



3-30-2016

Reflections on Peace from Interculturality

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Recommended Citation

Garcia-Gonzalez, Dora Elvira (2016) "Reflections on Peace from Interculturality," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 23 : No. 1 , Article 1.

DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2016.1320

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol23/iss1/1>

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Reflections on Peace from Interculturality

Abstract

This article purpose to think about interculturality in connection with what peace means, since many of the great conflicts in the history of humankind have been provoked by the failure to settle conflicts, by the absence of genuine dialogue and the inability to listen, thus producing violence among persons and among cultures. Therefore, to overcome these situations it is necessary a deep understanding of what peace means, as well as of its relation to justice and ethics. This will make it possible to seek the development of a positive interculturality, within a framework of peace. The existence of interculturality does not necessarily generate violence, even when there are conflicts. Transforming and overcoming these conflicts is the prerequisite for establishing peaceful intercultural relations. The argument in this article is that such transcendence is possible by resorting to the ethical imagination: a creative resource that makes what is absent and desired present and that generates possibilities thought to be inexistent in existing situations. The ethical imagination introduces a constructive view of social change in scenarios in which conflicts are deeply rooted, thereby, facilitating transformation.

Keywords: *culture of peace, interculturality, values, solidarity, hospitality, compassion.*

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Reflections on Peace from Interculturality

Dora Elvira García-González

Looking back on the past, it is clear that relations between cultures have been complicated; on too many occasions marked by crimes, outbreaks of individual and collective hatred, vengeance, conflicts, hostilities, and wars; and most of which are the result of unresolved conflicts. This has led to the belief that the social order in those cultures entails the use of violence, thus traditionally legitimizing the latter as a requirement for social construction, since, as Rene Girard (2005) has pointed out, violence is entrenched in the symbolic center of societies and cultures. Johan Galtung refers to this type of violence as “Cultural Violence” (Galtung, 1990, pp. 291-305.) A similar approach can be seen in Danesh (2013). These realities have shaped the reflections carried out by political philosophy, leading it to focus on the organized conflicts that have arisen since ancient times.

To speak of the nature of interculturality requires recognition that the origins of humankind are linked to diverse and plural cultures that have come into contact throughout their development. However, these relationships have not always been easy; rather, they have been marked by unresolved conflicts that have produced situations of intercultural violence. In this article, interculturality is understood to be a condition of interaction and relationship among cultures in their shared human and social spaces, in which exchanges of patterns built in to each culture take place. Interculturality is thus considered to be a *factum*, that is, something that is lived. Therefore, while it is true that interculturality has, on many occasions, been violent, it is necessary to derive desirable intercultural expressions fostering and promoting peace, and to promote healthy relations among cultures. This proposal builds upon certain aspects of Jean Paul Lederach’s analysis on the topic, and specifically on how to transcend violence starting from the capacity to generate, mobilize, and build a moral imagination (Lederach, 1995; 2005). To envision intercultural relations in this manner—as a *desideratum*—is to see them in the spirit of overcoming conflicts and building peace. Here, peace is considered a *value* rooted in empirical reality through *data* and accompanied by theoretical constructions (*theories*); it is a value that must be strengthened by other values such as compassion, hospitality, and solidarity—all of which pursue a harmonious relationship among cultures. In this sense, peace is related to the welfare of people and understood

in this way for mostly all cultures. The field of peace building is quite large and that is why it is linked with many concepts such as harmony, concord, tranquility, agreement, alliance, and so on.

The concept of peace is suitable for defining different situations in which people handle their conflicts so that their needs are met in the best way. Peace (and also violence) is an experience that can be found in all cultures, and it is bound together by the process of socialization of different human groups. Peace as a wished-horizon for an interdependent world, has to be seen as a plurality of traditions, histories, and cultures (López, 2004, p.886). This reveals the presence of interculturality.

Finally, in this introduction, I consider it important to indicate the disciplinary position of my reflections. The perspective of this text is based upon philosophy—particularly cultural studies—and not solely upon peace studies. This allows reflections within a broader scope to explain the social construction processes of what is understood by peace, violence, and conflict. Hence the relevance and usefulness of the theoretical approach and companionship of authors such as Foucault (1980;1992;1997), Žižek (2008) and Derrida (2000), as well as Villoro (2005) and Ricoeur (2005), among others.

The Undeniable Presence of Interculturality

Within this article's thesis, the dimension of values predominates over that of power. While it is true that all cultures feature dimensions of values and of power, I argue for the predominance of the values dimension, which includes moral principles, expressed in behavior; aesthetic principles, materialized in artistic expressions; and religious codes, related to the sacred. This means that, as stated by Luis Villoro:

A theory of interculturality would involve several steps. First, it would attempt to identify each culture in its singularity, as well as in its similarities and differences with other cultures. Secondly, it would try to *understand* it The understanding of a culture is neutral regarding its acceptance or rejection understanding entails questioning all prejudices. (Villoro, 2006, p.140)

Another step involved in understanding is assessment, which is that provided by an intercultural position insofar as it includes value judgments. In fact, “assessing a culture, in its qualities and limitations, is part of a level of judgment that arises after understanding; it presupposes understanding” (Villoro, 2006, p.142).

Interculturality arises among several cultures, in the midst of plurality, since “not, one of them would be able to serve as a pattern to evaluate the others” (Villoro, 2006, p.142). Among

many other causes, the temptation to do so, is what gives rise to unresolved conflicts and, hence, to wars. Therefore, the importance of values is crucial in generating an intercultural ethics that fosters peaceful coexistence. Initiatives such as bilingual intercultural education are aimed at seeking a more equitable intercultural coexistence. In Latin America, a growing number of countries began processes for recognition of their multiethnic character, in reference to the historic debt they have inherited from the first nations that populated the continent. Since 1990, the constitutions of at least eleven countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela) have recognized and accepted their pluri or multiculturalism and some, as in the case of Ecuador, have even postulated the “multinational” character of the country. Four other countries (Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama), with fewer instances of official recognition of multiethnicity and multiculturalism, also acknowledged those rights, including that relating to a differentiated education (Lopez & Küpper, 1999, p. 20).

The increasing existence of *cultures of violence*—which appear in diverse human environments and social spaces—is nurtured by beliefs, expectations, and interpretations of social reality that look upon those who are different, the others or the foreigners, with suspicion, prejudice, and hate. As Todorov said, “‘We’ are not necessarily good and neither are the ‘others;’ the only thing that can be said in this respect is that opening up to others, the refusal to reject them without previous examination, is a quality in every human being” (Todorov, 2009, p. 432). Those positions opposing harmony underlie the closed-minded attitudes and behaviors that have historically led to violent situations and implications of a politics of fear. Such accounts call for reflections on interculturality in an ethical world, aimed at opening up new horizons for the achievement of peaceful coexistence among diverse cultures (Lederach, 2005).

As stated and illustrated above, unfortunately on many occasions and against intercultural efforts, cultural hegemony takes over, invalidating, delegitimizing and silencing a world of the oppressed seen as irrelevant and lacking dignity. Such forms of empire generate epistemic and cultural violence, as Galtung (1977; 1990; 1998; 2004) describes it in his peace research work. These types of violence are grounded in hegemonic views exercised by means of structural or cultural domination, or both, more than through physical force. This means that domination is exercised through consent or consensual submission on the part of the dominated (Gramsci, 1971). Such hegemony is perpetuated by the domination of institutions that usually have the support of ideological State apparatuses, such as education, religion, the law, and the media. These apparatuses render invisible the valuable cultural elements of the cultures that interact with them.

The quintessential example of this type of relationship was hegemonic systems of acculturation, which were generated from the conquest of one people over others. In Latin America, these systems were characterized by the direct rule of the natives by foreigners; this was the basis of colonial exploitation of indigenous peoples, and is the primary matrix of cultural discrimination to this day.

All of these ideological forms aim at maintaining and legitimizing asymmetrical power relations and processes related to exclusion and domination. Constituting the basis for postcolonial study critiques, these arise as necessary counter-hegemonic proposals and call for the commitment to create “new forms of thinking and positively transforming social reality” (Omar, 2010, p. 175; Mignolo, Walter, 2011; 2002). For this reason, Galtung (1996; 2010) points out important nuances and distinguishes three types of violence: direct or explicit violence; structural violence, which is located in institutions and social structures; and cultural violence, which is present in cultural spaces or symbolic imaginaries.

Structures are significantly linked to political-economic systems, since they and the violence they generate depend on those systems; structures are composed simultaneously of cultural schemes, resource allocation and power modes. Cultural schemes provide the actors with meanings, motivations, and prescriptions for social action. The resources provide the actors with the means for action. Modes of power regulate the action by specifying what schemes are legitimate, and to which individuals or groups are assigned resources, and in addressing the conflicts that arise in the course of the action (Sewell, 1996).

Unequal distribution of wealth generates violence. Galtung thus insists that such violence occurs when basic needs are unmet due to unfair economic systems (Galtung, 2010, p. 13), as can be seen in poor countries like México. However, besides the economic factor, and without failing to recognize their relevance, it is important to point out that there are multiple structural types of violence, among them gender violence. Violence against women has been recurrent throughout history, and it has not ceased to the present day. In addition to being structural and cultural, this violence has been direct, since the former justifies and legitimizes the latter. While it is true that women are not the only group affected by violence, they are, nevertheless—even in the most developed societies—the largest minority group and the most affected by that violence. In these types of violence, I constantly find the feminization of people's weaknesses or disadvantages. For example, expressions remain in Latin American countries that disqualify a man with feminine adjectives to denote fragility, pusillanimity, or cowardice.

In what follows, I argue for the defense of a healthy interculturality in order to achieve a culture of peace. The undeniable existence of interculturality does not necessarily generate violence, even when there are conflicts. Transforming and overcoming these conflicts is the prerequisite for establishing peaceful intercultural relations that foster practical moral postulates aimed at suppressing perverted values affirming and defending the naturalization of prevailing violence. It is necessary to rescue those values inherent to peace—such as solidarity, hospitality, and compassion, since they are cardinal values for humanity—and intertwine them with the specific elements of interculturality.

Interculturality shows that cultures link to one another by processes located in basic experiences, implying constant exchanges between one's own culture and that of others. These dialogic processes generate bridges that make it possible to conceive new situations—among them a new order of peace. Implied is the recognition of others or those who are different, taking into account their dignity, and collaborating with their actions in order to promote freedom from all subjection and domination (García, 2011, p. 65). On the basis of the “point of view of intercultural philosophy, the path to achieve that historical possibility can only be the path of intercultural dialogue” (Fornet-Betancourt, 2011, p. 7). Such dialogue makes it feasible to collectively imagine an alternative force that changes the world within the framework of a plurality of cultures, and in which respect for diversity prevails. Such intercultural dialogue can be envisioned through proposals for a culture of peace with pluralist assumptions that can be universalized despite not being absolute.

As such, it is relevant to think about interculturality in connection with what peace means since many of the great conflicts in the history of humankind have been provoked by the failure to settle conflicts, by the absence of genuine dialogue and the inability to listen, thus producing violence among persons and among cultures. Therefore, to overcome these situations, a deeper understanding of what peace means is necessary, as well as its relationship with justice and ethics.

Values as Pillars for Thinking Peace and Moral Imperatives

In its ethical perspective, philosophical reflection has followed the critical guidelines regarding the recognition of all human beings. It has been committed to providing practical responses that explain what human beings do to one another, the damages inflicted on others, and the violent actions perpetrated on a daily basis. Philosophical reflection focusing on peace carries out a reconstruction of human behaviors aimed at harmonious coexistence, through changes in attitudes and conduct in society.

Research on peace has shown that in addition to being a rational imperative, peace is also a moral imperative. Conflicts and confrontations should be settled peacefully, and it should be assumed that situations of poverty, hunger, and misery are in themselves forms of structural violence that defy basic rights and neglect persons' basic needs, besides being forms of clear exclusion. In turn, these forms of violence generate more violence in a spiral that only escalates. Those forms of exclusion produce further unending violence, just as in a "fire that ends when the house has burned down with a bitter ending" (Galtung, 2003, p. 109). Therefore, in addition to finding ways to satisfy basic privations and guarantee fundamental rights, peace studies must seek to transform explicit forms of aggression. What is needed is a compassionate positive energy, accepting in nature, and characterized by positive knowledge of oneself and of others (Galtung, 2003, p. 110). The desired structural peace seeks to overcome exploitation and repression in order to achieve fairness and freedom. Likewise, it focuses on solidarity and participation rather than on marginalization. Cultural peace aims at replacing the legitimization of violence with the legitimization of peace in cultural environments (Galtung, 2003, p. 58).

The pursuit of peace implies confidence in human beings and involves the full deployment of life (Galtung, 2003, p. 27); therefore, ethical norms are essential. This was precisely what led Gandhi to the possibility of imagining different realities, to the conviction that things could be different, and also what philosophers of peace such as Galtung have defended. This issue is of supreme relevance because it changes the manner in which reality has been seen historically, that is, from a warlike and violent perspective. Peace studies have been ignored repeatedly because they are deemed to propose goals that are unreachable in view of the prevailing reality of war. Even Immanuel Kant (2009), whose reflections proclaim peace as reachable and plausible, thought that war was the driver of history and that it forced humanity to progress. In contrast, following the argument of Elise Boulding (2000), no culture is in itself violent or peaceful; human nature in this sense is shaped by social learning, not genetic issues.

It is not surprising that both the concerns and the language of peace have been based on the assumption of violence, that war is inherent to, and characteristic of, human beings and society (Clastres, 2004). Hobbes articulated these ideas in his theses regarding the innate nature of violence in persons and in the state of nature; hence the need for a dominating Leviathan, who guarantees peace thanks to the fact that the freedom of citizens is delegated to the State. This legacy endured and is evident in contemporary societies, many of which rely on unjustified beliefs, given that many expressions of reciprocity and pacifism have been silenced throughout history.

Unfortunately, this concealment, fostered by silence and apathy, legitimizes violence (Galtung, 1996, pp. 13-14).

Given this state of affairs, it is necessary to enter into peace studies in order to acquire a full understanding of peace and what it means to think from a peace perspective. It is necessary to observe the nuances and propose definitions and clarifications, as well as to avoid using the term “peace” equivocally, so as not to create ambiguities that could lead to entrapment, especially in a world that desperately needs peace. It is necessary to have clarity with respect to what peace is, in order to prevent its excessive, manipulated, and often fallacious use, and to start building theories of peace on a new basis. Johan Galtung (2003, p. 34) proposes a triad made up of theories, data, and values. Peace studies argue for the preeminence of *theories* in building a reality oriented toward peace, given *data* that provide references to reality. However, in order to achieve the established goals, the third element, *values*, is essential to guide one's actions, as well as those of the other members of society. This triangle shows the coordinated movement of reality, the epistemic constructions of reality, and the desirable data and elements, thus rooting peace in empiricism. The desired design of peace must be based upon real data and theoretical constructions.

As already stated in the introduction to this article, I define peace as “the series of situations in which one opts for non-violence” (Jiménez, 2011, p. 117), including fostering dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance, and solidarity. These in turn help defend values such as hospitality. Here, the concept of hospitality, originating in Kant's thought, is a category for the achievement of peace—an attitude and a position of openness that requires one to imagine being in the position of the others, of foreigners, of those who are different (Kant, 2005). Moreover, peace encourages us to be more human (Jiménez, 2011, p. 117) through what others think of one's being, and encourages us to relate to others, either those closest or those farthest, and whether in agreement or in conflict.

With respect to conflict, it is essential to emphasize that conflicts must be overcome and transcended in order to achieve peace. This does not mean that conflicts are eliminated, which would be impossible, but rather they are settled in a manner that benefits the parties involved. Based on the thesis that humankind is conflictive, and that this prognosis cannot be ignored, transforming conflict in a non-violent manner is still possible. Conflicts may be explained as arising from the incompatibility of goals, so that conflict resolution must start from those incompatibilities in order to try to overcome and transcend them (Chedlelin et al, 2008; Kriesberg and Dayton, 2012). According to Galtung, there are six approaches to conflict resolution: resolving

the incompatibility (transcendence), compromise, deepening, broadening, integration, and disintegration through decoupling. The idea is not to freeze the conflict or deny it by prolonging it through mechanisms of structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 2003, p. 160). Conflicts can occur at four levels: (1) Micro conflicts (within and between people); (2) Meso conflicts (within the societies); (3) Macro conflicts (between states and nations); and (4) Mega conflicts (between regions and civilizations). The type of conflict and the energy itself, which involves and characterizes it, should be used to prevent the escalation of conflict in violent manifestations. (Galtung, 2003)

In order to learn about conflict transformation and put it into practice, it is necessary to have common, shared values that make it possible to transcend those conflicts by re-signifying human behaviors. The idea is, then, to define peace and contrast it with those actions that betray it, and at the same time, to envision its links to justice. Peace studies are crucial to intercultural relations, providing an understanding that enables the different actors in a society to see the ensuing implications with a responsibility to encourage the recognition of others. A peaceful interculturality is achieved through a life praxis that nurtures mutual relations with others in an inclusive and shared manner. That life in collaboration with others shall be lived in a framework of peace, in order to make interculturality an active, desirable quality of interpersonal relationships and of relations among cultures (Fornet-Betancourt, 2000).

The conceptual clarification of the meaning of peace makes possible its connection to justice and fundamental realities: there is no peace without justice, and what is involved is a legacy of ethical thought that implies respect for the dignity of others, as well as responsibility marked by solidarity (Cortina, 1985). Solidarity implies recognizing the relevance of others, and it has to do with an ethical type of learning. Achieving peace is thus possible even in intercultural societies marked by conflicts. When violence is settled by overcoming conflicts, value-laden attitudes strengthen peace. The processes of personal recognition and value recognition are slow and, like peace, silent. It is, nevertheless, true that peace is often destroyed and on many occasions perverted by recurring forms of injustice that have become naturalized—violent expressions inherent to structural forms of violence (Galtung, 2003, pp. 57, 261). As I had stated above, unsatisfied basic needs generate violence and injustice. The marginalization of what is vital and the deprivation of fundamental rights constitute violence. Therefore, peace and justice are the pillars on which a citizenship bound by solidarity can be built, especially in cases of cultural difference.

The Ethical Imagination in the Face of Conflicts

As previously mentioned, conflict theory shows that the conflictive nature of humankind cannot be changed; however, it is possible to transcend those conflicts. The obvious question is then: how can conflicts be transformed by peaceful means? If positive and suitable means are used, such as empathy, creativity, and non-violence, it will be possible to transform conflicts (Galtung, 2003). Consequently, conflicts are constructive and have a positive aspect. Given this nature of conflicts, I propose the use of the ethical imagination as an element that makes it feasible to postulate possible realities. This proposal can be found in some philosophers (i.e. Kant, 2009; Nussbaum, 1997, 2005; Lederach, 1995, 2005), as well as in political and anthropological studies that argue for the use of the imagination in order to go beyond the nation and build post-national, socially and culturally open communities (Appadurai, 1988).

Now then, if human beings have the capacity for peace, it is necessary to inquire into how it can be realized; this is the central issue that must be studied and is the basis for the studies and theoretical reflections that shed light on the possibility of peace, as Galtung states in his book *Transcend and Transform. An Introduction to Conflict Work* (Galtung, 2010). This approach makes it easy to move beyond violence and conflict, and it promotes the visualization of possibilities for peace as realistic and not as the expression of illusory optimism. Looking for peace, we must ask how it is possible to transform the historical *dictum* that has been repeated incessantly: if you want peace, then prepare for war (*si vis pacem para bellum*). We should subscribe to this as an alternative: if you want peace, then prepare for peace.

Defending peace as something possible does not cancel conflicts; rather, it transcends them, since the incompatibilities between persons and societal goals or interests can be resolved. If conflicts are not resolved positively and creatively, they turn into violence because “deep down in each conflict there is a contradiction, something that gets in the way of something else, in other words, a problem” (Galtung, 2003, p. 107). There are many who believe there are aggressive and violent cultures—ideas inherited from Hobbesian thought (Hobbes, 2010). In view of that position, I should first distinguish between aggressiveness and violence. Muchembled (2010) holds that there is a difference between aggressiveness and violence, since the former is innate to some beings, including human beings, while violence is not. In this sense, if I affirm that aggressiveness is inevitable, it does not follow that violence is also inevitable (Etxeberria, 2013). Conflict, however, is inherent to life, and with adequate guidance it can contribute to personal and social development.

Peace through peaceful means must be approached with a reasonable, inclusive, and open rationality that respects human beings and their basic needs; considers others and recognizes them; and strives for a better society. Given this approach, philosophy distinguishes between the rational and the reasonable (Nussbaum, 1997; 2005). The rational refers to what is quantifiable and verifiable, to calculation, and it has to do with individualizing and maximizing postures. On the other hand, the reasonable belongs to a more humanizing space, which implies the consideration of epistemological resources such as the imagination, fantasy, and ingenuity, which involve cooperation and a more communitarian approach.

The limitations of the rational self-sufficiency model, with its anti-emotional characteristics, have prevailed since Plato, and this way of conceiving reality was strengthened by modern thought that followed the guidelines of mathematical thinking and Cartesian theory. Representatives of that way of thinking have defended their position radically and absolutely, consequently neglecting other human faculties such as feelings and emotions. The traditional dichotomies of thought that have enthroned reason believe the emotional sphere to be less reliable and even questionable. Therefore, they distrust the reasonable resources of the imagination, fantasy, and inventiveness, because they consider them deceptive faculties—hence the little attention that has been paid to the cultivation of those resources in the history of thought. Despite this resistance, Villoro holds that the *reasonable* is a vital reason (Villoro, 2006).

Human beings are the starting point, the reason and goal of any effort. Peace makes possible the deployment and development of life that takes place amidst recurrent challenging situations (Galtung, 2003, p.266). Therefore, I can say, that it is precisely on the challenge of transcending the violence associated with cultural differences, that the transformation of the self must be carried out in order to achieve peace.

As can be inferred, postulating peace instead of violence in the midst of war and in a belligerent society, such as that of Mexico, poses difficult but not impossible challenges. Survival and its concerns are complicated, which support an ethical requirement to seek a better pathway—that is, the only humanly sustainable path—peace. Transforming and transcending violent expressions is the way to promote peace and its sustainability. It is an axiomatic principle that without peace there is no sustainable development, while, at the same time, development is the condition of possibility for the construction and maintenance of peace. Given the dynamic condition of this process, that includes all social and cultural constructs, it takes time to build peace. For peace is a process that implies grounding it in firm foundations, achieved by satisfying

society's basic needs through a combination of strategies. This process provides the basis for thinking of a peaceful society aimed at satisfying those needs in order to live more humanely, exercise freedom, and build identity. This is the only way to achieve a just society. The satisfaction of said needs is a requirement for sustainability. Confronting those who defend violence as an inevitable way of life implies making them understand that human beings are not predetermined to act in a certain way, since they have the option to carry out violent or non-violent actions.

This paper has illustrated how intercultural relations depend upon the way in which conflicts are dealt, and on the extent to which these conflicts can be resolved. Achieving reconciliation among cultural groups has the potential to achieve peace. The obstacles are enormous because the forces of domination involved in the process are intended to strengthen their power instead of building agreements. It is in the context of such forces that conflicts must be settled in order to transcend them. Exploitation and domination generate violence and destroy the paths toward a culture of peace because they eliminate the possibilities of achieving justice among cultures that exist in a horizontal relationship. Everyone loses with violence, as it involves trying to outline the possibilities of transcending violence in order to build a healthy, positive, and more human interculturality. Humanity has within itself the resources to transform violence and war into non-violent, peaceful situations. Such resources have to do with reflective dialogue, the presence of those values referred above, and the vindication of the fundamental needs and rights of all.

Hence, my paper formulates the possibility of peace as something viable, since I understand the inevitable transformation of reality; the resolution and transcendence of conflicts; and violence in situations of peace and harmony. Such transcendence is possible by making use of the ethical imagination: a creative resource that makes what is absent and desired, present, and that generates possibilities thought to be nonexistent, as argued by the thinkers who have defended and continue to defend imagination as a resource (García, 2014).

The ethical imagination introduces a constructive view of social change in scenarios in which conflicts are deeply rooted, thereby facilitating transformation. To consider the imagination as an element of change implies reeducation in this sense, because realistically speaking, it is known that the starting point is belligerence. The ethical imagination buttresses attempts to deal with, and overcome, the tendency toward violent confrontation—making way for a repositioning of people and cultures toward achieving peace as the final goal. A new scenario can become a reality.

The resolution of incompatibilities, when focused on transcending conflicts, can be achieved through ethical imagination (a fundamental aspect of building peace) which proposes a

new social structure in order to solve structural conflicts (Galtung, 2003, p. 161). It is Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, which struggles against injustice through *Ahimsa*, aimed at union. Gandhi develops the notions of *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* based on Hindi, Jainist, and Buddhist proposals. The first of these notions has been translated as non-violence—the absence of violence—and attempts have been made to give it a positive sense. *Himsa* is the desire to kill or do harm; *A-himsa* means to refuse to kill or do harm, or even desire to do so (Gandhi, 2004, p. 193, 265). Not harming others is an act of compassion. Gandhi focuses on highlighting positive aspects, such as love, doing good even to those who harm, and he does so actively, with strong social commitment and action strategies ranging from negotiation to civil disobedience. For its part, *Satya* derives from the Sanskrit root meaning truth and what things are; *Agraha* means understanding what things really are, or truth guided by love. Therefore, Gandhi conceives *Satyagraha* as the path leading to self-realization, toward the constitution of one's self and that of all things.

Gandhi thought that oppressed groups could obtain better results by not using violence. He considered interculturality as the basis for envisioning non-violent paths when faced with examples of societies and cultures torn by war. Non-violence has to be part of the common discourse supported by the values of solidarity, hospitality, and compassion, thereby destroying structurally violent underlying habits and customs. Culture shows its radicality more emphatically than reason itself (Choza, 2002, p. 41), and that is why the forms of structural and cultural violence have to be transformed by appealing to values that promote social change.

The Values that Make Interculturality Possible: Solidarity, Hospitality, and Compassion

By adopting the definition of peace as “the series of situations in which one opts for non-violence” (Jiménez, 2011, p. 117), and promoting dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance, and solidarity, one can facilitate the flourishing of values such as hospitality and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Compassion makes it possible to imagine oneself in the place of others. Nelson Mandela contended that reaching out to others is not cowardly (Carlin, 2009). Therefore, resorting to peaceful means in order to achieve peace is the clearest opportunity to build a non-violent society.

Solidarity, hospitality, and compassion are categories that presuppose plurality and difference, and hope to cancel the feelings of suspicion that are so common in groups marked by diversity. Said categories constitute an attempt to overcome mistrust, prejudice, hate, and internal or external violence in groups, communities, and cultures. To see what this looks like in practice, consider an example: harsher immigration laws have led to a culture of fear and suspicion, since

they deny interculturality, as well as any other possibility aimed at opening up new horizons for coexistence and harmony.

That is why intercultural possibilities aim at subsuming the necessary social transformations within the framework of a philosophy of peace, since they hope to normatively rebuild human competences and satisfy basic needs in order to construct peace (Martínez Guzmán, 200, p. 24). The idea is to mitigate human suffering by building a positive peace and achieving social justice. Intercultural relations reaffirm the value of each culture, without granting preeminence to the epistemological value of any single culture, as has been the case throughout history. For example, postcolonial critique has been directed to highlight the interests underlying the production of knowledge. (Foucault, 1980, p. 82).

A sense of responsibility for others is necessary in order to deal with the world in which one lives; it is important to be responsible in order to overcome conflicts through dialogue and discourse. Here, discourse must coincide to an ethic, in Apel's sense, (i.e., as principles or values that regulate or inspire human behavior) a regulative idea that requires the realization of social and political conditions, and the collective responsibility of human actions (Bada Panillo, 2000, p. 87).

Solidarity and Compassion: Connections and Encounters with Others

The ethical assumption of the bond of solidarity has to be protected in order to achieve peace. That peace shall be reached when social bonds are reestablished through the social reconciliation of subjects, and cultures are ethically recognized as such. It is evident that the breakdown of social bonds generates violence rather than connections (*communitas*); this occurs because greater value is given to utilitarian subjects with instrumental reasons such as profit and exploitation (*inimicitia*) (Esposito, 2006). This situation creates violence because utilitarian logic breaks down the balance of profits, hierarchies, and capitalist markets, as well as the possibility of correspondence of a certain social good, a position (*munus*), which generates cohesion. Here are evident binding moral elements such as restitution, openness to commitment, communication, and recognition—all categories that require giving back and being open to receiving. This fosters the logic of reciprocity, which, in turn, strengthens the bond of peace. Many protests by native groups in México and Latin America have occurred because a lack of respect mainly with their lands and rivers. For example, in México legislation on energy issues has resulted in mobilizations of cultural groups looking for non-polluted rivers and grounds. Such policies weaken social bonds and thus potential for peace, increasing violent relations.

Reciprocity is the common element (*munus*) that unites, and that is why “violence begins with the breakdown of the original solidarity in all human actions” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001, p. 110). It destroys trust in view of a power that tries to annul the others and turn them into subjected types of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1992; 1997), especially when they are not considered to be equal, and they have no opportunity to develop their capacities (Sen, 1992, p. 72). Violence, thus, begins with the breakdown of solidarity in human actions; it destroys confidence, understanding, and the possibility of exercising capacities.

Today it is possible to speak about four models of solidarity, three of which have deviated from their authentic meaning through manipulation. Nowadays it is common to understand solidarity as a spectacle or a campaign, therefore distorting its true meaning; for example, many Latin American governments have patronage practices to ensure social support and legitimacy of their power. The same occurs when solidarity is understood as charity, simulating assistance in many cases, as I shall explain below. It is only when solidarity is understood as a coming together, as an encounter, that it becomes possible to grasp its most profound meaning (Aranguren, 1997, pp. 3-6). Briefly stated, when solidarity is understood and characterized as spectacle, and it is expressed through festivals, television programs, and concerts, it becomes an article for consumption that “masks the deep social, political, and economic problems by eliciting emotional reactions and generating a feeling of usefulness” (Aranguren, 1997, p. 3).

In pseudo-solidarity there is no coming to awareness and, therefore, no possibility of transforming injustice, since it takes place in an established sociopolitical horizon, in which the market and its laws drive this sort of solidarity. The second type of solidarity is solidarity as a campaign, which derives from the preceding sense. Natural or man-made disasters of all sorts are usually the responsibility of the international organizations. In this version of solidarity, no one wants to assume responsibility, and that is why the humanitarian aid component is added to solidarity campaigns. This aid, which does not solve the problem or its structural causes, only addresses what is urgent and does not resolve crises on its own (Žizek, 2008, p. 14).

From an ethical perspective, what exists is not a *painless altruism*, which would be the first version of solidarity, but rather a distant solidarity in which actions focus on the economic. This solidarity is expressed through convenience, and makes possible relief from feelings of guilt. As Rigoberta Menchú (Nobel Peace prize in 1992) said, solidarity cannot be just a word; it has to be action (Menchú, 1996). The famous Nobel Peace Prize winner refers to the fact that solidarity needs to center on the action-reflection-action triad; otherwise, solidarity will remain at the

superficial level of the problems, without going further to inquire into the causes of the tragedies and violence that are being alleviated, but that could well be prevented.

The third type of solidarity, solidarity as cooperation, has been emphasized ever since NGOs appeared and, with them, the idea of cooperation for development. This solidarity is immediate in nature and insists on projects and not on the socio-political reality. The ethical model of this form of solidarity can be an ethics of consensus; the problem is that the agreements reached do not include the truly interested parties. It is a rigid, vertical cooperation, carried out from the perspective of the predominant cultural patterns, ruled by the logic of the project, which does not strengthen the capacities of the protagonists of human development processes (Aranguren, 1997).

Finally, the fourth model is that of solidarity as encounter, which is related to the second category I would like to consider within the value framework of peace: compassion. In the face of suffering, it is necessary to build a type of solidarity based on compassionate assistance, on not being indifferent to pain. It also entails the capacity to think and live differently, which, in turn, involves the capacity to analyze, in a reflexive and critical manner, the inhumanity and injustice that prevail in reality, since those whose dignity has been violated live in that reality. The great danger here is to objectify persons and treat them as disposable (Bauman, 2005), excluding them from the human world. As opposed to solidarity as cooperation, solidarity as encounter positions projects as means for the growth and development of the needy, not as ends in themselves. From my point of view, it becomes a radical experience of coming together that reveals the source of the ethics of compassion.

Solidarity and compassion are moral values that fully develop people's life projects in order to achieve a livable world—a peaceful world that has achieved more human intercultural and communal bonds. Solidarity has to be understood as an ethical principle for action and for shaping one's own existence; it does not turn in on itself in an individualistic manner, but rather develops in the midst of the asymmetrical reality typical of humankind (Aranguren, 1997, p. 8). As such, it requires a personal willingness to favor the encounter with the other who is different. Therefore, cultivating this sensibility allows one to see the reality of those who suffer; hence, the experience of solidarity requires acknowledging the other as someone different from myself, without turning him or her into the object of self-interest. This leads us to delve in the place of others, to learn to see the world from the perspective of the others, thus validating the view of reality arising from that perspective. This solidarity is an encounter, and it is compassionate; it can be conceived as a social

debt whose grounds can be found in the anthropology of Martin Buber, a philosopher who held that the central fact of existence is human being with human being (Buber, 1986, p.146).

The person is encounter, relationship, and dialogue, and these dimensions come from the outside, from the encounter with the others. Giving and love reveal the neediness of human beings, making them greater, so that solidarity is a possibility of humanization. In this way, possibility and reality come together as central elements of an anthropology of solidarity, so that the possibility allows the transformation and construction of new realities on the basis of values that are embodied in action, in the process of construction of the self. This is why solidarity leads to social change precisely when dignity has been destroyed. In those moments solidarity attempts to restore dignity to those who have lost it, or from whom it has been taken away; it moves in a setting of asymmetrical relations that characterize human reality. Furthermore, solidarity brings together wills, affects, and projects for action. The elements that make possible actions of solidarity do so through dialogue and encounter. These critical actions give rise to a critical solidarity characterized by being responsible, in the sense suggested above, because it deals with the present and the future.

Based on all of the above, I support an ethical principle aimed at achieving justice through a process that can be defined as a compassionate ethics of solidarity. Compassion is to let oneself be affected by the real, concrete situations of others, which means living the pain “in oneself, due to the pain of others, but evidently not *suffering* the same pain as the other” (Arteta, 1996, p. 32). Actions of solidarity are based on the feeling of compassion by virtue of which persons are affected by the reality of others, and this fact leads people to react by means of personal and community actions. Compassionate solidarity is based on the belief in the other, and it becomes a duty aimed at the restitution and strengthening of the person based on recognition. In this sense, compassion is linked to recognition because acting according to solidarity means bringing people out of anonymity, visualizing them and appreciating them as persons who need recognition in order to be fully human. Compassionate solidarity is thus the search for universal social justice in defense of the right to peace (as set forth in UNESCO documents, the Millennium Program, and the Earth Charter).

Hospitality as an Openness to the Others

In order to close the triangle of fundamental values that I consider necessary for peace (the values of Solidarity, Hospitality, and Compassion), I shall now address hospitality. Closely related to solidarity, cooperation, and compassion, hospitality “responds to the fundamental ethical experiences that shape the lives” of individuals; the basic form of a general humanity manifests

itself in hospitality (Innerarity, 2001, p. 13) . The “category of hospitality can serve to articulate moral theory by virtue of its cultural universality and its wealth of meanings” (Innerarity, 2001, p. 13). In this sense, it is a relationship of giving and receiving, a dialectical relationship and a positioning of those who welcome and those who are welcomed, of those who are hosts and those who are guests. Such a hospitality is an openness to otherness, to the other, to other human beings whom one should not show indifference. As the Latin proverb says, *omo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto* (Publius, Heauton Timoroumeons, the Self-Tormentor) “I am human; I consider nothing that is human alien to me” (Unamuno, 1962).

The ethics of hospitality is pertinent, especially in cases where cultures are mutually interrelated, in relations marked by conflict, in a world in which on many occasions some cultures are hegemonic and attempt to dominate, and/or when other cultures defend themselves from those actions. This type of interculturality departs from truly human ends. This is why, as I have emphasized throughout this article, it is necessary to pursue an interculturality that protects relationships among cultures and promotes the transcendence of conflicts in order to achieve the desired state of peace.

Hospitality promotes peace in the face of violent actions, as it asks for assistance in a society that needs protection, and seeks the help and care of all who would be carriers of dignity. This means that people cannot receive hospitality if they are anonymous, since they lack a place of birth, a history, a legacy, or any type of reference. Identity and subjectivity are required (Derrida, 2000). It follows then that ethical hospitality exists in cultures that host others, without demanding compensation. Citizens should defend intercultural and interpersonal hospitality versus predominance of capital, because in a capitalist context, inequality is intensified which dislocates individuals from their ethical requirements. Those who do not fit within the “hospitality” of capital are devoured, since they are radically other—others who appear by disappearing, resisting integration (Penchaszadeh, 2011, p. 258-259). Therefore, it is necessary to follow Derrida's maxim according to which “hospitality always entails a *duty*”(Penchaszadeh, 2011, p. 261), thus ratifying the ethical order.

Cooperation, hospitality, harmony, and other attitudes of respect and collaboration with other human beings have survived in cultures throughout the years as spheres (or spores) of peace (Muñoz, 1993, p. 109). For this reason, it is appropriate to speak of recognition, since it has to do with responsibility toward, and for, the other (Ricoeur, 2005). The intercultural and interpersonal relationship of hospitality means welcoming and openness, and it may express itself in a politics of

hospitality, that is, by materializing ethics in the State. Therefore, its setting is interculturality, which makes it possible to see, understand, and recognize the culturally diverse other, in order to establish a peaceful relationship. An example of all of the above would be the social initiative to host tens of thousands of refugees from war-torn locations around the world, a popular action that, in some cases, grew strong enough to change well-established governmental domestic and bilateral/international policies concerning refugees. Unfortunately, the social initiative is threatened by the recent reactions against migrants, as in the case of the Syrian population seeking refuge in European countries.

Conclusion

Peace, from the perspective of its connection to interculturality, is a desirable expression. Peace is envisioned as transforming existing violence through the values of solidarity, compassion, and hospitality. These values constitute an ethical imperative, and they are necessary in the struggle against distinct forms of violence. Simultaneously, this struggle is related to justice, which requires the achievement of those values (Galtung, 1993, 2003). Attempts to achieve peace require these values and the experiences of the persons in each culture (Jiménez Bautista, 2011, p. 24). Ethical imagination is capable of achieving a change in inherited cultural paradigms that have accepted violence as inevitable. This change aims at transforming violent practices in order to build peace.

Transforming the different manifestations of violence requires the resolution of conflicts, breaking the cycle of violence, and promoting peaceful processes. My hypothesis is that it is possible to build peace by employing ethical imagination to achieve reconciliation. Preparing for peace means developing peaceful means (Galtung, 2003, p. 19) within a humanizing framework. An ethical imperative is the adoption of values in order to achieve intercultural peace. On this point again it is worth recalling the example of the recognition of the multiethnic and multicultural nature of the countries in Latin America and their initiative for intercultural bilingual education. The achievement of this peace will guarantee better living conditions for humanity, reinforcing a culture of peace as this example suggests. Thus the fundamental insight of this reflection: positive peace is indeed achievable via interculturality and engaging humanity's ethical imagination.

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