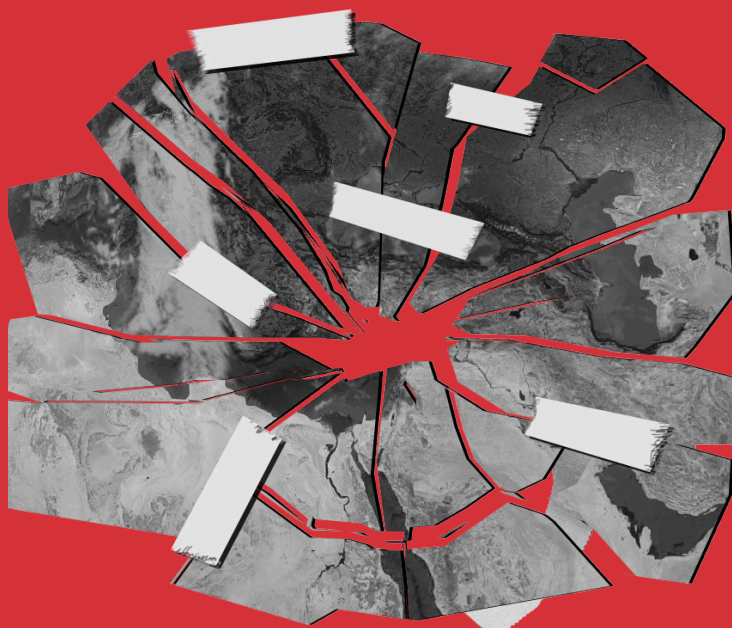


Toward a (Counter)Culture of Reconciliation

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INTRODUCTION

As we will attempt to show in this booklet, reconciliation is something we find difficult to accept in our present sociocultural context. Part of the reason for this is that important elements that are the basis for its theoretical conception and practical realization—for example, repentance, self-criticism, guilt, forgiveness, and truth—do not form part of our society’s prevailing mindset. To the contrary, certain categories that are key to our current conception of social life (such as political correctness and moral relativism) and our inadequate understanding of other categories (such as dialogue or the partiality of truth) make it difficult for us to conceive and achieve reconciliation in a satisfactory way. Given these circumstances, we want to stress the need not so much for a culture as for a counterculture of reconciliation.

Before attempting to explain and develop the basic elements for building a counterculture of reconciliation, we think it wise to review some theoretical points concerning the category “reconciliation,” its various types, and a possible definition. These will be supplemented by a practical, experiential study of both initiatives and persons. This distinction between theory and practice is purely analytical, for they permanently affect one another: theory is elaborated by contrasting it with concrete experi-

ence, while practice is designed on the basis of what has gone before and so is interpreted on the basis of theory.

Our reflection is necessarily concrete and particular, but it aspires to offer elements that transcend the temporal and the local and so open us up to developments that are still partial and also different. We are dealing, concretely, with the lessons learned from the experience of reconciliation in the context of the violent, politically motivated, terrorist conflict that occurred in

the Basque Country—and in the rest of Spain and in part of France, to a lesser extent—during the last fifty years (1968-2018). This experience serves as inspiration, and from it conclusions are drawn that can be applied to other conflicts and other contexts in which there have been violence and victims.

Besides these limits on the scope of our study, the authors have consciously and deliberately chosen an ethical option that must be made explicit from the start: they wish to assume the perspective of the victims. What does that mean? It means that, granting the partiality of every approach to reality

(overcome only by the impossible perspective of the impartial observer), we have opted to make ours the viewpoint of the victims. Why? We do so because, without that perspective, any analysis, reflection, or action inevitably fails to see a part of the reality. And from the standpoint of ethics, the part not seen is the most important part: it is the part that reveals the injustice, the essential starting point for doing justice.¹

Trusting that our proposal will provoke a rethinking of reconciliation and at the same time motivate its being made real and concrete in practice, we begin our exposition.

1. RECONCILIATION

We begin by recognizing that “reconciliation” (like other basic moral concepts such as justice, liberty, etc.) is an ambiguous term with various meanings; it is rich in connotations and interpretations. This is so not only in common speech, where rigor and precision are not required, but even in the realm of academic studies, where there is little agreement about the meaning and reach of the term despite its frequent use—or perhaps because of its frequent use. The term is used in very diverse ways by experts in theology, philosophy, and psychology; this should not be surprising considering the different character of those disciplines. But even within each of them, the word is conceived in ways that are not only different but often contradictory.

A great diversity of interpretations is found also in peace studies. For example, Carlos Martín Beristain,² drawing on an earlier study of Van der Merwe and without pretending to be exhaustive, explains the various ways in which the concept of reconciliation is understood:

- Construction of community and of neighborly and familial relations, etc., that have disintegrated because of pain, resentment, or fear.
- Construction of a non-exclusionary ideology expressing a new consensus with respect to human rights.
- Promotion of intercultural understanding in situations of conflict, thus encouraging mutual understanding and respect.
- Moral conversion, personal change, acceptance of others, and acknowledgement of one’s own errors and offenses.
- Restoring integrity to victims and providing a path to recovery

through their experiences of suffering and resistance.

- Reckoning with the past on the part of perpetrators and those responsible for atrocities.
- Re-establishment of the relation between victim and perpetrator.

The different meanings mentioned here do not contradict one another; rather, they are complementary since they correspond to different levels of reality (social, political, cultural, interpersonal, etc.).

1.1. A Debatable Definition

In our present context, “reconciliation” can initially be taken as an ethical term or concept that is valuable and positive in principle, but is often problematic and polemical from the point of view of the victims.

One of the reasons why victims reject the concept is that it tends to conform to the model of transitional justice. This model clearly assumes a basic schema of equality and of symmetry between the subjects: both the opposing parties are considered responsible for producing flagrant injustices, and in many cases they are even said to share the same condition, of being both victim and perpetrator simultaneously. That is the way reconciliation is proposed in postwar situations (especially after a civil war), at the demise of a dictatorial regime, in any type of serious conflict, and even in a conflict of interests, no matter how trivial it may be. For now we will not try to analyze the adequacy or the justice of this schema of “symmetrical

reconciliation,” nor will we grant its validity beforehand, for it sometimes conceals notable asymmetries. We will observe only that this schema is not the only one possible. Even if it is valid in other contexts, it is certainly not valid when we are speaking—as in the Basque country—of a violent terrorist conflict in the heart of a society that is reasonably democratic, though always in need of improvement.

The schema based on symmetry is inadequate for politically motivated violent conflicts in which guilt is clearly asymmetrical. Such conflicts necessarily require a concept of reconciliation with a theoretical formulation that is asymmetrical; such a concept would be morally more just and would even be more effective politically in civic-democratic terms.³ Moreover, this asymmetry can be concretely expressed by assuming the perspective of the victims of terrorism and by asserting their priority as referential subjects of the process of reconciliation.

For this type of conflict we recommend a concept of reconciliation that has the following characteristics:

- The concept should be ambitious, aspiring to define reconciliation in the most demanding terms possible: it should include and integrate other dimensions, it should extend to the root causes of the conflict, and it should either eradicate them or channel them adequately.
- Although the concept supposes forgiveness, it is not identified with it and surpasses it. Reconciliation requires prior forgiveness, but it goes beyond forgiveness. This statement should not keep us from

recognizing that there are theoretical proposals of reconciliation and practical attempts to achieve it that are based not on forgiveness but on forgetfulness—an example is the transition to democracy in Spain. There is also a type of strategic reconciliation based on pragmatic and utilitarian considerations but lacking in authentic forgiveness; we have seen examples of this at the end of dictatorial regimes in some Latin American countries. There are even cases of reconciliation that have a purely formal character: there is a minimal restoration of relations but no indication of forgiveness. These variants of reconciliation are inadequate, but they can be simply rejected because of their deficiencies, for sometimes they are the steppingstones to a more complete form of reconciliation.

- The concept of reconciliation must be at once realistic and capable of being put into practice. Even when the reconciliation is imperfect, it deserves to be valued since it makes full reconciliation possible; it paves the way toward reconciliation, which is always understood to be limited by its incarnation in concrete contexts.
- The concept will reject as erroneous and inadequate any formulations that urge the rejection of the victims since they are the principal protagonists of reconciliation. It therefore refuses to be identified with the premature peace that is often promoted by the perpetrators and even by well-intended persons. A hurried peace brings with it trivialization and forgetfulness of the

past, it avoids in-depth analysis, and it seeks only to look to the future without considering the facts of history. We are therefore talking about a slow and steady process that respects fully the dignity of the victims and, to the extent possible, makes them the principal protagonists by assuming their perspective.

In summary, we can understand reconciliation as a process that includes aspects of truth, justice, reparation, memory, forgiveness, and agreement. Either it restores a situation of peaceful co-existence, or it creates such a situation where there was none before. At the very least it creates human conditions that nourish social life and resolve its conflicts, and it gives due recognition to the “radical” victims (those who were murdered) while enabling the “living” victims to assume their desirable condition of “survivors.”

1.2. Personal Reconciliation / Social Reconciliation

In principle, a reality in need of reconciliation is one in which the preexisting relations have been broken by an unjust act. To achieve reconciliation in its social dimensions, it is necessary to reestablish the bonds of citizenship, which as such are formal but very important. Victims and perpetrators are called to recognize one another mutually, though generically, as citizens with equal rights (without prejudice to the legal condition in which they may find themselves) in a sociopolitical context accepted by all.

Paradoxically, however, while an unjust action has caused the rupture we just indicated, it also provokes a new relationship between victim and perpetrator, a relation that is dramatic but very solid. Both parties are immersed in a relationship that is negative (involving hatred and resentment) but also very personal, even when the perpetrator is unknown. Although it is the perpetrator who decides to initiate the relationship with his criminal act, thus provoking a sense of dependence in the victim (which involuntarily leads to pain, rage, etc.), it is the victim who actually has moral power over the offender, once he has recovered his autonomy and protagonism. As regards his personal future, the perpetrator remains inevitably subordinated to the attitude that the victim takes with respect to him: the forgiveness granted—or from his perspective, the gift received—will make it possible for him to begin a new life. If forgiveness is refused, he will be definitively marked by the weight of his injustice. Reconciliation clearly takes on the character of a supreme challenge that surpasses the social or purely “personal” level. The challenge is constructive: it is to transform the destructive interpersonal relationship into one that is positive.

This distinction between the social and personal dimensions of reconciliation should not be neglected; to the contrary, the intimate relationship between both parties must be stressed even more. The consolidation of social reconciliation will depend in large measure on the way in which personal reconciliation is achieved. In other words, the social dimension of

reconciliation, which is theoretically easier, depends largely on the personal dimension, which is in practice more difficult.

1.3. Perspectives of Reconciliation

Reconciliation can be treated from different perspectives, and these correspond to the different levels of reconciliation.

The religious perspective of reconciliation is the most evident and most recognized, even if it is the most difficult to universalize. It is undeniable that in our cultural context reconciliation and forgiveness have clearly religious origins. The Christian tradition proclaims that human sins are forgiven by God, and it announces our definitive reconciliation with God through the paschal event—the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Sincere believers know that they are forgiven by God despite their errors and limitations, and that they are consequently born to a new life that will reach its eschatological culmination beyond history. This heartfelt belief is expressed in the ecclesial liturgy through the eucharistic celebration and the sacrament of penance (also called “the sacrament of reconciliation”).

This originally religious experience has practical consequences in the life of the believer, and these introduce us fully into the ethical perspective of reconciliation. On the one hand, the experience of faith becomes a fundamental motivational element: the person forgiven by and reconciled with God finds in this experience the wherewithal and

the motivation to open himself to others and to actively seek reconciliation with them. On the other hand, Christian morality, succinctly summed up in the commandment of love, specifies concrete elements that should be present in the believer's action: offering unlimited forgiveness, even to one's enemies; granting the forgiveness requested by the offender; taking the initiative in asking forgiveness and expressing repentance before the person who has suffered the offense. It is in this second aspect of the ethical dimension, the concrete steps of reconciliation, that believers and non-believers can come together, even though they will logically diverge in the first aspect. But this is also the aspect in which they will most often disagree, because the reasons common to both worldviews do not attain to the moral exigency of reconciliation and so will be considered as pertaining only to believers. Sometimes it will be agreed that reconciliation is a morally commendable attitude, but it then ends up being reduced to a virtue in the sphere of private, interpersonal relations, without possible application to public life and social sphere. In any case, recognizing the virtuous nature of reconciliation at the level of ethics, while it does not require an appeal to religious beliefs since it is fully consistent with secular morals and the worldviews of non-believers, does open up for us a new perspective.

The political perspective of reconciliation is, as we have said, more problematic than the two mentioned already, but it has become more recognized and accepted in the course of the last few decades. Countless public petitions for forgiveness have been

made by political leaders in the name of the states they represent; their petitions have related especially to offenses of the past, such as colonialism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, criminal aggression, etc. In countries that have seen a transition from totalitarian, dictatorial, or racist regimes toward democratic systems that respect human rights, leaders have appealed to reconciliation as an objective, and also as evidence of and a channel for the success of the transition. To express this new perspective, some have even coined the phrases "politics of pardon" or "politics of reconciliation." However, if reconciliation is ever going to be more than rhetorical, it has to become politically concretized in specific proposals and initiatives. For example, it must orient and inspire the actions of parties and government; it must be significantly present in the so-called "political agendas"; it must be the object of debate and the generator of opinion; it must be made visible in public acts; it must have criteria evaluating its own program; and it must produce specific legislation.

The juridical perspective of reconciliation is the most problematic, but it is also the perspective with the greatest universalizing possibilities. We are not referring, as we already said, to any legislative initiatives that may arise from the political perspective; we are referring simply to the initiatives which emanate from legislative power and which affect the continuum of judicial process / serving the sentence / social reinsertion. Reconciliation can—and to be effective, should—be made concrete in juridical formulas. Its spirit is clearly perceived in instances

such as amnesties, indults, remission of sentences, conditional freedom, etc.

In concluding this section on the different perspectives, we want to stress again that the perspectives are

more easily distinguished on the analytical level than they are in practical reality, where they are found closely interwoven and sometimes even confused with one another.

2. EXPERIENTIAL REFERENCE POINTS

In this section we discuss the theoretical debates found in the reflections and experiences of the victims and in those of ex-members of the ETA, for only in this way do they attain their true density, complexity, and diversity. We draw close to persons who have suffered directly the effects of violence and have also experienced the initiatives of restorative justice, by which they recover the protagonism that corresponds to victims. We talk also with perpetrators who have ceased to be such and who have partially or totally assumed their responsibility after recognizing that their crimes have produced specific victims. The stories we present come specifically from the conflict in the Basque Country, but many other conflicts can be seen to be reflected in this one.

2.1. The Prisoners of Via Nanclares in Front of Their Mirror

Most of the ETA prisoners have not dissociated themselves from the terrorist organization, which today no longer exists. The restorative justice meetings held between victims and perpetrators at the beginning of the 2010s were the culmination of a labor carried out with a small minority of the prisoners at Nanclares de Oca (Álava) who had adopted a critical view of violence. This initiative provoked profound political fractures and negative reactions on the

part of some victims' associations. The principle critics of the meetings were convinced that it was a simple ploy to facilitate the closure of ETA and to whitewash its history. Others contended that it was a conciliating compromise that would favor impunity by gaining the prisoners' release. The victims who took part were accused of suffering a type of "Stockholm syndrome." However, nothing could be further from the reality. The terrorist band declared a definitive cease-fire in 2011, and seven years later it was dissolved as the result of judicial and

police harassment and the pressures on its political arm, which saw ETA's persistence as suicidal. Moreover, the prisoners who took part in the meetings received in exchange no benefit as regards sentencing; their participation was not motivated by selfish interests.

In a process of moral healing, the offender's repenting for his actions implies that he takes responsibility and admits his guilt, that he understands how his actions affected his victims and society as a whole, and that he is ready and willing to repair the harm done. After spending many years in prison, offenders find it very difficult to think for themselves because of the group pressures they experience, but often enough, the ideological and symbolic mindset that had led them to rationalize their violent practices collapses like a house of cards. In the words of Luis Carrasco:⁴

The desire—or even more, the need—to meet with the victims did not always exist. For years I developed a whole series of defensive arguments, self-justifications. ... The process of maturing took me years. ... They were rough, harsh years of erratic but tenacious purging until I could kindle in my inner being sentiments of guilt, repentance, and the need to ask for pardon ... for having caused great injustice.⁵

Taking responsibility for the harm caused is not a simple matter because it involves refusing to take cover under the mantle of a false collective responsibility.

First I must assume that the responsibility is solely mine; I must separate the

facts from any pretext that would disguise them or pervert them. ... Yes, I repent having joined ETA. I have murdered persons, I have destroyed families, and I have harmed many innocent people.⁶

Face to face with the victims, the perpetrator is radically transformed, from being the “hero” of a cause to being “guilty” of a crime against a fellow human; from being an “example” for those celebrating his immoral actions to being a “traitor” and an “informer” for the same people. The conversion is exceptionally costly: “I could view it impartially because I was assuming the risk, but my family had a very hard time as a result. I believe that it required much more courage to leave ETA than to join it.”⁷

In isolated cases, such as that of José Luis Álvarez Santacristina, alias Txelis,⁸ repentance takes on a religious dimension. In June 2012 a letter⁹ appeared in which Txelis declared that he felt profound remorse for his activities as a militant terrorist—“God is witness that I am profoundly and sincerely repentant of that”—and that he was fully conscious of the moral responsibility that came as a consequence. He stressed the regenerative force that comes from asking forgiveness, provided that it is the fruit of genuine freedom (and not a pure formality). He insisted, however, that his repentance did not mean that the victims had to feel obliged to forgive him, given the magnitude of the harm they had suffered.

In repentance, the perpetrator must not dissociate his individual responsibility for assaults in which he was personally involved from the other as-

saults committed by the terrorist organization:

We experienced ETA militancy in a collective way, so that our responsibility was not limited to the direct victims for whom we have been sentenced. We are not free of responsibility in those cases where we were not actively and directly involved in an attack. Anyone of us might have been involved in falsifying papers, supporting the political apparatus, or editing a newspaper without being directly responsible for any victim.¹⁰

However, dissembling about the double morality and the dehumanization of victims was also indispensable for justifying the use of violence:

We were sensitive to suffering when it affected us directly, when they killed our companions or in the cases of torture. ... At the same time, we were unmoved and tried not to think of the consequences in the cases of victims whom we thought had to be the object of our activities. ... We arrived at what was evident: that torturing was as questionable and unacceptable as being tortured, that killing was as unjustifiable as being killed.¹¹

Nevertheless, of the scarcely thirty inmates who have explicitly abjured violence, there are still some who have not overcome the utilitarian temptation that makes it quite difficult for them to declare violence to be completely illegitimate. They continue to harbor the dangerous pragmatic view that “yesterday it was right, but not today.” They justify what was done in the past

by saying “the political context explained the violence, but now it makes no sense. ... I still believe that what I did at that time was correct.”¹² Furthermore, very few ex-members of ETA have agreed to pay compensation, and even fewer have collaborated with law enforcement in clarifying unsolved murders and attacks. More than 40% of the crimes committed by the terrorist organization have still not been resolved judicially, and more than 300 murders remain unsolved, many of them now past the statute of limitations.¹³ Becoming an informer is still considered an unforgivable betrayal. Nevertheless, in assessing degrees of responsibility, it is necessary to differentiate between members of units who were unaware of what other units were doing and the organization’s leaders, some of whom are today the protagonists of Via Nanclares.

2.2. The Victims and Their Dilemmas Are Conjugated in the Plural

The victims of any conflict, offense, or abuse are faced with the challenge of being healed interiorly from the immense pain they suffered, and for them the offer (or denial) of forgiveness to the perpetrator will present itself as a great dilemma. In the case of the Basque Country, the victims agree on the undeniable need for them to be the protagonists in the reconciliation process and on the importance of having their own rights recognized—repairing what can be repaired and remembering what cannot—but they disagree on underlying questions. Some sectors want

to concentrate on identifying those responsible for the anonymous attacks and then prosecuting and sentencing them. They also want the sentences to be served in full, without early release, since in their view early release would serve only to whitewash the history of ETA. Other sectors, especially those with experience of restorative justice, desire to maintain the clear moral asymmetry between victim and perpetrator. They therefore defend those processes of reconciliation and rehabilitation which promote the social and civic reintegration of the perpetrator, but they also agree that the self-denominated *abertzale*¹⁴ leftists must evaluate their past critically and assume responsibility for legitimizing the violence.

The decision to forgive and the actual forgiving provoke unease and contradictory feelings, as well as diverse responses. On the part of the radical victims (those who were murdered), their relatives can offer forgiveness only in a vicarious manner. Some of them feel that doing so would betray the memory of the loved one who is no longer here: "He asked me for forgiveness, but the one who must forgive is dead. I cannot grant forgiveness."¹⁵ Then there are those victims who, feeling in no way inclined to forgive, distinguish not forgiving—because they believe that trying to dilute a radical evil that cannot be undone would eliminate responsibility—from finding themselves immersed in feelings of hatred that would only bring on their own destruction: "If they ask me, 'Do you forgive?' Well no, you do not forgive. But neither do you live only to hate them, because that would

be tantamount to letting them do away not only with the father but with everybody else."¹⁶

In their testimonies the victims admit to having felt rage, anger, and hatred, sentiments perfectly understandable given the magnitude of the injustice inflicted. They even confess to desires for revenge, but these have attenuated over time, especially as they come into contact with other types of victim:

But worst of all was the hatred. How I wanted to kill! ... Those wretches killed Juan Carlos [her husband, murdered by the GAL¹⁷], and they almost made me into something even worse. ... Joining in solidarity with others who were suffering was the best thing I could do. Denouncing every abuse by the terrorists has been my salvation.¹⁸

These words of Laura Martín provide an occasion for briefly explaining the restorative justice initiative called *Glencree*, promoted by what was then the Basque government's Agency for Attending to Victims of Terrorism. During a politically convulsive time—between the end of the armed organization's final truce and its definitive declaration of a cease-fire—the initiative was, with extreme discretion, organized by a group of almost thirty victims of ETA terrorism, counter-terrorist measures, and police maltreatment.

From an ethical perspective, this type of initiative helps to combat any selection process that tends to exclude from the group of victims those who are not ideologically or politically

akin.¹⁹ All the victims are united by unjust suffering and by the desire to delegitimize the politically motivated violence that has caused it. At the same time, they are different from one another, and their testimonies make it clear what needs to be done for (and with) each type of victim. Their coming together undoubtedly makes a positive pedagogical contribution to reconciliation, and it contrasts with those political and social strategies which either present the victims as a homogeneous group steeped in anger and opposed to any peace process (or rather, what they understand by that) or else consider these multi-victim initiatives to be a way of blurring responsibilities in the exercise and justification of violence.

There are victims who, because of strong ethical or religious convictions, believe that they should forgive and have done so, even if the perpetrator has not asked for forgiveness or can no longer do so. They consider forgiveness to be a liberating act for the person who grants it (but who does not forego justice or forget what happened); they see forgiveness as essential for healing wounds and contributing to peace and reconciliation in society.²⁰ Because of the traditional association of forgiveness with religion, other victims refuse to talk of forgiveness because they consider themselves non-religious or because they prefer to speak about giving the perpetrator a “second chance” instead of forgiving him.²¹ Offering a second chance is closely related to the process of reinsertion, which should guide all prison policy that seeks to institutionalize punishment but not vengeance. Marta Buesa states the case thus:

I do not think that we can be harmed if those who murdered my father recover their liberty, provided they appreciate the pain they have caused, assume responsibility for it both individually and collectively, condemn their terrorist past, acknowledge the damage they did, and seek to make reparation. Quite to the contrary, it will bring tremendous benefit, not only for victims but for the whole of society, and it will serve to guarantee that what we have experienced will never be repeated.²²

The victims who take part in the restorative justice meetings speak about their initial misgivings (“They’re asking me to help a person who has ruined my life so that he can feel better?” “How can I look into the eyes of a person who has done me so much harm?”), but they also stress the importance of such meetings for society. Considering themselves in more than one case heterodox victims, they showed great generosity. Although they had their own personal motives—knowing the truth, obtaining answers—they were aware that they were also offering help to the perpetrator and were giving the offender’s dignity priority over the fact that he had killed their loved ones:

What most impressed me during the conversation is what he kept repeating over and over. ... “Everything about me is bad,” “There is nothing good in me.” I told him that that was not true: “If it were, neither one of us would be here now.” And I added: “I believe you have been very brave to recognize all the damage done; you have been able to understand that everything you did in the past was seriously wrong, and you

have asked forgiveness for it. But most importantly, you have regained your liberty and the right to be a citizen.²³

From the perspective of a counter-culture of reconciliation, the experience of restorative justice takes on a special quality due to the presence of victims in the meetings, both the victims of ETA and those of state terrorism and of police and paramilitary violence. From the very start the process provoked fierce controversy in political circles and the media. The abertzale left rejected the proposal, saying that not “all types of victims” should be present; they insisted on their distorted view of what had happened in the Basque Country, adhering to their theory of two armies engaged in a war. Resistance in the non-nationalist political sector came from the fear that such meetings would encourage the perverse idea that victims and perpe-

trators were equivalent. After harsh partisan accusations on both sides, the initiative was formalized in the program called “Adi-Adian,” and it has gradually become part of the regular school curriculum, expanding more recently to the university level. Besides being an act of justice, albeit limited, it allows the ethical values of the victims as “moral witnesses” to be incorporated into society. In unveiling the evil, their testimony necessarily proceeds from conditions of truth (what is narrated happened so) and justice (for the purpose of delegitimizing injustice). Its reconciling potential is revealed in the non-neutrality of educators with respect to the victimization and also in the receptive attitude of the students, who express indignation at the injustice suffered, affective and effective solidarity with the victims, and conscientious defense of the humanity dignity of both victims and perpetrators.

3. ELEMENTS FOR BUILDING A CULTURE OF RECONCILIATION

As we have been arguing from the start, we are convinced that reconciliation possesses foundations, conditions, and characteristics such that, given present sociocultural circumstances, their defense, development, and application require a specifically countercultural proposal, one that is supported by and makes effective categories that are radically opposed to those of the dominant way of thinking.

3.1. Critically Confronting “Do-Goodism”

Promoting the culture of reconciliation requires us to criticize the socially dominant “do-goodism,” by which we mean the well-intentioned sort, since the malicious sort is simply a moral perversion. Also in need of criticism are the associated concepts and categories, which end up being plainly quite inadequate. We could offer many examples here of such naïve, detached interpretations, but it will suffice to describe a couple of them briefly to show the need for their purging by criticism in order to make reconciliation possible rather than difficult.

Neutrality

Neutrality, when it is understood as the refusal to take sides and or to pronounce moral judgment on those involved in a conflict, is praised as the most coherent and balanced posture when in reality it is only a subtle—and, we would hope, unconscious—manner of supporting the aggressor or of admitting that he is just as right as his victim. As far as we are concerned, this posture has been exposed as a manner of remaining irresponsibly equidistant. In the face of injustice, no one can remain neutral; doing so makes one into an accomplice. Instead of neutrality, what is called for is impartiality. Im-

partiality does not let itself be seduced arbitrarily by the particularities of one of the protagonists in the conflict. The impartial person, far from being neutral, always acts in favor of the one who has suffered the injustice rather than the one who has perpetrated it. To use an image from sports, the referee must be impartial and not let himself be influenced by the team colors of the players; he must therefore denounce and punish all conduct which violates the rules of the sport.

Unconditional dialogue

We consider unconditional dialogue as the way to resolve every type of conflict, so much so that we view with pity, if not contempt, those who place conditions on dialogue. It is true that dialogue is an irreplaceable instrument and channel in human relations, but it is intrinsically conditioned precisely because it is human: it is not always possible to talk about everything and with everybody. There are conditions of all types—spatial, temporal, ideological, psychological—that prevent it, that make it possible, or that make it difficult. Dialogue requires prior recognitions and relations because its forms will vary, depending on whether its aim is to gain knowledge, to show contrasts, to sound out views, or to reach agreements.

3.2. Conditions of Possibility

The culture of reconciliation must be based on the formulation, implementation, and deepening of its conditions of possibility (all necessary and insuf-

ficient), which our earlier definition spelled out. We must be aware that in every condition of possibility we discover worrisome hegemonic versions for which it is necessary to formulate alternatives that are solid and compelling.

Truth

We live in times of post-truth, which denies the existence of error or falsehood, and of absolute relativism (since “there is no absolute truth,” each person always has a part of the truth, his or her own truth). It is therefore more than ever necessary to defend the truth—partial and relative, of course—in the face of the lie. When an injustice has been committed, when dignity has been wounded, or when the fundamental rights of a person have been violated, it is important to know what happened. Knowing the truth of what happened is one of the principal demands of the victims’ but not of the perpetrators. The victims demand that what actually happened be publicly known because in that way their innocence will be more clearly made manifest. The perpetrators, for their part, strive to keep the facts of the case enshrouded in doubt, ambiguity, or forgetfulness; when they give their version, they introduce spurious matters with manipulative intent, always concealing the truth of the wrong that was done.

Justice

Reyes Mate frequently reminds us that two schemas are at working in bringing about the end of violence. One is the “price of peace” (which is indebt-

ed to the schema of symmetry), and the other is “the blood that cries out for justice.” And in this second case, two ways of responding are possible. Either the response can be based on a purely punitive conception of justice (the *lex talionis* conforms to the schema of symmetry: the punishment is proportionate to the injustice committed), or it can be based on restorative justice, which is asymmetrical. Restorative justice is more interested in compensation for the harm suffered by the victim than it is in punishment for the offender, the latter always being subordinated to the former. Restorative justice will better guarantee the protection of victims in their legitimate aspirations for justice, though perhaps never completely. For this reason, restorative justice does not involve impunity, forgetting, or prescription because the harm continues as long as there is no resolution.

Reparation

The victim should have adequate and rapid reparation that is proportionate to the injustice suffered and the consequent harm. The reparation may take quite different forms:

- restitution both of goods lost and of rights violated;
- indemnification for all types of economically calculable harm (physical, mental, material, financial);
- the necessary rehabilitation, which may include medical, psychological, legal, or social assistance;
- satisfaction, which may involve measures such as stopping the injustice, revelation of what happened, a

public apology, acts of recognition and homage, or the assuming and assigning of responsibilities;

- guarantees that the injustice will not be repeated, possibly through measures of control, educational plans, identification mechanisms, resolution of conflicts, improved legislation, etc.

Memory

It is undeniable that memory is diverse and susceptible to multiple interpretations. There is no such thing as objective or neutral memory. However, not all memories have the same value, and not all versions of the past are equally legitimate. In any case, as difficult as it may be to establish an adequate account of the past, such an account, given the position defended here, will never be an impossible midway point between the narratives of the victims and those of the offenders. Collective memory is constructed on the basis of ethical and political principles that were not held by the perpetrators but were rather undermined and subverted by them. Social memory demands that we remember those who, by their explicit action or their unfeigned passion, have represented those values on which are founded the institutions and the life of the political community.

Forgiveness

In the social sphere we speak with great facility about forgiveness offered or forgiveness requested. Both seem to us valuable, and in fact we do not think it matters which comes first. We invite both parties, offenders and offended,

to offer their version on equal terms. However, such a conception appears mistaken from an ethical perspective. The offended cannot be morally obliged or required to offer forgiveness, but the offender, asymmetrically, has a moral obligation to ask for forgiveness for the injustice committed. At the same time, the reincorporation of both victims and perpetrators into society is an obligatory step toward reconciliation. Given the criteria of human dignity and the common good, society cannot allow the contributions of any of its members to be despised. But here again there is asymmetry: society and state have the responsibility to assist in the reinsertion of the perpetrators, demanding of them active participation and reasonable conditions. Society and state also have the responsibility of reintegrating the victims, but in this case without asking for anything in exchange, for they have done as much as they could by renouncing vengeance and leaving in the hands of Justice the assignment of blame, the certification of the deeds, and the determination of subsequent penalties.

Agreement

It seems logical to think that every process of reconciliation should culminate in the formulation of an agreement of coexistence that sets the terms for sociopolitical life in a future that is far removed—not only temporally but also and above all formally and materially—from the violent events of the past. In the case of a terrorist conflict such as the one we have suffered, this framework for coexistence cannot be a sort of midpoint between the positions

of the perpetrators and the victims, between terrorists who have wounded democratic legality and those who have sought to preserve it, between those seeking to subvert the legitimate social order by violence and those who respect and even defend it. It most certainly cannot be a balancing point between violence and democracy, for such a point is not only unstable but impossible. Of course, it is theoretically reasonable to suppose that, in order to reach an agreement of resolution in any situation of conflict, all parties must cede something, show flexibility, and modify their positions. However, if we examine the concrete reality of the violent conflict we have experienced in the Basque Country, we must recognize that, in order to reach a reasonable and just agreement—which is not the same as or even similar to a midpoint—some parties must move hundreds of kilometers from their initial positions, which are exclusionary and violent, while others need move only a few centimeters from their positions, which are firmly committed to peaceful coexistence. It is therefore not logical or meaningful to say, in such a case, that “we all have to move.”

3.3. The Anthropological Perspective

From the anthropological perspective, reconciliation demands recognition of our common human condition, especially in its vulnerability and limitations. Such recognition provokes compassion and solidarity, it takes seriously the dignity of human beings, it respects their human rights, and it mo-

tivates responsible action. All dehumanizing processes should be avoided, first those that dehumanize the victims, and then also those that dehumanize the perpetrators, for such processes lead to the violation of the rights of both sides. We must all contemplate the victims and their aggressors as human beings endowed with inviolable dignity, a dignity that does not proceed from the goodness or evilness of their actions but corresponds rather to their human condition. All of us, because of our vulnerability, are susceptible to being victims of others, but all of us are also, because of our moral limitations, capable of committing injustices.

3.4. Acknowledgement of Guilt

In confronting the dominant mentality, the culture of reconciliation demands acknowledgement of guilt as a positive ethical category; it also requires the practice of self-criticism as a basic attitude in the human subject leading to repentance. The many criticisms of the concept of “guilt,” which is essential for addressing the ethical problem of moral evil, can be overcome if the category is considered from the viewpoint of the victims, as we have postulated since the beginning of this text. As Reyes Mate states, guilt is expressed adequately and positively if the perpetrator experiences it when beholding the victim. The feeling of being unhappy with oneself, which accompanies guilt, is secondary; it is the consequence of the more important prior sentiment: unhappiness with the harm done to the victim. Thus, instead of resorting to exculpatory

techniques to free ourselves from the weight of guilt, we can take the positive approach of the path of repentance, which begins when we behold our victim and acknowledge the harm we have done him. Such an approach produces an intense movement toward the justice due to the victim, and it motivates us to assume responsibility, desist from doing evil, make reparation to the victim, and not reoffend. As a consequence, not only does the victim recover full citizenship in the community (from which he had been expelled by the violation of his rights), but a corresponding healing is produced in the morality of the perpetrator, who is thus also rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community.

3.5. Peace and Nonviolence

The culture of reconciliation can be understood as integrating and accompanying two other cultures that have treated more fully in recent studies and educational proposals: the culture of peace and the culture of nonviolence. Any proper treatment of either of these cultures, which in our case implies assuming the perspective of the victims, will contribute significantly to developing a culture of reconciliation. This means, among other things, that the social processes of reconciliation—apart from how they are actually generated, whether at the instigation of the victims or at the request of the perpetrators—have a clearly identifiable dynamism, one that takes into account the diversity of the protagonists. The starting point is the conviction that the victims take priority; this conviction confronts

the perpetrators as an ethical provocation, so that the bystanders—the social majority not affected either actively or passively by the injustice—assume the corresponding commitment, avoiding inhibition, neutrality, or indifference. Consequently, when circumstances dictate, it will be finally the state that modulates the necessary political and legal responses. However, employing these theoretical and academic developments should not make us forget that the culture of reconciliation is related, both initially and progressively, to spirituality, “mysticism,” and transcendence (though these need not be religious). It thus avoids being identified with a technical or administrative process managed by experts who

design social, juridical, and political measures, which are necessary by not sufficient. The culture of reconciliation also requires that diverse cultural (artistic, musical, literary) products be recovered, created, and collected. In this context it should be stressed that the wisdom of Christian tradition possesses a great richness that can make a specific, but not exclusive, contribution to the culture of reconciliation,²⁴ which requires an eminently “kenotic” attitude in order to carry out its task of motivation. What is developed in this case is an authentic service of reconciliation based on identification with the victims, with a strongly paschal dimension that vindicates life in the midst of death.

4. FUTURE HORIZONS AND MODELS OF COEXISTENCE

As we think of the present and the future of society, the culture (or better, the counterculture) of reconciliation presented in these pages will help us to evaluate critically three models of coexistence and to place our hope on the last of them. The three models are that of the temptation to forget and manipulate memory, that of coexistence, and that of reconciled cordiality.

4.1. Forgetfulness and Manipulation of Memory

This model is more common than we think, though it involves profound ethical inconsistencies. After decades of bloody conflict, the temptation often arises to “make a fresh start” without dedicating time to reflection on what has happened (to us) and why it happened. Making a virtue of necessity, we say that, as hard as it was for the victims, the same thing has happened in similar situations in other parts of the planet so that people could look to the future without luggage. Any contrary position is systematically accused of wanting to keep alive the flame of ha-

tred, of “throwing a monkey wrench in the works,” in other words, of not promoting coexistence and reconciliation.

Shlomo Ben Ami, the Israeli diplomat and historian, says that a choice must be made between justice and peace. To live in peace, a fresh start must be made since politics is a task for the living, not the dead. But peace is more than the absence of violence and coercion. Reyes Mate²⁵ shows that the conflict between memory and politics, as Walter Benjamin maintained, can be overcome if a relationship is established between the justice of the living and doing justice to the dead by bringing their absence into the present. This also implies, of course, keeping

present the victims who have not died or who suffer, as it were, the “death of forgetfulness.”

Many of the contemporary debates about memory were born after that authentic laboratory of radical evil called Auschwitz, which revealed two types of laws that tend to be reproduced mimetically in violent conflicts. The first is the law of the “double death” inflicted by the same crime: physical death and hermeneutical death. Before, during, and after the murders, an invisibilizing discourse proves to be very productive for criminal purposes and for the banalization of the murders. The second law is the “duty of memory,” a categorical imperative of justice intimately linked to the cry of the surviving victims. “Never again,” the principle of non-repetition of barbarity, requires these sine qua non conditions: 1) condemning the evil committed and its injustice and 2) keeping alive the memory of the victims. This memory should serve as the principal support for the ethical regeneration of civic harmony and for the socialization of the new generations through an appropriate therapy of emotions, one which favors empathy and indignation in the face of suffering and violence and which blocks off the paths of hatred and exclusion. Thus, the imperative of memory takes on a double function, reparative and therapeutic, on the one hand, and socializing, on the other.²⁶

It is very important to be aware of the underlying connotations when the violence disappears. There is no consensus, and a fierce struggle is waged to win the battle of the narrative, a struggle in which opposed versions

seek social and political legitimacy. In the previous section we warned about the dangers that post-truth and relativism pose for democracy and harmonious coexistence. The hermeneutic version of the cry of the victims should allow us to avoid not only the temptation of converting forgetfulness into self-fulfilled prophecy but also the manipulation of memory by the perpetrators or by those who collaborated with them directly or indirectly by sharing their vision of reality and covering up their violent practices.

It should be kept in mind that the terrorism of ETA differed fundamentally from that experienced in other countries because the terrorism had significant support among many in the Basque Country. Not enough importance has been given to the extent to which the abertzale left has been concerned, in the so-called “peace process,” with projecting a certain image of victory (mostly for internal consumption) and especially of pride in its past.

Sortu should be a synonym of memory, so that when any compatriots are released from prison, ... they feel recognized and welcomed, and so that Sortu may be the proud key in Basque society. Let those who have sinned ask pardon and recite three Ave Marias, for we have already paid for our errors. Let the abertzale left be nourished by its self-sacrificing past; let it cultivate it in its new militants, and let it know how to transmit it to others, because once we have won the battle of memory, we will have won over everybody.²⁷

Since the abertzale left never practiced self-criticism, it never con-

demned the crimes of ETA. Because of its role in the polemical disarmament and in the disappearance of the armed organization, it was able to consolidate its support in public opinion, presenting itself as an authentic notary public and guardian of the peace. Its supposed contribution to the disappearance of ETA was hailed as more important than its failure to expressly condemn terrorism. There was recognition of the harm done to some victims (not all), but the violence that produced the victims was not denounced. It was considered sufficient that they admit that they had caused suffering and that it was unjust. For the political sector, a distorted notion of peace was framed in terms of ETA's unilateral withdrawal from a supposed war and the state's continued use of "repressive mechanisms." These mechanisms included everything indiscriminately: from the punitive policy viewed as a consequence of the conflict (detentions, prosecutions, and sentences) to the national government's refusal to consider any changes in the political status of the Basque Country, the supposed cause of the conflict.

That manipulation of memory, an attempt to yoke victims with perpetrators under a mistaken cloak of collective responsibility, reveals profound ethical faults. Strategies that involve denial, revisionism, distortion, or leveling²⁸ provoke a diffusion of discourse about how everyone must admit to committing errors—"we are all guilty"—with the corollary is "no one is responsible." The "middle position" proposed in such discourses has been harshly criticized in this booklet, even in its well-intentioned versions.

Taking such a position, whether consciously or unconsciously, facilitates the exoneration and impunity of those who have committed crimes,²⁹ and it revictimizes the victims. The citizenry should remain alert in its efforts to delegitimize any nihilistic discourse, both that which aims to exculpate or contextualize violence and that which denies, underestimates, or even defends the existence of state terrorism and police and para-police violence. There is also a need to deconstruct political discourses with a low ethical threshold, limiting themselves simply to calculations of a tactical or utilitarian sort. As we stated with regard to the reflections of the prisoners of Nanclares, the mentality of "yesterday it was right, but not today" makes it impossible to delegitimize violence, and it reduces the scope of the principle of non-repetition.

In recent years members of the *abertzale* left have taken part in homages to the victims of violence, but they have not been able to acknowledge their own political responsibility.³⁰ Moreover, the heroes' receptions given to those who have completed their sentences without any sign of repentance, as well as the attempts to celebrate them illegally in the patronal feast of Basque cities and town, show that the reality has not changed as much as it should have. In specific cases it can be questioned whether such events have actually stepped over the thin line of penal responsibility. In any case, there is no doubt about their humiliating effect on the victims, the risk they carry of secondary victimization, and their anti-pedagogical potential. Finally, when the institutions fail to respond

firmly to such outrages, fallaciously defending the need for coexistence, they end up playing politics, as if the victims did not exist.

4.2. Coexistence and Reconciled Cordiality

Coexistence can be compared to two parallel lines that never meet. Perhaps it is a necessary step, a transitional phase in the utopian tension that gives birth to reconciliation, but it has serious deficiencies. It divides society into ghettos and airtight compartments, and it eliminates the real possibility of deactivating the context that promotes violence or nourishes the existence of two opposing bands that promote hatred, dehumanization, and murder of the Other. Mere coexistence, under the slogan “Us here, them there,” can be defended with diametrically opposed arguments, both by the sectors that have legitimized violence ideologically and politically and by the associations of victims whose demands for recognition have not been satisfied and who with good reason profoundly distrust the perpetrators and their accomplices.

As opposed to mere coexistence we defend the model of reconciled cordiality, which is based on the definition of reconciliation that we have spelled out in this booklet. This model stresses the clear moral asymmetry between victim and perpetrator, without euphemisms or confusions (as well intentioned as these may be). But it also insists that the perpetrators must make efforts toward ethical rehabilitation, thus providing the conditions for the full restoration of their status as citizens.

Thus, for example, both the public policies of memory, understood in their broadest sense, and their educational potential should resist any temptation of “museum-type preservation.” Viewed sociologically and ethically, memory implies studying the political significance of the past for the present and the utility of the past for constructing the future. The worst way to acknowledge the victims is to sacralize them as legacies of the past, thus depriving them of ethical and political significance for today and tomorrow. Understanding their legacy means trying to find a completely different way of constructing social and political identities, and this must be done in addition to asserting their still pending rights of recognition—and in close association with those rights. It means refusing to consider pluralism as a difficulty to be overcome on the way to homogenization and seeing it instead as a treasure with great potential. It means refusing to see the others who are different (victims or perpetrators ready to assume their responsibilities) as enemies and accepting them as fellow citizens. As Euskal Herria Gesture for Peace³¹ stressed when the violence was at its height, in the Basque Country the problem has not been one of knowledge [conocimiento] but one of recognition [reconocimiento]. Particular individuals were murdered, kidnapped, persecuted, etc., because they were considered occupation forces, because they refused to contribute to the finances of ETA, or because they thought differently. If the principle of non-repetition is to be something more than pure rhetoric, empty of content, then it must require Basque society—

and above all the abertzale left—to have the moral and political integrity it takes to behold the victims squarely and not hide behind subterfuges that call seriously into question their democratic pedigree.

Within this horizon of reconciliation, penal and punitive justice, if it cannot be replaced, should at least be complemented with restorative justice, which is centered on the victims and their healing and which makes possible

the social reinsertion of perpetrators who have acknowledged the injustice of the harm they have caused, assumed their responsibility toward the victims, undertaken serious self-criticism of their violent past, and become actively involved in working for social harmony. In this context, the whole of society plays an active role as it commits itself to recovering for the community, in different ways, both victims and perpetrators.

5. CONCLUSION: BUILDING A CULTURE OF RECONCILIATION

When reflecting and debating about reconciliation, we enter a minefield with plenty of possible pitfalls. There is little agreement about the meaning of reconciliation either in the academic world or in our ordinary way of speaking. Not even victims are in agreement. At the heart of the question is the concept of moral symmetry that underlies the classical understanding of reconciliation; this concept is totally inadequate when applied to a violent terrorist conflict taking place in a fundamentally democratic society.

That is why we advocate a “counterculture” of reconciliation that is founded on asymmetry and assumes the perspective of the victims as ethico-political subjects. The centrality of the victims is essential because it is in them that the injustice becomes visible. Reconciliation, thus understood, can be approached from different perspectives (religious, ethical, political, juridical), all of which reveal both a social and an interpersonal dimension; of course, the social dimension depends on the fruitful realization of the interpersonal, which is more difficult.

By contrasting the elements needed to build a culture of reconciliation with

the experiences narrated both by victims and remorseful perpetrators, we can delineate the contours of a model of reconciled cordiality that seeks to remedy, on the one hand, the ethical deficits of forgetfulness and manipulation of memory and, on the other, mere peaceful coexistence. To achieve that, the following is indispensable:

- Any attempt to abuse memory must be rejected,³² and the link between past, present, and future must be made manifest. That implies:
 - Not shunning one’s personal responsibility by taking cover behind the fallacious existence of

a collective responsibility.

- Not dissociating one's responsibility for personal acts that violated human rights and human dignity from the acts of the armed organization in which one served as a perpetrator.
 - Dismantling any hint of moral relativism that would tend to stigmatize the victims and call into question their dignity as ends in themselves.
 - Denouncing any discourse that would view the abertzale left as a decisive agent in the cessation of violence; such discourse distorts the reality and prevents that political sector from assuming its responsibility in justifying the violence and promoting terror during decades.
 - Supporting processes of reconstruction of identity that assume the exercise of a healthy pluralism.
- A close relationship must be established between repentance, taking responsibility, admitting moral guilt, and forgiving, but forgiveness should not be identified with reconciliation, for reconciliation surpasses forgiveness. It is the perpetrators who ought to ask their victims for forgiveness, and they should do so by exercising their own freedom (not through the intervention of outside agents). The victims have the right to forgive but not the duty or obligation to do so. Often those close to the victims believe that they cannot forgive because in so doing they would be betraying the memory of their murdered relatives. Other persons are convinced

that forgiveness prostitutes coexistence because it dilutes responsibilities. Still others see positive value in forgiveness, either for its intrinsic merit or as liberation for the one who grants it, as a contribution to social peace, and as a second chance for the one who requests it after assuming responsibility for the harm unjustly inflicted.

- Any attempts to establish an equidistant midpoint of false neutrality in the face of processes of victimization must be rejected, whether they come from political actors, educational institutions, or society itself. The rights of the victims to truth, justice, reparation, and the principle of non-repetition must be defended. Given the limitations of penal justice, which continues to be indispensable for avoiding impunity in the case of atrocious crimes, the experiences of restorative justice (restorative meetings, multi-victim perspective, and victim educators in the classroom) place a new and different emphasis on the epistemological and hermeneutical protagonism of the victims. Despite the diversity of their personal journeys, as well as their diverse political and ideological affiliations, the victims are united by the unjust suffering they underwent as the result of politically motivated violence. Those experiences have a tremendous educational potential for delegitimizing violence and rebuilding harmonious coexistence. It is therefore important to support political initiatives that draw on these experiences. In the case of the Basque Country, much

remains to be done. The victims are already present in the classrooms, with greater or less success. However, most of the perpetrators have not broken their ideological and affective links with the world of terror. It is therefore important to draw lessons from the itineraries of those who at one point in their lives decided to take up arms to defend political objectives and who have now repented doing so:

What is happening here is that ... those who caused the harm and those who suffered it are able to share their view of the past and their judgment about what occurred. By looking at the past together, with the consensus of the renewed political community, it becomes possible to think that the two sides have closed the wounds, even though the wounds have not thereby been erased or made invisible. They are still aware of the wounds and realize that, as such, they should never have happened, but still the wounds remain and are justly recognized as part of their shared history. Thus the scars left by past wounds are the nexus of a shared memory, and on that memory is founded the renewed political consensus.³³

Final Coda

As we have stressed from the beginning, all that has been presented here regarding reconciliation has arisen

from a very concrete context, the terrorist conflict in the Basque Country during the last half-century. And it has been viewed from a very concrete perspective, the centrality of the victims. These highly specific parameters have allowed us to produce our proposal, but at the same time they have greatly limited its reach. Aware of that, we do not want to conclude without indicating the need to elaborate a broader and more ambitious proposal; we hope our own proposal, partial and limited as it is, will be a modest but valuable contribution to that end. Ultimately our aim should be to formulate an “integral reconciliation” that reestablishes damaged or broken relations not only among persons (interpersonal) but also between humanity and nature, and for those of us who are believers, between us and God. Such an initiative necessarily involves working for a culture of transversal reconciliation that is made up of diverse social and cultural contributions coming from different religious and ideological traditions. It should also include contributions from peace, justice, and solidarity movements such as feminism, environmentalism, indigenism, human rights activism, etc. The challenge lies before us. The achievements so far have not been few, but they are still insufficient. The possibilities are many, but even more numerous are the deficiencies. Is it too late in the day? As Pedro Casaldáliga wrote, “It is late, but it is our hour. ... It is late, but it is daybreak if only we insist a little.”

1. This presentation is entirely indebted to the extensive and profound reflection of Manuel Reyes Mate.
2. MARTÍN BERISTAIN, C. and PÁEZ ROVIRA, D. (2000). *Violencia, apoyo a las víctimas y reconstrucción social*, Madrid: Fundamentos, pp. 96-97, note 60.
3. Cf. INNERARITY, Daniel (2006). “Políticas de la memoria en Euskadi: reconocer, reconciliar, relatar, recordar” in *Hermes*, no. 21, pp. 18-25.
4. He was one of those responsible for the murder of Juan Mari Jáuregui, former civil governor of Gipuzkoa in 2000.
5. In PASCUAL, E. (coord.) (2013). *Los ojos del otro. Encuentros restaurativos entre víctimas y ex-miembros de ETA*, Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 279-280.
6. In TERRADILLOS, A. (2016), *Vivir después de matar: Los terroristas de ETA que dejaron las armas cuentan por primera vez su historia*, Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, pp. 109-115.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
8. A member of the ETA leadership disbanded in Bidart in 1991, he was one of the first activists not only to dissociate himself from the organization but also to indemnify his victims economically.
9. This letter, titled “Forgive in order to Live,” appeared in 2012 during the summer course of the Universidad del País Vasco.
10. In RIVERA, A. and MATEO, A. (coords.) (2019). *Víctimas y política penitenciaria. Claves, experiencias y retos de futuro*, Madrid: Catarata, p. 87.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
12. In TERRADILLOS, *op.cit.*, p. 137.
13. Cf. CALDERÍN, J. F. (2014), *Agujeros del sistema: más de 300 asesinatos de ETA sin resolver*, Vitoria-Gazteiz: Ikusager, pp. 25-27.
14. Abertzale means “nationalist” or “patriot.”
15. In TERRADILLOS, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
16. In SAN SEBASTIÁN, I. (2003), *Los años de plomo. Memoria en carne viva de las víctimas*, Madrid: Temas de Hoy, p. 126.
17. Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups.
18. In CUESTA, C. (2000), *Contra el olvido. Testimonios de víctimas del terrorismo*, Madrid: Temas de Hoy, pp. 94-95.
19. SÁEZ DE LA FUENTE, I. and BILBAO, G. (2018). “La problematicidad de la asunción ética de la perspectiva de las víctimas,” in VARONA, Gema (dir.), *Victimología: en busca de un enfoque integrador para repensar la intervención con víctimas*, Madrid: Aranzadi, p. 70.
20. Cf. ALBOAN (2003). *La reconciliación. Más allá de la justicia*, Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Cuaderno no. 122, pp. 5-9.
21. Cf. TERRADILLOS, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
22. In RIVERA and MATEO, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-149.
23. In PASCUAL, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
24. It is sufficient to refer to the Song of the suffering Servant in Isaiah and, of course, to the Gospel of Jesus.
25. Cf. MATE, M. R. (2009). *Medianoche en la historia. Comentarios a las tesis de Walter Benjamin “sobre el concepto de historia,”* Madrid: Trotta.
26. Cf. ALONSO, M. (2012), *El lugar de la memoria. La huella del mal como pedagogía democrática*, Bilbao: Bakeaz, p. 193.
27. *Gara*, 12/07/2012. Sortu was the first political party of the Basque nationalist “abertzale left” to openly reject any kind of political violence
28. Cf. ALONSO, *op. cit.* p. 14.
29. Antón López Ruiz, alias *Kubati*, was the murderer of Yoyes. As a leader of Sortu, he was radically opposed to having prisoners collaborate with justice in clarifying unsolved crimes.

30. Natividad Rodríguez, after a homage to her husband, Fernando Buesa, addressed the women parliamentarians of EH-Bildu in these terms: "I would really like you to make these gestures, and take other steps also. We cannot do it for you. It is not with me that you have to do it; it is with Basque society, with the Basque citizens. For me this is not sufficient" (*El Correo*, 22/02/2017).
31. Euskal Herria Gesture for Peace was a social organization begun in 1986 and terminated in 2013. It was one of the first organizations asking ETA to dissolve itself and showing solidarity with victims of terrorism.
32. Cfr. TODOROV, T. (2000). *Los abusos de la memoria*, Barcelona: Paidós.
33. GÓMEZ, A. (2017). "¿Con o sin cicatrices? Los límites del perdón y de la reconciliación" in GÓMEZ, A. and SÁNCHEZ, C. *Confrontando el mal. Ensayos sobre memoria, violencia y democracia*, Madrid: Plaza y Valdés, pp. 167-168.

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