

# **A CALL FOR MANY PEACES**

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The question „Is small beautiful?“ was central to the life and thought of Leopold Kohr<sup>1</sup>, to whom the 1997 Summer Academy at the Peace Center Stadtschlaining as well as this reader have been dedicated. Even from a 1990s perspective there is nothing nostalgic or anachronistic about this. On the contrary, ever since the social sciences have recovered from the numbness of their complacent crisis of the 1980s and embarked on a hectic search for new paradigms which would allow an interpretation of our perception of a postsoviet reality<sup>2</sup>, Kohr's thoughts have found their way into a larger debate which is taking place around the concepts of *postmodernity* and *postmodernism* - often, though, without any reference to Kohr's name. Issues of universalism and pluralism, of stability and mobility, of dynamism and deceleration are at least implicitly present in most of the work being done on societies, their conflicts and the transformation of these conflicts. Independent of the positions assumed by the participants in this debate, and the interests by which they are guided, these seem to be key issues of our time. We would like to approach the questions of stability and mobility and of universalism and pluralism by discussing some of the key concepts of the peace discourse of the past years and their different meanings in modern and postmodern perspectives.

This is not the place for an extensive discussion of *postmodernity* and *postmodernism*.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper we would like to clarify at the outset what we mean when we speak of *postmodernity* and *postmodernism* without wanting to further contribute to the confusion around these concepts.

With *postmodernity* we refer to a part of an epoch in human history, while *postmodernism* denotes a particular way of forming knowledge.

*Postmodernity* should not be misunderstood as the historical epoch that follows modernity, although the prefix “post“ might suggest this. However, “post“ also refers to a reflection of something, in this case, of modernity. Therefore, „post“ indicates that the social value system of the time span that it circumscribes refers to a condition which, although preceding it, still has effects and remains relevant at a particular point in time. If this were not the case, the prefix „post“ would be redundant. One would then describe the condition or the epoch in question by something which characterises it, not by referring to something that preceded it. Postmodernity, then, describes the state of mind of one or several generations that have had to painfully disassociate themselves from the great truths of the previous epoch, without having found for themselves a new unitary system of reference. This state could be described by the word disillusionment. People have become aware of the relativity of those truths in whose absolute validity they used to believe. As a consequence, those truths have lost their binding character. From a pessimistic point of view, such a state could be interpreted and experienced as a simple loss of values and orientation, i.e. as anomy.<sup>4</sup> If one adopts an optimistic

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<sup>1</sup> Summarized in Kohr, Leopold, Small is Beautiful. Ausgewählte Schriften aus dem Gesamtwerk; Wien, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> For an early attempt see Menzel, Ulrich, Das Ende der Dritten Welt und das Scheitern der großen Theorie. Frankfurt 1992.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent overview of the history and the meaning of the concept see Welsch, Wolfgang, Wege aus der Moderne. Weinheim 1988. p.1-47.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of anomy was introduced in the social sciences by Emile Durkheim in Les règles de la méthode sociologique, Paris 1895. It denotes a condition of fear and lack of orientation of individuals, also a situation of lack of regulation in and among societies. In this paper the term is used to describe an analytical concept and is understood in the above definition, i.e. in its psychological and its social science meaning.

perspective, it is precisely the insight that there cannot be the one truth<sup>5</sup> which allows for a democratic plurality of truths.

If modernity is understood as the societal project characterized by Newtonian physics, Cartesian reductionism, the nation state of Thomas Hobbes, and the capitalist world system, then *postmodernity* does not stand for an epoch which is equipped with a new paradigm of comparable efficacy and a comparable claim to truth. Instead, *postmodernity* simply refers to that dis-illusioning phase of the same modernity in which people increasingly doubt the universal truth of this paradigm. These doubts, and this perception, derive mostly from everyday experience, that is they stand for an important intellectual and social achievement, without being immediately the result of scholarly reflection in a more narrow, institutional sense.

Postmodern thinking as a scholarly method is a response to the loss of those basic truths of modernity which before were viewed as certain; for an issue can only become relevant to academia after becoming socially relevant and after being perceived as socially relevant.<sup>6</sup> The attempt to respond to the loss of modern paradigms - perceived as such with increasing frequency by a growing number of people - is the usual way of human communities of responding to such crises of perception. The meaning of the social sciences lies in the task of elaborating a new concept for interpreting social reality which corresponds to this general feeling of insecurity. There is a growing readiness now in the academic community to face up to this task. It seems natural, though, that it was philosophy which created a framework of thought from which other *disciplines* could derive their methods for tackling and interpreting the social phenomenon of *postmodernity*.<sup>7</sup> From the point of view of peace research, one could ask what the thinking of, say, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jaques Derrida has to say about its area of interest, i.e. interpersonal and intersocietal relations between understanding and violence.<sup>8</sup>

It is crucial at this point to do away with the common prejudice that postmodern thinking stands for some type of complete arbitrariness. The dis-illusioning insight that the one truth exists neither in the premodern/Christian/occidental sense nor in the enlightening/civilising sense of modernity does not lead to arbitrariness. Instead, it is precisely the acceptance of a plurality of societies and pluralism in societies and their truths, often enough contradictory and incompatible, which requires a definition of difference. Unlike modern thinking, postmodern thinking will never attempt to dissolve plurality, it will instead demand respect for and coexistence with difference. This difference is a key concern for peace research. The thinking of postmodern peace research will embrace concepts which are located beyond universalism and the civilising process, beyond the modernist belief in the objective truth of scientific stock-taking, and beyond the belief in the solvability of conflicts.

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<sup>5</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *Apocalypse*; Graz, Wien, 1985.p. 9-91. Derrida concludes: „Truth is itself the end, the determination that truth reveal itself is the completion of the end“. p. 64. This and all following quotes translated from the German by W.S.

<sup>6</sup> Krippendorf, Ekkehard, *Internationale Politik*, Frankfurt 1986. p.25-37.

<sup>7</sup> The key work here is probably Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *La condition postmoderne*, Paris, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> The Peace Centre Burg Schlaining is currently conducting an extensive research project on this question.

## THE CIVILISING PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

In modern, enlightened thinking, peace, and its twin concept development have been elevated to the mythical status of a worldly and eschatological paradise. Assuming that every social phenomena can be known and solved and that every conflict can be visualized in its entity and its concrete and subtle meanings understood and therefore also be solved, peace and development were defined as feasible, practicable and desirable processes which could be attained through the civilising process. It was assumed that

*“underdevelopment is the normal state which is to be expected, and development a positive exception deviating from the norm. Development is the phenomenon that requires explanation. Unexpected cases of development should therefore act as incentives for the design of strategies which are oriented along the positive and not the negative example.”*<sup>9</sup>

Since the authors of such statements seem to view themselves as civilised and developed, this understanding of man and society departs from an idea of the “other” as the prototype of disease and anomaly, as constructed by 19th century empirical anthropology.<sup>10</sup> Postmodern thinking will therefore hold against this assumption on development that there needs to be a definition of what terms such as “successful”, “positive”, “negative”, and, above all, “underdevelopment” should be taken to mean. Whose perspective, whose evaluation, whose strategy are we talking about? How many perspectives and evaluations are there? Are they followed by one or by several strategies, and can these strategies coexist without conflict? Or is there only one true evaluation, one type of success, one positive result, one strategy, and therefore an implicit falsification, rejection and exclusion of other perspectives?

*Civilising the savages* is a post-Enlightenment idea whose pragmatic version dates back to the Belgian King Leopold II,<sup>11</sup> who attempted to legitimise his colonial politics through the *civilisation* of Africa, or, more precisely, of those African people who had physically survived several centuries of European and Arabian slave trade. Leopold’s objective of the exploration of Africa, *“the civilisation of its inhabitants, making them accustomed to trade and peaceful labour, and suppressing slave trade”*<sup>12</sup>, expressed as early as 1876 at the *Conference de Geografie*, lay the foundation for the pan-European project of domination in Africa, which was going to descend on the population of the African continent following the Berlin Conference of 1884/85. On a structural level, this was not the first and not the last such project. The *Civilisation* of the *savages* of Africa was simply an enlightened repeat of the previous mission of bringing the Good News to the *pagans*, especially in South and Central America. When after the turn of the century the domination project of *civilisation* turned out to be much less profitable to the European elites than had been assumed, the label was changed once again. Passing through the intermediary stages of *White Men’s Burden* in the

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<sup>9</sup> Menzel, Ulrich, Auswege aus der Abhängigkeit. Die entwicklungspolitische Aktualität Europas. Frankfurt 1988, p.11.

<sup>10</sup> An early and extensive discussion of this xenological fixation can be found in Duala-M’bedy, Munasu, Xenologie. Die Wissenschaft vom Fremden und die Verdrängung der Humanität in der Anthropologie. Freiburg 1977.

<sup>11</sup> The intellectual creator of this concept is probably Edward B. Tyler, who in his „Researches into the Early History of Mankind“ (1865) established anthropology as an academic discipline based on a unilinear conception of history.

<sup>12</sup> Grauden, Karlheinz; Schindler, Hans Michael: Die deutschen Kolonien; Augsburg 1989.

British Empire, and *ethical politics* in the Dutch colonial empire, the 1920s and 30s brought the new key concept of *development*.<sup>13</sup>

*The civilising process* was something designed by the European elites as an unconcealed foreign project for people in Africa. Being the central exponents of a system whose inner workings are based on dynamism and expansion, this is what they had to do. In the process of standardising and in their costly attempts of implementing this *civilising process* they encountered the resistance of subsistent communities and societies. Such self-reflexive societies, although not organised in a static fashion, have a low and not necessarily expansionistic readiness for change. In their persistent self-sufficiency they do not normally strive for surplus or perfection. In this way they turned their back on the standardised objectives of a modernity on its way towards universalisation and evaded centralised planning and control. From the perspective of colonialism and modernity, this is annoying and expensive. Whereas subsistent societies are about feeding, nursing, healing, educating, housing, and organising themselves autonomously, modernity aims at replacing precisely these activities by machine-driven, large-scale and standardised processes.

Although 19th century modernity departed from the simplistic notion of the *civilised* having to *civilise* the *uncivilised*, the administrations of the imperial centres noticed early on that they would overburden themselves with such a project. They therefore shifted the responsibility for the implementation of the *objectives of civilisation* as determined by modernity away from the *White Men's Burden* by redefining them as *the natural development objectives* of the *uncivilised*. Behind this change of labels, one encounters a shrewd act of intellectual violence. In the old paradigm of civilisation, it was plain to the subjects and victims of the civilising process that this was a foreign project. By introducing the development idea, the notion was constructed that the path to the norms determined by the civilisatory paradigm was at the cradle of all people, communities and societies by virtue of their mere existence, i.e. that they themselves and by way of their natural destination had to *develop* into this direction, and that the *civilised* could, at best, help them in doing so. Once the objective, i.e. the way of life and the truths of modernity, had been determined, the former *savages* were no longer able to decide where their path would lead. As the *underdeveloped* they were obliged to walk, or rather to hasten, the one-way street of development towards the north Atlantic lifestyle, the only right and possible path.

The free decision of people, communities and societies to *develop* which ever way corresponded to their inclinations, possibilities and necessities was dissolved as a social reality by a colonial act of intellectual violence, only to return a little later in the shape of universal human rights. This is nothing more than a logical process, for reducing, formalising and processing human dignity into human rights was from the very beginning the story of a social „notice of complaint“. Precisely those values and goods which, in the perception of contemporaries, got lost in the modernising process received the status of rights.<sup>14</sup> However, this proclamation became a mere simulation after the development idea had been introduced. When Harry Truman,<sup>15</sup> in his frequently quoted speech, introduced the concept of *underdevelopment* as the opposite of *development* into the debate, he merely carried out a formal act that had been prepared over the preceding decades, that is, the decades of imperialism, totalitarianism and fascism. Truman's feat simply consisted in setting the

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<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Dietrich, Wolfgang, *Peripherie, Integration und Frieden*, Wien 1997

<sup>14</sup> For the same reason it may be justified for postmodernism to demand a „right of pluralism“ in the face of globalisation

<sup>15</sup> Truman, Harry S, *Memoiren*, Vol. 2. Stuttgart 1967

plurality of those who the civilised referred to as the *savages*, and whose objectives could potentially still be diverse and open, on the universalist one-way street of *underdevelopment*, a street that would necessarily lead towards *development*.<sup>16</sup>

*Development aid*, invented in the process, was merely meant to help people along this path marked as the only one by nature, God and Truman. The *underdeveloped* was declared master of his own destiny, albeit not an autonomous master who does whatever he thinks fit, but an expert of his own *development* towards the final goal of civilisation and modernity. The reflexive proverb “oneself” existing in the world of subsistence, as in feeding oneself, dressing oneself, housing oneself, etc., now became a reflection of the self. What previously had been committed by the *civilisers* - against the *savages* could now be done by everybody against themselves under the title of *self-development* and with the humanitarian assistance of the *civilised*.<sup>17</sup> The victims of *civilisation* were promoted to the status of experts of their *self-development*, an idea which, camouflaged as humanitarian intention, found its most embarrassing expression in the 1970s phrase of “helping people to help themselves”. Self-help is not an intelligent revival of subsistent activities, but the simulation of subsistence. Whoever helps, feeds, houses, organises, heals himself along the lines of development projects declares himself an authorised assistant of the experts of civilisation. These “*self-help activities are actions of the self on itself with the purpose of removing its lack of normalcy*”<sup>18</sup>

The modern ideas of civilisation and of development receive their violent character not from being a fundamentally wrong or deceitful project of domination. Many of the assumptions that it is based upon have been empirically proven by generations of sincere scholars and scientists and are “true” in an enlightened sense. Yet the relentless decoding of the secrets of being and their pornographic exhibition as well as their noisy commercialisation have not brought a humanistic civilisation, but an age of enlightenment, reason, modernity, civilisation and development which is synonymous with a global condition which has been empirically proven to surpass any previous period in terms of the military and industrial means of mass destruction which it has generated. Never before was there a comparable destruction of social relationships, a comparable abuse of nature mistaken for a resource, a comparable annihilation of choices of future generations. The origin of the horror of this age lies in the link between the universal claim to truth and the possibility of its technical implementation.

This is what writers such as Leopold Kohr, Günther Anders or Ivan Illich, still under the impression of the horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, warned against. However, to refrain from doing what one can do is not a virtue of modernity. These authors were therefore slandered as pessimistic, and those in power continued doing whatever was in their power. Modernity has unhinged the proportionality of human power and powerlessness:

*“Inspired by a history-making mixture of optimism and aggressiveness, it aimed at the creation of a world in which everything happens as we think, because we are able to do what we want, and willing to learn what we are not able to do.”*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In this regard his achievement corresponds exactly to that of Polybios, who, following the destruction of Carthage, unified the plurality of communities living outside the boundaries of the Roman empire into a mythical image of the Barbarians, the single, homogenous and collective non-self of the Romans; summarised in Rufin, Jean Chrisophe, *Das Reich und die neuen Barbaren*, Berlin 1991. An even more detailed analysis of this argument in relation to Greek mythology is contained in Duala M’bedy, Munasu, *Xenologie*, op.cit. p.33-61.

<sup>17</sup> See the excellent discussion in Gronemeyer, Marianne, *Das Leben als letzte Gelegenheit. Sicherheitsbedürfnisse und Zeitknappheit*. Darmstadt 1993. p.54-72.

<sup>18</sup> Gronemeyer, op.cit., p.63

<sup>19</sup> Sloterdijk, Peter, *Eurotaoismus. Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik*. Frankfurt 1989.

The *development* myth of modernity nevertheless is no longer a source of meaning, because its harmful consequences could be felt with increasing clarity in an increasing number of places. What was left behind were meaningless institutions and the ruins of past promises of salvation. The myth was replaced by a post-myth whose function was no longer to create meaning but to act as a reminder of this meaning. Wherever meaning is lost, dynamism becomes its own purpose. Under the post-myth, we no longer develop and act in order to reach global salvation, but in order to serve development and action themselves, constantly more, better, and faster.<sup>20</sup> In the development debate more and more have endorsed an appeal to stop development and development aid launched by Gustavo Esteva<sup>21</sup> more than 10 years ago in protest against the dynamism of the post-myth. Confusion and disorientation are spreading since it became apparent that *homo creator* might have dreadfully failed in his claim of being the thinking arbiter of the world.

For those societies which find themselves in this anomic condition - anomy here refers to both the arbiters and the victims of power - the turn towards the pluralism of postmodern philosophy does not offer a material rescue, but it certainly points a way. If the masses of factual knowledge which were accumulated by modernity are enriched by some orientative knowledge, not all truths of modernity have to be rejected or declared false or obsolete in order to be able to respect the parallel existence of truths and secrets which may be incompatible with the former without being in conflict with them.

This is certainly a bold claim. Yet we believe that, as a logical consequence of the present state of affairs on our planet, we have to abandon the claim of a "royal path" of development and of individual and institutional conflict resolution capabilities. Since we raise this claim at a place where central topic is *peace* in our time and possibilities of achieving it, we would like to illustrate this claim by offering an understanding of peace as a noun with a plural.

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p.22

<sup>20</sup> For a more extensive discussion, see Dietrich, Wolfgang, *Der Irrwisch des Polybios*, in: ÖSKF (ed.), *Interventionen? Politik der Einmischung in einer turbulenten Welt*; Münster 1995, p.22-39.

<sup>21</sup> Esteva, Gustavo, *Fiesta. Jenseits von Entwicklung, Hilfe und Politik*. Wien 1995, pp.65-111. In the Spanish original, this essay, which is the most important part of the book, was written under the immediate impression of the earthquake in Mexico.

## FAREWELL TO THE ONE PEACE

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those of good will.*

Most of us have been familiar with this liturgical sentence since early childhood. It has fundamentally conditioned our idea of peace but has rarely been the subject of serious analysis. In relation to our question this is precisely what is of interest: which peace are we talking about? Obviously not about a peace for everybody, for it is only meant for those men on earth who are of good will. This raises the question as to those men who are not of good will, and, furthermore, and rather importantly in connection with a fundamental value such as peace, who would decide with who is to be considered of good will and who is not. Peace, then, is not practiced by men on earth themselves, but is given unto those among them who are of good will. Only the the giver of peace, that is, of God in the highest, can decide who is of good will and who is not.

Enlightened social science has its difficulties with such a self-referential construction, and of course with this peace-giving God. From its perspective the only possible interpretation would be that peace is meant for those who count themselves among the community that resorts to this God. Those who do not are excluded from the peace order of this community and possibly exposed to an uncertain fate.

Such a concept of peace cannot be really universal because it rests upon the exclusion of all those social realities which are not of “good will”. Yet it has a universalist claim in so far as pleasing him refers to a moral code which is meant to apply everywhere on earth. The differential between this moral claim and social reality produces an extremely unpeaceful tension which finds its expression, amongst others, in the missionary obsession. In the development idea, these notions return in an enlightened and secular disguise: *Glory to technical progress, and peace on earth to those who are prepared for development.*

At this point, everybody who knows the Bible well must have noticed that the earlier quote is not to be found in the Bible at all. In contemporary translations Luke 2.14 reads as follows: “*Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased*”. In earlier translations<sup>22</sup> there is no scope for difference between the chosen ones and the others: “... *and good will towards men*”. To all, without exception! If one compares earlier translations with the peace idea as expressed in Paul’s letters to the Ephesians 2.11-22<sup>23</sup>, then there can hardly be any doubt that the biblical concept of peace originally was not aimed at exclusion but at respectful reconciliation. Only the translations and interpretations of the 19th century include the enlightened and disrespectful idea of the one and perpetual peace in their vocabulary and thus promote an idea which can hardly be termed Christian.

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<sup>22</sup> The German original here refers to Martin Luther’s translation: “Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und Friede auf Erden und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen”.

<sup>23</sup> „But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near the sacrificial death of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies (...) So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of the family of God ...“

If the peace concept is approached through the etymology of the German language one arrives at similar results. Peace (*Friede*) in German originally stands for “*treating others like members of one’s own kin*”. This understanding contains the insight that respecting the otherness of others must be one’s own principle for peace. Although the others are treated like members of one’s own kinship, there is no intention to adapt them to one’s own standards, nor are they simply tolerated as the losers in a foreign system. In this way of thinking, respect instead of tolerance or assimilation is a constituent element of peace. Conversely, tolerance and assimilation are the first steps towards open conflict.

It is no coincidence that this concept of peace withered away in European languages with the advent of the industrial revolution, that is, of the primacy of economics over politics and culture, with the enlightenment and modernity, so that, following a “long bourgeois century”, an academic discipline for the analysis of the nature of peace had to be established. The agreement of May 30th, 1919, in which the British and American delegations at the Paris Peace Conference resolved to establish academic institutions for research on international relations, followed the traumatic experience of the Great War and the shocking insight that this long bourgeois century did not bring a system of perpetual peace, but instead an escalation of violence and destruction unprecedented in human history.

In the logic of the Enlightenment, the insight that the “one peace” of the bourgeois age had not brought a peace order that could be designed and controlled called for the establishment of institutions for research on the nature of an imagined world society and its internal relations. As early as 1920, the Royal Institute for International Affairs and the US Council for Foreign Relations were founded, followed by the German “Hochschule für Politik” in Berlin and the „Institut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes Internationales” in Geneva. These and other institutions were to conduct their research for several decades and through another World War before it became acceptable among experts to suspect that it may be precisely this linear, universalist and reductionist basic assumption aimed at a paradise on earth, the one truth, the one and perpetual peace, the one world society, and the one civilising process that carries in it the germ of a self-reproductive structure of violence, and that this kind of idea of salvation is in itself intellectual violence because it simply lacks respect for otherness and its secrets. How is one to treat others like members of one’s own kin if the difference among kins has long been eliminated through nationalisation and universalisation, and as long as the other is still considered synonymous with imperfection?

European peace research has indeed arrived at this dis-illusioning and therefore postmodern stage. It has to acknowledge that war tends to “*assimilate cultures to each other, whereas peace is that state in which each culture blooms in its own, unique way.*”<sup>24</sup> The search for the “one peace” is identified as part of a larger universalist mode of thinking which in its totality rests upon disrespectful and therefore unpeaceful basic assumptions, so that the guidelines for action and the real politics that derive from it do at least have the potential for a continuous renewal of violence.

Peace research, at least in the German speaking areas, could be stimulated by taking a look at the premodern and *moral understanding of peace* with its openness for difference and respect, as long as this stimulation is not misunderstood as a relapse into premodern real politics. The importance of such a vision becomes clearer when one looks at different, non-European concepts of peace. Three examples might illustrate this:

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<sup>24</sup> Illich, Ivan, Vom Recht auf Gemeinschaft, Reinbek 1982. p.116.

If one looks for a non-islamic basic concept of peace in African traditions which could be translated into peace, one encounters a wide range of terms invariably connected to *energetic* interpretations aiming at harmony of society, nature and cosmos. This harmony is reached in different ways, depending on temporal and spatial circumstances. It is responsible for personal health as much as for the well-being of the family and the community, for the growth of plants and the fertility of domestic animals. The cosmos, nature and society are seen as being in an inextricable reciprocal relationship, which, when balanced, is experienced as peace. If one wanted to give a name to this kind of understanding of peace, I would suggest the term *Kindoki*<sup>25</sup> which is used in the Congo basin and the region of the Great Lakes. *Kindoki* denotes something fundamentally different from neorealist or institutionalist concepts with which it is incompatible, and different from the modern concept of peace. The latter often leads us to see anomy and chaos where, if viewed from close quarters, there is a good measure of vernacular organisational form and a considerable amount of social creativity and skill of improvisation.

Javanese ethics is also based on the assumption that the highest value which humans should respect in all their relationships is *harmony*. This is true of relationships to nature, to other people, and to super-nature. In Javanese ethics the cosmos, in all its dimensions, represents an ordered whole. Harmony reigns when every element is in its proper place. Harmony becomes a synonym for peace; it means *damai* in Bahasa Indonesia, the official language of Indonesia, and in *Bahasa Malaysia*, to which it is almost identical. Harmony is disturbed when there are peacelessness, restlessness, excitement, danger, accidents, disease, fate, wars, disasters and other misfortunes. It is therefore in the interest of all to maintain harmony as comprehensive peace, or that it is reestablished whenever disturbed. "*Look for your place and act accordingly*" is a Javanese wisdom that sums up the central tenet of this world view.<sup>26</sup>

From this follows the basic imperative of Javanese ethics to always behave in such a way as to maintain the harmony of nature, society and in the relationship to super-nature. If the objective of human acting is to find one's place in the cosmos, then this is done through respect for tradition, and respect for the other and the others, and through consensual conflict transformation and modesty (renouncing individual interests and, mostly, individual initiatives). From these imperatives it follows that in Javanese ethics changing the world as its own purpose cannot be a meaningful objective for human action, and that extending one's roots one's proper place must be the supreme goal of life.

The Javanese world view, then, is pragmatic and on the material level quasi static. It is not so much about a theory of final truths, about an idea of what ultimately holds the world together, but rather about an interpretation of one's own existence. It serves as an aid to locate the confusion of the life world of experience within a manageable framework, so that one can gain control over one's life and gain a sense of security. A world view is a tool used in the attempt to realize one's aspirations in life. Its usefulness is measured by determining how helpful it is in attaining a state of inner tranquillity, serenity and balance, a psychological state which expresses itself in harmonious, that is peaceful, relationships among the members of a society, their environment and the cosmos. Change can be introduced into this world view whenever the objective of harmony requires it, but not as a purpose for itself.

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<sup>25</sup> Friedli, Richard, *Die Kindoki sind gestört*. In: Friedensbericht 1995, Chur/Zürich 1995, pp.273-287.

<sup>26</sup> Magnis-Suseno, Franz von, *Neue Schwingen für Garuda - Indonesien zwischen Tradition und Moderne*, München 1989, pp.61ff.

The term *Utziläj K'aslen* stands for another parallel, this time in the Mayan world of Central America. *Utziläj k'aslen* is the word used by the Maya-Kakchikel for *Peace*. It refers to mental and material well-being and circumscribes in the world view of these people the oneness of society, nature, and the universe. Maintaining this unity requires the respect of each man towards each other, towards the community and the environment. In the Maya's view, this environment is not objectivised and functionalised in the service of man; instead, they see themselves and everything else which exists on the material and spiritual levels as creative elements of the whole. In the Maya's cosmology, wherever this respect - for individuals, the community, nature, or the universe - is absent, the harmony of elements gets lost, *Utziläj k'aslen* is disturbed, and the result is some kind of peacelessness.<sup>27</sup>

Following this brief look at such *energetic* understandings of *peace* in very different cultures and world regions it might be apparent that an ethics of this kind could be highly suited to absorb change and foreign influences, but that it could relapse into disharmony, peacelessness, defence and perhaps even panic-like violence as soon as this change works against a way of life designed to maintain harmony in a concrete place. There are historical and contemporary examples of this in Java and Malaya as well as in Central America and Africa.

In all these *energetically oriented* world views there are mechanisms of absorbing elements of foreign cultures encountered. Historical experience shows that any such encounters have usually strengthened the culture in question. Following an initial, often very violent clash between the indigenous and the foreign, and a corresponding redistribution of power, such cultures tend to be more peaceful than others based on absolute (monotheistic) truths and moral world views. Absorbing the foreign - even after a victorious war - requires above all respect for this foreign culture and its particular characteristics, and an *energetic* understanding of peace requires, per definition, a speedy recovery of harmony. On this point we would agree with Johan Galtung,<sup>28</sup> who views Eastern world views as potentially more peaceful than occidental ones.

Now it could be asked whether societies with an energetically oriented peace concept can apply the principle of co-option (*apropiación*) as a promising strategy for the defence and strengthening of the self also in the case of modernity. For modern „western“ technology is not simply a thing, a tool. Modern technology does not simply denote a product's particular way of functioning or its use; it is, instead, closely related to the mode of production. For modern technology, the alienation of men from their place, and their transformation into the labour force is a necessary requirement. Production in an abstract, non-personal, global space requires a price to be attached to land and the concrete life worlds, a process which has been found to be anything but harmonious. In *energetically* oriented ethics, it per definition requires *peacelessness*.

„Modern technology“ is directly related to a society in which economics has won supremacy over politics and culture. Innovation, change, growth and action there become a competitive purpose of its own which does not ask for the harmony of concrete life world. Individual initiative is considered a virtue, conflict avoidance gives way to competition, unanimity

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<sup>27</sup> For a more extensive discussion see Dietrich, Wolfgang, *Utziläj k'aslen - Zur Unvereinbarkeit von Staat, Militär und ziviler Gesellschaft in Guatemala*. In: Birk, Fridolin, (ed.) *Guatemala - Ende ohne Aufbruch oder Aufbruch ohne Ende?* Frankfurt 1995.

<sup>28</sup> Galtung, Johan, *Zivilisierung der Internationalen Beziehungen?* In: ÖSFK (ed.), *Politik der Einmischung in einer turbulenten Welt* (Dialog 29), Münster 1996, p.16

comes after economic rationality, self-contentment is up against the entrepreneurial spirit and work ethics, the engines of the system; and finally the respect for others gives way to the disrespect of a development thinking in which the developed pass on alms to the underdeveloped or grant them „help for self-help“.

It may be true that societies with an energetic world view are, because of their open design, easily penetrated by „modern technology“. But if this is the case, they take a murderous guest into their midst.<sup>29</sup> „Modern technology“ does not allow any syncretisms as they can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, or pre-Enlightenment Christianity. It dissolves concrete places into global space. Therefore any community which succumbs to the technical world view is stripped of its sense of belonging to a certain place. There is not even the question of a third way. Whoever takes on „modern technology“ as a mode of production degrades energetic ethics into the traditionalist reflex needed by the *homo oeconomicus* for his mere survival.

What we have said so far raises a sensitive question: if it is true that the supremacy of economics over politics and culture, i.e. the violent reign of the capitalist world system, penetrates traditional societies organised around an energetic concept of peace just as it penetrates western societies organised on the basis of Christian ethics and a moral peace concept, are there different forms of resistance found in either concept? Western peace research tends to idealise „Eastern ethics“ and to ascribe to the energetic peace concept a higher force of resistance against structural violence.<sup>30</sup> Although we cannot deny that the capitalist world system had its origin in Christian- occidental thinking and in the enlightened secularisation of its universalist claim to truth, we are asking whether in resisting an overheated capitalism a moral concept of peace might not be better suited than the energetic one.

For it is possible that the break of *damai*, *kindoki* or *utziläj k'aslen*, once it has occurred, and the impossibility of returning to the harmonious balance has more severe group-psychological consequences than the violation of a *moral peace concept*. Perhaps the moral world view encourages individualistic resistance at the basis, a fight against windmills, political filibustering, as practiced by many grassroot and citizens groups, whereas the definitive destruction of an energetic peace concept leaves nothing but anomy, because from this perspective resistance is useless once a critical size is surpassed? Leopold Kohr sees war as a consequence of surpassing the critical size, independent from ideology, religion, leadership, culture or the economy of the social formation which reaches this critical size.<sup>31</sup> Beyond this threshold, the potential peacefulness of energetic cosmologies is no longer of any use. Perhaps under these conditions resistance based on a *moral peace concept* could act as a better break on an overheated capitalism.

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<sup>29</sup> Amongst many others, Jeffrey Parker's lamento on Asian youth in the Asia Times of 19 February, 1997 is a clear indication of the violence and the speed at which the proces of modernisation crushes down on Asian societies.

<sup>30</sup> As an example, see Johan Galtung, *Zivilisierung der Internationalen Beziehungen*, op.cit.,p.18.

<sup>31</sup> Kohr, Leopold, *Small is beautiful. Ausgewählte Schriften aus dem Gesamtwerk*. Wien 1995, pp.103-115. Kohr defines as critical size a size at which problems are not so much caused by organisational or human faults as by proportions. On the level of international relations a critical size would be reached when the leadership of a state has reasons to assume that its power has grown beyond that of every possible adversary. On the intrasocietal level, this size is reached when multitudes become so big that their inner forces of order (morality, laws, police, etc.) are no longer capable of safeguarding group-conformous behaviour. p.111.

Let us remember that Leopold Kohr and Karl Polanyi<sup>32</sup> argued that the pace of social change is often more important than its character. A type of resistance that has a decelerating effect can therefore be of great importance to the societies concerned because it allows them to adjust their orientative knowledge to their factual knowledge. If morally founded resistance against overheated capitalism has at least a decelerating effect, it would be of greater use than the energetic peace concept which, once overcome, obviously cannot master the same amount of resistance. This might explain why the combination of „western technology“ and „eastern ethics“ leads to an uninhibited acceleration of growth, while „western ethics“ puts limits to „western technology“, which are symbolically expressed in the lower growth rates of those economies.

This supposition is strengthened by the argument which is not likely to encounter a great deal of sympathy among European readers. The moral concept of peace is not a monopoly of the west, of Christianity, let alone of Enlightenment. The Arabic word *salam* also denotes a peace understood in moral terms. The commandment of the Koran is certainly of moral nature, and only possibly juridical.<sup>33</sup> Although enlightened Europeans may disapprove, it is evident that in the last decade of this milenium non-systemic resistance against the capitalist world system has its strongest foundation in Islam, stronger than the grassroots movements of Christian orientation or inspiration, as they thrived in the 1980s mostly in Latin America.

The universal claim to salvation and truth as put forward by the great religions of the Mediterranean may, on account of its exclusiveness and its tendency towards fundamentalism and purism, tend to be less peaceful than cosmologies which rest on an energetic peace concept. On the other hand, the moral peace concept by which these doctrines are guided might be tendentially more resistant when the societies concerned are confronted with a force as absorbing as the capitalist world system. Because of this power of resistance against the violent world system of capitalism such a peace concept may, at least temporarily, acquire an important function and legitimation.

However, the universal and monotheist orientation of such forms of resistance, if successful, will always tend to generate new universalisms and new peacelessness. Contrary to this, the energetic world view will, in the face of the universal violence of the capitalist world system, find no way out of its anomic condition, because the expected swing back into quasi-static harmony is not possible beyond the critical size which the expanding and accelerating character of capitalism necessarily creates everywhere. It follows that the response to the structural violence of modernity both in postmodern thinking as in view of the real-political situation can only be the demand of a pluralistic, differentiated and incompatible vision of peace. *Postmodernity calls for many "peaces"*.

At this point we once again encounter Leopold Kohr, who said that problems and conflicts which are due to exaggerated social size could not be solved by the modern means of regimentalisation and standardisation, which, through their expansive power, aggravate the social dimension of these conflicts, but by dividing critically "big" societies into subcritical or optimal societies, the only ones in which conflicts can be reduced to a measure at which "common mortals" can manage them with the limited means at their disposal.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Polanyi, Karl, *The Great Transformation*. Frankfurt 1978, and Kohr, Leopold, *Small is beautiful*, op.cit. pp.19-32.

<sup>33</sup> Talbi, Mohamed, *Religionsfreiheit - Recht oder Berufung des Menschen?* In: Schwartländer, Johannes (ed.), *Freiheit der Religion. Christentum und Islam unter dem Anspruch der Menschenrechte*. Mainz 1993.

<sup>34</sup> Leopold Kohr, op.cit., p. 112.

Whether the reaction of concrete communities against the threat of their life worlds by this capitalism is actually proportionate to their needs, whether moral or energetic reasons lead to a peace that is perceived as such can, therefore, only be answered in concrete situations. There is certainly no mathematical formula for it. We remain reduced to the insight that precisely this capitalism has shattered the boundaries of concrete proportionality.

If it is true that we live in an era in which we are dis-illusioned about the guiding visions and values of the past, without being able to replace them by convincing new ones, we necessarily come back to Leopold Kohr's thinking. His postulate of smallness is inescapably also an appeal for plurality and for the concrete. He arrives at this position not out of provincial stubbornness or front-garden romanticism, but from his thoughts concerning proportionality. Kohr loved the ambivalent word "certain", which for him was more than a stylistic decoration. Ivan Illich<sup>35</sup> sees in it the central message of Kohr's social morphology. Whoever demands that things should relate to each other in a "certain proportionality" thinks about peace in a way similar to the energetic visions discussed above, but approaches this vision in a moral way. If the potential for peace is tied to many concrete places and measured against the proportionality of manageable sizes of communities, it follows that, since the prevailing conditions are different in each case, a range of different, and often mutually incompatible concepts of peace will remain in and among these places and communities. These differences may sometimes be minor, but they may also be so large that some may doubt that any understanding is possible. At this point the circle closes: peace, as defined from a postmodern perspective by an occidental man, can, in the face of the perverse claim for its universalistic denotation in modernity, only mean treating others like the members of one's own kin, without insisting on the pornographic urge to expose all secrets of the foreign peace. A full clarification and codification of our own understanding of peace and their endless simulation in foreign realities can never be taken seriously as a peace project by others.<sup>36</sup> Peace can neither be produced nor exported. Without being related to concrete places it will never have any social power and remain an abstraction in the brains of peace researchers.<sup>37</sup>

It would follow that specific forms of peace and of resistance against the capitalist world system should not be interfered with, and that the idea of the one (perpetual) peace in the one world, as it is put down in all key documents of modern world politics, is, at least, sheer intellectual violence vis-a-vis those who cannot share this idea, because it is just this: an idea, put in front of man in order to conceal that not even this one is equal. The world therefore needs more than one peace for concrete societies and communities to be able to organise themselves. *The peaces* do not become mutually compatible the moment everybody

<sup>35</sup> Ivan Illich, Leopold Kohr als Initiator der Sozialmorphologie, in: Kohr, Leopold, *Die überentwickelten Nationen*, Salzburg 1983, p.224.

<sup>36</sup> For this reason we disagree with Menzel, Ulrich, Das Ende der Dritten Welt und das Scheitern der großen Theorie, Frankfurt 1992, where on p.222 it is argued that interventions are legitimate if a "*parasitary state repeatedly destroys any attempts of development cooperation, or when it repeatedly proves its inefficiency or incompetence (?)*". Menzel's point disturbingly coincides with a quote by US President Theodore Roosevelt, who on 6 December 1904, in his Annual Message to the American Congress, stated that "*the weak and chaotic governments and peoples of the south could, in case of flagrant misbehaviour and incapacity, force the USA to exercise an international policing power*". Quoted after Niess, Der Koloß im Norden, Köln 1984 (translation from the German by the authors). In view of the fact that the "misery", the inefficiency and the faultiness of others for 500 years have been used as legitimations of projects of expansion, and in view of the Menzel's own argument that in an increasing number of countries large part of the population today live in worse conditions than at the time of decolonisation (p.203), we would think that today what is needed is not an increased dynamism of action but deceleration.

<sup>37</sup> Illich, Ivan, Vom Recht auf die Gemeinheit. Reinbek 1982, p. 117

understands one another, but when all live in their own peace, that is, treat others like the members of their own kin, and so respect them even if they do not understand them.

Let us look for our place and act in accordance with it! Let us talk about the many peaces!

## APPENDIX

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