for their growth. Most of this critique has centered its efforts on the curriculum of schools: what should be studied, at what ages, and with which materials. "The fact that so much research and development in purely educational matters is centred around the curriculum is evidence enough that the overall approach is intellectual in nature" (Childs 1996).

This brings us to the main criticisms of traditional education⁷: the extent to which it has decided to ignore or relegate to the background the subjective, irrational phenomena of feelings, emotions, or social interactions as so far as they are not considered pure science.

7. I call traditional education the model that I described above from my experience: focus on books, age-division, compulsory attendance, tables facing the teacher, homework, and subject division of the learning material.

The predominant attitude in the modernity paradigm accuses the field of psychology and emotions of being too subjective – as if treatments of topics like interpretation, subjectivity, or any of many references to our inconclusiveness were synonymous with being vague and elusive [...]. Emotions have historically been situated at the opposite end of reason, connoting a perverse twist on the romantic perspective and an incomplete view of our humanity (Zambrana-Ortiz 2011)

This modernity paradigm Zambrana-Ortiz talks about finds its bedrock in the institution of the school and does not have any interest in destroying the rationality-based and progress-oriented premises on which it has been built. In the spirit of providing a more comprehensive education approach, taking as a point of reference the child as a full human being – with all his feelings, emotions and irrational sentimentality – new methods developed during the 20th century. Montessori, Waldorf and Emilio Reggia schools are the most established examples of this trend - but not the only ones.

Maria Montessori, an Italian doctor born at the end of the 19th century, soon took some steps away from her medical career path to explore her interest in children and early childhood development. Many of her theories and ideas on are nowadays taken for granted, but were revolutionary at the time. For instance, clothes and tools used in schools at the time were not adapted to children's size, but were simply taken as they were and used for children, in spite of the difficulties this could pose. Maria Montessori claimed that objects needed to be reshaped into the size of children in order to make them feel comfortable to use them; in order to enable them to relate to their environment in a measured manner. This is only one of the many aspects of her philosophy that are now taken for granted as common knowledge.

Nevertheless, some of her founding pillars still belong to the exception rather than the rule. She developed a pedagogy focused on the child's emotional, ethical and spiritual development. "She argued that if education truly could develop ethically and socially conscious men and women, whose moral sense had been developed as fully as their ability to read and write, mankind could begin hoping for a more peaceful world" (Duckworth 2006, 39). The ideal method for her to reach this goal was a classroom in which the teacher would be a facilitator to provide the appropriate space and materials for the child to, then, explore, discover, and learn on his own (Mooney 2000).

In spite of the extensive influence that Montessori's thoughts would later exert on educational practices, two main criticisms remained. The first one is built around her image of the child: uncorrupted, pure, 'messianistic', as if children were able to give rebirth to the human race. The second one lays on her tendency to be too literal, too strict on the 'how' it should be done, grounding children as to what reality means and, thus, leaving too little room for true creation (Duckworth 2006).

In the same spirit, the structure, *modus operandi* and guiding principles of the Waldorf schools were created by the German philosopher Rudolf Steiner in 1919. They were born as independent schools in a context in which, according to Steiner, "human beings have become so anti-social in their constitution of soul and in its development" (Childs 1996, 39). He believed that the dramatic developments of the time only left one possible way out: to educate the children in a way that would prepare them to "cope with the demands and challenges of a post-industrial world" (Easton 1997, 88).

In this conception, the child is taken as threefold: conformed by body, soul and spirit, and relating four senses to each of this dimension (Easton 1997). A great emphasis on arts (Easton 1997) and morality (Woodard 2005) is believed to develop all those aspects of the child. Connection to the universe, beauty, goodness and truth constitute some of the axes in which Waldorf schools develop the way of understanding the world – aspects which remain largely overlooked in traditional schools (Easton 1997).

Decades later, in the midst of post World War II reconstruction efforts, Loris Malaguzzi gathered with other parents of pre-school and primary education children of the Italian city of Reggio Emilia and developed their own educational system, known as the Reggio Emilia Approach. This is a method "in which each child's intellectual, emotional, social, moral potentials are carefully cultivated and guided" (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998, xvi). A great emphasis is put on dissolving the dichotomies that constitute the pillars of traditional education, and thus convey the unity that exists between art and science, the individual and the community or the child and the adult (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998).

These alternative educational models, in spite of their inevitable shortcomings, re-

sponded to a large part of the criticism to traditional education. Each in their own way, they proposed a more holistic idea of the child as much more than an intellect. They opened up the curriculum to arts and movement-based practices and placed a greater focus on children's emotions and social interactions. Furthermore, they managed to bridge the gap, to a certain extent, in the relationship between the educator and the child, leaving more room for children to take their own decisions and responsibilities.

In a nutshell, I argue that the approach taken by these school systems comes much closer to the understanding of the human being that I propose, based on humanistic psychology. It also touches upon aspects of relevance for the transrational philosophy, acknowledging the different dimensions of the child as a person and the diverse ways in which knowledge can be acquired. Nevertheless, none of these practices address the core of the issue of education: the meaning of education itself. Going back to Ariès's thesis on the modern conception of childhood, it becomes clear that these new school systems, simply for the nature of the school, still sustain three main pillars of the modern view of childhood.

First, it remains an unquestionable truth that the child needs school in order to receive education. This idea of education is the preliminary requisite to become an adult. Second, school implies the necessity for a teacher, educator, instructor, or facilitator. This remains, all in all, a figure who knows how to do it, who knows what is best for the child, who has actually studied himself and been instructed to know all of this. Third, the school and the teacher are only the cornerstones for the creation of an overall environment with which the child interacts. This is a sterile, well-prepared, and thought-through arena that constitutes the only habitat in which a child can become a proper adult. The conditions need to be provided for learning to happen. Furthermore, this learning and interaction with this pre-conceived habitat is the only setting that corresponds to the child in this period of this life⁸.

8. During my research, it has been of astonishing surprise for me to discover the enormous lack of literature that one can find on the child and children as human beings, and not only as subjects of growth where the only goal is to develop into adulthood, and where proper developments rests on the school and parents. This is part of the reason why my theoretical foundations rest so much on the existing literature on education: I need to work on what is already there in order to successfully lead the reader to my reasons on why I will distance myself from it.

4.3.3. "Deschooling Society"

These premises that serve to justify the very nature of education are the ones that Ivan Illich deconstructs in order to bring forward the idea of eliminating universal schooling for healthier societies. His text *Deschooling Society*, published in 1971, is a masterpiece dedicated to questioning the founding pillars of the educational institution, presented in his text as the product and motor of the capitalist society. Education, because of the untouchable status it holds, is bestowed as the mother of all state institutions which, in its sum, hold the paradigms upon which structural violence, authoritarianism and war are allowed (Zaldívar 2016).

One of the main claims Illich tries to get across is the need to recognize the difference between schooling and education, which institutionalization has wrongly turned into synonyms. While education remains the necessary life-long learning process undergone by every human being, schooling is to Illich the “age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum” (Illich 1971, 14). Schools have done nothing but to confuse the meaning of teaching with learning, “grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new” (Illich 1971, 2), a parallel that can be applied to almost every other modern institution in their own terms.

Institutional wisdom tells us that children need school. Institutional wisdom tells us that children learn in school. But this institutional wisdom is itself the product of schools because sound common sense tells us that only children can be taught in school. Only by segregating human beings in the category of childhood could we ever get them to submit to the authority of a schoolteacher. (Illich 1971, 15)

Children are depicted and treated as a specific group of human beings, divided among themselves into age-based subgroups and led by an authoritative figure that provides the necessary knowledge to be granted the adulthood status. This is an implicit discourse that, according to Illich, is easily destroyed by the empirical evidence of daily life experience. "Everyone learns how to live outside school. We learn to speak, to think, to love, to feel, to play, to curse, to politick, and to work without interference from a teacher" (Illich 1971, 15). To which he adds: “In fact, learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the

result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting" (Illich 1971, 14).

In the current system⁹, this instruction needs to be provided by a person who has been officially certified to be apt for that duty. This has a twofold purpose: on the one hand, to ensure the continuity of the certification criterion – school is needed in order to obtain a degree or a diploma, which is the only way to get a job, a purpose in life, a task to fulfil. On the other hand, school should maintain the authority and self-justification of the institution itself – only institutions are able to provide with certification, thus institutions are needed (Illich 1971).

This means that the concept of education, falsely confused with learning, becomes a goal whose completion is only accessible in a specific, institutionalized place through a certified, institution-supported person. Everything outside those parameters does not count as education – maybe as recreation, as interest, as enriching, but not valid education. Holt (2004) develops this argument further on his book *Instead of Education: Ways to help people do things better*. He claims that the control over our minds and thoughts (to which I would add, feelings) is our most valuable asset that we cannot lose if we are to unfold ourselves as people. Nobody should be contented with delegating that control and letting it be shaped in environments created specifically to do so – no matter how many certifications (Holt 2004).

This links back to another aspect of schools, usually seen as basic condition, that Illich problematizes. Schools are environments outside daily life, outside street circumstances, in which children are denied contact with adults other than their teachers (Illich 1971). Schools are the opposite of the life learning process, simply because they are built outside life circumstances, outside the natural human habitat, in a context in which the vast majority of people (children) are not allowed to take part in the decision-making processes and tools (Zaldívar 2016). Exploratory and liberal approaches become then even more inefficient, as inventive and creative behaviours cannot happen in an institutionalized, pre-designed environment (Illich 1971).

9. It is worth noting that, although Illich published his text in 1971, most (if not all) of the characteristics of education in which he basis his criticism remain unchanged almost thirty years later. This is why the time factor does not play an influential role in discussing Illich's arguments today.

Above all, the most worrying aspect of schools is, according to Illich, its universal nature. The idea, world-spread and almost undisputed even today, is that social, economic, and political progress is subject to a more advanced, well-established institution of the school, accessible for all. The nature of the school itself can account for an explanation of why this idea is barely put into question: schooling teaches that schooling is necessary, and builds a well-established foundation that holds all the arguments that support that idea. This is why schooled people find it so hard to believe that a deschooled society, as presented by Illich, might be desirable (Zaldívar 2016).

School and the current idea of education thus becomes, I believe, the bedrock of structural violence. It creates an inability to relate to ourselves and to others, to think outside of pre-determined categories, to open up to reality as it comes, to see ourselves as that which we are and not that which we have been told we are. It influences and shapes what we become in order to make it fit the standards of thought, feeling and action. If we equate this to Rogers' and Maslow's terms, it then becomes an obstacle to become that, which we truly are. It becomes the enabler and encourager of our masks.

4.3.4. Rethinking Learning

Having deconstructed all of those arguments that hold the classic claim of society's need for institutionalized education, Illich then proposes a new way of looking at education; a new way of learning. "The current search for new educational tunnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing and caring" (Illich 1971, 1). The alternative he brings forward is a well-developed network of humans and resources, in which people would be matched to one another depending on their interests and skills. In such a system, all the previously mentioned core problems would be tackled: no more universality, no more compulsory attendance, no teacher-student relation, no age division... Education would thus become a shared experience of human beings who would learn from one another, not only in terms of intellectual knowledge but from every quality of each human being (Illich 1971).

Illich himself recognised that such a system would only work in a society that reunites

the condition for such sharing experiences to take place – and admitted that such a society not only does not exist yet, but would have to be built from scratch. In spite of that claim, it could be argued that the 21st century has brought about technological advances that would render such a network of connections much more accessible than it would have been in 1971, when Illich proposed it. In fact, there is a great number of existing initiatives that make use of technology to bring together people interested in learn from one another: tandem partners for learning languages, group meet-ups for shared interests or cultural exchanges for travellers and locals.

Nevertheless, in addition to numerous objections that can be made to trying to equate these initiatives to Illich's proposal of alternative education networks, two main problems remain central to the argument of this thesis. First, these networks are very rarely available to children. Their use is restricted to adults; to those who already 'know better' and are allowed to take responsibility for themselves. Second, and directly related to the first, such activities only count as strictly extracurricular. They do not substitute institutionalized education. They are perceived as recreational practices, in opposition to the necessary and obligatory character of school. The problem remains the same: learning is only valid for the system if it is acquired through the system itself.

It does then seem that Illich's objection to his own system was plausible: it would only work in a society that has not been created yet (Zaldívar 2016). Nevertheless, I do not believe that is enough to desist on the effort to rethink the process of learning and education as thought by Illich.

He thought of education as the life-long process of learning from human experience. As such, he believed the centre of any learning practice should be on the experience itself, on the individual as a human being and his possibilities to open up to his own potential (Zaldívar 2016). Each person is a learner and a teacher at the same time, all the time, and he must learn how hold both of those roles in a responsible manner, following by a deep knowledge of oneself. Learning does not happen when one chooses it to happen, nor at a specific place or time; rather, it naturally arises from every moment of a person's life experience (Illich 1971).

4.3.5. My approach to children and learning

It is at this point that the conceptual framework laid in this chapter begins to come together and sets the basis for the overarching principles around which I build my arguments. I see many fundamental problems in the system that configures our society – the one in which I grew up, as well as the one that I am part of right now. One of them, that this thesis deals with, is the reductionist understanding of what a human being is and how this understanding impacts our inner and outer life, with all its intrapersonal and relational aspects. I believe that this incomplete notion of being human is illustrated, brought about and sustained by the current institutionalized educational system. I do believe that education is one of the most powerful sources of change and transformation. Nevertheless, the conception of education that I hold does not match the reality of how education works nowadays.

I build my arguments on a transrational understanding of peace, conflict and relations, in which the personal leads to the global, and everything is affected by a constant dynamic exchange of energy in which all levels and dimensions are to be taken into account. My understanding of what that personal, inner life looks like comes from the notion of the human being proposed by humanistic psychology. A person is a constant process of transformation in a strive for self-knowledge and the unfolding of all our abilities and potential. A child is a human being in its first years. A human being with all of its complexities, needs and possibilities. Nothing more and nothing less, not better nor worse – only, maybe, still less affected by the constant influences and feedback loops of societal relations and inputs. That is to say, still closer to the core of his being and less shaped by the surrounding world. The interactions with the inner and outer world are crucial for children in their personal unfolding – just as much as they are crucial for everybody else throughout our lives.

The difference is that most of those child interactions are carefully selected and carved by the institutionalized notion of education: by schools. Only the fact that the interactions are limited to a certain environment, in addition to the implications attached to the fundamental understanding of school, inevitably lead to the narrowing down of the

possibilities of the child to unfold as a person. I believe in a notion of education that understands learning as a process of living human experience and allowing it help us to become more of what we are. It is a life-long process of getting in touch with ourselves by getting in touch with others. Only an education that is not conceived to enable the stepping up from the inferior stage of childhood to the superior stage of adulthood can do that. Only a conception of childhood that sees the child as a whole human being and not an object to be shaped into societal life can sustain it.

What I propose in the following chapters is not a solution to the above described problematic, nor is it a recipe for education. It is not a call for action based on a one-size-fits-all understanding. It is just and simply an experience. One that I have lived and through which I have been able to dissolve some of the puzzling tensions between what I have been taught through my mind, and what I have felt through my body. It is an experience with which maybe others identify, or maybe not. It is simply a possibility among many. It is one way of doing things that works for me for now, for learning and for becoming myself, and which hopefully can find its resonance with others and contribute to their processes of learning and becoming themselves. It is a proposal. An open door. An opportunity. A prelude to a possible song.

4.4. The experience of music

“The arts, when experienced in the fullness of our emotional life, are about becoming
alive” (Eisner 2004, 85)

Let us take one step back and stay for the moment with the existing models of education we know. It can be argued that one of the main discussions surrounding education-based on the importance given to the curriculum, as I have already discussed—is the place for arts education in such a curriculum. Traditional education systems tend to be created and developed with an emphasis on what are thought to be ‘tough’ subjects, namely natural sciences and mathematics. Social sciences and languages are relegated to a second level, while arts are left to the background (Eisner 2004; Narey 2008). This is reflected on the number of hours dedicated to each of those groups of subjects as well as the importance

of their grades in the count of the GPA (Grade Point Average).

Alternative education models, especially Waldorf schools, have reshaped curriculums in order to make the importance of art education outweigh that of all other subjects or, at the very least, put it on an equal level. Without entering into details about the different ways in which arts can be integrated into a school curriculum, I do want to highlight the importance of arts education during childhood and discuss the thoughts of two main proponents of arts in schools: Vygotsky (2004) and his idea of imagination, and Eisner (2004) and his writings on *The Arts and the creation of mind*.

4.4.1. Creativity

Lev Vygotsky, writing in the first half of the 20th century, proposed an interesting idea against the conventional thought that children are more creative than adults. He believed that, on the contrary, children can have much less imagination because they have lived less; they have had fewer life experiences. From his point of view, imagination is nourished by the experiences a person has lived and, the greater the experience, the richer the imagination. The reason why this is usually confused is that the child “has greater faith in the products of his imagination and controls them less, and thus imagination, in the everyday, vulgar sense of this word, that is, what is unreal and made up, is of course greater in the child than the adult” (Vygotsky 2004, 34).

Vygotsky believes that the routine in which we immerse ourselves, the self-restrictions that we impose on our imagination in our daily lives, lead to a decrease of our showcasing of creativity. “Creative imagination diminishes—this is the most common instance. [...] the majority of people gradually get lost in the prose of everyday life, bury the dreams of their youth, consider love an illusion and so forth” (Vygotsky 2004, 35). However, it never disappears completely and there is always room to train and re-educate it. During childhood, this is at best achieved by broadening the range of experiences a child lives and allowing the expressions of his imagination to take place in whatever manner it comes (Vygotsky 2004). Thus, by avoiding the creation of limits and imposition to the imagination, the creative mind can be developed.

This is relevant, Vygotsky argues, because imagination serves as an “internal language

for our emotion” (Vygotsky 2004, 18). It is the way to express our inner landscape. That is the reason why, for instance, children drawings tend to be colourful and vivid: because they represent what they live with the same enthusiasm they live it¹⁰. “Every feeling, every emotion seeks specific images corresponding to it. Emotions thus possess a kind of capacity to select impressions, thoughts, and images that resonate the mood that possesses us at a particular moment in time” (Vygotsky 2004, 17-18). The author underlines that the realm of emotions is the only type of association on which imagination is based that is not greater in adults than children, but just the same. He believes that while experience increases throughout time, the emotional world is just as vast since the moment we are born, he believes. Thereof derives the importance of allowing the expression of our emotional world through imagination and creation not only in early childhood, but also during adulthood (Vygotsky 2004).

Eisner agrees with Vygotsky in the affirmation that creativity is an exploration of our interior landscape. “The arts help us discover the contours of our emotional selves. They provide resources for experiencing the range and varieties of our responsive capacities” (Eisner 2004, 11). In his book *The arts and the creation of mind* (2002), Elliot Eisner focuses on the importance of arts education and develops sound argument on how arts “provide models through which we can experience the world in new ways” (Eisner 2004, 19); how they can open the door towards new ways of understanding that differ from the logical cognitive focus pushed through in traditional education. The author specifies that, even when his examples point at a particular form of art, he does refer to all kinds of arts: visual, music, dance, etc. Although Eisner’s writing targets the formation of a school curriculum, I believe his arguments are plausible from every standpoint regarding the experience of arts in general and, looking at the experience I have had with music and the results of my workshop, which I will develop in the upcoming chapters, I believe it applies to music in particular.

“The arts provide permission to engage the imagination as a means for exploring new

10. Vygotsky makes an interesting argument on how the means of expression develop from drawing to writing when the child turns 7-8 years old. He believes that, as his vocabulary gets richer, he finds more possibilities of expressing his inner world through words and doing so through stories brings him joy (Vygotsky 2004).

possibilities. The arts liberate us from the literal” (Eisner 2004, 10). And the literal, the logical, is only one small part of what life is. Traditional education is designed to pave the way towards that part of life. The arts open up the way towards much more. It allows other ways of knowing, other ways of perceiving the world as it is—because it is not just literal. Arts “refine our senses so that our ability to experience the world is made more complex and subtle” (Eisner 2004, 19) and they make us able to “experience the full range of qualities that constitute the empirical environment” (Eisner 2004, 19). This is why, through arts, a person can experience himself and the outside more fully. One can acknowledge that perceptions come in many different manners, and that all of them are equally valid.

Eisner also focuses on the practical implication that this entails. A child who uses his imagination through arts, he argues, will learn to create, to react, to feel free when facing new situations and act upon them. He will feel himself more and better, and will thus be prepared for life as it comes, with all of its surprises. Arts pay great attention to relationships: between colours, between notes, between rhythms. The attention paid to through art equals the attention paid to our relationships in life—with ourselves, with those around us, with our environment. Every relationship has to be taken care of through somatic knowledge, “through being tuned in to the work and being able to make adjustments [. . .] on the basis of what is felt emotionally” (Eisner 2004, 76).

Developing all of these potentialities which we all have within ourselves is, from my point of view, crucial to learning more about who we are and how we relate to others. Arts can help understand those things that are inexplicable through the logical mind—and what is more, it can help us accept that that kind of understanding is also valid.

Both Vygotsky and Eisner, talk about arts in general with a focus, I would argue, on visual arts. It is remarkable to see how, although neither of them excludes music from their analysis, they are also not able to provide any specific examples on the potential of music, while they count numerous cases dealing with visual arts. Since I do believe that their arguments on the possibilities that arts reveal are perfectly valid for music, I now turn to explore further the field of music research.

4.4.2. Words

The world of academia, following the logical sequence that is initiated in schools, is still heavily focused on the mind as the primary mode of cognition. Validity is based on rationality and quantitative data, and natural sciences still hold a superior position above the social ones. This is perhaps the reason why a vast amount of existing literature on music deals with the physical and neurological effects (Tamplin 2016). Numerous quantitative studies have demonstrated the effect of music, through neurophysiological responses, for health benefits, pain management, stress reduction, physical activity or well-being (Tamplin 2016).

With regard to music education in particular, the widespread debate on the role that it should play on the curriculum is centred on the instrumental use of music as a tool for the children to excel in other areas (Crooke 2016). Music has proven its beneficial effects on children and young people for the improvement of language and phonological skills, literacy, memory, mathematical performance, logical reasoning and general motivation. In other words: scientific research argues that music helps to get better grades (Hallam 2016).

Nevertheless, in the last decade, the debate has expanded and additional fields have been covered. “The focus of attention, previously very much on the cognitive psychology of music, has broadened in several directions including social, developmental, and applied psychology” (Tan, Pfordresher, and Harre 2010, ix). Siu-Lan Tan, Pfordresher and Harré outline these changes in their book *Psychology of Music. From Sound to Significance* (2010). They explore the many ways in which the field of music research has broadened, giving an account of topics such as the meaning of music based on lyrics, the communal, cultural and social significance, the physical responses to music and the field of rhythm perception. In this sense, it can be argued that new trends have widened the focus, shifting away from solely perceiving music as a way for better cognitive capabilities. Nevertheless, most of these new trends remain mind-centred and still present music as a tool for improving something else.

In a parallel manner, a new trend has evolved: music therapy. Another stream of the

literature examines the benefits that music display for patients with wide range of health conditions: from autism to schizophrenia. The debate here spirals around proposing music as a natural ‘cure’ (or, at the very least, treatment) for as many pathologies (footnote on pathology) as possible.

All of these, although perfectly valid and plausible understandings of the power of music (and yet exceedingly modern for my taste), present certain limitations to the purpose of my research. First of all, the use of music therapy is (to the best of my knowledge) almost completely limited to patients considered to be suffering from a what is usually called a pathology. It is used for groups of people with dementia, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder or anxiety, among many others. As the word ‘therapy’ itself indicates, it carries the connotation of making something that is not completely healthy better. What I do want to research, however, is the effect of music on people in general, without the need to focus on making anything ‘better’ than it is, but simply desiring to get to know oneself better and unfold one’s potential.

Second of all, the literature revealing the benefits of music education for children are based on a series of paradigms that I reject when laying down the foundations of this research. The first of them is a traditional understanding of music education—and here it is worth adding: the music education that I received. This understanding proposed a linear model, in which the student begins with no musical capacities and has to gradually acquire them following a series of instructions and ‘appropriate ways of doing things’ in order to reach the ideal of perfection. This is constructed on a rigid proposition of ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ and ‘good’ and ‘bads’ added as qualities of music that does not match the explorative music experience that I propose, in which the only point of reference for the validity of music is within oneself.

Finally, all of the previously mentioned literature “is crystallised around the notion that music has become valued for what it can do in non-musical areas, not for being music” (Crooke 2016, 5). The effects, benefits, or whatever other terminology literature uses of music does not find its validity within the music itself, but on the empirically proven side-effects on other areas of school or life. According to such an understanding,

music is an instrument to get to a different goal, not the goal itself. Music is not seen as valuable simply for being music, but because it adds value to another aspect that is sought to be improved. Since I personally do see the value and beauty of music itself and would like to focus on the aesthetic component of music, instead of the instrumental one, I do not agree with such an approach.

It then becomes evident that, by turning to the music literature, I encounter a shift to a very rational, modern approach to music. This drifts away from Eisner's and Vygotsky's ideas on arts, which seemed to come closer to the humanistic understanding of a person and transrational world vision that I propose. I do see the significance in all the existing music literature and I appreciate the richness of the field, which I find fascinating. I do believe that the potential of music is immense and the deconstruction of its potential into different areas of expertise is welcomed and necessary. At the same time, I also see the need for a more holistic interpretation of the meaning of music understood as the experience of music itself. My research interest and focus is not in any of the above-mentioned specific areas in which the field of music research has broadened, but rather on a transdisciplinary, cross-cutting understanding of what music is and how our personal unfolding is related to it.

It is at this point that I turn towards Joachim Ernst Berendt, a jazz expert and musicologist who, from my point of view, manages to convey a more comprehensive message on the power of music for what it is and not for what it does.

4.4.3. Sound

The cosmos is filled with sounds and rhythms, from pulsars and quasars, from supernovas, from so-called 'red giants' and 'white darfs,' from fleeting and colliding star systems, and, of course, from our own sun (Berendt 1991, 59)

Berendt's main argument begins with the assumption that everything in the world is sound. From there derives the name of his book *The world is sound: Nada Brahma*. Nada Brahma is a concept which, as he explains, comes from Indian spirituality. The first word, *Nada*, is Sanskrit, and it literally means 'sound'. However, it can also mean 'bull'; a roaring bull and, in one of its variations, it can mean 'river'. From that variation

derive several meanings, one of which is ‘stream of consciousness’. The word, therefore, represents the relationship between sound, nature, and the inner sounds (consciousness). Sound then takes a broader meaning; it is not only that which we can hear from the outside, but everything which we can hear in the inside (Berendt 1991).

The other word, *Brahma*, is also Sanskrit and it is “the primal creative word, source of the world and sacred knowledge” (Berendt 1991, 16). It is God understood as the creator, and at the same time it is much more than God. It is everything and nothing at the same time; it is God’s inner sound and man’s inner consciousness. Nada Brahma, therefore, means that the world is sound and that sound is the world. Sound is everything (Berendt 1991).

It is in this meaning that we can find the underlying assumption of all of Berendt’s arguments: the world is sound. He explains that the world is filled with sounds, even those that cannot be heard. Our consciousness, our inner selves, our gods (whatever gods it may be that we believe in) are sound. We ourselves are vibrations, our own breath is a sound on its own (Berendt 1991). “Anything that vibrates reacts to vibrations, even (as recent discoveries have shown) to the most minute vibrations, and to those that only a few years ago could not be measured” (Berendt 1991, 39).

Not only is everything sound, but what is even more phenomenal is that sounds and vibrations enter in resonance with each other in a strive for harmony. There is a natural presence for harmony in sounds: the harmony in our voices, in instruments, but also harmony in the natural world. Harmony of the sounds and harmony of movements, of cycles. The kind of harmony those natural cycles choose –that is, the natural intervals around which they oscillate– have a perfect correlation with the musical intervals we know.

The fact that the planets move in elliptical orbits is indeed remarkable, but even more remarkable is the fact that from an unlimited wealth of possible orbits they have chosen precisely those which oscillate and sound in the proportions of undivided numbers prevalent in our ‘earthbound’ music. (Berendt 1991, 60)

This does not only happen with planets. The correlation between the intervals of the universe and our natural scale of tones can be found everywhere in nature. Our ears prefer consonance and “the entire microcosm is replete with harmonic concurrence” (Berendt

1991, 69). The experience of music can be transcending because music itself transcends; it is within us and it is in everything else around us.

4.4.4. Ears

In the light of this preference for harmony and the surrounding presence of sound, it is only natural to ask ourselves the question that Berendt brings to awareness in his book: why have we relegated our ears to the background, putting most of our trust in our eyes to perceive the world? “Modern human beings no longer listen” (Berendt 1991, 6), he argues. Modern Western man, he specifies, only *sees* the world but does not *hear* it, does not feel it, does not sense it.

In the ancient Chinese tradition, the eyes represent the yang side in the yin-yang, while the ears represent the yin. The eyes depict the male power, aggression, and the need for domination and rationality. They scan the surface, they analyse things. The ears embody the female sense, intuition, spirituality. They are receptive, careful and able to perceive oneness (Berendt 1991, 5). Just like in the yin-yang, the key to harmony is balance between both of them, a balance that modern western society has managed to destroy.

In the male-dominated, patriarchal, heteronormative society in which we¹¹ live, it is no wonder that the eyes dominate among our senses. In Dietrich’s terms, this would be equivalent to the domination of a modern vision of peace over an energetic understanding. Rationality and logic, the values that guide our norms, are acquired through the eye. Television, computers, smartphones, advertisement... in our daily lives, we are surrounded by visual input that brings unbalanced attention to the eyes.

The eye is directly connected to the head and the ears are directly connected to our core, to our belly. The eye is the rational element, which of course connects to what we think. The ear is the emotional component, and what we hear vibrates in our whole being, with its centre in our belly. Berendt argues that we have placed the centre of reception in the eye and, together with that, we have placed the centre of our power in our head.

11. It is important to note that, while in the rest of the thesis I try to distance myself from formulations in the ‘we’ person, I intentionally use this terminology in this section to better convey Berendt’s message. In his books ‘Nada Brahma’ and ‘The third ear’, he repeatedly refers to ‘we’ or ‘us’ as the modern western society. This is what ‘we’, ‘us’ or ‘our’ refer to in this section.

“The core of Western weakness lies in the fact that we have displaced our centre too far upward-into the chest and the head. That’s why we tip over so easily—literally as well as figuratively” (Berendt 1991, 131).

My experience with martial arts has taught me how importance it is to keep the balance through the belly. My experience with singing has taught me it is essential to find the power in the belly. The physical stability comes through the belly, while the psychological one comes through the ear. “Living only through the head has made our lives poorer. In the Asian way of thinking, the centre of human existence is in the belly [...] If you rest in your hara, you are unshakable” (Berendt 1991, 131). Or, in equivalent terms, *seeing* things without really *listening* is only half of the picture. The strength, the core, the balance comes by getting the full picture.

The child is viewing nothing more than information about an event that has already taken place somewhere else. The ‘outer’ image makes the ‘inner’ one superfluous. The ‘outer’ image may be more colorful, with more action, more alluring (and above all: more robust), but for exactly that reason it is able to take the place of the ‘inner’ image. By contrast, if you tell your child a fairy tale, the child has to transpose the tale into ‘inner’ images in order to understand it. (Berendt 1991, 139)

In Jungian terms¹², this is deeply connected to the attitudes: an extroverted one, in which the outside is taken as the primal point of reference, versus an introverted one, in which the self is the source of approval. In Rogers’ terms, this is directly related to the awareness of what is inside and the trust of one’s own organism. Berendt proposes, just like the previous authors in their own terms, a shift to the ear, to the inner world, to trust on the self.

It is important for me to emphasize that I do not completely agree with Berendt in his strong criticism towards the eye, the outer, rationality. Personally, I do believe that recognizing the power of our eyes and our rational understanding is just as important as trying to come in contact with our sense of hearing. The key, to me, is balance: seeing and hearing, inner and outer, feeling and thinking. Going back to Dietrich’s transrational philosophy, the emphasis here is on the *trans*: transcending without denying. Integrating.

12. Although I do not engage in depth with the philosopher Carl Gustav Jung, one of the fathers of transpersonal psychology, I do find his writings inspiring. Here, his idea of the two different possible attitudes of a person is very relevant. Jung’s writings are extensive, and a good source for a first look into his thinking has been, for me, Jolande Jacobi’s book *The Psychology of Jung* (1943)

For now, let's have a look at how exactly music can open up the doors towards that other side of the coin.

4.4.5. Perception

Hearing can be the most powerful channel to get to our inner landscape, the place where we can find our deepest emotions, feelings, fears, desires. Hearing is the powerful experience of being freed from the logical, from the rational, from what can be explained, from what can be understood. Hearing transports us to everything we are inside, to everything we can be, to the best and worst of ourselves, to that, which cannot be seen.

Life is not as neat and linear as logic teaches us. Loving and hating the same person is possible. Feeling sadness and joy at the same time is possible. Paradoxes are all around us, and the need to resolve them into something definite is nothing but a self-imposed limitation on the richness of our experience. "There are only minimal differences between what we believe to be irreconcilable and antagonistic. That is reality. Splitting up and separating the world into polarities is make-believe, illusion, Maya. All is one. If we were to listen, we would hear that." (Berendt 1992, 50) Instead, we tend to trust what we see rather than trusting what we hear. This tendency we share towards disdaining other forms of perceiving reality is closing the doors to a reality which, in spite of us not letting it be, still exists.

Hearing is the opening up to those other ways of understanding the world. It is a fresh escape from the need for results, for efficiency, for success. "The arts, in contrast, have little room in their agenda for efficiency [...]. Efficiency is a virtue for the tasks we don't like to do; few of us like to eat a great meal efficiently or to participate in a wonderful conversation efficiently, or indeed to make love efficiently" (Eisner 2004, xiii). Hearing is about savouring the experience.

Once again, I do not believe that everything should be hearing, or music, or ears. I believe the key is balance between seeing and hearing, thinking and feeling, head and belly. Opening up to all new ways of understanding the world, without denying the validity of one or the other. Music is one more way, and a very valid one, that I believe is not paid enough attention to. Berendt puts it beautifully in the following lines:

We are like novice musicians who have mastered one or two octaves, at best, but certainly not the entire range of the keyboard. Playing the full range of our tactile senses is a capability limited, among seeing people, almost totally to those in love when the body of the beloved partner becomes the instrument in sexual union. In the modern Western world, it is the lovers and the blind who are still in active command of the entire ‘orchestral’ range. (Berendt 1991, 145)

4.4.6. Empathy

This powerful tool that is at our disposal –hearing– is something that can be trained and learned, and it has a much greater impact than accessing our own inner world: it gives us access to the world of others. It is the channel of communication with ourselves and with others. Hearing –or rather, listening– is the door towards empathy.

Carl Rogers explains that an individual experiences depression, anxiety or other reasons that may lead him to go to therapy mostly when there is a problem of malfunctioning communication. Communication has broken down within himself and, consequently, he is not able to communicate properly with others. I argue that music and, especially, the ability to listen, is a strong channel for maintaining communication at both of these levels, that is, to be empathic towards oneself and towards others.

Tobin Hart, writer of the essay *Deep Empathy*, describes empathy as the “understanding and ‘feeling into’ another’s world” (Hart 2000, 2). This is achieved by paying close attention to the other person and being open for them, in order to approach ourselves to an understanding of their own experience. Rogers, in a similar line, describes empathetic understanding as the “understanding *with* a person, not *about* him” (Rogers 2004, 332), and he adds that this can really be done “when we listen with understanding” (Rogers 2004, 331).

This, however, is expressed in terms that only refer to feeling empathy towards another person. What about ‘feeling into’ our own world? I believe that empathy with oneself is just as significant as empathy towards another person, and listening plays an important role in it. Listening to ourselves, to our bodies, to what we want and we don’t. Listening with an understanding of what is there. Listening to the inner music.

Rogers calls this congruence between feeling and awareness, and it is indeed closely linked to humanistic psychology’s vision on awareness of what is happening within oneself

and acceptance of such feelings. This is what I call empathy with oneself. As human beings, we vibrate, just like music, and we sound, just like music. Empathy is a matter of tuning in. Are my feelings and my actions vibrating at the same speed? Do my emotions resonate with what is happening to me? Am I *in tune* with myself, with my life?

It is essential for me to constantly ask and answer these questions in order to reach an authentic empathy with others. Once I enter into resonance with my own inner world, I can ask: "can I hear the sounds and sense the shape of this other person's inner world? Can I resonate to what he is saying so deeply that I sense the meanings he is afraid of yet would like to communicate, as well as those he knows?" (Rogers 1995, 8). Only by daring to get that deep into myself will I be able to recognize it in others.

The qualities of empathy, of listening with understanding, can be trained and improved – just like learning to listen to the music. Hart argues that everyone has got this capacity and it is simply a matter of expanding our capacities to feel and improve our listening skills. The key of this listening is to leave out the judgement; to listen to the melody for the sake of feeling it; "to increase the amount of listening with, and to decrease the amount of evaluation about." (Rogers 2004, 335). That is where this real communication begins (Rogers 2004).

Tobin Hart beautifully illustrates the relationship between music and empathy with a vivid example. When there are two violins in a room and the string of one of them is pulled, it begins to vibrate, and this vibration causes the same string of the other violin in the room to vibrate as well, even though it has not even been touched. "The phenomenon of sympathetic acoustical resonance parallels empathic resonance" (Hart 2000, 17). Empathy is resonance, and resonance is the ability to feel the vibration of oneself and of the other. It is the ability to recognize that there is no division between the two.

It is like listening to the music of the spheres, because beyond the immediate message of the person, no matter what that might be, there is the universal. Hidden in all of the personal communications which I really hear there seem to be orderly psychological laws, aspects of the same order we find in the universe as a whole. (Rogers 1995, 8)

4.4.7. Love

In his book ‘Nada Brahma’, Berendt beautifully explains how Western music¹³ has naturally evolved following a tendency to interpret an increasing number of musical correlations as harmonies. I will not get into the details of this evolution at a theoretical level, but the essence of this evolution has been that the human ear was, in the beginning only able to identify one or two musical intervals as harmonious. This means, only these couple of intervals would be considered music; there was a very reduced possibility of what music could be in order to sound harmonious or beautiful (Berendt 1991).

“The entire development of Western music can be interpreted as an increasingly intense (and successful) search for consonances in those intervals and chords previously considered to be ‘unharmonious’ and ‘dissonant’” (Berendt 1991, 113). The western ear has become increasingly able to identify more sounds as beautiful; as music. Over time, Western music has found its ways to widen the repertoire of acceptable sound correlations. Today, and especially now with the use of new technologies, we encounter a huge spectrum of musical sounds and intervals that constitute beautiful, enjoyable music (Berendt 1991).

It is striking for me to see how accurately this can be related to the opening up of Western society in general¹⁴. I believe that societal dynamics are very much like music; they are a constant attempt to find the harmonious patterns. As well, society has, in general, increasingly opened its ears in order to accept more and more correlations as harmonious. Relationships, living styles and ways of relating that once sounded dissonant can now be integrated into the song. Although we are still very far from accepting the whole range of correlations that exist, I do believe that there has been increasing tolerance that has enriched the music of the Western society’s dynamics.

This personal reflection is closely linked to what Berendt proposes: “Every dissonance tends toward becoming a harmony” (Berendt 1991, 112) in music, and “it is important to realize that the tendency toward harmony, immanent in music, in a way is nothing else but the reflection of the same tendency outside of music, in almost all fields” (Berendt

13. It is important to emphasize that this relates only and exclusively to Western music. Other musical traditions around the world have a very different history.

14. Once again, the generalization of Western society here is done on purpose in order to match Berendt’s terms

1991, 116). This happens most notably, as he explains, in nature. "Flocks of birds" and "schools of fish" enter into a harmonization with each other through their movement, their sounds, and their intention, in a way that they become one (Berendt 1991).

It is highly interesting in this context that collisions are, in fact, very rare occurrences in nature. Compared with the frequency of collisions among human beings, they are surprisingly infrequent, even in much denser populations [...]. We have 'unlearned' to feel (that is, we do not listen to) the 'harmonization' and 'entrainment' of our own 'flocks' or 'schools'. Possibly this has to do with the fact that in many instances human behaviour is largely controlled by the rational left-brain hemisphere. (Berendt 1991, 118-119)

Music and hearing is not only essential from its most obvious effect of learning to listen to each other. Its significance goes beyond that; it is essential in order to regain the feeling of harmon the ability to enter into resonance with each other. A good conversation, a hug, or the feeling of love are some of the best examples of this resonance which we, indeed, are still able to feel, but rarely allow. "Love is the recognition of identical spin states, that is, of identical harmonic states, identical vibrations or, finally, identical harmonies [...] Hence love is accord [...] Love is music" (Berendt 1991, 74).

5. Making Music

5.1. Sound and Silence

The first workshop began with energetic eagerness and vivid interest from the part of the kids. What are we going to do? Where are we going? What comes next? We sat in a circle and I said “We are going to make music! What can we make music with?” A long enumeration followed, but did not solely focus on the instruments that were in the room.

The hands, the feet, the voice, the lips, the knees. . . “En faite, on peut faire de la musique avec tout!¹”, Silko said. Without me even having thought about it, he was very right. They began a splendid demonstration supporting that statement: music can be created with everything.

"Ultimately we ourselves are the instruments" (Berendt 1992, 126) The children were totally aware of this from the first moment. Music can be made with everything; we are able to produce music with our bodies because music is part of our human experience. Music is everywhere, and as soon as they could, the children began to explore all the possibilities that music opens up by trying out all the different instruments in the room. Those moments of freestyle improvisation when they would freely explore the sounds coming out of every instrument, without the need for a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to do it, but simply for the sake of producing sound with it, turned into magical chaos.

We created music, speaking from a conception of music that is far from the common one. It did not sound in any way like Mozart or Beethoven, nor like any kind of folk or traditional music, not even like a new experimental kind of music. It sounded like a group of people, each following their own beat, their own exploration of the tones, their own inner drive guided by the sound, all of them going their separate ways and producing sound together. A different understanding of music and, yet, still music.

One of the things that surprised me the most in these explorations was the enthusiasm towards loud instruments, such as the drum kit, and what is more: the conformity of the

1. "Actually, we can make music out of everything!". Translated by the author.

rest having that loud sound over their own instruments. On the one hand, it made me understand that the others were not disturbed, because a louder sound did not distract them from the sounds of their own instruments. They still played in a concentrated fashion as if, in spite of the bass and the cymbals, the sound of their own song prevailed over everything else in the room to their ears.

On the other hand, not only was I struck that such a loud sound would not disturb them, they also did not perceive it as noise. On the contrary: it became clear, session after session, that the sound of the drums was one of their favourite means to express themselves, to get out what was inside of them. Just like the music they created together, it did not have to comply with the traditional understanding of 'beautiful' or 'harmonious', which would serve to describe pieces of Mendelssohn or Wagner. It simply had to serve their intention of creating, of expressing.

This realization of finding beauty in a sound that I would not otherwise have thought of as beautiful, reminded me of the idea of silence and, particularly, the experience of finding sound within the silence.

The opposite of light is darkness. But the opposite of sound is not silence, which is an intensification of sound [...] Silence is wrongly viewed if it is felt to be the opposite of sound. The opposite of sound is noise. Anyone who does not want to listen must at least hear noise. (Berendt 1992, 72)

I perfectly remember the first time I had the thought that silence was also sound; even more, deeper, stronger sound. It was during the first term of my MA Program, during a movement exercise in which we were invited to 'look at the empty spaces' and 'listen to the silences'. This was, for me, an invitation to pay close attention to those things I did not think were there; to that which I considered not to have relevance, because it meant absence. Instead, I found something.

Listening to the silence has been, since then, one of the most mysterious endeavours I have taken on. This has not only consisted of just being in silence, but truly, attentively listening to the silence. Trying to find the silences within the songs, within the music of daily life. Silence, for me, is a representation of space: space for the new and for

opportunities that I might usually not pay attention to. For me, silence is the kind of sound that opens up the door for possibilities. However, it had taken me many years to realize that silence was also sound, also to attribute to it the value that it has.

During the music workshops, silence played a fundamental role. The first time, I asked whether the children could listen to the silence, their affirmative response came without a doubt. We started listening to the silence, all together. "But there can be no real silence here. If I listen to the silence, I still hear very small noises, or the birds", one of the girls, Meinasha, argued. Maybe it is true; maybe real silence does not exist, because in silence there is always sound, and that is why it is an "intensification of sound" (Berendt 1992, 72). Those small sounds that Meinasha referred to are what Berendt calls the sounds inherent to a room; in German, the "*Eigentone*" of a room: its own tone (Berendt 1992).

The importance of silence² resides, for me, in the awareness of its existence. First, realizing that silence is also sound is an experience on its own. Hearing that, which one might have not been able to hear, means hearing more, hearing something new, and giving life to possibilities; it means the unfolding of potential that was already there. Secondly, the experience of silence, those moments in which we concentrate in the quiet instead of the loudness, are the gateways towards our own inner sounds. It is the time in which we can really hear what goes on within ourselves. "In taking the time to be quiet, we are able to truly listen to ourselves" (Judith 2004, 235).

The world we live in today³ is filled with visual impulses but also, often unnoticed, sonic impulses. Television, phones ringing, music in the background of cafés and restaurants, cars on the streets, audible traffic light signals, public work, airplanes, computer keyboards, washing machines... We are surrounded by sounds. Silence is

2. Entering a discussion on the real meaning of silence goes beyond the purpose of this thesis. I take silence in its most common understanding: the absence of sounds that are perceptible without being attentive to them. In this research and to me personally, the importance of silence begins when attention is paid to its existence. Berendt elaborates further on the meaning of silence in his book *The Third Ear* (1992). The philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti elaborates on the importance of being aware of the silence for meditation and peace of mind in his book *A wholly different way of living* (1991), among others.

3. With this 'we' I am referring to the group of people I was with during the time and in the place we were together: Berlin, 2017, mid-class westerners. I believe it can, nevertheless, apply to many people around the globe.

the representation that, as Berendt says, sound does not always mean vibration. "It is nowhere laid down that sounds must be audible" (Berendt 1992, 121). The inner sounds and voices within ourselves, our inner music, is also sound. Yet, the vibrations and acoustic impulses of the outside dominate and take over, making it possible to even forget that we have sounds on our own; that we are instruments on our own. Silence is the reminder. It can lead carefully into that other world of sounds.

From that first moment of the workshop when I asked about silence, the value of leaving spaces for listening to it became important for us. Of course this did not always work in a smooth, flawless manner; most of the time, someone was still playing, or singing, or producing some kind of sound. Yet, many times silence became almost sacred, as if we were all listening to something deeper, more profound. It was as if only we, in that group, in that moment, could hear that specific silence, and we therefore had to put our whole beings to doing so.

5.2. Inner Landscape

Joel was one of the most engaged, kind and caring boys of the group. He committed himself to every exercise with his whole heart and his positive energy shone through his smile everyday. Joel, like many other children in that school, was born in a different country, in his case, a northern country, far away from our place of residence. A place for which, when the topic arose, he consciously showed pride and nostalgia towards. One day, we did a story-telling exercise in which we created a story and accompanied it with sounds that would represent the acoustic atmosphere of our scenes. We began to create the story together, and we decided it would take place in some very cold and snowy mountains. He decided that it would be his country of birth. And so it was: we created a story that took place in his country of birth.

Later during the exercise, Joel began to disconnect. He started acting in an unusual manner, with an excess of energy that did not correspond to the scenes we were describing nor did he enter into harmony with the energy of the group. This was something very uncommon for his engaged, committed behaviour. Yet, there he was, fully expressing everything he had inside, even though it did not match what the rest of

us considered to be appropriate in that moment.

The story-telling was the last exercise of that day's session. Right after, we began drawing. Joel had a very clear vision from the moment he lifted the pen: he would draw the flag of his country. And the trees of his country. And the animals in his country. He drew the pride and nostalgia that he had inside; the very same one that he had been able to express through the sounds



Figure 5.1.: Joel's drawing after the story-telling exercise.

I truly believe that something had been awakened in Joel. The story, the sounds, the music, the drawing. . . Children carry a history and baggage as well – sometimes big, sometimes small, but it is there, just like every other human being. There are triggers that awake certain feelings and reactions in our bodies, and I believe that this session was a trigger for Joel to experience his feelings towards the place where he was born. A trigger of his emotions. This can be very well appreciated in Figure 5.1, which is a picture of that drawing he created right after the story-telling exercise.

Alice Parker believes that melody is “the language of emotions” (Parker 2016). I believe this is not only true for melody, but for sound in general. Silence is, as I have previously mentioned, a wonderful way to pay attention to our inner voices, our inner sounds. Music in all of its forms is the outside resonance to our inner sounds.

As Berent explains, sound does not only need to be audible. We make it audible

because we want it to be; we want to give it an acoustic condition. "Audible music reflects the inaudible - no matter whether transmitted by violin or synthesiser" (Berendt 1992, 126). Audible sounds are an outside reflection of inaudible, inner sounds.

The equation works both ways. Sometimes, I feel something inside and I am able to listen to it. After listening and understanding it, I need to express it so I, for example, write a song. Other times, it works the other way around. I listen to a song and, without knowing why, arises something in me. It suddenly makes me feel sad, thoughtful, or melancholy. There is a resonance that happens between the audible sounds of the song and the inaudible sounds of my inside. It is just like when the string of the violin is pulled, and the same string of a different violin vibrates across the room, without having been touched. It is simply a resonance of the emotions conveyed by the audible song and the emotions inside myself. The resonance helps me understand my inner, inaudible sounds; it makes me discover the shapes of my inner landscape.

Most of the times the process is much more complex than that. It goes in all directions at the same time and iterates and repeats itself. Like Lederach and Lederach (2011) explain, the circularity of processes and stepping away from the idea of direct consequentiality is not detrimental, but rather adds to our understanding of how things happen. The order of resonances and awareness that comes with it flows simultaneously in both directions. That is what I find inspiring about such a resonance: once the string has been pulled, and both strings of both violins commence vibration, it is virtually impossible to recognize which string started vibrating first.

It is, then, no wonder that so many linguistic expressions used to convey closeness to the heart use or include musical terminology. This is the case for 'being in tune' with someone or something, usually used to describe a good understanding, or something that is 'music to one's ear', in order to express how pleasant something is that one just heard. Even more illustrative is 'to hit the right note' or 'to strike a chord', both of them having an affective connotation that surpasses the limits of any other adjective that can be attributed.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the word 'chord', understood as a group of

more than two notes that sound as a harmony, finds its etymological source on the Latin ‘cor’, meaning heart. The source is the same for the Spanish equivalent, ‘*acorde*’ and the French one, ‘*accord*’. It might be for this exact reason, for this closeness of chords and music to the human heart, that the children found one of their favourite activities in a game they actually invented themselves.

During the second session, I asked the children how they were doing. Instead of answering the question with words, I would play different chord sequences in my guitar until they found the right one that which described the way they were feeling at that moment. I did not expect them to be so stubborn and insistent, making me try over and over again, stretching my creativity and music skills to the maximum, until I finally found those chords with which they were really satisfied. Still, they found different means to the same end, a way they considered more fun.

At the beginning of each session, they would hide under the panels and curtains of the theatre stage. I would begin to play different chords, sequences and rhythms. They would wait, patiently, quietly, listening, until they could identify the one that reflected their feelings at that moment in the most appropriate way. Until they could resonate with the sounds. Until it would strike a chord. Until it would touch their hearts.

The same idea applied to many other games and activities. For instance, we could each choose an instrument, with which we would play to each other the way we were feeling at that moment. They had a couple of minutes to try it out and could then play it for the rest. They were engaged and did not conform themselves to the first thing that came out; on the contrary, they asked to repeat the exercise when it had not conveyed what they really wanted to express.

The best example of how music managed to awake the consciousness of our inner landscapes was, for me, the drawings. In most sessions, they drew after the music had taken place. Since they are kids, and they all liked to draw, the showcase of imagination and creativity that they displayed in each drawing did not come to me as a surprise. What did come as a surprise to me was what happened on the last day.

The last session was a celebration. We prepared a performance to which we could invite all of our loved ones, even if they were not in the same country, even if they were already gone. We could invite the people we loved and they would come; we would be able to see them in the audience if we looked carefully, with our hearts. The room ended up being completely full.

The celebration consisted of common singing of the songs that we had learned during the workshops, and the opportunity for each child to do whatever they wanted, however they wanted, and as long as they wanted, in order to show what they had taken for themselves. That day, we drew two times, all together on a huge piece of cardboard: once at the beginning of the session, as a placard for our loved ones to be welcomed to the place, and a second time at the end, as a reflection of the performance.

The difference in the drawings of Group V was striking. The first drawing consisted of simpler lines, simpler colours, simpler shapes. The second drawing was an outburst of colourfulness and play. It was as if the richness of their imagination had surfaced and travelled through their hands into the painting. Unfortunately, the images of both pictures do not truly reflect what I experienced, because they insisted on ‘finishing’ the first placard after the session, at the same time that they drew the other pictures. The photo that you see below was taken, therefore, after both pictures had been ‘finished’ at the end of the session.



Figure 5.2.: Drawing of group V on the last session. It started before and finished after the celebration



Figure 5.3.: Drawing of group V after the celebration of the last session

I want to pay close attention, however, to the ‘how’ we got to the last picture, rather than the result that can be appreciated in the image. Let’s stop for a moment in the dark corner of the last picture. It was drawn by Stephen, and the process was by far not as simple as the image possibly shows.

Stephen is a very smart, intelligent boy, with a very rich vocabulary in three different languages. Sometimes, Stephen finds his fun in intercepting the words, games or actions of other children, just for the amusement of annoying them. The thick blue and orange section in the first drawing was a result of this: he was not interested in drawing on his own (actually, more importantly, he insisted that he was ‘not able to draw’). So he openly admitted that his objective was to cover someone else’s drawings – and he did. At the end of the session, however, his energy and attitude had made a U-turn. He took that corner for his own and began exploring the story that the paintings could tell. He was not interested in whether he was able to draw or not anymore, nor in bothering anyone at all. He simply wanted to tell his own story with the paints. He engaged in a constant, long-lasting, playful covering and uncovering of different colours, adding shades, erasing traces... He was immersed in his own story of lights and shadows. He talked, in a low voice, about the sun rising, the clouds coming, the rain falling, darkness arriving, the light arising again... Repeatedly, as if nothing could get him out of that narration. It was wonderful to watch.

Drawing is the most powerful means for children to express their inner landscape (Vygotsky 2004) and music is the transport to discover that inner landscape (Berendt 1991; Parker 2016). Stephen's example reflects this perfectly. Admittedly, it could have been many other things, not the music. Maybe they just invented the game where they hid behind the curtains merely for the fun of hiding. Maybe they simply liked to explore the sounds and they stopped when they felt like stopping, not when they heard the sound that resonated with their inside. Maybe Stephen was inspired by watching others or from other reasons and not the music. I am not them, so all of this could have been possible.

Yet, I was there in the room, fully present, feeling the atmosphere, entering into contact with them and my co-facilitator, sharing those moments, and allowing myself to open up and listen in an empathic manner. Through the experience lived, I could feel, see and witness the powerful role that music played in letting us access that inner landscape, those things within ourselves that are not easily identified nor acknowledged. It would be extremely reductionist to say that I was led to these conclusions by my observations; it was much more than that. It was what I felt, sensed, heard, and *saw* at a deep, empathic level.

Stephen's example illustrates what the workshops taught me each day: music provides us with infinite ways to get more in touch with ourselves. By experiencing a wider range of feelings and emotions through the experience of music, we can become more aware of our inner landscape. This does not only reflect on a deeper self-awareness, but also on our relationship with others and our interactions with the outer worlds. Experiencing music is a way to experience ourselves and, thus, to get closer to what we are.

5.3. Voices

Malena is one of the quietest, shyest girls of the group. The very few times she spoke up, she did so in a very low voice, as if she feared that someone would actually listen to her. When the day to sing the first song all together arrived, her voice could barely be noticed. It was a day of improvisation: only three children in the workshop, we could not use the music room and I did not have my own guitar with me. All I could do was get an old guitar from the music room, go to the normal class and improvise the session! My

co-facilitator played a song for us on the computer. She had printed the lyrics and even the guitar chords, so we spent most of the hour learning to sing that beautiful song all together.

Having noticed Malena's reluctance to let her voice come out, I invited her to step outside of her position behind the other children, come to my side, and play the rhythm by tapping the guitar's body. And there she was. Suddenly, we could hear Malena. We could see her. We could notice her in the room, in the song with us. She was not using her voice, but she was speaking up, she was having a voice. Suddenly, she dared to shine. She dared to be there. And she remained there throughout the session – until the time came again to use our voices: our physical voices.

At that time she stepped back again, but something had changed already. The next day, when we sang the song, she sang a little bit louder – this time, literally, with her voice. Every session, each time we sang the song, she sang a little bit louder, as if she could gradually find the voice within herself and let it out, let it be heard.

Malena is still the shy, quiet girl who seems to fear speaking up. However, music provided her with the possibility to do so; it gave her moments of presence, of daring, of overstepping. Something was visibly transformed on the outside and, hopefully, something was transformed inside her too.

Looking back at the first sessions of the workshop and in assessing their development, I get the rewarding feeling that Malena's case was not an isolated one; rather, it was the most visible representation of a pattern that most of the children followed. My co-facilitator agrees with me; even in children I had not been able to notice, many of them gradually found the way to let their voices be heard (Gizolme 2017). Karole's observations are especially valuable in this context because she had known the children for a much longer time than myself and I trust her appreciations based on her experience with them.

Our voice is our most immediate instrument. For me, the importance of singing, of speaking, of producing a sound through our voices rests on the natural quality of voice as innate to our human nature. Alice Parker, in this very same line, argues that music is “the only one of the arts that is immediately available to human beings. You don't have

to have paints. You don't have to have a brush. You don't have to have a pencil. You don't have to have anything else" (Parker 2016, 00:45:39 - 00:45:49). Nothing other than yourself – and the courage to let it out.

It is because of this very same nature of the voice that it means so much more than just the ability to sing or produce sounds. As Lederach explains, the metaphor of 'having a voice' is an extremely powerful one, because it touches upon our very nature of being human, and not having a voice unchains a "profound sense of distance and exclusion" (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 65). It ultimately deprives us from our humanness.

Voice signals that people are within hearing range, the shared space of a conversation [...] As such, to have a voice suggests that people, and significant processes affecting their lives, are proximate: they are physically close enough that the vibrations of sounds touch each other, create an echo that bounces, reverberate and resonate between them. (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 65)

Voice comes through our throats. This area of our bodies is representative for our fifth chakra in yoga philosophy. Anodea Judith is a writer who wonderfully connects eastern philosophy to western living styles and explains the significance of such connections in her book *Eastern Body, Western Mind* (2004). She insists on the importance of the voice as a sign of health and balance within our fifth chakra, and connects this to the basic need to express ourselves with the outside. "The voice is a living expression of one's basic vibration" (Judith 2004, 298).

This chakra, she argues, is usually developed fully in the ages between 7 and 12 – exactly the ages of the children with whom I did the workshop. This is the age in which, generally, children develop their ability to communicate with the outer world and express the feelings, emotions and fantasies that live inside them. "Children have a need to be heard and listened to. If they fail to receive this, they won't even be able to hear themselves" (Judith 2004, 311). The inner listening, the listening to our own emotions, needs to be matched with the ability to express it. This ability is what enables the creation of an individuality, of presence. "People who are well connected to their own voices generally have a strong sense of themselves. Their attention is present, with themselves and their environment" (Dietrich 2012, 104). Paying attention to that connection with

one's own voice, especially during that age, is essential for that connection with oneself; for that sense of who one is.

As Judith explains, the acknowledgement of emotions and the ability to express those emotions are intrinsically connected, and working on one, works the other. "Emotions are connected with the voice, and that we cannot touch one without touching the other [...]. When we constrict our emotions, we simultaneously constrict our expression" (Judith 2004, 322). In line with Lederach's ideas, I believe it also works the other way around; by constricting our expression, we constrict our ability to get in touch with our emotions.

Lederach departs from the basic point that hearing the voice of someone means being in a physical space where the range of that voice can get to our ears. That is to say, we can be reached, we can be touched. "The sensation of voicelessness always means finding oneself in a space too expansive, distant and remote to feel or be touched by the vibration of sound" (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 66). If we connect this to Judith's and Dietrich's beliefs, which I share, the sense of one's voice is deeply connected to the sense of our own emotions and feelings. Just like not hearing someone means we cannot be touched by someone, the inability to express ourselves through our voice means that we cannot get in touch with ourselves.

The question then becomes: what does this expression of ourselves really mean? Does this expression need to be in a vocal form? Let me just go back to Berendt, who argues that sound does not need to be audible, as well as to Rogers, who explains that communication is much more than what is spoken. Indeed, I believe that communication and expression can take many different shapes, ranging from facial expressions to body movement or paintings. Anything that we create is a means of expression.

Patrick McCarthy, talking about the role that arts (and he specifies, all kinds of arts) play in peace and conflict, argues that "art is transmission of a feeling" (McCarthy 2007, 356), of all kinds of feelings. He adds: "Genuine art is known by the risky personal attempt to make concrete the strongest inner sensations" (McCarthy 2007, 358). I believe music is an art and thus it is a wonderful way of expression, which I experienced during the workshop. The case of Malena reflects this perfectly: she found her expression in the

drums. Music constitutes the possibility to express what is inside without words – just like many other forms of arts – and this is in many occasions a necessary first step towards letting out the unspeakable.

"The lovely thing with the music is that we don't have to be limited by the way that words are limited by our rational minds" (Parker 2016, 00:01:38 - 00:01:44). That aspect of music that transcends the limit of what we can understand, is what enables expression through music to convey human experience to the depth that words are not able to. The enormous range of musical possibilities makes it possible to convey emotional nuances that would otherwise be impossible to reach.

Having acknowledged this, I still want to emphasize the importance of voice and the use of voice for expression, as I believe that it adds another dimension to the discussion. Music is the means to express our inner landscape to the outside. Voice is the reaffirmation of our sense of self when facing that outside.

One of my most vivid memories as a child is the way in which I used to sing while the water got heated up for me to take a bath. I would just sit there, while the water was running, so that my family would not hear me too much, and sing in what I said was 'English' and 'Chinese' – words I invented adding up sounds that I thought, shared the phonic characteristics of those languages. It was beautiful to dream that, one day, I would be able to sing in all the languages of the world.

As far as I can remember, I have always had a strong sense of my voice. I have always been able to speak up, to raise it, to use it in every way I deemed necessary. I always asked (and answered) questions in class, I loved to sing everywhere and I would tell many people stories, about everything possible. I had a voice. And sometimes, I had too much of a voice.

When I started university, this comfort that I feel in my own rhetoric led me to join the delegation of my university to participate in Model United Nations⁴, the Euroteachers

4. Model United Nations (MUNs) are simulations of United Nations conferences in its different configurations. The participants prepare their position, representing one of the member countries, regarding a specific topic. During several days, they defend the position of this country in their assigned committee with the aim of pushing that position to be reflected in the resulting common declaration. More information can be found on: <https://www.model-un.de/en/was-ist-mun/>

group⁵ and a debating championship. Furthermore, the format of my university was designed in a way that most of our courses were not lectures, but group learning in which we would debate a different topic each week. This means that I spent the first two years of university debating, discussing, and sharing ideas, using my voice.

These were two wonderful years, during which I gained a lot of self-confidence and grew as a person. Also, these were two years in which that comfort that I find in my voice led me to use it in a way in which I lost touch with other aspects of myself and became only my voice. I was only my party in the debate, only my argument in the discussion.

I spent every minute while someone else spoke thinking about what I was going to say next, rather than listening to the real meaning of her words. The discussions and debates stopped being about learning from each other for me, and became a need for self-reassurance about my own value. My voice had led me to gain a lot of trust in myself, but it had also led me to depend on it for that trust. It was not the transport for my inner landscape to get to the outside, but simply a weapon for me to win – a weapon I was very good at using.

I hope this personal story illustrates where the importance of the voice comes from for me. It also makes clear, once again, one of the crucial aspects of my arguments: balance is key. Judith confirms that a healthy fifth chakra is characterised by the balance in a person's voice. A sense of one's voice that is too strong also results in an imbalance.

In this case, the balance is significant in one further aspect than just the equilibrium itself. "Since this chakra is about self-expression of one's truth, we judge its openness by how well we can speak about the things that are closest to the heart" (Judith 2004, 319). Speaking up about things that feel distant from ourselves is, therefore, rather easy. This was what happened to me during Model United Nations and debating contests: I was speaking loud, clearly and convincingly, but only about matters that barely touched me at an emotional level. This is how using my voice became just an instrument of self-validation: I could do something very well, but I did not make it significant for my inner

5. Student association of the Maastricht University. We used to give one-day workshops for children 17-18 years old in schools in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands about the current issues facing the European Union. More information can be found on: <http://euro-teachers.eu/>

landscape.

Here, in this workshop, in this research, I focus on the significance of the voice when it transports the inside world of a person to the outside; when it transports my inner landscape to the outer world. At this level, balance is again key; not only in the way I use my voice, but in the content of what I am saying. Even if it is without words – words with no meaning or pre-lingual methods – there is a sense in what I am expressing, there is a message, and it is in the closeness of this message to my heart that the ability to use my voice as an expression of my inner vibration will be reflected.

In this regard, it also flows both ways: I am able to use my voice because I am in touch with my emotions, and I get in touch with my emotions thanks to using my voice. It goes both ways simultaneously, with no distinction between which thing is causing the other. Just like with music, it is no cause and effect, but rather a process that goes beyond what words can explain, and which makes it possible for our inner landscapes to be uncovered and presented to the outside world. It is a process that allows our inner landscapes become reality.

It is for these reasons that I believe providing the children with that possibility to find a space where they could use their voice, as we did in the workshops, is crucial. In those years in which that chakra, that ability to use their voice, is developing, they attend a school in which most decisions are taken for them, including which subjects to study, which homework to do, and sometimes even which clothes they can wear or what food they have to eat. As Jason J. Wallin argues in an attempt to integrate Deleuze & Guattari's thoughts with current educational practices: "Schools are not made for children: children ought to be made for schools" (Wallin 2014, 119). Bringing a further focus to the role of our voice in our lives especially at this age would be a turn towards the needs of children. As Judith explains, not being able to feel that one has a voice, especially at that stage of life, can lead to insecurities and an unbalanced development of the throat chakra. A space in which voice is not only allowed, but encouraged, explored and discovered, would from my point of view respond to what most of our bodies need at that age.

"At the deepest, perhaps most complex level, voicelessness means losing touch with

a sense of personhood. As metaphor, when a person no longer has a sense of voice they experience loss of humanity" (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 66). Again, this refers to the relationship between the inner landscape, our feelings and emotions, and our capability to express it to the outside. This intrinsic relation makes it imperative that, for one to be able to keep in touch with oneself, one must be able to keep in touch with the outside. For one to listen to one self, one must be listened to by the outside.

It was therefore beautiful to see how the children all felt increasingly confident throughout the weeks to use their voice. Of course, factors like trust towards the facilitator and the group also play a role, and I cannot argue that music workshops are the blanket solution for allowing all children to find their voices. I do argue, however, that providing spaces in which they feel free and secure to explore the power of their voices, as well as the effects of using them as a transport to reveal their inner landscape to the outside, are of utmost importance. This is particularly important at a young age in order to develop a healthy development of their capability to speak up, feel listened to, and listen to themselves. "To give children the gift of clear communication is to give them a key that will unlock the majority of impasses and difficulties they will face in the future" (Judith 2004, 312) This ability to communicate with themselves and with their world is a communication which, ultimately, will determine the quality of their intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships.

5.4. Musical beings

The point is to transcend what everybody does, to attack the obvious and the superficial in the conventional ways of behaviour. The point is to experience the inaudible of the sounds, the invisible of the colors, the visible of the sounds, the audible of the colors. (Berendt 1991, 36)

In the previous chapters, I developed my views on the constraints that current western society, and traditional institutionalized education in particular, impose on the human need for personal unfolding as proposed by humanistic psychology. This chapter proposes music as one of the many possible ways towards that personal unfolding – not with the aim of denying the importance of rationality and the education of the mind, but with the purpose of widening the concept of learning and personal growth to further horizons.

I do not propose music as a counterbalance to the general environmental dynamics in which children are involved (which it can also be). Rather, I take the meaning of music as a whole; the meaning of hearing as presented by Berendt, to propose a general way of relating to each other. In this case it relates to children, and the way children relate to the world, in which the importance of the inner images outweighs that of the outer.

"Science and education, being too exclusively abstract, verbal and bookish, don't have enough place for raw, concrete, aesthetic experience, especially of the subjective happenings inside oneself" (Maslow 1968, 209), Maslow argues. Humanistic psychology believes that this happening inside oneself, those feelings, emotions, desires, and inner experiences, is what a person needs to uncover and accept in order to actualize his or her full potential. If I am open to living everything that is inside myself, I will discover that it is not hurtful, but enriching. That richness will foster my qualities as a person; it will allow me to blossom with all the aspects that are closest to my core.

Getting in touch with our own emotions is, to Rogers, an essential step to experiencing that which we truly are. Emotions can be accompanied by the fear of feeling them, fear of vulnerability, and fear of risk (Rogers 2004). Rogers believes that it is essential to fight the fear and open up to the experience of feeling our whole range of emotions, in order to get closer to the self (Rogers 2004). Music is, as I have presented it here, a transport to life which is inside ourselves without the constraints and fears that sometimes get in our way. Knowledge about oneself "can come only if a person's depths are available to him, only if he is not afraid of his primary thought processes" (Maslow 1968, 144). That is exactly what music, when lived in a free, creative manner, can be: a primary thought process. It is raw, it is real, it is our depth coming to the surface.

Feelings, according to Rogers, will tend towards harmony just like music does, according to Berendt. The harmony on the outside ends up being the harmony on the inside. Our feelings and emotions are already there, and they are not evil nor dangerous on their own. What makes them become dangerous is, according to Maslow, their repression, or the failure to recognize that they are part of ourselves. "Both active and passive repressions [of the inner, deeper nature, of impulses, capacities, emotions, judgements,

attitudes, definitions, perceptions...] seem to begin early in life, mostly as a response to parental and cultural disapprovals" (Maslow 1968, 192) School, society and family dynamics tend to contribute to such repressions. Music can be the experience that allows the children to go through that range of emotions that belongs to them, to all of those images of their inner landscape, allowing them to discover that there is no danger in there.

This is what can be called empathy with ourselves. It is listening to what is inside, to the sounds that are not audible. It is getting in touch with our inside, vibrating and resonating with our own feelings and emotions, like Lederach's idea of getting touched by, and vibrating with, others (Lederach and Lederach 2011). Listening can be learned, Rogers (2004) and Hart (2000) argue. Juddi Kirshnamurti draws an important nuance to this learning as, for according to him, it is not the "mechanical" learning that we follow to drive a car, for example. "The seeing and the listening have become mechanical" (Krishnamurti and Anderson 1991), and the kind of listening that we propose here, the one that "permits empathy" (Hart 2000, 18), can be learned through training ourselves to pay full attention (Krishnamurti and Anderson 1991). What a better way to learn to listen than music? Only the experience of listening to music, of listening to the sounds, and to the silences, is a practice, an exercise of paying attention to the world outside and to the world inside.

Once this contact is made, once this communication is established, voice, an important element of music, provides us with the possibility of communicating it to the outside. It is the means of expression of our inner world to the outer, and that communication is essential because it links to what Maslow and Rogers identify as acceptance, authentic selfhood, and trust in one's organism. I feel the deepest core of myself: I trust what I feel, I accept it, and I can convey that self to the outer world. I do not deny or repress what I am, but I take the things that are close to my heart and use my voice to convey it to the outside. The self-actualizing person is, for Maslow, "the one in whom all his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed or denied" (Maslow 1968, 5). Music is not only a transport towards the inside, but also from the inside to the outside, towards free

expression of the inner nature.

It is important at this point to emphasize that, for me, this by no means implies reaching any kind of superior state of being. The idea I want to convey (which is what I interpret from humanistic psychology) is not the transcendence into uncontaminated humanness. Rather, it is much simpler than it sounds. It is the ability to be and feel oneself for all that one is, including those aspects that are unpleasant. It means perceiving reality in manners other than what can be rationally and logically explained. Rogers explains this with examples like anger or sadness. It is the dissolution of the idea of perfection, and the ability to take distance from the expectations of others.

This can present itself in as many different ways as there are different people in this world. Again, it does not mean to become pure or flawless. Simply to get closer to what one really is, and further away from what one has been taught to be. I believe this is especially essential during childhood, for many of our patterns and behaviours are shaped during that time. Music can⁶ create spaces that are "permissive, admiring, praising, accepting, safe, gratifying, reassuring, supporting, unthreatening, non-valuing, non-comparing, that is, where the person can feel completely safe and unthreatened, then it becomes possible for him to work out and express all sorts of lesser delights" (Maslow 1968, 53). If, during childhood, most of the spaces we are part of could be as described, we would be allowed to blossom freely and we would more easily become that which we really are.

5.5. Listening

Listening is an art (Krishnamurti and Anderson 1991). The literature review of Berendt's texts already laid down the basis of what hearing means and the importance of the ear as a means to perceive the world. I would now like to make an additional emphasis on listening, its direct relationship with empathy, and what it implies in the broader spectrum of human relationships.

According to Rogers, the basis of psychotherapy is on working with relationships

6. The word 'can' is essential here, for it is not a given. Whether or not these spaces are safe for the child to enjoy her own unfolding depends on the trust that is established and the environment created. Chapter 6 will elaborate further on this topic.

that have been broken due to communication failures. For him, conflicts in interpersonal relationships arise from difficulty in proper communication (Rogers 2004). This means that, ultimately, communication is responsible for relationships from the personal to the global level, and vice-versa. This theory has got a lot in common with and is supported by, Bateson (1972), who first formulated the system theory, or Virginia Satir, who wrote extensively on communication and relationships.

Rogers believes that "the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove, the statement of the other person, or the other group" (Rogers 2004, 330), and that this tendency can be overcome by listening with understanding to the other person. However, what does this really mean? What is listening with understanding, if not thinking about and evaluating what we are hearing?

There is extensive literature on this topic. I am most persuaded by the theories of Carl Rogers, Marshall Rosenberg and Tobin Hart on the meaning of empathy and empathic listening. I do agree, from my very personal experience, that most of the problems arising in human relationships find their basis on the difficulty to communicate. On the one hand, this includes saying what I really mean to say to the other person. This is what Rosenberg would call expressing my feelings and needs. On the other hand, it is the ability to *listen*. That second part is where I find the incredible value that music can bring to a person's life.

All three authors agree that listening is key for better communication and that listening is something that can be learned. We are born with the ability to hear, and our ears cannot be shut down, not even when we sleep (Berendt 1991). Yet, listening is an ability that every person can learn to master through practice and dedication (Rogers 1995; Hart 2000). The key, for Rogers, is "to increase the amount of listening with, and to decrease the amount of evaluation about." (Rogers 2004, 335). By learning to listen to what our ears hear and to really take inside the perception of our hearing senses, without the need to judge or evaluate, is what develops into empathic understanding.

I believe that music in all of its forms is about listening. It is about receiving what

is perceived by our ears. This is not simply hearing it, as if it came into an empty cavity and went out again, but truly letting it resonate inside, embracing it with our whole being. The best example for this is the previously mentioned story about silences and how important listening to silence became. Perhaps silence is the best illustration of what I mean to explain, because listening to silence takes an extra effort. Silence is not only heard, but needs to be listened to with careful attention. It is in that listening that the learning comes.

That learning to listen to music can easily be transposed to listening to one another in our daily lives. "Deep empathy is not a technique but a way of being" (Hart 2000, 17). So is listening, I believe. Learning implies a change in the predisposition of our whole bodies, in the attitude of our being. We do not only hear the outside and the inside, but we listen to it and we perceive it with attention. This is empathy. Listening is empathy towards ourselves, as I have previously argued, and it is empathy towards others.

That is why I consider it essential to learn to master the skill of listening from an early age. In his book *The Development Dictionary* (2010), Wolfgang Sachs gives extensive account of the vocabulary used during the 'age of development'⁷ and discusses the importance of shifting the paradigm that dominated during those years. The authors "started with the premise that Western hegemony leaves its imprint not only on politics and economics, but on minds as well" (Sachs 2010, xii). Education as it is presented in schools is, to them, the "economic definition of learning" (Sachs 2010, 18), and by shifting paradigms from the 'age of development' to a time of "search for less material notions of prosperity" (Sachs 2010, xiii) we will "make room for the dimensions of self-reliance, community, art or spirituality" (Sachs 2010, xiii). Education and social dynamics nowadays are so focused on the skills that belong to the realm of the visual, the rational, and the logical, that there is very little space left for the skill of listening to be developed (Berendt 1991). The practice and experience of music constitute one of those paths away from the economic understanding of the human being. Music yields the opportunity for

7. For Wolfgang Sachs, the age of development are the years mounting up to 1989, during which the dominant political and economic discourses focused on the need to 'develop', understanding that verb as a growth in the middle classes, access to basic public services, and democratization of states. In 1989, with the fall of the Wall, he argues that the age of development left room for the age of globalization.

all the characteristics and resources of the human being, in all of their complexity, to be taken care of, cultivated, and watered, so that they may flourish.

5.6. Belonging

After the session, Elise's father came to pick her up. After greeting his daughter, he asked her: "Tu as bien chanté aujourd'hui?", which in French means "Did you sing well today?". It is important to notice that there is a difference in French between 'tu', which is 'you' in singular, and 'vous', which is 'you' in plural. The father asked in singular, whether his daughter had sung well. Elise's answer was crystal clear: "Non papa, nous, on a bien chanté". "No, dad, WE sung well".

This emphasis on the 'we' by Elise illustrates perfectly the feeling of group and community that developed throughout each session. We arrived there with our different stories, having each lived through our own days and with our own worries in our heads. During the sessions, while keeping that individuality, we moved towards something common. We were together in what we were doing, and that was visible throughout the different exercises.

The picture used as the cover of this thesis is equally representative of that feeling of togetherness. After one of the sessions, they ran as usual to the finger paintings that were available for drawing. This time, Joen covered his hand in paint and left his imprint on the paper. All the others followed; they left their own drawings for a minute and created, together, the colorful drawing with the imprints of all their hands.

"What we miss when we don't have song is the means of creating a community, of creating a whole out of a group of people" (Parker 2016, 00:13:06 - 00:13:16). This was evident during the moments of singing and working through different nuances. Following the same melody, the same tune, with the same volume and tonality, resulted in a feeling of unity. Our voices resonated with each other. What came out of each of our inner landscapes through our voices resonated with the expressions of inner landscapes of the others, merging together to create only one voice, resonating with each inner landscape once more. It was a sensation of unity of our voices and instruments, similar to the one that can be experienced when singing in a choir or playing in an orchestra. It is

the sensation that the individuality that one expresses is one with the individualities of others. It is commonality, it is a group, it is a community.

In the moments when sound was not as harmonious, including when each explored their own instruments or when we sang songs that we did not know as well, these experiences could still be felt. In these cases it was felt not as much through the sound, but through the silences. In one of these exercises, we each played one instrument freely, following our own beats, without the need to be in tune with the others. Then, the person playing the instrument designated the 'Orchestra director' (a position that was constantly rotating) and would stop playing and sit on the floor. We would all follow and keep silent until the director started again. These moments of silence were magical, almost sacred. "It just means that everyone – it's as if all of our inner ions have been scheduled to be moving in the same direction at the same time" (Parker 2016, 00:14:00 - 00:14:10). Alice Parker explains it with those words, but I am sure that most of us have lived similar experiences of unity, either through music or something else.

My experience in the Philippines was marked by music in many different shapes. On the New Years Eve entering 2015, I was in Sagada, a village in the mountain region of Cordillera. Admittedly, this village is frequented by many tourists – many from abroad, others from different parts of the Philippines. Yet, the ceremony that welcomed the new year was truly local, and had nothing to do with anything I had ever seen before. The Bontoc people, inhabitants of some areas of the Cordillera region, play a traditional instrument in most of their ceremonies. It is a Gong that is held in one hand by a short rope, and hit with a stick by the other. There are different sizes to create different sounds. In the traditional way of playing it, the men form a semicircle and play the gongs. The first one leads the beat while the rest follow playing whatever they feel fits in that beat. They walk and dance in circle. The women form a semicircle on the outside and dance to their beat. The leader constantly changes, the women sometimes play, the men also dance... it evolves organically and beautifully, without losing the harmony of it all.

I had been lucky enough to participate in other traditional ceremonies with Bontoc people

who had taught me to play and to dance. That New Year's Eve, I was invited to join their circle and play the Gongs with them. Suddenly, there I was, playing and dancing in a circle to welcome the new year in a traditional Bontoc ceremony. I entered into the new year with a group of people that I had never before met in my life, on the other side of the world from where I was born and where my family was, with a kind of music and dancing I was barely familiar with. Yet, I had an unknown, unforgettable and unique feeling of belonging. As if the music and the magic of the moment had unified all of us into something beyond place of birth, language or skin colour. As if the deepest of our beings had been brought to the surface and differences did not have a place to exist. As if being human was all that mattered for being together in that ceremony.

It is exactly this kind of unity that music brings forth. Humanistic psychology talks about feeling the core of our beings; feeling that which we truly are⁸. I have never been able to live this more clearly. Moments of music bring moments of unity, and the core of our humanness is made evident thanks to the realization that the humanness is exactly what connects us to o another.

"Sound and music have this innate capacity to touch us in ways in which [...] we can perceive our lived social landscape in new ways and find our place" (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 142). Everything else becomes superficial to a point that it is not relevant to the experience of being human in that moment of music. It is deeper, and depth means togetherness.

5.7. Surrounding Sound

Sound surrounds. Sound and music create a sensation of being held. The sonic experience, particularly in music and in specific songs, can serve as a container that stimulates insight and the potential for creativity. The sensation of being surrounded creates spaces of feeling the potential and perhaps the reality of being accepted, the presence of unconditional love, which can be described as being held, feeling safe, experiencing a sensation of 'at-homeness' (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 142)

This quote of Lederach covers perfectly all the essential aspects of music which touch upon its potential for personal unfolding and the transformation of human relationships.

8. See Ch. 4, Sec. 2 for further information.

His book When Blood and Bones Cry Out gives extensive account on the potential of music for conflict transformation. Here, I want to focus on that potential translated into childhood and an alternative understanding of learning that takes the child as a person in all of its wholeness and humanness.

My understanding of conflict goes beyond the one based on violence. Based on a transrational conception of peace, I understand conflict as necessary energy blockages or imbalances that arise out of intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics. My understanding of learning goes beyond that proposed by traditional education. I believe that learning is an ongoing life process in which inner and outer impulses foster our personal unfolding, widening and deepening our understanding of ourselves as human beings and of the dynamics that surround us in the outside.

From my point of view, it is necessary to shift the traditionally held understanding of education towards an understanding of learning that takes into account all aspects of a human being, including those that cannot be logically explained nor rationally grasped. I believe this needs to take into account the basic assumptions of humanistic psychology and the main characteristics of a transrational idea of peace. The dissolution of dichotomies for perceiving the world, the trust in one's own organism as a point of reference, an understanding of human relationships and social dynamics that take conflict as a necessary element for transformation, and the love and acceptance towards the self and others as they are, are some of the key aspects that contribute to a personal life process that results in a more balanced, more accepting, less frustrating perception of our own being and interactions with the outer world.

This means learning, from an early age onwards, that perfection does not exist, that what one feels can be enriching, and that personal and interpersonal dynamics constantly transform. Music is the transport for learning to listen. It can open up a space of acceptance and inclusion, of feeling surrounded by something bigger and simultaneously much smaller. It is something very personal and yet universal. Music serves as a door into a dimension of learning those things that cannot be explained with words. It is the experience itself of what that understanding of learning, conflict and being a human

means.

6. Elicitive facilitation

Let me emphasize here that, as much as I believe in the power of music as a tool for self-unfolding, the *way* in which music is presented, played, listened to and experienced is just as important as the music itself. The means that we use to come in contact with music or, in this case, to lead a group of children to come in contact with music, is crucial and needs to be taken into account in this thesis as well. For that matter, traditional music education is widespread among primary school children, and yet, I believe this methodology, this way of presenting and experiencing music, does nothing but support the overall traditional academic structure, whose characteristics I have discussed in previous chapters.

It is for that reason that the ‘how’ is an essential element in this research. It is not only music, in its abstract conception, what I am exploring here as means of fostering unfolding and transformation. It is, primarily, the attitude with which music is proposed; the spirit in which the endeavour is taken. Here is where I introduce the term ‘Elicitive Facilitation’; not as the sole and ultimate response to how teaching and education should be, but as the idea that, to me, best summons the principles that I believe would lead to a more enriching understanding of learning.

The term elicitive does not exist in the English dictionary. It was derived by John Paul Lederach from the verb ‘to elicit’, which means to evoke or to bring forth. ‘Elicitive’ as an adjective means, then, anything that provokes or brings forth something else (Lederach 1996). Lederach proposed this understanding in the framework of peace and conflict work, as a paradigm shift from the prescriptive conflict resolution approach that he observed in the field. This shift implied the change in understanding of two main elements: first, the change from ‘resolution’ to ‘transformation’. Conflict shall, from his point of view, not be perceived as an evil force to be avoided and solved, but rather as a necessary life energy, present in all relationships, which can be transformed into new, more functional patterns of behaviour. Second, the change from a prescriptive to an elicitive approach. In a prescriptive approach, the peace worker enters the conflict situation as a neutral force with the receipt for change and the answer to the problems. In an

elicitive one, the peace worker enters as a third party to the conflict situation, with all this involves, and searches, together with the parties, new perspectives to the problem that will transform the way of dealing with it and, thus, will transform the conflicting energy (Dietrich 2013).

This paradigm shift in the realm of peace and conflict world is, from my point of view, a concrete example of two different paradigms in the way of looking at the world. In the case of this research, I apply the parallel to the concept of 'learning', with the prescriptive approach being traditional education and elicitive facilitation presented as an alternative. Schools, understood here as a modern institution to teach children the basic knowledge they need to face life as adults, has been widely criticised for failing to change and adapt to the transformation of societies (Wallin 2014). As it has been presented in Chapter 3 of this research, this traditional model of education has been accused of not responding to the needs of the children (Duckworth 2006; Mooney 2000), reproducing modes of economic and social oppression (Freire 2017; Falbel 2002), leading towards homogenization (Wallin 2014), destroying the natural creativity of children (Holt 2004; Mooney 2000) and serving as a justification and continuation of the capitalist economic model (Sachs 2010). Still now, after years of critique and in spite of numerous models of alternative education, the traditional understanding of schools remains the same (Wallin 2014).

Elicitive facilitation is presented in this research not as an alternative to schools, which I believe would be an overly ambitious, long-term and energy-consuming endeavour, but as a way of creating spaces, within or outside of schools, to *elicit* learning instead of *imposing* it. Freire would call these spaces 'educational projects', Illich proposed 'learning networks' and Holt talked about 'resources for do-ers'. All concepts which, with its own nuances, aim at addressing those constraints that, due to its institutional nature, traditional education encounters. In that same line, I propose Elicitive facilitation as a way to re-think the meaning of learning as a participatory process, in which the main resource are the participants themselves as full, resourceful human beings.

The word facilitation itself already makes justice to that paradigm shift. Its Latin root, 'facile', means easy. Facilitation means therefore to ease something up; to allow for

something to be easier. By taking a look at the roots of the Spanish word that makes reference to the concept of teaching something in traditional education, 'enseñar', this paradigm is made evident. 'Enseñar', as many Spanish words, comes from the Latin 'insignare' (RAE 2014). It brings together the Latin prefix 'in' with the verb 'signare', which at the same time comes from the root word 'signum' (RAE 2014). This word, 'signum', means 'sign' in its most material sense: a characterization of something. For instance, a traffic sign. The verb 'insignare' was originally derived in latin to make reference to graving something; to designate the action of literally creating a sign in something like, for instance, a stone. 'Insignare' could be used, in that sense, as 'to grave' or 'to mark' the stone (Lewis and Short 1879).

Later, the word adopted a broader meaning and became what we can in English call 'to signal' in a wider sense: to make known, to indicate. The latin prefix 'in' indicates an action of movement, of the verb taking place in a direction, towards something or someone (Lewis and Short 1879; Gaffiot 1934). That is how it developed into the Spanish word 'enseñar': to signal in a certain direction; to mark something; to indicate towards. When in comparison to the verb 'facilitar' (the Spanish equivalent to 'facilitate'), the different connotations of these words very much illustrate the difference in the overarching foundations of a more traditional way to conceive education and the basis of facilitation that I propose in this chapter.

The term Elicitive Facilitation, in this regard, even seems redundant to me: to facilitate something in an evocative manner. To facilitate the bringing forth of what is there. Both terms imply each other already. Yet, I believe the repetition is justified by the need to emphasize that shift in paradigm; that change in the underlying assumptions.

I propose elicitive facilitation not as a prescriptive, ultimate solution to learning, but rather as a change in the way we think about learning. I do not think children, nor for that matter anybody else, needs a superior authority to come and tell them what to learn, how to learn it nor how to use it. As the pillars of humanistic psychology argue, I believe we all have a potential that wants to be unfolded, and learning is the process of that unfolding (Rogers 2004; Maslow 1968). "Children do not need to be made to learn about

the world, or shown how. They want to, and they know how" (Holt 2004). That process cannot be taught, but facilitated, eased up, enabled, evoked, bring forth by the situations in which we are, the group of people we interact with, what we see in others, what we reflect about ourselves.

A revealing example of such potential that can be evoked is the voice. One of my points of criticism towards Berendt's writings is his focus on music experts and artists who have devoted their lives to music (Berendt 1991). From my point of view, he fails to recognize that same potential in non-musicians, which I believe plays against his overall praise to music. Parker, on the other hand, acknowledges that everyone has got the ability to sing. Maybe it is in the voice that such a potential can be recognized easier, since it is the instrument we are all born with, and the one that requires least technical expertise to be used. "If we have ears, the realm of music is open to us", Parker argues. She continues, "in any place there's a group of singing, where two or three are gathered together, we can sing" (Parker 2016). The potential that lays within our voices is always there. Elicitive facilitation means creating a space that allows for its unfolding; it is to the person what water is to the plants to make them flourish. Whenever it is not the right time or place, Elicitive Facilitation does not impose. It simply opens up possibilities and leaves the rest to the people involved.

Elicitive facilitation can be, from my point of view, carried out in as many different ways as there are people in the world. Personally, I feel inspired by the basis on which Carl Rogers develops his Client-centered therapy, as well as his thoughts on learning and education; Maslow and his ideas on the 'helpful let-be' during children growth; Natalie Rogers and the method she developed on Person-Centered Expressive Arts; and, especially, Lederach with his brilliant writings and reflections on the facilitation of spaces for healing and social change.

This is only an account of what I, personally, have learned about elicitive facilitation, about the possibility to open up spaces for learning and re-think its meaning as the unfolding of human potential. I make this account more concrete through the workshops I organized with the children, while all my previous and later experiences working with

groups as well as being part of a group are equally relevant to my thinking. This last part of this research is just an impression of my own learnings that may, or may not, resonate with the experiences of others.

6.1. The Flow

The first session with the group was, simply, a lot of fun. It developed in a very natural manner, we discovered the instruments in a playful way and underwent the first interactions with each other. From a musical point of view, it could be said that harmony was not our strong point that day; not in rhythm nor in tone. Yet, we still felt that unity of playing all together, even when the result of all our personal ways of playing was sonic chaos.

When the session finished and we were about to change rooms for the drawings, Silko went to the drum kit and began playing a stimulating rhythm. Instead of moving forward to the other room, we all stayed still, moved by his initiative, listen attentively to what was coming out of him. Another child moved to the congas and looked at me, as if asking for permission to join. I granted the permission by beginning to accompany Silko's rhythm myself at the bongos, and she immediately followed. Before I could even realize what was happening, we were all accompanying Silko's rhythm with different instruments. This time, it was complete harmony in rhythm. Without even looking or asking for it, we naturally came to play together. It just came up. It was just there. Not an activity, not a game, not a request. Simply our instincts coming together to create something.

This was only the first example of a long series, which helped me to understand one of the main propositions of this way of working: the energy for that, which will happen, is already there. I only had to allow it to flow. There was no need to bring in a new activity or game in order to achieve that synchronicity that took place at every level among all of us. It was simply necessary to let it be. They started it on their own, they followed it, they made it happen. My role in that case was only to allow it.

It would have been easy, even tempting, to stop it from the very first moment Silko approached the drum kit: I had given the clear instruction that we had to leave that room and proceed to the room where the drawing would take place. That was the timeline, it

was the plan, it was that, which we were supposed to do according to the schedule I had carefully established; that, which was to happen next. Ceasing their impulses from the beginning and changing rooms would have been totally logical; and yet, it would have denied all of us the opportunity to take part in that beautiful moment of sharing the music, feeling the music, interacting with one another, following the rhythm, playing to the same beat. Paradoxically, this means that following the plan designed for that session would have denied us the opportunity to feel that, which the workshop was aimed to do.

Another revealing example of that same learning took place the moment another session began: as we arrived to the music room, we found it occupied by the school director and a group of students. She told us we could not use the room that day. Every single activity I had planned for that session involved the use of the instruments in the music room – I had to come up with something completely different.

And I did. Or, to be more accurate, *we* did. With the help of my co-facilitator, who had printed the lyrics and chords of a song, we managed to turn the session into a beautiful voice session. I took an old guitar and we learned that song almost by heart. We then began to communicate without words, only sound, as in an invented language. It was a relaxed session during which we made the best use of our creativity. What we did was not presented in the form of exercises, but it evolved naturally from the children. One of them began to answer to the other without words. Then another began to sing with invented lyrics. It was simply flowing in the directions that they allowed it to flow.

Vygotsky (2004) argues that imagination is greater in adults than children, but children have more faith in what they imagine and, thus, let it free, while adults control it and keep it for themselves (Vygotsky 2004). This correlates to Maslow's theories on creativity. Out of his study on self-actualizers, he deduces that people who unfold their potential tend to have 'child-like creativity', that is, creativity that is born out of the primary thought of process, and is not filtered by secondary thoughts. It comes out of us in a fresh, raw manner, without the constrictions of our socialization, pre-conceived ideas, judgement and enculturation (Maslow 1968).

Allowing the space for children to guide the direction of the sessions in the realm of

facilitation entails, therefore, both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, I believe that children are more prone to take the courage to let their instincts guide them, to set that creativity free. They believe in what they imagine as something enriching, as something that is possible to bring to reality. The tendency to judge their own impulses is less present than in adults (Vygotsky 2004). The energy that will guide the course of events can be, therefore, much stronger, much more present. This presents an opportunity for letting it happen, for letting it be. It is not even necessary to look for it or encourage it: the faith that children have in the product of their imagination is encouragement enough for them to pursue it.

On the other hand, the strength of this energy might be perceived as an enemy force against the discipline that is also needed in group work. I believe that the countering force, in this case, discipline, tends to be proportional to the perceived primary force. In groups of children who have got a greater amount of energy, rules and norms are stricter in an attempt to control that energy to maintain the structure. Illich argues that school are in nature, because of their institutional character, a detriment to inventive and creative behaviour (Illich 1971). Institutions need form and structure to function and, if education is institutionalized, it will make use of discipline to generate the conditions for that structure to be maintained (Illich 1971). Although John Dewey spread the now generally accepted idea that children need a setting of "experimentation and independent thinking" (Mooney 2000, 4), the institutional nature of schools seems to collide with this idea. Based on this understanding, I do believe that in a place like school, which is an institution and needs to maintain certain rules and norms in order to keep its structure, the answer to creative behaviour and deviations from the idea of how things 'should' look like can easily tend to be stricter discipline. There are limits imposed to what Maria Montessori called the "boundless potential" of children and their imagination (Duckworth 2006).

As a facilitator, the setting up of limits might be the primary and most logical impulse. I have seen this in myself and I have fought against this impulse in many occasions, most of which have proved to bring beautiful moments of insights as a person

and facilitator. I believe that this energy should not be seen as an enemy force, but all of the contrary. That energy is a facilitator itself: the fact that children trust their imagination and impulses makes it easier for the facilitator to recognize the energy that is there to guide the group work. That energy is a source of opportunity for exploring all those options that the facilitator cannot bring, but only allow. All those options that are already there, that are born out of the group, of each individual, that which wants to be, which wants to be created. It is one more step away from the authoritative, prescriptive approach, into an understanding of learning where knowledge comes from each other's experiences in its wholeness.

As it has been mentioned in other parts of this research, jazz improvisation is used by different authors (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Dietrich 2012; Berendt 1991) as a symbol of creation. The nature of jazz leaves an open room for creating new things, for turning into reality the product of one's imagination or for simply allowing the sounds to be, whatever sounds those are. I personally would like to draw the emphasis here on 'improvisation', instead of 'jazz'. I have always believed that improvisation is a wonderful tool for creating something unexpected, fresh, alive. The moments of improvisation that I lived in the workshop, as well as in other areas of my life, have usually lead me to results that, I believe, could never be attained with pre-programmed activities.

In my view, improvisation is nothing but allowing that energy to flow. Not pushing an agenda means leaving some space; space for that energy to get in, to circulate. Filling all that space with a detailed agenda means containing the energy. I believe it is always necessary to leave some spaces for unexpected things to happen. Here, elicitive facilitation is that frame proposed to give space. It is the creation of a structure that, instead of containing the energy and setting boundaries, lets the energy flow and the boundaries expand.

For improvisation to take place, there needs to be an element that I consider essential in elicitive facilitation: trust. Paulo Freire, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005) writes: "They [those who want to initiate change] talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary

change" (Freire 2017, 60). Indeed, I believe the adjective 'indispensable' appropriately accompanies the word 'trust' when talking not only about revolutionary, but all kinds of change.

6.2. The Trust

One of the deepest insights that I got in the last months did not come by all the hours of reading, nor the workshops. It came spontaneously, one day after the workshop, as Karole, my co-facilitator, met a friend¹ who happened to be a teacher in the same school the children attended. They stopped for a very short conversation that I witnessed, in which Karole asked her friend how the classes were going. The teacher seemed very positive and gave the pertinent answer, pointing out that there were still difficult children and that, for her, the key remained to keep on asking herself 'what does that child actually need?'.

That statement got me thinking the whole afternoon, remembering Marshall Rosenberg and his non-violent communication proposal, for which it is essential to identify our need. Asking oneself what the child needs is, from my point of view, an understanding attitude that goes beyond a prescriptive approach. Yet, something did not feel right about this: should it not be the child himself, who identifies what she needs? Should the objective not be to allow for a learning in which the understanding of our own person allows for the identification of our needs and feelings, which would later lead to its expression?

As I brought these thoughts to Karole, she agreed with me. She insisted that stronger attention in education should be brought to learn how to answer two main questions: "what do I need?" and "what do I feel?". She believes that a constant questioning of our own feelings and needs since early childhood is important for our own well-being and personal unfolding, as well as for our relationships and interactions with others (Gizolme 2017).

An essential part of elicitive facilitation as I experience it, is to provide the space where the children can ask themselves these questions and find their own answers without

1. Both my co-facilitator and her friend are following the education to become teachers of the Montessori method.

judgement. One of the situations which best illustrated took place during the final ceremony of the last session of the workshop. I asked each of them to prepare a performance or act that they would like the rest of us to witness. They had the complete liberty to do anything they wanted, with any instruments they wanted, for as long as they wanted. While all of the performances moved me, there were two that brought a special teaching for me.

The first one took place when Anna and her friend asked me if they could do something during the performance that was not music: they wanted to do acrobatics. Of course, I told them they could, and they enjoyed themselves preparing and performing a short series of jumps and body shapes. How could I have ever known that what they needed was to express themselves through moves, instead of sounds. My place as a facilitator was not to decide what they had to do, but to allow for themselves to choose what they wanted to do. It was to trust them. To open up the space and let them answer the question of what they want without impositions or constraints; without judgement on the outcome. As Maslow argues:

Ultimately the person, even the child, must choose for himself. Nobody can choose for him too often, for this itself enfeebles him, cutting his self-trust, and confusing his ability to perceive his own internal delighting the experience, his own impulses, judgments, and feelings, and to differentiate them from the interiorized standards of others (Maslow 1968, 50)

The second one came from Marcella, one of the oldest girls who plays piano and cello beautifully, she loves music and she practices diligently in a strive for perfection. The day of the closing ceremony, her moment had come. During the previous sessions, I had insisted that she tried different instruments – it seemed to me like, if she only played the piano, she would not get out of her comfort zone and she would not enter the same energy as the other kids. My objective was to allow her to experience something different than the satisfaction and recognition of playing perfect pieces. She always seemed appalled by my suggestions.

That day, she was completely free to do whatever she wanted, and she chose the instrument she knew best. Not only did she decide to play a refined piece on the piano,

but she decided to play blindfolded and completely by heart. All of us kept our attention in the notes he played for whole time the piece lasted, without a sound. At the end of the ceremony, she was the one who drew the words "hab dich lieb" (I loved you) and "ich vermisse dich Oma" (I miss you, grandma) as shown in Figure 5.2. I then knew that the piece in the piano had not only been special for us, but truly meaningful to her. How could I have known that blindfolding her eyes was what she needed to have her moment? Only providing the space for her to decide herself could have brought such an outcome.

In her specific case, three main elements played a role in determining how meaningful her performance was. First of all, Marcella was a girl with whom I felt a certain difficulty to get her in the energy of the group, as I have mentioned. Her need for perfection made her disconnect and complain each time that the activity was not fitted to make her stand out – in other words, she would purposely disconnect before being seen as unable to follow. I tended to associate this with an overemphasis on the ‘good’, on the ‘rational’, on her need for perfection. I tended to link this with an overweight of her ‘eyes’ upon her ‘ears’. Yet her blindfolded performance was the metaphorical and literal illustration of her ears over her eyes; of her ‘hearing’ and not ‘seeing’. To me, it was a learning on how she managed to do by herself all of that which I had not been able to get her to do during the workshop. It was the perfect example of how I could not decide, all throughout the sessions, to make her listen instead of seeing, and how only she could decide on her own that she wanted to do it as soon as she had the chance.

Second of all, it was a practical illustration of transrationality; of the possibility of integration of different ways of looking at the world, without the dismissal of one another. Marcella was extremely focused on rationality and perfection, but it was within that perfection that she could find her harmony. She insisted on playing those instruments she knew how to play, namely the piano and the cello, and throughout the other sessions, I insisted on denying her the right to play them. I wanted her to let go of that need to stand out; to let go of her strive for perfection. That last session showed me how it was only in that perfection that she could find her letting go; it was in the rationality that she could find her energy flow.

Last of all, this brings us back to Maslow's theory of growth, which proposes that growth (understood as a person's natural tendency towards self-actualization) takes place when the next step to be taken is more delightful, more joyous than the state in which the person is in (Maslow 1968). He uses children as an example of this: children learn how to walk once crawling has become boring; once they have mastered it and they are able to find the joy in the challenge of the next learning. In this sense, the person chooses on her own that she wants to go there, that she wants to learn more, that she wants to be more, simply because it brings her joy to do so. With Marcella, that is exactly what I saw: playing piano by heart without a mistake had become easy for her, and her joy was in doing it blindfolded. That is where she found her delight, her personal unfolding, that was her next step – and I personally could have never guessed what that step was; only she could take it herself by allowing her to do so.

Marcella's case was only one of all the experiences that taught me that they knew better what they needed than I did. I believe this is one of the hardest things to accept when working with children, and maybe one of the most dangerous ones if the balance is not achieved. The adult tends to know better because, as Karole explained, the adult has lived more, she has more experience and experience is also learning (Gizolme 2017). Experience is valued in many realms of society and it is usually linked with credibility, ability and reliability. When working with children, the overwhelming amount of experience that an adult has in comparison to their short life renders it very easy to conclude that the adult knows best. Yet, the experiences lived in the workshop, together with the basic assumptions of humanistic psychology and elicitive facilitation, argue otherwise.

In each sessions, the children were enthusiastic about creating activities on their own, about deciding themselves what they wanted to do and what they didn't – and most of the times, the outcome proved to be more satisfactory than those activities that I imposed. By choosing themselves, there seemed to be more consensus on what to do and how to do it, more compliance, more satisfaction, more laughs, more smiles, more pleasure in the activity. Deciding themselves also allowed them to take that one more step towards unfolding, that joyous step of joy that Maslow talks about.

An explanatory example of this can be found, once again, in one of the activities they developed themselves. One day, at the beginning of the session, I proposed to start playing one of the songs we knew. They proposed to not only play all together, but that I would start playing and they would come from behind the theatre curtains as they felt they wanted to join the song. That's what we did. The next day, we went one step further: they decided that not only they would come out as they wanted to join, but they would do so in a performance-like fashion, each of them playing their instrument or singing their part of the song. They smoothly agreed on exactly the how, when and what of the activity, and all I had to do was to follow that natural flow that was created. They did know better than I did.

The general way in which things tended to flow were a constant learning for me that day by day demonstrated me how they knew in which direction to go in order to take that next step in their unfolding. As long as my ears were open to listen to their petitions, we managed to develop activities and games in which all our voices could be heard and our needs could be answered. It was like paddling in a river: all I had to do was to paddle smoothly, in a fluid manner, without forcing too much, without slowing down, just following the stream that would get us down the river.

I found out that, as much as I tried to answer to the question 'what does this child need?', my answer was never as accurate as the one they could give for themselves. Elicitive facilitation is ultimately the creation of a space that evokes, facilitates, brings forth, not only the opportunity to ask oneself those questions, but to be able to answer them and bring that answer to reality.

A prescriptive approach where a fix path is established does not allow for the unexpected turns of the river. The traditional education system is in itself in opposition to those turns, only from the basis on which it is built. The fixed curricula with determined goals, methods, objectives, grades that determine performance... The whole path is pre-constructed for the child and does not open up any space for the child to decide herself. In a metaphoric understanding, this approach could rather be equated to a train that cannot deviate from its already constructed rails; it has absolutely no way of functioning

outside them nor does it leave any room for the passengers to have a say in the direction they are taking. It is all put in place to reach the final destination as soon as possible.

Now, I do believe that for many children that train might respond to their needs, and I do not pretend to claim that elicitive facilitation is the answer for education for all. There might be children for whom getting to that destination in that period of time is the suitable thing to do. Nevertheless, I do think that many others might get distracted by the outside landscape through the window, by the aesthetic quality of the ride, they might be tempted to stop in a little town on the way, rather than getting to the final destination swiftly. It is for that reason that I believe the boat in the river is much more able to mould.

It can adapt to the direction changes, it allows for stops, for boosts, for rapid turns, for slow motions. It lets the passenger enjoy the landscape, get off and up again, decide where they want to paddle and, most importantly, it creates trust in the natural flow of the current, rather than a pre-constructed, man-made, imposed straight line to follow. The responsibility and decisions are shared among the facilitator, the participants, and the energy of the stream – and so is the trust.

This trust, coming back to our non-metaphorical terms, transforms from the trust that the facilitator puts in the participants to the one that the participants have in themselves. I learn to trust myself because someone has trusted me; someone has trusted my ability to decide on my own where I want to go. This allows me to pose myself the question: ‘what do I need? What do I feel? What do I want? Where would I go?’. And, thanks to the trust that someone put on me, I can answer those questions and not be judged nor restrained by the answer that it brings. That is for me, ultimately, the key of elicitive facilitation.

6.3. The Dark

One day, I began asking how each of them felt. They could answer with words, music or anything else they wished, but trying to avoid the words ‘good’, ‘not good’ and all other vague expressions that with which we tend to answer that question and which, actually, do not depict any feeling.

They went around the circle, answering one by one. By the time we got to Joel, he answered that he was not ok, and followed his answer with a strong stroke on the djembe, as if that loud sound would represent the unrest he was feeling inside. My first impulse was to ask him why, what happened, how come... Still, I decided not to do so. We remained silent for some seconds and, after we got the feeling that he had expressed all he wanted to, we passed to the next child.

That was the same day that the story-telling activity took place; the same day he disconnected from the energy of the group in an unusual manner; the same day he drew about his home country at the end. Maybe he was really not doing good that day, and he just needed a space to explore those feelings.

Joel's story is just an example of a behaviour that comes up in children, as well as in adults, and which is usually discouraged in society and, specially, in schools. A necessary part of the traditional education model is to teach children to behave properly – and the definition of such behaviour is drawn by those feelings and emotions that are accepted in society. Here, it is useful to go back to Maslow's differentiation of the mentally healthy and unhealthy person, and how it differs from the usual understanding.

Maslow proposes that the mentally healthy person is not the one who does not suffer from depression, sadness, anxiety or other forms of psychological states – rather, the healthy person is the one who allows all of those to exist. Mental illness comes from the suppression and denial of those feelings which, in opposition to what society and culture spread, are inherent to our human nature (Maslow 1968). "Self-actualization does not mean a transcendence of all human problems. Conflict, anxiety, frustration, sadness, hurt, and guilt can all be found in healthy human beings" (Maslow 1968, 210).

Following this line of thought, it is then logical that education, following the current scientific paradigms, discourages behaviours that seem to come as a reflection of that psychological suffering. Or to put it in more plain terms, behaviours outside of the norm. As Jason Wallin puts it, the traditional model of school "negates the potential for thinking a people out-of-sync with the people in general" (Wallin 2014, 119). At the same time, taking Maslow's ideas as a point of reference, trying to cancel out those behaviours, trying

to repress, is actually unhealthy in itself. Psychological health derives from allowing those behaviours, as well as those feelings and emotions, to be there, to happen, to exist – and later, learning how to deal with them. Elicitive facilitation can be, I believe, an allowance of those people 'out-of-sync', a recognition in the potential of all feelings and emotions, even when they do not fit into the norm or expectations.

As to what this means for how a space is facilitated, I would here like to refer to one of the easiest yet most eye-opening learnings I have had: tension creates more tension. This is perfectly depicted in a very simple Aikido² exercise that anyone can try with a partner at any time. One person wraps her hand around the other person's arm and simply explores what happens by applying different levels of pressure and tension. When the hand is relaxed, the arm has not reason to become tense: it remains relaxed as well. As soon as the hand applies pressure or tries to pull the arm, the arm has a reason to become tense as well; to resist the pulling or to fight the pressure. This is where the struggle begins. However, if the arm ignores the pressure of the hand, no struggle is created, no matter how strong the hand tries or how much force it applies. If the arm does not respond, it simply follows, but no fighting occurs. The struggle only takes place when both parties engage in a pulling and pushing battle of forces.

Similarly, the struggle of a person begins where her feelings, emotions or behaviour are repressed, pushed away, fought against. If they are allowed, they naturally evolved into a healthy state of being. This is where the resistance that takes place in traditional education against certain types of behaviours seems completely counter-productive to me. The child's behaviour nourishes from the response it gets from its environment. From my experience, if this response is accepting, welcoming, allowing, the child's behaviour will naturally evolve; the tension will not get a response that encourages more tension, but will naturally be discouraged from engaging in the struggle, and no struggle will take place.

2. Aikido is a Japanese martial art. The meaning of the word could be translated as 'life energy'. I have never practised Aikido on a long-term basis, but this exercise stuck to me ever since I experienced it during the one-week Aikido workshop with Winfried Wagner in the Summer Term 2016 of the MA in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation of the University of Innsbruck. More information on Aikido and its relationship to peace can be found in his book *Aikido. The trinity of conflict transformation*.

In terms of methods that allow such an environment to be born, music becomes an important element for expression during childhood - expression, in this sense, of everything that is going on within. Going back to Vygotsky (2004) and Judith (2004), it is worth noting that the child's ability to express through words only begins to develop around the age of 7 – 9 years old, and the vocabulary richness to fully convey the world of feelings and emotions is only obtained much later. It is for this reason that activities based on visual or sonic elements provide a tool of expression with which the child can work without the need for that vocabulary. The child is not limited by his knowledge of language, but becomes open to the possibilities that color and sound offers and, thus, becomes able to express and live more fully his inner world.

Figures 6.1 - 6.3 are some of the drawings that the children completed after the workshops. To me, they represent their boundless imagination, the fruits of their self-expression in a combination of abstract shapes and diverse colors. I could not really say what any of these drawings actually is and, yet, I see in them all the range of emotions that we experienced during the workshops. Through the drawings, the children had the opportunity to express all of that for which oral expression is too limiting. This is reflected in the way that a hand and a happy face merge in one in Figure 6.1, or the uncommon fusion of human and animal shapes in the Drawing of Figure 6.3. Without wanting to interpret what the drawings mean (for I am arguing that exactly the opposite is needed in this kind of work: simply letting them be) I want to emphasize the importance of creating and expressing things that, with words might be hard to convey - and much of that is intrinsically related to our inner landscape.

I find it also important to notice how the drawing that seems to have more definable forms and the only one which actually uses words is the one drawn by Marcella: the older one in the group. Marcella was already 11 years old at the time of the workshop, she was beginning to write her own stories. It can be seen here, especially when compared to the other drawings, how she begins to use words, written language, combined with drawing, for expressing herself.

Giving the opportunity for that inner world of the child to exist in its entirety is



Figure 6.1.: Drawing A by Stephen, March 10th, 2017



Figure 6.2.: Drawing B by Marcella, March 24th, 2017

consistent, once again, with the understanding of the person proposed by humanistic psychology. Carl Rogers proposes an ideal type of therapy in which the client would be allowed to live all her emotions to the fullest, in order to discover that the experience of such emotions as such is not dangerous nor threatening – only their repression can derive in hurtful experiences (Rogers 2004).

With elicitive facilitation, what I believe is happening is the allowance of all that range of emotions to be experienced from an early age, without the judgement and discouragement that might lead to their repression and thus to psychological illness. What I believe elicitive facilitation can do is give the floor to the inner world of the child to exist, instead of guiding and predicting how that inner world should be. The acceptance of it as it presents itself is already a necessary step for the discovery that experience is

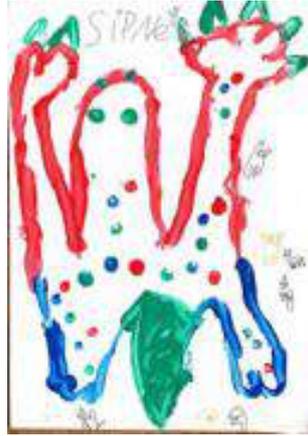


Figure 6.3.: Drawing C by Silko, March 8th, 2017

not evil; the way in which experience is treated might be.

"This means that the sick child must be respected as much as the healthy one, so far as the growth process is concerned. Only when his fears are accepted respectfully, can he dare to be bold. We must understand that the dark forces are as 'normal' as the growth forces" (Maslow 1968, 54). In Maslow's terms, elicitive facilitation would mean the creation of a space in which the child can feel safe with everything she has inside; and only after safety can come growth, according to Maslow. Eliciting that growth means respecting every aspect of the child, not only the accepted, not only the intellectual, not only the appropriate – also everything else. The energy that disturbs the group, the hard feelings, the disharmony. A disharmony that is, from my point of view, present in the drawing of Figure 6.4 - and which, after all, constitutes harmony in its own way. Darker tones and more aggressive shapes differ from the lightness and colourfulness of the drawings above. And yet, letting it simply be like that, the drawing finds its own harmony - and so does the person drawing it. This acceptance prevents the tension, the fight, the repression and, ultimately it encourages a healthy growth of the whole person.

The elicitive approach itself is an actualization of the principles of humanistic psychology. Here, by the acceptance of the darkest side of the human being, a dissolution of the dichotomies in which the world is divided is implied. Figure 6.5, a picture drawn by Stephen, is illustrative of this darkness. It is not the acceptance of the 'bad' or the 'wrong' in the child, but the perception of those characteristics as human and, therefore,



Figure 6.4.: Drawing D by Stephen, March 24th, 2017

natural. In order for elicitive facilitation to happen, in my opinion, a step away from categorization needs to take place. It is not the tolerance of the ‘bad’ – it is the idea that there is no bad and no good, everything just is, is just human.

6.4. The Facilitator

The day we could not enter into the music room, things flowed in an almost magical way and we ended up singing a song that my co-facilitator had showed to us for longer than I would have expected. We did not learn the full song, but only the chorus. They sang and

I played in the guitar, and the experience of connection out of something I had not planned at all, as well as their commitment to it, truly touched me.

The following day, I was even more surprised and deeply moved. I began the session by singing that short part of the song we had learned. This time, they were much more prepared than I was: they continued singing the rest of the verses and bridges; they had learned almost by heart every part of the song. They had liked it so much that they cared to listen to them at home and sing it with their parents and families. That day, they were able to sing it all; and I was, honestly, not even able to follow with the guitar. That day, they gave me a lesson on preparedness, surprises and enthusiasm without them even knowing it.

From my point of view, facilitation is not only about the actions, the creation of the space, or the method. It is equally about the facilitator herself, about the person who is

providing the facilitation, about a human being that interacts with other human beings, with all the beauty and all the flaws that this entails. Authors whose writings constitute the cornerstone of this research, such as Rogers and Lederach, as well as others who support the ideas elaborated here, such as Satir or Fromm, all agree that, as relational beings, the quality of our constant entering into relationship with others is crucial to the way we live and unfold. It is, therefore, not only about what we *do*, but about who we *are*.

Taking the very own foundations of this research as a premise, being human is not only about doing or knowing, but rather about being oneself, unfolding in all of one's qualities. A facilitator who comes into contact with the children does not only come into contact through what she does, but most importantly by who she is, with her personal unfolding, struggles, masks, emotions, authenticity and qualities. Not only what she knows plays a role, but the way she talks, what she feels, what resonates with her, what does not, the way she moves, smiles, laughs, gets frustrated... In other words, the conception of a person as a full human being does not only apply to the children who are in the workshop, but also (and just as importantly) to the facilitator herself. Elicitive facilitation is therefore, from my point of view, about who the facilitator is; about who the participants come in contact with.

6.4.1. Doing

The previous sections outlined the basic characteristics of a space in which, out of my experience, Elicitive Facilitation results. In her book *The Creative Connection for Groups*, Natalie Rogers (1993) develops in detail the characteristics of facilitation of a method that she herself came up with, and which she calls 'Person-Centered Expressive Arts'. Through this methodology, the participants explore different forms of art expression (painting, drawing, dancing, singing...) and use them as tools to get to the deepest core of their inner beings (Rogers 1993). She bases her purpose on her father's (Carl Rogers) theory on the human beings and their tendency to become that, which they truly are; and her method on his Person-Centered approach to therapy.

Although she only and specifically focuses on this method, I believe the characteristics

that she outlines as necessary for the creation of the space and for the actions and attitudes of the facilitator do apply to many other methods and, from my understanding, it does apply to Elicitive Facilitation as well. Here again, I do not believe that the purpose is to differentiate between different methods and try to find out the best one but rather, for me, it is about outlining essential characteristics of a way to conceive group work that can foster an understanding of learning that takes into account the whole human beings that we are.

Natalie Rogers delineates what are for her the necessary conditions for the creation of a space that enables personal unfolding, healing and social transformation. One of the main pre-conditions for her as regards the facilitator is for her to have undergone the same experience that the participants are about to go through. This means, to have done the same activities, to have taken place in the same group dynamics, to have fully lived the power of what she is about to encourage other people to live. Only in that case “will [she] fully comprehend the power of the arts to transport you into rich, unconscious realms” (Rogers 1993, 45).

In my opinion, the experience reaches further than just the awareness of the effect of that specific method. The facilitator will, by doing so, get a clearer picture of her inner landscape, of who she is, of why and how she wants to facilitate what she is going to facilitate. She will become more aware of herself and her role. On the one hand, this can lead to more trust and confidence in what she is doing. “Facilitators do their best work when they do not need a lot of approval from the participants” (Rogers 1993, 63). This, Rogers adds, should not be confused with arrogance. Self-awareness goes both ways: acknowledgement of our capabilities as well as of our flaws. I thus believe that such a self-awareness also results in honesty with one’s own limitations, biases and constraints.

“Facilitators may think they can hide their biases, but our closely-held beliefs reveal themselves in subtle ways that affect our group participation” (Rogers 1993, 48) I would argue that this is not only the case with biases, but also fears, doubts and weaknesses. Honesty³ about all of these, with oneself and with the group, is a useful tool for overcoming

3. Here, honesty is used as ‘truthfulness’ or ‘authenticity’ especially with oneself. Self-acknowledgement of the own state of mind. Self-awareness.

the possible tensions or moments of distrust that an attempt to hiding them might create.

It is in this self-awareness that I find the potential to trust. Trust that the counter-balance to the our (the facilitator's) flaws can be found in the energy of the room, in the other participants, in the co-facilitators. An all-mighty facilitator might find it very hard to put the trust of leading the group in others, and might thus miss the chances of taking the turns of the river. Thus, the self-awareness seem to be preconditions for embracing the flow of the river, for swimming and sailing with it; for creating a space such as the one described in the previous sections.

One of the key points in this regard is, I would agree with Natalie Rogers, the ability to offer. There is a vast difference between imposing participants to do something and offering them the opportunity to do so. Elicitive facilitation is not a guidance into what needs to be done, but an observation of the energy and needs of the participants and, with that information and the tools that the facilitator knows, an offering on what could help to keep the flow going.

This corresponds to Maslow's idea of a 'helpful let-be', which he applies especially (but not exclusively) to child growth and he describes as the acknowledgement and respect towards that growth, but also the same acknowledgement and respect towards fear of growth or the slower paces of growth (Maslow 1968). Elicitive facilitation is an offering of tools that might foster or enable personal unfolding while, at the same time, trusting the internal mechanisms of the participants to decide whether to take them or leave them, and respecting that as well.

All the insights provided by this and previous sections seem to answer the question 'what needs to be done in order to provide Elicitive Facilitation?'. It focuses on actions. It is true, much of what I have learned during my experiences is best reflected in actions – after all, facilitating is an action on its own. And yet, for me, Elicitive Facilitation is much more than an action. Or perhaps, much less. It is an attitude. A way of being. A presence.

Presence here is a key term because, for all of this to be possible, the facilitator needs to *be* there. This goes back to the understanding of empathy proposed by Hart (2000)

and Rogers (2004), who both argue that presence with the whole body, mind and heart is essential for empathic understanding. Being present is, these authors say, much more than paying attention; it is presenting oneself fully to that moment, in that place, with those other human beings. I argue that this kind of presence, understood as being there as a full human being, is also crucial for elicitive facilitation. It is a precondition for all the other aspects of facilitation.

6.4.2. Being

In *When blood and bones cry out*, following a line of meaningful metaphors to illustrate the dynamics of social change that they establish throughout the book, Lederach and Lederach (2011) establish the allegorical relationship between the facilitation of a space for social healing and the Tibetan bowl⁴. Its inherent qualities make of the Tibetan bowl a recipient, a container which is at the same time a receiver and producer of sound. The effect of constant, circular movements around it, is a deep resonance in the interior of the Tibetan bowl, which results in an expression of sound; of the same sound it receives through the movements. "The sound rises from the depths of the bowl" (Lederach and Lederach 2011).

Lederach and Lederach (2011) use this metaphor to illustrate the dynamics of social change and communal healing, insisting on the importance of containing, repeating, deepening, resonating and expanding. In this part of the book, the authors do not apply such characteristics to the person who holds a space for healing, but to the space itself. Nevertheless, I find this parallel inspiring to apply not only to conflict transformation, but to the case that occupies me at this moment: Elicitive Facilitation; and not only to the space itself where the healing and transformation takes place, but to the space within the person who facilitates it: her way of being.

The viola –the first instrument I learned to play in my life– seems to me like an explanatory metaphor in the line of Lederach's Tibetan bowl, which helps me gain a clear

4. The Tibetan singing bowl is an instrument that has been used for centuries in Buddhist ceremonies. Although it can vary in size, it always has the shape of a round bowl. Traditionally, it was made out of seven different metals; the machine-made ones that are more common today are often made out of alloy or other composites. It is played with the help of a wooden drumstick, usually covered in leather. It can be gently hit for a gong-like sound or circled around with the leather of the drumstick, producing an effect of continuity of sound (Lederach and Lederach 2011).

picture of the shape that the way of being as an elicitive facilitator takes place. A viola is a string instrument, whose strings are fractioned with a tensioned bow on the right hand as the fingers of the left hand put pressure on the different strings in order to determine the length of this one as it is played, and thus produce higher or lower sounds. The friction of the bow's hair with the string at the determined length in a moment in time will vibrate to the viola's sounding board, which will contain the sound for just a fraction of a second, resonate with it, and expand it through the room. Just like the Tibetan bowl: containing, deepening, resonating and expanding.

The reason why I picture the facilitator better as a viola than a guitar (the instrument I am most familiar with) is, simply, because of the viola's greatest risk of imperfection. A guitar's neck is divided by frets – small (usually white) lines that determine the position in which the fingers should be placed in order to obtain perfect intervals. This means that, no matter which sound is played in the guitar, if it plays on its own and the guitar is on tune, it will always correspond to one of the many sounds that our ears identify as acceptable. Between those sounds, there are very tiny sound intervals that sound somehow dissonant to our ears; they are intervals that do not correspond to tones nor semi-tones on the scale and which, therefore, we normally do not use for making music nor are we familiarized with.

The viola, however, does not have frets: the position of the finger is completely free and flexible among all the range of little intervals, also those that do not sound good to our ears. Placing the finger on the spots that determine the tones and semi-tones is not always an easy task and even with a lot of practice and expertise, the risk of a sound that is slightly above or below our desired note is very high. This inherently imperfect nature of the viola is what makes me perceive it as a more illustrative musical metaphor for facilitation than the guitar.

Being open to whatever note one needs to resonate with is, to me, the basic characteristic of Elicitive Facilitation. No matter which sound vibrates, being open to contain it, receive it, deepen it, resonating with it and expanding it. In Spanish, my mother tongue, the word person is 'persona'. It comes from the latin verb 'sonare' – a musical

verb which in English could better be translated as ‘to resonate with intensity’ (Lederach and Lederach 2011, 96). I do believe that, indeed, resonating with our environments, with others and with ourselves is an inherent part of our being. Yet, as I expose on my previous chapters, being cut off these abilities seems to be, paradoxically, one of the main roles of traditional education. This is why it is not only the purpose of Elicitive Facilitation to evoke those learnings that comprehend all parts of the human being, not only the mind and rationality, but it is imperative for the elicitive facilitator to rediscover those human abilities within herself and to understand the facilitated space with all her modes of cognition, not only her mind.

Natalie Rogers argues that, for her, the greatest part of facilitation is “sensing the energy of the group” (Rogers 1993, 54). This implies being aware of the mood and energy of each individual and of the group as a whole, but this awareness does not only come in the shape of logically inferring and concluding from their actions and words. Wallin puts it in different words, arguing that teachers are “those capable of inventing new techniques of thought and action correspondent to contemporary difficulties and enthusiasms, of palpating an original thought in the style of an ‘unheard music’” (Wallin 2014, 121). According to Lederach, it is only through intuition that we can truly understand and gain the insights that will enable the facilitator to sense that energy.

Intuition is a funny thing. Most of us don’t trust it. In fact, most training about conflict resolution and peacebuilding seems to be built on skills that reduce, circumvent, or ignore intuition. But if you have ever talked at length with good practitioners about how they know what they should or should not do next, or even more if you talk with people working on peacebuilding who are from the setting of violence, you will hear that what they circumvent are the rules of proper procedure. What they follow is their gut. (Lederach 2010, 68)

It is the importance of daring to follow our gut which, I would emphasize, is essential to facilitate as full human being for full human beings. Once again, I will not engage with the technicalities and philosophical discussions on the meaning of intuition and how many forms of knowing there can be – even though I do recognize the many interesting points that could be made in this regard and I acknowledge the added value that further research on this topic would adjoin to my arguments. Guts feeling, intuition, sensations. . .

there is countless terminology on the different modes in which a person can actually know something, without having acquired this knowledge from logical inferences. That is what I mean by being open to use all of our resources in order to not only think about the facilitation, but feel it, resonate with it, sense it, get in tune, follow our intuition.

There is a Spanish expression commonly use to express our desire for doing something: *me late*. The verb *latir*, from where it comes, is only specifically used for the act of the heart beating. It is not any other thing beating – just the heart, the act of the heart pumping blood. The use of the expression *me late* does not mean that we consider something is right, nor that we have evaluated the risk of something and ended up taking a positive decision on it. It is a metaphorical attempt to convey a positive, heart-felt sensation that leads us to a decision on something.

I believe Elicitive Facilitation requires a non-negligible deal of *latir*. It needs to be felt, sensed and intuited with the whole being, just like the vibration of the string expands along the whole sounding board, no matter whether the sound corresponds to what is ‘right’ or not, expected or not.

One of the feedbacks I received from my co-facilitator referred to a comment that I had considered most inoffensive. One of the girls was asked to write a word in the board in French, and so she did. She was very proud right after doing it (let’s remember that French is not the mother tongue of most children) but she had written it... well, wrong, from a grammatical standpoint. I immediately intervened: “Very good, thank you, but I can see a mistake on your spelling”. The girl seemed surprisingly upset about my comment. At the end of the session, the facilitator asked me to avoid words like “mistake”, for it gave children the feeling that they were doing something wrong and could affect their self-love and confidence. Of course... but how was I to say that the grammar of a word should be different without using the words ‘mistake’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’, ‘missing’, ‘rules’ or ‘should’?

Well, nobody said it was easy. That moment, I realized that stepping away from ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’, rationality and the need for logic structure was not only something to be reflected on the activities I proposed during the music workshop, but something to be

illustrated by me as a person. I had to personify that, which I wanted to enable the children to learn on their own. Such a small thing could, indeed, have been expressed very differently and could have conveyed a different message. If only I would have said something like “Very good, thank you. I believe that the letter ‘x’ is written instead of the letter ‘y’ in this word”, it would have given the same content, with a very different message surrounding it.

I believe that it is very hard and it takes a lot of practice to be aware, as a facilitator, of oneself, the participants and the environment at all times, and to realize how such small gestures can influence the overall message that is sent not only during workshops, but in daily life. Natalie Rogers extends this to the biases of a facilitator due to her beliefs and to the preconceived ideas that one might have done oneself about the participants. “Facilitators may think they can hide their biases, but our closely-held beliefs reveal themselves in subtle ways that affect our group participation” (Rogers 1993, 48). She believes that honesty and openness about one’s beliefs and the biases that we might carry with us is the best ingredient to avoid the possible mistrust and lack of confidence in which an attempt to hide our deepest convictions can result.

She further adds that one of the most difficult challenges in facilitation is to get rid of the judgements and pre-conceived ideas that the facilitator might have about participants. This is not only a challenge for the development of the session, but sets up walls and limits to what the participants can bring to the space, because judgements close up the doors to all that does not fit the expected; it does not let all the scale of tones resonate. “Openness to experience means to see each person as unique, rather than categorizing or stereotyping him. This is realized when the facilitator is in tune with the vibrational energy of the group” (Rogers 1993, 63). Here it is once again: the vibrational energy of the group. The facilitator, as the resonance box, does her best job when she is open to all vibrations that might come, also when they are not the expected ones. Only thus the sound that expands in the room, the sound that resonates with the participants, can be produced.

Lederach uses the term ‘peripheral vision’ for depicting this way of looking at the space. A peripheral vision is, to him “the capacity to situate oneself in a changing envi-

ronment with a sense of direction and purpose and at the same time develop an ability to see and move with the unexpected" (Lederach 2010, 118). It is exactly that capacity to resonate with whatever vibration is received. He opposes this to the 'tunnel vision', which can only see the pre-conceived end goal and nothing that is around it, nor can it thus adapt to changes and the unexpected. This metaphorically correlates to the previously proposed illustration of the river of the flow against the train rails: again, multi-directionality against linearity.

The peripheral vision, the viola, the capacity to resonate, deepen, contain, the openness, the embodiment of everything that the facilitator needs to convey. . . All of these are not actions nor rules on how to act in a facilitation session. Much to the contrary, they are the properties of a way of being in the world that reflect in an Elicitive Facilitation. They are only the shape. The shape of the Tibetan bowl – the shape on its own does not produce any sound, but it is that shape, that way of existence, that will enable the sound to resonate.

6.4.3. An Artist

My argumentation is partly based on the critique I have drawn regarding traditional education and how the school as an institution fails to recognize the individual as a whole human being with capacities to learn and acquire knowledge through much more than its logical abilities (Illich 1971) – and the actual need of human beings to unfold all those capacities throughout their lives. Freire (2017) sees that kind of (institutionalized traditional) education, what he calls the 'banking model', as an oppressing situation that "interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human" (Freire 2017, 55). (Wallin 2014) put it in other words, arguing that "the school not only anticipates the kind of people it will produce, but enjoins such production to an a priori image of life to which students are interminably submitted" (Wallin 2014, 117).

Now, I argue that the task of Elicitive Facilitation cannot be fulfilled unless the facilitator, who has most probably (and almost inevitably) been submerged in a system that holds the paradigms of traditional education, is able to realize herself as a whole human being and recognize her endeavour of unfolding her full potential. Following Freire's

logic, "the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation" (Freire 2017, 47), and the facilitator has got a constant task to re-examine herself and constantly check her awareness, presence and way of being.

Lederach himself, although keeping some distance from a more detailed debate on education, recognizes in various occasions that "on the purpose of training, I believe we have fallen prey to a model of education that produces technicians more than artists", and he adds: "Missed in the pedagogical endeavor is the artistic side of our work" (Lederach 2010, 124). He distinguishes between 'technicians', the people belonging to the mass product of a theory-oriented society, and 'artists', a term which, he argues, shall not be limited to the commonly denominated fine arts, but should be applied to all people with 'creative learning' and 'insatiable curiosity' for life.

These are just two more possible denominations for the distinction that this thesis is based on: the over-emphasis on the rational and logical, versus the holistic understanding of the human being. A distinction which, I would like to remind, does not always produce 'either-or' classifications of people, but which can serve as significant orientation in the way that human beings, life and relationships are understood and approached. In this case, as orientation for how the facilitator perceives herself: a technician or an artist?

We have come to see our work for social change and peace-building too much in the line of an intellectual journey, the cognitive processes of getting the analysis right and developing the technique that facilitates the management of the change process. We have failed to nurture the artist. To nurture the artist however does not require becoming whom we are not. The opposite is true. It requires that we pay attention to what already lies within us, within our capacity. (Lederach 2010, 162)

I do believe that, if we are to make art, if we are to see life as art and to navigate through it as if it were an artistic creation, we have to perceive ourselves as artists. If we wish to perceive children as whole human beings, we have to see ourselves as whole human beings. If we want to create a space in which their potential is called to be unfolded, we need to remain open to actualize our own potential. If we wish to foster awareness of feelings, emotions and patterns, we need to be ourselves a reflection of self-awareness. Elicitive facilitation is, to my eyes, an art, and art can only be done by artists.

A school teacher in the US, quoted by Natalie Rogers, argues: “I believe that teachers are well situated for creating lasting change in education and leading justice initiatives in their classrooms, in their schools, and in the hearts of their students” (Barbera 1993, 339). Elicitive facilitation is not the creation of an isolated, exclusionary space where some privileged individuals can opt to personal development. It is a shift in the understanding of learning. It is a shift from the imposition of a curriculum to the offering of tools and opportunities. It is a shift in the conception of the child as a full human being that wants to unfold all its abilities and capacities – also all those sides that are not considered as pleasant. It is a change of paradigm towards an understanding of learning and education which, I believe can lead to social transformation.

Imagining such a shift as a way to address societal challenges and using that imagination to be able to realize it, is what Lederach calls *Moral Imagination*. He uses the term in relationship to conflict situations and the facilitation of such and he defines it as the "capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not exist" (Lederach 2010, ix). I understand it, reframing it in other words, as the materialization of ideas of new ways of transforming present conflicts and addressing current issues that are important to one, and for which one has imagined a change. For Lederach, it is intrinsically connected to our artistic capacities and to the need of finding "our way back to our humanity" (Lederach 2010, 162). I here argue that Elicitive Facilitation is a result of the *moral imagination* applied to the arena of education and one possibility to find our way back to a more human understanding of learning.

6.4.4. Serendipity

There are still two points that I consider worth explaining before being able to wrap up and present the concluding arguments of this thesis. The first one constitutes a challenge to the possible inference that, if all the aforementioned requirements for Elicitive Facilitation are met, the space facilitated will immediately and undoubtedly lead to the personal unfolding and the blossoming of the personal qualities.

Natalie Rogers develops an "If-Then" theory (Rogers 1993, 55) in which she makes

exactly this point: if the conditions she mentions as necessary for Person-Centered Expressive Arts are reunited, then "Participants will be able to tap into their deep wellspring of creativity – their inner essence or truth – becoming authentic, self-confident, and compassionate" (Rogers 1993, 55) . In the same line but under more general directives, it could be read from Maslow's writing that, if the individual has met all his basic needs, feels safe, and sees a next step that appears delightful to him, he will take that step towards growth.

I would like to disagree with such a linear, hierarchical and uni-directional understanding of personal and group processes. Going back to Lederach, I coincide with his opinion that circularity and openness towards the unexpected are essential elements of conflict transformation (Lederach and Lederach 2011) and, in this case, of Elicitive Facilitation. It is, actually, that lack of possibilities for prediction the most valuable point of Elicitive Facilitation, making of it the tool for the creation of a space in which everything is possible: everything that might be inside the individuals or among them, and not the expectations that come from the outside.

The "If-Then" Theory does, to my eyes, not hold in real life and can, in fact, prove damaging to the overall philosophy that I am proposing. First of all, no matter how well formulated the pre-conditions or requisites of a 'successful' facilitation might be, they are nothing but words that then need to be reflected in actions and, as previously explained, in a full way of being of the facilitation. "Theory is our best speculation about how complex things work" (Lederach 2010, 116), but it is never an infallible weapon. Second of all, in the hypothetical case that the "if" part would be perfectly complied, I believe that the complexity of human beings and personal relationships, and the amount of phenomena that cannot be logically explained, makes the "then" adverb extremely fragile.

Taking again Lederach as a point of reference, I believe that the "If-Then" theory could very well be satisfactorily replaced by a heart-felt trust in 'serendipity'. "Serendipity, it seems, is the wisdom of recognizing and then moving with the energetic flow of the unexpected" (Lederach 2010, 115). It is the ability to recognize the powerful and positive energies in that, which we never thought as playing in our favour. It is not the chance of

encountering something unexpectedly helpful on the way, but the reactive ability to take what comes, whatever its nature, and embrace it in the overall flow of events as part of the experience. "If taken seriously, serendipity increases our capacity to be responsive in the real world. And it all starts with a fairy tale" (Lederach 2010, 116).

Related to this openness to the unexpected is the second issue that occupies this section, which is nothing but another clarification of hypothetical inferences that might arise from my argumentation. Elicitive Facilitation is not the acceptance of anything at all, at any costs. It is not related to un-preparedness or un-professionalism; nor does it entail the lack of objectives, discipline or rules. This thesis has put special emphasis on those aspects of facilitation that tend to be missing in current educational and learning models, exactly because of the need for a *moral imagination* towards it. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all aspects of learning or, especially, group dynamics, determined by the rational mind and logical propositions should be eliminated.

Once again, I believe that a key aspect is transrationality. The integration of the different ideas, and the recognition of each of them as carrying its own value and significance. As Lederach explains, "the corrective is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. It is to seek the genuine connection of discipline and art, the integration of skill and aesthetic" (Lederach 2010, 70). This is, perhaps, where the most challenging difficulty might arise: in the actual implementation of the Elicitive Facilitation pillars, in which an open, non-judgemental, resonating way of being in the group needs to be reconciled with certain organizational needs and behavioural rules.

I do believe that valuable working methods have been developed in this area and are worth trying as a catalyse for such integration. For instance, I consider the TCI Model of Ruth Cohn (Cohn 2009) or the Non-Violent Communication style of Marshall Rosenberg (Rosenberg 2003), both of which propose guidelines for personal interaction, excellent examples of how communication models can be used to address this difficulty.

Although not a model on itself, music – to close the circle – seems to me like a wonderful tool to overcome, once again, the difficulties of integration. The arts, especially when the participants take an active role in them, provide a space where openness and

acceptance can be easily reconciled with rules, preparation and objectives.

It is with those two remarks that I close my arguments and proposal on Elicitive Facilitation as a shift in the paradigm of learning, education and group work. Elicitive Facilitation is not a solution and it does not hold on its own on ground-breaking pillars of how things should be done, but requires the integration already existing and practised ideas. As I present it here, Elicitive Facilitation is a tool that holds, fosters and allows the person as a whole human being. It works through the complexity of personal interactions, seeing them as the inevitable and essential energy of life. It proposes a way of being for the facilitator, who is not only a teacher in the traditional sense, but one more individual in that complex network of interactions, with its own flaws, need for unfolding and potential. It acknowledges the resources in each one of the individuals that partake in it and attempts to open the space to use those resources, in whatever way necessary, to allow self-actualization and unfolding.

Conclusion

By the time I find myself writing this conclusion, I have read each word of these pages several times. Having changed, reframed, turned around, deleted, and created throughout these lines, I surprise myself by feeling empty and full at the same time. Doubting the value of my work and profoundly cherishing it all at once. It is a very similar feeling to the one I often get right after composing a new song: it is exactly the song I need at that time and, at the same time, I know it might as well be nothing. A feeling that might simply belong to the process of creating something.

Part of this feeling comes from my awareness that everything I have written was already there before. It has been said, experienced, and practiced by humanity for centuries. That is the core issue: none of what I propose is extraordinary, but simply human - that's where its significance lies. However, by getting lost in the complexity of life we sometimes forget about the beauty of its simplicity. Bringing back awareness to the simple, everyday life connections of different complex terms, and proposing a way to live and experience the importance of that simplicity, has been the attempt of this research.

With the hope of compiling the key ideas that have been explored in the previous pages, I would like to emphasize the concept of the person as a full human being with a need for uncovering and unfolding all of its qualities, as well as the understanding of learning as the lived experience that allows for that unfolding. Being and understanding does not only happen in the mind but in our whole bodies. Music is a doorway towards experiencing oneself as a full human being, allowing us to access ways of understanding the world and ourselves that escape rationality.

Following this line of thought, children are not only the unfinished stage of personhood, but they are also full human beings on their own. They have the same need to unfold and flourish, with an equal (or even greater) capacity for understanding through all possible means. Elicitive facilitation has been proposed as way of coming into contact with children in the framework of education, learning, workshops, or sharing experiences, which can open up the space for unfolding and flourishing to take place. When all these

elements are combined, it can open the door for, more concretely: connectedness between the participants, self-awareness, acceptance of one's own feelings and emotions, discovery of one's own voice, and acknowledgement of one's needs for taking steps towards becoming a fuller, more complete, and integrated human being.

Learning to listen, to feel oneself, to understand in an empathic manner, or to connect to others are therefore not necessarily only skills for a peace worker. They are all, in my understanding, human qualities. They are qualities that we sometimes neglect or forget because perhaps, like music and arts, they require much more than a rational understanding of their significance. Through this research, I hope to have been able to bring back attention to something as simple as that: as human beings, we have the potential to listen, feel ourselves, understand empathically, and connect with ourselves and others. This allows us to be more of who we are. To be fully human. To find our own peace and, ultimately, to find our peace in the world that we live in. As human beings, we have the need to find spaces to learn all of this since the day we are born. The pillars of elicitive facilitation are very much in line with this simplicity: making use of that humanity to feel where the flow goes, to allow it, to be in touch with oneself and . . . to simply be there.

At the end of the day, if we only return to the simple process of being ourselves, it might well be that we are all peace workers and we can all transform our own conflicts. Whether it is through music, elicitive facilitation, or any other method is completely irrelevant. What I have proposed here is one possible path, which I hope will serve as inspiration to others. For now, and with the intention to close this research, let us remember that not everything I argue can be understood by reading these words. So, instead: let us sing!

A. Appendix - Drawings by the Children

As explained in Chapter 3, one of the tools I used to gather information during the workshops and get closer to children's reactions and feelings waken up by the sessions, was drawing. Each day, after we had finished with the part of the session that was directly related to music, I would play a soft melody on my guitar, give them blank paper and different colors (finger paint, crayons, foam rolls, pencils, makers...) and I would invite them to draw whatever they felt like drawing.

Usually, we managed to create a calm and inspiring atmosphere. We could relax and they would let their imagination flow. To me as a facilitator, this moment was the perfect time to reflect about the workshop myself and accompany those thoughts with music on my guitar. They were also times, for me, to *observe* and simply *be* with them, compared to the more active *doing* style of facilitated that I needed to have during the first parts of the sessions.

Many times, they would share with me the inspiration behind their drawings or what they wanted to illustrate with it. Here are some examples of those drawings and their meaning to the children, to me as a facilitator and to this research.



Figure A.1.: Drawing by Meinasha, March 10th 2017

Meinasha was one of those children, during the workshop, whom I could see truly finding her voice, using it and being proud of it. Since the first and second session, she was eager to sing with the group and even to try her own solos - in spite of an initial shyness. During the second session, I invited them to sing whatever song they already knew or could remember. Very few of them remembered actual lyrics or could share a song they liked.

Meinasha, however, tried very hard to do so and could, after all, share a song with us. In spite of the simplicity of this picture, the meaning goes beyond what one can see at first sight: the text in the drawing is a part of the lyrics of her favourite song, which after trying very hard she managed to remember and sing to us. She seemed very happy about her achievement and she kept on singing and singing while we drew together.

In later sessions, Meinasha kept on working on her voice. Gradually, her voice opened up until, in the last sessions, she truly dared to sing in front of all of us and some parents. She sang loud and proud for more than ten minutes.

Some months after we finished the workshop series, I accompanied Karole and the children to a "Fête de la Musique" (Music Fest) that they organized in the neighbourhood. Meinasha, given her performance during the workshops, decided to do the solo and lead the group in singing while I would play the guitar. This time, there was an audience of

about 30 people. It was hard for her to let her voice out and sing in front of that crowd. This makes me think that it might have been different if we had kept on working on her voice throughout those weeks. The months that passed by without her being able to practice seem to me like a probable cause for the difficulty she encountered when doing something she truly wanted to do, but was not very sure of how to do any longer.



Figure A.2.: Drawing by Marcella, March 10th 2017

After the second session, Marcella drew this picture which, she would explain to me later, was related to a story she was writing for her German class in school. She was the older one in the workshop, and her pictures were always distinctive because they usually included text, thinner lines and more defined shapes.

In a later session, she asked whether she could dedicate the time at the end of our gathering to keep on working on that same story instead of drawing. For me, this was very illustrative of how, at a certain age (according to Vygotsky, more concretely from the age of 9 onwards) the vocabulary gets richer and the ability to form complex sentences increases. This happens to such an extent that drawing ceases being the primary mean of communication and it becomes replaced by oral and later written communication.

Marcella and her need to include text in her drawings, her need to explain herself orally and her eagerness to write that story were very representative of that change, especially when compared to younger children in the workshop. Again, the fact that she asked to keep on writing her story made me aware that her imagination, her inspiration and her senses were open after the session - only this time, she wanted to let that be in a written form.



Figure A.3.: Drawing by all the children of Group V, March 17th 2017

After the third session, I only gave each of the groups one piece of paper, with all the usual drawing materials, and asked them to create something together.

This is the result of group V. At first, they were reluctant to share the drawing space and each asked for their own piece of paper. At the end, they all entered into constant interactions and contributed to each other's parts of the drawings. This can be seen in this drawing - what began by being individual figures and shapes ended up merging with others. Colours were combined and, in the end, a big drawing was created.

After having enjoyed and admired this common creation, and when some of them

teristic of the process of facilitation and group dynamics, and to be aware of the plurality of possibilities in order to be able to adapt to it accordingly.



Figure A.5.: Drawing by Elise, March 8th, 2017

As soon as I took out my guitar on the first session, Elise expressed how much she liked it and how she would love to be able to play it. She gave it several tries throughout the sessions and insisted that she wanted to learn how to play guitar.

At the end of the very first session, her drawing was this guitar. Her eagerness to learn and her love for the instrument was significant for me as a facilitator, because it meant that she enjoyed what we were doing and that she was getting to know some of her own desires and wishes through it. She got closer to one aspect of herself after what we did together.



Figure A.6.: Drawing by Malena, March 15th, 2017

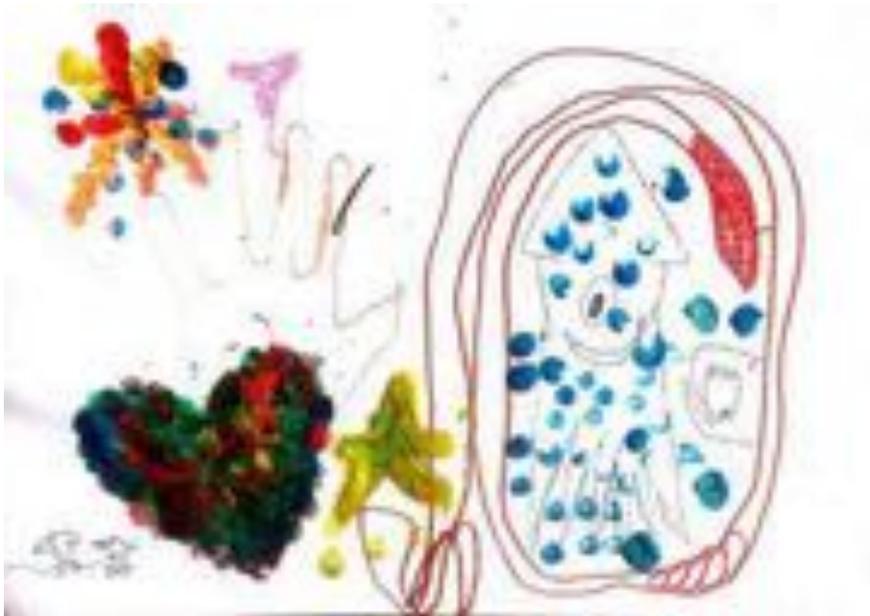


Figure A.7.: Drawing by Malena, March 29th, 2017

Malena was the most quite girl of the two groups. After each session, before beginning to draw, she took her time and often whispered that she did now know what to draw. She was too shy to say it out loud or ask for inspiration, but I could always observe her taking some time for herself and observing the others before beginning.

The two pictures above are two of her drawings on different days. They symbolize, to me, the lightness, colorfulness and brightness that she has inside, even though it was

hard for her to express it to the outside. Drawing was for her, as can be seen in these pictures, the means to communicate to the outside that diversity of colors and shapes that are harder to communicate by talking.

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Affidavit

I hereby declare that I have written the presented Master thesis by myself and independently and that I have used no other than the referenced sources and materials.

In addition, I declare that I have not previously submitted this Master thesis as examination paper in any form, either in Austria or abroad.

Innsbruck, January 9, 2018

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