

Post-Colonial Studies and Philosophy for Peace: A Comparative Approach

Sidi M. Omar  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3484-8563>

Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, España, omars@uji.es

Abstract: The article seeks to propose a dialogue between post-colonial studies, which represent a critical approach that aims to address the multiple effects of colonialism within (post)colonial cultures, and the proposals of Philosophy for Peace expounded by Vicent Martínez Guzmán. The objective of this comparative approach is to examine the possible concurring points between the two projects as well as their respective contributions with a view to promoting cultures for peace and intercultural dialogue. Apart from their criticism to hegemonic systems of knowledge and their associated forms of violence, both projects also carry out a reconstructive task by proposing an education for peace that seeks to reconstruct the normative horizon that makes explicit our competences to make peace(s) and increases peaceful coexistence in a world that is becoming increasingly globalized and interrelated.

Key words: colonialism, culture for peace, modernity, philosophy, post-colonial studies.

Resumen: El artículo trata de proponer un diálogo entre los Estudios Post-coloniales, los cuales representan un enfoque crítico que pretende abordar los múltiples efectos del colonialismo en el seno de las culturas (post)coloniales, y las propuestas de la *Filosofía para la Paz* promovida por Vicent Martínez Guzmán. El objetivo de esta aproximación comparativa es examinar los posibles puntos de encuentro entre los dos proyectos, así como sus respectivas aportaciones con miras a la promoción de culturas para la paz y la interculturalidad. Aparte de su crítica a los sistemas de saber hegemónicos y las violencias que generan, los dos proyectos también realizan una tarea reconstructiva, haciendo hincapié en proponer una educación para la paz que trata de reconstruir el horizonte normativo que explicita nuestras competencias para hacer las paces e incrementar la convivencia pacífica en un mundo que cada vez se está haciendo más globalizado e interrelacionado.

Palabras clave: colonialismo, cultura para la paz, Estudios Post-coloniales, filosofía, modernidad.

Original article

language: spanish.

Translated by Luis Cejudo
Espinosa

Recepción:

23/05/19

Aprobación:

10/11/19



Introduction

To begin with, it is noticeable that dialogue between these two projects started more than a decade ago, when Vicent Martínez Guzmán published in 2001 his article “Paz, Culturas e Identidades Civilizadoras: ¿Valores Universales o Particularismos?” [Peace Cultures and civilizing identities; universal values or particularities] (Martínez Guzmán, 2001). In this article, the author presents and incorporates the “post-colonial perspective” into the philosophical reflection made from Philosophy for peace, in the context of UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace of Universitat Jaume I de Castellón.

It is true that Post-colonial studies and philosophy for peace are two utterly different approaches as regards their starting points, analytical tools and objects of study. However, as we will expose over this article, they share certain analytical interests and regulatory concerns regarding the conceptualization and reconstruction of human relationships in a constructive and pacific manner. By criticizing the (neo)colonial discourses and the various forms of violence they provoke, Post-colonial studies intend to state possible alternatives to conceive and promote human relationships based on dialogue and interculturalism. For its part, Philosophy for peace proposes a regulatory reconstruction of human competences for peacemaking and transforming conflicts creatively and pacifically.

Post-colonial studies also analyze and disclose the Eurocentrism of the occidental discourses and knowledge and rationalization systems that have served -and still serve- to justify colonial and neocolonial practices. Moreover, in the context of the criticism of the epistemological hegemony of the European knowledge systems, Post-colonial studies focus their analysis on the modern occidental project and its link with the history and practice of colonialism. For its part, as noticed below, philosophy for peace engages in critically examining the scientific and epistemological legacy of occidental modernity, mainly as regards the unilateral uses of rationality and its close relation with colonial power and other forms of domination.

All in all, the two projects have a special interest in researching all the forms of violence, either physical (direct, structural or institutional) or discursive (cultural) and presenting alternatives based on the construction of cultures for peace and interculturalism. In addition to exposing the key elements of these projects, the attempt to make them dialogue may also allow such projects to mutually question, enriching their analytical and critical approaches.

Post-colonial studies

Post-colonial studies¹ refer to an important area of study of literary and cultural studies developed in the 1980's. They particularly focus on researching the intimate relationship between culture and politics, thus distinguishing interrelations between certain cultural forms and political and historic practices (Omar, 2008: 228). A key characteristics of Post-colonial studies consists in emphasizing the disclosing of underlying interests in knowledge production and introducing an opposing critique that underscores and tries to recover the broad range of "subjugated knowledge" (Foucault, 1980: 82) of "decolonized" peoples.

They also research structural relationships of domination and discrimination express, manifest, become and legitimize in and by means of discourses. In the discursive analysis of ideologic domination, post-colonial studies focus on the "hegemony" produced not only by means of physical force, but also by means of consensual submission (consent) of those dominated (Gramsci, 1971: 268).

The condition of the hegemony perpetuates by means of the active intervention of a range of "State ideological apparatus" (Althusser, 1971:144), which include education, religion, law, the media, etc.

A paradigmatic example of the post-colonial critique is Orientalism (1978), by Edward Said, which is commonly considered the main catalyst and reference point for the post-colonial theory (Gandhi, 1998: 23) and peace studies. On the basis of French post-structuralism, particularly in the works of Michel Foucault, Said intended to analyze a range of European representations of oriental cultures in the XIX century: works of geographers, historians, travelers and anthropologists, as well as literary works and memoirs.

The goal was to underscore the forms of knowledge that acted in connivance with the history of European colonialism. To sum up, for Said, orientalism was not only an academic study on "The East", but also a discourse which, via the complicity of the European knowledge system with political power, contributed to the colonial control and the subjugation of the "East". That is to say, orientalism was a form of epistemic or cultural violence in agreement with Peace research terminology, as we will see next.

1 It is worth stating that over this article I will use the term "post-colonial", with a dash to emphasize its critical aspect, rather than the chronological, usually indicated by the spelling without a dash.

Philosophy for peace

Philosophy for peace, as we have previously stated, is the philosophical proposal promoted by Vicent Martínez Guzmán (2001), whose key elements are gathered in his book *Filosofía para hacer las Paces* [Philosophy for peacemaking]. As a set, the book is an original contribution to studies and research for peace from a specifically transmodern and trans-Kantian philosophical standpoint. It presents a novel approach to the topic of peace, introducing an “epistemological shift”, whose main axes will be exposed later. To sum up, this proposal presents philosophy for peace as a public commitment to philosophy and also a critical project that intends to rebuild human competences for peace and build cultures for peace, on the basis of mutual recognition.

What is important is to notice, in this context, is that peace is not seen in a singular manner, but in the context of the specific intention to recover the plurality and diversity of conceptions implied in the various ways of peacemaking, thus speaking of peaces. By and large, the proposals of philosophy for peace consider the attempt to propose new forms of conceiving international relationships, development, humanitarian action and cooperation. They also put forward the problem of post-development studies, as well as postcoloniality and contributions from gender studies, and presents an analysis of human rights, right to the difference and interculturalism, right to hospitality and interlocution.

The fundamentals for this philosophic proposal, as the name states, revolve around topics of philosophy and peace and their interaction. It is proposed, in this way and in a simple manner, that philosophy represents “the set of human capabilities of asking and giving reasons or expressing feelings for what we do to one another and nature” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001:16).

From the premise that human reason is a capability that human beings share in common and that makes it possible, using arguments, to go beyond a particular standpoint, Martínez Guzmán’s philosophical proposal defines philosophy as the autonomous use of reason that enable us to be directly accountable to one another for what we do unto each other and nature. All in all, philosophy is conceived as a human activity characterized by a want of finding out what we do to one another and nature.

The common thread of this proposal would be the elaboration of a communicational phenomenology (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 205), understood as the study of the experience of what we to one another through what we say to one another on what we do to us. It is about finding out how

we human beings use words in our communication experiences in which we ask and give reasons for what we human beings say and make to one another.

In this context, philosophy for peace specially stresses the performative dimension of language, which makes us understand that every saying is making while assuming the responsibility of what we do to one another and offering the possibility of being accountable to one another for what we do to us. Since we human beings are not abstract subjects, we are part of a “discursive community”, in which communicational liberty is not a mere subjective liberty, but subjected to the intersubjectivity by means of which we are mutually willing to practically account for what we do, say and do no say. These characteristics are part of our human condition, and if in virtue of this reason, it is very clear that human beings can be accountable to one another for what we do to one another and nature.

According to philosophy for peace, from this performative communicational perspective, the solid links inherent to any communication act are the basic expressions of solidarity, which is understood, in this sense, not as something added to human relationships, but as a basic characteristic of any sort of interaction, when human actions are seen from what we do to one another, the commitments we make and the responsibilities we accept. Violence, therefore, begins with the rupture of the “indigenous” solidarity in all human interactions as it breaches the basic confidence in any illocutionary act, thus denying the interlocution capability (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 110).

The alternative proposed by philosophy for peace, in general, entails recovering a minimal planetary ethics to reconstruct the minimal moral shared in common by the various worlds of life and which take place in the general structures of these worlds of life. That is to say, they base on the capability to develop autochthonous cultures, the very cultures, the very systems of socialization and construction of individual personality. The minimal values of this minimal planetary ethics are partly the need to adjust human relationships so that every human being or collectivity can make their voice or silence audible as regards their affectations and has the right to speak.

As regards peace, philosophy for peace performs a reconstructive role of the very studies for peace², which is an attempt to make a reconstruction of the institutions which upon the idea of peace we human beings have in

2 Studies for peace approach topics such as aggression and direct violence implied by war; structural violence with reflections on basic needs, development, poverty and social justice; and, cultural violence that includes discursive legitimations and in general, symbolical of structural and direct violence (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 61).

the practice of our relationships. In this reconstructive process, from the standpoint of a communicational phenomenology which we have referred to before, philosophy for peace starts from the world where we live -the world of life- and the intuitions we have of how we make things.

The rational reconstruction of this knowledge indicates a regulatory horizon of how we should do the things in order to transform our conflicts with a view to pacifying. That is to say, it is a reconstruction of the possibilities we have to make things one way or another. It is noticeable that this starting point, whose background or horizon is the world of life of our relationships, supposes the recognition of possibilities to act of human beings: attention to our potentialities, aptitudes and competences.

Then, philosophy for peace will have a reconstructive function for the human competences for living in peace; that is to say, philosophy for peace is “a regulatory reconstruction of the competences of human beings for peace making, with vigilant attention to the reasons and sentiments expressed from various peace researches” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001:24). What is important is that the reconstruction of competences for peacemaking implies a political commitment with the potentiation or empowering of those collectives whose capabilities are denied and with the recognition to the identities as human and collective beings.

The two projects’ meeting points

Public commitment and the responsibility of the intellectual labor

As we have previously indicated, the reconstruction of human competences for peacemaking, which is made from philosophy for peace, implies a political commitment with the potentiation of those collectives.

Whose characteristics are denied, and the recognition of their identities as human and collective beings. This means that the stance of this philosophy is still a concern by the emancipation or empowering of the excluded, nuanced by a serious discussion of these other interpretations. On the basis of such reflections, philosophy for peace specially stresses on carrying out the conceptual reconstruction of the role of philosophy and its “occidentalism”, intending to turn their pride into responsibility and commitment to the excluded so many times in the name of the European rationality, which deems itself universal.

The awareness of European identity, thereby, is not proposed as an ethnocentric prejudice, but as a responsibility and universal commitment which will not end as long as there is a human being that “cannot adopt the attitude of explaining and asking for reasons for their actions” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 18). From the very conception of philosophy as the autonomous use of rationality for human beings, the philosophers’ commitment to asking for reasons to why we do what we do onto ourselves and enquiring on whether we would be able to do things otherwise so that there is no human that does not recognize this rationality.

From the post-colonial standpoint, it is verified that intellectuals, by and large and due to their proper profession and social position, have a huge responsibility to their historic, cultural and social environment. Said (1978: 10) states that:

No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society.

It is clear then that the alleged neutrality of intellectual work is a mere myth that has always been used to justify the forms of exclusion and domination. What is defended, moreover, is that the theories do not only represent a reality, but also contribute to create it, thereby, they are intrinsically political in this sense. In the context of affirming the worldliness of intellectual labor, post-colonial studies openly state their commitment with their political and socioeconomic reality, namely: the reality of the marginalized, the oppressed and the subordinates or “the wretched of earth” in Fanon’s words (1999).

Thus, they account for a basically critical, interventionist and subversive project that is committed not only to researching, but to the political, social and cultural transformation of their research area was well. It is noticeable, however, that post-colonial studies do not relate in a discursive form with the subordinates merely as objects or fields of research and knowledge, but as interlocutors whom they address. Because of this, essentially post-colonial theory accounts for a discourse addressing the other because endeavors to create a space for the voices of those who have “been condemned by history” (Bhabha, 1994). In this way, it intends to help us not only to resist the incursions of epistemic violence, which we will refer to later, but also have their own voice and to obtain the approval of their knowledge and ways of life.

The critical and transformational task of intellectual labor

In the context of public commitment, both projects also intend to carry out their task which is the criticism and pacifist and creative transformation of the social, political and cultural reality. As it will be seen in the two examples we analyze below, the critique made by post-colonial studies, and instead of accepting the categories given, it would be a challenge to the same epistemological contexts that support and enable such categories.

Moreover, Cortina (2003) proposes, from the standpoint of applied ethics, that the task of philosophy is to be fundamentally the capability of establishing a critical point that allows distinguishing between the current and valid, and also enables, potentiating the public use of reason that is fundamental in a pluralist society.

Critique to the “dominating modernity”

Bearing in mind that all human beings have the capability of questioning the reasons we give each other about our coexistence, philosophy for peace conceives philosophy as “a critical exercise”, with which the philosophical reflection will always be a provocation that contests the logics that conceive themselves unquestionable. Philosophy for peace supposes, in this sense, a critical reflection on modernity which, by dialoging with other reflections and critiques to deviations of modern rationality, it will have to become a transmodern philosophy. That is to say, it will have to be self-critical to the unilateral developments of rationality, such as it is toward its Occidentalism, using all the intellectual tools for criticism. Though, without avoiding the philosophic task of having a public commitment with a claim for the capacity to offer reasons and express feelings for all human beings, as well as the critical functions on the reasons we give to why we do what we do.

In this context, the critical theory that is part of a very important methodological component of philosophy for peace. As it is known, the critical theory denounces the reduction of rationality to a mere instrumental rationality because it is based on a reduction of the notion of observation and objectivity. This way, it locates that observed in the social contexts of the very scientists and the broadening of the modern notion of science in the Galilean tradition in the context of certain socioeconomic conditions, which have promoted one particular sort of industrial development, not others, privileging certain social strata and not others.

Philosophy for peace critically examines the scientific and epistemological legacy of modernity and its close relation with the colonial power that has imposed certain sort of cultures over others. It is affirmed, for instance, that in the XIX century there was an interaction between colonization and “civilizing mission” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 105) which tried to take the benefits of education, progress and science to peoples far away, as an ideological discourse that masked more subtle forms of domination.

Philosophy for peace also states that modern science keeps a congenital relationship with the notion of development (which the so-called developed countries carry out regarding those called “underdeveloped”), as well as with a softening of their alliance with racism, sexism, imperialism and colonialism. Therefore, philosophy for peace intends to disclose the epistemological suppositions underlying the developmental project in all its economic, political and cultural aspects.

From a multidisciplinary approach post-colonial studies focus their critique on modernity and its rationality, supposedly illustrated in rethinking the very concept of modernity. Dussel (2000), for example, examines the dominant concept of modernity. According to this concept, modernity is conceived as an emancipation, an “exit” from immaturity by means of reason (Kant, 2005: 21). Moreover, it is presented as a critical process that gives humanity the possibility of a new development that took place mainly in Europe over the 18th century. Dussel (2000) deems Eurocentric, provincial and regional this proposal, as he points at some intra-European phenomena as a starting point for modernity, and he explains their later development without referring any other thing outside Europe.

However, despite the strong rational core and its emancipating spirit, modernity also conveys an irrational process with which the very modernity is seen as a justification for an irrational praxis of violence.³ One of the bases of this irrational process is in the supposition that modern civilization is superior and developed, and that this superiority makes the improvement of “barbaric” and “primitive” cultures into a moral obligation.⁴ Moreover,

3 This appreciation may be noticed, for example, in the affirmation by Montaigne (1967: 208) “we can call them [the non-Europeans] barbaric with respect to the standards of our reason, but not with respect to ourselves, given that we surpass them in all kinds of outrages”.

4 Over the colonial times, the Eurocentric supposition of occidental superiority was supported by thinkers such as Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) himself, who produced a “universal” theory that essentially was a theory of European history in which the rest of the world was seen as objects not subjects. According to Said (1993: 168), for Hegel, Asia and Africa were “static, despotic and irrelevant for worlds’ history”. Later on, Hegel’s theory of history had a heavy influence on the Marxists and humanistic historiography.

when barbaric peoples opposed “the civilizing mission”, the modern praxis was seen justifying the use of violence to destroy the obstacles that hindered modernization.

As demonstrated by post-colonial studies, such contradictions inherent to modernity (which were exposed in the colonial context) were those that have led, considerably, to the criticism of the very modern rationality substantiated in the intellectual and material domination of a “nature” that had been instrumentalized and objectified. By extension, the others (other “races”, ethnicities, women, working classes, et cetera), which were considered mere natural resources to be instrumentalized and utilized, were trapped into the same cycle of domination.

Post-colonial studies defend that any discussion of modernity that disregards the impact of the colonial experience in the formation of “modern” power relationships is not only incomplete, but ideological. All in all, post-colonial studies intend to underscore the persistence of the inheritance of a dominating modern thinking in the modern knowledge systems and political and socioeconomic structures.

Critique to the Eurocentrism of modern rationality

A central tropic on which philosophy for peace and post-colonial studies concur is the stance against imperialism and eurocentrism, and the critical analysis to the occidental forms of producing knowledge and science. As we have pointed out, philosophy for peace commits to renouncing the occidental ethnocentric pride (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 16) and the Eurocentric ideology of power which, so often, has been imposed in the name of universal rationality, and which has become oppressor of other cultures and other ways of being accountable for the norms that rule the behavior of other human beings and other collectivities.

Martínez Guzmán (2001: 76) affirms that “we have been the male indigenous individuals from a place in the world, the Occident of the North, which have modeled a sort of knowledge, of science, which we have considered and imposed as universal”. This is why philosophy for peace tries to reconceptualize the notion of rationality and Occidentalism that makes self-criticism possible regarding the adventures and misadventures that the very occidental rationality has had over history. However, this does not imply a fully renounce to the use of this rationality, because then there would be no possibility for the self-criticism of its European misadventures, and from this standpoint, those who suffer the bewilderment of the Occidentals

on their own flesh. From the post-colonial standpoint, the global critique to the dominating modernity cannot be fully discussed without analyzing other of its constituent elements, this is to say, Eurocentrism. This is to say, if the colonial experience is constituent of the modern experience, it is not possible to realize modernity without approaching this fact, which still feeds a lot of discourses and practices at present.

Quijano (2007: 171) has argued that over the same period in which the European colonial domination consolidated, the cultural complex known as European modernity /rationality. Plus, there is no modernity without coloniality (Escobar, 2007:184). It is necessary to recognize that the appropriation by Europe of the adjective “modern” is a piece of global history of which an integral part is the history of European imperialism” (Chakrabarty, 1992: 352).

The fundamental question is now as follows, is it possible to make a critique of this sort of space outside the discursive space delimited by the occidental modern project? Many seem to agree that it is difficult to carry out this task, for there are no original spaces or non-colonized from which to speak, including post-colonial studies (Venn, 2002: 51). Moreover, as argued by Nandy (1983: xi), particularly colonialism has taken the concept of modern occident from a geographic and temporary entity toward a psychological category. In his opinion, “occident is now everywhere, in Occident and outside in the structures, in the mind”.

In the context of all this intercalation of histories, geographies and knowledge systems, he would state that any critique to modernity or the European modern project shall not suppose any regression to the cultural particularism or ethnocentrism whatsoever. Neither can it avoid approaching the historic legacy and epistemological domination of the occidental knowledge systems and the forms of epistemic and cultural violence they generate. As stated by Chakrabarty (2000: 16), the “European thinking at once indispensable and unsuitable to help us reflect on the experiences of the political modernity in non-occidental nations”.

Recognizing that this thinking is now a common heritage that affects us all, Chakrabarty (2000) supports that the task of the post-colonial critic is to research how this thin king may be transformed and renewed from its margins for their interests. This stance supports on the call by Quijano (2007: 177), who proposed “an epistemological decolonialization”, headed to prepare the road for a new cultural communication and an interchange of experiences as the basis for another rationality, which legitimately aspire to universality.

Cultural, symbolic and epistemological violence

In this context of critique, philosophy for peace broadens its conceptual scope to include structural violence as an analysis category to approach the inequalities deeply rooted in the social and economic structures. This introduction of structural violence, which enters in the context of analysis of negative and positive peace as alternatives to direct and structural violence, is joined by the discussion of the most legitimizing and subtlest symbolical violence in the two sorts of violence.

This form of violence is also called cultural violence (Galtung 1990), which would comprise all the discourses, symbols, metaphors, representations, patriotic or religious anthems, which will try to legitimize either structural or direct violence. It is also described as epistemic violence that leads to the “annihilation” of other forms of knowledge that are considered female, primitive or savage” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 119). From philosophy for peace, philosophically, one of the most relevant aspects of this sort of violence is that it makes moral responsibility opaque.

As it will be seen further in the text, post-colonial theoreticians use the concept of “epistemic violence” in different but interrelated ways, which focus on the material effects caused by knowledge in their subjects and objects. By and large, in their analyses of the European colonial expansion era and the discourses associated, the post-colonial theoreticians have underscored the importance of knowledge production (the discourses produced by the colonizer on the colonized) for the success of colonial domination.

This way, they analyze how the colonizers carried out a series of epistemic violence in the shape of some modes of knowledge that enabled and rationalized colonial domination from the European standpoint, producing certain ways to see the “other” societies and cultures, whose legacies endure nowadays (Said, 1978; Young, 1990; Spivak, 1990; Bhabha, 1983).

The language and the discourses have a leading role in the production, codification and exercise of epistemic violence. Butler (1997: 43) emphasizes the word that not only names but also makes in a certain way what it names. That is to say, epistemic violence takes place when the nominal “objectivity” has repercussions in the subject. However, for epistemic violence to work, an intellectual paradigm in which the others are seen as something less than human and irrevocably deficient by nature is needed. Césaire (1972) explains that colonizers become accustomed to seeing the colonized as animals and start treating them as such. This is, in fact, an example of what philosophy for peace describes as the fact of making responsibility for others opaque.

From a post-colonial standpoint, this kind of paradigm partly came from the appearance of social, human and natural sciences, which were born in the European Illustration, which justified various theories on “race” and the “unquestionable” supposition of the superiority of the “white race” over the rest.

These disciplines created a set of theories and concepts that were established as something regulatory, with which all exceptions might be explained. This led to the formation of dominant epistemes⁵, that is to say hegemonic structures of knowledge united to the power that appear as something evident for their carriers even if their archaeology has shown that they are clearly socially and historically built in a context of submission and domination.

According to Quijano (2007), colonial exploitation is legitimized by a colonial imaginary that establishes immeasurable differences between the colonizer and colonized. The notions of “race” and “culture” work as a taxonomic device that generates opposing identities. The colonized thus appear as the “other of the reason”, which justifies the exercise of a disciplinary power against them by the colonizer. As demonstrated by Fanon (1999), wrongdoing, barbarism and incontinence are “identity” traits of the colonized, while kindness, civilization and rationality are proper to the colonizer. These identities are in relation of exteriority and mutually exclude. Communication between them cannot take place in the sphere of culture (as it is supposed that the codes are incommensurable), but in the sphere of pure violence dictated by the colonial power.

As it is invariably a companion in a dominant power relationship that becomes its legitimizing ideology, epistemic violence is also indissolubly related to dominant epistemes that introduce, establish and codify certain concepts (and not others) as something relevant, true or possible, without disclosing their hidden interests. Epistemic violence, this way, is seen as a previous condition for the explicit and direct uses of violence that may be direct or structural.

It is convenient to point out, at this moment, that seemingly epistemic violence may be similar in their formulation to cultural violence, as proposed by Studies and Research for Peace. It is possible to recall that Galtung (1990: 291) defines cultural violence as “those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence [...] which can be utilized to justify and legitimize direct or

5 In Foucault’s analysis on the dynamic of power / knowledge, an episteme is the unified body of theory that tends to privilege some sorts of knowledge, while subjugates others, placing the latter at a lower statute in its hierarchical paradigm (McHoul and Grace, 1995).

structural violence”. However, they are conceptually interchangeable because there is a perceptible difference in their respective emphasis of analyses, with which epistemic violence focuses on certain forms of knowledge related to certain historic and social realities, while cultural violence approaches general culture. The analysis we make below will explain this point further.

By and large, epistemic violence is the systematic discourses, regular and repeated, being hostiles toward alternative epistemologies, intend to deny alterity and subjectivity of others, in a way that it perpetuates the oppression of their knowledge and justifies the domination. That is say, it is the violence exercised through knowledge regimes and epistemic repression of the others, by means of denigrating and invalidating their knowledge by determinate discursive regimes, allegedly “universal”, which represent them and reinvent for themselves.

In the (neo)colonial context, epistemic violence works to condemn knowledge and the practices of indigenous peoples to an epistemic existence derived and subjected. This is made by means of certain measures that encompass contrasting the indigenous forms of knowledge with scientific knowledge that supposedly is “truer”, matching “alterity” with ignorance, hiding, denying or stripping the indigenous forms of knowledge of any legitimate meaning, and classify them as “childish” and mere “superstition”.

An important post-colonial critique, associated to the introduction and elaboration of the concept of epistemic violence, is that of Gayatri Spivak. In her works (1985; 1993a; 1993b), she insists on the persistence of “epistemic violence” as a product of the colonial process in which Europe establishes as the indeterminate “subject” who has the explanatory power, while the colonized become the others, that is to say, mere “objects” with no voice nor power.

Spivak (1985) extends the meaning of epistemic violence to refer to the complicity in the persistent construction of the other, “as the shadow of the ego”. She criticizes these intellectuals and activists, mainly in the first world, who state that they may represent subordinate individuals and speak on their behalf, or have an objective standpoint to analyze the topic of the subordinate. However, their representations only silence subordinate individuals because they are represented by others. What Spivak (1993a) intends is to propose an epistemology that considers the subordinate not only as a case study, but as a source of knowledge and a subject with a proper voice and is capable of resettling themselves.

Feminist ecologist Vandana Shiva (1991 and 1997) examines other forms of epistemic violence related to the nature of reductionist modern

science. At first, she points out the link between modern science and violence is obvious, considering the fact that 80% of all scientific output deals with industry and openly orients toward large-scale violence. The author advocates that modern science is violent, even in the pacific spheres as, for example, health and agriculture, where the declared objective of scientific research is not violence, but human wellbeing. To demonstrate its superiority on the alternative modes of knowledge and to be the only legitimate mode of knowledge, reductionist science resorts to repressing and falsifying facts, and thus violence is exercised: violence against the subject of knowledge, the object of knowledge, the beneficiary of the knowledge and the knowledge itself.

Shiva (1997) also approaches scientific knowledge and unveils its underlying suppositions. According to popular belief, modern science consists in the discovery of the properties of nature according to a “scientific method” that produces “objective”, “neutral” and “universal” knowledge. This vision of modern science as an impartial description of reality as such is a false assumption because the fact-reality dichotomy is a creation of modern reductionist science, which is, in point of fact, an epistemic response to a determinate set of values and political interests. It is plain to see there are many coincidences between this critique of modern science and that made by philosophy for peace, as we explained before.

Well now, if philosophy for peace teaches us that opposition to cultural violence is similar regarding epistemic violence. However, firstly, there is need to recognize that the various forms of epistemic violence frequently represent a set of naturalized prejudices that structurally and constantly insert into epistemological, cultural and social paradigms. The fact of trying to go beyond those powerful paradigms would imply an important intellectual change from an ethnocentric paradigm to a more open and inclusive one, based on mutual recognition and dialoguing interculturality.

The reconstruction labor

After this deconstruction work, we now move to the reconstruction labor of the two projects by means of analyzing the topic of recognition and the endeavor to build a culture for peace; topics that are much present in their respective proposals. It is worth underscoring that the post-colonial project not only focuses exclusively on criticizing and deconstructing the (neo-) colonial discourses, but also the attempt to propose alternatives to approach the important questions of culture and identity in a constructive manner. For

its part, philosophy for peace does not limit to such deconstruction effort, but complements with a reconstruction endeavor. In words by Martínez Guzmán (2001: 174), philosophy for peace “does not content expressing how intelligent we are, showing how bad everything is” but is committed to the reconstruction of the normative horizon of what we might be able to do. That is to say, it is about rebuilding the normative horizon that makes our competences explicit to carry out things and increase pacific coexistence.

Recognition policies

As we have explained before, philosophy for peace states that we human beings are a “discursive community”, where everyone is an interlocutor with competence and rights to communicate and be accountable for what we do to each other because the origin experience is an attribution of responsibility. That is to say, we only recognize ourselves as people-interlocutors in the universal recognition of every individual as interlocutors with the same communication rights. Philosophy for peace explains that violence begins with the lack of mutual recognition as beings competent for communication. This is to say, violence means lack of recognition of some human beings as valid interlocutors, of communication and comprehension of the illocutionary force with which we say things as well as leave the performative attitude that commits and makes us responsible for what we say and do to one another.

As previously indicated, post-colonial theory addressed the “wretched of earth” to disclose and alleviate their alienation and reification as the “others”. The great effect of colonialism has been objectifying the others and put them into racial, ethnical and gender categories by means of the various modalities of epistemic violence we have exposed before.

The first attempt of the post-colonial theory is to counteract such objectification stressing the fact that subordinates need to be respected and validated by means of explicit acts of recognition. However, post-colonial theories warn that we have to be attentive to the fact that demanding recognition -not only in the individual but also cultural sphere- sometimes might become an exercise in the production of categories in which the existing social relationships have been unfairly codified. That is to say, looking for emancipation in recognition without questioning the normative sources of privilege in any given system may in fact have the effect of reinforcing social injustice. In a different context, Butler (1990:15) states that:

The power relations that condition and limit dialogic possibilities need first to be interrogated. Otherwise, the model of dialogue risks relapsing into a liberal model that

assumes that speaking agents occupy equal positions of power and speak with the same presuppositions.

Upon these perspectives, she would propose that poorly recognizing or “the lack of recognition” (Taylor 1994) -in the individual and collective spheres- is to deny the condition of interlocutor in social interaction, as a consequence of certain configurations of power relations. This is what philosophy for peace expresses as an act of violence, which means the lack of recognition of some human beings for some others as valid interlocutors.

Toward culture for peace and constructive cultural transformation

Other key element in the reconstruction labor of philosophy for peace and post-colonial studies is to deepen into the discussion on culture for peace and propose conceptual frameworks and constructive forms of carrying out the interaction and cultural transformation.

Philosophy for peace conceives “culture” as the sum of “the forms in which we human beings cultivate our relationships with ourselves, the environment and nature” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 256). In this sense, culture for peace tries to deconstruct moral opacity and make the responsibility we have due to the way we manage our relationships explicit. Philosophy for peace puts forward that as citizens of the world, we human beings share the property of the land, we can interchange us, nourish intercultural relationships, though none has the right to cultivate the lands and lives of others without taking them into account. Against colonization as conquest and settlement with no consent, cultural interchange, the right to interculturality and interlocution are asserted as a war to take the affected into account.

Instead of undoing cultures violently, in the name of a better culture, interculturality is proposed as an interpellation between cultures. Owing to this, it is insisted that the right to interculturality is the right to mutual interpellation between cultures and, therefore, it is based on the value of being discussed and contested, and not on the relativist attribution of the same value for all the cultures.

It is evident that we have the right to enthuse with how we imagine our roots and the various trends and stories that are our identities. However, on balance, all our identities are “impure”. For it to be, we have to be educated to take up a hybrid identity (Omar, 2008) instead of a pure, which shows the complexity of cultures, human beings and the histories that partake of the formation of our individual and cultural identities. For the want of recognition for our hybridity by means of reaffirming a “pure” identity which

either is “against” or “with” may turn our identities into “assassing identities” (Maalouf, 1999).

This makes philosophy for peace affirm that “we need be impure to make peace” (Martínez Guzmán, 2001: 291); which does not mean to uproot from our own cultural and even political identity of our own community. On the contrary, the best way to look for recognition for our collective identity is based on the pacific struggle for the recognition of multiple ways of life and the right to hospitality of those who emigrate or immigrate willingly, or much worse, out of need. However, having a hybrid identity will not save ourselves from the responsibility regarding the particularities of our own community.

In this context, philosophy for peace proposes education for peace and interculturality. This pedagogical endeavor starts from the need to deepen into the origin of our notions of culture and their relation with the responsibility and liberty of human beings to make things unto us in many ways and be accountable to one another. That is to say, education for peace and interculturality must study and make explicit the ways in which we human beings learn to “make peace”, take up responsibilities for the way in which we care for relations between ourselves and nature.

Education for peace has to be an education that comprises all the levels and modalities of conventional and nonconventional teaching, and from the everyday experience from our very own ways of understanding our life. Moreover, education for peace means reciprocal education, not unilateral from the expert to the learner. A collective educated for peace is understood as one community of communication that assumes mutual recognition of competences or capabilities to reach agreements.

Education for peace proposed by philosophy for peace has to be provocative, impertinent and subversive as well, in the sense of demonstrating, against the allegedly realistic affirmations that the real is that the things we human beings do to each other may have many different forms and that some are pacific, fair, tender. That is to say, it is about rebuilding the ways in which we can live in peace and recover all the powers for peacemaking.

From a post-colonial perspective, the issue of hybridity, which is also accounted for in philosophy for peace, is of the utmost importance in this context. In addition to being an analytical category that breaks the epistemic wall of incommensurability of people and cultures, the intellectual and cultural hybridity is a reality that has to be normatively emphasized to take interculturality to a valuable and mutual recognition of everyone’s dignity to potentiate a pacific coexistence and the creative transformation of our diverse cultures. That is to say, working educatively is necessary to go from

hybridity (factual) toward hybridity (value and critique) up to making it a “cultural imperative” that implies the moral obligation of promoting dialogue between those culturally different to concur on the recognition of a common core of shared values upon which coexistence and interculturality may rest.

As regards education for peace and interculturality, post-colonial perspective especially stresses the need to carry out a critical approximation to the entire educational project. Owing to the intimate relation between power and school as a socializing agent of knowledge and values, it is essential to be aware that producing a deep criticism to the conditions of knowledge production, of the education institutions and their role in producing conceptual apparatuses, know-hows, certain sorts of awareness and ideological orientations. Education for peace has to be different from the conventional ways of education and its normalizing logic. If it is not so, it may lead to the mere fortification of the existing order and the preservation of the invisibility of epistemic violence, even if it tries to give the silenced a voice, and face the injustice suffered by the marginalized.

Conclusion

With a view to starting a dialogue between the post-colonial epistemological set and the principles of the proposal from philosophy for peace, this article has tried to research the possible concurring points between the two projects with a view to exploring their respective contributions for education for peace and the creative cultural transformation.

In this context, at first an introduction to philosophy for peace was made, especially stressing its definition of philosophy as the autonomous use of reason that enables us to ask for responsibilities directly to ourselves for what we do to one another and nature. On the basis of this definition, philosophy for peace has been put forward as a normative reconstruction of the competences of human beings for peacemaking with vigilant attention to the reasons and sentiments expressed in the various peace researches.

Considering the comparative study of the key topics of both projects, it has been verified that post-colonial studies and philosophy for peace share a concern regarding occidental epistemology, precisely the modern conception of science and its implication in generating various ways of violence.

As exposed in these two projects, this quantitativist, Eurocentric and reductionist conception of science has had many violent repercussions mainly on those who have been perceived by occidental culture as “non-

European”, “female”, “primitive” and “underdeveloped”. Owing to this, the two projects insist on the need to criticize and undermine this idea of science that made Europe to extend beyond its borders with a view to conquering, colonizing and slaving many peoples and cultures almost everywhere in the world. Supporting on de-constructivist methodologies, both projects intend to rebuild and recover such knowledge has been infra-valued by science and the modern discourse as it is primitive. Moreover, the critical alliance existing between post-colonial studies and philosophy for peace is clear, particularly as regards the critique to Eurocentrism of modern occidental science, which is related to a hegemonic knowledge and many forms of domination such as colonialism and neocolonialism.

Additional to the emphasis and critique to the hegemonic knowledge systems and the violence they generate, post-colonial studies and philosophy for peace also carry out a reconstruction task by means of the analysis of the topic of recognition and the endeavor to build culture for peace and constructive cultural transformation. In this context, emphasis is made on promoting education for peace that is provocative, impertinent and subversive in its attempt to rebuild the ways in which we can live in peace and recover the powers for peacemaking. That is to say, an education that tries to rebuild a regulatory horizon that makes our competences for peacemaking explicit and increases the pacific coexistence and transforms the conflicts in a constructive and creative manner in a world that increasingly becomes more globalized and interrelated.

References

- Althusser, Louis (1971), “Ideology and ideological state apparatuses”, en Althusser, Louis, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, England: New Left Books. Maalouf, Amin (1999), *Identidades asesinas*, Spain: Alianza.
- Bhabha, Homi (1983), “Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism”, in Barker, Francis *et al.* [eds.] (1983), *The Politics of Theory*, England: University of Essex.
- Bhabha, Homi (1994), *The Location of Culture*, England: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1990), *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, England: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1997), *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, England: Routledge.
- Césaire, Aimé (1972), *Discourse on Colonialism*, Estados Unidos: Monthly Review Press.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (1992), “Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History”, in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000), *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, United States: Princeton University Press.

- Cortina, Adela (2003), *Ética mínima*, Spain: Tecnos.
- Dussel, Enrique (2000), "Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism", in *Nepantla: Views from South*, vol. 1, no. 3, United States: Duke University Press.
- Escobar, Arturo (2007), "Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise", in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Fanon, Frantz (1999), *Los Condenados de la Tierra*, Spain: Txalaparta.
- Foucault, Michel (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, England: Harvester Press.
- Galtung, Johan (1990), "Cultural violence", in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, United States: Sage Publishing.
- Gandhi, Leela (1998), *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, England: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Kant, Immanuel (2005), *Ensayos sobre la paz, el progreso y el ideal cosmopolita*, Spain: Ediciones Cátedra.
- Martínez Guzmán, Vicent (2001), *Filosofía para hacer las paces*, Spain: Icaria.
- Mchoul, Alec and Grace, Wendy (1995), *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, England: UCL Press limited.
- Montaigne, Michel de (1967), "Des cannibales", in *Oeuvres complètes*, France: Gallimard-Pléiade.
- Nandy, Ashis (1983), *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, England: Oxford University Press.
- Omar, Sidi (2008), *Los estudios post-coloniales: una introducción crítica*, Spain: Universitat Jaume I.
- Quijano, Aníbal (2007), "Coloniality and modernity/rationality", in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Said, Edward (1978), *Orientalism*, United States: Vintage Books.
- Said, Edward (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, United States: Vintage Books.
- Shiva, Vandana (1991), *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology, and Politics*, England: Zed Books.
- Shiva, Vandana (1997), "Western Science and its Destruction of Local Knowledge", in Rahnema, Majid and Bawtree, Victoria [eds.], *The Post-Development Reader*, England and United States: Zed Books.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1985), "The Rani of Sirmur", in Barker, Francis *et al.* [eds.], *Europe and Its Others*, England: University of Essex.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1990), *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, England: Routledge.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1993a), "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura [eds.], *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, England: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1993b), *Outside in The Teaching Machine*, England: Routledge.
- Taylor, Charles (1994), "The Politics of Recognition", in Taylor, Charles [ed.], *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, United States: Princeton University Press.
- Venn, Couze (2002), "Refiguring subjectivity after modernity", in Walkerdine, Valerie [ed.], *Challenging Subjects: Critical Psychology for a New Millennium*, United States: Palgrave.

Young, Robert (1990), *White Methodologies: Writing History and the West*, England and United States: Routledge.

Sidi M. Omar holds a European doctorate in Peace and Conflict Studies of Universitat Jaume I de Castellón (UJI). A researcher in Instituto Interuniversitario de Desarrollo Social y Paz (IUDESP) and UNESCO Chair of philosophy for peace in UJI, in which context he develops his docent activity as an invited professor in th university master in international studies for peace, conflicts and development of the same university. He is also an invited professor in Universitat Oberta in Catalunya, Spain and the university of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Main research lines: post-colonial and cultural studies, studies for peace, conflicts and development, violent Salafism and political violence in Northern Africa and the Middle East. Recent publications: Omar, Sidi M. (2017), “Paz e Interculturalidad: Algunos planteamientos para construir culturas de paz”, in Espejel Carbajal, Claudia and González de la Vara, Martín [eds.], *La Paz Alterada*, México: El Colegio de Michoacán; Omar, Sidi M. (2015), “Más allá del ‘choque de ignorancias’: interculturalidad y post-colonialismo”, in *THÉMATICA, Revista de Filosofía*, no. 52, Spain: Universidad de Sevilla.