



*Communicative Solidarity and Recognition: Contributions of Philosophy for Peace
to the Unesco Project of New Humanism*

COMMUNICATIVE SOLIDARITY AND RECOGNITION: CONTRIBUTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY FOR PEACE TO THE UNESCO PROJECT OF NEW HUMANISM



Solidaridad comunicativa y reconocimiento: contribuciones de la filosofía para la paz al proyecto Unesco de un nuevo humanismo

Solidariedade comunicativa e reconhecimento: contribuições da filosofia para a paz ao projeto Unesco de um novo humanismo

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this article is to explain the contribution of the Unesco Cátedra of Philosophy for Peace to the Unesco project of a new humanism. The paper presents two central categories around which philosophy for peace contributes to the development of the renewal of humanism, namely: communicative solidarity and recognition. In this research domain, the ethical principles that put these two analytical categories into play are exposed..

Keywords: Communicative solidarity, recognition, philosophy for peace, new humanism, non-violent social transformation.

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RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es explicar la contribución que hace la Cátedra Unesco de Filosofía para la Paz al proyecto Unesco de un nuevo humanismo. El artículo presenta dos categorías centrales en torno a las cuales la filosofía para la paz contribuye al desarrollo de la renovación del humanismo, a saber: la solidaridad comunicativa y el reconocimiento. En este dominio de investigación, se exponen los principios éticos que ponen en juego estas dos categorías analíticas.

Palabras clave: Solidaridad comunicativa, reconocimiento, filosofía para la paz, nuevo humanismo, transformación social no violenta.

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RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é explicar a contribuição que faz a Cátedra Unesco de Filosofia para a Paz ao projeto Unesco de um novo humanismo. O artigo apresenta duas categorias centrais em torno às quais a filosofia para a paz contribui ao desenvolvimento da renovação do humanismo, a saber: a solidariedade comunicativa e o reconhecimento. Em este domínio de pesquisa, expõem-se os princípios éticos que põem em jogo estas duas categorias analíticas..

Palavras chave: Solidariedade comunicativa, reconhecimento, filosofia para a paz, novo humanismo, transformação social não violenta.

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INTRODUCTION

In the December 2011th editorial of *The UNESCO Courier*, that talks about UNESCO's project for a new humanism, Irina Bokova¹ stated: "Humanistic values are UNESCO's philosophical foundation ... humanism is an idea that we must reinvent" (2011, pg, 5). In this same editorial, Bokova defined UNESCO's project for a new humanism using two postulates: 1) the understanding of progress as the growth of the knowledge that societies have about themselves and their possibilities of developing peaceful models of coexistence and 2) a definition of "justice" based on the dynamic equilibrium between ideological pluralism and the contingent regulations produced by liberal democratic societies and thus account for the open, progressive and unfinished nature of justice.

In this article, my intention is to explain the contribution made by the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace to UNESCO's project for a new humanism. To do this, I will present two analytical categories, communicative solidarity and recognition, highlighting their potential to guide democratic processes of non-violent social transformation.² These two categories will be

explained by using the epistemological framework developed by the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace that subscribes to the tradition of critical-communicative theory.³ Within this epistemological framework, and with the overall objective of UNESCO's project for a new humanism: "Combining scientific commitment with truth and ethical commitment with justice" (Bokova, 2010, pg.3), this article will work on three specific lines: 1) redefine the relationship between moral development, deliberative culture and democracy, 2) demarcate an ethical-normative horizon capable of integrating the plurality of ideologies that shape liberal democracies' political landscape and 3) propose a model of social scientific intervention that helps energize democratic processes of non-violent social transformation.

To organize these research lines, the article is structured in three sections: 1) the first section presents the epistemological foundations of a philosophy for peace, starting from a dialogue with Levinas' ethics, which reveals the link between the notions of *communicative solidarity*, *violence* and *moral responsibility*; 2) the second section elaborates on the dialogue that philosophy for peace has with Honneth's social theory of recognition and

¹ Irina Bokova has been the Director-General of Unesco since November 15, 2009.

² We use the concept of *non-violence* in its socio-political sense, so we distance ourselves from the use of this concept in other broader levels, for example, the religious meaning it acquires in the Buddhist religion. In particular, we speak of non-violence as a political strategy that seeks to generate a social, moral and cultural transformation as regulations, without the use of violence. For a deeper inquiry on the uses of non-violence as a sociopolitical concept in the Unesco Chair in Philosophy for Peace, I recommend the works of Ortega and Pozo (2005) and López (2001).

³ The material produced by Vicent Martínez, honorary director and founder of the Unesco Chair of Philosophy for Peace, around philosophy's *linguistic turn* and *pragmatic turn*, have laid the epistemological foundations of a philosophy for peace. The *linguistic turn* inaugurates an ontology that posits that language codifies thought as well as human will, that is, language codifies thought and action. The use of *the linguistic turn* and *pragmatic turn* in ethical and political philosophy

allowed the emergence of a critical-communicative epistemology (Apel, 1991, Habermas, 2010, Martínez, 1999). Within this framework, dialogue is conceived as the basic mechanism for the coordination of thought and social action. Based on this axiomatic principle, critical-communicative epistemology argues that free dialogue produces its own open and dynamic regulations, which are limited by the conditions that make dialogue possible: veracity, contrastability, fallibility and a pretention of consensus. The critical potential of this epistemology lies in its ability to point out the barriers that block dialogue between the institutional sphere and the demands for justice generated within civil society. Another critical dimension of communicative epistemology is its ability to identify fundamentalist positions with respect to ultimate and absolute conceptions of justice, which operate against the liberal and democratic principle of tolerance towards ideological pluralism. For a more profound research on the foundations of critical-communicative epistemology within the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, I recommend the works of Martínez (2010) and Forastelli (2013).

examines the link between the ideas of indignation, conflict and recognition, and 3) the last section goes back to the arguments of the two previous sections in order to place them in relation to the practical potential of the project for a new humanism, in relation to social scientific the work ethic.

COMMUNICATIVE SOLIDARITY, VIOLENCE AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

In its dialogue with Levinas' ethics (Levinas, 2003), philosophy for peace has produced communicative solidarity as a category, in which communication's pragmatic dimension, that is, its consequences for ethical and political life stand out. From this linguistic-pragmatic approach, the idea of communicative solidarity *serves* as a prescriptive category that refers back to an inclusive dialogic methodology that guides collective decision-making processes of a democratic nature (Martínez, 2001). In this line of interpretation, Vicent Martínez⁴ (2001, p. 45), defines communicative solidarity by the use of a *counterfactual* argument, and maintains that communicative solidarity is broken at the moment when, socially or institutionally, we block the possibility of particular subjects (individual or collective) expressing their opinion on a decision that affects one of the dimensions that constitute their dignity: bodily dignity, legal dignity or cultural dignity. In line with this definition, this author identifies the rupture of the communicative solidarity as the fundamental level where the moral

denigration of human dignity originates and, therefore, the origin of the violence:

Solidarity originates in human relationships when communication takes place. Violence begins with the rupture of this communicative solidarity, that is, violence begins with the lack of recognition of one another as competent beings able to communicate and express our opinion on the issues that affect us [italics in the original] (Martínez, 2005, pp. 72-73).

In collaboration with Irene Comins Mingol and Sonia París Albert, researchers of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, Martínez has delved into the idea of the dialogical and intersubjective formation of moral responsibility:

In our research we face a foundational level that precedes the ego's self-reflexive individuation in its concrete form. It is a foundation that connects the ego with the other egos prior to the self-reflexive individuation of any ego. The topic of intersubjectivity shifts from an I/OTHER position, to a question of co-constitution of monads⁵ (Paris, Comins and Martínez, 2011, pp. 343).

This research on the dialogical and intersubjective formation of moral responsibility is the result of an up-to-date reading of Levinas' ethics. According to Levinas himself, the formation of moral conscience is developed with the praxis of actively listening to the demands of the other (Levinas, 2003, page 58). Thus, according to Levinas, genuine moral learning "is the result of a gesture of approximation to the other who is demanding justice" (2006, p.20). In this line of ethical research, the dialogue between the philosophy for peace and Levinas' ethics is articulated around a fundamental thesis that Martínez formulates as follows: "Moral responsibility develops in the mutual exercise of

subjectivism, a monad is a simple and autonomous unit of understanding which, from its perspective, represents the totality of the relations that make up the world (Audi, 2004, p.591).

⁴ Vicent Martínez is honorary director and founder of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace.

⁵ In the Leibnizian philosophical system, which together with Cartesianism constitutes the origins of rationalism and modern

giving ourselves and asking ourselves for reasons on what we do to one another" (Martinez, 2010, p.14). Martínez (2011) referred to Levinas' dialogical ethics in a conference entitled "Reflections for New Humanisms," and emphasized that the renewal of humanism is due to a twofold awareness: on the one hand, recognition of the *factum* of human suffering in the present forms of inequality, discrimination or violence; and, recognition of the ethical challenge that these suffering experiences entail for those who are involved in politics and the social sciences.

This reflection that Martinez mentioned about new humanism, refers to a complex field of dialogical relations,⁶ in which discourses produced by social groups that suffer situations of injustice call on scientific and political discourses that seek to offer solutions to such situations. According to Levinas's ethical-dialogical approach, it could be argued that this dialogical exercise constitutes the mechanism that guides democracy towards excellence, "whose basic liberalism corresponds to the ethical, deep and incessant questioning of justice" (Levinas, 1993, 39).

INDIGNATION, CONFLICT AND RECOGNITION

Standing in the theoretical tradition of critical-communicative epistemology, the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace is developing an analytical framework that researches the legitimacy of institutional frameworks of justice in relation to social consensus/dissent that are configured in the sphere of civil society, that is, in the social,

participatory and deliberative space in which public opinion is formed (Habermas, 2006, Martínez, 2008).

From the critical-communicative approach, philosophy for peace is inclined towards a model of political praxis that refers back to the ideal of a liberal democracy socially articulated by a deliberative culture. In this context, the study of social struggles and civic activism initiatives that question the regulatory and cultural frameworks that normalize situations of injustice, becomes particularly relevant. Within this theoretical field an area of intersection is formed between philosophy for peace and social theory of recognition, in relation to researching the demands for justice that emerge from situations of inequality, discrimination or violence (Honneth, 2012, Paris, 2015). In this area of theoretical intersection, the positive conceptualization of conflict constitutes one of the most relevant convergence nodes between philosophy for peace and social theory of recognition:

1. Philosophy for peace includes conflict as an inherent part of democratic processes of non-violent social transformation, provided that conflict is resolved through political procedures based on negotiation, dialogue and persuasion (Paris, 2009, p.23).
2. Social theory of recognition understands conflict as the condition for the progressive evolution of the regulatory and cultural frameworks that regulate social relations. In this line of interpretation, Honneth (1996) argues that historically the struggles of oppressed groups have contributed to the

institutional sphere opens up to the discourses civil society produces (Comins y Paris, 2012; Martínez, 2009).

⁶ In the critical-communicative epistemological framework in which philosophy for peace is situated, democracy acquires its legitimacy according to the channels of communication that the

institutionalization of principles of justice that nowadays form the basis of liberal democratic constitutions. Consistent with this interpretation of the conflict, Honneth argues: "The struggles for the recognition of groups who have been historically marginalized from the system of universal rights, beyond defending a particular emancipation interest, have contributed to the perfection of a universal idea of justice (1996, p. 5).

Within this conceptualization of conflict lies a dialectical tension that is related to the way in which social struggles have historically contributed towards the limits of the universality of justice. This tension has a twofold potential:

On the one hand, this dialectical tension permits the denunciation of the imperfection of historical and contingent forms of justice; at the same time, this tension opens a process of revision and transformation of the factual frameworks of justice, towards a utopian horizon of justice, gradually and progressively correcting situations of inequality, discrimination and violence.

On the other hand, this dialectical tension carries the following risk: the plurality of ideologies that question the limits of the universality of justice (always imperfect, contingent and unfinished) provoke a fragmentation of the social conscience of the notion of *justice* and in this way, segments the collective understanding of the basic consensus principles, upon which any society aspires to reach an agreement. This risk could translate into a scenario where ideologies, unable to find points of convergence on which to begin a process of dialogue, violently clash.

Another of the nodes that links the analysis of philosophy for peace and social theory of recognition can be placed in the domain of research pertaining the moral motivations involved in social struggles. In this order of inquiry, Honneth locates a foundational level that refers social struggles to collective experiences where dignity is harmed; experiences that he himself conceptualizes from the dichotomy recognition/disparagement. In the words of Honneth himself: "The motives of rebellion and social resistance are constituted in a space where there is a moral experience of denigration, that springs from the harming of deep expectations of recognition" (1996, 264).

In this level of analysis on the moral motivations involved in social struggles, I consider the ethical investigations of Paris (2013, 2015) to be especially relevant, because they systemically relate the notions of *indignation*, *conflict* and *recognition*. In dialogue with Honneth's social theory of recognition, Paris designs a tripartite typology of the different modes of indignation that underlie the organization of social struggles. Paris (2015, p. 63) distinguishes three experiences of indignation: 1) indignation caused by injury that denigrates our bodily dignity (or that of others), 2) indignation caused by injury that denigrates our legal dignity (or that of others) and 3) indignation caused by injury which denigrates our cultural dignity (or that of others).

Beyond the convergence nodes that link Paris' (2015, pg. 64-65) and Honneth's (2011, pp. 40-43) research, I believe that the Paris' proposal adds a differential element to Honneth's theory.

For his part, Honneth conceptualizes the political subject "as an existentially involved subject, who

does not take cognizance of the states of sensitivity in a neutral way, but is affected by them in relation to himself" (2007, pp. 76-77).

While, on the other hand, through an up-to-date reading of Strawson's (1974) phenomenology of moral feelings, Paris (2013) proposes that commitment to the transformation of situations of injustice is not exclusively a matter of a sentiment of indignation provoked by an experience of moral denigration suffered in the first person, but solidarity also plays a very important role when we commit ourselves to transforming situations of injustice.

PHILOSOPHY FOR PEACE, NEW HUMANISM AND NON-VIOLENT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In this last section, I will return to the reflections on communicative solidarity and recognition, in order to situate them with respect to my own vision of how the renewal of humanism challenges a series of epistemological and practical dilemmas related to the ethical commitment of scientific work.

Once again using the overall goal of UNESCO's project for a new humanism, "combining scientific commitment with truth and an ethical commitment to justice" (Bokova, 2010, p. 3), I think one of the main dilemmas that this project faces would be defined by the quandary between science and politics. This dilemma, which in its more classic version has been formulated by Weber's epistemology (1988) and his proposal for a science free of values, is challenged by the philosophy for peace precisely because it is a defense of the social sciences commitment to

solidarity as a central value that should guide the work of social scientists (Cortes, 2014).

In this line of interpretation, philosophy for peace understands that solidarity is the principle that guides ethics in scientific work, especially in the field of social sciences, and in particular, peace studies (Comins, 2008.) This axiological commitment is based on the following postulate: the purpose of peace studies is not the descriptive neutrality of social phenomena, but rather the non-violent management of social conflicts and the design of coexistence models based on respect, tolerance and dialogue (Cortés, 2012, Martínez, 1999).

From my point of view, another of the main dilemmas facing the proposal for a new humanism comes from its twofold commitment, to 1) define a universal idea of justice that allows a minimum common understanding about the need to protect the dignity of all human beings, and 2) exposing the idea of the universality of justice to criticisms formulated by a plurality of ideologies that denounce situations of injustice (inequality, discrimination or violence) suffered by certain social groups (Cortés, 2012, p. 81; Martínez, 2001, p. 173). Philosophy for peace challenges this dilemma by proposing that the social scientist, especially in the field of peace studies, must commit himself towards energizing dialogue and understanding processes between the different ideologies that are fighting the battle to define the scope of the universality of justice (Cortes, 2014, pp. 204-205). In this line of argument, I think Irina Bokova's reflection during the *Round Table on the current situation of humanism*, reinforced this vision pertaining the scientific commitment to the constant renewal of the limits of the universality of

justice: "Justice is not an *a priori* that can simply be applied as a recipe, [justice] is the result of research, of dialogue" (Bokova, 2010, p.4).

Returning to the thread of thoughts on the ethical and epistemic dilemmas that challenge new humanism, I consider that the social scientist, especially in the field of peace studies, should play the role of dialogue enabler between the different stories that dispute the definition of the scope and limits of justice, in a given situation of social conflict. In this sense, I believe that the social scientist has to transcend the university's space and commit himself to *work with* or *influence* the different spheres where collective frames of thought are built and legitimized (or questioned) around the limits and scope of the universality of justice: 1) the media, 2) civic activism spaces where social struggles are organized and 3) the institutional sphere where the regulatory frameworks that regulate social coexistence are designed.

In accordance with the principles of communicative solidarity and recognition, I consider that the renewal of humanism faces the challenge of inscribing minimum ethical commitments that regulate social struggles that question the scope and limits of the universality of justice and thus contribute to non-violent processes of social transformation, based on dialogue, persuasion and negotiation.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article has been to explain how the notions of *communicative solidarity* and *recognition*, produced in the critical-communicative epistemological framework of the UNESCO's

Chair of Philosophy for Peace, contribute to the development of the UNESCO's proposal for a new humanism. This presentation has enabled me to present a certain conception of the social scientist's ethical commitment, especially in the field of peace studies.

The article has profoundly analyzed the nodes of convergence that articulate the dialogue between philosophy for peace, the ethics of Levinas and Honneth's social theory of recognition. This analysis has allowed me to highlight: 1) a conceptualization of the interruption of communicative solidarity as a form of original violence, which would be based on the denigration of the subject's (individual or collective) ability to express a reasoned opinion about a decision that affects his own existence, and 2) a conceptualization of social struggles with respect to the collective reaction against a particular situation of injustice, which underlies an impulse to demand the recognition of the moral dignity of the affected subjects.

This analysis has presented the conflict from its creative dimension, that is, from the possibilities it opens to initiate a process of non-violent social transformation. In this sense, the article has conceptualized conflict as the condition for social progress, since it makes it possible to question both the regulatory frameworks and the moral and cultural frameworks that justify situations of injustice. This conceptualization has delved into: 1) the dialogical dimension of the development of moral conscience and 2) the tension between the pretension of universality of justice in liberal democracies and their exposure to the critique originating in different ideologies that question its universal scope; criticisms that emerge from the

social struggles of groups that denounce situations of injustice that manifest themselves in the forms of inequality, discrimination or violence.

In this expository order, the article finally proposes that, guided by the ethical principles that introduce the categories of communicative solidarity and recognition, the social scientist must commit himself to *work with* or *influence* the different spheres that coordinate collective thought and action processes: 1) the media, 2) spaces for civic activism, and 3) institutional spaces responsible for defining normative frameworks of justice that regulate social coexistence.

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