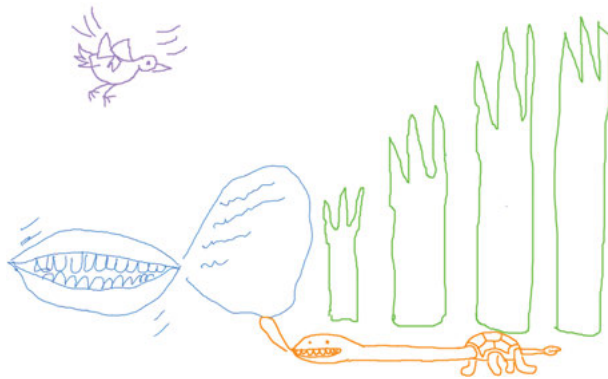Cathérine Lehnerer
Learning from Pupils about Conviviality

Tickling Turtle

A turtle tickles the speech bubble coming out of a giant mouth-creature while a sparrow flies by to reach the crown forest (see Figure 1). The drawing was created in the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," which took place in January 2021 online via Zoom and lasted 90 minutes. Thanks to the online setting, the participants could get in touch with each other on their screens from different locations. While verbal communication was taking place, they were primarily supposed to communicate through written or pictorial signs. The aim of our workshop was to deconstruct existing hierarchies between teachers and learners, while at the same time to enable a sensitive and convivial engagement with the traumatic experiences of the terrorist attack in Vienna on 2 November 2020.[1]

Figure 1: A turtle tickles the speech bubble coming out of a giant mouth-creature while a sparrow flies by to reach the crown forest. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2020. © Cathérine Lehnerer and the participants.

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1 Starting in the following paragraph I will be using the first person plural "we" by which I mean myself Cathérine Lehnerer – the initiator of the project – and the three pupil collaborators Rawan Almohamad, Munar Khalid-Biiq, and Arabina Amedoska.

Special about this situation was that the three participating pupils Rawan Almohamad, Munar Khalid-Biiq, and Arabina Amedoska designed and led the workshop themselves (see Figure 2). Our collaboration began three years ago during a language course when the four of us realized that we all shared a passion for comics. At that time, when I developed the idea of organizing a comics workshop, the three pupils had moved on to secondary schools and I was no longer their teacher. Gradually they took on the role of teachers and guided the participants. Due to my profession as a teacher, I was able to help them planning, but our workshop ultimately turned out to be a collaborative project during which we continuously learn from each other. Generally, our workshops cover topics such as diversity, mindfulness, and living together in a democracy.

Figure 2: From top left to bottom right: Self-representations of Rawan Almohamad, Munar Khalid-Biiq, Arabina Amedoska, and Cathérine Lehnerer. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2021. © Almohamad, Khalid-Biiq, Amedoska, and Lehnerer.

Self-Conscious People

Fundamental to our workshops is the idea that hierarchies between institutions and their members ought to be questioned. This is here primarily achieved by drawing comics, which can provide a playful form of expression for conversations. As different perspectives of people are connected through the creation of comics, a contextual approach can be practiced in terms of the concept of *situated knowledges* (Haraway 1988). It is impossible to speak for all people and yet, in a democratic society, as many individuals as possible should be heard. As the OECD's

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) proves, students and pupils are often the object of research rather than actors in their own rights.

In order to avoid an essentialist and Eurocentric perspective, there is an urgent need to test new forms of research informed by the basic idea of *participatory action research* (PAR) that "self-conscious people [. . .] will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis" (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991, 13). In the context of radical pedagogical practice, dialogue as a problem-formulating method can become (political) action through dialogue, as Paulo Freire designed it in the 1970s in his famous book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. If transformation wants to happen in dialogue, the spoken and written word must be used in practice. Otherwise, language will merely lead to empty verbalism. Essential for Freire is the word, which he divides into action and reflection. Both are "in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers" (Freire 2000, 87).

Critical pedagogy is about social change, emphasizing the reciprocity of pedagogical processes in which the teachers also learn. Critical pedagogy aims to dissolve the boundaries between art, culture, and everyday life. In this context, comics workshops are a means of self-empowerment, but also of self-reflexive and critical cultural participation. Of particular interest is an interdisciplinary approach to comics' research that combines intersectional, intercultural, and pedagogical approaches. The process of the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality" is presented in the following section and also serves as an example of critical, social practice in relation to theoretical reflections, which was designed to reflect and show what participation can look like in practice.

Thanks to my professor Dr. Marina Gržinić, who made it possible that we offer the workshop through the Academy of Arts, many different people – who had become aware of it on our website – took part. Among the participants were students, schoolteachers, pupils, cultural mediators, and professors from different cities and countries.

Welcome, Everyone!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop had to be held online via Zoom. The advantage of this was that the participants came from different cities and countries. This situation allowed different perspectives on the November 2020 attack to become visible. The terrorist attack in Vienna occurred on 2 November 2020 in the center of Vienna in a popular local neighborhood. Four people were killed and 23 were seriously injured.

It turned out that the format of comics was well suited to express feelings and perceptions for which we lack words due to their overwhelming nature. In regular online meetings, Rawan, Munar, Arabina, and I developed the design of our workshop starting in November 2020. Inspired by a conversation with my professor, I suggested the terrorist attack as the main topic because I was surprised to see that in Vienna the prevention education programs offered mainly focused on possible future perpetrators rather than on discussing the consequences for all members of the society. In designing the workshop, we were particularly concerned not only to deal sensitively with the traumatic events, but also to draw attention on the associated effects on young Muslim pupils. The young teachers wanted to use the workshop to draw attention to the experiences of discrimination they had to go through as a result of the attack. Munar wears a headscarf and she told us about incidents in the subway where she was directly insulted by people. Rawan is from Syria and does not wear a headscarf, but she too noticed the aggressive mood. Personally, I was very interested in how to counteract the racism that is omnipresent in Vienna. Arabina suggested that we prepare little cards with sentences that served as suggestions for the conversations for the discussion round at the end of the workshop. Particularly important was the sentence: "Islam is not Islamism."

We wanted to have an open discourse about this to enable an exchange about our different perspectives. We were looking for a framework to share our own experiences with others, to exchange ideas and learn from each other, because new knowledge is always created in community and exchange. But we quickly became aware of the dilemma that *naming* the differences inevitably reproduces differences. So, what should we do? We wondered if it would be possible – with the help of our comics avatars – to question concepts of identity based on gender, age, skin color, or class origin. What are the possibilities of playing with fixed external attributions in order to deconstruct them? These were the questions occupying us. In pursuing them, we were first inspired by a famous comics cat!

Fluid Self-Concepts in Comics

The protagonist of George Herriman's comic strip *Krazy Kat* demonstrated non-binary gender identity over a hundred years ago in the surreal world of Coconino County. In a comic strip from March 20, 1921, the following is written in the middle panel (Figure 3): "Kuriosity [sic] has led our heroine thus far – but seeing what he sees 'kuriosity' no longer impels her – he is now actuated with a sweltering suffusion of benevolence" (Herriman and Casey 2020, 128).
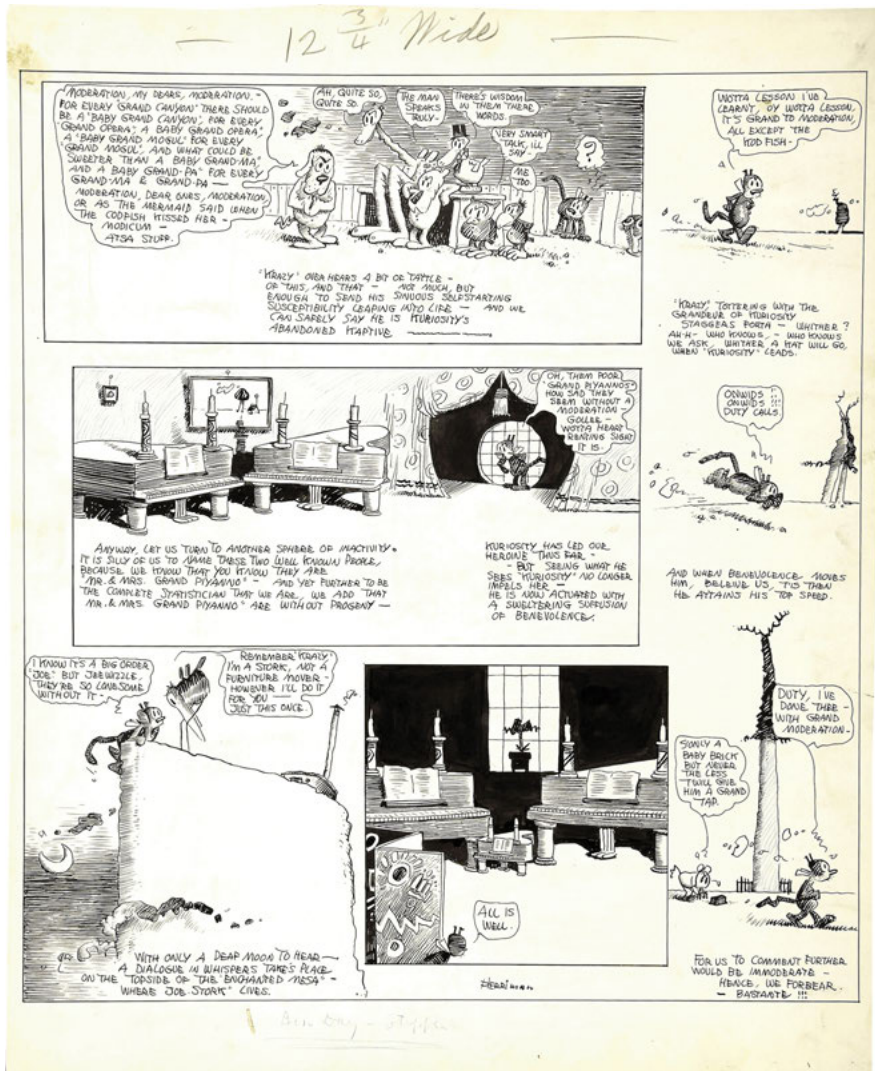
Figure 3: A strip of Herriman's Krazy Kat (Herriman 2020, 128). © Scan of the original art from Krazy Kat strip by George Herriman, 20 March 1921. Public domain image from Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Krazy_Kat_1921-03-20_original.jpg (publ. 20 March 1921, acc. 9 May 2022).

As if to prove the point, the cat's pronouns can change up to four times within a sentence. George Herriman's genderfluid protagonist is crazy about Ignatz the mouse and keeps trying to win his affection. Unfortunately, the mouse always throws a brick at the loyal cat's head as a thank you. This repetition becomes a habit and is found in almost every comic strip. While Krazy does not seem to fit into the heteronormative norms of a binary gender identity, societal norms are parodied. The cat performs a flexible identity that is not reducible to a fixed core. Through the stylized repetition of comics characters' actions, such as throwing the brick, the attributions from the outside that the cat encounters are highlighted. Comics have the power to show, through their parody, that identity without an original is merely an imitation (Frahm 2010, 36).

In gender and queer studies, the concept of *performativity* refers to the permanent citation of hegemonic norms and gender identities. According to Judith Butler, gender is neither a stable identity, nor is it a fixed site of action from which various actions emanate. Identity is rather constituted through a stylized repetition of action:

> Sociological discussions have conventionally sought to understand the notion of the person in terms of an agency that claims ontological priority to the various roles and functions through which it assumes social visibility and meaning.   (Butler 1990, 16)

A particular strength of comics is their ability to playfully break gender norms and social conventions and to combine different perspectives. The fact that we were able to transform ourselves into comics characters helped us not being judged through superficial attributions based on our appearances and visible backgrounds. Identity is not something fixed, set-in stone, but subject to constant change and in the infinite process of becoming and reinventing itself. Identity is changeable and Krazy Kat is a "symbol for the *malleability of the self*" (Bellot 2017, n.pag., emphasis added).

In our workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," we used Krazy Kat's fluid self-concept by having all participants transform into a cartoon character at the very beginning of the workshop, thus unleashing the potential of mutable identity affiliations. Thus, the first drawings were immediately used as so-called *avatars* – as shown in Figure 4. The ability to act and make free choices, regardless of gender, social class or ethnicity, can be called *agency*: "Agency is the capacity of a person or a group of people to act independently or to make choices. It refers to their particular way, and to carry out their chosen action" (Hines 2018, 17).
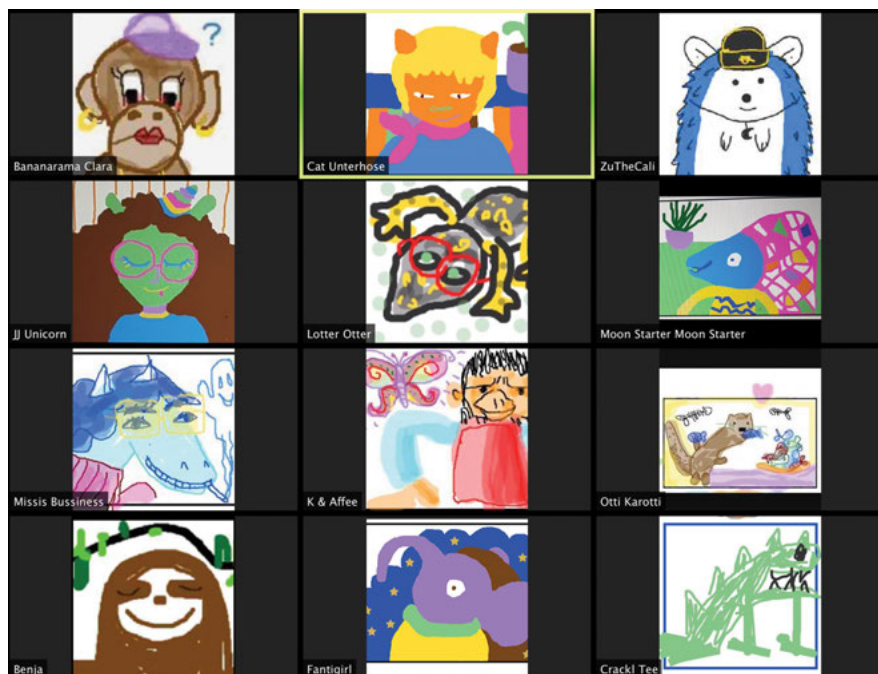
Figure 4: Participants transform themselves into comics characters and use their drawings as avatars. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2020. © Cathérine Lehnerer and the participants.

Comics as Agents of Agency

In *Games: Agency as Art* (2020), C. Thi Nguyen points to the special ability of games that allows us

> to be fluid with our agency and submerge ourselves in alternate agencies by another. In other words, we can use games as to communicate forms of agency. [...] Just as novels let us experience lives we have not lived, games let us experience forms of agency we might not have discovered on our own. (2020, 3)

This can also be applied to the medium of comics, especially when one is in an educational setting and using drawn avatars. In this context, the agency that can emerge through a collective comics practice is a way to creatively intervene in shaping the environment. Stuart Hall emphasizes that, by using the term "agency," he expresses "no desire whatsoever to return to an unmediated and transparent notion of the subject or identity as the centred author of social

practice" (1996, 2). However, the question of identity arises as soon as the relationship between subjects and discursive practices is reconceptualized. Identities are constructed within discourses and are therefore located in institutional sites in the play of specific modalities of power. Identities are positions that the subject must take, even if they are only representations. Moreover, identification is a process of articulation in the sense of a union, a superordination rather than subordination. Stuart Hall describes this relation as follows:

> This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the "positive" meaning of any term – and thus its "identity" – can be. (Hall and Du Gay 1996, 4)

In theorizing identity, both the necessity and impossibility of identities play an important, political role. Moreover, the connection of the psychic and the discursive must be recognized in their constitution (Hall and Du Gay 1996, 16). The agency of the workshop participants shows that they can effectively intervene in social relations by challenging and reshaping gender norms and hierarchies. In this way, it is possible to resist the power through which they themselves are constituted. Naming difference is what generates reflection on difference, so we decided to play with it and slip into new roles with avatars in the form of comics animals.

Art Spiegelman uses animal characters in the graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor´s Tale* (1986) to tell the story of his father Vladek, who survived Auschwitz. In an interview in *MetaMaus*, Spiegelman describes the use of masked characters in his famous graphic novel and says that "this de-individualization brings about empathy – it allows us to identify, and then you have to deal with your corrupt and damaged humanity" (2011, 132).

One's own entanglement in racist structures must be recognized and reflected upon without sinking into guilt. The young women were all affected by overt Islamophobia, which intensified after the Viennese terrorist's attacks. We wanted to convey these experiences without foregrounding the students' backgrounds or religious affiliation. However, hiding differences trivializes the structural racism that unfortunately exists and is based on those differences:

> Racism's de-individualizing effects can be adequately countered with large doses of individualism, its antidemocratic results repudiated with infusions of a generic democratic energy that need not or rather should not be made specific. (Gilroy 2004, 14)

The comics characters draw attention to the de-individualizing effects of racism – which is why it is so important to deconstruct its mechanisms. Furthermore, the personal stories can create counter-narratives to counteract the de-individualization with the individual.

Scratch the Surface

> It was racism and not diversity that made their arrival into a problem. This is more than just a question of perspective.   (Gilroy 2004, 165)

Norms and standards inhibit dynamic development and self-reflection. Identity is also ascribed by norms and rules from the outside, so that people know their way around and do not have to think too much. Is there a way to scratch the surface of prejudice in order to get to the underlying wounds that create this prejudice so that healing can subsequently take place? We are talking about the healing of minorities, but also about healing the unquestioned discriminatory prejudices of the majority. Majorities are equally wounded by not seeing and not thinking. Through laughing, crying, and talking together, the comics workshops found new ways to engage with and critique multiple concepts of identity. As seen in Figure 5, gender assignments can be blurred by comics characters. While gender characteristics such as clothing and hairstyles were still partially recognizable in our workshop, this example shows that they can almost dissolve. Only the names still suggest a clear assignment.

Figure 5: Drawings created by participants. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2020. © Cathérine Lehnerer and the participants.

Moreover, in addition to the deconstruction of gender norms, the workshop also allowed the expression of feelings. One of the tasks was to express one's own feelings with the Zoom drawing tool – as seen in Figure 6. Since this is also a difficult task for many adults, a playful setting was developed. Via chat, the players were sent a term that they had to draw on the whiteboard without talking – similar to the well-known board game "Activity." The terms given all covered the area of feelings and perceptions. Since nine people took part in the
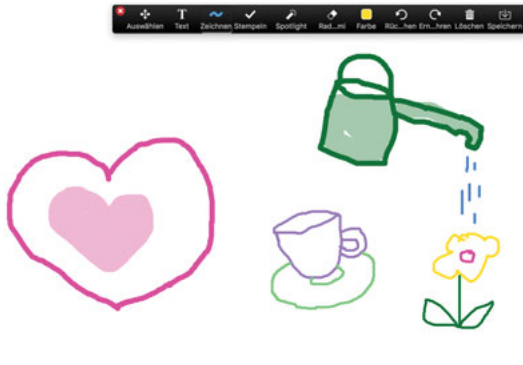
Figure 6: Drawings created by participants. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2020. © Cathérine Lehnerer and the participants.

workshop, they were divided into three groups and sent to their own digital space, the so-called "breakout rooms." Each student thus led a small group of three participants.

In contact with other people, by sharing our feelings and experiences, ideas can be put up for discussion with fellow human beings. For, as Krazy Kat shows, there is no fixed framework that determines which gender or national identity we belong to, there are always forms in between that contradict heterogeneous attribution. Confronting racist structures is nevertheless a painful process for all involved.

Un-Learning

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to "unlearning one's privilege as one's loss" (Spivak 1996, 4). Viewing privilege as a loss means that the perceived advantage creates a disadvantage at the same time because it prevents the privileged from thinking outside the box. An English native speaker, for example, will not be forced to learn another language to survive their everyday life and for this reason it's impossible to understand an Arabic poem, which is a loss. *Critical whiteness reflection* can only take place when people who are read as white are honest with themselves and allow the agonizing self-knowledge of the effect that their behavior has on other people, even if it is done unconsciously and perhaps even with good intentions. Then it hits the privileged full force and leaves a bruise, but it opens the door to genuine empathy, which is the basic requirement for a convivial society. When young Muslim women, such as the leaders of the comics workshop,

report racist assaults immediately after a terrorist attack, it affects all of us as a civil society and we all share responsibility for preventing such a behavior.

The workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality" provided a digital space where an exchange between the different participants could take place at eye level to enable mutual understanding.

Un-learning, just like learning, is an open process and in constant exchange with other people, literature or even comics. The comics workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality" has the potential to question one's own role and is therefore mainly aimed at adults who are sometimes unaware that they can still learn something. Teachers, in particular, are often so caught up in the role of a facilitator that they forget that they can also learn from pupils and, furthermore, unlearn discriminatory behavior. However, it must be emphasized that the participating teachers were all very open to learning from the pupils about conviviality and were following their instructions. Now let's imagine the teachers in the workshop sitting together with pupils, students and professors discussing the terror attack. What impact will it have on their pedagogical practice? Will they tell their colleagues about it? In addition to the importance of community, collaboration among teachers from diverse backgrounds is an important component of the pedagogy of hope advocated by bell hooks.

Theory is always connected with one's own life. Therefore, in this workshop, it was especially important to include the personal experiences of the participants. Educator bell hooks (2003, 3) emphasizes the importance of thinking together about different relations of oppression, a process in which the transmission of knowledge plays a central role. In this process, teachers and learners are equally challenged and encouraged. Subjectivity is often accused of being unscientific, but it is an "important dimension of marginalized discourses and a creative form of decolonization" (Kilomba 2016, 50). hook's work, directed against all forms of oppression and discrimination, was set back considerably after the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001. The mass media was full of anger and fear against people of different skin color and/or religious affiliation:

> No matter the overwhelming majority of people of color whose lives were tragically lost on 9/11, the more than sixty countries represented, every religion in the world represented, innocents of all shapes, sizes, colors, the newborn and the old – cruel Western cultural imperialism reduced this brutal massacre to the simply binary of "us/them," of United States citizens as "the chosen people" against a world full of "unchosen" people.
>
> (hooks 2003, 9–10)

Part of the public increasingly reacted with an imperialist, nationalist, and patriarchal anger against people with darker skin or women with headscarves.

This blind hatred turned into an everyday racism directed against people of color from different backgrounds and Muslim women from all over the world. Unfortunately, we saw similar tendencies in Vienna after the attack. It is only when we recognize the extent to which we are implicated in and reproduce discriminatory structures (often unconsciously and even with good intentions) that we can reflect on them in exchange with others in order to establish and communicate counter-ideas. Besides drawing comics and dealing with the terrible events, our aim was to create a convivial space. Paul Gilroy suggests that migration should not be used as an explanation for conflict: "The problem is not migration, the problem we have to deal with is racism!" (Gilroy 2004, 165). It is the responsibility of all of us to stand up against any kind of racism and look out for each other.

What Does Conviviality Mean?

Paul Gilroy uses the term conviviality "to refer to the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere" (2004, xi) and he points out that conviviality "does not describe the absence of racism or the triumph of tolerance. Instead, it suggests a different setting for their empty, interpersonal rituals" (Gilroy 2004, xi).

In the book *Tools for Conviviality,* Ivan Illich refers to conviviality as the autonomous and creative exchange between persons and the interaction of persons with their environment. It is the opposite of purely industrial productivity, as it denotes individual freedom realized in an interdependent manner. Conviviality is thus an "intrinsic ethical value" (Illich 2009, 24) that motivates communal thought and action. In a convivial society as Illich envisions it, access to tools must be provided to every member of society and secured through social agreements. Social justice can only be implemented in a participatory and distributive way that prevents forced labor and forced learning (Illich 2009, 26). Illich did not provide an idealized utopia in the 1970s, but concrete instructions for action for a convivial transformation of society. The ability to imagine a communal world is almost lost today. What is important for conviviality is the equal power of all to activate, to co-create a world and to interact with it. People are needed who sense when "enough is enough!" and when it is no longer necessary to keep being productive, but instead only produce enough to make a *good life* possible for as many people as possible. The gap between rich and poor is a

sign of social injustice, but ultimately keeps everyone from living more sustainably and convivially.

By living together free of assimilation and integration requirements, new rules and interpersonal rituals emerge. Central to this is the absence of a belief in "races." The existence of racism is not denied, furthermore it is addressed as a serious structural problem. Gilroy notes:

> Multicultural society seems to have been abandoned at birth. Judged unviable and left to fend for itself, its death by neglect is being loudly proclaimed on all sides. The corpse is now being laid to rest amid the multiple anxieties of the "war on terror."   (Gilroy 2004, 1)

In contrast to multiculturalism, a term for how different people from different cultures live together, conviviality refers to the process of how people interact and communicate with each other. The workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality" tried to create a convivial setting in which personal experiences about the traumatic event of the terror attack in Vienna could be shared. If traumatic topics such as the attack and also the discriminatory consequences for Muslims are to be discussed, a protected space is needed. Of course, meeting online in a virtual setting is quite different from a face-to-face, physical encounter. We have all certainly had many different experiences with online encounters in the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes the video chat can feel amazingly close, even though the person on the video may be miles away. Yet, there is always a social distance that is not just physical. Reading gestures and facial expressions is more difficult, and smells and other sensory cues are completely absent. Drawings have a language all of their own, and especially with traumatic experiences we often lack words. In addition to drawing, listening to the pupils and reading the signs of the drawings was very important in this workshop. Artist Lynda Barry, in her recent work *Making Comics*, tried to describe the special kind of 'magic' to be found in hand-drawings of children: "Adults are surprised when what look like meaningless scribbles turn into something as the kid describes what´s going on in the picture" (Barry 2020, 6).

The participants were asked to choose a particularly memorable situation they had experienced on 2 November 2020 and express it in a sketchy drawing. Afterwards, each drawing was discussed in detail and the drawings provided a good opportunity to talk about feelings and fears. The focus was not on the person, but on the experience itself. Dealing with thoughts and feelings was as important as sharing personal experiences. The very fact that pupils take the position of mediators opens up a space where they are listened to, and their experiences are valued. Nevertheless, the question arises how it can be possible to be strategically solidaristic without speaking for (the so-called) Others (Kazeem-Kamiński 2018, 138). The categories of "us" and "the others" no longer work once we bring

decolonial practices into focus. Comics characters have the potential to enable such distancing, and they indirectly refer to these very mechanisms of identification when we "identify" with the hero while reading, even if they are of a different gender or ethnicity. Throughout the workshop, the comics avatars offered protection from prejudice and attribution. In addition, the participants were respectful and interested in the conversations and shared their concerns and fears with each other. With the help of their fluid identities, individual narratives could be recognized as part of a structural problem referred to by the term racism.

Convivial Togetherness in the Workshop

The time is ripe for a dialogue about how we want to live with one another and what a more just life for all people, and a life in which not only a few benefit from the exploitation of the many, might look like. When I hear the term conviviality, I think of a large table and it is set with plates, glasses, and cutlery, inviting to linger. Conviviality, however, is not simply a naïve idea of peaceful coexistence without conflict. This is shown by the work "Coloniality / Conviviality" by Joëlle Sambi Nzeba and Nicolas Pommier, which was on view at Weltmuseum Wien during the exhibition "Stories of Traumatic Pasts." It shows that in convivial encounters the colonial past is always present. In addition to empty plates and glasses, we also recognize some overturned chair in the installation (see Figure 7). Perhaps someone got up in a rage and left the conversation?

The artists Sambi Nzeba and Pommier clearly criticize the "apparent obliteration of domination for the benefit of a friendly façade" (2020, 87). As can be seen well in their installation, conviviality requires sitting down at a table to talk to each other. But the fallen chairs point to a conflict. If we look closer, we can see chopped-off hands between the plates (see Figure 8). Congolese hands. The two artists wonder if it is possible to sit down to eat at a table when so many Congolese hands have been cut off in the name of a so-called "civilization" (Sambi Nzeba and Pommier 2020, 92). In a shocking way, the drawn hands refer to the mass mutilation and killing by the concession companies of eight to ten million Congolese. To date, there has been no recognition of the massacres and no reparations between Belgium and Congo.

In that instant, coloniality has to be considered and must not be swept under the carpet. With the chopped-off hands the artists refer to the destructive regime of the colony and the basic trauma it inflicted. Can we imagine a serene or friendly discussion taking place at this table? The hands remind us of the pain and trauma, raising the question of whether it will even be possible to

Figure 7: Joëlle Sambi Nzeba and Nicolas Pommier, *Convivial Table*, 2020. Exhibition view, "Stories of Traumatic Pasts," Weltmuseum Wien, 8 October 2020–3 April 2021. Photograph by Sophie Uitz, courtesy of the curators of the exhibition.

Figure 8: Joëlle Sambi Nzeba and Nicolas Pommier, *Congolese Hands*, 2020. Exhibition view, "Stories of Traumatic Pasts," Weltmuseum Wien, 8 October 2020–3 April 2021. Photograph by Sophie Uitz, courtesy of the curators of the exhibition.

silence the pain and ignore the trauma? Yet, a chair has been knocked over. Perhaps one of the participants in the conversation got up in a rage and left the table. Can a conversation start between victims and perpetrators? The artist duo stresses that we often sweep conflicts under the carpet like dust, hoping

they will disappear. And they point out that it might still be possible to sit down at a table and to enter into a convivial dialogue. They try to overcome this dilemma with political art and workshops held for this purpose:

> What is possible to overcome in such conditions? Peace is not the absence of bloody cannons and battlefields, it can have the appearance of "living together" and yet claim as many victims as war. Peace is not the opposite of war. Silence is death. The negation of the other is death. The continuous erasure of the history, identity and even of the very humanity of people is leading to war. We are at war in our bodies, in our minds even in (the absence of) our representations. (Sambi Nzeba and Pommier 2020, 92)

We do not always need to be in any particular position of power to be heard, do we?

So Please Take Your Seats

With this knowledge in mind, the pupils and I tried to deal with the terrorist attack sensitively for the workshop "Learning from Pupil about Conviviality," allowing a place for conflict and anger as well. When dealing with a subject as horrific as a terrorist attack, it quickly becomes apparent that conviviality may not always be cheerful. In a discussion round towards the end of the workshop, we therefore designed a small card that read: "Islam is not IS!" and put this up for discussion alongside other statements. It was particularly important in the conception of the workshop that the pupils' experience can be heard and that, at the same time, there was a space in which everyone could participate in the discussions.

Conviviality is a process but no fixed product. It is no commodity that can be serially produced and sold, like a comic book. At the same time, we did not want to just scratch a friendly, happy surface, but to address serious issues and to go in depth. If multiculturalism focuses on "culture" and "identity," whereby members of a minority are culturally determined and marked, conviviality is a process of exchange. In this way, any essentialization of "cultural identity" is prevented, since conviviality takes into account the fact that groups are heterogeneous. However, conviviality goes beyond this by not obscuring discriminatory structures. Through multiple affiliations, rigid attributions are constantly challenged. Islamophobia is a reiteration of old racisms or xenophobia and there is a link to the refugee crisis and the colonial past. What the experience of the attack and subsequent racist experiences have in common is that they are traumatic – and as Grada Kilomba points out, the word trauma comes "from the Greek word wound or injury" (2016, 132).

Respect Human Rights!

Before we conclude, let us briefly point out the connection between racism and sexism. To ensure that equal agency of all individuals and groups does not remain an empty promise, it is important to reflect about different forms of discrimination in terms of intersectionality and to stand up against them. Munar, one of the pupils, wears a headscarf and so should her comics character, because it belongs to her, and she is proud to wear it. In the graphic novel *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi (2003, 5) reveals her own experiences about the oppression of women in Iran and Austria. Satrapi experienced the change of government that introduced the state compulsion to wear a headscarf. For her mother, this paternalism by the state was a break she could not bear, which is why she took to the streets to demonstrate for her freedom (see Figure 9). Satrapi then had to wear a headscarf at school and later at university. During her stay in Vienna, she then noticed that women were also wearing headscarves here.

Figure 9: An extract demonstrating the polarization of the veil (Satrapi 2003, 5). © Scan of the original art from *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi.

Today's "headscarf debate" across Europe seems to be taking place under opposite auspices. There are serious discussions about whether schoolgirls should not be allowed to wear headscarves at school, or whether teachers and professors can do their job properly if they wear headscarves. All this is done under the pretext of "liberating" women from oppression. Often, however, there are xenophobic motives behind it, which are about anything but the welfare of women. It is especially important to talk about these issues now. As a teacher, I was confronted with many grievances from my pupils about what it is like to wear a

headscarf as an emancipated young woman. In fact, for many the headscarf has become a new symbol of contemporary feminism. While Satrapi says in an interview that she herself does not like to wear the headscarf, she also refers to the meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which says that everyone has the right to believe in what they want, to dress as they want – and to live as they want (Hummitzsch 2021).

Finally, I would like to point out that all terrorist attacks, whether by neo-Nazis as in Hanau, Germany, or by fanatical Islamists against freedom of expression as against *Charlie Hebdo*, have something in common: They strike innocent members of civil society. All our sympathy goes to the victims of terrorist attacks and above all, to their families. It is important that they cannot also attack our cohesion.

Taking Part in the Convivial Future

In conclusion, it can be said that through the comics workshop the different perspectives of the participants on the terrorist attack in Vienna in 2020 can be brought together – as can be seen in Figure 10. Some participants heard about the attack from the media because they come from other cities or countries. Their perception differs, for example, from the participant who was in Vienna and had to directly experience a helicopter rotor passing in front of her window. As the participants were asked to draw the moment they learned about the attack, the combination shows a "summary snapshot" of a concrete situation from different
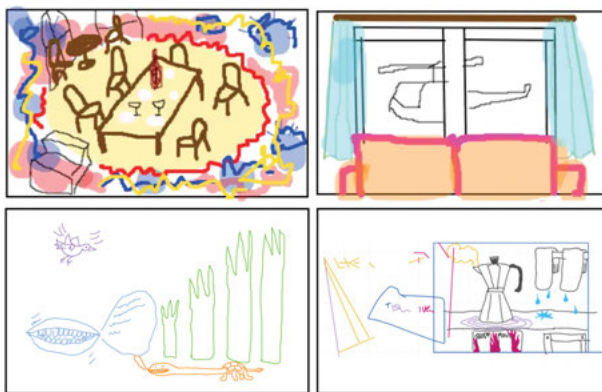
Figure 10: Drawings created by participants. From the workshop "Learning from Pupils about Conviviality," online event, 2020. © Cathérine Lehnerer and the participants.

perspectives. In the workshop, each individual picture was discussed in detail and so there was a direct exchange about what had been experienced. At the end of the workshop, Rawan, Munar, and Arabina talked about their experiences after the attack, where they faced hostility because of their appearance. In contrast to the rest of the workshop, where everyone discussed animatedly with each other, now all participants listened attentively and with concern.

With the aim of developing skills and knowledge necessary to engage critically with the world, the conditions of participation are explored in order to deepen a discussion of power relations and alternatives in educational work. In this way, new habits of thought and action can be negotiated in the sense of democratic participation, in order to shape one's own lifeworld in a critical relationship to the Eurocentric perspective. The focus is thus on an aesthetic-philosophical analysis on comics as a form, which is combined with insights from the tradition of critical pedagogy. Since comics are capable of questioning existing states of affairs and enabling new perspectives, it opens up a symbolic space in which concepts and definitions can be critically considered and reflected upon. Moreover, the comic enters the stage as an actor in its own right.

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