

TRANSMODERN WARFARE AND TRANSMODERN PEACE:  
TWO FORMS OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN THE  
TRANSMODERN ERA

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This article analyzes the character of war and peace within the context of the transmodern era. There are at least two different approaches to the idea of transmodernity, and their influence has transformed ways of waging war and making peace. Fifth Generation Warfare has emerged as a transmodern military theory based on a set of military strategies attuned to the latest technological innovations. A transmodern approach for making peace has also emerged. Transmodern peace is based upon trans-rationality, which encourages a constant search for “many peaces.” Current global challenges often present a choice between war and peace. Whichever pathway we follow, the outcome will inevitably be influenced by the way we understand transmodernity.

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DISTINCTIVE ASPECTS OF THE TRANSMODERN PARADIGM

In order to understand the conceptual framework on which the notions of transmodern war and peace are based, it is necessary to explain the most essential features of transmodern discourse. Transmodernity is conceptualized as a global transformation process, consisting of a paradigm shift that transcends modernity and postmodernity. The modernity project, formulated in the eighteenth century by philosophers of the Enlightenment, involved developing objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.<sup>1</sup> Thus, modern discourse, using the spheres of science and knowledge, was understood as an attempt, through

PEACE RESEARCH

*The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*

Volume 46, Number 1 (2014): 85-106

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reason—as opposed to metaphysics or religion—to comprehend a unified reality. Postmodernity, on the other hand, addresses a crisis in scientific knowledge and the unitary paradigm proposed by modernity. Constituted as the antithesis of modernity, the postmodern project is a heterogeneous perspective that tries to deconstruct and fragment reality. Thus, postmodernity represents an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge where pre-established rules and familiar categories are reformulated.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, transmodernity is a dialectical synthesis of the modern thesis and postmodern antithesis. Here, the prefix “trans” connotes not only aspects of transformation, but also transcendence beyond the crisis of modernity. The transmodern project accepts both the ethical and political challenges of modernity and postmodern critiques in order to define a new horizon of reflection that can escape nihilism and uncertainty.

The philosophical dimensions of the transmodern paradigm are based on some general principles whose influence generates a strong impact on the political, economic, and cultural components of our current society. One of the most relevant of these philosophical concepts is the idea of rationality. In every period of human history, the determination of ideas such as truth, time, space, and reality corresponds to the activity of our faculty of reason, represented in the concept of rationality. While modernity proposes the tenet of “one reason” to reduce the definition of reality to the existence of one objective truth, postmodernity proposes the deconstruction of this universal principle to demonstrate that there is no specific or objective reason or truth. Transmodernity, in contrast, suggests the concept of trans-rationality to show that there are many possible ways to define the veracity of the objects implicit in our reality. The search for plurality is one of the most relevant features of the transmodern scheme. There is no unified perspective of this model of thought, and it has been developed through a number of different proposals. Diverse approaches have emerged to explain it but they are not coordinated; each theoretical perspective uses a different standpoint to support its own ideas about transmodernity.

Irena Ateljevic has attempted to unify all these approaches,<sup>3</sup> arguing that the reason we do not hear much about the transmodern movement is because it is not centralized under a single unifying name. The transmodern movement, she says, needs a unifying approach that can reflect the original meaning of the term, which is critical of modernity and postmodernity but also draws elements from each. “Different authors use a variety of terms to

capture what can essentially be described as the synchronized phenomenon of emerging higher collective consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> To support this thesis, Ateljevic makes a comparative study of the main researchers in the transmodern movement. She concludes that their writings communicate the common idea of an emerging paradigm shift that will constitute the next cultural development in human history. The authors analyzed in her study appear to agree that this is the fall of the old order and the rise of a new age. Although their approaches take a similar starting point, their proposals diverge in some aspects, hindering any attempt to unify them in one theory.

Further, Ateljevic argues that while authors use different terms to capture the main forces behind the potential of creating the new transmodern world, they have the same expectations regarding inclusion, diversity, partnership, quality of life, sustainability, and universal human rights.<sup>5</sup> However, this aspiration towards unity must maintain the diversity implicit in the authentic transmodern project because plurality is the main factor that constitutes the basis of its development and evolution. For this reason, it is important to highlight both their convergent points and their divergences and contradictions. Although all these authors have taken a similar starting point, the development of their proposals reveals the emergence of two different approaches to transmodernity. One of these approaches is essentially trans-scientific, and considers technology to be the main factor in the configuration of the new transmodern society. In contrast, the transcultural approach proposes that human beings are not controlled by technologies, but rather that technologies are to serve the people. This humanistic perspective includes respect for cultural differences and a recognition of “otherness,”<sup>6</sup> which was suppressed in both modern and postmodern societies.

### *Two Faces of Transmodernity*

Regarding the trans-scientific proposal, Rosa María Rodríguez Magda<sup>7</sup> argues that transmodernity appears as a new paradigm based on a different way of understanding epistemology, since it provides a concept of science and technology that is different from the ideas proposed by modernity and postmodernity. According to Rodríguez Magda, transmodernity consists of a hybrid and totalizing formula, which is represented by digital reason and virtual reality: “The primacy of the virtual places us, after the death of old metaphysics, in the challenges of a new Cyberontology, the hegemony of the digital reason.”<sup>8</sup> Within this new philosophical context, the subject is

no longer stuck in physical and material dimensions, but in the interactive cyber-universe, which gives him or her visibility. The transmodern process implies a computerization movement in which the virtual is the expression of a new formulation of reality based on the development and interaction of technological and computerized artifacts.<sup>9</sup> This technological revolution has also changed the notions of space and reality, which are transformed into the concepts of cyberspace and virtual reality. As a consequence, spatial relations have altered inexorably. The notion of time now has little meaning, while space has been compressed as a result of technological development and can no longer be equated with territoriality, as was formerly the case. Where modernity proposed the concept of reason and postmodernity the notion of deconstruction, transmodernity now suggests the idea of single thought. Similarly, the transmodern discourse postulates some basic principles, among which we can highlight telepresence, instantaneity, transethnic cosmopolitanism, transculturality, and transsexuality.

Marc Luyckx Ghisi,<sup>10</sup> on the other hand, proposes a very different interpretation of transmodernity, which he conceives as a connection between premodernity and modernity. He suggests that we keep the best aspects of modernity but at the same time go beyond them in order to transcend modernity, creating a new model of thinking that makes the notion of progress compatible with tolerance of cultural differences. Further, Luyckx Ghisi argues that transmodernity is based on another epistemology, which conceives of truth as the empty centre of a common table, around which all cultures sit on an equal basis. No one owns or controls this empty truth: "Nobody dominates in this new picture, as today the challenge is not to build a new 'Silicon Valley,' but to get the right vision and to understand the nature of the transformation."<sup>11</sup> This transformation process involves an end to dogmatic religions and includes equality between women and men. Animals and plants are also worthy of respect because they are part of the cosmos. In other words, this transmodern approach establishes a tolerant epistemology. It advocates tolerance of cultural differences in order to help reduce feelings of terror towards "otherness," which he considers the main cause of violence.<sup>12</sup>

Modernity was based on a rational scientific method that tried to provide direct access to the truth. According to Luyckx Ghisi, modernity has given science a "divine status" which is now in complete crisis because people are asking science and technology to build a sustainable world, and

they cannot deliver it. In his view, the transmodern paradigm offers changes to the modern scientific method, which now is useful only in exceptional cases. Transmodernity provides a very different concept of science and technology, which is reoriented towards global citizens' desire for a sustainable and socially-inclusive world. This outlook states that science and technology must recover their human status and contribute to the common welfare. Thus, accordingly, transmodern politics must lean in the direction of non-violent networks of states, which no longer consider war to be an efficient solution. These networks of peace represent a new global political level of nonviolent management between states, seen, for example, in the European Union, which may be the first successful experiment of nonviolence at an international level. Hence, transmodernity has been configured as a new political paradigm that constantly attempts to promote pacifist movements and nonviolence between states.

Against Luyckx Ghisi, Rodríguez Magda considers it inappropriate to reduce transmodernity to a simple dialogue of civilizations or to a model that criticizes the insufficiencies of western modernity. In her view, we must abandon old illusions about the crisis of modernity and imagine a new conceptual and social paradigm. Here transmodernism does not mean multiculturalism or the synthesis of modernity and premodernity, but involves the merging of modernity and postmodernity. This point of view uses "Hegelian logic whereby Modernity, Postmodernity and Transmodernity form a dialectic triad that completes a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis."<sup>13</sup> This process represents a technological and globalized society which already exists in a number of first world countries. In this view, transmodernity is not an NGO for the poorest countries or a new technological utopia or a place for excluded people; it is simply the place where humankind is right now.

### *The Origin of Conflicts within the Transmodern Global Society*

Rodríguez Magda's transmodern approach envisions a single concept involving a transnational scenario where the economy, politics, and culture are considered an interdependent totality. In this scenario, transnational corporations play an essential role because many of them have used this transmodern discourse as the background to pursue their interests. Commonly referred to as the New World Order, this way of thinking attempts to dominate the world's societies by means of a One World Government ruled by a tiny minority of transnational corporations and other elites. In

this world, every human action is strictly monitored and controlled by sophisticated technologies at the service of global organizations involving the most prominent and powerful people in business, banking, finance, politics, education, media, military, and intelligence.

Currently, the global society lies within this dual scenario, between a multipolar and unipolar transmodernity, between respect for diverse wisdoms and the imposition of a single thought. This conceptual divergence is reflected in the social context of globalization. The assumption of transmodernity has implied a transition from modern industrial society to a globalized society. This social shift is a consequence of the technological and political changes that drive the process of economic globalization. The imposition of one discourse over others is a constant that divides the world into regions whose markets are connected through globalization and regions that resist being connected. The interests of the globalist political economy and those of the nationalist political economy are marked by contradictory policies that mean the interests of one group clearly clash with those of the other.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, globalization is still very partial and incomplete. While the world economy may be global, law, regulation, politics, and society are still largely national.<sup>15</sup>

These divergences create a conflict within the same transmodern paradigm. However, the way to transform this conflictive situation depends on the orientation followed by our society. The people of the world can choose the pathway of imposition or the route of intercultural dialogue. Thus transmodernity has two faces and an ambivalent character where two divergent perspectives coexist. The choice of any pathway can be positive or negative, depending on how people handle these situations. The following sections examine how the transmodern paradigm has created a military structure in order to transform conflicts by means of violence, and then examine the transmodern discourse on peace and its initiative towards “many peaces.” In this choice between war and peace, the way we understand transmodernity plays an essential role.

## TRANSMODERN WAR: THE EMERGENCE OF FIFTH GENERATION WARFARE

The character of every military theory is always influenced by different cultural, social, political, philosophical, and scientific factors. The ideas of military theoreticians arise from a complex interplay of scientific,

philosophical, and social influences, and are also affected by their era's major political and military events.<sup>16</sup> Human history is currently facing a globalization phenomenon based upon the social project of transmodernity. For this reason, early twenty-first century military theory has been influenced in part by the transmodern theory of a global society. This type of war, which may be termed transmodern warfare, is closely linked to transmodern politics and economics, and especially to technological breakthroughs. As modern wars took place in an industrial society, and postmodern wars appeared during the postindustrial era, the type of war that characterizes the globalized society may be classified as transmodern warfare.

### *The Complex Hybrid Character of Transmodern Warfare*

The study of transmodernity leads us to an analysis of the new doctrine of war, also known as Fifth Generation Warfare, a term coined by Lieutenant Colonel Stanton S. Coerr.<sup>17</sup> The previous generations of warfare in the modern era build on the war theory described in Karl von Clausewitz's treatise *On War*.<sup>18</sup> He conceptualizes war as an act of force aimed at compelling the enemy to do one's will. This act of domination requires a rational plan, military operations, and strategies to attack the adversary's centre of gravity, devastate the enemy's army, and break its will. However, victory in battle is not enough, and the success of warfare depends on reaching a political stage where nations and states play an important role.

This concept of war underlies the development of modern theories of war and the classifications of periods of warfare proposed by William S. Lind and colleagues. They divide warfare in the modern era into four generations. While the first three generations involve inter-state warfare, the fourth generation involves conflicts between states and non-states. First Generation Warfare, characterized by Napoleonic tactics and technologies, consists of the disposition of forces in lines or columns to form mass armed forces. Second Generation Warfare was a result of technological improvements in firearms and the development of communications. The Prussian Army, with its operational ideas and technological factors, was the best expression of this generation. Third Generation Warfare was represented by the First and Second World Wars, which shifted the tactical as well as the operational focus. While this was a response to an increase in battlefield firepower, it also increased maneuvering capacity. Fourth Generation Warfare appeared after the end of the Cold War, when interstate wars were largely replaced by

low-intensity guerilla wars and terrorism. Elements considered core to the fourth generation were an emphasis on guerrilla combat, extreme dispersion, decentralized logistics, and maneuverability at the expense of firepower.<sup>19</sup>

Today, as research on global guerrillas has borne out, a new, more dangerous generation is forming, known as Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW). Coerr argues that the features of contemporary wars have been evolving, conventional state-on-state warfare no longer dominates, and old rules of war no longer apply.<sup>20</sup> Historians, soldiers, strategists, and security specialists claim that we have entered a period of 5GW or at least an extension of Fourth-Generation Warfare because many of its elements are still present but in a more noticeable way.<sup>21</sup> Based on constant variations between conventional and irregular conflicts, 5GW is a form of “hybrid warfare” and the latest armed conflicts feature a hybrid blend of traditional and irregular tactics such as guerrilla warfare and insurgency or acts of terrorism. According to Frank G. Hoffman, 5GW features multiple types of warfare used simultaneously in a variety of forms by very sophisticated adversaries: “Hybrid Wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations; terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.”<sup>22</sup> 5GW may be defined as the use of all means to force the enemy to serve one’s interests, including non-state actors who, according to Col. Dr. Vasile Maier and Lt. Col. Dr. Eugen Mavris, have access to top knowledge and technologies, and can carry out asymmetrical attacks meant to promote individual or group interests.<sup>23</sup> These hybrid threats are most demanding and costly because they often take place in urban zones. According to Mackubin Thomas Owens, the operational environment for such conflicts is characterized by close encounters between friendly forces and an enemy who seeks to blur the distinctions between combatants and noncombatants.<sup>24</sup> This multidimensional hybrid warfare, also known as “complex irregular warfare,” includes elements from all the previous warfare categories.

Military actions are traditionally predicated upon defining and attacking an enemy’s centre of gravity and protecting one’s own. Traditional armed forces considered these centres of gravity to be a physical place, a general, or a military force on the battlefield. According to Coerr, 5GW lacks centres of gravity because counter-insurgency and irregular opponents do not have a traditional leader who can be killed or an army that can be destroyed. This means that there is no locus or strength drawn from a source



of non-military power, and therefore the enemy is not an organized military force but groups that float freely around a belief or an idea. The approach of these irregular groups may be nihilist, irrational, fundamentally bizarre, and militarily unsound. The emerging enemy does not need the support of a given population; he or she is what Hoffman calls a “transdimensional actor.”<sup>25</sup> These types of actors may kill their own people, use children to commit murder, strap explosives to the mentally challenged, destroy their own state, and remain immune to military defeat. This is therefore a very different type of warfare because states decline as transnational alliances and actors increase their instigation and support of chaos. Moreover, chaos in the poorest countries has created a matrix in which 5GW grows because these regions are characterized by growing poverty and a lack of state control.

### *The Emergence of New Transdimensional Belligerent Agents*

Unlike the other generations of warfare, no precise demarcation line can be set to mark the transition from Fourth to Fifth Generation Warfare. However, we may note certain signs such as technological innovations represented by the evolution of cyberspace and military robotics. Current armed conflicts employ a strategy that uses both simple and sophisticated technologies in an innovative way. Other features include the pervasiveness of information, the absence of borders (as in the case of cyber-attacks), and undeclared attacks with unmanned aerial vehicles. In addition, the media has become an independent, persuasive body that is more powerful than ever at the international level. The convergence of these factors indicates that the changes predicted in the content of war are not simple, and it would be an oversimplification to call 5GW a form of “information warfare.” According to Derek K. Barnett,<sup>26</sup> 5GW focuses on total-resource exploitation with an emphasis on digital tools. Cyberspace should be viewed as the “fifth battlespace,” alongside the more traditional areas of land, air, sea, and space. Cyber warfare is best understood as a new but not entirely separate component of this multifaceted conflict environment. Thus, a cyber-attack launched by an individual or a group of individuals with certain interests can lead to the collapse of governments and the destruction of corporations, with effects at regional and global levels. This method of sabotage goes beyond the simple destruction of physical infrastructure. It uses networks to undermine global systems.

The most distinctive feature of cyber warfare is the rapidity with which

threats can evolve. Cyber warfare can enable actors to achieve their political and strategic goals without the need for an armed conflict. Another feature involves the blurred boundaries between physical and virtual space. Furthermore, cyberspace gives disproportionate power to small and insignificant actors, who can operate with false IP addresses and foreign servers. Attackers can act with almost complete anonymity and relative impunity. Cyberspace is thus a *terra nullius* with unique challenges such as the absence of a constraining political framework around cyber warfare. This makes cyberspace attractive as a place in which to use aggression to pursue cultural, religious, economic, social, and political goals.

In addition, in recent military operations military robotic devices have been deployed, replacing human soldiers on the battlefields. As a consequence, we are facing a paradigmatic revolution in military history—the “robotization of warfare”—which is changing the strategies of combat operations and the structure of the armed forces. According to George Bekey, the current generation of military robots is mainly tele-operated, such as remote-controlled drones.<sup>27</sup> Gordon Johnson, who led robotics efforts at the Joint Forces Command in the Pentagon, points out that robots do not get hungry, they are not afraid, they do not forget their orders, and they do not care if the partner next to them has just been shot.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, many military commanders may more readily deploy robots than real human soldiers.

Another feature of 5GW is the dominant role of transnational corporations in international policy. In the wake of 9/11, the United States has seen dramatic political shifts in both its international relations and domestic priorities. In order to respond to the new challenges of a globalized and insecure world, the United States adopted a new National Security Strategy program, often called the “Bush Doctrine,” which shifted its political interest to a unilateralist foreign policy.<sup>29</sup> This security program, also known as “The Corporate Security State,” marks a return to activist, interventionist, and nationalist administration, representing the fusion of three institutions: the government, the military, and transnational corporations. This new kind of administration presents a stark contrast to the traditional notion of globalization where the system is no longer state-centric and power is in the hands of the market and the private sector. The Bush Doctrine reasserted the role of the state within national affairs, specifically in terms of waging war.

Hence, after 9/11, the US military underwent a transformation process, adopting a more aggressive posture that exploited military technology

in order to protect its economic interests. Thus, American national interests, previously defined mostly through economic metrics, now have a more military dimension. The US military adopted the role of protector of the globalization process in order to pressure nations that resisted becoming part of the network of markets linked through free trade. The Bush Doctrine employed military force to protect the transnational corporation's investments. Since then, transnational corporations have been entangled in wars and armed conflicts in many ways. This applies not only to weapons manufacturers and private security companies operating at the international level. More and more frequently, global players are asserting their economic interests and access to natural resources such as crude oil by military means.<sup>30</sup> Examples include the role of transnational oil companies in the Niger Delta, the introduction of transnational investors into Colombia's internal conflict, and the participation of foreign companies in the reconstruction of war-torn Iraq. Thus, transnational companies using the discourse of globalization and transmodernity are the beneficiaries of these armed conflicts. According to Peter Eisenblätter, in almost all cases, military invasion is followed by an economic invasion.<sup>31</sup> Due to the industry's influence and the impacts of transnational corporate activities, this most recent kind of warfare has the character of the transmodern project.

Thus the phenomenon of war has changed dramatically. The character of recent armed conflicts resembles the philosophical principles posited in the technological perspective of the transmodern project by Rodríguez Magda. She emphasizes that this social shift is a consequence of the technological and political changes that drive the process of economic globalization. The influence of the transmodern project and the participation of transmodern corporations have created new ways of waging war, such as cyber-attacks, the robotization of warfare, terrorism, economic embargoes, non-state actors, and media propaganda, which have all become features of military conflicts. Attempts to classify these processes have spawned terms such as hybrid and asymmetrical warfare, network-centric operations, and military operations outside of wartime conditions. A number of countries have incorporated these terms into their military doctrines.

## TRANSMODERN PEACE: TRANS-RATIONALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR “MANY PEACES”

If the character of war is evolving, the way of thinking and making peace must evolve as well. And if the character of military actions is influenced by the cultural, social, political, philosophical, and scientific factors of a given era, the projects and strategies involved in peaceful conflict transformation must come from the same cultural, social, and political factors. Thus, if we use the concept of transmodernity to describe the character of transmodern warfare, we need to find the tools to build peace and achieve peaceful conflict transformation within the same conceptual framework: the social dimensions of transmodernity. Here transmodernity should be understood not as an interconnected totality to be imposed on societies, but as a new place where different cultures and opinions can peacefully interact and enter into dialogue.

### *The Plural and Relational Character of Transmodern Peace*

The concept of transmodern peace could be linked to Luyckx Ghisi's perspective, namely, that the transmodern paradigm consists of dialogue and tolerance between different cultures. According to Wolfgang Dietrich, transmodern peace is based on trans-rationality, which recognizes all earlier practices and achievements of premodern civilizations. Premodern here comes close to pre-rational, and pre-rational wisdom is embedded in rational and modern consciousness. Thus, trans-rational is more than the inherited rationality of modernity and postmodernity. It approaches spirituality, and is a useful tool to help shape a reinterpretation of reality. Trans-rationality tries to rewrite peace as seen from the perspective of the world's many different cultural frameworks. To do so, says Dietrich, it constructs a multitude of cultures of peace, or “many peaces,” and rediscovers the philosophical bases in which they may be grounded.<sup>32</sup>

Dietrich sees the idea of “many peaces” as relative and relational, because “peaces” are relations: “More than anything the word peace describes the relations between human beings. . . . If we talk about peace, we mean the relations between people and societies, not an absolute value. Therefore peace—however we define or perceive it—is about relations. It is relative and relational.”<sup>33</sup> We emphasize the relative and relational character of transmodern peace in order to show how it differs from modern and postmodern ideas of peace, which were based upon the concept of what Dietrich calls

“One Truth” and its focus on absolute values. The search for One Truth or One Peace reflects a universalistic way of thinking, which assumes that one’s “Truth” is better than another’s, and has the potential for constant renewals of violence. According to Dietrich, the world needs more than one peace for concrete societies and communities to be able to organize themselves. As One Truth or One Peace does not allow for a democratic plurality of truths or “peaces,” this standpoint proposes the quest for “many peaces.” Says Dietrich, we must “take a look at the premodern and moral understanding of peace with its openness for difference and respect that can stimulate peace research.”<sup>34</sup> Thus the idea of trans-rationality applied in the context of peace research proposes a plurality of societies, pluralism within societies, and many truths and “peaces.”

In the context of peace research, the quest for “many peaces” has produced a number of approaches, such as a “Philosophy for Making Peace(s)” and the concept of “Imperfect Peace.” Both theoretical outlooks seek to provide an important set of ideas to reverse the violence produced by the armed conflicts of the transmodern era.<sup>35</sup> As noted above, the world situation changed after 9/11. Thereafter, peace research required a more transdisciplinary and transcultural approach in order to face the new social challenges. Here the Philosophy for Making Peace(s), coined by Vicent Martínez Guzmán, emerged as an approach to transform the violence of recent armed conflicts using the conceptual framework of transmodernity.<sup>36</sup> It aims to reduce the cultural and structural violence of current societies, and tries to reconstruct the way of understanding philosophy and our capacity for making peace. The main philosophical problem of peace research, says Martínez Guzmán, is how to transform the suffering that some people inflict on others: “For these two minimum objectives of peace research, building awareness of human suffering and inquiry into peaceful ways of transformation, there is neither a discipline nor a culture that has discovered the patent to the solution.”<sup>37</sup> In a similar way, the approach of Imperfect Peace suggests that peace is imperfect because we always coexist with conflicts and violence.

### *Philosophical Arguments regarding Peace in the Transmodern Era*

The conception of human beings suggested by the Philosophy for Making Peace(s) recognizes that our personal and collective identity is always developed through interactions with other identities and human groups. The fear this interdependence can produce can lead to violent behaviour,

which forms part of the human condition. Nevertheless, interdependence can also lead us to organize ourselves both personally and politically, and can generate a transformation of conflicts by peaceful means. In order to find peaceful ways of transforming violence-based relations, this approach tries to reconstruct the theory of knowledge by means of an epistemological “turn” or shift which starts with a critique of the rationality on which modernity is based. The modern model of rationality with its concept of “One Truth” has served to justify the imposition of violence and to destroy solidarity among human beings. Martínez Guzmán’s proposal attempts this epistemological turn by reconstructing what he calls the “competences” (skills and capacities) we use to explain the world. This implies recognizing different conceptions of life in peace, as seen in essays, dialogues, fables, stories, metaphors, myths, and artistic expressions that convey the multiple and diverse ways in which we make peace. This epistemological turn embraces other ways of understanding knowledge, which are often linked to the suffering of those who have been marginalized and excluded from the dominant forms of knowledge, such as women, indigenous peoples, and other collectives and cultures. This line of thought extends the notion of *episteme* by recognizing the knowledge of peoples in the world, and acknowledging the validity of their epistemologies.

This reconstruction of epistemology involves giving status to the diverse “competences,” capacities, and knowledge of human beings. One of the inherited prejudices of modern western science involves an obligation to be objective, neutral, and value-free. In contrast, the Philosophy for Making Peace(s) proposes that objectivity, neutrality, and the lack of commitment to values are not possible. The alternative to objectivity is intersubjectivity, which rests on the values-based theory of performativity. That is, the diverse ways of making peace belong to the performativity of human relationships, which are based on intersubjectivity and dialogue. This strong commitment to values embraces diverse ways of understanding peace, justice, governance institutions, personal relationships, gender perspectives, environmental sustainability, and the perspectives of the peoples of the global south. This standpoint considers that we have criteria for analyzing situations of violence and peace because we have intuitions, feelings, traditions, and stories about what the world is and what it would be like to live in peace. In this way, a new notion of *episteme* founded on values-based performativity allows us to restore the possibilities for organizing human coexistence, and to find more

ways of making peace.

We should note that this epistemological shift from modernity's absolutist and violence-prone rationality also influences morality. Whereas postmodernity limits itself to deconstructing modernity's patterns, transmodernity goes further to reconstruct some values that postmodernity had delegitimized. Transmodernity thus proposes a new epistemology whose methodology consists of a normative or values-based reconstruction of the moral experience. According to Martínez Guzmán, feelings of compassion and admiration are correlated with the discovery of otherness. This is the starting point for all conflicts because in our interactions the interests of some people clash with those of others. Confrontations suggest two outcomes: either we destroy each other or we transform a conflict by peaceful means. This second option is the basis for the philosophical approach suggested by transmodern peace, which seeks a positive way of viewing conflicts. This philosophical perspective states that, as human beings, we are able to organize our relationships through war and other types of structural, cultural, or symbolic violence that presuppose marginalization, exclusion, and even the death of some human beings. However, we also are able to organize our relationships in peaceful ways through the expression of tenderness and affection at different levels, including institutions for local, state, and global governance, which enable human relationships founded on justice and based on sustainability. Says Martínez Guzmán, "Human beings, if we want, can make peace. We can peacefully arrange our living together. However, it is also true that we can marginalize, exclude ourselves, make others starve, wage war, and spread terror. The key will be in using philosophical tools to support the claim that among all the things we can also make peace(s)."<sup>38</sup>

To this end, Martínez Guzmán suggests a normative or values-based reconstruction method that will allow us to unlearn the "competences" that lead us to violence and find peaceful ways to interact with each other. The normative reconstruction of our "competences" refers to those capacities and skills that allow us to live in peace; and (in light of modernity's imposed patterns), they have to be deconstructed that we may rebuild them again. This involves a reconstruction of everything that human beings can do to each other, and it involves us holding ourselves accountable for the "competence" we practice in our relationships and with regard to our environment.

Like the Philosophy for Making Peace(s), Francisco Muñoz's theory of Imperfect Peace is also based on an epistemological inversion, for it adopts



a starting point in which the concept of peace has a relevant presence and a different qualitative focus. Says Muñoz, “Epistemologically, the concept of imperfection—whether yet to be 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.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, the theoretical approach of Imperfect Peace proposes the emergence of open epistemologies which support an ongoing critical reflection on the point at which we find ourselves, and involve admitting our own limitations, moving forward at the same rate as our capacity for perception and our understanding of reality. This point of view suggests that conflicts, a sign of our imperfect nature, must be regulated peacefully, because they give us the chance to imagine and create new desirable situations in accordance with the values we hold about peace. According to Muñoz, peace should not be considered an almost impossible utopian goal: “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 . . . yet without having to renounce making plans for the future or having a goal: imperfect peace, which although more modest, is still a desirable, overall goal.”<sup>40</sup> In this respect, Imperfect Peace could be a useful tool that allows peace researchers to join the debate and help construct new paradigms through which to imagine and build more peaceful, just, and enduring worlds.

Finally, according to Martínez Guzmán, the philosophical movement of transmodern peace bases its conceptual arguments on rational sensibility and sentient rationality; this philosophical perspective is not only rational or merely empirical, but emphasizes that there is no dichotomy between reason and sensibility. Thus the Philosophy for Making Peace(s) is not only a rational act but also a sentient one, rooted in a passionate interest linked to the curiosity we see in the discovery of other cultures and peoples. This passionate interest is usually supplemented by forms of love, such as mercy, charity, justice, and volunteering. Thus, transmodern peace is understood as love for others, and makes it possible to adopt a peaceful attitude towards the admiration and fear which arise when we experience and discover otherness. This approach argues that the love of knowing how to make peace is rooted in our frailty as human beings, which in turn is based on an intersubjective and communicative form of rational sensibility and sentient rationality.



From this philosophical perspective, peace research and studies investigate people's "competences," capacities, abilities, and relative knowledge for the peaceful transformation of conflicts, international relations, humanitarian aid, and post-development studies. Given that humans have different capacities to act violently or peacefully, the main objective entails unlearning violent ways of relating and reinforcing new, peaceful ways to coexist.

In sum, transmodern peace proposes a search for a plurality of "peaces" rather than "one peace." It represents an open approach of transmodernity, which Luyckx Ghisi describes as dialogue and tolerance between different cultures. This new phase of peace research is based upon the model of transrationality, whose contribution involves making a connection between premodern and modern ideas in the search for "many peaces." The model of peace suggested by the Philosophy for Making Peace(s) approach indicates that peace is the love for others, and that this goal can be achieved by means of inter-subjectivity and the reconstruction of our communicative capacities, which allow us to change the strangeness of otherness. The Imperfect Peace approach reinforces this standpoint and further argues that transmodern peace is plural and imperfect because it coexists with violence and conflicts. Because human beings are conflictive, and we have differing capacities to act violently or peacefully, peace is a fragile goal. Still, if we want peace, we can and must unlearn violent ways of relating to one another and reinforce new, peaceful ways of coexisting.

## CONCLUSION

Transmodernity has altered the character of warfare and peace. Every military action is influenced by the different cultural, social, political, philosophical, and scientific factors of a given era. This same reasoning applies to projects for peacemaking and to conflict transformation by peaceful means. Transmodernity is a global transformation process whose activities affect all sectors. Despite attempts to unify the diverse standpoints in the transmodern paradigm, there remain at least two different approaches to the idea of transmodernity, involving different explanations. Although both standpoints propose an epistemological change, they involve different stances on science and technology.

The first transmodern approach is technology-centred, and is constituted as a dialectic synthesis of the modern thesis and postmodern antithesis. This approach focuses on changes in the vision of reality brought

about by the computerization process, and is represented by the primacy of digital reason, cyberspace, and virtual reality. The other approach proposes a human-centred society in which premodernity and modernity are linked. This standpoint promotes a trans-dimensional vision of reality committed to cultural diversity. It also provides a different concept of science and technology, which is reoriented towards the desire of global citizens for a sustainable and socially-inclusive world. It therefore suggests that science and technology must recover their human status and contribute to the common welfare.

Currently, the first approach is used by transnational corporations as a theoretical argument to support their domination of premodern societies. Fifth Generation Warfare is a military theory employed by technologically-developed countries, together with transnational corporations, in order to protect their strategic economic interests and the globalization process. This new hybrid warfare, based on constant variations between conventional and irregular conflicts, uses both simple and sophisticated technologies in innovative ways. Its military tactics depend on information, the absence of borders as in cyber-attacks, and undeclared attacks with unmanned aerial vehicles.

The second approach involves an approach for making peace. Transmodern peace is based upon trans-rationality, which attempts to substitute the modern and postmodern idea of “one peace” with the notion of “many peaces.” Here the Philosophy for Making Peace(s) and the theory of Imperfect Peace have emerged to promote transmodernity’s humanitarian values, represented in pacifist movements and nonviolent networks between states. According to these approaches, transmodern peace is plural and imperfect because human beings are conflictive, and we have differing capacities to act violently or peacefully. The main goal involves a normative reconstruction of our “competences” in order to unlearn violent ways of relating to one another and find and reinforce peaceful ways of coexisting.

These conclusions reveal the character of the current international panorama, which is marked by a variety of confrontations. The divergences between the two transmodern approaches create conflicts within the same structure of a transmodern society. However, we should remember that conflicts are not inherently good or bad, but rather a natural occurrence created by people who are involved in relationships; they can be addressed violently or nonviolently. Everything depends on our decisions. We may

choose to use violence or to follow a path of conflict transformation by peaceful means. The importance of this study lies in understanding the reasons for recent military campaigns, and also the quests for nonviolent mechanisms to reduce the effects of war. If we understand the nature of both pathways, we will be able to make better decisions when dealing with conflicts. Whichever pathway we follow, it will be influenced by the way we understand transmodernity.

#### ENDNOTES

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35. Regarding previous approaches to the concept of peace in the field of peace research in the modern era, a key approach to peace was suggested by Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* of 1795. For Kant, to achieve a permanent peace between states, we must assume that peace is not the natural state of humankind because it is an imperative of reason, a duty that excludes the state of war. Thus peace cannot exist in its natural state; only when people feel a moral duty through reason can they overcome the permanent state of war. For Kant, the most that practical reasoning can do is to achieve peaceful coexistence between individuals and states. Citizens should act as civic legislators, taking part in a peaceful society to which they belong, because the achievement of peace is a moral duty.

Later scholars employed the progress of social sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the strong emotional impact of the Great Wars to articulate the epistemological problem of peace in a theoretical way. A first phase of peace research is known as the stage of negative peace because it understood peace as the absence of war. The first steps of peace research focused on a scientific study of war and the violent conflicts between states because scholars sought a scientific and moral equivalent to war. Quincy Wright, the main representative of this period, made a quantitative analysis of war. He suggested that peace was a dynamic balance of political, social, cultural, and technological factors, and that war occurred when this balance was broken. A second phase was known as positive peace. This

term was introduced by Johan Galtung in an editorial of the *Journal of Peace Research* in 1964. Positive peace, related to social justice and the development of human potentialities, was the result of a construction of peace based on justice, generating positive values and satisfying human needs. Galtung turned peace research around by recognizing that peace has two sides, one negative and one positive. He later introduced the notion of structural violence as a category applied within the context of nation-states. In the 1970s and 1980s, a third phase of peace research emerged, which included macro and micro levels of peace. These involved not only the abolition of organized violence at the macro level such as war, but also at the micro level such as rape in wartime. In addition, the concepts of positive and negative peace were expanded to include the concept of structural violence. In an effort to overcome the scientific and negative vision of peace studies, this phase created a strong link to social movements. Later, after the end of the Cold War, a fourth phase of peace research came to employ the terminology of conflict transformation. This period applied structural and symbolic dimensions of violence to the analysis of negative and positive peace. This stage proposed the use of the term conflict management instead of conflict resolution.

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