

IMPERFECT PEACE

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I believe that *peace* can be considered as a primary reality throughout all human, psychological, sociological, anthropological, political and historical periods. It is a condition that has been an integral part of humanity since time immemorial. *Peace* enables us to identify ourselves as humans; *peace* can be regarded as a human invention; our own *peace* is then mimetically projected towards all other animals, Mother Nature and the cosmos. Contrary to what we may think on many occasions, *peace* is what makes us fear, define, identify and flee from violence.

The concept of *imperfect peace*, as we explain in the prologue of our book, has gradually become forged, it is an answer to practical, epistemological and ontological debates. It is certainly true that we could go on speaking only of *Peace*, as what we are doing here is just to place certain conditions on it. By using the adjective *imperfect*, I am able to reveal the meanings of Peace in some way. Although it is an adjective of negation - which, by the way, I greatly dislike applying to the concept of Peace, which I strive to free from that particular orientation - it can also be understood etymologically as "unfinished", "procedural", and this should be taken as its core meaning.

In effective terms, when faced with that which is perfect, complete, the aim fulfilled, all far removed from our human condition, we embrace all the circumstances that "humanise" us, that allow us to identify ourselves with our own conditions of existence and that open up real possibilities - based on the realities that we experience - of thought and action as incomplete processes, immersed in the uncertainty of the complexity of the cosmos. Through the work presented herein, we shall address the recognition of *peace*, the causes behind conflict, put forward a proposal for *imperfect peace* and explicate its consequences, deal with *power* from the perspective of *conflict* and, lastly, attempt to relate the entire issue within the frameworks of *globalisation*, *complexity* and the *future*.

There are three transversal, underlying issues to be addressed that I regard as essential in such debates. Our desire for Peace leads us to produce theories on peace, yet their epistemological base lies in *theories on conflicts*, making it necessary to redesign (recognise, criticise, deconstruct and construct) *autonomous theories on peace* (not directly dependent on violence) and, ultimately, address the issue of *power* as an individual, social and public capacity to transform reality into more peaceful conditions.

1. RECOGNITION OF PEACE

One of our greatest advantages is that *peace* can be felt, perceived and contemplated from many different points, spaces and ambits. Indeed, from religious people to political activists, as well as all manner of altruists and philanthropists, NGO volunteers, peace researchers, political leaders, groups and people, cultures etc., nearly all have a concept of peace based on different experiences and acquired in different ways. In other words, we

have an enormous potential for building peace.¹ However, it is not always possible to take advantage of this huge potential for the noble cause of peace. Firstly, because the initial assumptions are dissimilar and, secondly, because there is no "commonly recognised theoretical field" where such issues can be discussed. One of the greatest obstacles - in my view, the greatest obstacle- that we all come up against as agents involved, in one way or another, in the building of Peace is the system of organising and articulating the information at our disposal on the subject. A large part of this difficulty, at least within western Judaic-Christian (-Islamic) thinking, lies in a negative perspective of our species.

It is as if, in spite of the secularisation of thought, the "original sin" were still present in our reflections, upholding a negative ontological model, leading us take an exaggerated view of our violent elements ² and, even worse, ends up deforming our own research strategies. We presuppose that in order to comprehend and advance along the road to peace we must study violence in all its facets and complexities, thus leading to an assumption, through an epistemic, almost circensian pirouette, of an "automatic" capacity to embrace peace.

However, it has been left to pacifistic volunteers to rebuild peace -without all the necessary intellectual tools- and to be capable of applying it to their different areas of activity. Naivety turns into a certain primitivist messianism, in which all that is needed is to relay a simple, morally charged message in order for it to connect and mobilise our conscience. *Peace Research* that is intended to organise pacifistic thinking through "scientific" assumptions has also been somewhat conditioned by this tendency. A great effort has been made since the 1950's, all of which has afforded the human community in general and the scientific community in particular, an extensive legacy - in whose course and discourse we wish to place ourselves. Yet it has failed to rid itself of the previous "paradigm of the original sin". After years and years of research into the causes behind this war and that war; counting and recounting nuclear warheads and missiles; ethnic conflicts; conflicts between religions; hunger; poverty; economic exploitation; marginalisation; one form of violence and another; it can be said that we have a greater comprehension of violence than of peace. Therefore, our original preoccupation for violence -arising from a clear recognition of what peace means- has been perversely inverted, thus making it necessary for it now to be "re-inverted".

This "violent-logical" perspective is not exempt from a certain cognitive discord, sometimes bordering on schizophrenia, given that peace is more desired, sought after and valued, yet contemplated in terms of violence, which eventually - after a corrupt process - leads to the view whereby it is somehow clearer than peace itself. Therefore, many of the

1. Cf. GALTUNG, Johan (1985) *Sobre la paz*, Barcelona; RAPOPORT, Anatol (1992) *Peace. An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, Ann Arbor; PANIKKAR, Raimon (1993) *Paz y desarme cultural*, Santander; ELIAS, Robert - TURPIN, Jennifer (eds.) (1994) *Rethinking Peace*, Boulder; FISAS, Viçenc (1998) *Cultura de paz y gestión de conflictos*, Barcelona, 18-24; MARTÍNEZ GUZMÁN, Vicent (2001) *Filosofía para hacer las paces*, Barcelona; LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, Mario (2005) (coord.) *Enciclopedia de Paz y Conflictos*, Granada, 2 vols.

2. Cf. DAWSON, Dooyne (1996) "The origins of War: Biological and Anthropological Theories", *History and Theory; studies in the Philosophy of History* 35 (1), 1-28. The myth regarding the original sin could be viewed as a consequence of the somatic-mental-cultural "confliction". However, the restricted and negative view of this dilemma has a pernicious ontological importance. Cf. "Delimitar los modelos antropológicos y ontológicos", in *Investigation...*, pp. 51-78.

"prejudices" with which peace is perceived depend not only on the initial ethical and axiological assumptions, but also on the methodologies employed to approach the subject, as well as the epistemological and ontological postulates that sustain them.

I do feel, however, that the phenomenology of peace is potentially more transparent and evident than ever before and that its practical, semantic, conceptual and imaginary reality is incredibly profound.³ This would eventually allow us to invert the earliest sense of the expression: *si vis pacem para pacem*. Below, we shall be addressing such presuppositions, for which we shall make use of the knowledge that Peace Research has accumulated as well as a critical approach to some its proposals, contributions from Human and Social Sciences, and suggestions from scientists and thinkers from different fields.⁴

We shall begin by *recognising peace as a constitutive element of social realities*. Its origins can be associated to the very origins of humanity, and its evolution can be associated to humanity's history. Indeed, socialisation, learning, collectivisation, the act of sharing, association, cooperation, altruism, etc. are all factors that form part of the origin of our species. Such qualities are determinants in the rise and "success" of hominidae and, subsequently, of present day humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*).

Along similar lines, proposals put forward by psychology, discursive philosophy and other sciences and disciplines allow us to consider that the experiential, cultural and scientific "assumption" as regards peace has certain historic and cultural minimums, which we shall later be reasoning out and upon which we shall be able to establish the discourse on *imperfect peace*.

1.1. History of peace⁵

With almost total certainty, the concept of peace did not exist during the earliest years, centuries and millennia of Humanity's history. Throughout the language development process, the earliest concepts must have been those essential for daily life, for survival. The concept of peace implies the pre-existence of a social and symbolic complexity that had yet not been reached. As we have stated on previous occasions, Mankind probably only *lived in peace*. So, in simple terms, we can say that the concept of peace was unnecessary as it was not yet even close to becoming a preoccupation.

As societies in different areas and moments of history reached a certain level of differentiation and "complexity", this must have been accompanied by the emergence of explicative categories for such phenomena. Thus *peace* - as a concept - gradually emerged, gave coherence to social practises and has been with us ever since.

Subsequently, following the Second World War, *Peace* became the object of scientific study. Many approaches have been applied to its study, along with contributions from other disciplines that have enriched the overall perspective on human behaviour.

3. Despite the difficulties that may arise from recognising such statements: Cf. GREGOR, Thomas (1996) "Introduction", GREGOR, Thomas (ed.) *A natural history of peace*, ix-xxiii. Nashville and London.

4. In a similar sense, as well as the content, I also like the title of one of Johan Galtung's more recent books, *Peace by Peaceful Means* (1996, London). See especially pages 265-275.

5. See: MUÑOZ, Francisco A. LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, Mario (eds.) (2000) *Historia de la Paz*, Granada.

As far as we can deduce from written sources, it appears that the emergence of the concept of *peace* was closely tied to that of war, as both concepts appeared at almost the same time. During the early stages of human societies, it is possible that neither the concept of peace nor that of war existed, mainly because the social reality which such concepts would define were not present: war, because it had not yet appeared on the scene, and peace, because it was not necessary as a concept. Conceptually speaking, when War does not exist, neither does Peace, so the concept of Peace complies with the need to put a stop to War when it appears in practise and, probably, as a concept. The horrors of war needed to be explained and also related to a horizon of hope where war would not exist.

Thus Peace, as with many other historical and social circumstances, becomes reflected in language whenever they are motives for social concern. During the historic moments to which we refer, we have no evidence of conceptualisation because there was either no concern or awareness of the problem, or insufficient time had passed for it to have become an issue. Likewise, until recently, we had never used the concept of "ecological safety" (mainly because it did not exist or because we were simply unaware of the risk of a biospheric catastrophe). Moreover, according to many authors, a very high percentage, well over ninety per cent - the percentage does not have a mathematical exactness, but is still useful to gain a certain insight into the magnitude of the reality - of all communities throughout human history have never had to face this issue.

Continuing with our previous reasoning, during a second phase connected in most cases to the appearance of the nation-state, whenever wars spread due to multiple causes the need and the yearning for peace starts to become evident. Such circumstances undoubtedly led to the emergence of *Peace* as a concept, as a conceptual and analytical field in which it was possible to recognise peaceful relationships and regulations between groups and individuals. Nevertheless, this conceptualisation was still of a weak, theoretical articulation and, in most cases, dependant on the conceptualisation of war. During this phase, what we could call *ideologies of peace* were created. Under such circumstances, *peace* established links with religions and expanded both towards and with them, their rites and their ceremonies, even becoming deified, a sacred refuge or haven.⁶

This concept of peace was not just a theoretical, intellectual construction - quite the opposite. It was the expression of a value, an ethical assumption that was necessary in order to guide societies, which is precisely why it has been present in moral, religious and philosophical discourses. Hence the strong normative character of *Peace Research* that, while aspiring to be objective scientific knowledge, takes on this ambivalence with all its advantages - considered greater - and disadvantages.

1.2. Negative peace

The final phase in the generation of ideas and conceptualisations of *peace* coincided with the most virulent wars to have scourged Humanity - the First and Second World Wars and the potential nuclear holocaust - when work began on a far more in-depth, coherent and

6. Cf. MUÑOZ, Francisco A, and MOLINA RUEDA, Beatriz (eds.) (1998) *Cosmovisiones de paz en el Mediterraneo antiguo y medieval*, Granada.

complex theory on peace. To a large extent, it depended upon advances in social sciences during the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the heavy emotional impact of the World Wars, so that the full depth of the epistemological problem of peace could be addressed in a theoretical and articulated manner. It was precisely during this phase that *Peace Research* was born, incorporating such perspectives and interests into scientific and research circles and forums (Universities, Institutes, Centres and the scientific community in general).

Just as *peace* has been and will continue to be one of the most creative ways to construct history, *Peace Research* has had the virtue of widening the epistemological horizons of the sciences, as well as endowing them with new and interdisciplinary tools to enable a major advance in the treatment and solutions to mankind's experiential, real and, hence, intellectual problems.

Likewise, *Peace Research* has not been unaffected by the interests of historiographic debates surrounding the "engines" - circumstances that initially dynamise or mobilise - of History. It has contributed towards the generation of new analysis perspectives and the addition of scorned or neglected variables to the reconstruction of History, such as pacifism, the peace culture or non-violence.

During the early stages, following the Paris peace treaty and successive agreements that marked the end of the two World Wars, *Peace Research* gave rise to the need to find a moral and scientific equivalent to war and thus put an end to it. Hence, the pedagogy of peace was born, studying violent and aggressive behaviour in humans and promoting different forms of socialisation and education to enable people to become more responsible and creative, as well as having more freedom. Pedagogical movements in the between-wars world employed a more democratic approach to education and training, which, along with the various non-violent movements, enabled *Peace Research* to take its first steps forward. Nevertheless, research was always more subject to explaining the concepts of violence and war in a relatively concise manner. So much so that, from the very start, Peace Research consented to develop polemology to a far greater extent than irenology, mainly because the actual phenomenon of war and all things associated with it needed to be explained rationally, logically and scientifically in order, also based on these premises, to not only diagnose but avoid its phenomenology: in order to be abolished, it needed to be understood and studied. The concept of *peace* was thus developed as an absence of war or as a non-war situation. It was *negative* peace. During the 1950's, polemology spread significantly, powered by both the conventional and the nuclear arms race and under the patronage of international relations influenced by the neo-imperialism of the cold war. Its evolution spanned the study of the different kinds of arms through to additional implications explained by other human behaviour sciences, such as psychoanalysis, social psychology or anthropology.

1.3. Positive peace

However, as from the late 60's, Peace Research gradually unfolded as a field of study with its own identity. The key concepts became *positive peace* and *structural violence*. The first referred to a clear overcoming of the limits of peace considered as being the absence of war or of manifestations of direct violence, as regards harm to people's physical and

external integrity. Thus, *positive peace* was the result of a conscious building of a peace based on justice, a generator of positive and lasting values, capable of integrating both politically and socially, of generating expectations and of contemplating the fulfilment of human needs. This desire to fulfill and satisfy would confer Peace Research with the chance to work within the huge field of Human Sciences, inquiring into the best proposals for avoiding conflicts or regulating them in a more suitable manner.

As regards the second concept, *structural violence*, which could be considered as a type of violence that is present within social injustice, as well as other circumstances that support it, it has allowed the hidden, static forms of violence to be revealed, the violence of the systems (misery, dependence, hunger, inequalities of gender, etc) and of the possible interactions between them. As well as incorporating the values of Peace and Justice, it allowed Peace Research to make considerable advances in the study of fields that were thought to be either completely exhausted or disseminated through all the social sciences such as development and under-development, democracy, forms of participation and exclusion, etc.⁷

Though probably not its original intent, *positive peace* has often been regarded as a utopia, desiring and seeking better worlds, just as Christianity or Marxism, to cite some examples of ideologies or theories with which Peace Research has shared intellectual areas. Thus, *positive peace* could be identified as an intended "total" or "perfect" peace where there would be no violence or probably even manifested conflicts. Furthermore, this utopian horizon could, on the one hand, be somewhat unrealistic and frustrating and, on the other, a source of justified violence for reaching the highly desired, yet incredibly difficult, objective.⁸

Following little more than fifty years of development, Peace Research has facilitated a substantial step forward not only in this cross-disciplinary field, but also in all other Social and Human Sciences. Indeed, the concepts of *positive peace*, *structural violence*, *negative peace*, or an open conception of *conflict*, have promoted the renewal of studies in such fields as politology, sociology or international relations, causing them to focus on the values and epistemes relating to *peace* and human wellbeing; it has contributed to the decline of ideologies concerning scientific neutrality and created an awareness regarding the possible repressive uses and manipulations of its research; and certainly, among many other aspects, it has encouraged interdisciplinary cooperation among researchers from social and human sciences as well as other natural sciences.

1.4. Phenomenologies of Peace⁹

7. The concept of *structural violence* was developed in the 1960's due to the need to explain the interactions of violent practises in different social ambits. For instance, Martin Luther King hints at this in some of his writings. However, Johan GALTUNG made some of the greatest contributions towards its difussion. Cf. (1985) pp. 27-72.

8. Concerning criticisms of utopias cf. POPPER, Karl Raimund (1963) "Utopia and violence", *Conjectures and refutations: The growth of scientific knowledge*, Buenos Aires, pp. 425-435. Such approaches should not mean abandoning the future, but rather appropriating it through more suitable methods, such as Forecasting or Future Studies.

One of the first steps towards rescuing the realities, or "phenomena", of peace could well be to recognise all those actions in which peace is present, all the predispositions - individual, subjective, social and structural - that are related to peace in our speech, thoughts, feelings and actions. One way of seeking the "idea" of peace could be to approach it through the meanings that it acquires at different individual, social and cultural moments and spaces. To a certain extent, we have already begun this task in the previous epigraphs.

The appearance of similar meanings in diverse cultures, the more than likely universality of the concept of *peace*, may be the first indication of certain minimum common factors on the subject. It is now a question of finding out which processes enabled them to become established. In this sense, *peace* can be regarded as a symbol of interpretation and action involving networks of emotions along with both subjective and intersubjective cognitions. Its roots can be traced to causes of a phylogenetic, psychogenetic, sociogenetic and ontogenic nature that have been forged throughout our history as social animals for whom learning and socialisation have played a vital role for as long as we have existed as a species. Therefore, within our cognitive-emotional system, we can recognise "peace" associated with tendencies towards pleasure and kindness, from which imaginary concepts were, and continue to be, developed that functioned, and continue to function, as vital and epistemic guidelines for our behaviour. Such dispositions would lead us to search for good and avoid evil, pleasure instead of pain, common as opposed to individual interests: all being aspects that - despite the fact that in a different context they would require an in-depth debate as to their very significance - we can use herein to understand the construction of an "original discourse" on *peace*.¹⁰

Consequently, based on these emotive-cognitive networks, one could construct an epistemology that took into account the psychic and existential realities, as well as the imaginary horizon that Man creates to uphold them.¹¹ We could say that, from this perspective, we recognise how humans live in interconnected worlds where *peace* is introduced and becomes a reality: both real worlds (emotions, mental representations that are projected and mediated by the intersubjective) and virtual worlds (virtual and imaginary motivations, aspirations and representations).

Therefore, as well as emotive-cognitive and evaluative consciousness, *peace* and "peacefulness" are also intentional objects (with mental content) and thus appear cognitively within our consciousness in the form of beliefs, thoughts, intentions and opinions. The end result is that deep within human consciousness, within its collective consciousness, as we have already pointed out above, resides the idea that *peace* is necessary, that we cannot live without it, that without peace we would never have survived or evolved, and that it is something that must be safeguarded. Thus, in order to classify this phenomenological, axiological and epistemological versatility of peace, there exist multiple

9. In this section, which is to a certain extent essential for taking an open approach, I have made use of the excellent notes of my colleague José Manuel Martín Morillas, cf. (2004) *Los sentidos de la violencia*, Granada.

10 Cf. "Humans in the face of complexity" in *Investigation...*, pp. 33-41.

11 This idea allows us to visualise the complex "network" of circumstances that make up our being - social or individual - and the interrelationships that sustain it. Edgar Morin employs the word *complexus* to not only express this idea, but also to directly relate it to complexity. Cf. (1995) *Introducción al pensamiento complejo*, Barcelona, 32 ss.

search scenarios that show us its polysemy and which, to a certain degree, are indicative of its widespread existence.¹²

When asking ourselves exactly what *peace* is, we mobilise resources from various human phenomena and anthropogenic actions. We are aware that *peace* exists, that it is a real phenomenon that permeates life and that we are capable of creating it, performing it and enjoying it; we are likewise aware that we have a word, *peace*, which describes such a reality. We are aware of an entity that demands our attention and upon which we aim our intentional sights. It also assumes the role of symbolic mediation of the intentional object, i.e. the presentation of said intentional object to the consciousness by way of symbols and concepts. Finally, it also transforms into a self-awareness of the very same reflexive act of questioning.

We are likewise aware that, epistemically associated to those words, we have a series of emotions, ideas, stereotypes and concepts that are to a greater or lesser degree specific or abstract, subjective or intersubjective, personal or cultural, and which allow us to think about peace (remember it, recognise it, devise it, imagine it or abstract it), talk about it (define it, describe it, narrate it, express it or communicate it), and feel it (get excited about it, evoke it or react to it). We are equally aware that behind our questioning lies the motivation to understand its origin, its rationale, its consequences, the ways in which it presents itself and conceals itself, its problematicity (including its (in)solubility).

Events reach the human consciousness through a symbolic or conceptual mediation. Words and concepts do not operate within a vacuum of our consciousness. We interpret events by way of assumptions, schemas or symbols. In a certain sense, there are no events as such, just symbolically measured interpretations. This does not mean that they are all merely opinions, that there is no chance of criteria for truth or that everything is relative, but rather that even all objective and reliable truth is the result of a judgement associated with an interpretative act, an epistemic act whereby the verifiability and the evidence are based on intersubjective schemas sometimes governed by previous ideas, notional pre-judgements, values, knowledge, emotions or interests.

Consequently, *peace* partakes in that which is real, yet it overlaps that which is real; it partakes in the subject, yet it determines the subject and it is the subject who applies and enjoys it. It is reflected in language and is constituted by language. It is a cultural institution and cultures both establish and disestablish it. And, consequently, it can and should be viewed from a "praxis" that takes on practical dimensions re-formed from emotional, cognitive and theoretic internalisation.

Thus, far from discovering precisely which are the realities of *peace*, we have both broadened and opened up its existence, which in itself is important as it enables us to understand that its reality is more profound than we could initially have believed. On the other hand, it leaves a wide field of research ahead of us. Hence the importance of performing a phenomenological analysis of *peace* that inquires into its symbolic interactions and mediations. This all implies the need for a multi-, inter- and cross-disciplinary approach, i.e. a look at the ways of valuing-talking-feeling-thinking about

12: The concept of habitus created by Pierre BOURDIEU, as a series of dispositions that are related to practises, might well be relevant for these issues. Cf (2000) *Poder derecho y clases sociales*, Bilbao. Cf. *Investigation...*, pp. 140-152.

peace from the different disciplines (language, semiotics, developmental psychology, epistemology, emotional psychology, biology, clinical and therapeutic psychology, psychoanalysis, ethology, anthropology, sociology, social psychology, history or politics) from which we approach our knowledge. An intersubjective, conversed and cooperative approach to what we call the *cross-discipline field of peace*.¹³

2. ORIGINS OF CONFLICTION

Modern-day science offers visions of the cosmos in which disorder and uncertainty are present, rather than a simple order, as we had previously tended to interpret it. Guided by a growing complexity, the interactions between the different elements and agents are not exempt from a certain "confliction" that seems to be expressed through increasingly commonplace terms: controversy, dispute, collision, combat, antagonism, rivalry, struggle, opposition, fight, debate, friction, fluctuations, chance, randomness, likelihood... Such concepts are necessary in order to describe through human knowledge the cosmic, natural, physical, chemical, biological and social realities.

This means that in order to define such realities we have to resort to these concepts or, more directly, that such conceptions are constitutive of reality - of the explanation that we humans give to it. It thus appears as if "conflict", taken in a broader sense, as proposals, tendencies or "interests" that show themselves in the ongoing relationships of the constitutive elements of physical, chemical, biological or social systems, were forever present. In other words, "conflict" forms part of the universe, all the realities of which it is comprised and the relationships that become established between them.

2.1. A universe in conflict

We could consider the Earth as being continually subjected to the tensions of those elements of which it is comprised. If this is already evident from the point of view of the physics of the universe, it becomes even more apparent when we introduce the variables of living beings: in reference to such beings, it may even be more appropriate to employ the term "conflict" as there may be different interests among them as regards the development of their potentialities. We would almost dare to say that "conflict" is a characteristic of living beings who, in their attempt to perpetuate as individuals - in the face of death - and as a species - in the face of extinction - seek to benefit from the resources and energy available in their environs.

Fortunately, we are perfectly aware that energy is neither created nor destroyed, but rather it becomes transformed and degraded, which is precisely what entropy deals with; namely, measuring the disorder within a system. All living beings are subject to this increase in the degradation of energy and of the resources that we need for our subsistence. We humans are in no way an exception to this rule and as with all living creatures we

13. Cf. "Una matriz comprensiva e integradora del campo transdisciplinar de la Paz y los Derechos Humanos", *Investigations...*, pp. 124-129.

manage to survive by creating even more disorder in the medium in which we live. However, such a propensity is limited by the logical tendency to accommodate internal order to the conditions imposed by the reality of our environs.¹⁴

To put it another way, whereas the universe as a whole tends to be more disordered, entities tend to be more degraded - which orientates the unfolding of "cosmic time" - and we living beings represent a resistance to such a postulate. Thus, *we living beings are in "conflict" with the universe* and such tension has repercussions on the relationship that we establish with all things physical, with the resources of nature, on our biological behaviour patterns, on our interactions with other living beings, on the obtaining of resources,...and, of course, on culture. Theories on evolution, in those that include the "randomness" of changes and the "need" to maintain life in the face of the second law of thermodynamics (as opposed to vitalism and animism) justly place us within the survival of the species, and particularly the human species, within the context of cosmic confliction.¹⁵

2. 1. A conflictive species¹⁶

The human race is a participant in the aforementioned confliction of the universe and shares the same physical and constitutive parameters, united by a greater level of complexity determined by the emergence of culture that strives to overcome and coexist with its material and biological conditions of life. We shall therefore consider *conflict* - now in italics - to mean "contrast of interests and/or perceptions", ever present in all human societies and activities. Furthermore, its presence can be projected onto all of human time and space; ever since "culture" made us human, it has helped us to progress in the "dominion" of nature. At the same time, inasmuch as it powers the search for solutions, it could be regarded as a source of creativity and continual renewal. The notion of *conflict* opens up major possibilities for analysis due to its relationship with the needs, desires, emotions, etc. that form part of the entire social network.

Indeed, Man's immense capacity to feel, express, think and act, the evolution and changes experienced at this level, based on Man's biological predeterminations and cultural adaptations greatly increase the chances of being faced with new situations that may be "desired" and /or "created" individually or collectively. Thus, the range of possibilities to the effect that there may be non-coinciding proposals is substantially widened, though we should also be aware that the substratum of common socialisation facilitates coordinated proposals, projects and solutions. Thus, such "conflictive" stages that societies face, become

¹⁴ The *profusion of small lifeforms* is one of the consequences of living beings adapting to the environment in which we humans are immersed. This adds a certain degree of tension to our survival in a world teeming with bacteria, insects, reptiles and other creatures that are, with very few exceptions, all smaller than us.

¹⁵ Cf. DENNETT. Daniel C. (2000) *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, Barcelona. As opposed to what may be deduced from Darwin's initial ideas, in the new theories on evolution solidarity and cooperation play a major role towards ensuring the survival of the species.

¹⁶ Based on this epigraph, we shall use *conflict*, in italics, when referring to this human characteristic, as opposed to "conflict", in inverted commas, as we have done up to now when referring to the universe and living beings. You can find a somewhat more developed version of the ideas presented herein by reading MUÑOZ. Francisco A. "*Qué son los conflictos*" (What are conflicts) in *Manual*, pp. 142-170.

ongoing and permanent. The variability and wealth of such situations mean that, above all else, *conflict* can be considered as a source of creativity.

Likewise, and as a consequence, conflict forms part of the process of social interaction in which the interests of individuals and groups interact, are regulated, transformed or resolved on occasions. We could even say that it is an essential part of the complex unfolding of socialisation that all human entities experience in their social evolution. Of course, this process, in whose framework multiple and complex collisions and coalitions must occur that can benefit future forms of mutual recognition (assimilate human variety and otherness), understand the perceptions of others (the inexistence of a single truth, a single vision of reality, etc.), mere coexistence (at least a negative tolerance), or even the emergence of new forms of collaboration, coexistence and inter-racial breeding and, on occasions, can produce destructive and obliterative results.

This has forced each society to formulate proposals for the transformation, management, regulation or prevention of conflicts, systems of rules: proposals that are learnt individually and socially, in the different cultures, institutions or forms of organisation, experientially and experimentally, consciously and subconsciously. Also, in their peaceful dimension (peace) they are a guarantee for the survival of individuals, groups and the species. In conclusion, we could say that *without conflict, there would be no history of Mankind*; conflict contributes towards establishing the dynamics of societies.

3. IMPERFECT PEACE¹⁷

We have been gradually incorporating content to the "imperfect" sense of our quest. We have been able to appreciate how *peace* does not reveal itself palpably, but stealthily - I would even presume to say jealously, like a fabulous treasure - captured within an infinite number of minor events that often, through erroneous criteria, are not even worthy of being shown. We have also been able to appreciate how all of these small - or large - peaces form an inexorable and indispensable part of our cultural and existential heritage.

All of the experiences and conceptions that we have previously reviewed when we wished to recognise *peace* - negative peaces, positive peaces, phenomenologies of peace - can now help us to take a new perspective, one which should include all the different experiences of *peace* from a perspective of conflict: everything that will lead us to consider the relationships between the different ambits and scales of peace and, subsequently, to consider readapting our methodological, epistemological and, perhaps, axiological and ontological assumptions. If we take our starting point as being to identify the abundant realities of *peace*, the first thing we need to do is to *investigate its relationships*, then - if that were possible - order them and then rank them in accordance with how some may condition

¹⁷ If we look at the etymology and latin origins of the word *perfect*, we see that it comes from *per* (intensive) *-facio* [facio]- (do/make/perform): do very well, finish, perfect,...Perfective verbs are employed in the same sense - finished actions. By adding the prefix *in* (not) we negate such definitions. We would therefore be dealing with an unfinished situation, one that has not been satisfactorily completed, imperfect. We could have chosen a different word, perhaps a more positive one, which would imbue *peace* with its sought after meaning but, in all honesty, we simply have not been able to find one.

the others, to ultimately consider them as a whole. This would allow us to analyse the realities and, if possible, both predict and design them within a prospective work.

Under the denomination *imperfect peace*, we could group together such experiences and states in which conflicts have been regulated peacefully; i.e. where human individuals and/or groups have opted to help fulfil the needs of others, without there having been any cause beyond their will that impeded this.¹⁸ Can *imperfect peace* be regarded as a process between *negative peace* and *positive peace*, between the absence of violence and the preeminence of justice? Or even interactions of small-scale, positive peaces? Yes, to a certain degree it can, but it is also somewhat more transcendental, as we shall see below.

3.1. Causal relationships and feedback

We wish to bring to light and study all the possible relationships and decisions that may exist in those actions whereby conflicts are resolved peacefully and one party has chosen to satisfy the needs of the other. Namely, when a person or group acts to satisfy the needs of others, to what extent does this action imitate or condition so that similar events occur. Within this conceptualisation, we would include the causal relationships between the different states, regardless of their quantity, quality, direction or intensity, such as *peace* (those situations in which the needs are satisfied); scales of peaceful regulations (individual/group: socialisation, charity, affection, tenderness, solidarity, cooperation or mutual help; regional/state: agreements, negotiation, exchanges; international/worldwide: pacts, agreements, treaties, international bodies, exchanges, NGOs); vertical relationships - among elements of different scales - and horizontal relationships - among elements of the same scale -.

From such a viewpoint, it would be more appropriate to speak of "imperfect peaces" as there are many areas where peaceful regulations of conflicts occur. This asseveration further emphasises the need to acknowledge the contributions from each human entity in this respect and particularly from each culture. Whether consciously or not, all the actors from human societies have knowledge of their interactions and interdependencies, as well as the success of peaceful solutions and, consequently, strive to make such outcomes occur as a way of ensuring the reproduction of their very conditions of existence. All things personal, social and human depend on the continuity of the parts.¹⁹

Chance could reveal itself in different lineal ways, when one peaceful action directly gives rise to another; retroactive, whereby one peaceful, ongoing action interacts having performed a circular course; or recursive, whereby the action is the producer of that which produces it. A peaceful society is a good example of this, as it encourages the relationship of its comprising individuals through the processes of socialisation (kindness, language,

¹⁸ We should also include, as has in fact been considered on many occasions within *Peace Research*, personal peace in the sense of the peaceful regulation of the internal conflicts that a person experiences. Cf. In the same original volume, the proposals of Alfonso Fernández Herrería based on transpersonal psychology.

¹⁹ Interactions, just as we are shown by many theories, such as the Systems Theory, are essential for understanding the make up and dynamics of social realities. Cf. "Causal relationships and feedback" and "A relational methodology", in *Investigation...*, pp. 82-6 and 110-6 respectively.

education, etc.), which can also have repercussions both on other groups and internationally, who in turn interact with each other to create a peaceful society.

A holographic vision of society, such as that proposed by Edgard Morin, according to which the lesser part -e.g. an individual- contains virtually the totality of the information regarding the object represented - e.g. society -, may be a way of explaining the chance interactions between the peaceful attitudes and practices developed in some particular areas and those upheld by the social system as a whole. The opposite is also true, as not only is the part - the individual - within the whole - society -, but the whole is within the part; i.e. the social proposals for the peaceful regulation of conflicts have their correlate in both groups and individuals.²⁰

In any case, as we shall see below, *imperfect peace* is more than just the sum of all these peaces: it is a practical and theoretical tool that enables us to recognise them, promote them and interrelate them.

3.2. Some examples

In every language, we can find an endless number of words that could help us to recompose social practices through their semantic and conceptual fields. We can use the synonyms of *peace* as an indication of its social presence: concord, tranquillity, harmony, wellbeing, calm, serenity, quietude, sedateness, etc., which in themselves show us the depth of the matter. However, we should also consider other, complementary words, without attempting to produce an exhaustive list,²¹ which help to define *peaceful regulations*, such as: negotiation, mediation, arbitration, hospitality, compassion, charity, conciliation, reconciliation, forgiveness, helpfulness, mercy, aid, friendship, love, tenderness, altruism, philanthropy, solidarity, cooperation, alliance, pact, agreement, impartiality, devotion, diplomacy, dialogue, etc. We should bear in mind that what all of this defines is a very broad experiential and experimental field regarding human relationships that we must consider both as accumulated knowledge and as patrimony for the recognition, reconstruction, growth and development of *peace*. In addition, I employ the terms growth and development to further emphasise the need to work with the positive aspects that we possess.

Examples of such actions can be found in moments classified as peaceful, where it is easy to foretell the presence of peace, as the whole period in question has been catalogued as such. Such actions, however, can also be found in those moments classified as "violent", between wars and aggressions. One only needs to have experienced or had direct contact with any of these situations to understand how the generic appellative does not represent the entire reality.

I am thinking of Colombia where, despite the deep conflict between guerrilla forces and the state, as well as paramilitary forces, mafias, street violence, corruption and poverty, all of which paints a decided bleak picture, there are many *peace* initiatives in place. In fact,

20 Cf. (1982) *Ciencia con conciencia*, Barcelona; - (1995); and "Causal relationships and feedback" and "Conscience", in *Investigation....*, pp. 86-91.

21. Cf. MUÑOZ, Francisco A, and MOLINA RUEDA, Beatriz (eds.) (1998).

comparatively speaking, probably more such initiatives exist in Colombia than in any other country in the world. By way of example, we only need look at the *Mandato ciudadano por la paz, la vida y la libertad* (Citizens' mandate for peace, life and freedom), promoted by over four hundred social organisations in which almost ten million Colombians participate.²² In short, we choose to employ the term *imperfect peace* to describe the "analytical category" that defines the previous contents. Firstly, in order to break away from the previous conceptions in which *peace* appears as something perfect, infallible, utopian, finished, distant, unachievable in the short term. Achievable in the other world, in glory, in heaven, through the mediation of the Gods, far removed from mundane issues, beyond the reach of humans alone. Secondly, just as we have been affirming, an *imperfect peace* helps to recognise peaceful practices wherever they occur, revealing such milestones as forms of support for a greater and more extensive *peace*. Thirdly, an *imperfect peace* helps us to plan for conflictive and ever incomplete futures.²³

3.3. An unfinished process

This approach also allows us to consider peace as a *process*, an unfinished road. That is how one could interpret Gandhi when he said that *there is no road to peace, peace is the road*. It could be no other way: social and environmental realities are continually "evolving", as are the forms of confliction. Such peace is not a teleological objective, but rather a presupposition that is both recognised and built from day to day.²⁴ This understanding of the procedural nature of peace, in itself important for the advancement of the pacifistic praxis, is also upheld by theoretical and epistemological approaches as regards our understanding of the dynamics of nature and living beings.

On the other hand, accepting the "imperfect" aspects of our species that lives in continuous conflict between the diverse individual and social possibilities that are possible and available afforded by its cultural-biological condition, its history or its capacity to feel, imagine, desire, communicate, think or act. Accepting these determinants and the limitations of our biological, individual, social and cultural entity, *imperfect would be equivalent to conflictive*, while also revealing to us, based on the recognition of our parameters of existence, an enormous capacity for productive action.

However, as far as possible, we would like to avoid the negative sense that the term imperfect brings with it. It is not a question of negating a form of "doing", of non-doing. It is more a demand to act, create, engender, influence, carry out, work, operate, practise,

22. The vote took place on 26 October 1997. Much has happened since then, but it was by far the most striking display of the existing realities of peace in the country. Cf. MANDATO CIUDADANO POR LA PAZ (1998) *Eclipse de la guerra*, Santafé de Bogotá.

23. We are fortunate enough that, since the original article was first published in 2001, many research projects, doctoral theses and diverse publications have greatly expanded the areas of interpretation of *imperfect peace*. To quote just a few: san Francisco, san Juan de la Cruz, the Basque Country, Melilla, Morocco, Colombia, Education for Peace, Social Work, Indices of Human Development, ...

24. The Presocratic philosopher Heraclitus is one of the earliest references for such conceptions thanks to his famous insight to the effect that everything flows.

proceed, perform in a sense of positive, propositional transformation - of change towards -, of regulation of conflicts.

This approach enables us to achieve various objectives. Firstly, it affords us a global - not fractioned - understanding of *peace*. Secondly, it facilitates access to all its realities. Thirdly, it opens up better and greater research possibilities: it explicates them, explains them and gives them greater relevance; it makes them more accessible. Fourthly, it allows a greater promotion of ideas, values, attitudes and conducts of *peace*. Last but not least, it serves as a guide on the practise of *peace*, its enhancement and the advance of its power.

There are also many added values: it alters how we perceive ourselves, as it enables us to recognise that historically speaking the majority of our experiences have been peaceful; it creates hope; it has a mobilising effect; or it brings together the many different *peace* workers by relating their activities. Far removed from simplistic interpretations of "goodies and baddies", it allows us and obliges us to recognise realities (experiences, values, attitudes, etc.) of *peace* in the actors involved in conflicts. And, lastly, "imperfection" allows us to approach the humane, where positive and negative aspects, along with successes and errors, can coexist.

Finally, we believe that *imperfect peace* could be a useful instrument for allowing peace researchers to join the debate and the construction of new paradigms through which to comprehend and construct more peaceful, just and enduring worlds. We shall be readdressing this issue in the final epigraph of this work. Human societies, in their relationships with the laws of nature, are open, unbalanced systems, which leads them to establish relationships with the exterior environments, thus both allowing and guiding them to be continuously immersed in processes of self-organisation. This, in turn, forces us into a series of ongoing learning paths, new behaviour patterns and processes of development and evolution with which we must coexist, detect within their complexity and implement in the most just sense of their essence.

A further way to understand this procedural sense of *peace* is to compare it to the signs that illustrate the fulfilment of needs. Such a comparison would, to a certain extent, show us the level of *peace* that exists in each area. Different UN agencies, international bodies and NGOs are working on such indices of human development in their quest to learn as precisely as possible the conditions under which our basic needs are met.²⁵

These become gradually more complex, taking into account the initial *income per capita* in monetary terms, and a greater number of significant variables is now considered in order to produce a final amount aimed at representing a balanced evaluation of the tendencies that exist within all societies as regards the fulfilling of such needs and that, if we so choose, we could regard as the weighting of - needless to say imperfect - *peace*.

3.4. Innovating the epistemologies

We would not be able to consider some of the presuppositions that we have seen thus far if there were no critique concerning the epistemologies that we could call "violent", and if no new approaches and perspectives are incorporated that, as we have seen, allow

25. Cf. "Delimitar los modelos antropológicos y ontológicos" , in *Investigation...*, pp. 51-78.

greater access to the recognition of *peace*. Such aspects as complexity, chance and contingency and need, the teleology within nature, the formation of the cosmos, the evolution of living beings and the human race, Mankind's role in nature, "supernatural" forces, the mind (spirit)/brain relationship, the roles of gender or the universality of human needs are all theories that can condition our visions concerning *peace*, *conflicts* and *violence*. However, the discordant fascination that we have had with violence has conditioned not only our perceptions that have made us overvalue its role, but has also simplified and focused research more towards violent actions and their causes. Our preoccupation for violence should not lead us to confuse its pathologies with its symptoms or to simplify and decontextualize its causes and its solutions.²⁶

On the other hand, a certain tendency, displayed on many occasions, to overemphasise structural violence leads to an above all partial deformation of our appreciation and evaluation of reality. This tendency also connects directly - and produces a curious feedback - to visions upheld by cultural and religious traditions, such as Mazdaism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and their imaginary negatives regarding the human race (lost paradises, original sins, burdens, crucifixion, purgatories, hells, etc.) that, while we await "apocalyptic salvation", incapacitates and immobilises us in our quest for solutions to conflicts.

Furthermore, if we reduce the possibilities for perceiving and considering *peace* to those approaches that we can take based on *positive peace*, this could become an unreachable utopian horizon, given the requisites that it would potentially have to meet (inexistence of wars and violence, social justice ...). What is more, this reason greatly hinders the incorporation of those contributions, from experiences and "pacific" cultures, present in many cultures, among others in all large and small religions, widely recognised or of limited implantation, despite the fact that they themselves may have been unable to connect to more globalising approaches. We thus believe that it is necessary to employ a conceptualisation of *peace* that allows us to overcome these difficulties and clears the way for a more peaceful world, basing ourselves on each and every peaceful attitude and conduct that arise within the common experience of our species.

It may not be possible to adopt an alternative perspective if we do not perform what we could define as an about-turn or, in this case an *epistemological inversion*, in the sense of adopting a different starting point, other presuppositions in which the concept of *Peace* not only has greater presence, with a differentiated starting position, but also has a different qualitative focus that allows it to gain greater relevance and catalytic potential, in both theoretical and practical aspects, in debates surrounding peace. Our proposal is that *imperfect peace* could make a contribution towards this fresh approach.

In addition, such a concept would afford us a new capacity for mobilisation by providing us with connections to individual peaceful and conflictive experiences and realities, links and possibilities not only theoretical, but also real. Likewise, they could undoubtedly be projected towards the horizon of positive peace, which would thus take on new dimensions. Epistemologically, the concept of *imperfection* - whether yet to be

²⁶ See GALTUNG, Johan (1996). especially "Part 1: Peace Theory". 9-69. On this issue, I regard as inappropriate those interpretations that can "alienate" "cultural violence" from structural violence, because in this way the latter loses part of its explicative potentiality.

constructed or already under construction - distances us from "objective", closed and dogmatic visions and brings us closer to "intersubjective" - conflictive just like the very subjects of the perception -, open, debatable and much needed visions of communication.

3.5. Opening up dialectics

I would like to use the term dialectic in its original Greek etymological meaning. The prefix "dia" means "through", in a communicative sense. Therefore, it was similar to the term *dialogue* inasmuch as it expressed communication between two or more parties, which is important if we bear in mind that in its origins it allowed for the possibility that there may be more than two interlocutors. Those taking part in the dialogue would listen to the arguments put forward by the others and respond to them in an ongoing process to search for the truth (one could also consider that if the truth exists, it is within this search process). Hence *dialectics* can be regarded as being the relationships that exist between various elements in the search to comprehend reality.²⁷

Finally, this perspective reinforces the path towards the construction of a dialectic that overcomes the antagonistic dualism between peaceful and violent, good and evil, by accepting that there are endless intermediate situations subject to diverse dynamics.²⁸

To do so, in accordance with the aforementioned *realities of peace and conflicts*, it is necessary to adapt, promote and speculate with new *open dialectics* inasmuch as they consider that multiple actors and multiple motivations can intervene in the realities of conflicts; *holistic dialectics*, in as far as they consider all the possible interactions and the fact of belonging to a global universe; *possibilist dialectics*, inasmuch as they adapt to the reality of the possible without forgetting the desirable, connect the individual realities of *peace* to the collective, regional and global realities, as well as allowing us to be actors of *peace* based on our realities and our conflicts; *pragmatic dialectics*, due to their "realistic" description of the world for promoting justice; *reformist dialectics*, in as far as they attempt to capture reality just as it is and, on that basis, transform it as much as possible; *negotatory dialectics*, because they acknowledge the realities and potentialities of each actor involved in conflicts and, on that basis, attempts to establish interrelationships that improve the starting conditions; etc.

From this perspective, we would attempt to overcome the approach arising from a *negative/dualist dialectic* that: extols the negative and belittles the positive; does not believe in the "human race" (satanises the attitudes of individuals); demobilises, blocks, fragments individuals' capacity for action; breaks the lines of negotiation; makes reality appear to be a struggle between good and evil; reinforces mechanicism as opposed to "demons"; stresses dogmatism as opposed to evil and violence; neglects the dialectic and open social matrix; possesses the truth and that is that, there is no dialogue; does not study, does not debate; makes ideas grind to a halt; only retakes that of interest, discriminate knowledge; places

²⁷Cf. "Subtle and open dialectics", in *investigation...*, pp. 116-9.

²⁸ Cf. GALTUNG, Johan (1995) "Towards a Taoist epistemology of social science". *Investigaciones Teóricas. Sociedad y Cultura contemporáneas (Theoretical Research. Contemporary Society and Culture)*, Madrid, pp. 209-221.

sentiment above reason or gives reason absolute power; barbarism against barbarism; there are no methodological, epistemological or axiological approaches; there is neither criticism or self-criticism (there is no acknowledgement of non-neutral thinking...); or that converts force into the only measurement of truth.

The very definition of conflict dependent upon diverse interests and/or perceptions presents us with a huge amount of possibilities in their discourse. The actors within a conflict, their different interests, perceptions or projects, may have many other coinciding interests - as happens on the vast majority of occasions. Moreover, the different interests will not be static, but rather subject to the dynamics of societies themselves, whereby their confrontation or confluence would be subject to changes. Furthermore, the interests of each actor, the subinterests of each actor, the possible subactors, those that unite them and those that separate them and all the possible variables and alliances - including that of subactors of the other actor -, create a "matrix of conflicts" where the different possibilities may initially be considered as possible.

Open epistemologies would also mean an ongoing critical reflection on the point at which we find ourselves and the research paths to follow, as well as admitting our own limitations - including the very biological-social-subjective support that upholds them -, erroneous visions and conceptions, moving forward at the same rate as our capacity of perception and understanding of reality, fleeing from any form of ethno or andro or anthropocentrism and shunning any inkling of conformist immobilism.²⁹

Certain scientific theories, in their attempt to interpret nature, must continually opt to proportion the intermediate situations in which the different presuppositions find themselves and search for a way out in accordance with the potential that each one represents. Thus, a presupposition is not that which clearly imposes itself from the start, but rather after a series of relationships and "mediations", which we shall see in more depth further on, with all the other elements that may be present. Such areas are frequently those which define reality, even more so than the end result itself.³⁰

4. CONFLICTS AND POWER

So far, we have recognised *peace*, we have considered its dependence upon conflicts and therefore its unfinished nature, and we consequently believe it is necessary to encourage

²⁹ Regarding the contributions from the different theories towards systemic thought - or profound ecology, as the author likes to call it - see: CAPRA, Fritjof (1995) *La trama de la vida*, Barcelona, especially pages 25-34 where he proposes a shift in paradigms so as to incorporate into western culture thinking and values that are *integrative* (intuitive, synthetic, holistic, non-linear; and conservation, cooperation, quality, association), as opposed to *assertive* that are already fully integrated (rational, analytical, reductionist, linear; and expansion, competition, quantity, domination), in order to achieve a dynamic equilibrium between both.

³⁰ The Game theory takes into consideration the different decision possibilities of the actors (players) and the combinations and feedback that can be deduced from them. What is more, the search for rational "equilibrium" demands on a great many occasions the use of likelihood strategies. Cf. DASGUPTA, P., -MALE, K G. - WEIBULL, J. and others (1993): *Game theory: Rationality and Equilibrium in Strategic Interaction*, Bjorkborn Manor, Karlskoga. To a certain extent, diffuse sets are an attempt by mathematics to address the non-mechanical delimitation of the "gradual" belonging from one group into another in accordance with the choice of conditions to be fulfilled.

"peaceful epistemologies". Yet all of this will still not suffice if we fail to accomplish the main objective of our entire discourse: namely, to achieve *peace*. It is necessary to manage, transform, resolve and regulate conflicts by peaceful means, but this will not be enough if the decision-making process does not ultimately integrate such means as a principal element of social dynamics. In other words, *peace* and the regulating of conflicts should not simply be a stop-gap solution, a fire service, only getting involved when situations are deemed to have become critical, but not in the general decision-making process or the overall design of societies and their future.

At the risk of becoming "little angels", it is absolutely necessary that we start to speak of *power* and its capacity both to transform reality and promote the optimum possible conditions for achieving *peace*. Though it is true to say that ideas are also a part of power, this is not sufficient if we do not once again contemplate the relationships that they establish with other social instances. There are a great many debates on the matter from diverse perspectives (jurists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, etc) so I have no intention of addressing all of these issues, yet *no theory on peace can be exempt from a theory on power*. Furthermore, it is possible that they are also dependent on theories concerning conflicts, as peace and power may well reside in the management of conflicts.

Many researchers have gradually come to deem it necessary to approach the issue of power as a way of addressing the transformation of conflicts through objectives and by peaceful means. To do so, it distinguished between various spheres of its conformation, integrative power (cooperation, love, etc.), destructive power (war, violence) and productive (economic) power. All three spheres would be interrelated, from which we could ultimately infer a certain "point of equilibrium" resulting from the rifts and concordances that exist between them. The first such form of power - integrative power - as a set of private or public actions, yet affecting the social organisation as a whole, allows us to recognise effective and available resources throughout history for a non-violent transformation of reality.³¹

On the other hand, a consequence of the lack of in-depth debate on the issue is the absence of elaborate, coherent theories on the peaceful "taking" of power, in the face of what is supposed to be "established" power. Such theoretic-strategic poverty leaves a vacuum that in most cases is filled by "revolutionary" and violent proposals that thus become the only visible proposal for change and, even more serious, the actors involved in the changes become weakened and isolated.

The causes behind such difficulties also lie in the lack of intellectual and political attention that is paid to *non-violence*. This is despite its having made major contributions of a tactical and strategic, social and political nature, in which its presuppositions for action are guided by a just and proper - not instrumental - search for *peace*. Most notable among its principles are: its high regard for people; its use of persuasion before coercion; its using

31Cf. BOULDING, Kenneth (1993) *Las tres caras del poder* (Three Faces of Power), Madrid. The author makes a distinction between destructive power (war, violence), productive (economic) power, and integrative power (cooperation, love, etc.). Cf. "El poder de la Paz y los Derechos Humanos" (The power of Peace and Human Rights) in *Investigation...*, pp. 131-168. In this section, the concept of "praxis" is revisited as a need for an ongoing relationship between the theory and the practise of peace. See also LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ, Mario (2005) "Poder, política y no violencia" (Power, politics and nonviolence), in *Manual ...*, pp. 357-383.

as principles of political action certain virtues that are traditionally relegated to more private ambits, such as friendship, kindness and love (which, as we have just seen, form part of Kenneth Boulding's description for integrative power); and both its continuous performing and the greater depth of its actions. On the other hand, a pacifist movement unconcerned with the state and democracy has lost ground in the construction of peace - imperfect, of course.

4.1. Imperfect Peace [structural] and Structural Violence [imperfect]

Imperfect Peace as we have defined it thus far could provide us with a broader understanding of social dynamics through the avenues that have been selected for the regulating of conflicts. Indeed, if we gain greater insight into peaceful avenues, we will also be able to better understand the relationships that they establish with violent avenues and the social mediations that arise in such circumstances. In order to understand violence, *Peace Research* proposed, as we have previously pointed out, the concept of structural violence related to the non-fulfilment of needs and social injustice and, what I consider to be even more important, revealing the interactions between the different ambits in which violence occurs. This has enabled us to discover the hidden and static forms of violence within the system (misery, dependence, hunger, gender inequalities, etc.).

Consequently, a major part of the historical and social realities of conflicts could be explained through the different mediations and interrelationships (diachronic and synchronic, etc.) between *Imperfect peace and Structural violence*. Actually, we should speak of an *imperfect structural peace* and an *imperfect structural violence*, thereby allowing us to easily understand their limitations as well as their complementariness as regards their attempts to explain reality.

Obviously, it is not enough just to establish this relationship - after all, we were already aware of it - but more a question of seeing the *magnitudes* of each and of the relationships that become established thereby. This may undoubtedly be one of the keys for our being able to make progress. It is not enough just to know that peaceful and violent regulations can establish relationships in all directions (scales and ambits), which is of major importance in itself, but also that it could ultimately be regarded as a *totum revolutum* if we fail to clarify the kind of relationships that they establish and "quantify" the numbers of each.

At this point, we also find ourselves facing a delicate problem. We have managed to establish how violence and peace manifest and recur, and we also know that both possibilities are very closely related, so much so that they nearly always arise through the same social matrix. How should we work now when what we want is for peace to prevail among us? All proposals will be more or less effective depending on the effectiveness of the diagnosis. One may hold the view that *everybody is good* - as is stated on occasions - or, on the contrary, that *homo homini lupus* - as Hobbes believed -. Both aphorisms are partly true, yet totally unworkable for addressing the reality, as they are also false to a great extent. We humans are conflictive and we have the capacity to regulate conflicts peacefully and violently.

We undoubtedly need to turn to the initial matrix, which includes the needs, emotions, perceptions and conflicts that are unleashed by their very fulfilment, estimate and gauge how many such situations occur, and what solutions arise in one sense or another and on what scales. This is something that, in its entirety, is virtually impossible to address, but it is possible to work on different scales or ambits. For instance, we could consider a pre-school class: a family: a neighbourhood: the University; the relationship between two countries; between governments.

Firstly, it would be interesting to know in what levels of "confliction" we are immersed or, more precisely, to what extent is the regulation of the conflicts in which we are immersed cause for concern, or that it is foreseeable that they may create serious distortions. Everything seems to indicate that the levels are very high. Such a situation is inevitable, in view of the human condition and the wide range of needs and satisfiers, as well as the amount of humans involved faced with limited resources. An initial approach to these supposedly high levels of complexity and risk enables us to deduce that, despite the fact that violence is on the increase, the vast majority of conflicts are regulated peacefully. As I have already pointed out, this is one of my core premises for addressing the challenges we face today. It is also a proposal for creating therapies that offer the utmost efficiency.

However, this must not cause us to underestimate the actions and consequences of violence. I believe that *we are going through the most violent period in the history of mankind*. There are plenty of indications to make us believe that this is so. Firstly, the persisting arms race, which has implemented its role of direct violence through the symbolic visualisation, also direct to a certain degree, of the need for a violent (vigilant) power in order to ensure that there is harmony around the world. Yet even its traditional position as the number one cause of violence has been surpassed by hunger, easily curable diseases, etc. The unfair and discriminatory sharing of the world's resources is also a cause behind the non-fulfilment of needs for large areas of the population. The relationships and dependencies of such forms and causes ultimately reveal to us the destructive role of structural violence in its broadest sense.

Even so, I believe that most conflicts are regulated peacefully, as this is the only way to explain how six billion humans are able to survive, how we can grow being totally defenceless in the first years of our lives thanks to the care, the love and the socialisation of our family and social group. Likewise, dialogue, cooperation, altruism, philanthropy and so forth govern a large part of human actions in their everyday relationships, etc. We have already discussed this sufficiently, so it will suffice to recall that *imperfect peace* helps us to visualise all such actions.

For sceptics and pessimists: both appreciations (the most violent period in human history/most conflicts are regulated peacefully), difficult to prove to their full extent, are not important in their entirety unless it is because they reveal to us the existence of a *strong potential for violence and peace*. And at that point is where decisions must be taken: what should be done? Resist and stop violence, promote peace, or both at the same time? What efforts should be applied to each? This entails a long, drawn-out debate, but if we wish to at least show that just as natural medicine and neuro-linguistic programming benefit the healthy parts of patients, *Peace Research* should pay special attention to all peaceful regulations of conflicts as the "main" guarantee that we will have as peaceful a future as possible. And "main" does not mean "only", but "indispensable".

4.2. Mediations

Mediation is a concept that allows different elements to be related through agents or elements. These fulfill the function of: mediating, intervening between various circumstances; of being a certain physical, temporal or causal interval or space in which a particular action ceases to occur; of being or existing among two or more: taking a "halfway-point" between two extremes. The most important issue is that such mediations ultimately influence the course of events and how their occurrence depends largely on this type of mediations. In a more abstract line, from a philosophical viewpoint it is the rational reflection in which most ideas are incorporated, it is a rational and logical dialectic process through which the specific relationships can be found.

I believe it is important to consider it both in its more abstract form, in the articulation of ideas, and in its practical concretion, in the interpretation of realities and actions that can be performed in such a sense.

To a certain point, mediations interrupt the binomial polarity with which we often comprehend and relate - tauten and violate - realities. Such a situation has been considered by hundreds of cultures, who have used the figure of the *mediator* to establish relationships between certain ambits and others. In religions, a mythical character (a hero, a demigod...) establishes the relationship between supernatural forces and human communities. We could say that we are dealing with a topological consequence, as regards specific locations, spaces and representations of those that we have called *open dialectics*. As we have already stressed, these help us to find human entities and practices that connect *peace* and *violence*, they are often precursors of violence but at other times they act as a hindrance to it and stimulate peace.

Again, Kenneth Boulding makes a relevant contribution by studying the process through which the transition occurs from an "unstable" to a "stable" *peace*. He believes that social systems, in much the same way as many chemical substances and other biological systems, display highly varied and complex phases and areas of contact between each other, in such a way that many organisations, models and structures are determined by such areas. From this perspective, *peace* can be contemplated in different phases, depending on there being a greater or lesser degree of justice, oppression, competition, enrichment, impoverishment, etc.³²

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt as to its "interpretative" capacity and its ability to articulate reality. Within the peaceful regulation of conflicts, negotiation is one of the most widely recognised forms, in which mediation is a commonly used mechanism for favouring the initial positions of the actors and bringing them closer together.

All of which leads us to believe that it is important to regard - both theoretically and practically - *mediations* as being those ambits or circumstances in which the issue (confliction), for various reasons, cannot be understood - or does not operate - either as

32BOULDING. Elise - BOULDING. Kenneth E. (1994) *The future. Images and Processes*, London, 76-87. Cf. "Las mediaciones como punto de encuentro" (Mediations as a meeting point), in *Investigation ...*, pp. 77-95.

peace or as violence. These may vary according to the moment (space, time, actors, interests) at which they occur and the particular role they play. They are important because of their capacity to catalyse and dynamise situations.

In my opinion, *mediations* would allow us to understand the relationships that often arise between peace and violence, in any shape or form, or more generically between imperfect peace and structural violence. *Power* could be regarded as a prototypic example of such mediation and is commonly characterised as violent, but which in its latest interpretations - in the sense of "capacity to transform" - can have more open applications in which its violent sense is not an initial assumption but rather a quality that it acquires according to how it is used.

Consequently, *mediations* must also be propitiated, sought, promoted as an interim step, interlocutor, for the peaceful transformation of conflicts. Thus, communication, exchange of information, knowledge of the conditions, motives and interests of the other areas of conflict becomes a research vehicle inasmuch as it causes the circumstances that define reality to interact. From this point of view, proposals of communicative ethics become totally pertinent.³³

4.3. Pacifistic empowerment

Let us now readdress the issue of power. The previous reflections would be of little use if they lacked a practical reflection, if they were not useful for transforming reality. On many occasions, we gratify ourselves and make do with a simple reference to this desideratum: change reality.

However, despite the fact that most of the problems that we face are all in the mind ("Since wars are born in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that must be changed", as appears in a UNESCO charter), social and political action is essential. In my opinion, this vital praxis can only be addressed, unambiguously and without delays, from the space (horizon) of power.

Although it is true that *non-violence* (or even better: *nonviolence*) has laid the foundations for such a theory, as we will never tire of repeating, in my opinion it has two main deficiencies. The first is that, to a certain degree, it is limited to marginal actions, in the sense of being associated with the claims of the marginalised, but also because its capacity to mobilise has never been acknowledged as such by the dominant groups of one tendency or another. The second, and partly as a consequence of the first, is that it barely has any impact within democratic societies. It is possible that both problems are not exclusive to *nonviolence* and are related to the lack of debate between the classic theories on power, the state and democracy, and nonviolence.³⁴

Some of the tragic consequences of this are all the "revolutionary" proposals that aim to transform reality by seizing power through violent mechanisms that lead to loss of life and the destruction of infrastructures and resources. The use of "force" becomes the

33. Cf. MARTÍNEZ GUZMAN. Vicent, *Op. Cit.*

34. Cf. ARENDT, Hanna (1998) *Sobre la revolución*, Madrid; "El estado entre lo angelical y el leviatán", and "El poder de la Paz y los Derechos Humanos", in *Investigation*,,, pp. 91-5 and 131-168.

only argument of the social structure. For all of the above, we appeal to *pacifistic empowerment* as an acknowledgement of pacifistic realities, practices and actions and its capacities to act and transform its more or less immediate environs, as well as to promote the creation of networks among all the actors that, in one way or another, have reasons for promoting peace.³⁵

The word "*empoderamiento*" comes from old Castilian Spanish, taken to mean "empowerment" in relation to the use of power. However, in the last ten years, it has been used in this case as a translation of the English word "empowerment". The feminist movement and then NGO's used it to define the need to take charge of their subjects as the only way of transforming an unequal reality.³⁶

In my opinion, this point requires some deep reflection. I believe that Peace Research has enough accumulated experience on the issue but little systematic reflection. The best place to start is undoubtedly with *nonviolence*, but all those involved in pacifistic activity are well aware that this is not sufficient, as in its day-to-day practise such a framework is simply overwhelmed.

Indeed, whether in negotiations carried out within the area of the host organisation, relationships with fellow institutions and associations, contacts with political forces, contacts with NGO's, actions carried out in areas in conflict, etc., "power" is present in all of these instances. It is also true that we know, more or less, how to behave in such cases, how to make one's presence felt, what positions to adopt depending on the sphere of action, what proposals to carry out at any given time, how to apply pressure, cope with the tension, etc.

Pacifistic "empowerment" would imply a process in which the circumstances of conflicts would be acknowledged and there would be regulations that satisfy all the actors involved, an acknowledgement and potentiation of the practices of peace. A general pacifistic conception of power should be based on conflicts and potentiate the interactions between the different forms of peace, from individual peaces to group, associative, institutional, state, international or interstate peaces, as well as the different interactions that may exist between them. Finally, it should aid such peaces to occupy as large a public and political space as possible, in such a way that an overall frame of reference could be defined in which all transformative efforts and processes would unite towards a more peaceful and lasting reality.

5. GLOBALISATION, COMPLEXITY AND FUTURE

The mobilising capacity of *imperfect peace* increases as it accepts and connects with the "imperfection" of the initial reality and, therefore, is able to make proposals of transformation towards situations that are as peaceful as possible based on that particular

³⁵ It would seem that one of its origins lies within "neuro-linguistic programming" where people's positive and negative spaces are acknowledged and then used to make the necessary changes. Cf. GRINDER, John – BANDLER, Richard (1998) *De sapos a príncipes*, Santiago de Chile (Spanish translation of the English version *Frogs into Princes*, 1980).

³⁶ Although it is now used profusely for any case of awareness and attitude of transformation, from the individual to the public and political.

starting point. A large part of the reflections and concerns that we have on a daily basis in the field of Peace Research could take on new dimensions if analysed within the analytical category of *imperfect peace*. Indeed, as well as those spaces properly recognised as peaceful, this could also be recognised in: economic models, the market, world systems and globalisation, international and regional conflicts, nationalism, armament and armies, the relationships between religions, cultures, gender relationships, community relationships, education, or states. All display certain components of *peace*.

Many of these realities could be regarded as "global problems", just as we ourselves have expressed them on occasions, attempting to understand or explain the new phenomena under the umbrella of what used to be called the "new world order" and is now known as globalisation. However, we can also adopt the perspective of "global windows", i.e. all those possibilities that the new situation affords us for the constructing of peace: global vision, awareness of our interdependence with the rest of the species and the world in general, multiculturalism, solidarity without frontiers, greater possibilities for communication, better information, etc. Again from the perspective of "imperfection" which opens up spaces for us in which to think and act with new horizons.

5. 1. Globalisation

The interaction and dependence among the different entities in which human beings are involved in one way or another is becoming ever more profound and patent, and the term *globalisation*, accompanied by major controversies, brings together a large part of the debates on the issue. All of which is going to demand from us ever greater efforts of understanding, so that we may face up to its challenges and consequences.³⁷

Within its contemporary development, since the end of the Second World War, there are certain lines of continuity with previous historic moments but it cannot be contemplated through the logic of an accumulative and lineal historic evolution, since new aspects are being displayed and it is taking on new background or structural qualities, major shifts and reorientations are occurring, it is multifaceted, it simultaneously refers to differentiated social phenomena, the qualitative aspects and the timing vary in each situation, and new configurations are achieved as different types of realities, actors and agents interact around the world. Very much in spite of the contemporary processes of regionalisation, it is very difficult for anyone or anything to escape from its consequences (the spread of networks, the intensity of interconnections, the speed of global flows, etc.). Few areas can elude the advance of the globalisation process. This is reflected in all social dominions, from

³⁷Cf. HELD, David - McGREW, Anthony – GOLDBLATT, David – PERRATON, Jonathan (2000) *Global Transformation. Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge. It represents a broad and rigorous updated compendium of the debates that have been held on the subject. From a different and very prolix perspective, see: CASTELL, Manuel (2000) *La era de la información* (The information age). Vol. 1. *La sociedad red* (The network society). Vol. 2. *El poder de la identidad* (The power of identity). Vol. 3. *Fin de milenio* (End of millennium), Madrid; "Una sola especie en un solo mundo" (A single species in a single world), in *Investigation...*, pages 169-189.

economics (permanent global market) to politics, law, the military, the environment, and even culture.³⁸

Among its different manifestations, it is worth highlighting the growing tendency towards the interconnecting of the exercising of power within the global system through the decisions or interactions of agents anywhere in the world, or especially on a particular continent, which can have major consequences for nations, communities and homes in the remaining spaces, or continents. Furthermore, this practise can occur under the influence of interests and criteria that are far removed from the needs of the spaces that they affect, or in other words, it does not always occur in accordance with democratic criteria, in which all the agents involved take part in the decision-making process.

Consequently, *globalisation* implies the structuring and restructuring of the relationships of power. Indeed, the processes of extension, expansion and, ultimately concentration of its relationships of power mean that the locations where it is based are gradually becoming more distanced from the subjects and the local levels. Ultimately, the elite within the major metropolitan areas of the world tend to have an ever greater and increasingly tight control over the global networks along with a certain capacity to manage them.

Despite the fact that, during the different periods of internationalisation, states have taken on different forms, in today's new scenarios they have been deprived of some of their traditional attributes (management of the economy, the planning of infrastructures, international policy, etc), even though some of them not only show resistance but actively reinforce their position (regulating of the market, education, security, environmental and benefit issues, health, etc.). Decisions concerning many issues that are essential for the life of the populations, organised and included in delimited frontiers and territories, were taken by more or less democratic states and the groups that coexisted therein. Now, with the loss of their "autonomy", an increasing number of voices can be heard crying out against their debilitation and loss of competencies.

This "protest" unites differentiated political tendencies (communists, social democrats, liberals, Christian democrats, etc.), institutions and organisations in the need to recuperate the true benefactorial roots of the state, so that the state may protect the population from the stark policies of transnationals and globalisation. This goes hand-in-hand with an increasingly global awareness of elitism, as well as the popular classes that are developing new forms of solidarity-minded "internationalism". This all opens up a new space for resistance and unity in order to achieve and vindicate a more humane and just world.

Indeed, the highly tangible "visualisation" of some of the features of globalisation (hunger, poverty, migrations, pollution...) has given rise to the emergence of opposition and resistance movements against such processes in diverse areas and scenarios.³⁹ This

38. Coinciding with the end of the millennium, the world population rose to 6 billion, of which 1.2 billion go hungry, a similar number lack drinking water and 1 billion adults are illiterate in the information age. This can be verified through different items year after year. Thus, many of the end results of globalisation can be evaluated negatively, as they go hand-in-hand with inequality, stratification, asymmetry and hierarchy, which generate new models of inclusion and exclusion, new winners and losers.

39. Cf. HALLIDAY, Fred (1999) "Globalisation and its discontents", *Papeles de cuestiones internacionales* 67, 17-32.

constitutes an important new development, mainly because it is born from nonviolent presuppositions, there has been a large-scale mobilisation (demonstrations, parallel events, publications, etc.) and the response has been international, all of which affords a ray of hope that the pernicious effects of the new world can be arrested. We have reached the staging - distributed around the world as a positive consequence of interconnections - of a "power" struggle between the world elite (the World Bank, etc.) and alternative movements. The entire representation has enabled resistance movements to gain greater importance and provoked shifts in the agenda and discourse of the elite, but also, I suppose, changes in strategy to avoid its reoccurrence. In any event, I believe that we may have witnessed a nonviolent episode of popular democracy that is hopefully a beneficial effect of globalisation.⁴⁰

However, it is again not sufficient just to view the pernicious effects, as all this capacity for interconnection also provides access to advances and proposals from distant spaces and points. On a great many occasions, connections and networks enable the flow of beneficial effects that must be used to build *peace*. Let us first look at information: many research centres are connected to the "Net" and much of the activity is carried out through the contacts that it provides. We have all experienced such transoceanic relationships that would simply be impossible in any other way. Information also enables the progress of science and provides access to resources at distant locations. It allows us to become "world citizens", to visualise and evaluate the effects of globalisation, etc. The transnational defence of human rights, the equality of women and environmental protection can also be regarded as being beneficial effects of our new situation.

However, in spite of everything, we are still concerned with finding and creating spaces of *peace*. Therefore, the greatest importance should be placed on those modifications that the structures of *power* are experiencing, since in the new situation many of the actions and commitments of *power* come into very close contact, when they are not subsumed by the processes of globalisation and, consequently, the spatial range of their networks and circuits become modified.

5.2. Interconnections, networks and complexity

In order to approach all of these new phenomena, a renewed methodology is required that is able to provide models with the potential to explain the global interconnections that we are facing, in every dominion and at every level, from ecological models of interconnection that may differ from cultural models, military models, etc. Likewise, when we open up our frame of reference, we gain an understanding of the interrelationships that exist among the different ambits, but we also come across new problems derived from the new quantitative and qualitative dimensions of our analytical

40. The parallel mobilisations in Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Copenhagen, Beijing, Seattle, along with subsequent mobilisations, are a tangible demonstration of such events. It is worth remembering that the European Union invites NGO's to consultation tables and, in 1998, the World Trade Organisation proposed a plan of cooperation with these organisations, thus acknowledging their public and beneficial interest. Cf. CHOSSUDOVSKEY, Michel (2000) "Disarming the New World Order. Seattle and beyond", COATES, Ken (ed.) *The Spokesman. Disarming the New World Disorder*, Nottingham, 5-17.

frameworks. Indeed, "globalisation", the universal, the holistic allow us to see the macro links but, at the same time, they connect us to *complexity*, which thus becomes both a solution and a challenge.

Complexity cannot be regarded as a magic wand that solves all our problems but, for the time being, it is one of the avenues that may provide some of the keys, given that it assumes the study of the network of relationships among heterogenic entities as far as their qualitative and quantitative aspects are concerned, including events, actions, relationships, interactions, feedback, needs, twists of fate, order and disorder. Complexity thus connects us to *imperfection*, since it is related to the irrepressible and the uncertain. Therefore, on the one hand it produces turmoil, anxiety and immobilisation. On the other hand, it becomes a refuge from the unknown. In both senses, it is related to the problems of peace and violence. Nevertheless, we need to reinvigorate our thinking, despite being aware of its limitations, so that we may gain the greatest possible understanding of our reality.⁴¹

Due to the characteristics that we have defined thus far, all thinking generated around *peace* becomes an instrument with which to address complexity on all its different levels. Indeed, conflicts have an enormous comprehensive potential -at least in respect to human phenomena- and peace -being a just and equitable regulation of conflicts- shares in this potentiality and suggests desirable solutions to them. Confliction needs to be addressed through both interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary epistemologies that are *sine qua non* conditions for addressing complexity. The relationships between *imperfect peace*, mediations and structural violence can ultimately only be understood through the presuppositions regarding complexity.

All the various disciplines, which are themselves limited and inoperative in the face of their evident dependencies on both broader phenomenologies and greater dimensions of complexity - especially as regards the changes that occur and the relationships between the parts and the whole - need epistemological strategies - and even axiological and ontological strategies - in order to take part in the "adventure" of understanding the universe and those recently-arrived little creatures called humans.⁴²

This view of complexity enables us to understand some of the changes that occur and that seem to defy the arrow of time - those tendencies defined by the laws of thermodynamics - and which afford a certain hope for the future of Mankind, relating to the capacity for self-organisation. Not in vain has Mayor Zaragoza used these theories as a framework for some of his proposals for peace.⁴³

Pacifistic actions themselves interact with social activities and realities as a whole. The consequences of such relationships are not always controlled by the subjects of the

41. MORIN, Edgar (1995) The author presents three principles that may help us to think about complexity: the dialogic principle (it links terms that are complementary and antagonistic at the same time - allow me to assimilate this to the relationship between imperfect peace and structural violence); the principle of organisational resourcefulness ("products and effects are simultaneously causes and producers of what they produce"); the hologramatic principle ("Not only is the part in the whole, but the whole is in the part"), p. 105 ss.

42. Cf. WAGENSBERG. Jorge (1994) *Ideas sobre la complejidad del mundo*, Barcelona

43. Indeed, Ilya Prigogine, forefather of the theories on dissipative systems, wrote the prologue to the book by Mayor Zaragoza, *Una nueva pagina*, which points out how, even in the face of so much violent cruelty, Mankind is able to perceive the chaos and decide to improve its organisation towards forms that are more just, equitable and peaceful.

action. This means that they "immediately" become part of the complex framework of the surrounding reality and, logically, would not be sufficiently effective unless placed within strategies that take such conditions into account and evaluated on the basis of their complex implications. Living beings, as organised entities, are more tolerant of disorder in accordance with the complexity of their organisation, and the solidarity among its members also allows for greater levels of tolerance.

5.3. Future and forecasting

The future becomes the only possible proposal for interacting with reality, so it is necessary that we think about it and work on it using the appropriate methodologies.⁴⁴ As a consequence of all that we have seen over the previous pages, the future should be *desirable, lasting, just, peaceful*, but also *imperfect*. A future that includes solidarity towards future generations, where justice and equity are paramount, where conflicts are regulated by peaceful means and where conflicts - a sign of our *imperfect* nature - give us the chance to imagine and create new, desirable situations in accordance with the values that we hold as regards peace. A future that is definitively open to both old and new conflicts and always in the "process" of regulating them peacefully. A *lasting* future inasmuch as the attitude, efforts and resources aimed at acknowledging, dynamising and addressing the diverse interests and conflicts should, by and large, act as a dynamic driving force so that such interests and conflicts may become a source of creation and wellbeing.

Therefore, we must take control of the Future, not only driven by our desires or in search of utopias, but through scientific methods of approach and evaluation such as *forecasting* (or Future Studies) that provide us with both all the possibilities and circumstances that it represents as well as with the creation of *Peace*.

From any perspective, *peace* should not be considered as "total", closed, the endpoint, an almost impossible to achieve "utopian"⁴⁵ goal, - except at great expense - unrealistic and, consequently, frustrating, but as counterproductive inasmuch as it can be the source of violence.⁴⁶

Thus, *imperfect peace* could be used to provide an intermediary path between maximalist utopianism and conservative conformism: it is a matter of changing our reality based on our knowledge of human limitations and present scenarios (knowledge provided by the different sciences, forecasting and future studies), yet without having to renounce

44. Cf. BOULDING, Elise – BOULDING, Kenneth E. (1994), *Op. cit.*, 89 ss. SANCHEZ, Jesus.- MUÑOZ, Francisco A.- JIMENEZ, Francisco.- RODRIGUEZ, Javier. (eds.) (1995) *Paz y prospectiva. Problemas globales y futuro de la humanidad*, Granada; "Apoderarse del futuro", in *Investigations...*, pp. 269-284.

45. On other occasions (MUÑOZ, Francisco A. – RODRÍGUEZ, Javier (eds.) (1997), pp. 70-75, we held the view that utopias, as representations of an unachievable future, have generally given rise to violence, for all of these factors (cf. note 9). We thus prefer to distance ourselves from the concept of utopia in order to plan for the future.

46. From Wolfgang Sutzl's point of view, it is important to liberate the construction of metaphysical presuppositions that have meant the masking of violence related to the promotion of an eternal and universal peace based on science and modern techniques. I would hereby like to thank the author for his contributions. Cf. *Op. cit.*

making plans for the future or having a goal: *imperfect peace*, which, although more modest, is still a desirable, overall goal (hence also with a normative dimension).

In short, a future that I once again strive to bring as close as possible, yet also removed from naïveté, forcing us to be deeply critical and combative with the violence of the present, but also with that which we may "stage" in the future. We must make full use of the possibilities offered to us by our present reality in order to project a future in which we are as close to *peace* as possible. Come what may, this must occur by way of a process, a path, filled with obstacles, difficulties, advantages, facilities - in short, conflictive - open to permanent evaluation, but which must always be dominated by a creative and intelligent quest.⁴⁷

The main objective that I have wished to address throughout this work is *Peace* - based on the assumption of its normative, theoretical and practical presuppositions - in order to endow us with the most suitable, finest - most refined - intellectual tools so that we may comprehend (approach, contain, embrace) all the circumstances that surround it - including violence. To do so, I have employed all the intellectual resources that I have found along the way, without seeking to use any form of academicist pedantry, but convinced that the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach - so rare yet so necessary in research institutions - is the only one that can take us closer to the future that we all desire.

47. Cf. AVIA, M^a Dolores - VÁZQUEZ. Carmelo (1998) *El optimismo inteligente*, Madrid; ROJAS MARCOS, Luis (2005) *La fuerza del optimismo*, Madrid.