Re-thinking Peacebuilding

From Universal Models to Mundane Peace

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Abstract

The article re-theorizes peacebuilding through the critique of the universalizing tendencies prominent in peace and conflict research. The critique is targeted both at the medical analogy and liberal peace theory which epitomize universalism in their own ways. By presenting a case study on a seemingly insignificant, minor and mundane event and person, a Finnish woman Kaisu, the article seeks to demonstrate the usefulness of cultural understanding of peacebuilding and the ethnographic fieldwork methods which open up interesting research questions for the research field. It is shown how peacebuilding is about politics that is 'not yet'. During peacebuilding society needs to face its troubled past with its full complexity and create a space for constant struggle that does not seek consensus, but rather engages the society in agonistic politics and democracy. Ultimately, the article suggests that the agency of parrhestiastes, truth-speaker, opens up a necessary space for post-conflict peacebuilding as it reveals the fragmented nature of the national self.

Keywords: peace and conflict research, culture, peacebuilding, democracy, truth speaking.

1. Introduction

Peace and conflict research has developed in close interplay with social interests. There has been a normative observation that war is a problem for the whole of humanity and, therefore, there is a need for rigorous and systematic scientific study of war in order to find the road to peace. Analytical rigor has always been high on the agenda of peace and conflict research, and scientific ideals have been a part of the quantitative research tradition (based, for example, on game theory and formal mathematical models) in the field. Anglo-American peace and conflict research was shaped between the two world wars by Quincy Wright in the United States and Lewis Fry Richardson in Britain. They gathered and analyzed statistics on wars and deadly quarrels to investigate the actual levels of violence and its causes in various historical eras and geographical areas. In 1957, Anglo-American peace researchers launched the *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* which still follows this quantitative tradition of research. After World War II, another, Scandinavian, branch of peace and conflict research emerged with Johan Galtung as one of its founding fathers. Like Wright and others, he called for the scientific study of the conditions of peace. In 1959, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) started publishing the *Journal of Peace Research* which emphasizes even today in its mission statement the theoretical rigor and methodological sophistication. These journals are important since they guide the agenda for an important part of the research that takes place in the field (for a more detailed analysis see Jutila et al., 2008).

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In my study with colleagues (Jutila et al., 2008), we showed how with the quest for the systematic scientific study of war there runs parallel a view where peace and conflict research is defined as an applied and multi-disciplinary science. It is seen to be analogous to medical science in the sense that peace researchers' commitment to peace is seen to be analogous to the commitment of the medical profession to the value of health. For example, Johan Galtung, who calls for the scientific study of war and peace, introduces a medical analogue by suggesting that a conflict researcher should be able to present a triangle that includes the diagnosis of the causes of the conflict, the prognosis of its development and therapy through which conflict resolution can be sought (Galtung, 1996; see also Dunn, 2005; Lawler, 1995). For John Burton (1990, 1997; see also Väyrynen, 2001) rooted in the Anglo-American tradition, a conflict researcher works on the basis of his scientific knowledge, brings this knowledge into practice and theorizes on the basis of his practical experiences. According to Burton, there are natural law-like universal regularities, i.e., human needs, that determine human behaviour and that can be known and brought to the field of peacebuilding. Hence to Burton as well, conflict resolution resembles the medical profession with its solid scientific foundations and practical orientation (Burton, 1997).

For me, the problem in this quest for the scientific study of conflict and peacebuilding is that it adopts the ideal of science from the natural sciences and therewith believes in the universal applicability of peacebuilding models. Furthermore, in order to combine universalism with practice, it introduces the medical analogy that, in my view, is highly problematic (Väyrynen, 1998a, 2001, 2013a). The medical analogy insinuates that 'dysfunctional conflicts' and 'deviant behavior' are signs, like physical symptoms, of something else, of diseases. Conflict, like symptoms of a disease, as such is not malign since it is merely a sign of structural failings or failures, for example, in basic human needs satisfaction which cause violent political behavior. I concur with Hanna Arendt who argues that seeing society in the organic and biological terms and using medical metaphors increases the role of expertise knowledge and power in political and societal matters. Whenever there is a need for a surgical treatment of the patient, the greater the power of the surgeon, argues Arendt (1970: 75). In a similar fashion, it is only through professional, scientific and universally applicable knowledge, and even social engineering, that 'sick' societies can be 'cured.' In my critique, I argue that too little space is left for other forms of knowledge (e.g., everyday and situational knowledge) when an expert and problem-solving oriented peacebuilding intervention is planned and executed (Väyrynen, 2013a).

I seek to re-theorize peacebuilding in this article through the critique of the universalizing tendencies prominent in peace and conflict research. The critique is targeted both at the medical analogy and liberal peace theory, discussed below in a more detailed manner, which epitomize universalism in their own ways. I use a speech act of a Finnish woman, Kaisu, to criticize the universal models of peacebuilding, and therewith the theory of liberal peace as well as other universalizing trends in the field. In order to present an alternative framework for the study of peacebuilding, I conduct a cultural reading of Kaisu's case. By presenting a case study on a seemingly insignificant, minor and mundane event and person, I seek to demonstrate the usefulness of cultural understanding of peacebuilding and the ethnographic fieldwork methods which open up interesting research questions for peace and conflict research.

2. Liberal Peace Theory

Liberal peace theory, which has gained a very dominant position in current world politics, reflects the strong trust in the universally applicable knowledge, reliance on expert led interventions and problem solving type treatment of societal and political issues. In the liberal peace theory, conflict resolution and peacebuilding is seen to consist of three main objectives: (1) creating and strengthening democratic political institutions, (2) encouraging sustainable, poverty-reducing development, and (3) fostering collaborative, non-violent social relations. To achieve these objectives, the main components of liberal peace are democratization, the rule of law, human rights, free and globalized markets and neo-liberal development. At the core of the liberal peacebuilding ideology there is the idea of post-conflict liberalization, i.e., democratization and marketization of post-conflict societies (Paris, 2004: 1-5). Liberal peace theory emphasizes the role of formal institutions in establishing long-term peace, and the need for normative and legal arrangements for transferring a nation from war to peace. Constitutional arrangements, namely democratic institutions, are a cornerstone of liberal peace. Peacebuilding, in this view, can involve external actors who aim their expert knowledge at creating the domestic conditions for durable peace (Richmond, 2013; Väyrynen, 2010).

Critics of this approach view it as over-determined by an instrumental rationality characterized by technical control and the efficiency and success of goal-directed actors. Jürgen Habermas argues that instrumental rationality marks the self-understanding of the modern era. It "carries with it connotations of successful self-maintenance made possible by informed disposition over, and intelligent adaptation to, conditions of a contingent environment" (Habermas, 1991: 10).

This type of rationality aims at instrumental mastery of the world where instrumental reason encounters ready-made social and political subjects and systems without questioning their foundations. Instrumental approaches, such as liberal peace theory, to peacebuilding assume that violent conflict represents a breakdown of 'normal' social relations and that good post-conflict governance is equivalent to Western-style, and hence universalizable, statehood, democratization, neo-liberal economics and the existence of civil society (Bellamy, 2005: 19; Duffield, 2001; Paris, 2002). In liberal peace theory, peacebuilding is considered to be a positive and universally acceptable form of action where problems emerging during peacebuilding represent instrumental failures. Peacebuilding in liberal peace theory is, thus, criticized for being based mainly on problem-solving theory that treats problems as pre-given and ready-made, gives preference to hegemonic and dominant theories and practices, relies on expertise and seldom seeks alternatives. In short, since problem-solving theory aims at maintaining the existing structures and world order, it tends to offer largely technical and expert driven solutions to problems (Bellamy, 2005: 18-19; Cox, 1981).

When liberal peace theory emphasizes institutional and instrumental solutions for conflicts, context dependent interpretations of peace are ignored. Peace is seen to imply the restoration of 'law and order' and return to 'normal conditions', hence recovery from a temporal sickness. The opposite, war and violence, is conceptualized in terms of societal pathology that plagues societies. Liberal peace is problematic because it dismisses the social and human consequences of the process of constructing liberal peace and assumes that the peacefulness of societies can be measured by estimating the degree of overt violence. The everyday dimensions and experiences of peace do not count in liberal peace theory (cf., Jutila et al., 2008; Richmond, 2005, 2010; Väyrynen, 2010).

3. Language Games and Cultural Readings

In my feminist critique (Väyrynen, 2004, 2010) of liberal peace theory, I argue that whilst leaving the cultural contexts of peacebuilding unnoticed, the gendered dynamics of peacebuilding – which are a vital part of any peace process – are neglected. In liberal peace theory, women are assigned a particular type of universalized agency and identity: the dominant form of femininity is that of civilian, protected and passive, whereas the hegemonic masculinity re-confirms the roles of combatant, protector and active actor. Liberal international peace missions produce a very limited type of femininities and masculinities where women are seen as victims of war conducted by men, and therefore, in need of protection. In peace missions women are normally invited to take civilian roles and posts rather than combatant or peace-enforcement roles.

My approach suggests a critical examination of the gendered dynamics and particularly the constitution of 'local women' and its role in liberal peacebuilding. I argue that 'local women' serve the construction of Western external agency as protector, human and ethically active. The wish to hear the voices of 'local women' is distinctly problematic since, according to my analysis (Väyrynen, 2010), liberal peacebuilding constitutes third world women silent as ever (cf., Spivak, 1988) by projecting them as in need of being protected and saved by an external (Western and masculine) actor. International liberal policymakers, peacebuilding practitioners and local subaltern subjects play different language games (assuming that the subaltern can speak), and they often have disparate interpretations of the conflict situation as well as gendered agency, which means that there is no mutual definition of peacebuilding either.

The observation that there are incommensurable language games in peacebuilding calls forth a cultural understanding of the processes of conflict and conflict resolution (cf., Avruch, 1998; Avruch and Black, 1991, 1993; Avruch et al., 1991; Bleiker and Brigg, 2011; Jabri, 2007; Väyrynen, 2001, 2013a). Alfred Schutz, the philosopher on whose work I rely in my context dependent reading of peacebuilding (Väyrynen, 1998b, 2001), shows how a human being encounters the world guided by cultural patterns. Cultural patterns are peculiar to social groups and they function for its members as an unquestioned frame of reference. They consist of mores, laws, habits, customs and fashions and shape the way we typify the world. In short, cultural patterns consist of knowledge for interpreting and handling things in the social world. Shared typifications embedded in cultural patterns are a foundation for communication and cooperation. When these shared typifications break down, the undergirding structure of shared reality collapses. Peacebuilding, in this view, implies that the participants in conflict need to find a sufficient amount of shared typifications that form a basis for communication, i.e., shared language games. Finding shared language games is not guided by problem-solving attitude and means-ends rationality, but rather relies on discursive rationality where the parties engage in a long-term process for finding commensurable foundations for communication. The aim of sustaining dialogical practices is often enough for the language games not to become schematic and enclosed.

Cultural readings of peacebuilding require research methods that are seldom used in the field of peace and conflict research. With my colleagues (Jutila et al., 2008) I argue that fieldwork methods have a lot of untapped potential. Their usage has been limited not only numerically but also in the ways they have been utilized. The typical research setting based on fieldwork is fairly local and the research is carried out in a faraway place, most likely in a developing country or other periphery. This traditional understanding of anthropological field research limits the way peace researchers think of doing fieldwork. Instead, fieldwork which my colleagues and I employed is so called multi-sited ethnography where the 'fields' can be fuzzy and where the research design uses different sets of research materials (Puumala et al., 2011). According to George Marcus (1995), this kind of multi-sited ethnography is mobile and it moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional research designs, so as to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space. For us, the field is necessarily not 'out there' but 'right here' (see also Väyrynen, 2012).

With multi-sited ethnography and its understanding of fieldwork, human praxis as well as the human consequences of peacebuilding can be brought to the center of peace and conflict research. Through the following case study, I seek to demonstrate how peacebuilding is ultimately about agonistic politics, namely about politics where the society faces its troubled past with its full complexity without producing a false sense of collective harmony and unity. Unlike the reliance on the medical analogy and liberal peace theory where universalism prevails, Kaisu's story presented below demonstrates the richness and usability of situational and everyday knowledge in peace and conflict research as well as reveals the underlying gendered dynamics of peacebuilding (for a more detailed study of Kaisu and other 'Hitler's brides', see Väyrynen, 2013b).

4. Kaisu's Story

Kaisu is an elegant, slim 80-year old Finnish woman whose body is straight and voice clear. Her emotions vary from melancholy to overt resistance when she speaks about her travel to Germany with the withdrawing German troops from Finland in 1944 and her return back to Finland in 1947. She tells her story in a documentary film entitled *Auf Wiedersehen Finnland* (Suutari, 2010) by a Finnish film-maker Virpi Suutari. Kaisu says that she left Finland with the Nazi army because she was afraid of the Soviet occupation. She refers to 'other girls' when she speaks about young women who had, according to her, reckless affairs with the German soldiers. Kaisu distances herself from the 'other girls', although the way the nation treated her after her return to Finland did not make any difference: she was named as 'Hitler's bride'.

Kaisu's speaking in the film provides interesting ethnographic material on peacebuilding since Kaisu's story carries mundane historical and political content that could not be reconciled with the Finnish post-war national identity. The Finnish nation silenced her by creating a collective memoryscape, where the Finnish alliance with the Nazi Germany and the women who left with the troops became socially sanctioned. Her story is vital for post-war Finnish peacebuilding as it forces the nation to look back to itself and its national memory. It brings the trauma of World War II back to the core of the nation, and shows how bringing it back is necessary for the nation's long-term peacebuilding. Kaisu's performance allows revisiting the post-war Finnish history where the imagined collective national unity has been based on collective denial. I argue that due to the denial the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation has not been fully completed in Finland. In sum, Kaisu, her story and the mundane knowledge embedded in it open up a complex problematique of post-conflict peacebuilding, and even the nature of democracy.

The background for Kaisu's story can be found in World War II history. More than 200,000 alien military men traversed or were stationed in Finland over the three years when Nazi Germany's occupation of Norway brought to the fore the need to transfer troops and munitions through Sweden and Finland. Diplomatic relations between Finland and the Third Reich had improved in the winter of 1939-1940 and an agreement was reached that allowed Germany to set up supply depots along the Arctic truck road. Germany declared war on the Soviet Union in

June 1941 and Finland grew closer to Germany. Eventually, Finland became a co-belligerent with Nazi Germany for a while (Lunde, 2011). Many of the German soldiers stayed for a long time in Finland and intimate relationships with Finnish women developed (Junila, 2000: 138-143, 286-304; Virolainen, 1999: 77-94).

The Finnish Information Bureau raised concerns about Finnish women who fraternized with the Germans. Female sexuality became a source of major anxiety and the intensive practices of naming through which the "confluence of historical, cultural, biographical, political, and symbolic themes that express membership in a particular group" (Tanno, 1994: 33) brew up. The role of women and their location at the nation's home front formed a core signifier through which female bodies were named and categorized, e.g., the binaries of sacrificial/deviant, loyal/non-loyal, mother/whore were established by the Finnish state. Any rupture in the home front was seen to imperil the entire nation, and thereby identifying and naming of the outcast female subjectivity was appropriate. The imaginary work that produced the assumed coherence of the nation largely took place at the home front, where the "scraps, patches and rugs of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture" (Bhabha, 1990: 297). The uncontrollable dangerous energy of the sexual desire towards alien men needed to be harnessed and put to work for the national cause right there. In short, a 'deviant woman' constituted a danger to the imagined healthy and vigorous body of the Finnish nation (cf., Butalia, 1998; Das, 2000, 2008; Ehlstain, 1987; Jarvis, 2004; Mosse, 1996; Nagel, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1997).

A thousand women left Finland with the withdrawing German troops in 1944. Not all of these women had relations with German soldiers, and their reasons for leaving included work, the fear of Soviet occupation, as in Kaisu's case, social pressure and also adventure (Heiskanen, 2011). This group of women who left for Germany formed a sub-category of the otherwise abject group of women, namely those who had fraternized with alien soldiers or the prisoners of the war. They were seen to have betrayed their nation in two ways. First, they were suspected of having fraternized with the Germans and thereby rejected the heroic Finnish men, and second, they had deserted their nation at a critical point in the war. They could not be employed to construct the core national myth of the laborious and sacrificial mother. They had deserted their country in a critical moment of the nation's history and deserved to remain unrecognized and muted by the nation.

On their return to Finland, the women were securitized, namely they were defined as a security risk and subject to internment and strict interrogation. The Finnish Security Police sought to interview all women who returned Finland between 1945 and 1948 from Germany, and scrutinized any activities of the women possibly amounting to treason (Heiskanen, 2006, 2011; Kontinen, 2011).

Post-war Finland socially sanctioned talking about this part of Finnish history. Furthermore, national history writing cemented the collective denial by talking about a 'separate war' where Finland was not allied with Nazi Germany. The existence of the "war-brides" constituted a reminder that hindered the production of closure to the trauma of war, particularly of the Finland's shameful alliance. For the post-war Finnish peacebuilding the figure of the sacrificial and laborious mother, as indicated above, has been one of the key figures around which the nation's identity narrative has been constructed. The sacrificial mother has offered appropriate, normalized, modes of female agency. The Finnish nationalistic ideology required the myth of sacrifice and the figure of a woman who was willing to send her husband or son to war as well as carry on the hard work at the home front served this purpose. Any derailment from this ideal type has been treated with suspicion (Helén, 1997; Siltala, 2009).

5. Post-conflict Peacebuilding and Truth Speaking

For me the post-World War II Finnish history and the nation's way of silencing women who fraternized with Nazi soldiers is an example of a post-conflict peacebuilding, where there has been a collective denial of an important and challenging part of the nation's history. Some of the vital agonistic clashes concerning the interpretation of the past were rejected from the core of the nation. The acceptance of the women who were accused of having relations with the German soldiers would have meant severe agonistic clashes of world-views during peacebuilding. Although Finland fulfils in many ways the criteria of liberal democracy and liberal peace, it has shunned away the difficult stories, even the very existence of the women, and thereby has not dealt fully with its past. According to the critical trauma theory of war, the trauma of war is likely to return in unexpected ways if the society rejects important elements of its past (e.g., Bleiker and Hutchison, 2008; Burgess, 2011; Edkins, 2003, 2006; Fierke, 2004; Shapiro, 1997; Väyrynen, 2013b, 2013c).

Kaisu was silenced for more than 60 years. In her case, the abject has been able to speak (cf., Butler and Spivak, 2007), but the nation has not wanted to hear what the abject wanted to say. Kaisu alternates between different ways to find the means to re-create her relationship to the collective memory and national trauma. On the one hand, her corporeal components reveal melancholy and her body and voice fail as she talks about the suffering she has caused her parents and the suffering of the Jews. In her narrative of others, Kaisu tells about herself (cf., Ross, 2002: 272). She has lost her youth, innocence and, most importantly, her trust in the nation's capacity to include her in its collective self. Kaisu had to develop an intimate relationship with suffering, and thereby she is mourning a part of her life and the collective belongingness that is lost. On the other hand, her voice becomes excited when she tells about her resistance to the Nazi regime by refusing the Nazi greeting in her workplace in Germany.

Kaisu was among the women who were transferred to the camp in Finland, and in the documentary she calls it the 'quarantine camp' as if there had been something contagious in her body that needed purification in order to save the others from its harmful influences. In the documentary, her body is stiff, but strong when she sits on the porch of the wooden grey barracks she thinks she was incarcerated in 60 years ago. She is smoking a cigarette with a firm hand. Her body and her solemn voice convey her strength. Kaisu recalls how the Security Police had suspected her of being a German mole. She is very proud of the fact that she did not cry during the interrogations: “In front of Hautojärvi [the interrogation officer] I did not cry”. In the narrative, her resistance is not just geared towards the interrogation officer, but also towards the Finnish nation, whose security apparatus suspected, humiliated and silenced her. In her upright body, she resists the forces that sought to silence her.

What can be seen in Kaisu’s case is a formation of agency made up of divided and fractured subject positions (cf., Das, 2007). Her subjectivity is melancholic and resistant and the past and present intersect while she re-creates and re-enacts her relation to the Finnish nation. The lack of public and political language can turn the resistance inwards, but in Kaisu’s case the resistance flows to the public and political sphere and turns into political agency that speaks back to power (cf., Eng, 2002: 89; Guha, 1999).

Kaisu becomes a *parrhesiastes*, a truth-speaker, as she forces the nation back to itself by speaking the truth and resisting its discriminating power with truth. The fact that a speaker says something different from what the majority believes is a strong indication that she is a *parrhesiastes* (Foucault, 2012; see also McGushing, 2007). By speaking after a long silence Kaisu becomes the one who forces the nation to deal with its violent past and helps to transfer the nation to the sphere of peace. In short, Kaisu’s act of *parrhesia* is a courageous act of resisting power and bringing the nation to a new temporality of peace. Instead of offering a witness account ‘what really happened’, a *parrhesiastes* presents an implicit or explicit diagnosis of the present in terms of power and knowledge. By manifesting to the nation what she is, she reveals the problems in her nation’s peacebuilding and reconciliation. She does not confess what she has done, but problematizes the politics of the nation. Stakes are high because the nation does not want to hear the truth. However, she chooses frankness and criticism instead of persuasion and confession. She disturbs the collective certainty by setting the record straight and disturbing the nation’s memoryscape that tries to forget its shameful alliance with Nazi Germany.

Kaisu’s speech has no confessional tendencies since close to her death Kaisu’s relation to power has started to change. She is “speaking between two deaths” (Das, 2007: 62): her social death doomed her silent for 60 years and now close to her biological death she speaks back to power. For her there is nothing to confess. She is courageous without being confessional and without hailing into being the agency of *superstite,* namely witness with confessional tendencies. She boldly brings the trauma of war back to the national consciousness without excuses. Her speaking in the documentary is an act of political and historical intervention since it sets the record straight, offers a critical view of the nation’s memory work and moves the collective self beyond its structural indifference towards its muted memory (cf., Feldman, 2004; Guha, 1999).

The process of truth speaking differs from confession in front of an examining or investigating authority. Examination is a disciplinary technique for the production of knowledge and it is used by doctors, scientists, teachers, psychiatrists, police officers, lawyers and so on. Through examination an individual is made visible, her behavioural patterns documented and, finally, objectivized and controlled. Within the disciplinary matrix, examination and confession have a correctional function. The examined confesses and through her confession turns herself into something 'better'. The agency of *superstite,* witness with confessional tendencies, does not emerge in Kaisu's case as she refuses to be known: she does not reveal her intimate secrets, but tells in a very matter of fact way her story to the nation. She takes the nation back to its trauma.

By refusing to be known, her act of speaking distances her from the mode of speaking in truth and reconciliation commissions. Kaisu's speaking and her becoming a *parrhesiastes* does not mimic the structure of a truth and reconciliation commission where the figure of *superstite* prevails. In the structure of the truth and reconciliation commission there is a strong belief that the possibility of telling one's story publicly leads first to truth and then reconciliation. It is thought that by narrating the past and by incorporating the individual narration into the collective visions of the future, the society can cope with its past. In them experiences of injustice and violence are assumed to become a part of official history and, therewith, of collective self. By contributing to the 'objective accounting' these narratives form an element in the development of a 'common shared history'. This, in turn, helps to serve as a basis for reconciliation and consensual politics. Narratives are, thus, thought to promote peace by providing the basis for an official and authoritative account of past crimes and misdeeds (for a critical analysis of the South African commissions see, e.g., Moon, 2006, 2008). Kaisu brings the trauma of war back to the nation's core and shatters the trust of the unitary national self. Instead of 'healing' and contributing to the imaginary national consensus and harmony she offers a truth that is agonistic. Furthermore, she refuses to become a part of a victim culture that dismisses her political agency. On the contrary, she takes her agency forcefully.

6. Conclusions

Peacebuilding is about politics that is 'not yet'. During peacebuilding society needs to face its troubled past with its full complexity. Ultimately, it is not about finding instrumental or institutional solutions to the problems that 'plague' war-torn societies. Peace does not emerge as a rational deliberation of the options available for instrumentally rational actors or through the problem-solving oriented external intervention, but rather through a creation of agonistic political space. Peace, in this view, is an "open-ended, fluid political process" that "will enable us call into question both the normative and structural components of peace in order to resist the imposition of hegemonic disciplinary orders" (Shinko, 2008: 475). It is a space for constant struggle that does not seek consensus, but rather allows the society to deal with its past in fully (on agonistic politics and democracy, see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 1999, 2000; Schaap, 2006; and Shinko, 2008).

Kaisu's case demonstrates the usefulness of mundane experiences for peace and conflict research. By relying on universal peacebuilding models, peace and conflict research dismisses the rich empirical material that allows asking pertinent questions, for example, about the human consequences of liberal peace and democracy. Kaisu's story brings forth the everydayness of peace. Unlike theories and practices that rely on universalism, her case demonstrates the context dependency of peacebuilding. The measure of peace is not in establishing a certain type of institutions as the liberal peace theory suggests or following the 'curative' process suggested by the medical analogy. Rather, Kaisu's case demonstrates how difference and contestation are the hallmarks of peace.

The article suggests that the agency of *parrhestiastes* opens up a necessary space for post-conflict peacebuilding as it forces the nation to look back to itself and reveals the fragmented and agonistic nature of the national self. The processes of becoming a *parrhestiastes* are culturally bound in the sense that the variations of speaking truth are historically and spatially located. The West cannot determine the forms of *parrhesiastes* although it might seek to determine the form of peace, namely liberal peace, in the current global order. In other words, although the West seeks to promote liberal peace and frame post-conflict peacebuilding accordingly, it cannot frame truth speaking. The patronizing aim to define peace for the others fails. In this view, post-conflict pluralistic society is not about the creation of a consensus and a liberal model of peace but rather about accepting the openness, contestation, anxiety and fragility of any political arrangement. Although conflict resolution and peacebuilding are the ultimate aims, there must be space for the figure of *parrhesiastes* to emerge and bring agonistic politics to the core of the nation.

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