Non-Western and Western Theories of Peace

Carl Hermann Dino Steinmetz

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the divergent yet complementary approaches to peace in Western and non-Western theoretical traditions. Western theories—such as Democratic Peace Theory, Liberal Institutionalism, and Galtung's Positive/Negative Peace—emphasize structural, state-centric mechanisms, including democratic governance, international organizations, and institutional justice. In contrast, non-Western philosophies—Ubuntu, Ahimsa, Confucian Harmony, Islamic Sulh, Indigenous Restorative Justice, and Buddhist Peace Theory—prioritize relational, spiritual, and communal dimensions of peace, focusing on interconnectedness, nonviolence, ethical harmony, and restorative dialogue. By juxtaposing these frameworks, the study reveals how Western models often address macro-level stability while non-Western traditions cultivate micro-level transformation. Ultimately, the paper argues for an integrated paradigm of peace that synthesizes institutional rigor with cultural and spiritual wisdom, offering a holistic response to global conflict.

Keywords: Peace theories, Western peace models, Non-Western peace philosophies, Conflict resolution, Restorative justice, Ubuntu, Ahimsa, Structural violence, Interconnectedness, Metanoetics.

INTRODUCTION

In a world teetering on the brink of perpetual conflict, I have repeatedly underscored—across multiple articles—the urgent necessity of pursuing peace. My writings seek not only to illuminate the catastrophic consequences of war but also to challenge the structures that perpetuate violence. The devastation wrought by conflict extends far beyond the battlefield: it erodes human dignity, decimates communities, and inflicts irreversible harm upon our planet. At the heart of this destruction lies a global order dominated by war-mongering ideologies, often perpetuated by authoritarian regimes and unchecked militarism.

My recent articles—*Crisis and Peace*, *Peace and Resistance*, and *Obstacles to Creating Peace* (Steinmetz, 2025, nos. 1, 2, and 3)—serve as critical inquiries into the mechanisms that both hinder and facilitate peace. These works are framed by pressing questions that demand our collective reflection:

Crises and the Seeds of War

- *Does systemic inequality, exacerbated by crises, fuel regional and proxy wars?* History has shown that economic disparity and political instability often serve as tinder for conflict. When power imbalances go unaddressed, marginalized populations become vulnerable to exploitation, and geopolitical tensions escalate into violent confrontations. The link between structural injustice and warfare is undeniable—yet it remains a cycle we must break.

Peace and the Paradox of Resistance
- *Why do peace initiatives frequently encounter fierce resistance?*
- *Does resistance emerge before peace takes root, or as a reaction to its imposition?*

The case of Palestine and Israel exemplifies this dynamic. Despite international calls for a just resolution, the entrenched occupation of Palestinian land persists, met with both grassroots defiance and institutionalized suppression. Resistance, in this context, is not merely a response to peace efforts but a manifestation of long-standing oppression—a reminder that true peace cannot be built upon injustice.

The Fragility of Peace Making
- What systemic obstacles undermine peace initiatives?
- How does public dissatisfaction with unresolved conflicts—such as the war between Russia and Ukraine—hinder diplomatic progress?

Peace is not a passive state but an active, often contentious process. When negotiations fail to address root causes—whether territorial disputes, security concerns, or ideological divides— disillusionment sets in. The protracted conflict in Eastern Europe demonstrates how unmet expectations can erode trust in diplomacy, leaving societies trapped in cycles of retaliation and despair. These reflections are not merely academic; they are a call to action. To forge a sustainable peace, we must confront the forces that profit from division, amplify marginalized voices, and reimagine governance beyond the grip of autocracy. The choice before us is stark: continue down the path of mutual destruction, or rise—collectively—to reclaim our shared humanity.

THE CYCLE OF INQUIRY: EXPLORING THEORIES, HYPOTHESES, AND EMPIRICAL TESTS
Human understanding advances through a dynamic cycle of exploration, theoretical framing, hypothesis formulation, and empirical validation. This iterative process—fundamental to both scientific and sociopolitical inquiry—allows us to refine knowledge, challenge assumptions, and adapt to new evidence. Below is an eloquent synthesis of this intellectual journey, anchored in methodological rigor and scholarly discourse.

Exploration: Observing Patterns, Asking Questions
Every investigation begins with observation—identifying anomalies, contradictions, or recurring phenomena that demand explanation. In my articles (Steinmetz, 2025), this phase involved scrutinizing the links between systemic inequality, resistance movements, and stalled peace processes. For instance:
- *Why do crises disproportionately escalate into proxy wars?*
- *How does resistance shape (or derail) peacebuilding efforts?*

Exploration draws on interdisciplinary lenses, from political science (e.g., Galtung's *structural violence* theory, 1969) to ecological studies (e.g., Homer-Dixon's *resource scarcity conflicts*, 1999). It is the bedrock of curiosity-driven research.

Theory: Framing the Puzzle

Theories provide scaffolding for chaos. They synthesize observations into testable frameworks, offering causal mechanisms or predictive models. Key theoretical anchors in peace and conflict studies include:

- **Hegemonic Stability Theory** (Kindleberger, 1973): Suggests that dominant powers can enforce peace—or provoke instability when their authority wanes.
- **Negative vs. Positive Peace** (Galtung, 1969): Distinguishes between the mere absence of war and the presence of justice.
- **Security Dilemma** (Jervis, 1978): Explains how defensive actions (e.g., militarization) can inadvertently escalate tensions.

These theories guided my hypotheses, such as: *"Structural inequality, when weaponized by elites, transforms crises into prolonged conflicts."*

Hypothesis: Bridging Theory and Evidence

A hypothesis is a precise, falsifiable claim derived from theory. For example:

- *H_1: Economic sanctions imposed on authoritarian regimes increase civilian suffering without reducing aggression (e.g., Iraq 1990's, Syria 2010's).*
- *H_2: Peace initiatives face maximal resistance during transitional justice phases (e.g., South Africa's TRC vs. Israel-Palestine stalemate).*

Hypotheses must be operationalized—defined in measurable terms, such as conflict duration, casualty rates, or treaty compliance (King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, 1994).

Testing: Confronting Reality

Empirical tests validate or refute hypotheses through:

- **Comparative Case Studies** (e.g., contrasting Bosnia's Dayton Accords with Colombia's FARC peace deal).
- **Quantitative Analysis** (e.g., regression models linking inequality to conflict recurrence; see Fearon & Laitin, 2003).
- **Experiments** (e.g., behavioural studies on intergroup reconciliation; Paluck & Green, 2009).

Crucially, tests must account for confounding variables (e.g., external 干预 in Ukraine vs. domestic grievances in Sudan). Negative results are equally valuable—they expose flawed assumptions and refine theory (Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 1963).

Iteration: The Knowledge Spiral

No single study is definitive. The cycle repeats as new data emerges:

- **Russia-Ukraine War**: Challenges theories of deterrence (e.g., Mearsheimer's *offensive realism* vs. constructivist critiques).
- **Climate-Conflict Nexus**: Recent IPCC reports (2022) demand updates to resource-scarcity models.

This iterative process—observed in both natural and social sciences—ensures that knowledge remains provisional, adaptive, and self-correcting (Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962).

Conclusion: The Ethics of Inquiry

The cycle of exploration is not merely academic; it carries moral weight. When studying war and peace, flawed theories can legitimize violence, while rigorous tests can save lives. As I've argued elsewhere (Steinmetz, 2025), the pursuit of knowledge must be coupled with humility—a recognition that every answer births new questions, and every "solution" must be stress-tested against the complexities of human nature.

WESTERN THEORIES OF PEACE

Western theories often emphasize institutional, liberal, and structural approaches to peace.

Democratic Peace Theory argues that democracies rarely go to war with each other (Immanuel Kant (Russett, 2003), and Michael Doyle (1986).

"Immanuel Kant (Russett, 2004) argued that democracy, economic interdependence, and robust international law and institutions could lay the groundwork for *perpetual peace*. Our analysis of politically relevant dyads confirms that each of these three pillars of the Kantian peace contributes in a statistically significant and independent manner to reducing interstate conflict. These effects persist even when controlling for other influential factors—such as power disparities, military alliances, geographic proximity, and economic growth.

The data reveal striking results: a one-standard-deviation increase in shared memberships in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) reduces the likelihood of militarized disputes by approximately 23% from the baseline rate for neighbouring states. When both nations in a dyad are democratic, conflict becomes 35% less probable. Similarly, elevating both trade interdependence and its upward trend by a standard deviation diminishes the risk of conflict by 38%. Cumulatively, the Kantian variables reduce the probability of disputes by an impressive 72%.

Further analysis suggests a dynamic feedback loop: IGOs help mitigate conflict, while peaceful dyads are more likely to join such organizations. Democracies and economically interdependent states also exhibit a greater propensity to participate in shared IGOs, reinforcing the synergy between the three elements of Kant's vision for lasting peace."

"Drawing upon an expanding body of scholarship in international relations, Russett revisited the classic liberal assertion that regimes grounded in individual liberty inherently demonstrate "restraint" and "peaceful intentions" in their foreign policy. To explore this claim, he engaged with three distinct liberal traditions, each embodied by a pivotal thinker: *Schumpeter*, the democratic capitalist whose theory of liberal pacifism frequently informs contemporary discourse; *Machiavelli*, the classical republican whose vision of imperial glory often underlies liberal practice; and *Kant*, the liberal republican whose framework of internationalism most accurately reflects what liberal states have become.

Despite the apparent tensions between liberal pacifism and liberal imperialism, Russett argued—alongside Kant and other democratic republicans—that liberalism has nevertheless forged a coherent legacy in foreign affairs. Liberal states *are* distinct. They are, in many ways, peaceful. Yet they are also capable of war. As Kant predicted, they have established a separate peace among themselves—while also, as he feared, finding liberal justifications for aggression.

Ultimately, Russett contend that the divergences among liberal pacifism, liberal imperialism, and Kantian internationalism are neither random nor incidental. Rather, they stem from fundamentally different conceptions of the citizen and the state (Doyle, 1986)."

Liberal Institutionalism
Suggests that international institutions (e.g., UN, EU) promote peace by fostering cooperation (Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye (1977 & 1984).

"In their seminal books *Power and Interdependence* (1977) and *After Hegemony* (1984), Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye profoundly shaped the study of international relations and global political economy. Their key contributions include:
- **Complex Interdependence:** They introduced this concept to describe the increasingly intricate and multifaceted relationships between states, where economic, social, and transnational actors play significant roles alongside traditional state power.
- **Power and Dependence:** In *Power and Interdependence*, they examined how military and economic power interact with dependency in international politics, highlighting that states are not the only influential actors.
- **Hegemony and International Order:** *After Hegemony* argued that a stable international system does not necessarily require a dominant hegemonic power. Instead, institutional cooperation can sustain order even in the absence of a single leading state.
- **Theoretical Approach:** Their work bridges realism and liberal institutionalism, offering a nuanced framework for analysing contemporary global politics.

Conclusion:
Keohane and Nye significantly advanced international relations theory by emphasising the complexity of global interactions, the evolving nature of power, and the potential for cooperation in a post-hegemonic world."

Negative vs. Positive Peace (Johan Galtung, 1969)
Negative peace = absence of direct violence. **Positive peace** = absence of structural violence (inequality, oppression). "Johan Galtung (1969), a leading peace scholar, differentiates between **negative peace** and **positive peace.**

Negative Peace:
- **Definition**: The absence of direct violence (e.g., war, armed conflict).
- **Focus**: Stopping immediate violence through measures like ceasefires, peacekeeping, or conflict resolution.
- **Limitations**: Does not address deeper structural causes of conflict, making it a fragile form of peace.

Positive Peace:
- **Definition**: The presence of social justice, equity, and the elimination of **structural violence** (e.g., systemic inequality) and **cultural violence** (e.g., discriminatory beliefs).
- **Focus**: Tackling root causes of conflict by promoting fair institutions, economic development, inclusive governance, and cooperative social attitudes.

- **Characteristics**: More sustainable and holistic, fostering long-term wellbeing and harmony.

Conclusion:
Galtung's framework shows that while **negative peace** is crucial for halting violence, **positive peace** is necessary for a just and enduring peace. True peace requires not just the absence of war but also the presence of fairness, equity, and social cohesion."

Cosmopolitan Peace (Kantian Perspective)
Advocates for global citizenship and universal human rights as foundations for peace (Jung (2025): Immanuel Kant's Perpetual Peace,1795). "Immanuel Kant's 1795 essay, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, outlines a visionary framework for achieving lasting global peace, grounded in Enlightenment ideals. His blueprint revolves around three **Definitive Articles**:
1. **Republicanism**:
   - States must adopt republican constitutions, ensuring freedom, equality, and the rule of law.
   - Citizens, who bear the costs of war, are less likely to support conflict, making republics inherently more peaceful.
2. **A Federation of Free States**:
   - Nations should form a voluntary *pacific federation* (not a world government) to resolve disputes through law rather than war.
   - This anticipates modern institutions like the United Nations.
3. **Cosmopolitan Right**:
   - A universal principle of hospitality grants strangers the right to visit foreign lands without hostility, recognising humanity's shared ownership of the Earth.

Supporting Mechanisms:
- **Preliminary Articles**: Practical steps to reduce war risks (e.g., banning secret treaties, standing armies).
- **Nature's Guarantee**: Self-interest (e.g., trade) and rational self-preservation drive states toward cooperation, even without moral idealism.
- **Morality Over Realpolitik**: Kant critiques power politics, arguing that ethical governance and public accountability are essential for sustainable peace.

Historical Influence:
Kant's ideas shaped:
- **Democratic Peace Theory**: The observation that democracies rarely fight each other.
- **International Law**: Foundations for the UN, WTO, and human rights frameworks.
- **Liberal Institutionalism**: Theories emphasising interdependence (e.g., Keohane & Nye) trace roots to Kant's advocacy for trade and cooperation.

Tensions Between Idealism and Reality:
Despite Kant's optimism, the 19th–20th centuries saw imperialism, world wars, and realist power struggles. Yet, his vision endures in modern efforts to institutionalise peace through democracy, law, and multilateralism.

Conclusion:
Kant's work remains a cornerstone of liberal internationalism, arguing that peace is achievable through republican governance, federated cooperation, and cosmopolitan ethics—bridging morality with pragmatic self-interest. While historical contradictions persist, his framework continues to inspire global governance and conflict resolution."

Key Quote:
"Perpetual peace is no empty idea, but a task which, gradually solved, comes steadily nearer its goal." — Kant"

Conflict Resolution & Transformation
Focuses on dialogue, mediation, and long-term reconciliation (Lederach, J.P. (1997). Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies).

"John Paul Lederach's work highlights a critical gap in traditional diplomatic efforts: the neglect of middle-level actors in peacebuilding processes. While top-level negotiations and grassroots initiatives often dominate attention, Lederach argues that sustainable reconciliation hinges on engaging mid-range leaders—those with the networks, credibility, and flexibility to bridge divides and sustain long-term change.

Since the 1990s, donor governments and NGOs have gradually recognised this oversight, leading to more targeted efforts to bolster middle-level capacities for peace. A promising example emerges in Northeast Africa, where the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has prioritised conflict prevention, aligning with broader initiatives like the U.S. Greater Horn of Africa Initiative, which integrates peacebuilding strategies into regional stability efforts.

Lederach's conceptual framework offers policymakers, international agencies, and diplomats a robust analytical tool—one that not only dissects the root causes of conflict but also charts practical pathways for reconciliation. By adopting this model, stakeholders can craft more nuanced interventions, tailor strategies to specific contexts, and foster the patient, multifaceted approaches essential for enduring peace. His insights underscore that peace is not merely the absence of war but the deliberate construction of relationships, institutions, and visions capable of sustaining it."

<div align="center">

NON-WESTERN THEORIES OF PEACE

</div>

Non-Western theories often emphasize spirituality, harmony, and communal well-being.

Ubuntu (African Philosophy)
"I am because we are" – peace is achieved through interconnectedness and communal harmony (Tutu, D. (1999). *No Future Without Forgiveness)*.

"The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa was a significant moment in global history. Never before had a nation attempted to transition from oppression to democracy by confronting the brutalities of its past while simultaneously seeking reconciliation with its former oppressors. At the heart of this bold endeavour stood Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was appointed by President Nelson Mandela to lead the Commission. Now

that the Commission's final report has been released, Tutu has shared the profound insights he gained while guiding South Africa through this harrowing process.

In No Future Without Forgiveness, Tutu made a compelling case that true reconciliation demands an unflinching confrontation with history—yet acknowledges how agonizing it is for a nation to "look the beast in the eye." Rejecting empty clichés about forgiveness, he instead offers a visionary spirituality—one that fully acknowledges humanity's capacity for cruelty while steadfastly upholding the possibility of redemption. Drawing on decades of wisdom, Tutu illuminates a path forward, demonstrating how honesty, empathy, and moral courage can forge a more just and compassionate world."

Figure 1: Ubuntu. Link: https://ap.lc/tOzeT

"Post Apartheid Ubuntu[*]
In the post-apartheid era, Ubuntu was heralded as a foundational philosophy for the new South Africa . From 1993–1995, as South Africa prepared for democracy, Ubuntu became closely associated with the proverb "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", symbolizing the nation's emphasis on reconciliation and community values. Leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Nelson Mandela, and President Thabo Mbeki invoked Ubuntu to promote healing, unity, and a "humanist ideology upon which the new democratic South Africa is constructed" .

For instance, the 1996 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (chaired by Tutu) embodied Ubuntu by favouring forgiveness and restorative justice over retribution, granting amnesty to those who confessed their wrongs in order to restore social harmony. Through these high-profile applications, Ubuntu moved from village life to centre stage in national discourse, illustrating its adaptability and power as both an ancient ethos and a modern ideology.

Core Principles and Values of Ubuntu
At its core, Ubuntu is a value system that emphasizes our shared humanity and interdependence. A person with ubuntu recognizes that they are inextricably bound to others: "I am human only because you are human. If I undermine your humanity, I dehumanize myself." Some of the fundamental principles and values associated with Ubuntu include:

- **Interconnectedness and Community** – Ubuntu stresses that individuals exist in a network of relationships. One's identity ("personhood") is defined through interaction with others and participation in community. As a South African saying goes, "a person is

---

[*] https://www.thegotoguy.co.za/post/ubuntu-an-african-philosophy-of-community-and-humanity

a person through other people," highlighting that personal fulfilment is achieved through communal bonds, not in isolation.

- **Humanity and Human Dignity (Humanness)** – The term ubuntu itself means humanity. It calls for treating others with respect, compassion, and recognizing their inherent dignity. To have ubuntu is to exhibit the highest virtues of human character. For example, showing empathy, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness are seen as signs of ubuntu. A person living with ubuntu is often described as fully realizing their "human excellence".
- **Communalism and Shared Responsibility** – Ubuntu upholds communal values over individual gain. It is "a philosophy that supports collectivism over individualism". This means members of a community share benefits and burdens so that no one is left behind. Personal wealth or success is meaningful only if it contributes to the well-being of others. There is a strong sense of common responsibility: "We are our brother's (and sister's) keeper."
- **Reciprocity, Cooperation, and Generosity** – In an Ubuntu ethic, doing good for others is not just charity but an obligation. Acts of hospitality and generosity are social norms. People are expected to share with and care for one another. As one scholar explains, Ubuntu includes virtues like "compassion, generosity, honesty, magnanimity, empathy, understanding, forgiveness, and the ability to share," which are qualities of a truly humane person. There is an understanding that one's humanity is enriched by giving and by the gratitude and well-being of others.
- **Harmony and Conflict Resolution** – Maintaining social harmony is a key goal. Ubuntu favours restorative approaches to justice and conflict. Wrongdoings are ideally corrected through reconciliation, dialogue, and forgiveness rather than punishment. The focus is on restoring balance in relationships and the community. Desmond Tutu often emphasized that "when others are humiliated or oppressed, we are all diminished", underscoring that harmony is restored by lifting people up and rebuilding relationships rather than exacting revenge.

Underlying all these values is the belief that an individual becomes truly human through others. As philosopher Augustine Shutte put it, "Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human, and this means entering more and more deeply into community with others. So although the goal is personal fulfilments, selfishness is excluded.". In Ubuntu, personal good and communal good are seen as inseparable; ethical behaviour is that which strengthens the community and affirms the humanity of all its members."

Ahimsa (Indian/Jain/Buddhist/Gandhian Thought)
Non-violence as a moral and political principle (Mahatma Gandhi (1968). *An Autobiography Or The Story of My Experiments With Truth.* Translated from the Original in Gujarati by **Mahadev Desai.** General Editor: **Shriman Narayan.** Printed & Published by: Navajivan Publishing House. Ahmedabad 380 014, India).

"As the world commemorates the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, we honour a man who transcended borders to become a universal emblem of truth and nonviolence. More than the architect of India's peaceful liberation from colonial rule, Gandhi was a visionary

109

philosopher whose teachings on human dignity, ethical living, and global harmony remain profoundly relevant.

Central to his philosophy was the inseparable link between means and ends. "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree." For Gandhi, righteousness was not merely a moral luxury but the surest path to justice, even if it appeared arduous. He redefined civilization not as endless material accumulation but as the mindful restraint of wants, advocating for "simple living and high thinking." True economics, he believed, must harmonize with ethics, rejecting a system where wealth amassed by the powerful comes at the expense of the marginalized.

Contrary to misconceptions, Gandhi was not opposed to technology but cautioned against its blind worship. He championed "production by the masses" over mass production, envisioning an economy where human labour and dignity took precedence over mechanization. His vision resonates today as societies grapple with the dehumanizing effects of unchecked industrialization and corporate dominance.

Gandhi's compassion extended foremost to the oppressed—his talisman for decision-making urged individuals to consider the weakest among them. A staunch democrat, he believed true self-rule could only flourish through nonviolence and cooperation, aspiring toward a "world federation" built on mutual respect. He welcomed the exchange of cultures yet stood firm in his principles, declaring, *I want the winds of all lands to blow about my house, but I refuse to be blown off my feet."*

As Pandit Nehru poignantly reflected, Gandhi's light continues to guide humanity, a beacon of eternal truths. Einstein marvelled that future generations might scarcely believe such a man walked the earth. To honour his legacy, the Navajivan Trust—founded by Gandhi himself—publishes *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, ensuring his wisdom endures for generations seeking a more just and compassionate world.

Gandhi's life was a testament to the power of moral courage. In an age of moral ambiguity, his teachings remind us that true progress lies not in wealth or power, but in the unwavering pursuit of truth, justice, and human dignity."

"Born in the same spiritual soil of ancient India, Jainism and Buddhism[†] share foundational principles yet diverge in profound philosophical ways. Both reject the authority of the Vedas, deny a creator God, and uphold ethical living, meditation, and liberation from rebirth. Yet their paths to enlightenment reveal striking contrasts.

Core Differences:
- **The Soul & Self**: Jainism asserts the existence of an eternal individual soul (*Jiva*), bound by karma and liberated through purification. Buddhism, in contrast, teaches *Anatta* (no-self), viewing the notion of a permanent soul as an illusion.
- **Liberation**: Jainism seeks *Moksha*—freedom from karmic bondage—through extreme asceticism, non-violence (*Ahimsa*), and meticulous self-discipline. Buddhism pursues

---

[†] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_Jainism

Nirvana, the cessation of suffering, via the Middle Way and the Eightfold Path, avoiding extremes.

- **Karma**: In Jainism, karma is a tangible substance clinging to the soul, requiring rigorous effort to shed. Buddhism treats karma as a causal chain of intentions and actions shaping future existence.
- **Non-Violence**: While both prioritize *Ahimsa*, Jainism extends it to an unparalleled degree—avoiding harm even to microorganisms and plants. Buddhism advocates mindful non-violence but with more pragmatic flexibility.
- **Metaphysics**: Jainism's *Anekantavada* embraces multiplicity, acknowledging truth in diverse perspectives. Buddhism rejects rigid metaphysical assertions, favouring experiential wisdom over dogma.
- **Monastic Life**: Jain monks and nuns practice extreme itinerancy, rarely staying long in one place except during monsoons. Buddhist monastics, particularly in Theravada, often reside in monasteries, observing seasonal retreats (*vassa*).

Shared Foundations:
Despite their differences, both traditions emphasize:
- **Ethical Discipline** – Mastery over desires as a path to liberation.
- **Rebirth & Liberation** – Freedom from the cycle of suffering (*Samsara*).
- **Meditative Practices** – Cultivating mindfulness and inner peace.
- **Empirical Spirituality** – Valuing personal insight over blind faith.

While Jainism's ascetic rigor and soul-centric philosophy contrast with Buddhism's middle path and no-self doctrine, both remain timeless guides to ethical living and spiritual awakening. Their teachings continue to inspire seekers of truth, each offering a unique yet harmonious vision of liberation.

Confucian Harmony (East Asian Thought)[‡][§]
Peace as social harmony, achieved through ethical relationships (e.g., filial piety, ruler-subject duty) (*The Analects of Confucius[**]*).

"At the heart of East Asian civilization lies Confucian Harmony—a vision of society where balance is achieved not through rigid control, but through virtuous relationships, mutual respect, and moral duty. Rooted in texts like The Analects, this philosophy teaches that a flourishing society mirrors cosmic order, where each individual embraces their role with integrity and compassion.

The Pillars of Confucian Harmony:
- **Hierarchy with Humanity.** Confucianism structures society through five key relationships—ruler and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger sibling, and friend and friend. Far from blind submission, these bonds thrive on reciprocity: leaders must govern justly, parents nurture wisely, and children honour dutifully.

[‡] https://ap.lc/KCfkd
[§] https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/confucianism/
[**] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analects

- **Filial Piety (Xiao): The Foundation of Virtue.** Respect for one's elders extends beyond the family, shaping a culture of reverence for teachers, ancestors, and tradition. Filial piety is the bedrock of social cohesion, fostering gratitude and continuity across generations.
- **Ren: The Heart of Humaneness**. The virtue of Ren—empathy, kindness, and moral excellence—animates all relationships. To practice Ren is to see oneself in others, cultivating a society where compassion tempers authority and dignity guides obedience.
- **Self-Cultivation for Collective Good.** Harmony begins within. Through education, introspection, and adherence to virtues like sincerity and wisdom, individuals refine their character, becoming pillars of a stable and ethical community.
- **Order Through Ethical Leadership.** A just society depends on rulers who lead by moral example, not force. When each person fulfils their role with responsibility—parents guiding, children learning, rulers serving—the entire social fabric thrives.

A LEGACY OF BALANCE

Confucian Harmony is neither passive nor oppressive; it is an active pursuit of equilibrium where duty and compassion intertwine. By valuing hierarchy with humanity, tradition with empathy, and self-discipline with social duty, this ancient wisdom continues to shape cultures that prize unity, respect, and enduring moral order."

Islamic Peace (Sulh & Ummah)
Sulh (reconciliation) and **Ummah** (global Muslim community) as paths to peace (Qamar-ul Huda (Editor). Abu-Nimer, M. (2010). The Peace-making and Conflict Resolution Field and Islam)

"This book emerges from a gathering of Muslim scholars and practitioners who convened to explore Islam's relationship with violence and peacebuilding. Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond—as well as the persistent appeal of extremist narratives—the conference sought to critically examine Islamic principles of conflict resolution, historical juridical debates on war and resistance, and the potential for nonviolent interventions rooted in Islamic tradition.

The discussions highlighted the need to move beyond rigid legalistic frameworks and engage more deeply with the socio-political realities of Muslim communities. Challenges include overcoming an excessive focus on juridical arguments, fostering self-critical discourse within Islamic scholarship, and addressing the complex cultural and economic factors that fuel radicalization. The essays in this volume reject simplistic calls for "moderate" Muslim reform or imposed liberal democracy, instead offering nuanced, tradition-grounded approaches to peacebuilding. By drawing on Islamic values that prioritize the preservation of life, dignity, and justice, the contributors illuminate pathways toward stability and reconciliation in Muslim societies—bridging scholarly insight with practical, context-sensitive solutions."

Indigenous Peace making (Restorative Justice)
Circle processes, dialogue, and restorative justice (e.g., Native American, Māori traditions). Reference: Zehr, H. (2002). *The Little Book of Restorative Justice.*

"The Little Book of Restorative Justice by Howard Zehr (with Ali Gohar) is a concise introduction to the philosophy of restorative justice (RJ). It outlines the core principles of RJ, contrasts this approach with the traditional retributive justice model, and discusses how RJ can be applied in various contexts – from the criminal justice system to schools and communities. Originally written for a North American audience, this edition also integrates cultural perspectives from Pakistani and Afghan contexts, illustrating how restorative principles can align with local traditions. Below is a structured summary of the book's key insights, including a comparison of restorative vs. retributive justice, the fundamental RJ framework, practical applications in different settings, and notable cultural adaptations.

Core Principles and Framework of Restorative Justice
At its core, restorative justice is not a specific program or mediation technique, but a set of guiding principles and questions – essentially "an alternate set of 'guiding questions'" and a different framework for thinking about wrongdoing. Instead of focusing on law-breaking and punishment, RJ focuses on harm, needs, and obligations, seeking to heal and put things right. The book emphasizes that *restorative justice is not* about soft-on-crime leniency or forced forgiveness, nor is it limited to minor offenses or any one culture. Rather, it is a philosophy of justice centred on repairing harm and involving all affected parties, which can be applied even in serious cases. Some of the key principles and pillars of RJ include:

- **Focus on Harm and Needs:** Crime is understood primarily as *harm done to people and relationships*, not just a violation of abstract law. Thus, justice begins with identifying who was hurt and addressing victims' needs. A restorative approach inherently prioritizes victims – their losses, concerns, and healing – even if no offender is caught. This harm-focused lens also extends to recognizing harms or root causes affecting offenders and the broader community, aiming for solutions that promote healing for all.
- **Obligations to Make Amends:** Wrongdoing creates obligations. RJ holds that offenders (and sometimes the community) have a responsibility to *"make things right"* to the extent possible. Accountability in RJ is not defined as inflicting punishment, but as **encouraging offenders to understand the impact of their actions and take active responsibility for repairing the damage**. The offender's first obligation is to acknowledge the harm and try to mend it (through apologies, restitution, etc.), and the community or society may have obligations to support both victim and offender in the healing process.
- **Inclusive, Collaborative Processes:** Restorative justice emphasizes **engagement and participation** by those affected. Rather than professionals or the state alone handling the case, RJ involves victims, offenders, their families, and community members in deciding how to address the aftermath of the offense. Dialogue and mutual agreement are favoured for resolving what justice requires, whenever possible. This may occur through facilitated victim–offender meetings, family or community conferences, circles, or other forms of encounter where stories can be told and questions asked in a safe environment. Even when direct encounter is not feasible, the process seeks other ways to include stakeholders' voices and knowledge. Overall, RJ favours **inclusive, collaborative processes and consensual outcomes** over adversarial procedures and imposed sentences.
- **Involving Stakeholders with a Direct Stake:** RJ actively involves those who have a *"legitimate stake"* in the situation – above all the victim and offender, but also family

members or community representatives affected by the crime. The justice process is thus opened up to the people directly impacted, rather than being the sole domain of lawyers and judges. This involvement recognizes that these stakeholders best understand the context and can together craft a meaningful resolution. Importantly, victim participation must be voluntary, and offenders must accept some responsibility for their actions as a starting point for the process.

- **Seeking to Put Right the Wrongs:** Ultimately, restorative justice **seeks to "put right" the wrongs** – to restore, as much as possible, the well-being of those harmed and affected. This often means a plan or agreement for concrete steps: for example, an apology, restitution or compensation, community service, or other actions to make amends and prevent recurrence. The emphasis is on problem-solving and healing rather than on punitive infliction of pain. By addressing the harm and its causes, RJ strives to *rebalance* the situation and promote reconciliation or at least closure. As Zehr puts it, justice in this paradigm is measured by the extent to which the harm is repaired and trust is restored, rather than by the severity of punishment.

In summary, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* frames RJ through a "three pillar" lens: addressing the harms and needs caused by wrongdoing, obligations (primarily of offenders) to repair those harms, and engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the process. Restorative justice requires, at minimum, that we address victims' harms and needs, hold offenders accountable to put things right, and involve those affected in the resolution. This is a fundamentally different orientation than conventional justice, guided by a different set of questions and values.

Restorative Justice vs. Retributive Justice
A major portion of the book contrasts restorative justice with the dominant **retributive** or punitive justice model. Traditional criminal justice (a retributive system) views crime as an offense against the state and its laws, asking questions like *"What law was broken? Who did it? What punishment do they deserve?"*. In this model, justice means establishing guilt and delivering punishment proportionate to the offense. The process is adversarial and state-driven, often marginalizing the victim's role to that of a witness for the prosecution.

Restorative justice, by contrast, views crime as *first and foremost a violation of people and interpersonal relationships*. It asks very different questions: "Who has been hurt? What are their needs? And whose obligation is it to meet those needs?". The focus shifts from the abstract offense against the state to the concrete harm suffered by individuals and communities. Justice, accordingly, is redefined as meeting the needs of those harmed while holding the responsible party accountable in a meaningful way. Instead of asking how to punish the offender, RJ asks how to repair the damage and *who should be involved* in that effort.

Importantly, Zehr notes that retributive and restorative justice are not absolute opposites – they share a common concern for *righting a wrong* or *balancing the scales* of justice. Both frameworks acknowledge that when a wrong is done, something is owed: *"the victim deserves something and the offender owes something"*, as Zehr writes. The difference lies in what each approach sees as the proper "currency" of justice. Retributive justice believes that deliberate infliction of pain or punishment on the offender will vindicate the wrong – essentially, that

hurting the offender answers the original harm. Restorative justice, on the other hand, holds that acknowledging the victim's harm and actively repairing it is what truly vindicates and restores balance.

As the book explains, *"Retributive theory believes that pain will vindicate… Restorative justice theory, on the other hand, argues that what truly vindicates is acknowledgment of victims' harms and needs combined with an active effort to encourage offenders to take responsibility, make right the wrongs, and address the causes of their behaviour."* In short, retributive justice seeks to *even the score* by enforcing suffering, whereas restorative justice seeks to *heal* by repairing harm.

This difference in philosophy leads to practical differences in process and outcome. In the retributive model, the primary actors are the state (police, prosecutors) and the offender; the victim's role is minimal. The process is often technical, focused on past actions and governed by strict rules of evidence, with the outcome (sentence) imposed by authorities. In the restorative model, the victim and community are central, and the process is more dialogical and forward-looking – concerned not just with what happened, but with what is needed now to make things as right as possible. The outcome is typically an agreement developed with input from all parties, tailored to address specific harms rather than a one-size-fits-all punishment.

Zehr cautions against viewing restorative vs. retributive justice as an *"either/or"* dichotomy. The book suggests it's useful to think of justice on a continuum: on one end the fully restorative approach, on the other end the formal legal (retributive) approach. In reality, a functioning justice system may incorporate elements of both. For example, serious cases may require certain legal procedures or protective measures even as restorative elements are introduced. The vision, however, is that the justice system become increasingly restorative in orientation – focusing on victim needs, offender accountability, and community involvement – while still upholding the rule of law and safeguards of due process. Ultimately, the book imagines a future where even the formal justice system is built on restorative principles, and punitive responses are used more sparingly.

To summarize the comparison: retributive justice defines crime as a violation of the law and the state, prioritizes establishing blame and doling out punishment, and often leaves victims and communities on the sidelines. Restorative justice defines crime as a violation of people and relationships, prioritizes addressing the resulting harms and needs, and actively involves victims, offenders, and community members in seeking a resolution that promotes repair and reconciliation. Retributive justice asks "What does the offender deserve?"; restorative justice asks "What do the victim and community need, and whose obligation is it to fulfil those needs?". Retributive justice delivers punishment; restorative justice pursues healing and accountability.

Applications in Criminal Justice, Schools, and Communities

One of the key insights of *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* is that RJ principles can be applied in a wide range of contexts. Restorative justice originated in criminal justice settings – the modern RJ movement began in the 1970s with experiments in victim-offender mediation for juvenile property crimes – but its use has since expanded dramatically. The book notes that restorative programs are now used for even the most serious offenses (including cases of violent crime such as assault, rape, and even murder) in some communities. Moreover, RJ approaches have spread *"beyond the criminal justice system to schools, to the workplace and*

religious institutions," and even to post-conflict community reconciliation efforts. Below, we look at how RJ is applied in three arenas: the criminal justice system, educational settings, and community or cultural contexts.

In the Criminal Justice System
Within formal justice systems, restorative justice has given rise to practical programs and models that operationalize its principles. Three common RJ practices described by Zehr are Victim-Offender Conferences (dialogues), Family Group Conferences, and Circles. These models create a safe forum where offenders, victims, and sometimes family or community supporters come together with trained facilitators to discuss an offense and decide on steps to make amends. All of these approaches involve some form of encounter between the key stakeholders – at minimum the victim and offender – under the guidance of a facilitator. Participants share their experience of what happened, how they were affected, and what they think needs to be done to repair the harm. They are encouraged to ask questions and speak openly, often leading to outcomes like apologies, agreements for restitution or service, or other actions to address the harm. Unlike a court judgment imposed by a judge, the resolution in a restorative process is typically mutually agreed by the parties (with community input) and aims to *"even the score"* by meeting the victim's needs and holding the offender accountable in a constructive way.

These restorative practices are used at various stages of the justice process. Some programs divert cases to a restorative meeting in place of formal prosecution (especially for youth or minor crimes); others are used alongside the court process (e.g. as input to sentencing or as a form of alternative sentencing). In severe cases, restorative dialogues may occur post-conviction or even in prisons as part of rehabilitation and healing, rather than as an alternative to incarceration. The book emphasizes that RJ is *not* only for first-time or minor offenses; in fact, restorative approaches can have the greatest impact in serious cases where the need for healing is most acute. For example, dialogues have been used in cases of murder or drunk-driving fatalities, allowing survivors to get answers and offenders to express remorse, often with profound results. Even in situations of large-scale wrongdoing, such as the aftermath of violent conflict or war, a restorative framework has been applied (e.g. truth and reconciliation commissions) to address harms to entire communities.

Criminal justice agencies around the world have increasingly adopted these models. Family Group Conferencing, for instance, was pioneered in New Zealand (drawing on Maori indigenous practices) as a response to juvenile crime and is now widely used elsewhere. Circles (sometimes called Peace-making Circles or Sentencing Circles), inspired by Indigenous practices in North America, involve the community in discussing both the wrongdoing and the underlying issues, often in a literally circular seating where everyone (victim, offender, family, police, community members) can speak with respect. Victim-Offender Mediation (also known as Victim-Offender Dialogue or Conference) often involves just the victim, offender, and a facilitator, and was one of the first RJ innovations in the West. The goals across these models are similar: to *acknowledge the injustice and harm*, to have the offender take responsibility and make amends, and to restore a sense of fairness and safety for the victim and community. Research has shown that, when done well, these practices can result in high rates of victim satisfaction and offender understanding, and often lower recidivism – though Zehr stresses that reducing repeat crime is a welcome side-effect, not the primary aim of RJ.

The *Little Book* also notes that real-world justice needs both restorative and legal components. There will always be cases that are not suitable for face-to-face encounters (for example, if an offender refuses to take responsibility, or in certain domestic violence situations). Thus, a *"fully restorative"* system is an aspirational goal, but in practice a hybrid approach may be necessary. Still, the trend is to infuse conventional criminal justice with restorative values – making the system more responsive to victims, more focused on offender accountability through repair, and more open to community involvement. In many jurisdictions, restorative programs operate as a complement to the court system, handling appropriate cases referred by police, prosecutors, or judges. This partnership allows the strengths of both approaches to be combined."

In Schools and Educational Settings
Outside of the court system, schools have become an important arena for restorative practices. Educators around the world have adapted restorative justice principles to school discipline and conflict resolution, giving rise to what is often called *"restorative practices in education."* Rather than relying solely on punitive measures (like suspensions or expulsions) for student misbehaviour, many schools now use restorative approaches such as mediation, dialogue circles, and collaborative problem-solving to address rule violations, bullying, fights, and other conflicts. The book notes that while these school-based practices share similarities with programs for criminal cases, they *"must necessarily be shaped to fit that context."* For example, a "restorative circle" in a school might involve a student who misbehaved, any students or teachers who were affected, and a facilitator talking through what happened, who was hurt, and how the harm can be repaired – perhaps resulting in an apology, agreement to perform a helpful task, or a plan to change the behaviour.

The goals in a school setting are to keep students accountable without excluding them from the community. Restorative practices aim to foster empathy in offenders (students who caused harm), give victims a voice and validation, and rebuild trust within the classroom or school community. By focusing on the harm caused (to peers, to the school environment) and how to fix it, this approach can transform disciplinary issues into learning opportunities. It also engages students in understanding the consequences of their actions and in developing solutions, rather than passively receiving punishment. School-based RJ has been credited with improving school climate and reducing suspension rates by addressing conflicts at their root. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* emphasizes that these adaptations, while informed by the criminal justice models, are tailored for the developmental and communal needs of schools. The inclusive, dialogue-driven process resonates well in educational communities, as it promotes communication, responsibility, and respect – values that align with educational goals.

In Communities and Beyond
Restorative justice principles have also been applied broadly in community contexts – from workplaces and neighbourhood's to religious institutions and even post-conflict national reconciliation. The text points out that RJ is spreading to *"larger community issues and processes"* and has become part of discussions on how to deal with mass violence or societal-level conflicts. One example is the use of restorative principles in truth and reconciliation commissions (such as in South Africa) where the aim was to address *collective harms* and facilitate healing after systematic injustice. In local communities, restorative processes can be used to resolve disputes or incidents that may not rise to the level of crimes – for instance,

neighbourhood conflicts, disputes in faith communities, or internal harm within organizations. Techniques like community conferencing or circles allow those involved to talk out a conflict, repair relationships, and reinforce community norms collaboratively.

Significantly, restorative justice has often served as a bridge to rediscover or adapt traditional forms of justice in non-Western or indigenous communities. Zehr and Gohar highlight that in many societies, there were longstanding communal or customary practices for resolving wrongs – practices disrupted or suppressed during colonialism or by the imposition of Western legal systems. The restorative justice movement, while modern in its current form, *"owes a great debt to earlier movements and to a variety of cultural and religious traditions"*, and its roots are *"as old as human history."* In fact, two of the most influential RJ models – family group conferences and peace-making circles – were directly adapted from Indigenous methods (the Maori *whānau* conference and North American Native circle processes, respectively). The book mentions traditional forums like the *Punchayat* in the Indian subcontinent and the *Jirgah* in Pashtun (Pukhtoon) communities as examples of circle-based community justice that resonate with restorative principles. These forums involve community elders and collective decision-making to address wrongdoing, focusing on restoring harmony – much like RJ. In recent times, some communities in South Asia and elsewhere have looked to revive or adapt such traditional practices within a restorative justice framework, blending old and new approaches.

The authors provide vivid cultural insight: in more *"high-context" communal cultures*, processes of forgiveness and reconciliation are often central to justice, with community elders facilitating forgiveness and the government respecting these outcomes. By contrast, in Western legal systems forgiveness is usually considered a private matter separate from justice (offenders are punished by the state regardless of personal forgiveness). Restorative justice creates space for concepts like forgiveness to play a role, but never as a coerced goal – it remains a voluntary choice for victims and communities. The book also notes differences in expressions of forgiveness: Western culture says *"forgive and not necessarily forget,"* whereas in some Eastern cultures true forgiveness may entail *choosing to forget* the past wrong. Such cultural nuances are important in tailoring restorative processes to fit local values.

Ali Gohar's contributions infuse the book with Islamic and Pashtun perspectives, illustrating unique cultural adaptations of RJ. For example, the text discusses the value of *"honour"*: it describes restorative justice as embodying *"the principle of human honour,"* whereby an offender, by accepting obligations and working with the victim and community to set things right, can regain honour and bring honour to others. This emphasis dovetails with cultural contexts where honour and shame are powerful social concepts. The book even quotes Islamic teachings and the poet Rumi to draw parallels – framing the difficult work of an offender confronting his wrongdoing as a kind of *"greater Jihad"* (inner moral struggle) to overcome the selfish ego and do right by others. By linking restorative justice to familiar cultural or religious values (such as justice as a form of communal balance or repentance and forgiveness in faith traditions), practitioners like Gohar show how RJ can be *translated into different cultural languages*. This makes restorative justice not a one-size-fits-all import, but a flexible paradigm that communities can adapt.

Indeed, Zehr stresses that restorative justice is *not* a rigid blueprint to be imposed, but a set of principles – a "compass, not a map." Every community should build its own version of

restorative practice from the ground up, through dialogue, to meet their specific needs and reflect their cultural norms. The book provides the metaphor of a river fed by many streams: the contemporary RJ movement started as a "tiny trickle" in the 1970s and grew into a worldwide river, fed by tributaries including modern programs and ancient traditions from around the globe. For instance, alongside Western mediation and victims' rights movements, the RJ river is fed by indigenous practices like Maori family councils, Canadian aboriginal circles, Navajo peace-making, African customary law, and South Asian *panchayat/jirga* systems. These diverse sources all emphasize restoring harmony and community involvement in justice. Rather than copying any one tradition wholesale, RJ encourages learning from them to inspire locally appropriate models. True justice, the book argues, *"emerges from dialogue"* and is grounded in local context and values, not handed down from afar. This insight is a reminder that cultural adaptation is not just an add-on, but central to restorative justice – the practice must resonate with the people involved if it is to be legitimate and effective.

Conclusion:
The Little Book of Restorative Justice provides a clear overview of restorative justice as a philosophy that seeks to repair harm, involve all affected parties, and rebuild trust and well-being. Its core principles – focusing on harm and needs, encouraging obligations to make amends, and engaging those impacted – offer a compelling alternative to retributive, punishment-focused justice. The book contrasts these approaches, showing how restorative justice reframes our questions about wrongdoing from ones of blame and punishment to ones of healing and responsibility. It also demonstrates the versatility of restorative practices: originally applied in criminal cases (from minor offenses to severe violence), RJ has spread to schools as a better way to handle discipline and to communities addressing conflicts or historical harms.

Crucially, Zehr and Gohar illustrate that restorative justice is *not a new invention but a rediscovery* of old wisdom. It draws on traditions as old as humanity's quest for justice, now being renewed and adapted across cultures. Whether through a victim-offender dialogue in a U.S. courtroom, a restorative circle in a school, or a *jirga* council in a village, the heart of restorative justice remains the same: to put right what has been made wrong, as much as possible, through inclusion, accountability, and healing. This little book's enduring message is that justice is not served by merely punishing offenses – true justice "requires, instead, that we ask" who was harmed, what they need, and how to involve everyone in addressing that harm. In doing so, restorative justice offers a path to transform not only individuals, but the very way communities understand and respond to wrongdoing, moving from a paradigm of retribution to one of restoration."

Buddhist Peace Theory (Interdependence & Compassion)
Peace arises from inner tranquillity and detachment from greed/hatred (Hanh, T.N. (1987). *Being Peace*)

"Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that true peace begins within, rooted in inner calm, mindfulness, and freedom from greed and hatred. By nurturing peace in ourselves through present-moment awareness and compassion, we can positively influence the world. Key ideas include:
- **Inner Peace:** A state of clarity and contentment, not just the absence of conflict.

- **Letting Go:** Releasing greed and hatred to reduce suffering.
- **Mindfulness & Compassion:** Essential practices for personal and collective harmony.
- **Interconnectedness:** Individual peace contributes to global peace.
- **Practical Tools:** The book offers actionable steps to cultivate peace in daily life.

Ultimately, *Being Peace* presents a vision where personal transformation fosters a more peaceful world."

"Tanabe Hajime, the eminent 20th-century Japanese philosopher, wove Buddhist thought into the very fabric of his later work, crafting a philosophy of *metanoetics* as a profound counterpoint to Nietzschean individualism. At its heart, his thinking embraced Buddhist notions like *absolute nothingness* and *metanoia*—a radical transformation of the self—while engaging in rich dialogue with Western philosophy, particularly Hegel and Platonism. His vision sought nothing less than a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought, aspiring toward a universal *world religion* rooted in self-transcendence and compassionate wisdom.

Key Dimensions of Tanabe's Buddhist Engagement
1. **Beyond Nietzsche: Metanoetics as Surrender**
   Rejecting Nietzsche's *will-to-power* as a path to domination, Tanabe proposed *metanoetics*—a turning toward *Other-power*, where faith and self-emptying dissolve egoic fixation, yielding a more compassionate existence.
2. **Buddhism and the Mind's Paradox**
   He delved into Buddhism's diagnosis of the mind as both the architect of suffering and the wellspring of peace, applying its insights to modern crises of violence and delusion. For Tanabe, Buddhist epistemology was vital for envisioning a harmonious future.
3. **Toward a Universal Religion**
   His concept of *absolute religion* sought to harmonize Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity, reframed through Hegelian dialectics and the Buddhist void (*śūnyatā*). This synthesis aimed to transcend cultural divides, offering a philosophical-spiritual unity.
4. **Platonism as a Bridge**
   Tanabe's dialectical method drew deeply from Platonism, which he saw as a mediator between philosophy and religion. This framework allowed him to interlace Eastern and Western thought into a singular, dynamic system.

In essence, Tanabe's legacy lies in his bold reimagining of philosophy itself—one where Buddhist wisdom, metanoia, and dialectical reasoning converge, offering a path beyond nihilism toward collective awakening."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In a world besieged by perpetual conflict, the pursuit of peace is not merely an ideal but a necessity. War erodes human dignity, devastates communities, and inflicts irreversible ecological harm, all while authoritarian regimes and militarism perpetuate cycles of violence. My recent works—*Crisis and Peace, Peace and Resistance*, and *Obstacles to Creating Peace*—interrogate the structural and ideological barriers to peace, framing critical questions:
1. **Crises as Seeds of War** – Systemic inequality and political instability fuel proxy wars, transforming economic disparity into violent confrontation.

2. **The Paradox of Resistance** – Peace initiatives often face backlash, exemplified by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where resistance stems from entrenched oppression rather than opposition to peace itself.
3. **The Fragility of Peace-making** – Unresolved grievances, as seen in Russia-Ukraine, breed disillusionment, undermining diplomacy and perpetuating cycles of retaliation.

This analysis is a call to dismantle war-mongering structures, elevate marginalized voices, and reimagine governance beyond autocracy.

The Cycle of Inquiry: From Theory to Praxis
Human understanding evolves through iterative exploration—observation, theory, hypothesis, and empirical testing—applied here to peace and conflict studies:
1. **Exploration**: Identifying patterns (e.g., economic sanctions exacerbating civilian suffering).
2. **Theory**: Frameworks like Galtung's *structural violence* or the *security dilemma* explain conflict dynamics.
3. **Hypothesis**: Testable claims (e.g., "Transitional justice phases provoke maximal resistance").
4. **Testing**: Comparative case studies (Bosnia vs. Colombia) and quantitative models (e.g., Fearon & Laitin's conflict recurrence analysis).
5. **Iteration** – New data (e.g., climate-conflict links) refines theories, ensuring adaptive knowledge.

This cycle demands ethical rigor—flawed theories can legitimize violence, while evidence-based approaches save lives.

Western Theories of Peace: Institutional and Structural Approaches
1. **Democratic Peace Theory** (Kant, Russett): Democracies rarely wage war on each other, reinforced by trade and international institutions.
2. **Liberal Institutionalism** (Keohane & Nye): Institutions like the UN mitigate conflict through cooperation.
3. **Negative vs. Positive Peace** (Galtung): Beyond ceasefire (*negative peace*), justice and equity (*positive peace*) are essential.
4. **Cosmopolitan Peace** (Kant): Global citizenship and human rights as foundations for lasting harmony.
5. **Conflict Transformation** (Lederach): Sustainable reconciliation requires engaging mid-level actors and communal dialogue.

Non-Western Theories: Spirituality and Communal Harmony
1. **Ubuntu** (Tutu): "I am because we are"; peace emerges from interconnectedness and restorative justice.
2. **Ahimsa** (Gandhi, Jainism/Buddhism): Nonviolence as a moral and political force.
3. **Confucian Harmony**: Social equilibrium through ethical relationships (e.g., filial piety).
4. **Islamic Sulh & Ummah**: Reconciliation (*Sulh*) and global Muslim solidarity (*Ummah*) as peacebuilding tools.
5. **Indigenous Restorative Justice** (Zehr): Circle processes prioritize healing over punishment.

6. **Buddhist Peace Theory** (Thich Nhat Hanh, Tanabe Hajime): Inner tranquillity and *metanoetics* (self-surrender) counteract greed and hatred.

Conclusion: Toward a Synthesized Vision of Peace

The dichotomy between Western institutionalism and non-Western spiritual-communal approaches is false. Tanabe Hajime's *metanoetics*, for instance, bridges Buddhist *śūnyatā* (emptiness) and Hegelian dialectics, while Ubuntu and restorative justice merge communal ethics with legal accountability.

True peace demands:
- **Structural equity** (addressing inequality, demilitarization).
- **Cultural reconciliation** (dialogue, restorative practices).
- **Inner transformation** (mindfulness, compassion).

As Kant envisioned, peace is a dynamic task—one that requires weaving diverse philosophies into a tapestry of collective awakening. The choice is stark: perpetuate cycles of violence or cultivate a world where justice and harmony are inseparable.

References

Doyle, M. (1986). "Liberalism and World Politics." American Political Science Review. Vol. 80, No. 4 (Dec., 1986), pp. 1151-1169 (19 pages). Published By: American Political Science Association.

Fearon James, D., Laitin David, D. (2003). Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. American Political Science Review. 2003;97(1):75-90. doi:10.1017/S0003055403000534

Galtung, Johan. (1969). "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." Journal of Peace Research. http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690

Hajime, Tanabe (2024-2025). Doi H. Thoroughness of philosophy and return to religion in Tanabe Hajime [version 1; peer review: 2 approved with reservations] F1000Research 2024, 13:59 https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.130602.1 First published: 12 Jan 2024, 13:59 https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.130602.1

Homer-Dixon, Thomas, F., (1999). Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict. International Security, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 5-40.

Howard Zehr & Ali Gohar, The Little Book of Restorative Justice. Good Books, 2003. (Pakistan/Afghanistan Edition) etc.

Jervis, Robert (1978). Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma (1978). Princeton University Press. World Politics, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Jan., 1978), pp. 167-214. Published by: Cambridge University Press. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009958.

Tanabe, Juichiro (Waseda University) & Layne Hartsell (Asia Institute, Chulalongkorn University) (2024). Journal of the Philosophy and Religion Society of Thailand 19, No. 2 (July–December 2024).

Jung, Haneul "Hahn", Kant's Perpetual Peace: The Foundation of the Liberal Worldview (January 02, 2025). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=5079629 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5079629

Keohane, R. (2005-1984). After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy. 9780691022284. https://www.bol.com/nl/nl/f/after-hegemony/30079184/

Keohane, Robert, O., and Nye, Joseph, S., Junior (2012, 2001, 1997). Power and Interdependence. Fourth Edition. Longman. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-08291-9 ISBN-10: 0-205-08291-2.

Kindleberger, Charles P. (1973). The World in Depression, 1929–1939. By. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973. Pp. 336.

King, G. Gary, Keohane, Robert, O., & Verba, Sidney (1994). Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. Princeton University Press 41, William Street, Princeton, New Jersey. ISBN: 0-691-03471-0.

Kuhn, T. (1962). The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. University of Chicago Press: Chicago

Lederach, John, Paul (1997-1999). Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. United States Institute of Peace Press. Washington, D.C. ISBN 1-878379-74-7 (hardback). — ISBN 1-878379-73-9 (paperback).

Paluck, E. L., & Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. Annual Review of Psychology, 60, 339–367. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163607

Popper, Karl (1963). Conjectures and Refutations. The growth of scientific knowledge. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Russett, Bruce, R., Oneal, John, B., & Davis, Davis (2003). The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod for Peace: International Organizations and Militarized Disputes, 1950 85. February 2003. International Organization 52(03). DOI: 10.1162/002081898550626. Source: RePEc. Link: https://ap.lc/wKKJA.

Steinmetz, Carl, Hermann, Dino (2025). Peace and Resistance in Non-Western and Western Countries. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 12(06). 232-244. DOI:10.14738/assrj.1206.18995.

Steinmetz, Carl Hermann Dino (2025). Obstacles When Creating Peace in Non-Western and Western Countries. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 12(07). 167-190. Link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/393679805_Obstacles_When_Creating_Peace_in_Non-Western_and_Western_Countries

Tutu, Desmond (1999). No Future Without Forgiveness. Rider. ISBN: 0712670130, 9780712670135

Qamar-ul Huda. Introduction (2010). The Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution Field and Islam in Qamar-ul Huda (editor). (2010). Crescent and Dove Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam. United States Institute of Peace 1200 17th Street, NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20036-3011 www.usip.org.