

CONFLICT

Conflict *noun*

1. To come into collision, or be in opposition or at variance; disagree
2. To contend; do battle;
3. a battle, or struggle...
4. controversy; quarrel; discord of action; feeling, or effect
5. antagonism, as of interests or principles: *a conflict of ideas*
6. a striking together; collision.

Macquarie Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1991

MEDITATION

While in a general sense conflict involves oppositional stances between two or more entities, it can be described in two ways: agonism and antagonism.

Agonism can be traced back to the ancient Greeks who saw it as a positive approach to conflict. Unity is achieved through opposition. This can be seen in sport where two sides contend for a prize, or in constructive discourses where contrasting ideas interact with each other.

Antagonism, as the prefix *ante* (against) delineates, refers to a more combative approach to conflict. It creates disunity, is hostile and non-negotiable.

The music in *Conflict* explores agonistic and antagonistic approaches to conflict. It is a play between forces in contention or opposition. Conflict in music can be represented in a number of ways. One of the most notable examples of conflict can be found in the concerto form.

The technique of counterpoint can be interpreted as being agonistic in which a sound is placed in contrast to another sound and where all parts contribute to the overall texture. As in sport such as basketball or football, where players have a distinctive style, so too do many of the parts in *Conflict* display agonistic tendencies. When one least expects it, a melodic line will burst forward from the contrapuntal pack.

Antagonism is represented through interruptions and contrasts where textures dominate other textures and one must win at whatever the cost or approach.