

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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Dr. Laura Finley

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## Table of Contents

### ARTICLES

**Culturally Competent Engagement: The S.O.S. Approach**  
Ed Brantmeier and Noori Brantmeier.....4

**Do We Need New Heroes? Reflections on the Cult of Personality and Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice Movements**  
Laura Finley.....17

**Redefining and Delineating Dehumanization: Towards an Inclusive Assessment Model**  
Aniuska Luna.....34

**Exploring Indigenous Approaches to Peacebuilding: The Case of Ubuntu in South Africa**  
Abdul Karim Issifu.....59

**Teach, Learn, Act, Empower: Education for Restorative Justice in Sexual Violence Cases**  
Matthew Johnson.....73

**Toward a Peaceful and Creative Coexistence through Empathic Recognition of Our Inner Uniqueness**  
Carol L. Simpson.....89

**REVIEWS**

**Amster, R., Finley, L., Pries, E., & McCutcheon, R. (Eds.). (2015). *Peace studies: Between tradition and innovation*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.**  
 Christian A.I. Schlaerth.....128

**Wood, H. (2016). *Invitation to Peace Studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.**  
 Janet Gray.....130

**Herman, J. (1992, 2015). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books.**  
 Nekeisha Bascombe.....134

**POETRY**

**Occupy or Die**  
 Matthew Johnson.....139

**Peace is a Woman**  
 Matthew Johnson.....141

**America the Wicked**  
 Matthew Johnson.....142

**State of Dissent**  
 Matthew Johnson.....144

**Black and White**  
 Matthew Johnson.....145

**The Disease**  
 Matthew Johnson.....147

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## **Culturally Competent Engagement: The S.O.S. Approach**

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## **CULTURALLY COMPETENT ENGAGEMENT: THE S.O.S. APPROACH**

### **Abstract**

In this article, we offer an approach and method for culturally competent engagement that seeks to help practitioners more deeply engage, be stronger allies, and attend to issues of systemic power, oppression, and privilege. In specific, we describe the S.O.S. (Self-Others-Systems) Approach and the OIIR (Observe, Infer, Inquire, Respond) Method for culturally competent engagement. We hope you will use, critique, and nuance this tried and true approach and method, both forged out of self-reflection on our practices for the past twenty years as educators and consultants who strive to grow cultural competent people for the purposes of creating a more socially just and equitable world.

### **Introduction**

Cultivating cultural competence in those who work in service to others--social workers, health care professionals, educators, peace workers, community activists, and people in general--is a journey of a thousand miles with many stops along the way. Cultivating cultural competence is a nonlinear process; one takes steps backward at times when mistakes and blunders are made in cross-cultural engagement given the tremendous difficulty of rightly interpreting and responding to the changing dynamics of situated contexts and emergent circumstances. Cultural competence, through culturally responsive engagement, should not be seen as an end point, but as an ongoing process of learning, failure, growth, self-reflection, and change. By viewing this process as a developmental one, and with an attitude of humility, we begin to more deeply know ourselves,

others, and the social, economic, political, and environmental systems that circumscribe and influence daily life. Paying close attention to the dynamics of power, related privilege, and oppressive structures within situated contexts allows us to meaningfully and deeply engage with others in dialogic and potentially transformative encounters, though much care and attention to power needs to be taken in change processes.

Culturally competent engagement requires creating deep learning opportunities for people, learning that goes beyond rote memorization and shallow application in simulative contexts. Deep learning requires deep teaching, teaching is that is “meaningful, both personal and connective, for students and the teachers, and relevant — meaning that it is fused to real world challenges” (Brantmeier and Lawrence, 2013). Deep teaching promotes sticky learning. Sticky learning “...stems from not only a cognitive repertoire of new knowledge or skills to do great things in the world, but also an emotional connection and sense of caring for and about content and the world” (Brantmeier and Lawrence, 2013). Learners need to care *for and about* others and *for and about* the world (Noddings, 2003).

Culturally relevant engagement is integrating individual and community knowledge paradigms, values, and behaviors into the learning process in meaningful ways that foster relevant and engaged learning. In teaching and learning contexts, we can examine the curriculum (content), modes of instruction (context), and how we measure learning (CIA --Curriculum + Instruction + Assessment + Climate = culturally responsive teaching and learning). In this article, we conceive learning contexts to include traditional brick and mortar schools, a multitude of informal educational contexts, on-line communities, and the community we live in. Considering our approaches to culturally relevant engagement is very important when developing partnership relationships with people in various learning contexts.

How do we know whether we are helping or hindering in cross-cultural or multicultural contexts? Lilla Watson, a deceased Australian Aboriginal educator and activist, stated so powerfully, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have are here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us walk together.” As educators, we (Noorie and Ed) use this quote every semester when preparing students for culturally competent engagement in international and domestic contexts. As I (Ed--white, male, first generational college student) reflect on my service learning work in 2000 in Lapu Lapu, Philippines where my students and I were helping to paint a local primary school, to build a brick sidewalk to the school water well, and to construct an expressive mural art project, this quote mysteriously appeared on the wooden beam of the bamboo, thatch-roof shelter where we daily ate breakfast. We reflected on the meaning of the quote in team meetings, but I think it took much longer for my students and me to understand the deeper meaning of the quote. What does it mean to have one’s liberation bound with the people we work with? What does that really mean? What does it mean to help in the way that people want to be helped and how do we know we are doing more harm than good, or at the very least, doing no harm?

For me, (Noorie--Native American/Latina female, first generation college student) I educate and provide consulting services to organizational leaders who have had little, to no contact with Native American communities, explore best practices for forging mutually beneficial partnerships with Indigenous community organizations and tribal entities. We start with first exploring the true impetus for a partnership with Native American communities. Does the desire for partnership

come from a place of mutual need and respect? Does the hope for a partnership come from well-meaning pity? These are important questions to consider because well-meaning pity, though well intentioned, does little to acknowledge the strengths, talents and resiliency of Indigenous people and communities. It perpetuates a power-down relationship based on “poor you” sympathy that can be harmful for mutual growth. In workshops with potential partners, we have challenging conversations about colonial legacies, the roots of contemporary community challenges, but also the opportunities and innovative spirit of Native American communities and people who have accomplished so much with so little. Clearly, who we are, including our various social identities and our intentions, matters much in understanding how to engage with both care and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts.

### **The S.O.S. (Self-Other-Systems) Approach**

Culturally competent engagement is a *quest* in which many questions are encountered along the way. The root of the word **question** is “quest.” Questions send us on a journey of learning, failure, growth and change. The following are questions to consider when using the S.O.S. (Self-Other-Systems) Approach to culturally competent engagement:

**Self-Understanding Questions:** Who am I? How do various diversity variables (race/ethnicity, socio-economic status/class, gender, sexual orientation, geographic origin, religion, sexual orientation, dis/ability, etc.) impact the way I interpret experience, what I value, and how I act in the world? How am I privileged? Underprivileged? What are the implications of this? How can I be privileged without personally feeling privileged? Am I fully embracing diversity or am I held back by my own socialization and cultural conditioning, my own limitations? Am I imposing my will when working with others or eliciting the needs, desires, or perspectives of the “other”?

**Other Understanding Questions:** Who are “others”? How does “otherizing” get reinforced when we interact? How do we build bridges with the “other” to close the distance yet honor the diversity?” Am I correctly interpreting his/her/their behavior? Is this interpretation all about me or really the representative of the “others” values, thought patterns? How might the experience of diverse “others” be understood in his/her/their historicized, particular context? How might the experiences and perspectives be understood as equally valid, unique, and important? Does the desire for partnership come from a place of mutual need and respect? Does the hope for a partnership come from well-meaning pity? Am I approaching the partnership from a power over, power with, or power within orientation? (Brantmeier, 2013). Do I understand individuals and groups in the context of wider institutional, structural, and systems realities?

**Systems Understanding Questions:** Who am I within systems? Who are “others” within systems? What causes and conditions have created present circumstances and situations? How might cultural contexts change over time? How do institutional policies and practices marginalize certain individuals and groups of people, either intentionally or unintentionally? How do power, oppression, and privilege operate to benefit the ruling elite or dominant individuals or groups in a given context? How do wider economic, political, social, and environmental systems influence the lives of historically marginalized

individuals and groups of people? Who benefits from the maintenance of the status quo within a given power hierarchy? How do historical legacies of privilege, assumptions of rightness, and the luxury of ignorance (Howard, 2006) perpetuate dominance paradigms? How are legitimizing myths used to continue the status quo of dominant and subordinate relationships and systemic inequality? How might systems be mindfully changed to promote equity, social, and ecological justice? What is the role of peaceful resistance and disruption?

Self-understanding, other understanding, and systems understanding interact and influence one another; they are mutually interwoven in situated realities. Questions such as the ones presented above are ongoing and crucial to reflect on during culturally competent engagement. Of particular importance, and perhaps the differentiating factor when comparing other approaches to cultural competency education, is the emphasis on systems understanding in the S.O.S. approach presented here. The S.O.S. Approach aligns well with social justice approaches in education:

Working for social justice in education means guiding students in critical self-reflection of their socialization into this matrix of unequal relationships and its implications, analysis of the mechanisms of oppression, and the ability to challenge these hierarchies (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

We align with social justice educational approaches to foster culturally competent engagement as described above because they address the work that needs to be done on the self, relational, socio-cultural, and systems levels. Culturally competent practitioners, we argue, possess tools and potential to transform individuals, groups, and societies through consciousness-raising, vision, and action.

Culturally competent engagement takes time, care, and vulnerability. Cultural sensitivity comes with growing to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. This idea comes from anthropological tradition as elucidated by Minor (1956) when he states that understanding culture happens when the strange becomes familiar, and the familiar becomes strange. Cultural sensitivity accrues over time, with repeated exposure and interactions:

Intercultural competence is not achieved in one course or one experience. Rather, you recognize where one is on the developmental continuum, and you engage in systematic, oftentimes repetitious, and well-planned exposure to intercultural interactions that are designed to nudge one to increasingly complex levels (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003, p. 130).

Clearly, we have to be “willing to be disturbed” (Wheatley, 2002). We must encounter our fears of making mistakes, embrace our mistakes as learning opportunities, and be willing to be transformed by our encounters with “others.” The invisible veils that are lifted when we deconstruct systems dynamics and begin to understand structural and cultural violence deeply can be transformational on epistemological and ontological levels. New ways of knowing and being usually encourage mindful action that changes past trajectories toward future potential and possibilities. Change is indeed possible.

*Exploring/Defining Terms*

The great debate about what culture is in cultural anthropology is an important one that nuances our understandings, yet for practical purposes, we recommend using the following in teaching as a basic definition of culture for courses: “acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior” (Spradley, 1980. p 22). Understanding acquired knowledge, interpretive frameworks, and behaviors is essential for understand one’s own culture and the culture of others. Spradley (1997) further breaks culture down into useable bits:

- what people do----cultural behaviors
- what people know----cultural knowledge
- things people make and use----cultural artifacts. (p.21)

Though undoubtedly oversimplified, these useable categories allow one to understand a cultural scene and begin the interpretive process of understanding deeper meanings, dynamics, and cultural profiles—to go below the surface of cultural beliefs and behaviors and to understand value frameworks and thought patterns (Weaver, 1998). What people do, know, and use can be easily observed in multicultural contexts and provide a gateway into deeper cultural understanding.

In exploring culturally competent engagement, definitions of cultural competence matter. Rather than entering into dialogue about the nuances of cultural competence, let’s use a basic definition in teacher education here. Diller and Moule (2005) define cultural competence as the “ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than your own. It entails mastering complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills” (p.5). This definition focuses on awareness, sensitivities, knowledge, and skills. Similarly, for a workshop for the 2011 South and Central Asia Fulbright Scholar Pre-Departure Orientation, I (Ed) defined cultural competence in the context of awareness, skills, and action using the S.O.S. Approach:

Self—awareness of self and assumptions challenged

Other—skills for interpreting cultural others (intercultural empathy included in this) and an appreciation of the diversity of otherness

Systems—awareness of how to navigate cultural, political, economic, social, environmental systems that enable or constrain hope, dreams, and happiness (Brantmeier, 2011)

We would also add the need for an inclusive value framework and critical thinking skills as needed in culturally competent engagement.

Yet how are awareness, skills, and action developed? This question has guided our journey as educators and co-learners who have strived to cultivate deep learning and develop our own cultural competence and that of our students over the last twenty years working in both informal education and formal education contexts. In this article, we will review some of the tools we have developed as a multicultural/diversity/peace educator and as a social worker. In specific, we will review the Self-Other-Systems (SOS) learning approach (2011), and the OIIR (Observe, Infer, Inquire, Respond) method for culturally competent engagement-- (Brantmeier, 2012). In everyday life the S.O.S. Approach and OIIR Method are not only relevant for peace and multicultural educators,

they are relevant for a variety of professions and those engaged in multicultural civic life. We offer these as tools for others to use and nuance in their work in culturally competent engagement in a variety of fields: health care professions, leadership preparation, and peace activism to name a few.

### **Integrating the S.O.S. (Self, Other, Systems) Approach in Teaching**

The S.O.S. Approach for culturally competent engagement emerged from deeply thinking through learning outcomes in past multicultural/cross-cultural education courses. What do we want students to know, to feel, and to be able to do (thinking, feeling, doing) at the end of our learning experiences together? Noorie and I both have gone through course design institutes that use backward design approaches to course re/design (Fink, 2013). Ed has gone through multiple course re/design processes when leading a group of educators through a course re-design process at Colorado State University, and then later as a participant and then learning team facilitator for other university faculty for the Course Design Institute at the University of Virginia. Through these processes and as part of ongoing consulting with our consulting business, the S.O.S. Approach for Culturally Competent Engagement has been built and tried with undergraduate students, graduate students, and adult professionals in industry. It's not yet a clearly articulated and integrated approach and method, yet we offer a good start in this article.

In its most basic form, the S.O.S. Approach promotes self-understanding, other understanding, and systems understanding. Remarkably, this simply yet complex framework appears to encompass many learning outcomes desired by those in the field of multicultural/cross-cultural/intercultural education. This is said having examined many multicultural education syllabi of various U.S. based colleagues over the years.

In my (Ed) master's level cross-cultural education courses at Colorado State University first and now James Madison University, my students are asked to explore themselves as cultural beings, others, and the systems that enable and constrain access, opportunity, hope, and happiness for historically marginalized individuals and groups in society. One of these courses at James Madison University is an immersive experience in partnership with a local Boys and Girls Club. Given significant evidence that experiential, mentored learning experiences provide high impact learning (Kuh and O'Donnell, 2013), my students and I (Ed) volunteer our time as literacy tutors with children who come from historically marginalized backgrounds (race and ethnicity, socio-economic, country of origin, etc.). Self, other, and systems understanding becomes the core of the learning journey in that immersive context. It has been a significantly useful and integrative tool to clarify learning outcomes connected to specific learning activities in this dynamic multicultural context where flexibility and adaptability are imperative dispositions for engaged learning. We learn about ourselves through first doing a cultural profile assignment in the context of experiencing interactions with the "other," and we learn about the systems of privilege and under-privilege that influence the educational process. Below is the more detailed description of the foundational course questions, the invitation to learn, the learning goals, and learning outcomes, quoted directly from my most recent masters level Cross-Cultural Education course syllabus:

#### Foundational Questions

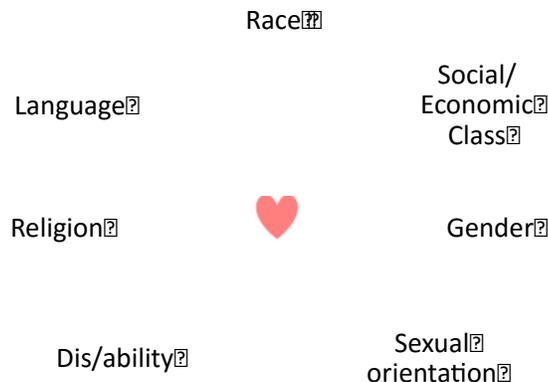
1. Who are you?
2. Who are “cultural others”?
3. How do social *systems* fetter or free groups and individuals?
4. How can you transform the dynamics of power, oppression, and privilege--and in turn, transform society

An Invitation to Learn...

This course is an invitation to learn—to learn about yourself, others, and the systems that enable and/or constrain hope, dreams, access, and opportunity. As a professional, you have great deal of power to create innovative opportunities and moments for change in schools, businesses, and communities. If you take time to reflect, observe, engage your mind, emotions, and body during this semester, you should emerge with a great deal of cultural competence after our time together. Cultural competence here is defined as self-understanding, “other” understanding, and systems understanding—those embedded arrangements within social, political, economic, and environmental systems that provide access and opportunity for some and exclusion and marginalization for others. For example, what factors are involved in creating an achievement gap in our local and nation’s schools? What factors are involved in creating an unequal distribution of wealth and privilege in society?

Access and opportunity are unevenly distributed and exclusion often is expressed through various diversity variables that comprise culture. **We will be analyzing various diversity variables in relation to POP (power, oppression, and privilege) for the purpose of inviting you to cultivate your orientation toward social justice—understood here as fair and just relationships and structures that promote access and opportunity for the historically marginalized.** The following diagram illustrates some diversity variables that comprise the individual and cultural group member.

## Diversity Variables



## Learning Goals

You are invited to increase your cultural competence through systematic reflection on self, others, and systems--the theoretical and practical foundation of cultural competence and cross-cultural education for this learning experience. If you are open, you will be challenged and changed, invited to move beyond your comfort zone and shift toward a multicultural way of perceiving, valuing, and doing in the world. Many of my students over the last fifteen years of teaching this course [or courses like this] have reported significant and deep learning moments as they engaged in the journey of self, other, and systems understanding. You may experience cognitive dissonance, challenging emotions, and moments of insight along the way. Your acquired skills of adaptive intelligence and adaptive behavior will be useful in making learning culturally responsive and relevant in your future work. If applied in your future work, the knowledge and skills acquired just might lift someone up and change their life—this is the potential of a culturally competent and engaging practitioner.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

### SELF

### OTHER      SYSTEMS

This course is an invitation for you to:

- Demonstrate Self Understanding
  - Be aware of yourself as a “cultural” being made of multiple diversity variables.
  - Examine socially constructed assumptions and ways of knowing --and those of “others”—this is perspective consciousness.
  - Believe in yourself as change agent for a more just and peaceful world.
- Demonstrate Other Understanding
  - Develop skills for interpreting cultural others and your capacity for “intercultural empathy.”
  - Cultivate an appreciation of “otherness.”
  - Understand approaches for culturally responsive and relevant teaching and community engagement.
- Demonstrate Systems Understanding

- Analyze how systems enable or constrain hope, dreams, happiness and self-defined “good life” for groups and individuals.
- Examine how power, oppression, and privilege operate in societies.
- Evaluate the role professionals, citizens, and/or teachers in reproducing or transforming existing socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental orders. (Brantmeier, 2014, Course Syllabi, James Madison University)

Again, we see this approach not only being applicable in the field of teacher education, but also valuable for leadership positions in a variety of contexts that require culturally competent engagement. In the fields of social work and adult education, the fields where I (Noorie) am a practitioner, the S.O.S. Approach has applicability and relevance as we engage with others who are culturally different than ourselves. Both social work and education are often dominated by people who identify as being white and may serve, teach, or work with people who are not. Social work as a profession for example, is built upon ideals of social and economic justice for those who are on the margins in our communities, our society, and our world. Cultural competence is one of the cornerstones of the social work profession and to be a competent practitioner, knowing yourself as a cultural being is integral. Self-understanding, the part of the S.O.S. Approach that calls for self-reflection is the first opportunity for many students to consider themselves as cultural beings and to talk about issues of diversity. When I teach my Indigenous studies/ethnic studies courses, oftentimes my predominately white students do not see themselves as having “culture.” In their minds, culture is something *other* people have--it’s something brown people have. Given the opportunity to reflect, and when provided with guidance about ways to explore their cultural background, barriers can be broken down. Students may begin to see their present place on a historical continuum. Through instances where students interview their parents, grandparents, and extended family members about their family’s origin and their family’s experience of being in the U.S. for example, they begin the process of being a person with culture, a history. To be an effective ally, social justice advocate, educator and to effectively promote racial and ethnic pride, this starts with knowing yourself.

### **OIIR (Observe, Infer, Inquire, Respond) Method**

The OIIR Method arises out of two important, transformative learning experiences I (Ed) had as an undergraduate and graduate student. The first experience was as student teacher, living and working for five months at a Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding School in the Navajo Nation in 1997. As part of a course entitled, Cultural and Community Forces that Impact Schools in an Indiana University-Bloomington Program for pre-service teachers (formerly Cultural Immersion Projects, now [Global Gateways for Teachers](#)), I was asked to complete bi-monthly reports chronicling and critically reflecting on experiences. One of the field report assignments, developed by Dr. Laura Stachowski, asked us to identify the undergirding values in operation from observed behaviors. Then, we developed culturally appropriate responses for the classroom or day-to-day interactions. The second experience was taking Dr. Bradley Levinson’s [Anthropology of Education](#) course in the Fall of 2001 where we completed a mini-ethnography, applying ethnographic sensibilities and tools to informal education learning contexts. I chose to do my mini-ethnography with a Middle Eastern drumming group for that assignment. These formative undergraduate and graduate learning experiences, categorized as “high impact practices” by those

who study the impacts of deep learning (Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013), left deep and lasting imprints on me (Ed) as someone who strives for growth in cultural competence.

Attempting to tap into the power from these immersive cultural experiences as a student at Indiana University-Bloomington, I developed, with several iterations over the years, an assignment for my cross-cultural education course entitled *Enhancing the Ethnographic Eye: Cross-Cultural Service Learning Project*. One part of that assignment focuses on applying ethnographic skills to develop a cultural portrait of an educational scene through participant observation. At least fifteen to twenty hours of immersion are required, though I wish I could require more. Here is the part of the Ethnographic Eye assignment description that describes the simple, but complex OIR Method:

#### Part A: Provide a Cultural Portrait

You should answer the following questions:

- Describe the time, how many times you visited and for what length, place, and the physical characteristics of the educational site.
- Observe. What did you observe? Describe the cultural behaviors, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts that you observed (Spradley, 1983).
- Infer. Go toward deeper cultural understanding.
- What humble inferences did you make? What values and thought patterns undergird the behaviors, knowledge, and artifacts expressed? (You will have to make humble inferences here.) How does teaching and learning take place in this educational/social context? What are the explicit and implicit rules in operation in this social context?
- Inquire. How did you validate your interpretations of meanings, values, and perceived rules? Did you check with a cultural insider or cultural mediator? How do you know your interpretation is right?
- Respond. How would you/do you engage in culturally responsive practice at this site? (Define cultural responsive practice with citations.)

Translation—What are the connections between this experience and what you have been learning in the course?

This assignment has proven to be particularly powerful and it is intended to promote habit forming observation, validation, and action skills for engaging in cross-cultural or multicultural encounters. The purpose of it is to cultivate observations skills, making inferences about the perspectives, meanings, and values of others and to not project one's own lens or baggage onto others. The purpose is to understand a situation from the emic perspective of individuals and inside group participants. The purpose is to respond with thought, care, and action, not from a self-referential, self-imposing position, but from a contextual understanding of what other people want, need, and desire. The purpose is to heed the Platinum Rule in cross-cultural interactions, a principle of the [National Peace Corp Association](#), "Do unto others as they would have done unto them." The development of cultural competence and the process of becoming a culturally competent practitioner is non-linear. We are not sure if anyone ever truly "arrives" and we should consider the journey toward cultural competence to be a lifelong one.

## Toward Closure

In this article, we offered an approach and method that seeks to help practitioners more deeply engage, be stronger allies, and attend to issues of systemic and structural power and privilege. As instructors, we use a variety of assessments and related teaching and learning activities in order to promote self-other-systems understanding. For example, Ed uses a robust Cultural Profile assignment in some courses to promote deeper self-understanding. Students are asked to choose 5 symbols that represent their cultural values and thought patterns; they are carefully walked through an analysis process using personally meaningful symbols or photographs to unearth the layers of conscious and unconscious conditioning and meanings, values, and thought patterns these symbols/photographs hold for them. Students often report a deeper awareness of who they are, what they value, and why they value what they do. This self-awareness tends to open their eyes to the cross-cultural reality that others may have very different and historically valid understandings and experiences of the world. Hanvey (1982) refers to this as “perspective consciousness,” a very basic, yet immensely important shift in cognitive and intercultural/global perspective development. Ed also uses an Enhancing the Ethnographic Eye Assignment where students are asked to immerse themselves in the context of the “other” and deconstruct their interpretations of the other. Students are also asked what they have learned about “Understanding self through the other”—a phrase that is the title of a past publication (Stachowski & Brantmeier, 2002). Other and self-understanding emerge from this inquiry. Readings, reflections, and learning activities such as Examining the Inner Circle: Unpacking White Privilege focus on power, oppression, and privilege and encourage deeper systems understanding of economic, social, and political realities (Brantmeier et al, 2011). Hundreds of students and several working professionals have reported deep impact from experiencing this particular activity. The Unpacking White Privilege activity unmask the realities of privilege and oppression and goads participants to think about how they can be part of the solution by disrupting the invisible systems of inequality rather than unconscious perpetrators of the problems of structural and cultural violence embedded in racial inequality. Individuals have reported moving closer to becoming systems thinkers and change agents from participation.

In her consulting work with [Seven Sisters Community Development Group, LLC](#), Noorie educates and provides training sessions for community and business leaders who hope to build partnerships with Indigenous organizations, but are new to working in Native American communities. The “Creating Successful Partnerships in Indian Country” curriculum teaches culturally responsive practices. Learning activities such as the *Who Am I* activity (Note: Self-understanding) work to attune training participants to differing cultural perspectives, worldviews, and practices found in many Native American communities. Participants first hear a traditional Navajo introduction done by a Navajo Nation tribal member. Navajos often first introduce themselves by sharing their four clan names because the clan system establishes kinship and connection. Participants are then asked to compare the Navajo introduction they heard with the typical western introduction that in many cases focuses on a person’s occupation and title. In a typical western introduction, very little is shared personally about oneself when entering into a business relationship and in many cases sharing is seen as unprofessional. Participants in the training session are asked to compare and contrast the differences and the values reflected in the Navajo introduction (Note: Other understanding). An important learning outcome from this activity is that participants begin to see

the importance of community and the value placed on family connections (Note: cultural Systems understanding). Working and engaging with Native American communities requires building rapport and trust for effective culturally competent practice, and it also requires a degree of vulnerability as you share about who you are as a fellow human being.

Cultivating cultural competence requires direct experiential learning with critical reflection that challenges what we know about self, others, and the systems that enable and constrain access, opportunity, happiness, and perhaps dignity for historically marginalized individuals and groups of people. Exploring approaches to deep learning is quite necessary. Ken Bain, author of *What the Best College Teachers Do* and *What the Best College Students Do* suggests that in deep learning learners need to apply complex skills to solve the messy problems of society (Bain, 2004). And focusing on knowledge and skills is not enough. Gandhi wrote about basic education and implicitly suggested that education deep learning should cultivate an education of the head (cognition), the hand (behaviors), and the heart (affective domain). In others words we should think, care, and act, which happens to be the subtitle of Susan Gelber Cannon's book, *Think, Care, Act: Teaching for a Peaceful Future*.

The ideas in this article were born out of work in both formal and informal education contexts. We also feel that all of us are educators, so in essence, we all have the potential to cultivate our cultural competence and that of those we interact with on a daily basis. We realize that cultural competence is something that all of us need to develop in our increasingly interdependent, global world, so we hope readers will take what they need from this S.O.S. Approach and OIIR Method that resonates with your own work. Our future research needs to more deeply explore and develop a more clear articulation of systems understanding—the unique feature that separates the S.O.S. Approach in this article from other models of cultural competency development. We welcome and embrace that journey; this article is just the beginning. The future of our own children and the children of the world depends on our collective work toward cultivating culturally competent practitioners—those who change themselves, their relationships, and systems that deny hope, opportunity, access, and dignity to all people. Healthy, longitudinal planetary survival for the human species depends on these critical and necessary changes toward a more peaceful and equitable world.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Do We Need New Heroes? Reflections on the Cult of Personality and Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice Movements**

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## **DO WE NEED NEW HEROES? REFLECTIONS ON THE CULT OF PERSONALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS**

### **Abstract**

The recent scandals involving Greg Mortenson of the Central Asia Institute, Jason Russell of Invisible Children, and Somaly Mam of the Somaly Mam Foundation highlight some of the problems associated with the cult of personality and heroification of individual leaders. This paper examines those scandals to show how individual idolatry of peace and justice leaders can serve to minimize serious issues, framing them as individual problems requiring individual rather than collective solutions, and reinforcing a dangerous competitiveness in the non-profit and NGO world that results in inadequate assistance to those in need. Further, heroification of individual leaders perpetuates the neoliberal model of service delivery that is antithetical to true social change for peace and justice. The paper concludes with recommendations for nonprofits and NGOs that can result in more collaborative and more effective social movements.

### **Introduction**

From the athletes Americans hold in god-like reverence to popular rock stars to human rights leaders and peacemakers, it is without a doubt that people love to worship individual heroes. Social psychologists have explained that humans have a deep need to make connections to others, and thus we select heroes that inspire us to be “better versions of ourselves” (Leopold, 2012). Many especially love to root for underdogs because it feels better to us when someone who appears to

have a disadvantage is successful (Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007). Once we have built them up, though, we love to see these heroes fall. Called *schadenfreude*, or taking pleasure from someone else's misfortune, it is particularly acute when the fallen hero is one who we believe to have been highly successful. Research suggests that watching heroes fall is a component of intergroup dynamics and is most common when we are encouraged to dislike those we view as opponents (Smith, 2013). The same is true of peacemakers and human rights heroes. We love to exalt the often charismatic leaders of non-profit or non-governmental organizations rather than those who may be doing similar good in communities in more grassroots, less congratulatory ways. Unlike rock stars, actors and athletes, however, when this type of hero falls, the consequences are likely to reach far beyond tabloid titillation.

This paper examines the recent fall of heroes who have led peace and justice movements, including Greg Mortenson, Invisible Children Co-Founder Jason Russell, and Somaly Mam, all of whom were discovered to have lied to or deceived donors and supporters as well as mismanaged funds. As Johnson (2014) maintains, the rise and fall of "heroes" like Mortenson, Mam and Russell say a lot about U.S. culture. That is, "we make celebrities out of 'do-gooders' just as we do out of athletes and actors, tempting humanitarians with lucrative book contracts, television appearances and speaking engagements" (p. 110). Further, as David Zweig (2014) points out in his book *Invisibles*, "We too often associate power, and the responsibility that goes along with it, with visibility" (p. 82). Gourevitch and Lake (2012) explain that NGOs often rely on an appearance of virtue, tied to the alleged intrinsic "good" of their members, as a claim of credibility. Thus, as "NGOs have become the favored child of official development agencies, hailed as the new panacea to cure the ills that have befallen the development process, and imagined as a magic bullet which will mysteriously but effectively find its target" (Fisher, 1997, p. 442), the failed leadership of these individuals becomes even more striking.

The paper discusses the many effects these individuals' deceptions have had on their respective social justice work and on efforts to build peace in general. This includes the minimizing of serious issues, framing them as individual problems requiring individual rather than collective solutions, and reinforcing a dangerous competitiveness in the non-profit and NGO world that results in inadequate assistance to those in need. Further, heroification of individual leaders perpetuates the neoliberal model of service delivery that is antithetical to true social change for peace and justice (Finley & Esposito, 2012). The paper concludes by recommending that peace and justice movements rethink the degree to which non-profits and non-governmental organizations are at the forefront of social movements and consider deeply how to reduce the tendency to idolize individuals instead of collective action.

## **Profiles of the Fallen Heroes**

### Greg Mortenson and Central Asia Institute

In 2011, Greg Mortenson was a veritable human rights rock star: His book *Three Cups of Tea*, chronicling the work of his organization The Central Asia Institute (CAI) in building schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, had spent the previous 50 months on *The New York Times* paperback nonfiction bestseller list. Mortenson was on the short-list for the Nobel Peace Prize for three years and his work was espoused by Nicholas Kristof, Thomas Friedman, Christiane Amanpour, and

other prominent journalists (Krakauer, 2013). Mortenson was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (About Greg Mortenson, 2012). Yet, on April 17, 2011, *60 Minutes* correspondent Steve Kroft revealed that CAI was actually spending more money advertising Mortenson's books and flying him to speaking engagements than building schools, and that many important parts of *Three Cups of Tea* were entirely fabricated (Krakauer, 2013). Further, the CBS broadcast maintained that Mortenson's heroic story of being captured by the Taliban in 1996 was likely untrue, given that there was virtually no Taliban presence in that part of Pakistan at the time (CharityWatch Calls For..., 2012). Additionally, many of the schools he had built were abandoned, not being supported by CAI, or were being used for purposes other than schooling, like storing grain (Williamson, 2014). In all, roughly half of the schools were not operating as was intended and as was described to the public and to donors (CharityWatch Calls For..., 2012). An investigation the following year found numerous financial transgressions, and Mortenson was ordered to pay CAI more than \$1 million as restitution. He was also forbidden from serving as a voting member of the CAI board of directors or holding any position at the charity that involved finances (Krakauer, 2013). Mortenson remains on the CAI payroll (his annual compensation is \$182,220, according to the most recent financial information released by the charity), and he continues to exert considerable influence over its operations (Krakauer, 2013). In 2012, David Oliver Relin, Mortenson's co-author for *Three Cups of Tea*, committed suicide. A year prior, he had complained that the scandal was devastating to his career (Barnard, 2012).

### Jason Russell and Invisible Children

Invisible Children gained international attention with its powerful videos focusing on the issue of child soldiers in Liberia and, in particular, on the need to track down and hold accountable leader Joseph Kony. The first, *Invisible Children: Rough Cut*, focused on "night walkers," the rural North Ugandan children who walked from town to town at night, trying to stay awake and alert so as to avoid capture by Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). It was released in 2004, and Invisible Children began hosting events and screenings around the country. The organization drew the attention of celebrities, with the CW's Veronica Mars making an episode about the work. In 2007, Fall Out Boy filmed a music video in Uganda, and Invisible Children joined the Warped Tour (Testa, 2014). Invisible Children's first legislative victory came in 2010, when President Obama signed the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, leading to the deployment of 100 U.S. advisers in LRA-affected areas in 2011 (Testa, 2014). The second film, *Kony 2012*, went live on March 5, 2012. Between the versions available on Youtube and Vimeo, 100 million views in six days — surpassing Susan Boyle's *Britain's Got Talent* performance (which took nine days to reach 100 million) and Lady Gaga's *Bad Romance* video (18 days). Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Ryan Seacrest, Nicole Richie, Diddy, and the Kardashian sisters all tweeted their support. (Testa, 2014). In April 2012, President Obama announced the extension of a military advise-and-assist mission to central Africa. The European Union, as part of a declaration of support, established a Joint Operations Centre to assist central Africa's counter-LRA regional task force and then in January 2013, Congress passed the Rewards for Justice Bill, authorizing \$5 million for information leading to Kony's capture (Testa, 2014). Interestingly, while the U.S. disavows participation in the International Criminal Court, it authorized these interventions that are intended to result in Kony's trial before that very body (Finnstrom, 2012). The hypocrisy was not lost on some critics. Antoine Bernard, director of the International Federation for Human Rights, has repeatedly critiqued the U.S. for supporting international law only when it is applied against others (Simons, 2013).

Critics have noted that the organization has supported the Ugandan army, which, like Kony, has been accused of committing human rights atrocities (Abad-Santos, 2012). Further, critics like freelance writer Michael Wilkinson discussed the fall-out of ill-conceived efforts to apprehend Kony, noting “In previous offensives by the Ugandan military that didn’t quite catch Kony, what [happened] was the LRA ransacked and massacred vengefully as it fled, killing hundreds of civilians in the Congo in the winter of 2009” (Testa, 2014). From the start Charity Navigator found that the organization used the majority of its funds for salaries despite projecting an image that it was a humble, grassroots organization (Sheets, 2012). Largely for this reason, Charity Navigator reduced its rating of Invisible Children, from a four star in July 2009 to a two star in September 2010 (Sheets, 2012). Co-Founder Jason Russell, who narrated Invisible Children’s films, suffered from a very public meltdown when he ran naked and screaming through streets in San Diego two weeks after the release of the Kony2012 video. He was hospitalized for six weeks (Newcomb, 2012).

According to Sibilla (2012), only one-third of Invisible Children’s revenue funds direct services. One fan, Aviva Rubin (2012), wrote “Watching something like Kony 2012 go viral filled me with hope. Seeing that bubble popped, almost simultaneously, with a hundred pins of criticism -- many valid and troubling, some just envious lemon suckers joining forces with sour grapes -- was nonetheless demoralizing.” In 2012, Altnet.org investigated the organizations financial records and discovered that Invisible Children accepted funding and support from anti-gay groups (Kony 2012 funding...., 2012).

### Somaly Mam and the Somaly Mam Foundation

It seems like everyone loved and admired Somaly Mam, the Cambodian sex trafficking survivor who went on to start her own foundation in 2007 to assist victims of trafficking. According to Moore (2014), “Her downtrodden-girl-overcomes-it-all-to-jail-abusers narrative is extremely compelling, both to Cambodians, who need more women heroes, and to young women in the U.S.” Susan Sarandon took a trip to one of Mam’s shelters for rescued girls, while Meg Ryan joined Mam super-fan, *New York Times* reported Nickolas Kristoff, in visiting another facility (Stoeffel, 2014). Sheryl Sandberg is an advisory board member of Mam’s foundation (Stoeffel, 2014). Yet Mam’s story of horrific abuse, including her own childhood exploitation and her daughter’s kidnapping by pro-trafficking thugs, it turns out, was not entirely true. Mam repeatedly emphasized that girls as young as 3 were found in brothels, despite most research finding that brothels are mostly full of girls ages 14-17 (Brandt, 2014). She often told the story of Long Pross, who was allegedly beaten, tortured, and had her eye gouged out by a pimp. New sources have revealed, however, that Pross underwent eye surgery for a nonmalignant tumor in a Cambodian Eye Hospital (Brandt, 2014). In late May 2014, she resigned from her own Foundation when the falsehoods were revealed in many news sources (Wells, 2014).

The following sections discuss why the misbehavior of these peace and justice “heroes” is damaging, to individuals in need of assistance, to understanding serious issues, and to broader movements for justice. Additionally, given that two of the three “heroes” described herein are white Westerners attempting to be the voice of oppressed peoples in non-industrialized countries,

the section below addresses the problems with colonialist and neo-colonialist white savior approaches to “save the other.”

### **Further Minimizing Serious Issues**

Critics have noted that the work of Mortenson, Mam, and Russell all perpetuate a personal savior myth that can be dangerously opposed to true social change. Agustin (n.d.) maintains that Mam “became a figurehead through a cult of personality, the phenomenon by which people uninformed about a subject look up to an individual as an inspiring symbol, endowing them with expertise and special knowledge, imagining they are leaders.” This cult of personality is based on and “unquestioning belief that the hero worshipped has the right fine feelings about an issue, perhaps gained through personal experience” (Agustin, n.d.). As Agustin (n.d.) notes, “NGO workers cultivate an attitude of benevolently *caring more* about their social causes than others do, but this is identity-formation, not fact — the building of a satisfying self-image to project to the world. These are conventionally career-seeking people, not self-sacrificing saints.”

The presumption that NGOs are benevolent and that doing something is always better than nothing can result in inadequate aid, inappropriate interventions, and in some cases, an exacerbation of violence (Stein, 2001). NGOs often purport to have expertise about issues, and to speak for persons affected by them, without producing any specific credentials or support from the public allegedly being served (Lehr-Lenhardt, 2005). People generally do not vote for NGO representatives, nor do they vote on the agendas they want NGOs to advance. Thus, NGOs seem to contradict “the most basic rule of democracy, namely, to govern with the consent of the governed.” (Lehr-Lenhardt, 2005, p. 17). In this era of feel-good activism, serious issues can easily become commodified, as is the case with the pink ribbonization of breast cancer (Barker, 2010). It is particularly common in what Agustin (n.d.) has called the “rescue-industry,” where good-intentioned but often ill-informed or misinformed leaders utilize dubious stories and statistics to allegedly “save” women from anything to do with the sex industry. These groups, of course, deny all criticisms, “... a hallmark of colonialism, which invokes class and race as reasons for clubbing together against savagery and terrorism” (Agustin, 2012).

Mam aside, it is often white, middle class advocates lobbying for the human rights of the “other,” but not necessarily working *with* those groups to effect change (Bebbington, Hickey, & Mitlin, 2008; Coyne, 2013; Fisher, 1997). Russell’s organization in particular has been criticized for perpetuating neo-colonialism (Finnstron, 2012; Sibilla, 2012), while Agustin (n.d.) maintains that the many high profile celebrities who toured through Mam’s shelters were simply modern-day manifestations of colonialism. Rather than spreading the word about organizations and community-based efforts to stop the violence and to hold Kony accountable, Invisible Children suggested that it was international military efforts that were required for his capture. At a screening of the *Kony 2012* film, Ugandans threw rocks at the screen (Sanders, 2014). Critics were especially concerned that the film was released when the LRA was at its lowest point, which served to minimize existing efforts (Siggins, 2014).

Petras (1997) argues that so-called grassroots NGOs have been used to further dangerous agendas in Latin America, under the guise of social good. Gwakh (2011) maintains that “too many Western writers try to portray themselves as selfless, Mother Theresa-like figures who venture to an exotic

and dangerous country to single-handedly save the natives.” Writer Dinaw Mengestu commented, “To claim [the children] were invisible because a group of college students traveling through Uganda happened to stumble upon a war they were too ignorant to have known of before going to the region is, to put it mildly, patronizing” (Testa, 2014). Finnstrom (2012) argues that the Invisible Children documentarians “use their own ethnocentric imaginations to generalize about a whole continent,” reinforcing stereotypes of the region as psychologically and pathologically unhealthy (p. 130).

Similarly, Teju Cole (2012) argues that Americans in particular suffer from what he calls the White Savior Industrial Complex. Rather than critically examining the structural causes of poverty, human rights abuses, and violence in other parts of the world (and especially the United States’ role in creating some of those problems), Americans tend to feel sympathy when a crisis arises and make a donation (albeit small, as Americans are among the most stingy donors). For example, Cole (2012) asserts, “We can participate in the economic destruction of Haiti over long years, but when the earthquake strikes it feels good to send \$10 each to the rescue fund.” Gwakh (2011) maintains that Mortenson is only one of many Westerners who make money and achieve fame by writing books featuring distortions and falsehoods about Afghanistan. He points to the comic “How To Write About Afghanistan” by Foust (2010), noting that Mortenson’s claim to have been kidnapped by the Taliban is straight from the playbook recommending that authors “Treat Afghanistan as if it were one indistinct mass. It is hot and dry all year, and full of angry, heavily armed religious fanatics who spend all their time torching girls’ schools and kidnapping Western journalists.”

In addition to “the credibility problem she has created for real victims of rape and abuse, Mam has made freeing women from oppression look easy, in her boldest and most damaging lie. It’s not” (Moore, 2014). Biddle (2014) explains that “Anonymous employees state that behind closed doors she can be cruel and tyrannical, a far cry from the saintly woman who has sat down with leaders ranging from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to the Pope.” Mam’s lies about the youthfulness of the girls in brothels may serve to diminish attention on older victims. As Brandt (2014) asks, “*Should we not be equally outraged at both three-year-olds and 14 to 17-year-old girls being trafficked for sex?*” (emphasis original). More than just untruthful, some have purported that the stories Mam told actually harmed the victims she was to be assisting, as the supposed work being offered these victims was in garment-making sweatshops. Moore (2014) maintains that Mam’s lies really matter, as her work “saving girls” by installing them firmly within a system of entrenched, gender-based poverty. This matters to all of us who would like to see that system’s demise.” Further, Agustin (2011) shared a poster in which women who were allegedly “saved” in a rescue mission shared the many ways these brothel raids actually hurt them:

- We lose our savings and our belongings.
- We are locked up.
- We are interrogated by many people.
- They force us to be witnesses.
- We are held until the court case.
- We are held till deportation.
- We are forced re-training.

- We are not given compensation by anybody.
- Our family must borrow money to survive while we wait.
- Our family is in a panic.
- We are anxious for our family.
- Strangers visit our village telling people about us.
- The village and the soldiers cause our family problems.
- Our family has to pay 'fines' or bribes to the soldiers.
- We are sent home.
- Military abuses and no work continues at home.
- My family has a debt.
- We must find a way back to Thailand to start again.

Many critics point to these cases as evidence that aid to other countries is a waste of time. Instead of worrying about issues abroad, these agencies should be focused on bettering the situation for women and children in the U.S. This logic serves to minimize that other organizations are indeed helping child soldiers and victims of human trafficking. Groups are actually building schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan that are in operation and are actually helping children and families. For instance, MADRE has partnered with local groups in Afghanistan to renovate and construct schools for girls while Bunyad is building Community Learning Centers in Pakistan (Avolio-Toly, 2010).

Others have benefitted from the lies and deceptions, however. For instance, Moore (2014) maintains that right-wing Christian fundamentalist NGOs have used the stories Mam shared to promote abstinence education and to preach converting to Christianity (Moore & Coleman, 2014). Moore (2014) also maintains that *New York Times* reporter and Pulitzer Prize winner Nicholas Kristof benefitted tremendously from his friendship with Mam, which he and his co-author (and wife) Sheryl WuDunn described in detail in their book *Half the Sky*. *Half the Sky* has become a movement with a strong web presence, support from many heroes of popular culture (from Diane Lane to America Ferrera to Eva Mendes), and funding from a variety of sources, including Nike Foundation, which of course benefits from the continuation of low-paying sweatshop labor for women in countries like Cambodia and Bangladesh (Moore, 2014). Kristof rocketed to celebrity-like status, according to Stoeffel (2014).

Likewise, while attention has been focused on Joseph Kony, another LRA commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Arop, who carried out the 2008 "Christmas Day Massacre" in which 143 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo were brutally murdered, has evaded international outrage from groups like Invisible Children because he switched sides and began aiding the hunt for Kony. Thus, he is considered to be a "good guy" in the good versus bad narrative that Invisible Children helped construct (Finnstrom, 2012). Additionally, "All these preoccupations and apparatuses provide employment for large numbers of people, the majority women. These social-sector jobs are considered dignified, sometimes prestigious and may even be tinged with a sacrificial brush—the idea that those employed in 'helping' are unselfish, not themselves gaining anything through their work" (Agustin, 2005).

## Individual Focus, Individual Solutions

As Loeb (2011) noted “It’s tempting to expect perfection from those we admire, but we romanticize lone heroes at our peril”...for one, because “the same story of unimaginable individual heroism and sacrifice that drew people in could also leave them feeling insignificant in comparison.” That is, when attention is so deeply focused on heroic individuals, it serves to reinforce an understanding of social problems as individual issues requiring individual solutions. What is needed is a more holistic understanding of the roots of social oppression, not simply its manifestations.

Those who don’t have the time, money, charisma, history of victimization, or other qualities, then, can easily see themselves as having nothing to offer. Many studies have found that audiences relate more easily to a single hero with a single story than to issues affecting millions (Coates, 2014), while people are more likely to donate to charities based on emotional appeals rather than statistics (Small, Loewenstein & Slovic, 2010). Loeb (2011) explains, “The story Mortenson presents leaves few ways for those it inspires to act, beyond raising money to promote his initiatives.” Loeb (2011) went on, “The arc of Mortenson’s fame also reminds me how much our culture enshrines lone entrepreneurs as the ultimate change agents, while displaying a commensurate disdain for those who’ve long worked in the trenches. We see this in international development, where businesspeople or celebrities receive massive publicity for their glamorous new projects, while groups like Oxfam or CARE that work year after year in local communities are left invisible in the shadows, or presented as dull, bureaucratic, and retrograde in comparison.”

Critics of Invisible Children, as well as many other activist efforts based largely or solely on online activity, note that this kind of initiative may raise awareness but rarely brings about change on issues that are highly complex (Flock, 2012). Some even go so far as to call such efforts not activism but “slacktivism,” noting that awareness over aid merely is a simplistic, feel-good approach (Testa, 2014). Calvert (2014) argues that slacktivists “may be substituting knowledge about an issue and engaging via social media about it rather than taking any real-world action.” For instance, one of Invisible Children’s slogans was “Don’t study history, make history.” This dangerous proposal suggests that simple, uninformed action is preferable to deliberate, thoughtful and strategic activism (Finnstrom, 2012).

Yet, as TRBQ radio host Dean Olsher explains, our culture is “drunk” on storytelling, which can “shut off our critical function and mesmerize us” (Coates, 2014). As Brandt (2014) explains, “There would be no incentive for fanciful storytellers to pull out the most heinous stories, or to embellish with exaggerated details, if they didn’t understand the propensity in human psychology to perk up to sensational reporting. We are drawn to the controversial, the scandalous, the extraordinary. The 1 percent success stories of heroic activism and justice work overshadow the 99 percent of boring, uninteresting, necessary sweat and labor behind it.”

In addition to all of these concerns, the biggest issue seems to be in the model of how most non-profits and NGOs operate today. “In the last decade, however, critics have begun to point out that non-profits are burdened by some of the same problems as are other institutions; namely, hyper-bureaucracy, competition for scarce resources, and kowtowing to the very states and governments

they once critiqued” (Finley & Esposito, 2012, p. 5). Based on an economic model that sees the free market as the best tool for structuring all institutions, neoliberalism is also an ideology which connotes worth with professionalism and efficiency and promotes competition over collaboration (Connell, Fawcett, & Meagher, 2009).

### **Neoliberal Model of NGOs: Contrary to Social Change**

The neoliberal model of service serves only to sustain the status quo (Connell, Fawcett, & Meagher, 2009; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2009; Finley & Esposito, 2012). “It creates competition where there should be collaboration, favors bureaucracy over democratic structures, and fails to promote long-term change” (Finley & Esposito, 2012, p. 6).

Rather than developing community and promoting civic and humanitarian responsibility, this model of aide provides Band-Aids but fails to address the structural roots of violence and injustice (Brainard & Siplon, 2004; Bush, 1992; Richmond & Shields, 2004; Schervish & Havens, 2001). As Baines (2010) suggests, it has “supplanted discourses of collective care, economic equality, and social solidarity” (p. 14). Strategies for assistance, for instance, have shifted from a focus on localized solutions to those that will sound most appealing to funders. The result is a continuation of the same approaches to unique community issues (Lehman, 1990). Further, “NGOs emphasize projects, not movements; they ‘mobilize’ people to produce at the margins but not to struggle to control the basic means of production and wealth; they focus on technical financial assistance of projects, not on structural conditions that shape the lives of everyday peoples” (Petras, 1997, p. 14). In the process, local ideas are minimized and local voices silenced. Petras (1997) maintains that “NGOs are not accountable to the local people but to overseas donors. In that sense NGOs undermine democracy by *taking social programs out of the hands* of the local people and their elected officials to create dependence on non-elected, overseas officials and their locally anointed officials” (p. 13). This homogenization of service, according to Brainard and Siplon (2004), results in a loss of “soul” in the aide provided by nonprofits and NGOs (p. 436). Kivel (2007) argues that the neoliberal model of service and aide co-opts leaders from diverse communities who succumb to the allure of paid work and whose interests then shift to the continued maintenance of the system. These individuals then become those colonialist white saviors that, instead of working with oppressed peoples to address oppression, swoop in to be heroes that do very little to actually change lives and challenge oppressive practices.

The primary foundations that provide financial support to non-profits seek to ensure that this work does not “...challenge the capitalist status quo” (Smith, 2007, p. 7). Neoliberal funding sources typically require “evidence” of so-called effectiveness, funding typically supports only short-term projects when what is usually needed is long-term, radical change (Berman, Brooks, & Murphy, 2006; Richmond & Shields, 2004; Steedman & Rabinovitz, 2006). As Thunder Hawk (2007) explained, “People in non-profits are not necessarily consciously thinking that they are ‘selling out.’ But just by trying to keep funding and pay everyone’s salaries, they start to unconsciously limit their imagination of what they *could* do. In addition, the non-profit structure supports a paternalistic relationship in which non-profits from outside our communities fund their own hand-picked organizers, rather than funding us to do the work ourselves” (pp. 105-6). Additionally, “scarce funding generates competition among agencies, compelling some to undercut themselves and others in order to continue to provide much-needed programs and retain highly skilled staff”

(Baines, 2010, p. 14). Research has found that nonprofit organizations and NGOs focus more on the image they project to funders and the community, rather than the effectiveness of their work, when they are in a competitive environment (Adams & Perlmutter, 1991; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). NGOs often seek short-term solutions because anything else will result in their obsolescence (Wilson, 2013). As Ungpakorn (2004) discusses, the single-issue ideology of most NGOs results in a fragmented approach to complex issues.

It is difficult to advance a movement for peace and justice when as de Almeida (2007) explained, “We are too busy being told to market ourselves by pimping our communities’ poverty in proposals, selling ‘results’ in reports and accounting for our finances in financial reviews” (p. 187). “In the end, NGOs are ultimately answering to their donors as the ability to raise funds determines success” (Williamson, 2014, p. 128), rather than the provision of service or the amelioration of the social injustice. Rodriguez (2007) notes that non-profit organizations feel compelled to “replicate the bureaucratic structures of the small business, large corporation, and state—creating centralized national offices, gathering political (and, at times, Hollywood) celebrities and luminaries onto boards of directors, and hiring ‘professional activists’ whose salaries depend largely on the effectiveness of professional grant writers” (p. 33). These salaries are, according to many critics, way too high. Twenty nonprofit CEOs earned \$1 million or more in 2010 and 2011, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (10 nonprofit CEOs..., 2012). Amnesty International Secretary General since 2010 Salil Shetty earns over \$300,000 annually. International attention was focused on the issue of staff salaries in 2009, when then Secretary General Irene Khan left the organization only to receive an enormous severance package (\$760,000 in 2012 currency) while her deputy, Kate Gilmore, received a payout the equivalent of \$493,000 (Ghosh, 2013). Khan, who was born in Bangladesh, was an outspoken anti-poverty activist, a fact many were quick to point out (Doughty, 2011). One member explained, “I am sure people making donations to Amnesty, in the belief they are alleviating poverty, never dreamed they were subsidizing a fat-cat payout” (Ghosh, 2013). Dr. Francis Boyle, former board member, noted “Amnesty International is primarily motivated not by human rights but by publicity...Second comes money. Third comes getting more members. Fourth, internal turf battles. And then finally, human rights, genuine human rights concerns” (Ghosh, 2013).

Further, many nonprofits and NGOs, like those led by Mortenson, Russell and Mam, have dubious if not completely inappropriate financial accounting measures. For instance, a Washington Post investigation published in 2013 found widespread diversion of assets, largely attributed to theft and embezzlement (Millions missing, little explanation, 2013). The problem is not, then, specific to these flawed individuals “gaming” the system but rather to how the game is played. Bien-Ame (2014) argues “What the Somaly Mam story highlights is a state of affairs that many of us in the social change movement bemoan, namely that simple stories of exploitation rarely grab the public’s imagination, the donors, or the press. Unless the overdone images of runny noses, torn clothing, or worse, naked children in a cage waiting to be sold, are splashed on glossy pages, the actual suffering of human beings too often fails to trigger widespread empathy or outrage.” Biddle (2014) adds, “There is a push to show that you’ve been challenged, and overcome more than anyone else; that you are a shining example of humanity. The pressure to live up to this ideal is, ironically, incentivizing falsehoods. As nonprofits scramble for donor dollars, often up against similar yet competing organizations, there is a tendency to exaggerate numbers, share what you hope to be doing next as if you were doing it now, and overall stretch the truth. Since a touching personal

narrative is more likely to attract big donors, nonprofits seem to be willing to make one up with the belief that it is a victimless crime with an undeniably beneficial outcome.” According to Biddle (2004), even the girls Mam helped were coached to fabricate or exaggerate their stories as a means of attracting donors. Given that so many Americans are hesitant to support foreign aid anyways, NGO leaders face even greater pressures to tell the most compelling story and thus attract those reluctant donors.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The scandals involving Greg Mortenson’s CAI, Somaly Mam’s Foundation, and Invisible Children highlight a growing problem in the peace and human rights world. As Rojas (2007) explains, complex problems of varying forms of violence are increasingly criminalized, medicalized or nonprofitized, all of which result in independent, non-collaborative, and overly simple responses. I would add to that “hashtagized,” as evidenced by the recent campaign, supported by first lady Michelle Obama, #bringbackourgirls to prompt Nigeria’s Boko Haram to return the more than 200 girls that they kidnapped (Stecula & Thrall, 2014). DeWaal (2013) maintains that true peace activism is coordinated in conjunction with and led by affected people. We must be reminded that “It is the people closest to the violence [that] have the greatest motivation to end it and the greatest knowledge regarding its dynamics, context, and the elements that might lead to change” (p. 7). Finally, activism must challenge those in power. “Activists” who pick only on the already-identified bad guys are at best activists-lite, whose inconvenience to policymakers is that handling them takes up precious time” (DeWaal, 2013). Below, I outline a few basic recommendations that might help transform the nonprofit and NGO world from one of hero worship to one of informed, collaborative service.

First, NGOs and nonprofits should work harder to identify potential collaborative partners and coalitions. Perhaps it would be useful to mandate that, in order to obtain or maintain nonprofit status or consultative abilities, these groups must detail how they have investigated potential collaborative partners for their works and which groups with whom they will be working. If this requirement was enforced, it could potentially change how many new groups are added to the existing glut of nonprofits and NGOs and it could result in less duplication, reduced cult of personality, and better services that address complex and interdependent issues (Kim, 2011/12). Another recommendation is that nonprofits and NGOs return to the more democratic forms of leadership. That is, ensuring that leadership is shared by many (if not all) involved, not in name only (such as some claim has happened among grassroots organizations like Amnesty International), but in the way that groups that have disavowed 501c3 status, like Incite!, share power and decision-making. Alternating or rotating who appears as spokesperson for an organization can also help reinforce democratic leadership and reduce the need to heroify one charismatic leader. Zweig (2014) notes that there are three common traits among the world’s most innovative and productive people: 1) Ambivalence toward recognition; 2) Meticulousness; and 3) Savoring of Responsibility (p. 6). In sum, these people shared a collectivist attitude that many believe is implicit in nonprofit and NGO work but is not, in actuality (Finley, 2010; Zweig, 2014). Given that we live in an era in which “we are reliant on recognition for our self esteem,” (Zweig, 2014, p. 111), building structures that reinforce these qualities could go a long way toward reducing some of the problems identified in this paper. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “There

is no limit to what can be accomplished if it doesn't matter who gets the credit" (Ralph Waldo Emerson quotes, n.d.).

Yet another recommendation is that salaries for leaders of non-profits and NGOs be capped. While my intent is not to offer a specific dollar amount, it should be clear that these leaders have no need for salaries in the millions, nor should they make hundreds of times that of the people doing the work directly with oppressed people.

A final recommendation is that peace and conflict studies programs make critical analysis of nonprofits and NGOs an integral part of their study. Students often believe the myth that those involved are making benevolent sacrifices, and that the best way to make change toward a more peaceful and just world is to get involved with or even start your own nonprofit or NGO. Debunking myths and misconceptions—about our heroes, even those icons of peace and justice—as well as about how these groups operate and the benefits and limitations of their work is essential. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., renowned advocate and practitioner of nonviolence, once applied for a gun permit during a period in which several homes and churches were bombed in Montgomery, Alabama (Bayne, 2013) and was far from monogamous, multiple times cheating on his wife (Martin Luther King's FBI...,2009). Johan Galtung, often considered the father of peace studies, was also enmeshed in controversy when he made comments that some perceived as anti-semitic. As Omer and Springs (2012) explain, "Even the best-intentioned peace activists could (occasionally out of sincerest benevolence, occasionally out of ulterior agenda or naiveté) silence histories in pursuit of justice. In so doing, peace activism and research can, despite their explicit opposition to such things, participate in forms of symbolic and cultural violence. Critical analysis of the cult of personality, the neoliberal professionalization, and the ways that these groups can sometimes contribute to the very problems they purportedly address can result in a better informed generation of changemakers.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Redefining and Delineating Dehumanization: Towards an Inclusive Assessment Model**

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## **REDEFINING AND DELINEATING DEHUMANIZATION: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT MODEL**

### **Abstract**

The study of dehumanization is muddled by challenges in symbolic language and the diverse application, definition and description of the phenomenon in multidisciplinary sources. The subject is also primarily studied from the perspective of dehumanizers, making what is known about it incomplete. Through the use of qualitative content analysis, the current study tackles some of these issues. It reviews the use of non-human codes applied to human experiences in anecdotes by survivors of the Holocaust. The patterns noted throughout the analysis were formulated into an inclusive definition of dehumanization, based also on themes noted in the literature on perpetrators. The definition and patterns found are formulated into a model that deconstructs dehumanization into general and content characteristics. The model may serve as a roadmap that can help in the assessment, understanding, and advocacy initiatives to undermine the phenomenon.

Dehumanization is a relational phenomenon; it is embedded in personal, institutional, and structural forms of violence that undermine negative and positive peace. Scholars acknowledge it as a psychological enabler of human rights violations against a targeted group that manifests in areas such as propaganda and negative stereotypes (e.g. Kelman, 1973; Stanton, 1998; Totten & Bartrop, 2007). What the literature does not cohesively address is the characteristics that differentiate dehumanization from other phenomena.

In addition, how dehumanization should be defined and on the basis of what is not clear in the scholarly texts, though existing definitions revolve around similar themes involving inclusion and

exclusion, attributes, perceptions, relative views, behavior and group differentiation (Haslam, Bastian, & Loughnan, 2010; Table 1 in the next section). This diversity of views is complicated by the subjectivities of metaphorical language that affects the distinction between dehumanizing and non-dehumanizing statements that use similar non-human references in discourse. Furthermore, the focus of dehumanization studies on perpetrators and dehumanizers but not on victims or bystanders makes the knowledge base on the phenomenon and its definition incomplete.

The current article addresses the perspective gap in the literature by exploring it through the accounts of Holocaust survivors who experienced dehumanization. Following qualitative content analysis (QCA) of survivor anecdotes, and an overview of topics covered in the literature on perpetrators and dehumanizers, a new definition and a list of characteristics of dehumanization are proposed. Both are formulated into a model that may help in the assessment of dehumanization in data samples.

### **Challenges in the Study of Dehumanization**

As a concept, dehumanization is often taken for granted. The term is sometimes used without explanation (e.g. Shalit, 1988) or definition (e.g. Theriault, 2012). Descriptions that are considered dehumanizing in various sources are not referred to in the same manner in other texts (e. g. Fein, 1979, 2007). The term is used interchangeably with concepts such as demonization or animalization (e.g. Prescott, 2010), which may be considered as themes within dehumanization (e.g. Bar-Tal, 1989, 2000). Such inconsistency creates ambiguity and uncertainty about the concept, its definition and characteristics.

In scholarly sources on conflict, dehumanization is prominently referenced in propaganda that denies or minimizes the enemy's humanity and enables its abuse. For instance, Germany's campaign against the occupation of the Rhineland by French African troops between the two World Wars framed them as the "Black Horror on the Rhine," savages, animals, monkeys, and as beasts that preyed on the local German population against all evidence to the contrary (Marks, 1983; Scheck, 2006). This preconditioned German soldiers to discriminate and abuse them, compared to other prisoners of war, during World War II (Scheck, 2006).

Social psychologists have studied dehumanization through the perception of emotions, mind, and traits especially as spearheaded recently by Leyens' (2009) theory of infrahumanization and Haslam's (2006) theory of dehumanization. These scholars and their colleagues have found that individuals tend to associate secondary emotions (considered to be uniquely human) with their own group and primary emotions (shared by humans with animals) with members of an out-group (e.g. Delgado, Rodríguez-Pérez, Vaes, Leyens, & Betancor, 2009; Leyens, Paladino, Rodríguez-Torres, Vaes, Demoulin, Rodríguez-Pérez & Gaunt, 2000; Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2009). The presence or absence of uniquely human (e.g. "refinement" and "civility") and human nature traits (e.g. "emotionality" and "desire"), on the other hand, have respectively been linked to animalistic and mechanistic types of dehumanization (e.g. Haslam, Kashima, Loughnan, Shi, & Suitner, 2008). These findings have been further connected to differences in power (Lammers & Stapel, 2011; Gwinn, Judd, & Park, 2013), disgust as a mediating emotion in the dehumanization of out-groups (Buckels & Trapnell, 2013), bullying (Van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen, & Bukowski, 2014) and racism (Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014)

in adults and children, among other issues. Perceptions of the presence of mind have also been shown to contribute to views of self and others as humans and non-humans (Fiske, 2009).

Bar-Tal (1989; 1990; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007) considers dehumanization as a type of delegitimization, an extreme form of negative stereotyping that leads to the moral exclusion of the negatively stereotyped. Delegitimization additionally includes outcasting, trait characterization, political labels and group comparison. Opatow (e.g. Opatow, Gerson, & Woodside, 2005) reviews dehumanization in connection to moral exclusion. Bandura (1973, 1999; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996) explains it in light of moral disengagement whereby individuals rationalize immoral behavior towards others by disengaging from their idea as humans.

The studies leave unanswered questions on what differentiates something as dehumanizing when non-human references and the notion of morality are set aside, and in the absence of detailed references to emotions or cognition. What makes killing, labeling, insults, references to non-humans in everyday language, interaction, social structures, and dogma dehumanizing if these are common elements of human society, behavior and communication that are not always dehumanizing? Moreover, the studies thus far cited show that dehumanization is primarily considered in the literature from the perspective of perpetrators (e.g. in war or genocide) or other dehumanizers (e.g. in the perception of emotions highlighted by the theory of infrahumanization in peace time).

Oliver's (2010) explanation (not her definition of the concept) may be an exception. She sees perpetrator, survivor, and bystander perspectives as elementary in sustaining dehumanization if their view of the victim is "somehow in- or subhuman" (Oliver, 2010, p. 89). The bystander can resist dehumanization if s/he acknowledges the humanity of the victim but contributes to it if s/he fails to embrace the victim's humanity. The victim's dehumanized perceptions of self, her/his individuality, subjectivity, sense of autonomy and ability to communicate and describe experiences, on the other hand, are curtailed through the visual (e.g. shaving heads) and physical (e.g. "physical control," torture) attacks on her/his body by the dehumanizer. These attacks are exemplified in the survivor testimonials from various conflicts such as Primo Levi's (the Holocaust) and Jacobo Timermann's (Argentina, 1980s) (Oliver, 2010, pp. 90-92).

The applicability of Kelman's (1973; 2001) concept of dehumanization may be another exception. Noted as part of three processes that diminish a perpetrator's moral objections to aggression (the other two are routinization and authorization), dehumanization is dependent on the concepts of identity and community. Both concepts ideologically and behaviorally shape the dehumanizer's and the dehumanized's views of the self and others as human beings, as unique individuals with worth, and their sense of belonging to a community of fellows that are linked to exclusion, inclusion and violence.

These scholars aside, dehumanization from the victim's point of view is not a focus of the literature. The definitions of the concept and the texts they are connected to in Table 1 show that scholars tend to look at dehumanization through the function it serves for the perpetrators. For instance, Hagan and Raymond-Richmond (2008) analyze it at the discourse level in genocide while Johnstone (2013) (citing Opatow's work) sees it as an enabler of elderly abuse by health care professionals and within society through ageism. The latter mirrors other sources where

dehumanization is linked to caring, social distance, worth, human dignity, equality, agency, the use of technology, and the bureaucratization or professionalization of certain jobs (e.g. health care professionals) that deny the humanity of the victim (e.g. Howard, 1975; West, 2002). Such denial allows the dehumanizer to perform his/her duties in a more efficient manner. Dehumanization of others can also result in the self-dehumanization of the perpetrator. In that case, the dehumanizer's conflicting emotions and views are numbed, diminishing her/his own view of the self as a unique human being (e.g. Bastian, Jetten, Chen, Radke, Harding & Fasoli, 2013; Bernard, Ottenberg, & Redl, 1971, refer to this as "self-directed dehumanization" while the dehumanization of others is termed "object-directed dehumanization").

<b>Table 1: Samples of Definitions of Dehumanization in the Scholarly Literature</b>			
<i>Author/s</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Definition of dehumanization</i>	<i>Focus of texts where the definitions are included</i>
Johnstone	2013	"is an extreme form of moral exclusion that, in the case of elderly people, places them 'outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply' and ultimately situates them as 'nonentities, expendable, or undeserving'" (citing Opotow, 1990, in p. 27)	Dehumanization of the elderly as a result of (as "engendered" by) ageism
Totten & Bartrop	2013	"In its most basic form, dehumanization – a psycho-social process – aims at redefining public perceptions of the person in question in such a way that society in general will no longer consider that person deserving of the same degree of decency, sympathy, empathy, or sensitivity given other human beings. In other words, the public identity of that person is transformed into something looked upon as lower in the local scheme of social types"	Definition of dehumanization in a context of genocide
Lang	2010	"a denial of the victim's subjectivity... it implies a tendency on the perpetrators' part to see members of the targeted group as radically different "others" whose subjective experiences need not be taken into account" (pp. 225-226)	Critique of the overuse of the idea of dehumanization to explain violence. Author proposes that such instances may be explained through an understanding of "psychological changes" connected to power, and the perpetrator's need to adapt to violence
Oliver	2010	"Dehumanization... is the process by which human beings are rendered so radically other that it becomes possible for their persecutors to commit murder on a	The human body and multiple perceptions of dehumanization

		mass scale, and for bystanders to stand without objection or remorse” (p. 89)	
Hagan and Rymond-Richmond	2008	“Dehumanization is a mechanism that imposes degrading attributes on both individuals and entire groups for purposes of massive group destruction, the defining feature of genocide” (p. 877)	Racial epithets, race, collective dehumanization, hate, motivation, intent, government and civilian involvement in the genocide in Darfur
West	2002	“Dehumanization is the process of stripping away human qualities, such as denying others their individuality and self-esteem” (p. 229)	Dehumanization and views of the dying by care takers
Stanton	1998	“one group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder”	Dehumanization as one of the eight steps of genocide
Goldberg	1995	“Dehumanization is a code word for a severely negative attitude toward and treatment of another human being. It is a code word because it may summon up a set of feelings without demanding a clear definition” (p. 137)	Dehumanization and its associations with contempt, disdain, aggression, various emotions, pain, etc., in sexual activity and perversion
Bar-Tal	1990	“ <i>Dehumanization</i> : labeling a group as inhuman by characterizing members as different from the human race – using either categories of subhuman creatures, such as “inferior races” and animals, or categories of negatively valued superhuman creatures, such as demons, monsters, and satans” (pp. 65-66)	Overview of delegitimization, causes, results and connections to conflict and ethnocentrism
Bandura	1973	(as a means to avoid “self-devaluation” of the perpetrator by dehumanizing the victim) “People selected as targets are often divested of human qualities by being viewed not as individuals with sensitivities, feelings, and hopes, but as stereotyped objects bearing demeaning labels such as “gooks” or “niggers.” If dispossessing victims of humanness does not fully eliminate self-reproof, it can be further reduced by attributing subhuman or degrading characteristics to them.” (p. 213)	Aggression and social learning theory
Bernard, Ottenber & Redl	1971	“We conceive of dehumanization as a particular type of psychic defense mechanism.... Dehumanization as a defense against painful or overwhelming emotions entails a decrease in a person’s sense of his own individuality and in his perception of the humanness of other people. The misperceiving of	Dehumanization in a nuclear age

	<p>others ranges from viewing them <i>en bloc</i> as “subhuman” or “bad human” (a long-familiar component of group prejudice) to viewing them as “nonhuman,” as though they were inanimate items or “dispensable supplies.”” (p. 102)</p>	
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*Note:* These definitions are by no means exhaustive. Those included were considered representative of definitional trends, as well as diverse in the thematic associations of the texts they were presented in. A more exhaustive table is available upon request.

The definitions in Table 1 additionally contain buzzwords connected to dehumanization throughout the academic literature such as moral, exclusion, labels, stereotypes, individuality, identity, category/categorization, humanness, and subhumanity – to name a few. The buzzwords were realized in the process of reviewing and analyzing the literature, not as part of a systematic content analysis of the texts. The overlaps noted are due in some instances to the similarity in theoretical, experimental or disciplinary background and fields of study of the researchers. For example, Haslam’s (2006) definition of dehumanization as a denial of humanness is cited by Goff et al. (2014), Van Noorden et al. (2014) and Gwinn et al. (2013); Bar-Tal’s definition of dehumanization as a form of delegitimization is also found in Bar-Tal, (1989; 2000) and Oren and Bar-Tal (2007).

In any case, the definitions show that how dehumanization is delved on by scholars is not inclusive of the perspectives of the multiple parties involved in it. Similar trends are found in the literature on the Holocaust and testimonials. For example, the texts by Auerhahn and Laub (1990), the Holocaust Memorial Center (2001), Friedländer (2001), Bauer (2001), Berenbaum (1994), Gilbert (2005), Lang (2003), Lasik (1994), Nutkiewicz (2003), Rosenhaft (2011) and Schiffrin (2002) mention dehumanization by Nazis and as an experience during the Holocaust in various environments but do not define or explain it. The *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (Rozett and Spector, Eds., 2000) has no entry reviewing dehumanization (neither does the online *Holocaust Encyclopedia* by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), though the subject is mentioned in several articles (e.g. Rozett, 2000).

Other texts provide descriptions that are considered by scholars as dehumanizing without acknowledging them as such. Bacharach (1998), for example, writes about parasitology and the depiction in Hitler’s racist and anti-Semitic ideology of Jews as parasites (p. 68). Although he does not refer to dehumanization in relation to the portrayals of others as diseases, the explanation of parasitology is consistent with described dehumanizing strategies in texts on genocide, identity, propaganda and the Holocaust (e.g. Hiebert, 2008; Scheck, 2006). Similarly, Fein (1979) states – without referencing dehumanization as a phenomenon – that conceiving the victims as “a different species, outside of the common conscience, and beyond the universe of obligation” is a precondition of genocide (p. 8). During the Holocaust these views were reflected in the essentialization and labeling of Jews as “nonhuman; bloodsuckers, lice, parasites, fleas, bacilli” (Fein, 1979, p. 20). She restates that assertion, again without referencing dehumanization, about the Rwandan genocide:

The *génocidaires* in Rwanda, as in the Holocaust also demonized their victims as subhuman but all-powerful—cockroaches (Inyenzi) and aliens and enemies who had

infiltrated the economy, dominated the professions, and undermined Hutus by their sexual aggression ... This reminds us of Nazi charges against the Jews as being subhuman – bacilli, lice, vermin – and members of another race who undermined Germany (Fein, 2007, p. 147).

Fein (2007) describes the “exclusion of victim from universe of moral obligation” and its perception as a threat to the perpetrator group as preconditions of slavery, terror/torture and genocide but does not describe these strategies as part of dehumanization or the phenomenon of dehumanization as a precondition of either (pp. 16-20, Table 1.2 in p. 19 of that text). Moral exclusion and portrayal of an out-group as a threat as noted earlier (e.g. Bandura, 1973; Marks, 1983; Stanton, 1998), however, are themes associated with the definitions and descriptions of dehumanization in aggression.

Gigliotti’s (2009) research brings to the fore dehumanization during the Holocaust in a myriad of settings and perspectives. But her work lacks a definition of the phenomenon and is spread out in the analysis of other facets of the perpetrator and victim experiences. For example, throughout Chapter 2 of *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust* the author (2009) mentions the objectifying role of dehumanization, euphemisms and other forms of discourse in transforming deportees into statistics and cargo for the Nazi bureaucrats and enforcers; these are issues also addressed by authors such as Friedlander (1980). Gigliotti (2009), nevertheless, does not address whether objectification and dehumanization (given the author’s association of the two throughout) can be considered as the same. In Chapter 4 of the same book, Gigliotti (2009) focuses on the sensory deprivation (e.g. smells, spaces, noises, sights) caused by the cattle car experience in the deportees based on testimonials of survivors. Even though dehumanization is referenced in the similes and descriptions used by survivors about their experience of the cattle cars, the author does not build such references into a cohesive section that reviews and explains dehumanization as a process in the deportations.

Hiebert (2008) also highlights survivors’ awareness of their own dehumanization, quoting Primo Levi, in descriptions of a type of camp inmate that seemed disconnected from life and referred to by inmates as Muselmann (p. 22). Beyond this reference, Hiebert (2008) does not consider how the perpetrator and victim perspectives converge in dehumanization even though she explains the phenomenon as one of three “conceptual switches” “of identity construction in genocide.” She examined the subject in the context of the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide but does not explore its characteristics beyond dehumanization as a conceptualization tool connected to language, humiliation and other issues (pp. 5-6).

The reviewed literature on the Holocaust and based on testimonies (e.g. Brenner, 2008; Hass, 2001; Langer, 1988, 1995; Auerhahn & Laub, 1990; Rylko-Bauer, 2005; Schiffrin, 2002), ergo, does not look at dehumanization as an inclusive phenomenon. It does not consider the similarities and differences in perpetrators’ and victims’ accounts towards understanding the phenomenon rather than the individual experiences or other subjects associated with dehumanization such as abuse, discourse, violence and humiliation (e.g. Cohen, 2006, on family structures and familial relationships in the environment of the ghetto; Katz, 2012, on rape during the Holocaust). These approaches have implications for what is understood. Individual accounts of dehumanization – especially those in book memoirs such as Primo Levi’s *If This is man* (2011) or those quoted by

Oliver (2010) – allow the survivor to reflect, sometimes expansively, on his/her experiences and convey perceptions of in/humanity including those of the Muselmann; others link them to philosophical or religious views of what it is to be human (e.g. Jewish religious views on being human and the Muselmann in Patterson, 2006). These individual accounts, the testimonial references and the scholarly texts connected to them echo one another thematically and descriptively. They have not been, however, connected in terms of the themes and characteristics that give shape to dehumanization as a phenomenon from the multiple perspectives of those involved in a systematic and comparative manner.

## **The Methodology**

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was selected as a methodology for the study because it provides the flexibility to find thematic patterns that can help describe what dehumanization is, how, and why by allowing revisions of code categories to adjust to emerging patterns in the data collection (Baxter, 2009; Berg, 2007; Mayring, 2004; Patton, 2002). This option is limited in its quantitative counterpart where a priori coding is conducted prior to data analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). Unobtrusiveness, on the other hand, allowed for the identification of anecdotes of interest in secondary sources (interview transcripts) as spontaneously revealed in the interview rather than as prompted by the researcher's inquiry. In addition, the use of archival material instead of live interviews hindered the retraumatization of the survivors through a new recounting of their experiences.

### Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Animal references feature prominently in perpetrator propaganda and discourse in genocide. Therefore, to understand how they may also be used by the victims to describe their experiences, anecdotes containing animal references (the codes) as applied to an individual, group, or experience by survivors of the Holocaust were collected from interview transcripts found in three archives (Voices of the Holocaust, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, and the Holocaust Oral History Archive). Only interviews in English and Spanish were considered because these are the languages that the researcher is fluent in. There were no restrictions on the regional or gender backgrounds of the survivors whose testimony was reviewed.

Four hundred and fifty one anecdotes were gathered from 74 interview transcripts. Data collection was stopped once reiteration was sensed in the themes. Not all of the anecdotes were considered for thematic analysis. In the process of preparing the anecdotes for analysis, each was reviewed several times. Anecdotes that contained little descriptive information that could not explain the use of the code from the perspective of the survivors were set aside. This strategy was aimed at minimizing the researcher's interpretation of dehumanization in instances where animal references were made by the survivor but were not explained or clearly connected to the descriptions of experiences.

### Organizing the Data for Analysis

In the process of recording the codes and their distribution in the interviews, several stages and areas of life came to the fore. These thematic patterns were used to visually organize the

information into a data table where the anecdotes were placed. Likely because of the facilitation and focus of the interviewers in obtaining chronological information, ten stages in the Holocaust were noted in the anecdotes: Life before ghetto/war, Life under German occupation, Ghetto life, Deportation, Camp life, Liberation (immediately after), Massacres, After the war, In the U.S., and Special circumstances. The latter was included to record situations that paralleled the Holocaust and Nazi occupation but were not as neatly placed under other stages such as Ghetto life and Camp life. Raoul Wallenberg's housing of refugees in Swedish buildings in Budapest while Hungary was under German occupation is an example of such situations. "Areas of life described," on the other hand, were determined based on words used by the survivors or derived from themes in the descriptions. Thirty nine "Areas" were noted: Arrival (e.g. to the ghetto or concentration camp), Bathroom, Beating/s, Bombings, Corpse disposal, Dying, Eating, Education, Fear, Fighting, General statement, Housing/ Barracks/ Tents, Hunger, Insults/Cursing, Living day by day, Manners, Medical experimentation, Moving around/ Grouping, No feeling, Not knowing, Not thinking, No volition, Numbers, Physical appearance, Presence, Self-reference, Sixth sense (having), Sleeping, Sounds, Stealing, Street walking, Things normally done to animals, Transportation, Views of camp inmates, Views of others, Views of Hitler, Views of Jews, Wild, and Work.

The descriptions across anecdotes associated with the corresponding code were then reviewed to find thematic patterns. What themes connected them within the same code and across others containing similar descriptions was considered. The results were then analyzed in light of the dynamics that shaped them with the aim to answer "what is dehumanizing?" and "why?" Answering these two questions could link overlapping findings with the themes in the scholarly literature on dehumanization, and highlight common characteristics that could define the phenomenon inclusively from the perspectives of dehumanizers and the dehumanized.

### Testing Some of the Findings

The dynamics encountered in the themes were formulated into tentative characteristics of dehumanization by the researcher and applied to the assessment of additional anecdotes. The latter were not analyzed early on because the researcher could sense patterns in them that distinguished them from more extreme examples but could not rationalize them. These anecdotes matched the search criteria (i.e. they contained animal references applied to individuals or their experiences) but were deemed not dehumanizing, or were considered too subjective (insults) to clearly explain them as dehumanizing.

### The Researcher's Subjectivity

Journaling to reflect on interpretive issues connected to themes associated with some codes was conducted throughout the coding and analysis stages. Reflexivity through journaling maintained a comparative dialog with the data gathered that enhanced meaning making and finding in how the information was organized, questioned, and analyzed following Strauss and Corbin's (1998) recommendations. Journaling further allowed the researcher to maintain transparency in the coding and thematic analysis steps taken to assure the justifiability of interpretations, and the transferability of theoretical constructs such as in the testing of findings on additional anecdote samples (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Prior to the thematic analysis of the anecdotes a pilot study was attempted to check for consistency in assessment of anecdotes as dehumanizing or not by multiple coders. Two other coders were enlisted from among friends and colleagues. They were asked to read through at least three interviews of their choice to assure data diversity. The coders were then to select which instances in the transcripts they considered dehumanizing and briefly explain why. It was hoped that in their explanations of why samples were deemed dehumanizing, the coders could list characteristics of dehumanization as a phenomenon that could be later compared with the assessment and conclusions of the researcher. The participants were not asked to select anecdotes based on the search criteria. Unfortunately, the activity proved to be too time consuming for the additional coders and the pilot study did not go beyond their interview transcript selection stage.

Given this experience and particular concerns for the subjectivity and emotionality of insults, where animal names are used but are not always dehumanizing though meant as degrading (e.g. Hughes, 2006; Neu, 2008; Wajnryb, 2005), a simplified and time effective version of the pilot study was created. One of the original coders was engaged once more. She was given a table with seventeen anecdotes containing insults stated at various stages of the Holocaust and by various individuals (e.g. *Kapos*, German overseers, Jewish inmates). The participant was asked to read through the anecdotes and state which ones she found to be dehumanizing, and why. To clarify some of her answers, the researcher asked her follow up questions. She was not made aware of the characteristics of dehumanization drawn by the researcher before or after her assessment of the anecdotes. The results of the researcher's and participant's assessments were then compared and analyzed.

Because of the limitation of finding additional coders committed to the study the thematic analysis and assessment of anecdotes was primarily conducted by the researcher. It is hoped that the study can inspire others to analyze additional survivor, bystander and perpetrator accounts. In doing so they may test more extensively the replicability of the findings and the proposed model.

## Results

### The Themes

Twenty seven animal codes were noted in the anecdotes. Four themes were found to connect the descriptions associated with them: things normally done *by* animals, things normally done *to* animals, living/natural conditions, and internalized dehumanization. Descriptions under things normally done *by* animals relate behavior that the survivors associated with animals such as not using cutlery when eating, not using toilet paper to clean up, fighting over food, or been hyperaware of danger. Descriptions under things normally done *to* animals convey actions, behaviors or conditions exerted by humans on animals such as medical experimentation, little to no conversation, placing them within guarded or fenced environments, and beating them to assure behavioral compliance. Living/natural conditions entail descriptions of settings that were not associated with those of humans but were part of the experiences of the survivors such as not having beds to sleep on, living with strangers in overcrowded spaces, and lack of clean bathrooms. Internalized dehumanization refers to behavior that the survivors took on that was associated with animals after they had been conditioned for some time in either the ghettos or the concentration

camps. Examples of internalized dehumanization include automatically walking in the street rather than the sidewalk, eating without control or utensils, and no respect, consideration or care for others.

### The Preliminary Characteristics

The relationships described in the anecdotes and highlighted in the four themes connecting them were found to be shaped by the following dynamics:

- Lack of control and powerlessness in the victims to make any decisions about their physical self, their destinies and conditions; power and control by the perpetrator over the victims
- Victims' actual or perceived lack of volition (that is, absence of personal choice); perpetrators have free will over themselves and over the victims
- Existence of hierarchies and inequalities between perpetrator and victim groups
- Dimensionality

Charlupski's (1981) recollection of deportation and transport between camps is an example of issues of power, volition, and control in an anecdote reflecting things normally done *to* animals:

... And all of a sudden comes an SS woman with a whip and she starts counting. And she needed 300 women to work... And we were taken away. We didn't know where we were going. We weren't told where we were going. And they took us to the shower and gave us another pajama top and a babushka. I think that time we got some kind of a skirt too, I'm not sure--nothing underneath. And we're taken into another barrack. And from there we were put in a train. You didn't know where you--we're going, so, you know, just like animals, like cattle.

The survivor's lack of choice is reflected in how her group was repeatedly "taken" (third, sixth and eight sentences) to places and then "put" in the train by Nazis. The inmates were "given" clothing and scarves (babushka) with no choice about which items they received. Nazis' power and control over the deportees are shown in the disregard of the group's ability to decide over itself by not telling them where they were going similar to how domesticated animals (see the codes "animals" and "cattle" in anecdote) are moved and treated by humans without allowing them free will (Price, 2002). Tools of violence (the whip) further aided overseers in securing the behavioral compliance of the deportees, limiting their choices and ascertaining the power and control of the overseers.

Hierarchies and inequalities in the characteristics list reflect world order views and contextual values that shape group inclusion and exclusion. Nazis' pseudoscientific racial ideology placing Aryans above Jews, Gypsies and Slavs is an example of a hierarchy. Inequality as used here refers to any disparity that is implied in language, attitudes, values, belief systems, and other mediums. Such disparity shows positive and negative preferences of one group or trait over another that places those who are considered negatively at a disadvantage. Clean over dirty or Aryan criminal over Jewish inmate in the concentration camps illustrate preferences that shaped accessibility to

resources such as food or living conditions. Hierarchies are likely to be seen as fixed while inequalities are fluid and subjective.

Dimensionality in the list of characteristics refers to the complexity and diverse sides of dehumanization as a phenomenon. Dimensions are conceived of as the different and multiple sides of dehumanization, as if one looked at it in 3-D. This characteristic pinpoints to how dehumanization can affect multiple areas of the life/death of the victim simultaneously (e.g. language, behavior, living environment, and emotions), and by different dynamics (e.g. power and worldviews). A situation is seen as dimensional, therefore, when several of the characteristics of dehumanization can be identified in it and/or as affecting several areas of life. In Charlupski's (1981) prior recollection dimensionality is shown in the combination of several characteristics (imbalances in power, control, and volition between victim and perpetrator groups), the presence of at least one of the themes connected with the non-human code (things normally done *to* animals), and multiple areas of life affected such as behavior (others' control of what inmates did), movement (where to go) and appearance (what to wear). The noted dynamics were considered as preliminary characteristics of dehumanization. To test their viability as an assessment tool they were applied to other anecdote samples. The characteristics showed promise in helping to differentiate dehumanizing anecdotes from non-dehumanizing ones.

### **Non-Dehumanizing Anecdotes That Matched Search Criteria**

Non-dehumanizing anecdotes that matched search criteria tended to lack dimensionality. The simplest of the examples show the traditional use of metaphors and similes to create sensory representation for the audience. Meaning is easily drawn from values or attributes that can be summarized succinctly in one or few words used by the survivor or summarized from the anecdotes. For example: bulls = strong; horse/elephant = "big"/"strong"; hyenas = sound (onomatopoeic); pig = dirty/disorganized; tiger = color reference.

The codes were additionally applied interchangeably to members of the same group and to those outside of it, often with similar significance. This indiscriminate usage illustrates the presence of common expressions across the region that were not always infused with prejudices. Unlike the use of non-human references in perpetrator propaganda, applying the same code to perpetrator and victim groups also shows a lack of intended group differentiation based on the qualities or values of the non-human code. Although power imbalances based on racial hierarchies shaped some of the interactions described in these anecdotes, they tended not to be associated with the non-human code and the relationship between the individuals in the anecdote.

The descriptions by Firestone (1982) and Kupferberg (1981, p. 3-2-38) respectively exemplify the use of the same code in a dehumanizing and a non-dehumanizing manner. Firestone's (1982) reference to "fly" is recounted as an insult by an abusive camp overseer in the Stutthof concentration camp; Kupferberg's (1981) account is on medical experimentation conducted on him and other inmates while in Buchenwald:

... Emma Macha came and gave me a licking [slapping/beating] that the blood was--first, my sister got a licking there in her room and then she came out... She didn't call me out in the other way. *You verfluchte Mißpeine!.... Verfluchte Mißpeine* was dirty fly was what

is over the dirt, you know... We were standing there already and then and then I started, "You going to have to go in the big mud puddle." Then I told them [the other inmates] to come, all of them on this side, because the water is not so deep here, so she gave me a licking and she said, "*You verflucht, rafinierte uh, uh, Mißpeine!*"... The reason I took it and that day I couldn't get any dinner, I mean soup. It was punishment for me, but if I would have said that the girls didn't want to come out or some--then 500 women couldn't get the dinner, you know. One person could always steal somehow, you know, my sister could have given me or even not, but 500 women which happened already--I couldn't have placed them that you know.

They want to make us sick with certain type of sickness and when we get healed from this sickness... this is right?... they gonna take our blood out from us and give our blood to the soldiers on the Russian front. Then the soldiers on the Russian front, German soldiers, died like flies there, on *Flecktyphus*. And they want to save their soldiers; many died there, and they want to make experiment with us prisoners and when we get through the sickness, our blood is then immune from this sickness, take our blood and give it to the Russians, on the Russian front to the German soldiers. And to save them. They first treat us very nicely, each one had a bed, like in a hospital. Give us better food... not better food, more food, than the rest of the camp. And outside we saw through the windows in the snow and cold, the prisoners fall like the flies. The prisoners died from the cold.

Firestone's (1982) anecdote describes several incidents where Macha insults and beats her or her sister as she uses her power as a camp guard to abuse the inmates. In the combination of physical violence and insult there are parallels in the quality of being dirty between the camp inmate (due to unhygienic living conditions) and a fly that – as the insult implies – hovers over dung, and in the action that humans sometimes take against them when they are bothersome (e.g. smacking them). Furthermore, there is a parallel in the Aryan-Jewish, and human-fly Nazi worldview hierarchies that tend to place the first two in both pairs over the others. The survivor's attempt to help the other girls is an exercise of volition. But the powerlessness of the inmate is shown in her inability to stop Macha's abuse, whose position as overseer gives her access to tools of enforcement. In this case, Firestone (1982) reveals that Macha left her without food that day, which was preferable to everyone else not having food.

The presence of several of the characteristics of dehumanization and areas of life described (e.g. insults/language, behavior, beatings) as derived from the data in Firestone's (1982) account shows the dimensionality of the phenomenon's experience. The same cannot be said of Kupferberg's (1981, p. 3-2-38) account. The use of "flies" as a code does not refer to the use of inmates as non-humans in medical experimentation, which he does correlate with the codes "guinea pigs," "mice," and "rats" in another anecdote that was assessed as dehumanizing (Kupferberg, 1981, p. 3-2-39). The only meaning of the code is that of large numbers. The code's application to both German Aryan soldiers and Jewish camp inmates shows that the use of "flies" is not meant to differentiate either group as human or non-human. Kupferberg's (1981) use of the code further lacks clear connections of power, hierarchy, and unequal disparities in the relationships between "flies" and the humans connected to the code.

The code aside, the situation Kupferberg (1981) describes is an example of dehumanization. Forced medical experimentation on Jewish inmates shows their lack of decision, control and power over what happened to them. It was based on worldviews and hierarchies that gave a heavier weight to the saving of German Aryan lives over those of Jewish lives, making the disposability of the latter for the sake of the former acceptable. The anecdote, therefore, shows that not all discourse applications of non-human references to humans are dehumanizing. This use of language contrasts with its use in perpetrator rhetoric where incited or intended action – including group exclusion, discrimination, or violence – against dehumanized groups is an aspect of non-human references about ostracized groups (e.g. O'Brien, 2013; Stanton, 1998). The example shows that the dynamics underlying what is described also shape the understanding of the situation. When these dynamics and the non-human discourse used complement one another, as in the accounts by Firestone (1982) and Charlupski (1981), content and characteristics reflect a more comprehensive and less interpretive view of dehumanization as a phenomenon.

### Insults

The struggle to determine which anecdotes in this data group were dehumanizing and why was in part due to the need to differentiate between language that is humiliating and symbolic, and language that entails dehumanization. The application of the characteristics of the phenomenon that were derived from the data did help in differentiating most of the anecdotes. Many of the descriptions lacked dimensionality, and succinct non-literal meanings could be seen in the use of the code as an insult. Codes that were used by survivors about individuals of their own group tended to lack the other characteristics as well, and depended for interpretation on simple meanings. This was the case of a Jewish woman calling a fellow Jewish man a “pig” in an overcrowded ghetto apartment because of the loud noise he made when he snored (Berki, 1983). There were no inequalities, no issues of volition or power, or worldviews of the man as a pig embedded in the insult.

If the insulter was also a member of one of the victim groups, as with *Kapos*, but given a power position by the Nazis then this created a power imbalance. This power imbalance contained inequalities and was based on hierarchies, limitations on power and volition on the abused individuals (e.g. a *Kapo* calling inmates “*Juden Schweine*,” [Jewish Swine/pigs] every morning as they crossed the gates of the camp to go to work in Kupferberg, 1981, p. 3-1-35). Examples reflecting these dynamics were deemed dehumanizing.

Insults made from unequal positions by the survivors about abusers posed assessment challenges. Zgnilek (1946), for instance, recalls a song camp inmates sang about revenge against the “damned German swine.” The expression and use of the code was seen by the researcher as aimed at injuring face (i.e. the idea of self); it reflected the emotions of the inmates but was made from a powerless and unequal position. Little dimensionality in the meaning and characteristics of the use of the code in the song made “swine” an insult but not a dehumanizing statement. In addition, this insult was seen as a way to empower the victim group by gaining a sense of power and volition through expressed revenge.

Insults slurred during interactions in the years immediately after liberation also proved challenging in assessment. Consider the following anecdote by Kupferberg (1981) about an incident with some German women after the Holocaust at a store in Berlin:

In December my daughter was born, and when my wife wants to buy a little bit milk for the baby, those Nazi women start to holler at her in the milk store. "*Komt die Juden,*" the Jewish belge—a word like animals, like. "Come the Jewish belge and trinkt [drink] the little bit milke away." So both us said, "We can't live here anymore." The same Nazism comes out again after a year, you know, this starts to go [again], on top Nazis again. And the English soldiers weren't very nice to them (p. 5-1-59).

If the reader is not made aware that the exchange took place in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, and that the insulted are survivors, the insult may be understood as anti-Semitic and degrading. There are no power, inequalities, control or volition issues limiting the parties in the anecdote. The insulters are no longer in a position to take action against those portrayed as animals. The insult is dehumanizing since Nazi worldviews of Jews as non-humans are expressed, but it is not an example of dehumanization. In this sense the distinction between dehumanizing and dehumanization may parallel the distinctions between infrahumanization (Leyens, 2009) and dehumanization in various scholarly sources (e.g. Haslam, 2006). For the survivor, however, the recent past shows that the insult is more than a mere statement of humiliation or perception. It is a reflection of the combined characteristics of dehumanization experienced during the Holocaust that are embodied in a threat and the possibility of another genocide in the insult.

With the exception of two examples, including the last one in Kupferberg (1981), the researcher and participant consistently agreed on dehumanization assessments in the insults. The consistence in overlapping assessments was in part attributed by the researcher to how humans are conditioned to recognize social violations of face and injury. The participant, on the other hand, acknowledged her perceptions as primarily shaped by her background as a historian though she did admit that some anecdotes were challenging to assess and explain due to subjectivity.

## **Discussion**

### Dehumanization: Proposal of a New Definition

The academic literature on perpetrators and Holocaust survivor anecdotes highlight that both perpetrators and victims use non-human references to describe individuals and various situations that are dehumanizing. Unlike the role of dehumanization for perpetrators in rhetoric, propaganda, emotional distancing, prejudice, genocide and "anonymity" (e.g. Anderson, 2010; Bosmajian, 1984; Grossman, 1995; Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008; Stanton, 1998; Steuter & Wills, 2009; Woolf & Hulsizer, 2005), however, descriptions of dehumanization in the survivors' anecdotes were not expressed as a conditioning strategy to move forward in times of hardship. Survivors also did not seem to premeditatedly frame others as non-humans or ascribed to the dehumanizers' worldviews of inmates as non-humans as a way to cope with their victimization.

Based on the themes found in the anecdotes reviewed it is proposed that dehumanization for the survivors serves a dual function. First, it is a way to acknowledge one's humanity by

distinguishing between the human and the non-human through the application of non-human codes to human subjects. Second, dehumanization serves to justify behavior that is unfavored by notions of what it is to be human. These human/non-human distinctions and the positive and negative values associated with them are reflected in the themes and descriptions found in the anecdotes such as stealing from the dead (internalized dehumanization), or living in forced unhygienic conditions (living/natural conditions).

Regardless of the details, dehumanization enabled the survivors to find meaning and explain their experiences in the disparities and abuses experienced not unlike the quest by perpetrators to rationalize their actions. Dehumanization, therefore, is a meaning making tool that allows the dehumanizer to justify and deal with the abuse of another group, and the victimized group to describe experiences of abuse. "Meaning" is the inclusive class that encompasses dehumanization for the perpetrators and the victims and that is missing in the scholarly definitions reviewed. In light of this, a new definition is proposed below (the format is based on Pepper and Driscoll's, n.d., format for definitions):

Dehumanization (*Concept*) is a meaning making tool (*Class*) that fulfills various psychological, ideological, and/or societal functions through the framing or perception of an individual (including the self), group or situation as human or non-human. "Human" and "non-human" convey positive and negative values that can manifest in language, thought, and/or behavior indicating group membership, and group inclusion or exclusion (*Characteristics*).

The definition highlights that views of human and non-human in dehumanization are value based. This clarification acknowledges that dehumanization takes place regardless of the factual differences between humans and non-humans, and is driven by perceptions of these differences. The differences are then manipulated in propaganda by perpetrators or shape views of dehumanization as an experience in the victims.

### The Characteristics of Dehumanization and Additional Themes

Additional themes were noted during the application of the initial characteristics, and in the analysis and discussion of the results. One of them is the presence of dichotomies. The discussions on power and powerlessness, control and lack of control, suitable living conditions versus unsuitable living conditions in the anecdotes revealed that each of these aspects cannot exist without the presence or absence of its counterpart.

Similarly, the idea of what is human cannot exist without the idea of the non-human. Therefore, per every notion, language strategy, behavior or situation that is deemed dehumanizing the opposite – its dichotomy – describes what is conceived of as human. Looking at dichotomies of the human/non-human in dehumanization captures social conceptions of both. These conceptions are closely related to what is seen as normal versus abnormal (another dichotomy) by human and nonhuman ideals and practices.

Dichotomies are connected to the concepts of relative deprivation and face, both present in dehumanizing themes. Relative deprivation involves viewing one's diminished condition,

“interests,” or “aspirations” as hindered in relation to something or someone else (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, pp. 19-20). Face, on the other hand, involves one’s social identity or view of self (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001). When perceptions of face are challenged by others (e.g. through libel) the injured party may engage in face saving strategies (e.g. lawsuit) to restore its social identity (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2001, Chapter 5).

In the Holocaust testimonials reviewed issues of relative deprivation and face existed at multiple levels. The survivors’ identity as humans, for example, was attacked through Nazi’s racial hierarchies and views of Jews as non-humans, the inequalities they created, and the inability of the victims to save face through power imbalances embedded in legislation, use of force, and social acceptance of discrimination. Relative deprivation is evident in instances such as the group-based discriminatory treatment of Jewish concentration camp inmates compared to other inmates from different groups (e.g. political prisoners and criminals) who had more privileges and access to resources (e.g. better food and more power).

The references to non-humans as applied to humans in the anecdotes reviewed increased as the genocide and war radicalized. The majority of the codes and dehumanizing anecdotes were found in the stages with the most extreme conditions (i.e. ghettoization and concentration camp experiences). The increase shows that dehumanization can be experienced progressively as a conflict radicalizes. This quality of the phenomenon is considered one of its characteristics as it may affect an individual or group at multiple stages of a conflict.

The characteristics of dehumanization reviewed thus far are echoed in the scholarly literature on dehumanizers discussed earlier. Dichotomies are present throughout the definitions of the phenomenon in Table 1 (e.g. exclusion, inclusion; non/human). They are in turn linked to power imbalances and inequalities as group differentiation between those who are part of in-groups and out-groups takes place (e.g. Gwinn, Judd, & Park, 2013). The use of propaganda, the limitation of rights and access to resources progressively violates the social identity of the dehumanized and excluded group and hinders its ability to regain or defend it (e.g. Kelman, 2001; Stanton, 1998).

Other themes in the perpetrator literature reflected in the survivor anecdotes include the recognition of mind (Fiske, 2009), which some survivors reported as diminished. Emotional numbness, no feeling, lack of restraint, and inability to control what happened to them in the anecdotes can be connected to the traits associated with animalistic and mechanistic types of dehumanization in Haslam’s (2006) theory of dehumanization. The types, however, were not as clearly delineated in the anecdotes, often showing a combination of the traits associated with both. The use of violence towards those who are framed as non-human and who experience dehumanization was prominent in the experiences described by the survivors (e.g. Delgado, Rodríguez-Pérez, Vaes, Leyens, & Betancor, 2009). Limitations on autonomy, value, caring, equality, and worth of the individual or group were reflected in the ghettoization and concentration camps, and in the relations among inmates and perpetrators (e.g. Howard, 1975; Kelman, 1973; H. Jack Geiger in West, 2002).

Finally, two of the thematic categories linking descriptions in the Holocaust anecdotes reviewed (living/natural conditions, and internalized dehumanization) were also found in a thematic analysis of the literature on perpetrators, victims and bystanders focusing on social distance and genocide

during the Holocaust and Rwanda (Haagensen & Croes, 2012). That text was found after the current research was completed. The authors reviewed testimonials and divided behaviors into five categories that included “dehumanizing living conditions,” “psychological dehumanization,” “physical dehumanization without physical pain,” and “physical dehumanization with physical pain” (with and without “instruments” such as guns) (Haagensen & Croes, 2012). Although the first category’s definition mirrors the descriptions under living/natural conditions reviewed for this research in the survivor anecdotes, the second does not. Haagensen and Croes (2012) define the latter as “perpetrator behaviors that inflict psychological torment, humiliation, and/or dehumanization upon the victim” rather than as behaviors internalized by the survivors as a result of their victimization (p. 227). The behavior categories noted, nevertheless, reflect themes in the survivor anecdotes and other academic literature on the role of insults, context, and violence in dehumanization.

Combining Findings into a Model for the Assessment of Dehumanization in a Sample

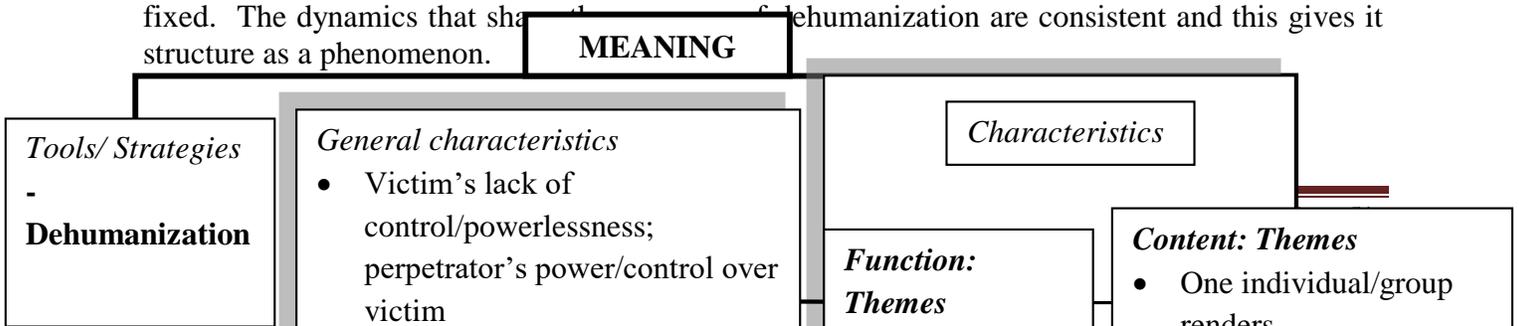
The patterns and themes found in the survivor anecdotes and the scholarly literature on dehumanizers were formulated into an inclusive model that combines the characteristics, class, and content of dehumanization (Figure 1). The aim of the model is to make the assessment of dehumanization in a sample cross-disciplinary, inclusive, and accessible. The model may serve as a roadmap to visually represent the content and dynamics of dehumanization as a unique phenomenon in a simplified manner. As research is conducted details may be added to the model in order to clarify its various components.

Following the proposed definition, dehumanization is listed in Figure 1 as one of other unspecified meaning making tools. The general characteristics in the model are fixed since they shape the structure of dehumanizing relations. What changes is their combination across situations.

The content characteristics capture the fluidity and diversity in themes and areas of life where the phenomenon manifests. The themes noted in the model are those encountered in the survivor anecdotes reviewed for the current study. However, content and how it is revealed varies as it accommodates to individual, group and regional views.

General and content characteristics are interdependent and complementary (as shown earlier in Kupferberg’s, 1981, anecdote under the code “flies”). On their own each of these characteristics may not be dehumanizing. For example, exerting power over someone or calling that person by a non-human label does not entail dehumanization. But the combination of content and general characteristics may indicate the presence of the phenomenon, and shape dehumanizing views and perceptions of the self and others.

For the model to be inclusive of multiple perspectives it needs to be flexible in a structured manner. These two qualities may seem contradictory but they are essential qualities of dehumanization as a phenomenon that are shown in the general and content characteristics in Figure 1. How dehumanization manifests itself in language, behavior, legislation, emotions, etc., varies; it is not fixed. The dynamics that shape the structure of dehumanization are consistent and this gives it structure as a phenomenon.



Dehumanization is thus flexible, subjective (in multiple perspectives and understandings), and structured at the same time; this has advocacy implications. How can scholars and activists fight a phenomenon that can be present in interpersonal, institutional, and structural types of violence; in language, behavior and emotions; and closely linked to other phenomena such as anti-Semitism and discrimination? Where do they start? A first step would be to study these phenomena separately in order to differentiate between them, and learn how each is unique yet similar. Similarities can show common areas where multiple phenomena can be tackled. Differences can show the areas that are distinct and unique to those phenomena and to which advocacy can be customized. Until this is done dehumanization will continue to be obscured by more encompassing phenomena it is connected to and poorly addressed in advocacy initiatives.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Exploring Indigenous Approaches to Peacebuilding: The Case of Ubuntu in South Africa**

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## **EXPLORING INDIGENOUS APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING: THE CASE OF UBUNTU IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to explore indigenous approaches to peacebuilding and its relevance in contemporary global peace efforts. The paper pays particular reference to *Ubuntu* system of peacebuilding used in South Africa after the Apartheid. The paper critic the western-conventional approach of liberal peacebuilding as not sustainable, and focuses on how the Chairman of South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Archbishop Desmond Tutu utilised indigenous *Ubuntu* to promote peace. Data for this paper is from secondary source including textbooks, journals, articles, internet publications, magazines etc. Analysis of data reveals that, *Ubuntu* acknowledges mutually beneficial conditions of storytelling, active participation, joints problem-solving and mutual respect as the panacea for peace in South Africa. The author draws on the philosophy of *Ubuntu*: empathy, forgiveness, love, restorative justice and concludes that, similar ethics can be apply in war-torn nations to help promote sustainable peace.

### **Introduction**

Violent conflicts have long been a component of International discourse. This is because about one-third of all countries in the world have experienced violent conflict triggered by segregation, marginalization, politics, power and ethnicity in one way or another. As observed by Imobighe (2003), a growing antagonism between individuals, communities and countries is still exacerbates by segregation, isolation and political prejudice. To date, Africa is still beset with a myriad of challenges. These include protracted violent conflicts and series of war. As Sadowski (1998) puts

it, many of these intractable violent conflicts are along political and ethnic lines and are a common phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa. The motivation for this observation is that, some of these conflicts remain unresolved and the situation tends to affect the vulnerable in society especially, women, children and the aged. It is for this reason that Mbiti (2010) laments that Africa is faced with a dreadful struggle in the political, social, economic and religious spheres. Mbiti reiterates that the deep wounds from ruthless blows on the body, mind and soul affect the whole of society, especially women and children.

Examples of African societies that have experienced and continue to experience violent conflict include South Africa, Nigeria, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Ivory Coast, DR Congo, Algeria, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Namibia, Libya, Mali, Rwanda, among others. One or more of such conflicts in these African nations emanate from ethnicity, power struggle, natural resources, politics and governance, justice and marginalization, territory or boundary (Sadowski, 1998). Ortberg (2010) affirms that, our society has become so politicized that people often hear words like justice, life, poverty or compassion as code words for a partisan political allegiance in one direction or another.

Interestingly, the majority of these conflicts are caused by Africans themselves and are resolved by the same people who rely on their indigenous methods of peacebuilding. In explaining violent conflicts and peacebuilding efforts in Africa, Choundree (1999) emphasizes that unlike developed countries, citizens of war-devastated African states have employed indigenous mechanisms as part of their post-conflict peacebuilding processes. All the indigenous peacebuilding and conflict resolution strategies employed by war-shattered states have worked effectively to ensure some level of sustainable peace and community development. For instance, in Chad, Niger and Ghana, indigenous or traditional methods of peacebuilding were used in the past to address the low intensity conflicts that affected these countries (Murithi, 2006b). In the more intense context of Northern Somalia, also known as Somaliland, traditional methods for resolving disputes were used to bring together the clans for a peaceful co-existence (ibid). The prominence and key utility of these indigenous practices lie in the fact that they endeavor to restore a balance, to settle conflicts and eradicate disputes completely. For example, traditional conflict resolution like *Gacaca*, *Amnesia*, *Ubuntu*, *Ayei* and *Mbiam* by Rwandans, Mozambicans, South Africans and Nigerians respectively helped to ensure sustainable peace after a series of violent conflicts (Ekong, 2014; Issifu, 2015). Contrarily, according to (Bukari, 2013), the use of western-oriented peace processes and agencies like International NGOs to resolve conflicts elsewhere did not lead to real sustainable peace at the local level. The conflicts in Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger Delta for instance rage on despite efforts to resolve them through foreign approach. Most of these foreign NGOs do not understand the local roots and dynamics in these conflicts and are not therefore in the position to prescribe local solutions to the termination of violent conflicts (Agyeman, 2008).

Following from this observation, the paper seeks to explore indigenous approaches to peacebuilding in global peace efforts, taking into consideration South African's indigenous *Ubuntu* peacebuilding strategy. In light of the central objective set out to achieve, the paper is grouped into five main sections. The first part of the paper focuses on theoretical framework; highlighting some critiques of the western-conventional approaches to peacebuilding (liberal peacebuilding) and the efficacy of indigenous approaches to peacebuilding in Africa. The second

part evaluate studies showing that indigenous approaches are more effective. The third section forms the contextual analysis of the *Ubuntu* conflict resolution strategy used in South Africa. The fourth part also examines how *Ubuntu* is implemented during the peace-making process. Based on the analysis and lessons from the traditional *Ubuntu* system highlighted in the fourth section, the author recommends in the concluding part that, African leaders and the International community should revive useful but relegated indigenous conflict resolution methods by learning from the successes of *Ubuntu* and its restorative justice.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### Critiques of the western-conventional Approaches (Liberal Peacebuilding)

Peacebuilding began as a key focus of International attention in the early 1990s to provide relief for the many war-devastated states, with the United Nations (UN) playing a key role. The concept of peacebuilding and its agenda have since developed remarkably in International politics. Boutros-Ghali (1992:57) defines peacebuilding as, “The process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict”. Boutros-Ghali further emphasized that, peacebuilding is the actions undertaken by national or International actors to identify and support structures which intend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.

Liberal peacebuilding was thus, adopted by UN to carry out the agenda of International commitment to transform post-war nation-states. Among other reasons, the elements of democratic elections, market liberalism, humanitarian assistance and the rule of law that underpin liberal peacebuilding gained this approach massive International support and was used by the UN and other large donor countries to transform war-shattered nations (Hoffmann, 1995) including Angola, Namibia, and El-Salvador. Notwithstanding the massive support that liberal peacebuilding approach has gained, it is bedeviled with challenges. According to Paris (1997), liberal peacebuilding has not been an effective model for establishing sustainable peace especially, in Africa. Paradoxically, the very process of political and economic liberalizations used in some war-torn countries generated destabilizing side effects, hindering the consolidation of peace and in some cases, even sparking renewed violent conflicts. For instance in Angola, political liberalization contributed to the resurgence of violence. Moreover, in Mozambique, the effect of economic liberalization threatened to reignite the conflict. These cases illustrate the potential dangers of the western-conventional approach of peacebuilding in war-shattered African states. Analyzing the case of Angola in detail, International negotiators secured a cease-fire in 1991 between the warring Angola political parties through an agreement to hold an immediate multi-party elections in September 1992, after several years of political turmoil. The elections took place on schedule under International supervision, and judged free and fair. Yet in January 1993, there was a full-scale civil war, which has been described by many as bloody since independence in November 11, 1975. Thus, Angolan elections did not serve as the basis for reconciliation championed by external bodies, but rather, it worked to rekindle the war.

Similarly, after the peace agreement in Mozambique between Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique and Resistencia National Mocambique in October 1992 following seventeen years of intermitted warfare, a democratic election was hold under UN supervision. However, as part of the economic restructuring process, economic liberalization policies appeared to have made life more difficult for ordinary citizens. Due to conditions underlying the implementation of World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) – driven Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the Mozambique government’s abilities to rebuild schools, clinics, roads, and other social infrastructure were restricted. Again, absolute levels of poverty increased, sharpening inequalities between the rich and the poor. The worsened living conditions contributed to the spread of rural bandit and increased fears that a growing sense of frustration, anger and desperation would spark a new uprising.

According to Newman and Richmond (2009), the prevailing paradigm of western-conventional approaches to peacebuilding; liberal peacebuilding, liberal internationalism or the assumption that the best way to consolidate peace is to transform war-shattered states into market democratic states and hold immediate democratic election, has been more problematic than anticipated. Paris et al (2009) reiterate that, political policies and economic liberalization seem to have generated unforeseen instabilities in most of these nation-states that underwent liberal peacebuilding changes. Moreover, formal court systems and interdictions applied under the liberal peacebuilding in some of the countries created an avenue for related challenges. According to Bukari (2013), the court system often leads to blame and punishment of some factions that tend to aggravate hostility among the conflicting factions and lead to the escalation of violence.

It is against these reasons that scholars have argued that indigenous approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution are more effective than western-conventional approaches (Zartman, 2000; Bukari, 2013; Issifu, 2015). Unlike the traditional peacebuilding methods, western-conventional approaches are not credit with local legitimacy because they do not focus on psychosocial and spiritual dimension, and do not take into account the cultural milieu of Africans during conflict transformation (Kirby, 2006). Instead, the western-conventional approaches focuses on holding immediate elections after peace agreements signed and introducing unfriendly economic restructuring policies without tackling the structural causes of the conflicts as well as appreciating the cultural needs of the vulnerable in society (Austin, Fischer and Giessmann, 2011). The failure to recognize the customs of the people, and identifying the structural causes of violence according to Kirby (2006) are the reasons why western-conventional approaches to peacebuilding have failed in Africa.

### **The Efficacy of Indigenous Approaches to Peacebuilding in Africa**

Africa is a heterogeneous society with diverse culture that have evolved over the years. However, there remain certain features of African culture such as local conflict resolution mechanisms and traditional peacebuilding methods that have survived the onslaught of colonialism (Zartman, 2000). Indigenous peacebuilding methods and conflict resolution strategies are therefore not products of external importation. Indigenous approaches to peacebuilding including mediation, accommodation, reconciliation, and negotiation are rooted in the knowledge, customs and history of Africans. According to Mbiti (2010), African’s peacebuilding processes including

reconciliation are not foreign notions and their intensity has accelerated wound healing and consensus building. Ndumbe (2001) also points out that, indigenous peacebuilding methods by Africans is not only a healing of psychological trauma or wound, but also a method for re-integrating ex-combatants back into the society as well as an avenue for promoting community development.

Indigenous system of peacebuilding thus, promotes unity, community mobilization and creates a merry making affair. Unlike the developed world, post-conflict reconciliation in Africa often requires symbolic gestures and associated rituals such as exchanging gifts and slaughtering animals; fowls, goats, sheep, cows and the like for partying as a sign of peace making (Zartman, 2000). In a similar vein, Mbiti (2010) identifies the traditional approaches to peacebuilding to include oral culture of proverbs, rituals formulas, prayers, creedal formulations and symbols from the perspective of indigenous religion of every African people, which evolved from ancient times without founders. Nwolise (2005) also adds that wealth exchanges, prayers and sacrificing to the gods/ancestors are part of African's peacebuilding processes. Indigenous approaches to peacebuilding thus, comprise social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions in accordance with the entirety of traditions, customs and worldviews of Africans. The spiritual dimension of indigenous peacebuilding and conflict resolution is primarily important because, according to Zartman (2000), it creates and restores impaired relationship with God, the spirits, ancestors, families and neighbors as the case might be. Therefore, the task of indigenous conflict resolution and peacebuilding is to re-establish contact between individuals, families and communities with the goal to rebuild social harmony.

The nature of indigenous principles to peacebuilding and conflict resolution in African societies anchors on flexibility and elasticity (Anifowoshe, 2010). Local methods of conflict resolution and peacebuilding are participatory in nature, voluntary, flexible, relevant and compatible with local settings unlike the western-conventional approaches (Brock Utne, 2001). Murithi (2006a) adds that, indigenous peacebuilding methods focuses on the principles of love, empathy, sharing and respect, protection of human life, caring, forgiveness and cooperation in dealing with common problems which underline the essence of humanity. It promotes human dignity and respect within the understanding that, an individual's humanity interconnects with the dignity and humanity of others (Mabovula, 2011). For these reasons, the effectiveness of the process and sustainability of the outcomes of the traditional peacebuilding approaches cannot be overestimated.

Essentially, indigenous peacebuilding mechanisms are not adversarial. Rather, they involve the reconciliation of the parties to end conflict entirely by addressing the structural causes of the conflict. Castro and Ettenger (1996) emphasize this view by saying that indigenous ways of building peace are not merely about adjudication of who is right or wrong, but it is about the transformation of conflict in which both parties are satisfied and willing to "let go their pain and forgive each other". Thus, indigenous peacebuilding is about admitting fault, showing remorse, loving one another, and valuing the lives of others for the purpose of ensuring peaceful co-existence. Additionally, Swindler (1992) argue that good relationships protect and promote human life, whereas evil is that which destroys or alters human existence. Hence, life is of good value in traditional African societies and expresses itself in respect for humanity (Abiodum, 2000). The practice of indigenous peacebuilding including *Ubuntu* is thus more sustainable, acceptable and

applicable in Africa because, they seek to promote restorative justice, aim at restoration of order, harmony, maintenance of relationships and look at the structural causes of the conflict phenomena to provide a lasting solution (Boege, 2006; Issifu, 2015).

### **Evaluation Studies Showing That Indigenous Approaches Are More Effective**

The key role that indigenous approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding play in many societies is too significant to ignore. In other words, the impact of indigenous approaches to peacebuilding is vital to either glamorize or discount in International discourse (Funk & Said, 2010). Evidence showing the effectiveness of indigenous approaches to peacebuilding is observed from several nation-states. For example, despite many conscious efforts by the International community, there remained a plethora of unresolved conflict in South Sudan (Kriesberg, 1989; Coleman, 2006). However, peace and reconciliation initiatives purely conducted in a traditional *Wunlit* and *Tali* conference ensured some level of peace in Mundari, South Sudan (Wani, 2014). Additionally, in the Acholi region of Northern Uganda, traditional approaches to conflict resolution provided a framework for building a sustainable peace through a well-established indigenous rituals and practices known as *Mato Oput* (literally drinking the bitter root) (Wasonga, 2009).

More so, in Northern Somalia, indigenous peacebuilding methods provided an indispensable way for mobilizing traditional elders to restore dialogue, repair broken relationships, and social order after several decades of violent conflict (Yusuf & Le Mare, 2005). Additionally, using chieftaincy conflict that took place in the Wungu Province of the Mamprugu Kingdom in Northern Ghana, indigenous methods of peacebuilding helped to end the chieftaincy conflict which and in the long run promoted community development in the Wungu Province (Tonah, 2007). Besides, after several years of conflict among the Ibibio of Akwa Ibom State of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, indigenous mechanisms of *Ayei* (young palm frond) and *Mbiam* (Juju) played a key role in ensuring peace in the area. According to Udofia (2011), the neglect of *Ayei* and *Mbiam* would have had serious effects not only in Akwa Ibom State, but also in the entire country. Furthermore, Tongeren (2013) adds that after the 1991 violent conflict in Kenya, where more than 1,200 deaths recorded, it was the efforts of *Wajir Peace and Development Committee* led by local women, which helped to advance serenity and community development in the area.

Essentially, in diverse nation-states like South Africa, Rwanda, Mozambique, East Timor and Afghanistan, many International missions have come to revalue, and have sought to learn about, create space for and encourage adapted applications for indigenous conflict resolution (Funk & Said, 2010; Issifu, 2015). For instance, the relevance of Rwandan's village *Gacaca* court (Villa-Vicencio, Nantulya & Savage, 2005), East Timor's *Nahe Biti* community-based reconciliation process (Mac Ginty, 2008), Afghanistan's *Loya Jirga* local peace-making, South African's *Ubuntu* reconciliation, and Mozambican's *Amnesia* traditional ceremonies of healing to forgo the past (Graybill, 2004; Issifu, 2015) are now receiving recognition by Western diplomats, International development agencies and policy thinkers.

This is because, the indigenous approaches to peacebuilding have the potency of addressing deficiencies in the "Orthodox Western approaches" by balancing the top-down, elite-focused

aspect of conventional intervention programmes into local context (Funk & Said, 2010). In essence, a survey by the World Bank concluded that the International system or Western peacebuilding has consistently failed to reconstruct the very 'social fabric' of war-torn societies into sustainable peace communities (Colleta, Cullen & Forman, 1998). Thus, the traditional African model of peacebuilding and human security, are more relevant to sustainable peace in countries recovering from war devastations (Cobbah, 1987). Henceforth, new idea is emerging near the most appropriate ways to tap the strengths of the indigenous methods of peacebuilding without depriving it of authenticity and legitimacy (Mac Ginty, 2008).

### **Contextual Analysis of the Indigenous Ubuntu System in South Africa**

South Africa is among the few countries to have stabilized politically and economically after several years of Apartheid. The country keeps enjoying lasting peace under the influence of *Ubuntu* - a traditional conflict resolution strategy. The concept of *Ubuntu*, over the years is been used in a general sense to refer to an African philosophy of life and survival (Mokgoro, 1997). *Ubuntu* originates from within African idioms; '*Mothokemothokabathobabangwe*' and '*Umuntungumuntungabantu*' which loosely translated means, 'A person is a person through other persons', and, 'I am because we are; we are because I am' (Ramose, 1999; Goduka, 2000).

Research has shown that, the concept originates from a pre-colonial African rural setting linked with community unity (Swanson, 2007). *Ubuntu* is a complex concept. Therefore, it has a diverse form of definition depending on the social context from which the concept is defined (Mokgoro, 1997; Anderson, 2003). As scholars define, *Ubuntu* is an African philosophy of humanity (Skelton, 2002); an African cultural worldview (Murithi, 2006a); a philosophy of being humane (Swanson, 2007). An overarching presumption underlying all these characterization is that, in rural African communities, a person who possesses *Ubuntu* spirit is the one noted for being hospitable, friendly, generous, compassionate, and caring for his fellow human being. Tutu (1999) affirms this position by adding that anyone with *Ubuntu* spirit shares what he or she have with others, putting away hatred of the past and living cordially with one another.

Drawing on the arguments by preceding scholars, Nomonde (2000) observes that, the drive for *Ubuntu* intends to work towards a situation that promotes a mutually beneficial condition. As Nomonde puts it, *Ubuntu* places emphasis on cooperation with one another for the common good as opposed to competition that could lead to grave instability within any society. In the viewpoints of Nomonde (2000), the secret behind *Ubuntu* is that, a person is considered human being if he or she lives through others, and participates and shares with his or her neighbor, in spite of all ancient or past hatred. Justifying the argument, Tutu (1999) emphasizes that, a person with *Ubuntu* spirit is the one who is open and live peacefully with others and does not feel threatened when others achieve success because, he or she recognizes that they belong to a greater whole. In addition, Mani (2002) posits that the motivation for this line of argument to support *Ubuntu* originates from traditional systems and the Biblical teachings of Jesus Christ, which talk about "love and forgiveness". Mani's (2002) view is support by Mbiti (2010) who argues that the African concept of peacebuilding centres on a monotheistic acknowledgement of the teachings of God.

The principles underpinning *Ubuntu* served as guide and food for thoughts to some of the perpetrators and victims who came before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Graybill (1998) also notes that during the TRC process, perpetrators openly confessed their sins, and victims freely forgive them. The TRC thus, became the foundation of the ground breaking restorative justice legislation in South Africa (Jenkins, 2006). The reconciliation process normally involves the victims and perpetrators as well as their family members and friends. The practice is crucial because, the act of reconciliation symbolizes the willingness of the parties to move beyond the psychological bitterness that had prevailed in the minds of the parties during the Apartheid. Nussbaum (2003) explains that, *Ubuntu* is a capacity in African culture for compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining the community. The concept therefore invites us to believe and feel that, 'your pain is my pain, my success is your success, your wealth is my wealth and my salvation is your salvation'. Therefore, the notion of *Ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of peace making through the principles of reciprocity, restorative justice, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between people. Thus, *Ubuntu* provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness. It also provides a rationale for sacrificing or letting go of the desire to take revenge for past wrongs (Murithi, 2006b).

### **Implementation of Indigenous Ubuntu in South Africa**

A combination of teachings of the Bible (forgiveness) and traditional teachings of *Ubuntu* (unity and love) played a key role in the South African's TRC chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, which helped to promote peace in the country after the Apartheid. According to the Chairman of the South African TRC, he drew upon both his Christian values of the Bible and his cultural values of traditional *Ubuntu* system to execute successful actions in the Commission. In particular, he highlights that, he constantly referred to the notion of *Ubuntu* when he was guiding and advising witnesses, victims and perpetrators during the Commission hearings (Tutu, 1999). For example, if someone raped a woman during the Apartheid period and then told the Commission that he really raped his victim and that, he was very sorry and showed a genuine sign of remorse for his act, the victim is then supposed to let go her pains and hatred and simply forgive. In reality, the Commission heard acknowledgements from a range of individuals and representatives of various institutions about their direct and/or indirect involvement with gross human rights violations.

In the process, the role of sincere apologies in the reconciliation process emerged. For instance, Major Mbina (former Captain of Ciskei Defence Force) testified before the TRC that, "*Some people shot, probably shot without having been given orders, knowing that at the end it's the boss that will answer. That is what I want to make clear. I also ask for forgiveness. I empathise with families that lost their members. I ask forgiveness on behalf of the Ciskeian Defence Force, especially those that were involved. We ask forgiveness. We will be very glad if the Commission would forgive us. To the community, we ask for forgiveness*" (TRC Report, 1998: pp. 382). The Commission's report reiterate that, people came to tell their stories in an attempt to facilitate not only their own individual healing processes, but also a healing process for the entire nation (TRC Report, 1998).

Apart from the South African's TRC, traditional Council of Elders in Southern Africa also employed the teachings of *Ubuntu* to resolve disputes through an institution known as

*Inkundla/Lekgotla* (Murithi, 2006b). The institution served as a group mediation and reconciliation forum for peacebuilding (Nomonde, 2000; Murithi, 2006b). The *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum was communal in nature and involved the entire society at various levels in trying to find a lasting solution to disputes viewed as a threat to social cohesion and community development. In practice, the proceedings in the *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum was led by a Council of Elders and sub-Chiefs or, if the disputes were larger, by the King himself (Murithi, 2006b). In the forum, the process of ascertaining wrong doing and finding a resolution included, family members related to the victims and perpetrators sitting together in the process of making peace. The mechanism therefore allowed members of the public to share their views and to generally, make their opinions known in the process. In particular, members of the society had the right to put questions to the victims, perpetrators and witnesses as well as to put suggestions to the Council of Elders on possible ways forward. The Council of Elders in its capacity as an intermediary had an investigative function and it played an advisory role to the Chief as well. By listening to the views of the members of the society, the Council of Elders could advise on remedies that would promote reconciliation between the aggrieved parties and thus, maintain the overall objective of sustaining the unity and cohesion of the community (ibid).

The actual process of *Ubuntu* as used in the *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum involved five key stages; Firstly, after a fact-finding process where the views of victims, perpetrators and witnesses were heard, the perpetrators if considered to have done wrong would be encouraged, both by the Council and other community members in the *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum, to acknowledge responsibility or guilt. Secondly, perpetrators would be encouraged to demonstrate genuine remorse or to show a sign of true repentance. Thirdly, perpetrators would be encouraged to ask for forgiveness and victims in their turn would be encouraged to show mercy and pardon their offenders. Fourthly, where possible and at the suggestion of the Council of Elders, perpetrators would be required to pay an appropriate compensation or reparation for the wrong done. The payments, however, were not in-kind but a symbolic sign, with the primary function of reinforcing the remorse of the perpetrators. Finally, the fifth stage would seek to consolidate the whole process by encouraging the parties to commit themselves to reconciliation (Murithi, 2006b). This process of reconciliation tended to include, the victim and his or her family members and friends as well as the perpetrator and his or her family members and friends. Both groups would be encouraged to embrace co-existence and to work towards healing the broken relationship between them and thus, contribute towards restoring harmony within the community, vital for ensuring the integrity and viability of the society.

## **Lessons from Indigenous Ubuntu Peacebuilding in South Africa**

### The Story

Storytelling is one of the elements of *Ubuntu* and played a key role in both South African's TRC as well as the *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum for peace making. Thus, victims were allowed to give a detailed account of their experience, the agonies which they suffered during the conflict. The aim was to restore hope and harmony among the former combatants through reconciliation, apology and forgiveness, communication and mutual respect of their needs. Through storytelling, victims

made the offender(s) to appreciate the gravity of the offence or crime committed against them in the Apartheid regime in the open.

### Active Participation of the Parties

In the TRC, former disputants were actively involved to participate in the peace process. This is because, the restorative justice nature of the *Ubuntu* traditional conflict resolution demanded that the parties should be involved in the peace process to promote the spirit of pardon, forgiveness, fairness and openness. The parties through their participation helped to appreciate various ways of addressing the harm or crime committed against each other and the root causes of the conflict. Opportunity is thus, established in the participation to rebuild the relationships in achieving sustainable peace after the Apartheid regime.

### Joint Problem Solving Approach

Both the TRC and Council of Elder's *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum sought to focus on restitution rather than retribution: restoration of friendship rather than finding fault, truth saying rather than searching for evidence, on dialogue rather than blame, on an apology-forgiveness rather than zero sum game; on accommodating rather than avoiding; and on cooperativeness rather than assertiveness. The joint problem solving approach as one of the elements of *Ubuntu* helped to address the underlying problems of the parties through the party's commitment to reach an agreement in the interest of all the parties involved in the peace-making process.

### Consensual Decision Making

*Ubuntu* was not coercive in nature. It is a voluntary process, which enable the parties to discuss their issues and the role they played in the conflict freely. The parties were encouraged to be in full charge of their decisions and agreements without any coercive interference by the other parties or the peace facilitator(s). The right to support or disprove any decision resided in every party. This principle helped the peace process to work out effectively in both the TRC and the *Inkundla/Lekgotla* forum to meet the target of promoting peace and reconciliation after the Apartheid regime.

### Mutual Respect

The parties were encouraged to submit themselves to the ground rules of restorative process of justice by respecting the rights of each other. The aim was to do away with utterances and actions of the parties that could disturb the success of the peace process.

### Flexibility of Process

*Ubuntu* process created opportunity for parties to adopt any guidelines or rules as situation demanded. The principle allowed the parties to make their decisions in line with time, sequence and participation among other considerations. This is imperative primarily because, the peace

process must be flexible to give a deep sense of decision-making and outcome determination of each of the parties.

### Empowerment

*Ubuntu* process enabled the parties to have a greater influence over the peace process. They were empowered through their participation, the ground rules and the outcomes of the process including taking charge of the peace process. Each party was accord the power to establish a better communication relation with the other party through justice, restoration of harmony and healing of wounds.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, indigenous African methods of peacebuilding and conflict resolution stress the need of fostering a spirit of peace and mutual respect for both individuals and groups in times of peace and in times of conflicts. Specifically, South Africa's *Ubuntu* traditional conflict resolution technique effectively ensured peace through the TRC and the institution of the Council of Elders. The Chairman of the TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, used Christian teaching of forgiveness together with the traditional *Ubuntu* system to promote peace and help resolve post-Apartheid hatreds. The Council of Elders at the community level also played an important role in defusing conflicts within and between communities. All of these helped to transform conflict to harmony and reminded the groups of their shared unity or identity. Thus, in the African setting, there is no "private dispute" of any seriousness since a dispute affects everyone in one way or another.

As one African Philosopher, John Mbiti (1970) correctly says, the African philosophy is based on the, "I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am". For Africans, there is recognition of the importance of relationship and harmony in the community. It would therefore be a mistake to ignore that potential and not to make use of it wherever possible. Therefore, leaders of war-devastated states, NGOs, the International community especially, United States (a leading force for liberal peacebuilding) can learn from and tap the potentials that *Ubuntu* offers even today; if peacebuilding is to become something more than foreign enterprise executed from the top-down with little or no active participation from the local people. Henceforth, appreciating the potentials of indigenous peacebuilding methods will help improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of conflict transformation endeavors.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Teach, Learn, Act, Empower: Education for Restorative Justice in Sexual Violence Cases**

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## **TEACH, LEARN, ACT, EMPOWER: EDUCATION FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES**

### **Abstract**

The criminal justice system rarely produces prosecutions in cases of sexual assault let alone true and enduring satisfaction for the victims and their families (Naylor, 2010). It offers little, if any, provision for perpetrators, their families, or the community that produced them (Hayden, 2012). Nonetheless, few alternatives are offered that maintain safety and advance justice.

While it is not widely recognized, restorative justice can be used to address sexual violence as either a complement to mainstream justice or as an alternative. A key step toward advancing restorative justice as a viable option is to educate the public, particularly sexual assault service providers and advocacy organizations, on the various models available as well as the potential benefits. Interested groups and individuals will also need the framework through which to promote the practice to their clientele. This article attempts to serve as a useful beginner's guide.

## Introduction

There is hardly an offense both as pervasive and pernicious as sexual assault. Although it is commonplace in Western<sup>1</sup> society to label rapists and child molesters as criminals who must be held accountable, the criminal justice system rarely produces prosecutions in cases of sexual assault (Naylor, 2010, p. 662) let alone true and enduring satisfaction for the victims and their families — and it often does not consider the circumstances of perpetrators, their families, or the community that produced them to be relevant to the outcome (Hayden, 2012, p. 4). Perhaps most importantly, it has neither stopped sexual violence nor curtailed it in any reassuring way, and by relying on patriarchal hierarchies and authoritarianism in police stations, courts, and prisons, the criminal justice system effectively maintains the culture of violence that gives rise to sexual assault and rape (CARA).

Nevertheless, many survivors of sexual violence and their supporters are recognizing the futility of the status quo and are embracing alternatives, such as a number of processes collectively referred to as restorative justice. While there is far from a consensus that restorative justice is appropriate in cases of sexual violence, there is no question that it can be both effective and desirable (Hayden, 2012). Moreover, restorative justice is only the beginning: There are some grassroots activists who feel that restorative justice, which is often — but not always — performed in cooperation with legal authorities, does not go far enough in breaking from state-based justice and prefer what is referred to as “transformative justice” (generation FIVE).

While this paper, after clarifying its terminology, will focus briefly on the proven and potential effectiveness of restorative and transformative justice, its main concern will be to address how to transfer the knowledge and skills necessary to take this approach — otherwise individuals who lack the time, energy, and access to resources that a devoted scholar possesses will continue to rely on mainstream legal mechanisms or do nothing at all to seek justice for incidents of sexual violence. It is, therefore, essential to educate members of the field<sup>2</sup> about these issues.

## Definition of Terms

“Sexual violence,” for the purposes of this study, refers to all cases of unwanted, intentional sexual contact or harassment, which includes repeated advances stopping at words and gestures of a suggestive nature. Although the common stereotype is that women are the victims of sexual violence and that men are the perpetrators, the definition includes violence against adult men, people who are transgender or gender-ambiguous, and children of all genders. Just as the definition includes all gender groups as potential victims, it includes all gender groups as potential

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of reaching its intended audience, this paper will narrow its focus to the Western context: the legal and moral status quo of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. This is not to say that sexual violence does not occur elsewhere or that the solutions presented would not be relevant to non-Western contexts.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this paper, “the field” and “service providers” will include staff and (trained) volunteers at sexual assault crisis and resource centers. It could be expanded to include dedicated grassroots activists, so long as there is a training requirement so that said activists understand the complex feelings and needs of survivors.

perpetrators.<sup>3</sup> The most important addition to this definition in the context of restorative and transformative justice theory and practice is that the survivor's perception supersedes that of all other parties to the incident and even objective reality itself. This is because the goals of using restorative or transformative approaches are not to determine what is empirically true, who was at fault in the legal sense, and who is to blame in the moral sense (Liebmann, 2007, p. 32).

“Restorative justice” and “transformative justice,” in short, are processes and practices serving as non-violent,<sup>4</sup> non-punitive responses to harm committed within a community (Creative Interventions, 2012, p. 63). The terms are also used to indicate the philosophies and principles justifying those responses.

Restorative justice processes are diffuse in both number and application, but all address through dialogue — to varying degrees — the following three questions: 1) “Who has been hurt?” 2) “What are their needs?” and 3) “Who has the obligation to address the needs, to put right the harms, to restore relationships?” (Zehr, 2009). The most relevant process to address sexual violence, particularly if the offender is not incarcerated, is “restorative conferencing”<sup>5</sup> because it allows for healing for those harmed, reparations from those responsible for the harm, and the participation of any party deemed necessary for safety, satisfaction, and success (Naylor, 2010, p. 665).

Transformative justice is a largely unexamined grassroots phenomenon that could be considered a sub-category of restorative justice or a different approach altogether<sup>6</sup> (Zehr, 2011) (Harris, 2006). It emphasizes not only the offense in question but the underlying societal conditions and layers of oppression that give rise to it; therefore, transformative justice not only seeks to address harm in relationships but also to challenge harmful systems (generation FIVE). Transformative justice is especially relevant to sexual violence due to the pervasive undercurrents of gender, race, class, ability, age, and sexual orientation that accompany it.

### **Restorative and Transformative Models**

While much space could be devoted to the numerous restorative and transformative justice models developed and practiced throughout the world, only a sampling of models that are directly applicable to sexual violence are included here. Despite this seemingly strict limitation, the pool is relatively large: there are models that pertain to children, indigenous peoples, and social justice activists with some overlap.

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<sup>3</sup> Some may be put off by the terms “victim” and “perpetrator” due to their presumption of dichotomy and inflexibility — not to mention their overuse by champions of the status quo (Hayden, 2012, p. 11) — but I use them here for the sake of clarity and practicality.

<sup>4</sup> There are, of course, violent alternatives to the current criminal justice system, such as vigilantism or civil lawsuits, but this paper will relegate its focus to alternatives that do not seek retribution.

<sup>5</sup> Restorative conferencing is known by many different names, but the word “conferencing” is usually maintained.

<sup>6</sup> Because I am of the persuasion that transformative justice is fundamentally the same as restorative justice, I will often refer to both as restorative justice for brevity's sake.

It is important to note that due to the nature of social justice organizations, “models” may be more accurately referred to as “guides” as variation based on regional and contextual preferences is common.

While it is difficult to neatly categorize due to a lack of consensus on the definition of restorative justice and its relation to transformative justice, this section will be broken down into interventions that are more closely associated with restorative justice — starting with Restorative Systems and ending with Victim-Offender Dialogue/Mediation — and those that are more closely associated with transformative justice — starting with Communities Against Rape and Abuse and ending with Hollow Water.

### **Restorative Systems**

Barter (2013), who is best known for developing a process called Restorative Circles in collaboration with slum communities in Brazil, conducts trainings around the world on not just how to facilitate a Circle but also on the larger process of setting up what he calls a “restorative system” in a community, workplace, or family. He offers five preconditions: 1) agreement, 2) space, 3) host(s)/people, 4) publicity, 5) access.

“Agreement” entails engaging with what already works and responding to what doesn’t without imposing, “space” entails providing a space with meaningful and symbolic significance for the restorative processes to be conducted, “hosts” are those who bring the process together and facilitate it (Barter, 2013).

Publicity is necessary because otherwise the community will not know that the particular agreement, space, or hosts exist. Moreover, the community may not be aware of restorative justice as a concept or any of the processes that fall under its framework. While society may be years away from a 911 hotline for restorative justice, publicity (and perhaps more sophisticated marketing) is essential for its growth (Barter, 2013).

“Access,” in the words of Barter (2013), means that there is “no permission phase” because restorative systems are bottom up; therefore, any and all members of the community should have access to them.

### **Restorative Circles**

The central process used in Barter’s restorative system is what he and his colleagues call a “Restorative Circle.” It consists of three phases: the pre-circle, the circle, and the post-circle. The pre-circle is tantamount to a preparation process whereby the facilitator introduces each participant individually to the conflict warranting a response, listens to his or her thoughts and feelings about it, and requests consent in order to proceed to the circle. The pre-circle is often the most time-intensive aspect of a Restorative Circle and is done in a formal fashion where the same questions are asked to each participant and coercion or persuasion of any kind — as well as blame or judgment — are to be avoided. In the Restorative Circle process, unlike other similar processes,

the facilitator need not be distant from the conflict in question and is a respected (but equal) member of the community (Barter, 2010).

The circle itself is carefully facilitated — with agreed-upon guidelines posted where all can see — in a matter that includes everyone on an equal level. All participants come into the circle leaving their titles and positions of authority at the door and are asked the same questions including “what would you like known, and by whom, about how you are right now in relation to the act and its consequences?” When a participant is addressed by another, the listener is asked to repeat back to the speaker what was heard until the speaker is satisfied that he or she was understood correctly. Once all participants understand each other fully, they are invited to take responsibility for their actions and eventually to consent to a course of action that will improve the situation and/or repair the harm done (Barter, 2010).

The post-circle is a follow-up process where the facilitator checks in to determine the status of the agreement and whether it is meeting the needs of the participants. Further action can be taken at this point to either celebrate success or re-evaluate and decide on new actions when expectations have not been met (Barter, 2010).

The flexibility of the process allows for it to adjust to the needs and specifications of survivors of sexual violence. In order to take into account power dynamics that are intrinsic to sexual violence, Restorative Circles have been conducted with a substitute or surrogate participating in place of the accused perpetrator or with the accused perpetrator in a separate room talking through the wall or through a telephone (Dominic Barter, personal communication, Feb. 20, 2013).

### **Restorative Conferencing**

Similar to Restorative Circles, restorative conferencing, which is also called Community Conferencing — derived from Family Group Conferencing (MacRae & Zehr, 2004) — allows everyone affected by a conflict or crime to come together to hear what happened, allow the perpetrator(s) to take responsibility, achieve transformation, and reach an agreement to make the situation better (Naylor, 2010). Restorative conferencing was developed in the 1980s in New Zealand based on indigenous Maori practices as a process to facilitate difficult decision-making in families and is now the foundation of the entire juvenile justice system there (Naylor, 2010). In Australia in 1991 the model was reinvented as a community policing technique by Terry O’Connell and, therefore, became more closely associated with the field of criminal justice (McCold, 2006, p. 32).

Pennell & Kim (2010) have adopted family group conferencing to suit the needs of survivors of sexual violence by expanding systems of support. The four elements that guide their work are 1) centralizing the family in decision-making and implementation, 2) involving different sides of the family in the process, 3) allowing family members to utilize their traditions toward resolution, and 4) collaboration with other local entities that have compatible goals (Pennell & Kim, 2010, p. 178).

Due to the sensitive nature of sexual violence and the safety concerns associated with it, certain organizations that offer conferencing allow letter writing or video conferencing to take the place of face-to-face meetings (“Facilitated Dialogue,” 2013).

### **Peacemaking Circles**

Not to be confused with Restorative Circles, which are entirely different in form — if not in function — Peacemaking Circles resemble a North American indigenous practice called the “Talking Circle” that has spread from the fringes of Western society since the 1970s (Pranis, 2005, p. 7). The process was introduced to the United States as part of the Minnesota criminal justice system under the framework of restorative justice, and it “offered a way to include those harmed by crime, those who commit crime, and the community in a partnership with the justice system to determine the most effective response to a crime” (Pranis, 2005, p. 8).

Peacemaking Circles establish a safe, non-hierarchical place to share stories and experiences or address conflict and make agreements by consensus. All individuals present have the opportunity to speak without interruption. Communication is regulated by passing a talking piece (often an object of special meaning to the group) that fosters respectful listening and reflection while preventing one-on-one debate or attacks. After the circle facilitator briefly describes the purpose of the circle, he or she passes the talking piece to the person on the left who is then invited to speak while the others listen. Those who are unwilling to speak may simply pass the talking piece to the next person and elect to speak at a later time (Pranis, 2005).

Peacemaking Circles take on many different names and forms based on their purpose. The most relevant to this study are Healing Circles, Support Circles, Sentencing Circles, and Reintegration Circles (Pranis, 2005, pp. 15-16). The purpose of a Healing Circle is to empathize with a person experiencing trauma while a Support Circle convenes to help an individual through a difficult period in life; Sentencing Circles are designed to hold an offender accountable while Reintegration Circles function as a re-entry mechanism for offenders returning from prison or isolation/estrangement from the community (Pranis, 2005, pp. 15-17).

### **Victim-Offender Dialogue/Mediation**

Victim-Offender Dialogue, also known as Victim-Offender Mediation or Victim-Offender Conferencing, is another form of restorative justice that is applied in the context of sexual violence as it involves bringing the survivor and/or his family in direct dialogue with his perpetrator (Amstutz, 2009). It is typically conducted in prison, where the victim and facilitator visit the perpetrator.

### **Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)**

Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), which formed in 1999 in Seattle, Washington, takes a community organizing approach to sexual violence and justice that is rooted in oppressed

communities and communities of color (Chen, Dulani & Samarasinha, 2011). Its “community accountability strategies”<sup>7</sup> are as follows:

Recognize the humanity of everyone involved; prioritize the self-determination of the survivor; identify a simultaneous plan for safety and support for the survivor and community members; carefully consider the potential consequences of the strategy; organize collectively; make sure everyone involved in the group seeking accountability shares a political analysis of sexual violence; be clear and specific about what you want from the aggressor in terms of accountability; let the aggressor know your analysis and demands; consider help from the aggressor’s community; and prepare to be engaged in the process for the long haul (Chen, Dulani & Samarasinha, 2011, p. 60).

### **Friends Are Reaching Out (FAR OUT)**

A similar approach ideologically is Friends Are Reaching Out (FAR OUT), a project of The Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, and Gay Survivors of Abuse, a sister organization of CARA that assists survivors from queer communities in breaking their isolation and developing support networks of clergy, service providers, friends, and family to aid them and develop agreements where necessary (Chen, Dulani & Samarasinha, 2011, p. 61).

### **INCITE! and Creative Interventions**

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence is one of the most antagonistic organizations toward the state that applies models consistent with restorative and transformative justice. It emphasizes the victimhood of oppressed groups, namely women and people of color, and places responsibility for most, if not all, violence on the state and refuses to accept funding from it (Ptacek, 2010, p. 18). In keeping with these principles, a decade ago it gathered with two other California-based groups — Generation Five and Creative Interventions — to develop a community-based approach that focused on empowering the individuals closest to those most in need (Kim, 2010, p. 207).

This approach is not necessarily survivor-centered and does not hold safety as the main goal of the intervention; it even allows for engagement of the perpetrator in cases where it is deemed suitable or necessary (Kim, 2010, p. 208). Its three elements are 1) determining goals, 2) discovering tensions between goals that are often based around societal and structural cleavages, and 3) deciding on an intervention based on consensus (Kim, 2010, p. 208).

### **Generation Five: Transformative Justice**

The Generation Five approach is outlined in a detailed document called “Toward Transformative Justice” and, although it pertains specifically to child sexual abuse, it is the inspiration behind many approaches dealing with adult sexual violence under the label of transformative justice. The

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<sup>7</sup> Mimi Kim, founder and executive director of Creative Interventions, uses the term “community accountability” to describe capacity building efforts to support survivors of sexual violence and hold perpetrators accountable, yet the term is often used interchangeably with “transformative justice” (Pennell & Kim, 2010, p. 180).

model can be summed up in nine self-explanatory steps: 1) building a collective, 2) preparation and capacity building, 3) naming and defining child sexual abuse, 4) conducting assessment: level of concern, opportunity, and capacity, 5) developing a safety strategy, 6) supporting healing and resistance, 7) holding accountability, 8) working for community transformation, 9) strengthening collective resistance. The distinct element of this approach that is utilized in other transformative justice models is to emphasize the conditions of society that give rise to sexual violence and the transformation of those conditions through community outreach and organizing. For these activists it is not nearly enough to hold individual perpetrators accountable — the community and, indeed, the whole society must be scrutinized for their role (Generation Five, 2007).

### **The Chrysalis Collective Model**

Stemming from the tradition of Generation Five, Incite!, and CARA is the model published in a zine entitled “Beautiful, Difficult, Powerful: Ending Sexual Assault Through Transformative Justice” by The Chrysalis Collective. It amounts to an eight-step program: 1) form a Survivor Support Team, 2) form an Accountability Team, 3) define the relationship between teams, 4) create a transformative justice plan, 5) prepare for the first approach, 6) [hold] the first meeting, 7) meetings with the Accountability Team, and 8) lessons learned.

The first step presumes that a survivor or victim has already come forward and is willing to work with a group of friends, colleagues, or family members to determine goals for support as well as goals for a larger transformative justice response based on skills, commitment levels, and available resources. The second step is forming a team to work with the perpetrator toward the goal of accountability by selecting members who not only possess the necessarily skills and temperament to effectively and maturely handle sensitive situations but are close to or respected by the individual in question. The third step is determining how the two teams will work together based primarily on the needs of the survivor. A major element is how and what they will communicate with each other throughout the process given their somewhat conflicting roles and the perceived sensitivity of both the survivor and the perpetrator. A community liaison, who does not serve on other team but solely as a conduit, is often employed for this purpose.

The fourth step is to develop a transformative plan (by no means final) even before approaching the perpetrator. The fifth step is carefully determining the initial engagement of the perpetrator. The sixth step is to hold the first meeting with the perpetrator in order to listen to his story, share the survivor’s story, and determine future steps and goals. The seventh and longest step is to hold as many meetings as necessary with the perpetrator with the goal of implementing a plan for accountability once a shared understanding of the offense or incident has been reached. This step also includes report-backs to the Survivor Support Team and utilization of outside resources and people as necessary. The final step is to debrief and evaluate the process (The Chrysalis Collective).

### **Hollow Water**

Well known in Canada and among First Nations peoples is the “Community Holistic Circle Healing” (CHCH) model, which was developed in the mid-1980s in Hollow Water, Manitoba, to

address the needs of survivors and perpetrators of sexual violence (Buller, 2005, p. 3). There are 13 steps: 1) disclosure (of the sexual abuse or assault), 2) protecting the victim/child, 3) confronting the victimizer, 4) assisting the spouse, 5) assisting the families and the community, 6) meeting of the assessment team and the authorities, 7) victimizer must admit and accept responsibility, 8) preparation of the victimizer, 9) preparation of the victim(s), 10) preparation of all the families, 11) the special gathering, 12) the healing contract is implemented, and 13) the cleansing ceremony (Buller, 2005, p. 4). The words “victim” and “victimizer” as opposed to this study’s use of “survivor” and “perpetrator” have been retained in order to fully capture the philosophy behind the model. This is the oldest restorative or transformative model developed specifically to address cases of sexual violence that could be identified from the prevailing literature on the subject and has fittingly served as a direct influence to the aforementioned newer models (Generation Five, 2007, p. 4).

### **Why this Approach?**

Restorative justice, in particular, has been criticized in its application to sexual violence due to concerns about survivor safety and re-victimization (Hayden, 2012). While many of these criticisms are well founded, measures can be taken to address these criticisms, so they should not discourage practitioners from providing sexual assault survivors and their families an additional resource (Hayden, 2012, p. 7), especially in light of the low rates of reporting and prosecution in rape cases and the potential for re-victimization during cross examination (Naylor, 2010, p. 662). In response to critics who favor the status quo, it is worth noting that restorative justice does not necessarily have to take the place of punitive or legalistic methods but can co-exist with them — and often do (Naylor, 2010, p. 679).

All cooperation aside, restorative justice has numerous benefits unique to its principles. One of the most important and relevant to the context of sexual violence is the measure of “social safety” that dialogue provides beyond the detainment of the offender(s), which can prevent retaliatory violence and strengthen community cohesiveness in the wake of a crime (Hayden, 2012: p. 9). In the context of intimate partner violence, restorative justice allows the relationship to be emphasized over consequences for the perpetrator, and this has the potential to foster safety predicated on changing the relationship rather than forced separation through imprisonment or restraining order, which the survivor<sup>8</sup> does not always desire (Hayden, 2012). The assumption that a survivor would always prefer to punish the offender than attempt to repair the relationship is not grounded in reality (Hayden, 2012). Moreover, unlike the adversarial court system where offenders are advised by their attorneys and supporters to lie or remain silent, restorative processes create the proper space and incentives for offenders to take full responsibility for their actions (Naylor, 2010). And regardless of the outcome, restorative justice is far more efficient and cost-effective than the courts (Sherman & Strang, 2007).

MacDougall (2009, pp. 79-80) provides a list of further benefits in the context of sexual violence, all of which could also apply to transformative justice:

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<sup>8</sup> I will tend toward the word “survivor” over “victim” because it is widely regarded as more empowering within the anti-violence community.

- the survivor is allowed a voice
- the power of narrative for healing
- the survivor is validated/perpetrator is held responsible
- the process is flexible
- the process is less formal and less threatening
- the process allows for relationship repair
- the process can offer a continuum of choice
- the process may be better able to serve the needs of diverse populations
- a less formal process allows perpetrator to take responsibility/consequences
- the process could circumvent the re-victimization of the court system
- the process can be personally empowering

Despite these benefits, restorative approaches to sexual violence cases are routine in only a few places, including New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. The Mennonite Central Committee of Canada has also implemented a range of restorative practices that address sexual assault and many other types of crimes (Koss & Achilles, 2008). More common than restorative justice is some form of mediation, although advocates often express concern that victims may be further disadvantaged as their abusers will manipulate and control the mediation in the same ways that they have the relationship (Koss & Achilles, 2008). In Canada, many First Nations groups and some others have used sentencing circles, where large groups of community members meet to discuss and determine an appropriate sentence for an offender. Criticism, both from First Nations advocates and others, emphasizes the lack of privacy and stigmatizing effect on offenders and the potential for coercion on survivors. Coker (2004) has argued that sentencing circles do not qualify as restorative justice.

Koss and Achilles (2008) identified just four restorative justice conferencing programs that are specifically designed for sexual assault cases. The South Australia Juvenile Justice Intervention, RESTORE in Pima County, Arizona, RESTORE-NZ in Auckland, and Phaphamani Rape Crisis Counselling Centre in Uitenhage, South Africa. Evaluations of RESTORE found that, of 22 cases in which sexual assault victims agreed to participate, 20 resulted in a successful conference (Koss & Achilles, 2008).

At the time of the study, Phaphamani Rape Crisis Counselling Centre had completed 63 conferences and 72 victim-offender dialogues. Although the programs had not been formally evaluated, staff reported that despite the fact that conferences were emotionally challenging for victims, most were satisfied with the outcome. Two additional difficulties were identified by program staff: 1) offenders' families' failure to support participation and 2) lack of referrals from the justice system (Koss & Achilles, 2008).

Daly (2003) conducted an evaluation of the South Australia Juvenile Justice Intervention. Her review of 89 conferences found that survivor/victim satisfaction was higher in the group that was assigned to conferencing compared to court and that conferencing cases more frequently resulted in admission of responsibility and apology compared to trials. More than half (53 percent) of

survivors reported having a greater understanding of why the offender committed the offense, and 82 percent reported satisfaction with how their case was handled. Nonetheless, only 20 percent of survivors reported that the conference was helpful for their emotional and psychological healing (Daly, 2003).

Daly (2006) later compared an Australian restorative justice program for youth sexual violence offenders with mainstream approaches. She found that youth were less likely to re-offend if they were placed in a tailored counseling program, which more frequently occurred as a result of conferencing than as a result of court hearings. Further, court cases took twice as long as conference and moved jurisdiction frequently. Survivors/victims attended, on average, at least six hearings before learning the outcome of their case and still had fewer opportunities to speak than they did in conferencing.

In a case study in Durham, England, McGlynn, Westmarland and Godden (2011) interviewed four people who participated in restorative conferencing about a case of rape occurring within a family. The survivor/victim expressed that conferencing gave her the opportunity to speak to the offender without him twisting her words. She found it difficult to listen to the offender but acknowledged that it was useful because he, for the first time, admitted guilt. She felt that the conference was a big turning point in her healing because she requested, and it seems as though the offender complied, that he not attempt to contact her in any way afterward.

At the time of this writing, no quantitative data could be found on the effectiveness of transformative justice in cases of sexual violence. This is likely due to the diffuse and informal nature of the approach when it is regarded as distinct from restorative justice and practiced outside the auspices of the courts and other mainstream institutions (Harris, 2006).

### **Pedagogical Framework**

Perhaps the greatest weakness of restorative justice is that it remains largely unknown to service providers, anti-violence advocates, and survivors alike. The goal of this paper is to change that — if only on the micro level — but not before attempting to place this pedagogical effort in its proper context.

Although a gendered perspective is not the only lens with which to view sexual violence, it is indisputably the most common and arguably the most necessary because it is very difficult to conceive of a sexual assault hotline or resource center that lacks a sophisticated gender analysis and competency. Indeed, if one seeks to curtail or eliminate sexual violence, that person likely seeks to curtail or eliminate patriarchy<sup>9</sup> as well (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007, p. 209). Both goals have been the subject of much attention on the international level in recent decades, culminating in the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

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<sup>9</sup> While there are many definitions of patriarchy, I like to define it along the lines of “structural authoritarianism based on perceived gender roles” in order to not limit it simply to the domination of women by men because this understanding does not account for hierarchies *within* genders nor does it recognize the flexibility of gender and its accompanying roles across cultures and epochs. Jenkins & Reardon (2007) allude to a more expansive definition (p. 227).

Women by the United Nations and, more recently, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007, p. 211). With the foundation of masculinities studies in the 1990s, more and more linkages to other forms of oppression, such as racism and militarism, were made and are continuing to be made (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007, p. 211).

In the context of training those in the field to provide restorative alternatives to willing survivors and their supporters, peace education pedagogy, described by the preeminent Jenkins & Reardon (2007, p. 216) as “enabl[ing] learners to think in terms of complexities beyond the standard curricula on controversial issues that usually teach students to consider little more than the two major opposing positions involved in the public discourse on the issues in question,”<sup>10</sup> is most appropriate. A skilled teacher would not limit the class discussion on sexual violence to the ‘woman’s side’ vs. the ‘man’s side’ — this would be laughable — however, everyday conversations about justice are often limited to the false dichotomy of retribution vs. inaction. The chosen pedagogy must transcend this self-imposed limitation.

This consideration, coupled with the acknowledgement that the debate is still open on the causes and consequences of sexual violence — not to mention the solutions to it — renders the “problem-posing” model of the renowned adult educator Paulo Freire (1990) highly applicable. The modern struggle against sexual violence is directly related to the Freirean principle of education for liberation from oppression, and there are few, if any, advocates and service providers who claim neutrality in their work against sexual violence. They instead position themselves on the side of the victim, who is oppressed, and many even go so far as to exclude from services those perpetrators — oppressors — who were themselves sexually victimized or otherwise oppressed, which represents the same challenge to the Hegelian dialectic that Freire himself faced in his work<sup>11</sup> (Schugurensky, 1998, p. 23).

As described previously the very nature of restorative justice comprises reflection, dialogue, and social action. It does not lend itself to mainstream top-down education, or what Freire (1990) calls “the banking model,” because there are no pre-packaged solutions to be presented to the participants; the participants suggest, debate, decide, and implement their own solutions. This is fully compatible not only with the Freirean method, but also with the general approach of sexual assault service providers and advocates to their clients. In fact, most organizational policies explicitly forbid them from telling survivors what to think and what to do.<sup>12</sup> Although Freire (1994) was highly educated and privileged compared to the peasant farmers he worked with in his home country of Brazil and other parts of South America, he insisted on placing his students at the center of his pedagogy, allowing them unprecedented control of their own learning and humbling himself

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<sup>10</sup> Jenkins & Reardon (2007, p. 216) go on to say that peace education “seeks to enable learners to confront and explore some highly charged social issues that have personal valence for most people in as deeply reflective and socially responsible a manner as possible,” which is also highly relevant.

<sup>11</sup> The challenge, specifically, is not only how to distinguish between oppressed and oppressor, given that their relationship is often dynamic in nature, but also how to incorporate both into a liberatory practice.

<sup>12</sup> I personally served as a service provider with the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) and the DC Rape Crisis Center and both made it clear in their training programs that service providers were to provide support and options as opposed to advice and solutions. I have never heard of a service provider that differs in this respect.

to learn from them. This is very similar to the approach of sexual assault service providers toward their clients and could apply to an in-house restorative justice training program, where the service providers' concerns and suggestions about the new service would, in turn, be given full hearing and consideration by management; all levels of the organization would, in effect, develop the program together.<sup>13</sup>

### **Project Implementation**

Despite its compatibility with pre-existing structures and guidelines, restorative justice in the context of sexual violence is not just another resource to be catalogued in the service providers' manual. The average person does not know what it is, so it cannot be assumed that a typical service provider or survivor in crisis would know, let alone be ready to perform the necessary functions. The proposed restorative justice training program — to be named whatever is deemed appropriate to the organization that seeks to adopt it — will effectively train the service providers to both inform clients of the new service and to work with them to implement it in their respective cases. Periodic training sessions, promoted throughout the community, can be held at the organization's offices or at other locations that are suitable and secure. Selected service providers will be asked to serve as facilitators or support people in the aforementioned restorative conferences.

The conditions of the restorative conferences — including the length, setting, and number of participants — are to be carefully discussed and agreed upon by all major stakeholders, with priority given to the survivor(s) needs. The prior mandatory training of service providers in sensitivity and competency when working with survivors of sexual violence will do much to aid them in creating and maintaining safety and equity throughout the process. A relevant model is that of the Centre for Victims of Sexual Assault in Copenhagen, although the terminology used and cultural context is somewhat different (Naylor, 2010, p. 674).

On the subject of culture, to critics who dismiss a restorative approach to sexual violence on grounds that it is incompatible with Western values and traditions, it is worth noting that women who are indigenous to North America tend to view restorative justice in a much more favorable light due traditions pre-dating the arrival of European settlers and the cruel reality of the “White man's justice” in their communities (Naylor, 2010, p. 677). If a sexual assault resource center's list of services is to be fully inclusive, it must take into account non-Western traditions and notions of justice.

### **Conclusion**

In light of calls for education to prevent sexual violence in response to high-profile cases in recent years (Waldron, 2013) — breaking from typical responses that can be categorized as victim-blaming and/or safety-planning (Goodman, 2013) — this paper presents a relevant and complementary argument that represents but one small part of the solution. Indeed, the proposal is not primarily preventive in nature, for restorative justice is often responsive in its application,

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<sup>13</sup> At the DC Rape Crisis Center, the volunteer-led community education program to facilitate discussions on “Sexual Assault Myths and Facts,” which began in late 2010-early 2011, was managed in such a manner.

yet to apply it fully would be to change society with implications far beyond what is proposed by the brave and insightful Zerlina Maxwell<sup>14</sup> (Goodman, 2013).

This far-reaching change will come in time, when the current justice system collapses under the weight of its own contradictions, but for those already inclined — Freirean types whose ideology and chosen profession represents a challenge to the status quo — an alternative is here and cannot be denied. Far from amounting to a retreat in the war against sexual violence, restorative justice is the “third way” between re-victimization and revenge (Wink, 2003).

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<sup>14</sup> I do not wish to do her the injustice of paraphrasing her words:  
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## Appendix: Resource List

Resources relevant for both the pedagogy and implementation of this approach.

### Documents and Reports

- Beautiful, difficult, powerful: ending sexual assault through transformative justice  
<http://www.blackandpink.org/wp-content/uploads/Beautiful-Difficult-Powerful.pdf>
- Toward transformative justice: A liberatory approach to child sexual abuse and other forms of intimate and community violence  
[http://www.generationfive.org/downloads/G5\\_Toward\\_Transformative\\_Justice.pdf](http://www.generationfive.org/downloads/G5_Toward_Transformative_Justice.pdf)
- Restorative justice: the evidence  
[http://www.sas.upenn.edu/jerrylee/RJ\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/jerrylee/RJ_full_report.pdf)

### Books

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### Websites

- <http://www.phillystandsup.com/>
- <http://www.generationfive.org/index.php>
- <http://www.incite-national.org>
- <http://www.svri.org/justice.htm>
- <http://www.restorativejustice.org>
- <http://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice>

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Toward a Peaceful and Creative Coexistence through Empathic Recognition of Our Inner Universality**

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**Keywords:** Peace, War, Inner Universality

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## **TOWARD A PEACEFUL AND CREATIVE COEXISTENCE THROUGH EMPATHIC RECOGNITION OF OUR INNER UNIVERSALITY**

### **Abstract**

Our world is facing unprecedented conflicts in cultures of violence. Largely drawing on Daisaku Ikeda's work as a starting point, this inquiry stresses the recognition of our inner universality, a mutually creative coexistence shared with the universe that can reawaken our inherent symbiotic, altruistic motivations as the next step in establishing the peaceful coexistence of human beings. Whether or not we are aware of it, these symbiotic, altruistic motivations constantly renew themselves as we strive to nurture and elevate our empathic potentials, simultaneously deepening the inherent humanity that defines our human integrity. Social interactions that form the basis of this deepened integrity spring forth independent of ideology, interactions that are the antithesis of war. Throughout history and time war has been the response to a set of ideological differences where the present is continuously sacrificed to some utopian non-existent future. Five conceptual alternatives to the political and economic ideologies heretofore sustaining war are proposed, alternatives that embody the spirit of inner universality, along with contemporary applications in practice. Supporting the premise that dialogue enriches new understandings of inner universality, I conclude by offering the dimensions of a new dialogue.

## Introduction

*Ultimately, the root cause of conflict and human misery lies in the helpless feeling that an individual can't make a difference – in other words, in an ignorance of and inability to believe in the dignity and infinite potential of human beings.*

-Daisaku Ikeda (2015), On Repaying Debts of Gratitude

*... The kind of inner universality I have been discussing, in which we plant our feet firmly in the actualities of the local community and seek to develop all larger perspectives from that starting point... [means] if we pay careful attention to the particular characteristics present in even a tiny patch of land, observing and analyzing them within the processes of living there, we can develop the ability to grasp the characteristics of the entire country or even the world.*

-Daisaku Ikeda (2009), Toward Humanitarian Competition: A New Current in History

*Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right.*

- Jane Goodall (1946), In the Shadow of Man

This article begins by discussing the ideological causes and human devastation of war. It then defines and proposes a notion Daisaku Ikeda has suggested is central in reconceptualizing alternatives to the prevailing ideologies of war: the recognition of our inner universality. This recognition can open the path for an effective dialogue and practices toward: engendering a new sense of security, recognizing the power of women, creating a deeper sense of global citizenship, encouraging humanitarian competition and ensuring the practice of imaginative empathy. Given the premise that the current ideology of peace is inherently flawed, I propose dimensions for a new dialogue that can help bring about greater mutual understanding toward the achievement of a more peaceful and creative coexistence.

## The Ideological Causes and Human Devastation of War

Our world is facing unprecedented conflicts sustained by persistent cultures of violence. Violence and bloodshed have enduring effects on people long after the fighting is over. Throughout time war has been the response to a set of ideological differences from which the present is continuously sacrificed to some utopian non-existent future. These ideologies are primarily motivated by political and economic hidden agendas and have little to do with people's well-being or that of the land. Rather, they function to sustain the ongoing condition of war and its inescapable human devastation. The antithesis and solution to this ideological quandary is embodied in the spirit of what Buddhist peace builder and educator Daisaku Ikeda has called the spirit of inner universality (See e.g. Ikeda, 2009a; 1989). Social interactions that stem from this spirit spring forth independent of ideology and form the very substance of peace. The recognition of our inner universality can reawaken life's inherent symbiotic, altruistic motivations. As awareness of our mutually creative coexistence shared with the universe, inner universality is the next step in establishing the peaceful coexistence of human beings. Whether or not we are aware of it, these symbiotic, altruistic motivations constantly renew themselves as we strive to nurture and elevate our empathic potential, deepening the inherent humanity that defines life's tremendous integrity. The current

underlying premise of peace through war as the means to “progress” is an ideology inherently flawed at its inception. It only serves to create further division between people. The pressing need for an alternative looms heavily upon us. In an age of nuclear and biological weapons that could very well bring us to an evolutionary dead end, the times call for an urgent reassessment of human behaviors and the ideologies that have heretofore sustained them. This reassessment guided by awareness of our inner universality gives rise to a new dialogue. The dimensions of this new dialogue and its capacity to enable every human being to wage peace through the power of mutual understanding are described in conclusion.

Glenn Martin (2004) proposes that if human beings are to be liberated from the cycle of war and violence they must also understand that oppression is not only a phenomena of third world communities where first world economic decisions routinely cause immeasurable suffering to countless numbers of marginally existing poor but a phenomenon of the dehumanization of all humanity being created by affluent modern technological societies whose immense economic interests increasingly manipulate human desires and opinions. Economic and political ideologies produce one-dimensional thinking and obstruct the creative nature of human beings as they strive toward realizing a fuller humanity. Humanity’s liberation, Martin contends, must encompass the transformation from institutions of war, exploitation, and oppression currently dominating the planet to an inner spiritual transformation if humanity is to free itself of the tormented human psyche that appears to reciprocally arise from and be perpetuated by its own cyclic and ever-increasing violent planetary condition.

The economic integration and technology that has brought the world closer together is increasingly its source of conflict and division. The critical need to discover ways of appreciating and surmounting differences in cultural values and outlooks becomes ever more apparent. This need is the central issue of Ikeda's philosophy. And the central task before humanity is to discover what he calls a “common humanity” that is based on universal values to support and encourage its fullest expression (Ikeda in Ikeda & Weiming, 2007, *passim*). The quest to establish an end to war is rooted in this task for it enables the recognition of one another as part of the same human family. Basic values like love for one’s children, the commendableness of effort, the worthiness of altruistic actions and the nobility of solidarity are values appreciated by all people worldwide. The recognition of these values stems from the basic core value of respect for the dignity of human life embodied in the spirit of inner universality. This spirit entails an approach to searching and clarifying of values that respects and encourages the particularity and uniqueness of each culture and each individual’s way of expressing it, an approach that is ultimately put into action through dialogue (see also *A Universal Humanity*).

### **The Recognition of Our Inner Universality**

The recognition of our inner universality, a mutually creative coexistence we share with the universe, can reawaken the inherent symbiotic, altruistic motivations to enable the next step for establishing the peaceful coexistence of human beings. Inner universality encompasses the notion that all human beings possess symbiotic, altruistic motivations that mimic the compassionate workings of the very universe itself (Ikeda, 2009a). Yoichi Kawada (2013) describes this compassionate profound coexistence human beings share with the greater cosmos as one that

encompasses both “inter-organism ethics (between all life forms)” and “intergenerational ethics (between past and future generations)” (p. 11). The reawakening of these motivations is a process of ever-expanding consciousness toward the richest life state possible. This life state is achieved as one progresses from an experience of oneness with all life, to feeling connected to the eternal, to appreciating one’s having life, to a spirit of greater and deeper compassion. The deepening desire to connect to the primordial cosmic source or the eternal in the ever-changing universe forms our symbiotic coexistence with the universe. Whether or not we are aware of it, this desire or consciousness constantly renews itself as we strive to nurture and elevate our empathic potentials, deepening our inherent humanity, renewing our human integrity. Social interactions that form the basis of this renewed integrity spring forth independent of ideology, interactions that are the antithesis of war.

Ikeda (1991) describes the symbiotic nature of human life and the universe and the dynamic relation existing between the two. One of the most central Buddhist concepts is dependent origination or the complex web of causation and connection that describes the relationship between all life and its environment. Whether in the realm of human or natural affairs, this relationship means all of life occurs in relation to other beings or circumstances. The underlying implication is that nothing “can exist or occur solely of its own accord” (p. 195). In addition to this emphasis on interdependent relationships, Buddhism also holds that there is compassionate energy that pulses within the depths of all human being’s lives, an energy whose scale is congruent with the infinite and unlimited universe itself. This compassionate energy mimics the universe’s desire for harmonious relationships. Ikeda explains that in human actions this energy is expressed in the notion of respect for the sanctity of life. Therefore when Shakyamuni was asked, “We are told that life is precious. And yet all people live by killing and eating other living beings. Which living beings may we kill and which living beings must we not kill?” His answer was, “It is enough to kill the will to kill!” (Ikeda, 1991, p. 196). Ikeda proposes this is no mere “simplistic denial or abnegation” nor “mere objective awareness” but instead:

...refers to a state of compassion transcending distinctions between self and other; it refers to a compassionate energy that beats within the depths of all people's subjective lives; it is here that the individual and the universal life are merged...It is the fusion--at the deepest level--of self and other. At the same time it is an expansion of the limited, ego-shackled self toward a greater self whose scale is as limitless and unbounded as the universe (Ikeda, 1991, p. 196).

Ikeda (1993a) defines this “greater self” as one embodying an “openness and expansiveness of character that embraces the suffering of all people as one’s own” (p. 175). He refers to the recognition of the greater self as our ability to tap into a self that is “fused with the life of the universe” (p. 175). In contrast the lesser self is “caught up in the snares of egoism” (p. 175). Ikeda moreover explains how encounter with difference once recognized as part of one’s most “essential self” is identified with the totality of life, constituting one’s “enduring self” (Urbain, 2013, p. 52). Based on its highly self-reflective, self-transformative and self-reformative character, the enduring self has the ability to spur a whirlwind of openness when engaged with others. It inspires truly heart to heart and fully-engaged dialogues and has the ability to recognize itself in others and understand “both good and evil as potentialities existing in all people” (Ikeda, 1996a, p. 56). This

ego-free state of life, Ikeda (1991) continues, is capable of transcending all distinctions between self and other and ultimately understands that the environment is dependent upon a dynamic relation with the internally-generated activity of life itself. The central question for human beings then becomes how to activate this inherent inner source of energy and wisdom?

This very same human seeking spirit that Ikeda points out is set forth in Buddhism, is a “self-questioning” “soul-searching” contemplative stance (Ikeda, 1991, p. 191) that strives to overcome “obsessions with differences” for the sake of peace and solidarity (2007, in Ikeda & Weiming). For Ikeda this spirit is humanity’s most noble intention. This intention is guided by the desire to come together with others so as to achieve a more human wholeness. By pooling our wisdom to discover the answers to the central question on how to revive “the innate sources of human energy” (2007, in Ikeda & Weiming), we begin to identify shared, universal principles within the context of contemporary society. It is Ikeda’s premise that it is here in our own hearts and those of the person next to us where we begin to understand the nature of life. In fact we need look nowhere further, for as we engage openly with others, with the sincere intent to share our heart and understand their perspective, we simultaneously tap into the same inherent potential that exists in all life.

Ikeda (2008) describes inner universality as “the ultimate principle and essential nature of all phenomena...found nowhere other than in the human heart” (p. 4). Dialogue between human beings is the human heart’s most essential expression rendering humans more human and wise. In fact Ikeda asserts that abandoning dialogue “is in effect to abandon our humanity” (Ikeda, p. 9). The quest for a universal humanism that can transcend sectarian and dogmatic frameworks is the most central challenge in the history of civilization for it entails what Ikeda calls “the humanization of religion” (p. 7).

Supporting the premise that dialogue enriches new understandings of inner universality, I propose five concepts with some contemporary applications as alternatives to the political and economic ideologies heretofore sustaining the institution of war: 1) engendering a new sense of human security 2) recognizing the power of women 3) creating a deeper sense of global citizenship 4) encouraging Humanitarian Competition (Makiguchi, 1903) and 5) ensuring the practice of “imaginative empathy” (Ikeda, 1996a, p. 55).

### Engendering a New Sense of Human Security

Human security is one way to express the notion of the fundamental worth of every human being in tangible form (Urbain, 2013; Ikeda, 1995a). Human security might be translated as placing emphasis, without denying the functional importance of the lands or territories, on human beings. The fundamental worth of every human being is a primary component of inner universality or inner universalism. Another conceivable component of inner universality is implied in Slater’s (2009) “integrative spirituality” (p. 150). Based on the premise that all human beings are born in a female and mother’s womb and “No one except a Siamese twin has ever been part of another male body, but everyone has been part of a mother’s body” (2009, p. 157), integrative spirituality like Ikeda’s (2009a) inner universality entails profound implications for the notion of war.

Both inner universality and integrative spirituality imply notions symbolic of human security. The human-based commonalities associated with integrative spirituality's expanding, compassionate mother-child-womb interconnection like inner universality's expanding human inner life inextricably linked to the compassionate consciousness or external cosmic life source of the universe are notions understood by many as the next step in the human abolishment of war. The basis for this understanding is the more one taps into the compassionate empathic consciousness of "mother," like the compassionate empathic consciousness of the universe, mother to all life, the more one understands that harming another erodes security, breeds mistrust and is tantamount to harming oneself and all life. Yet ideology driven by notions of social progress as the means to human happiness with states taking precedence over human beings and life has served to effectively block this awareness, notions persisting throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, obscuring the peace and security at the root of our most essential humanity.

Progress understood as a license for human degradation is at the core of a humanity lost all sense of life's inner universality, integrative spirituality, inherent value and dignity. Seminal in the thinking of Buddhism is the upholding of the sanctity of life and a determination to devote one's life to helping others overcome suffering and terror. Through dynamic action in this endeavor, one contributes to the creation of the necessary "indestructible realm of security and comfort amid the stark realities of society" (Ikeda, 1995a, p. 230). This determination to respect life and lead a contributive life is based on a deep sense of compassion compatible with that of a mother for her child. Empathy in Buddhism finds expression in the kind of motherly compassion that includes both sharing others' sufferings as one's own as well as the commitment to helping them overcome them (Ikeda in Ikeda, Bourgeault, & Simard, 2002). There is perhaps no greater comfort or sense of security than that experienced by a child with its mother. This deeply spiritual relationship is at the most primordial root of all experience in life. National security is no exception.

Former National Security Council senior member, Michel Charles Oksenberg (1938-2001) in a conversation with Daisaku Ikeda (personal dialogue, 9 October 1994) distinguished the true meaning of national security:

If people live in a spiritual void, they will experience insecurity. They will not know stability. They will not feel at ease. The nations and states in which they live will therefore not be offering their people true security. Real security requires that we consider more than just the security of the state but that we also include in our considerations the security of cultures and individual human beings. (cited in Ikeda, 1995a, p. 231)

Ikeda (2005a) observes a mother's inherent capacity for empathy and the twisted notions that mothers support their sons going to war or are in some way moved when honored by society for their children's participation:

[I]t is ordinary people--it is especially mothers and children guilty of no crime whatsoever--who bear the brunt of the appalling physical and mental suffering wrought by war. So many of the young men of my generation were incited by the militarist government to march proudly into battle and give their lives. The families left behind were praised for their sacrifices to protect the home front and as "military mothers"--a term deemed to carry

high honor. But, in reality, what a devastating tumult of pain, grief and misery swirled in the depths of their hearts! A mother's love, a mother's wisdom, is too great to be fooled by such empty phrases as "for the sake of the nation." (paras. 2-3)

Ikeda vividly recalls an incident one early spring morning in 1945 after a sleepless night taking cover from regularly occurring air raids. As a steady stream of one-hundred enemy B-29s vanished into the dawn horizon, someone shouted, "Hey! What's that?" A parachuting enemy soldier fell from the sky in a field some 300 meters away. Upon landing, a group began beating him nearly senseless with sticks; one threatening to kill him with a Japanese sword. He was later led away by military police, arms tied behind his back, eyes blindfolded:

When I got back and told my mother what had happened, she said, "How awful! His mother must be so worried about him." My mother was a very ordinary woman, in many ways the product of the era in which she was born and raised. But looking back, I am struck by her ability, as a mother, to empathize with the sufferings of a fellow mother--an "enemy" mother separated by thousands of kilometers of physical distance and by the high walls of political ideology. (2005a, paras. 7-8)

A key point of Ikeda's peace proposals on human security (e.g. 1995a, 2012) is to engender a new sense of global security that moves beyond the present preoccupation with national security to implement new frameworks designed and developed first and foremost to protect people (Urbain, 2013). A concrete suggestion he made in 1995 was that the United Nations which has thus far failed to fulfill its original intention to restrain and temper national sovereignty's deadly effects on people throughout the world, "shift away from traditional, military-centered conceptualizations of security" and instead create a new environment and development security council. This would enable the U.N. to empower and reengage itself in the true "pressing questions of human security with renewed energy and focus" (Ikeda, 1995a, p. 237).

### Recognizing the Power of Women

Ikeda (2005a) often acknowledges women's inherent capacity as models for peace possessing natural peacemaking skills as "givers and nurturers of life" (para. 9). He helped establish in 1980, the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee to promote individual peace efforts and increase awareness of women's role in building a culture of peace. The committee has compiled and published 20 volumes of war testimonials and developed and hosted seminars and exhibitions throughout Japan. The Young Women's Peace and Culture Conference was established in 1992 with an aim to promote peace education among younger generations of women who have no firsthand experience of war. Today, SGI women throughout the world are engaged in peace and human rights education in an era that Ikeda frequently refers to as a century shaped by empowered women. On April 2, 2009, the women's committee launched an educational DVD titled "Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace," featuring ten women whose lives were devastated following the atomic bombings of the two cities. The SGWPC also launched a campaign titled "Creating the Culture of Peace Together With Children," with forums and an exhibition entitled "Children and the Culture of Peace" running throughout Japan through November 2015 raising awareness of children's rights and commemorating the 25th anniversary

of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by the UN General Assembly November 20, 1989 (See e.g. SGWPC; SGI-OPI, 2014).

Ikeda (2005a) points to women's power as stemming from a focus on human relationships enhanced by the demanding work in raising children and protecting family life. This deeper sense of empathy is one that "cuts through to underlying human realities" (para. 9). Although Ikeda cries out to all men and women to speak out against war and "unite in a new global partnership for peace" (para. 17), especially all who have experienced brutality and violence that strips people of their very humanity, he proclaims it is women who are the most powerful protagonists in this effort. Ikeda (1996b) also clarifies that "in the future, rather than a situation where either one sex or the other dominates society, it will be necessary to develop a completely new civilization in which there is balance and harmony between the sexes" (para. 7, see also Ikeda in Ikeda et al, 2001, p. 113). Masao Yokota (2007) has noted that Ikeda "especially trusts women, even declaring the 21st century to be the century of women" adding upon reflection "Ikeda counts on women to show how to heal the wounds of separation" (as cited in Olesky & Bogen, 2007, para. 3). In fact Ikeda declares:

...unless women's perspectives are incorporated and their contributions actively sought, there is a real risk that the resulting research will fail to generate useful ideas. Indeed, it could even skew thinking away from the core strategies needed for the fundamental resolution of the challenges at hand. (Ikeda, 2001a, p. 8)

Noting the need to bring the voices, concerns and wisdom of mothers to the forefront in all spheres of society, Ikeda (2005a) extols the inborn, deeply rooted desire for peace in mothers who can lead others to extend and deepen the solidarity that grows from empathetic recognition of a shared humanity. By emulating the embedded desire of mothers to protect life and loved ones from harm, men and women both come to embrace all living beings as their own, transforming the twenty-first century of war into a century of life.

Edith D. McCarthy (1999) similarly notes women have been the most active leaders in peace, as well as in ecology, environmental movements and the maintaining of a focus on "imperialistic" practices in the U.S. and other Western scientific establishments (pp. 90-91). She also observes people shape social realities and effect knowledge as much as social realities and knowledge shape people. Ideas that form culture and knowledge are dialectic yet inextricably linked. Social realities inform as much as they are informed by a mass media responsible for distributing an increasingly broader view of discourses to an increasingly larger public. McCarthy's sociology of knowledge scrutinizes current interpretations and constructions of reality with the prime task of defining social problems and examining why and how groups, classes and nations compete for control over public opinion, a task that necessarily tells a story of discriminatory practices.

Sandra Harding (1991), like McCarthy sheds light on science's all too often male-dominated and private interest group-dominated perceptions of nature: "Women and men cannot understand or explain the world we live in or the real choices we have as long as the sciences describe and explain the world primarily from the perspectives of the lives of the dominant groups" (p. 324). Poignantly and wittily

she poses the question how much more our views of nature and social life might differ if those who “discovered them” were responsible for “cleaning up after them” (Harding, 1991, p. 27).

The day when all women worldwide decide to unite, speaking out together against this futile, abominable thing that is war, will be the day human beings begin the advance toward a more humane civilization. Women’s sheer numbers alone, our forces encompassing more than half of humanity, would surely pose the necessary collective power and unified strength to once and for all disallow this unconscionable institution. Women must bring humanity to its senses to see that nothing more ludicrous, more heinous, and more absurd exists than the killing of one’s fellow species in the name of glory, God, country or any other “irrationally” conceived label. I am confident that women’s deeper understanding of life’s inner universality is our significant contribution for bringing humanity to a realization of the colossal folly of war.

### Creating a Deeper Sense of Global Citizenship

The primary focus of global citizenship education is to cultivate a genuine concern for peace. SGI has long posited that it is not through any political ideology that human security can be accomplished. Rather, only to the extent that we face the challenges confronting us amidst the harsh contradictions of society, changing ourselves first, are we able to begin the work of transforming the world for the better. “Human revolution,” a term coined by 2nd Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda, is a pragmatic foundation for the endeavor to include as the prime focus of security, the security and moreover happiness and empowerment of individual human beings (Ikeda, 1995a, p. 230). Its inner reformation of the individual results in a renewal and invigoration of life and daily living. Another name for the attainment of human revolution is the attainment of Buddhahood. Ikeda is convinced that the commitment to individual empowerment is the first step in the evolution of the human race toward becoming strong, rich and wise and most of all in being able to lead a peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

Individual empowerment rejects assumptions of an unchangeable destiny and is per Ikeda (2015) the only means by which humanity will be prevented from falling into the tragic misfortune of war and environmental disasters. This inner empowerment through individual transformation has the potential to create tremendous transformation without. Individual inner transformation moreover enables deeper empathy for others based on one’s accumulated experience in overcoming the continual vicissitudes of daily living. It is when faced by great hardship and adversity that we can especially accomplish our greatest human revolution and thereby deepen our powers of empathy for others. The greater the struggle the more elevated one’s awareness of the power of one’s own life and the more elevated one’s reverence for all life. Each struggle brings an increased capacity for understanding the tremendous power and inherent nobility of the human spirit and all of life. This inner nobility describes not only Ikeda’s (1996a) ethic of global citizenship but his notion of inner universality as a component of the basic principles applying to all of humanity and inherent in all of life (see e.g. Ikeda, 2008; see also SGI Australia).

Human revolution, so much more than a commitment to personal transformation, is the driving force for social change, finding expression in active engagement with life and social realities. To foster an ethic of global citizenship, a sense of belonging to and responsibility for the global human

community based on empathic awareness of our most dignified shared humanity, Ikeda has founded the principle of Soka education along with many Soka (value-creating) educational institutions (K through college) worldwide. He defines the essence of Soka education as a spirit to treasure each student's individuality toward their happiness and glorious future, with the aim of happiness for society as a whole and the peace of all humanity. Conversely, when education's purpose is framed by national interests, prioritizing big business and industry, education's essential grounding in respect for humanity is obscured (Ikeda, 2010b).

Ikeda (in Ikeda, Saito, et al., 2000) describes how the continual striving for individual transformation and improvement is a source of profound individual empowerment as well as a motivation for increasing empathy and compassion, a simultaneous compassionate empowerment that brings confidence and compels us to take action for others. The continual spiritual effort to develop and train ourselves, a constant struggle to challenge our negativity and expand our life to encompass those around us, strengthens our sense of inner universality. Through personal transformative reformation one transforms the sense of a life of powerlessness and despair into one filled with satisfaction and happiness which then motivates work for the happiness of others.

Like Ikeda, Nel Noddings (2005, 2012) notes the vital importance of Peace education in the promotion of global citizenship; an education she stresses must also include the visual arts. The vivid depiction especially in photographs that captures "this havoc, this carnage" caused by war as none but monsters could ignore (2012, p. 149, as cited in Sontag, 2003, p. 8; Woolf, 1938) fully engages the senses and is an intensified experience, the kind that is necessary to move us beyond modern apathy and indifference. Noddings accords the lack of empathy with a failure of imagination, our inability to retain both a concrete and existential meaning of reality. Education too often emphasizes organization of knowledge into defined disciplines where we tend to over analyze and produce facts rather than listen and pay attention to the greater universal aims of happiness that produce wisdom. Noddings contends that education that combines both reason and emotion contains both knowledge and wisdom. This wisdom comes from our human ability (not to mention many non-human animals' ability) to empathize and put feelings together with self-interest.

Ikeda's (1996a) global citizenship is embodied in many of the principles of Soka education. As founder of Soka Education of the Soka education system, which includes kindergartens in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Brazil, a complete school system in Japan as well as Soka University in Japan and the United States (See Soka Education), Ikeda notes global citizenship is nothing more than the ability of ordinary citizens to possess inner nobility, regardless of how much they've travelled or whether they've never travelled beyond their native homes. This nobility is based on genuine concern for the peace and prosperity of the world and the Soka model fosters an education that aspires to enable such noble character (Simpson, 2014). Soka education provides a "momentum to win over one's weaknesses, to thrive in the midst of society's challenges, and to generate new victories for the human future" (Ikeda, 1996a, p. 57). Soka University was founded in 1971 in Tokyo "with the advancement of humanistic education, culture and peace" as its founding mission (Ikeda, 2010a, p. 257). One of its branches, Soka University of America founded in 2001, has the mission "to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a

contributive life” with school mottos: “Be world citizens in solidarity for peace” and “Be the pioneers of a global civilization” (See Soka University).

There are many contemporary examples of global citizenship. Takako Yoshizawa (2011), an alumnus of Soka University of America proposes refugee education is an excellent model. She notes that the refugee education programs she has encountered conform to all three of Ikeda’s (1996a) described global citizenship characteristics:

- 1) the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living
- 2) the courage not to fear or deny differences but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them
- 3) the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings, extending to those suffering in distant places. (Ikeda, 1996a, p. 55)

Yoshizawa shares two organizations that exemplify the third notion of contributing to reaching a wider community than one’s immediate one: 1) the ASRC, Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, and 2) Embrace Education, a refugee-migrant education institution. Moreover, these two while embodying all three principles of Ikeda’s global citizenship paradigm especially achieve the practice of Ikeda’s transcending imaginative empathy. Moreover, Yoshizawa sees connections between the origins and purpose of Soka education founded and created out of criticism to militaristic education of WWII Japan and refugee education which has been formed out of the need to take care of neglected children and students rendered vulnerable as a result of war, persecution and the atrocities of their respective socio-political climates. Embrace Education is a university student-driven organization located on the Monash University Clayton Campus begun by a student in early 2000. Its purpose is to tutor refugee children of low socio-economic statuses who have been neglected by the education system. Today Embrace is the recipient of financial and administrative support from private firms and grants with facilities at the two largest universities in Melbourne, Monash and Melbourne Universities. Besides tutoring, Embrace promotes integration of communities, whereby refugee students learn to socialize with the locals and the locals learn to understand and appreciate the different cultures of their refugee counterparts. The harsh reality of refugee students in Australia, mainly from Africa and the Middle East, not afforded the “dream of starting life anew” (Yoshizawa, 2011, p. 255) and having long struggled for the merest survival with school at the bottom of their priorities, includes facing insurmountable language barriers and low socio-economic status in poorly funded and ill-equipped schools, putting them at immense educational disadvantage in comparison to their Australian peers (Matthews, 2008).

Yoshizawa (2011) observes how Ikeda stresses education must encourage students by providing opportunities for them to develop their potential unlimitedly while fostering in them a spirit undeterred by the “destructive influences of society” (p. 260 as cited in Ikeda, 2010b, p. 51). Embrace Education achieves this by addressing the needs of unsupported high school students of refugee or recent migrant backgrounds and meeting their demands through a deep commitment to tutoring them in their respective subject areas in meaningful partnering professional relationships. Equality is maintained through a mutual role as students and tutors encourage students without disciplinary agendas. Tutors are committed moreover to helping students fulfill their aspirations

and goals after high school and helping them connect these through the notion of “contributing back to the community” (p. 261). Yoshizawa proposes that with even further emphasis on tutors’ developing their character toward being “global citizens,” applying Ikeda’s three criteria, volunteers and staff would develop greater empathy toward refugee related issues and generate successful models for preventing crimes, racialization/ethnicization and discrimination throughout the global community.

### Encouraging Humanitarian Competition

Creating a symbiotic social environment (Ikeda, in Ikeda & Unger, 2006) calls for a departure from modes of competition which seek to secure one’s own prosperity at the expense of others (Ikeda, 2014). The essential dynamic and the defining aspect of “humanitarian competition,” an idea set forth by the Soka Gakkai founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) in 1903, is to ensure that competition be conducted “firmly on the basis of humane values” setting forth “a synergistic reaction between humanitarian concerns and competitive energies” (Ikeda, 2009a, p. 20).

A truer, fuller sense of self is found in the totality of the psyche that is inextricably linked to “other.” (Ikeda, 2001b, p. 55)

Goulah (2010) explains social interactions based on Ikeda’s humanitarian competition dialogic concretization by human beings. Based on the Buddhist principle of *esho funi*, the Buddhist concept of oneness of self and environment, whether between one human being and another, one culture and another or one aspect of nature and another, the two are always “inseparably and cooperatively interconnected” and dialogue is the first step in this understanding:

Such dialogic interaction among humans, cultures and the environment prohibits us from abstracting the Other, whether it be other human beings, other cultures, or the natural environment. When we seek to value the subjectivities of the Other through dialogue, we thereby “concretize” them, which is the first step in humanitarian competition. (Goulah, 2010, p. 8)

Through *esho funi*, a win-win humanitarian competition and mutual self-betterment is fostered by working for the betterment of others (Goulah, 2010). This simultaneous process that Ikeda refers to as “creative coexistence” (Ikeda, 2002, xxxiii) is the antithesis of the economic, political and militaristic competition consonant with the spirit of abstraction. The notion of war, and its extreme, terrorism, originates in a culture of fear that makes abstractions easier. Fear has been historically bred and developed by dominator social systems set up to make profit by rendering others subordinate and subservient (drawing on Eisler, 1987). Fear is proliferated in modern society by media-setting agendas that aggrandize victimization so as to seek enemies to blame and condemn. Oversimplifications like “good guys/bad guys” are misconceptions of human beings that impede self-reflection and inner reformation not to mention empathy, the essential prerequisite to peaceful coexistence. The imaginative empathy required to transform the vicious cycle from seeing oneself the victim or enemy of “others” responsible for one’s experience to perceiving oneself as part of a problem has been identified by numerous psychologists as crucial in improving not only one’s

physical health but psychological and spiritual well-being, including the ability to challenge depression, anxiety and fear, symptoms of individuals who behave most violently (See e.g. Ryan, 1971; Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Katz, 1984; Rappaport, 1981,1987; Swift, 1984).

Humanitarian competition works through awareness of such empathetic connections to others. Relentlessly confronting and transforming immediate realities, “thoughts and associations” are freely directed toward the “larger dimension” (Ikeda, 2009a, p. 8); a simultaneous fusion of self and “other” functioning to sustain the network of life.

Lynn Margulis (1938-2011), through her work on the origin of eukaryotic cells and endosymbiotic theory, together with son, Dorian (also son of astronomer, Carl Sagan) draws attention to the natural symbiotic processes in life that have proven over time immemorial that “Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking” (cited by Slater, 2009, p. 125; Margulis & Sagan, 2007, 2001).

A study by Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy (2012) on resilience and the advantages of informal networking revealed that social relationships founded on deep trust produce resilient communities able to cope with and resolve disruption. However when efforts to impose resilience come from outside these are likely to fail. Networks, built on heart-to-heart trust and encouragement (Ikeda, 2014), reaffirm once again the conviction of inner universality that the inherent value and power of life reside within the human heart (Ikeda, 2008).

Jennifer Hayashi (2014), founder of SokaVision, an organization that produces media with a commitment to creating value through community collaboration, shares her experience while filming a documentary on “Edu-Culture and Hip Hop in Ecuador.” Here she began to realize there are different kinds of competition and “so much more to [graffiti] writing than merely creating something on a wall” (p. 138):

When people are all doing graffiti together on the same wall, there is often a heavy energy of competition. There is positive competition, essentially who can create the best section but in the end there is merely a beautiful mural that each person could contribute to. At the end of painting everyone would compliment the other pieces and it was always an experience of collective joy. (Hayashi, 2014, p. 138)

Makiguchi, influenced by Dewey, saw competition as a driving force for the future of humankind. Once profoundly and qualitatively transformed, competition entails “a recognition of the interrelatedness and interdependence of human communities” emphasizing “the cooperative aspects of living” (Ikeda, 2010b, p. 6). Hayashi (2014) agrees with Makiguchi’s premise that education should embrace the notion of humanitarian competition and notes Hip-Hop and graffiti’s potential as forms of humanitarian competition:

The major issue is that people are writing on walls that are not theirs. However, most writers are using public space because they want to influence their community. They cannot have the same influence on the community making paintings to put up on walls in their house. While their neighbors were sleeping they were out all night doing graffiti

because they wanted to create a voice for their community. Graffiti is their form of communicating with the community. (p. 138)

Hayashi (2014) is now convinced that the one way to truly understand graffiti's true potential as a powerful force for education is by directly experiencing it within a community, where learning does not solely exist in some isolated schoolhouse but constantly occurs within daily life. Citing Dewey, she contends that to create the most optimum value one must sometimes move outside the boundaries of convention:

It is safe to say that a philosophy of art is sterilized unless it makes us aware of the function of art in relation to other modes of experience, and unless it indicates why this function is so inadequately realized, and unless it suggests the conditions under which the office would be successfully performed. (Dewey, 1934, p. 12)

Citing Ikeda (2007) that "Artists must be free to make public their thoughts, even if they are considered subversive by the existing powers" (p. 230), Hayashi sees hip-hop culture as a weapon for fighting the realities of oppression by creatively expressing the most pressing realities of one's everyday experience within one's community. She concludes that the unique Hip-Hop culture created in Quito, Ecuador is providing a way for individuals to redefine their place in society. One example is Nina Shinku's government-funded and youth-run center that serves to educate children, teens, and young adults on activism and sustainability through art, music, dance, Ecuadorian culture, history, and indigenous knowledge. The words of MC KRS-One describe hip-hop's humanitarian potential:

Hip means to know, it's a form of intelligence  
 To be hip is to be update and relevant  
 Hop is a form of movement  
 You can't just observe a hop, you gotta hop up and do it  
 Hip and hop is more than music  
 Hip is the knowledge, hop is the movement  
 Hip and Hop is intelligent movement  
 Hip hop, her infinite power  
 Helpin' oppressed people, we are unique and unequaled  
 Hip hop, holy integrated people  
 We gotta think about the children we bringin' up  
 When hip and hop means intelligence springin' up. (KRS-One as cited in Hayashi, 2014, p. 136)

Many youth in Quito attend schools, Hayashi (2014) explains, whose educational philosophy is far from humanistic. Their creative alternative is turning hip-hop into "education in the street" (p. 135). One graffiti artist tagged the streets with the name of his crew while on the next street a block away he painted indigenous women from the Amazon. Hayashi observed how difficult it was to imagine the two coming from the same artist. Above the women are the words "SAVE YASUNI," Yasuni being the most bio diverse place on planet earth, currently threatened by Ecuador's oil drilling for exportation to China. Hayashi notes the legal ironies:

It's illegal for him to write a message on the wall. But he is concerned about the destruction of one of the most unique habitats on earth. This writer has never been to the Amazon in his own country, but is willing to potentially be arrested so he can make his community aware of the reality of Yasuni. (Hayashi, 2014, p. 136)

Manuela Picq (2012), professor at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador shares a similar example in Kichwa hip-hop that is dethroning “the imagery of indigenous peoples as living in rural communities isolated from modernity” (title). She observes how hip-hop is the global language of the youth as well as one of alternative politics from the streets against the state. With its historical emergence as a voice of the excluded, although mainstreamed and commercialized, hip hop's essence claims self-empowerment while “denouncing racial injustice and seeking economic equality” (para. 2):

You know hip-hop has become a universal language when indigenous peoples from the Andes use art forms developed by African-Americans in the south Bronx to contest power structures in Paris. It's not only that indigenous hip-hop represents the cosmopolitan, pop face of ancestral cultures. It is that hip-hop has become a tool to sing other worlds into existence, contributing alternative imaginaries in the pursuit for more [and] better democracies. (Picq, 2012, para. 4)

Humanitarian competition is inspiring a new inter and intra-civilizational dialogue. Providing peaceful and effective resistance to patterns of violence and domination, humanitarian competition is the most practical alternative to the current misplaced conception that free competition and markets resolve problems.

Yet how does one create the caring climate to encourage the practice of humanitarian competition and its humane processes so restorative of community accountability and collaboration? How do people transform cultures of violence into cultures of peace given the nature of conflicting identities? Terrence Paupp (2012) proposes that examining how identity is “predicated” and “framed” is noteworthy of attention. Among Manuel Castells (2004) three paths of identity, the “legitimizing identity” (going with the status quo), the “resisting identity” (similar to what Ikeda calls a lack of humanity in the current global system) and the “project identity” – the latter is conducive to a culture of peace and Ikeda's humanitarian competition (Paupp, 2012, pp. xxiii-xxiv). Humanitarian competition is a decision to develop one's project identity by working on one's inner transformation to create an outer more global transformation, bridging the two through dialogue and action, using human competitive tendencies toward humanistic endeavors.

### Ensuring the Practice of Imaginative Empathy

An examination of social intelligence, empathy and aggression demonstrates that the ability for peaceful conflict resolution is substantially reduced when empathy is removed from the correlation (Fernandez, 2002; Björkqvist et al., 2000). Moreover, empathy when “rooted in the universal spirit of human dignity” (Ikeda, 2005b, p. 8) inhibits aggressive behaviors like those negatively

expressed competitive energies that can lead to violence and war. Ikeda links empathy with this spirit or evolving human capacity.

To end the human institution of war, to relegate it to history with such barbarous practices as slavery — at one time also considered natural, inevitable, “part of human nature” — we must establish respect for the inviolable dignity of human life as the core value of our age. Rather than turning away from the staggering scale and depth of misery caused by war, we must strive to develop our capacity to empathize and feel the sufferings of others. (Ikeda, 2005a, para. 14)

Unlike sympathy, empathy is not an emotional state but a cognitive one. A cognitive assessment of another’s present condition is felt and shared deep within, causing the empathizer to experience a heightened sentiment “followed by an affective and engaged response” to their needs (Rifkin, 2009, para. 11; Hoffman, 2001). The empathic observer maintains a sense of self but never gathers information to be used for self-interest, as is often the case in sympathy. Jeremy Rifkin (2009) concludes that empathy may be causing “an increasingly individualized population to affiliate with one another in more interdependent, expanded, and integrated social organisms” (para. 16). In fact, he is convinced that human nature is apt to seek companionship, affection, and intimacy over autonomy and within this active engagement is an inherent willingness in the observer to associate his/her self in another’s experience while sharing the feelings of that experience. When empathy and the desire for association is combined with compassionate solidarity with another’s heart and when moreover these sentiments are based on respect for the inherent dignity of life, both our own and that of others, we are more naturally inclined to not only help others overcome their sufferings but triumph in their victories and joy (see Compassion).

Paupp (2012) notes Fritjof Capra’s (1982) argument that human beings, their social institutions and all of life evolve with increasing complexity in processes of differentiation. In humans, mental patterns demonstrate creativity and a desire for self-transcendence, a “characteristic of all life” (in Capra, p. 298). It has been suggested by many that these patterns also referred to as self-organization, once recovered could open the door to understanding the foundations of a united humankind. Although the division of human beings into communities is unavoidable, humans are “profoundly sociable” and “all human communities must be understood as expressions of such sociability” (Bartelson 2009, p. 139; see also e.g. Shaftesbury; Vico; Turgot; Diderot).

Rifkin (2009) underlines the direct relationship between empathy and civilization that extends from inner transformation or “selfhood” and leads to resocialization of blood ties to include other members of society:

As already mentioned, the awakening sense of selfhood is crucial to the development and extension of empathy. The more individualized and developed the self is, the greater is our sense of our own unique, mortal existence, as well as our existential aloneness and the many challenges we face in the struggle to be and to flourish. It is these very feelings in ourselves that allow us to empathize with similar existential feelings in others. A heightened empathic sentiment also allows an increasingly individualized population to affiliate with one another in more interdependent, expanded, and integrated social

organisms. This is the process that characterizes what we call civilization. Civilization is the detribalization of blood ties and the resocialization of distinct individuals based on associational ties. Empathic extension is the psychological mechanism that makes the conversion and the transition possible. When we say to civilize, we mean to empathize. (Rifkin, 2009, paras. 15-16)

SGI Buddhist practitioners create deep associational ties while seeking truth through social interactions based on equality, mutual empathy and committed engagement. Truths are revealed through experiences in faith “shared and transmitted through an expanding web of empathetic connection among people” (See Discussion Meetings, 2007). Buddhism’s focus on human subjectivity means the individual gives rise to the world by actively embodying the fundamental power of the compassionate Law or natural principle governing the workings of life in the universe through a web of mutually interconnected and interdependent relationships (Matsuoka, 2005). Buddhism’s empathically shared practice calls for self-disciplined self-restraint toward suppressing inherent human evil in favor of inherent human good. Key to bringing out this good is self-introspection expressed through Buddhist compassionate empathy toward self and others and the understanding that “Only within himself would he be at peace” and never “seeks peace from another” (Shakyamuni as cited in Matsuoka, 2005, p. 60). Rather, Buddhists simultaneously achieve peace overcoming their sufferings together through a process of self-reflection and self-reformation.

Given contemporary “processes of globalization, the decline of the nation-state, and the crumbling walls of US hegemony” the reality of such profound human processes of sociability is beginning to set in (Paupp, 2012). Coupled with a complex set of ambiguities, many youth find themselves seeking shared meanings and common understandings via texting, Tweeting, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, FaceTime and countless forms of video games. It is an opportune time to develop games and applications that include “a process of engagement...guided by an ethos of nonviolence” (Paupp, 2012 as cited in Falk, 1995, p. 171).

Many artists have innovative ideas that express the need for imaginative empathy amidst the struggle in modern times to end violence and war. One example, “Memorial Video Games” is designed to enable young people to practice empathy and engender more community oriented processes (Rughiniş & Matei, 2015). Using commemorative historical events, these games are lauded to enable the player to identify “family resemblance” features and specific rhetorical resources, claiming his/her own more truthful representation. This process is said to invite empathic understanding and opportunities for reflection, while focusing on time-related mechanics. Unfortunately most of the games center on war events like 9/11 or WWI/II. Rughiniş & Matei (2015) propose alternative design resources to assist in the creation of more meaningful remembrance games in the future. Diana Raffaella (2015) notes a more humanitarian agenda in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who are actively reaching out to video game developers to support efforts to promote respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). They signed a partnership in 2012 with Bohemia Interactive who introduced a system for turning one’s enemies into allies and where one is forced to face consequences if one shoots civilian players.

A recent study by Andrea Flores and Carrie James (2013) exploring youth's narratives about their "online lives" found individualistic thinking (focusing on consequences for oneself) dominated, while moral thinking (considering known others) was somewhat prevalent, and ethical thinking (acknowledging unknown others and communities) was the least prevalent of all. Surprisingly, ethical thinking was found among participants who interact principally with offline friends and among those with online-only friends, fellow bloggers or gamers. They even observed evidence of an 'ethics of care' (Gilligan, 1982) and moreover, a kind of "neighborhood morality" that maintained networked publics as close relations. Also, ethical thinking was present in the form of community thinking but not necessarily informed by or interested in the extended possible range of stakeholders affected by their activities. In fact, relatively few participants thought consistently about the ethical implications of their online actions, and lacked consistency in other areas, implying they apply their ethical thinking situationally. Although this inconsistent use of ethical thinking implies certain online contexts engender greater 'moral sensitivity' (Bebeau et al., 1999) while others greater 'disinhibition' (Suler, 2004) the upside is that there are particular online situations more apt to prompt moral and ethical action. Flores and James outline an emerging digital citizenship curriculum that provides relevant supports with principled thinking – a key component of moral thinking – and supplemental school-based portals created and offered by peer-based efforts in online contexts.

Although the internet has been lauded for its ability to cross borders, destroy distance and break down real world barriers, it is only real human beings interacting in authentic heart to heart empathic dialogue that has the power to reach across all barriers and bring about a "fundamental transformation" (Ikeda, 2001c, p. 107). Jazz is recently being used more and more as an effective heartfelt form of dialogue to stimulate intercultural understanding and reduce tensions between individuals, groups, and communities (See UNESCO, 2014). A language born and developed from slavery, jazz is increasingly recognized as a powerful force for freedom of expression for young people of marginalized societies and a symbol for both peace and unity. Last year's UNESCO International Jazz Day celebrated the 20th anniversary of UNESCO's Slave Route Project consecrated to the theme, "Assume the past, understand the present, build the future together" (UNESCO, 2014, para. 5). Spokesperson Marcus Miller shares the power of music as a story teller:

Music is such a beautiful way to tell stories. And in my mind, the stories we need to tell are the ones that depict the human struggle for dignity and equality. (See UNESCO, 2014, para. 7)

Herbie Hancock (2014a) explains dialogue and empathy are inherent components of jazz. He believes people in the audience sense this. Sharing the example of a 1998 concert at the Summit of the Americas in Chile at which President Clinton asked the Thelonious Monk Institute to represent jazz for the United States, Hancock describes their performance that acted as a powerful diplomatic tool:

When we were on stage, I could look out at the audience and see the representatives of the different countries relaxing. I could see a glow come to their faces, and I could see the invisible barriers coming down. The next day President Clinton told us that we did more

for intercultural dialogue than all of the heads of states and ambassadors that were there. (Hancock, 2014a, para. 5)

Hancock (2014b) explains what UNESCO Jazz International Days means to him:

Freedom of expression...teamwork...being open, embracing many cultures...working toward peace, toward harmony and encouraging that in everyone, and also spreading hope, respect for every human being, respect for different ideas, different perspectives, being non-judgmental, but also trusting others and trusting yourself toward the continual process of evolution of our own creativity, of our own ability to expand ourselves, to harmonize with each other in pursuit of a better world (transcribed from video).

In particular, Hancock (2014c) describes how when pursuing unknown territory to discover something innovative, jazz depends so much on empathy between musicians. Applying jazz's principle of being non-judgmental and taking whatever someone is playing to make something of beauty, Hancock (2014b) recalls jazz's inherent message that it's always okay to lose the battle in favor of winning the war. Jazz's tradition is a refreshing outlook for perceiving circumstances even when those are a source of tremendous suffering and pain and drawing from them to transcend the notion of defeat, really only a momentary notion.

Hancock's description expresses the possibilities of jazz as a formidable alternative to the anger and violence so prevalent in society. Because jazz encourages individual artists to support the desire for harmony by adding to and enhancing whatever other players are collectively and/or individually creating, its open-minded approach eliminates the ego that drives competitive individual status-seeking. In this way, Jazz helps cultivate a spirit of mutual cooperation and sense of responsibility for the sake of the collective whole, making it a highly effective model for cultural diplomacy and peace.

Like jazz artists seeking harmony, international relations scholars note the effectiveness of empathy for achieving diplomatic and democratic reconciliation post violent conflict. The primary practice of empathy relies on both "the victims' willingness to listen to the reasons for the hatred of those who caused their pain and with the offenders' understanding of the anger and bitterness of those who suffered" (Sørensen et al., 2003, p. 21). Sometimes this empathy is rendered possible through truth commissions, sifting fact from fiction, truth from myth. These can lead to an official acknowledgement of the injustice inflicted and become a common point for partnership:

Truth-telling is also a pre condition of reconciliation because it creates objective opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective responsibility. More important still is the recognition that victims and offenders share a common identity, as survivors and as human beings, and simply have to get on with each other. In some cases the parties in the conflict will seek and discover meeting points where partnership appears more sensible than sustained conflict. (Sørensen et al., 2003, p. 21)

Aleksandar Fatić and Srđan Korać (2011) examined the importance in building diplomacy through mutual empathy and trust building based on a shared sense of solidarity. Contemporary diplomatic

bodies have historically decided the fates of nations they are not used to taking seriously. The more stable countries beginning to compete for membership as major global decision-making bodies are finding themselves rejected in the face of a self-perception of understood increasing importance as regions in the world. Fatić and Korać stress that “people skills” that accord with rapidly changing needs are indispensable for diplomats. Unlike the traditional discipline-approach to training through history, politics and ideology, contemporary diplomatic skills must include capacities for empathy, sympathy and solidarity over the traditional negotiations-based model:

While the diplomatic game, coated in pleasantries, but based on controversies, is far less transparent than many ordinary social interactions and transactions, its effective conduct depends heavily on unsaid norms of honesty: modern diplomacy, due to its dynamism and wide reach, does not tolerate lies. The modern “non-papers”, “off-the-record” conversations and diplomatic consultations rest on a clear expectation of truthfulness and confidence; once a diplomatic actor abuses this expectation, he loses credibility in the long term and sacrifices much of his potential diplomatic effectiveness. Thus the optimum solutions that modern diplomacy seeks are likely to be most readily available in situations where solidarity with the interlocutor and mutual trust, arising from empathy, are opulent. (Fatić & Korać, 2011, pp. 12-13)

Fatić and Korać conclude empathy is the most crucial prerequisite when approaching diverse communities and their political representatives who have long held the belief that the only resolution to dispute is violence. Interpersonal dynamics entail psychological and emotional prerequisites if one is to put the message across to an interlocutor “without eliciting defensive posturing” (p. 7):

The principle of “no negotiations with terrorists”, while seemingly rational, is in fact a classic case of failed understanding of what terrorism stands for. People willing to commit grave crimes against civilians because they feel that their political or religious cause has no realistic chance of being effectively addressed through the existing institutions have become so fundamentally alienated from mainstream politics because of the complete lack of empathy for their cause, which is often quite legitimate in itself. (Fatić & Korać, 2011, pp. 7-8)

Most major terrorist groups according to Fatić apart from the various sects and Islamic religious zealots, tend to be connected with a political movement that addresses otherwise legitimate interests and rights (i.e. the Shinn Fein in the Northern Ireland, the Basque movement in Spain, or the Palestinian groups in the Middle East). We may not understand the rationale behind the Palestinian worldview but can nonetheless empathize with them on an emotional level on visiting Jericho and seeing the people who are over 80% unemployed, forced to cross borders with barbed wire and machine guns pointed at them while they undergo strip searches every day in order to get to their jobs.

Whether through direct experience or by viewing photographs and documentaries it is vital we begin to deepen our understanding of the challenges facing humankind and the magnitudinal human sufferings caused by war. The empathic connection that simultaneously understands one’s

own behaviors as integral and contributive to the collective cycles of global violence entails first examining one's own personal tendencies. Working to transform our own potential for personal conflict and violence is moreover intrinsic in developing empathy to imagine the sufferings of those in faraway lands. Imaginative empathy (Ikeda, 1996) which Ikeda also calls "empathetic imagination" (2014) is one his three key elements for educational programs on global citizenship, number three of which is the fostering of "empathetic imagination and a keen awareness that actions that profit one's own country might have a negative impact on or be perceived as a threat by other countries, elevating this to a shared pledge not to seek one's happiness and prosperity at the expense of others" (Ikeda, 2014, p. 12). Such imagination implies profound self-reflection.

Naomi Head (2012a) describes the power of a reflective stance for inviting engagement with differing perspectives. Contested historical and emotional narratives lacking this stance are the substance of conflict. Reflective dialogue moves parties from an adversarial approach to an integrative and creative problem solving one. This she observes is the least articulated yet most important component in conflict resolution (drawing on Rothman, 1992). Its relational approach of trust, empathy and dialogue is not limited to the international sphere but feeds into social practices and relationships on all levels. Yet in particular, in volatile international relations pervaded by mistrust, when conflict resolution actors have the reflective empathy to frame intersubjectively their various communicative practices they are able to be more sensitive to the differing forms of expression and plurality of perspectives that derive from and result in various forms of social, political or linguistic harm. Head sees this kind of mindful, reflexive dialogue, as intimately interwoven with the trust and empathy capable of recognizing and taking into greater regard those within societies who have been marginalized and subordinated through coercion. This is the first step if there is to be a positive transformation from conflictive relationships into trusting and cooperative ones. Reflective empathy Head notes can open understanding between acts and intentions in ways which remove the perceived necessity for deception on all sides, thereby building confidence. Using the example of US-Iranian relations, she concludes this trust/empathy/dialogue approach based on inter-subjective reflection has the ability to embrace multiple levels of analysis and challenge the distinct hierarchies in both domestic and international relations, mitigating and transcending international uncertainties that otherwise inhibit interstate cooperation. This kind of dialogue moreover Head contends creates the trust necessary for developing long-term stability moving beyond an elite state leadership to trust between societies themselves (see also Keating & Wheeler, 2013).

From Ikeda's many peace proposals, I have come to the conclusion that the first priority in fully supporting the complex ramifications for understanding war as obsolete and the gravest of human errors must entail evolving toward a dual spirit of sensitivity to the concrete realities of one's own life together with an imaginative empathy for that of others. This is the primary defining aspect of inner universality (Ikeda, 2009a). The symbiotic processes of inner universality and those of integrative spirituality are founded on universal bonds like those between mother and child, bonds through which our lives are nourished and sustained. This kind of symbiotic mutuality functioning in creative coexistence with the compassionate and empathic workings of the universe enables the flourishing of humans, animals and all of life. Sustained by networks of altruistic activity in humans and some animals, inner universality is a potential all humans and all of life equally and inherently possess. The fact that all humans equally possess mother origins is one kind of spiritual

commonality that can lead to deeper understandings of the inner universality of all beings. Such understandings feed and drive human compassion and empathy and are the next step in the human elimination of war. Whether based on the simple fact that we are all born of mothers or implied by the Buddhist doctrine of eternal life and dependent causality whereby we have all been one another's family in the remote or not so remote past in our eternal lives, it becomes increasingly implausible to harm or take another human being's life. Ikeda (2009a) invites us to add to this awareness, a "keen sensitivity" to the "concrete realities" of daily life, a love for not only one's "own patch of land" but a developed capacity to make the bigger leap of empathy that imagines oneself as a thread in the interwoven fabric connecting all peoples' lands (p. 8). This expansive imaginative empathy comprises the true spirit of inner universality, developed from within and rooted in the world of our nearest and most immediate circumstances. Without having to leap into the realm of the infinite complexity of life, peace begins in the realm of one's concrete surroundings. Ikeda (2013b) especially stresses how dialogue with our immediate neighbors presents myriad opportunities for peace and nurtures the spirit to develop the kind of universal human solidarity and humanity that can turn a foreign enemy into a friend.

To these understandings, consider again the findings of Margulis or Zolli and Healy on the workings of symbiotic synchronicity and the resilience evidenced by bonds of trust and informal networking, understandings that help render passé the worthless reductionist thinking that promotes acts of violence against one's fellow beings. The imaginative empathy to see one's own destiny in the "the lives of farmers working in mulberry fields in distant China" (Ikeda, 2009a, p. 7) together with the innate desire for life's sustainability, expands the network of human solidarity – an evolving human identity where women and men work together in trust, competing in partnership as global citizens, challenging each another to see who can perform the most humanitarian activities. The mulberry dyke fish pond complex contains two interrelated systems: the dyke, or land ecosystem for the growth of mulberry trees and the pond and the water ecosystem, consisting of fish and aquatic plants. Mulberry leaves are fed to silkworms, their excreta used as fish food, and the fertile pond mud consisting of fish excreta, organic matter and chemical elements is brought up from the bottom and used as manure for the mulberry trees. The mutual benefits of each system link reflects in the folk saying "the more luxuriant the mulberry trees, the stronger the silkworms and the fatter the fish; the richer the pond, the more fertile the dyke and the more numerous the cocoons" (as cited in Lee, 2004, p. 2). The dynamic identity built on transforming oneself in relationship with others gives renewed and life-enhancing meaning to the notion of inner universality. Here, self is an integral totality of the universe and this totality contains insight into the symbiotic workings of life and death, an evolving and eternal process where war is understood as abhorrent and the only battlefield, the one fought from within over one's inability to comprehend life.

Inner universality perceives the intrinsic value in every human being. It affirms life's inherent potential for inner transformation and enables the possibility of universal human values (Urbain, 2010). However, inner universality is only effective and meaningful when it is discovered from within. In other words this concept of universality or universalism does not fit the Western models of "imposed from without" "one-size fits all" such as we find in economic globalization for example (Urbain, 2010, p. 162). Interconnectedness like inner universality or inner universalism is a fundamental Buddhist concept found in the *Lotus Sutra* (see Chapter 4) affirming the notion

that people cannot function in isolation but must find various ways in which to communicate, including the essential communicative component of dialogue (Urbain, 2010). Ikeda (2009a) maintains even when confronted by overwhelming challenges, in order to realize the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, the first step must always be dialogue.

When dialogue is based on a practice of “soft power” (Nye, 1990, 2004, 2008, 2009) rooted in a strong philosophical and spiritual ethos, it is more persuasive and more apt to engender consensus than any coercive or repressive means (e.g. punishment, compulsion, inducement, agenda setting, persuasion and attraction (Smith-Windsor, 2000, p. 52). Jan-Philipp Wagner (2014) notes while one requires another to act in a way contrary to one’s usual behaviour, the other encourages one to do so voluntarily, the former leading to further conflict, the latter to consent (Gallarotti, 2011). Persuasive dialogue must strive to engender a sense of shared and renewed humanity void of any forms of domination, “propaganda, management, [or] manipulation” if it is to become an instrument for “rehumanization” (Martin, 2004 drawing on Cobb, 1976 and Freire, 1970). The dimensions of this dialogue include philosophical discussion but first and foremost dialogue must always be open, courageous, self-realized, empathetic, compassionate, persistent, and built on equality if it is to embody its infinite possibilities for affecting human liberation.

### **Dimensions of a New Dialogue**

#### The Art of Embracing Different Points of View and Thinking Together: A Living Critical Consciousness toward Human Liberation

William Isaacs, founder and president of Dialogos, a Cambridge company that consults on organizational learning and the creation of dialogue says:

Dialogue is the embracing of different points of view--literally the art of thinking together. In dialogue people learn to use the energy of their differences to enhance their collective wisdom. (as cited in Anderson, 2002)

Regardless of difference in ideological beliefs, a dialogue committed to the values of peace and culture, the underlying basis of which is humanism, is one that can open the door to friendship, solidarity and trust (Ikeda, 1999).

Martin (2004) notes that philosophers like their predecessor Socrates offer guides towards wisdom, transformation and enduring peace, representing inherently anti-dogmatic ways of life. These guides entail an examining of the self and others through participation in a perpetually emergent future. The process toward global peace hence arises from an educational, philosophical and most of all “dialogical praxis” (para. 35) whose authentic philosophical life is informed by “a spirit of living critical consciousness” (para. 36). This praxis entails a critical component of present institutions and their ideologies of domination and dehumanization while simultaneously reflecting upon those potentials within one’s own life. A “Socratic practice of self-examination” (para. 42) helps deconstruct the ego and its tendencies toward complacency. Then as people think together, merging different ideas and perspectives, a larger and more fully representational view

emerges. This view embodies a human critical consciousness that is mutually experienced as “awareness of the possibilities of human liberation” (Martin, 2004, para. 37).

### An Openness of Spirit, Unrestricted by Dogma

In particular, Martin (2004) observes that philosophical discussion void of ideology, pious emotions, and dogma represents dialogue’s most authentic spirit as “a process of human beings struggling for truth, wisdom, and human fulfillment” (para. 35).

Ikeda (1993a) describes the life of Shakyamuni as “one completely untrammelled by dogma, a life of open dialogue expressive of his openness of spirit” (p. 168). Shakyamuni, “a peerless master of dialogue” understood that to perceive the “single, invisible arrow piercing the hearts of the people” meant ridding oneself of all “discriminatory consciousness” and illogical attachment to difference (p. 168). Viewed as the underlying cause of all conflict, this arrow, explains Ikeda, although unperceivable, is indicative of an evil not founded in races and classes external to oneself but embedded within one’s own heart:

The conquest of our own prejudicial thinking, our own attachment to difference, is the guiding principle for open dialogue, the essential condition for the establishment of peace and universal respect for human rights. It was his own complete release from prejudice that enabled Shakyamuni to expound the Law with such freedom, adapting his style of teaching to the character and capacity of his interlocutor. (p. 169)

Dialogue with an openness of spirit unrestricted by dogma can transcend difference and the confines of nation states and ethnic boundaries. When human beings subdue one another through unconditional dialogue, rising above petty tribal outlooks, they embody the vast, unrestricted realm that initiates an open sense of global solidarity.

### A Death-Defying High-Risk Encounter

For Ikeda, choosing the path of dialogue entails persevering over repeated adversity, never foregoing hope while navigating through the most perilous times (Urbain, 2013). Noting Martin Buber’s 1923 declaration that “All actual life is encounter” (1996, p. 62), Ikeda (2005b) stresses that the real essence and practice of peace is found in heartfelt, one-to-one dialogue (p. 3) where dialogue becomes an “intense, high-risk encounter” (p. 4):

Be it summit diplomacy or the various interactions of private citizens in different lands, genuine dialogue has the kind of intensity described by the great twentieth-century humanist and philosopher Martin Buber (1878 - 1965) as an encounter ‘on the narrow ridge’ (1947, p. 40) in which the slightest inattention could result in a precipitous fall. (Ikeda, 2005b, pp. 3-4)

Ikeda (1993a) specifies that dialogue is not limited therefore to the “placid exchanges that might be likened to the wafting of a spring breeze” but at times must break “the grip arrogance has on another” where language becomes “like the breath of fire” (p. 169). Nichiren, a 13<sup>th</sup> century

proponent of Shakyamuni's *Lotus Sutra*, always engaged in compassionate and family-like affectionate dialogue with the common people. Yet he was uncompromising as he constantly confronted the corrupt and degenerate governing authorities of his time. During an era of a most historically violent Japan, Ikeda notes Nichiren used only the non-violent tools of logic and persuasion. Refusing to recant and abandon his beliefs even when threatened with the beheading of his parents, he boldly proclaimed:

Whatever obstacles I might encounter, so long as men of wisdom do not prove my teachings to be false, I will never yield! (Ikeda, 1993a citing Nichiren as cited in Yampolsky, 1990, p. 138)

The relentless and unremitting spirit of Nichiren attests to his faith in the power of language and dialogue, a spirit that Ikeda (1993b) is convinced is required if empathy is to be yielded over prejudice and discrimination and harmony over war and conflict. This relentless kind of "death-defying intensity" (p. 204) when applied in dialogue has the power to transform the "wedges that drive people apart into bridges that link them together" (Ikeda, 1993a, p. 170).

### Self-reflective, Self-realized, Embodying an Empathic Selfhood

Jessica Grogan (2013) describes the two key steps of reflective listening which arose from Carl Rogers' school of client-centered therapy: 1) seeking to understand a speaker's idea, then 2) offering the idea back to them to confirm it has been understood correctly. Reflective listening's approach is empathic and attempts to understand what the other person is thinking and feeling and relay this back for confirmation. But Grogan notes reflective listening goes beyond the mere contents of what was expressed or just recognizing another's situation. It means the listener has been able to imagine him or herself "inhabiting" that situation whereby confirmation inspires an even deeper mutual understanding (para. 5).

Self-reflection, one of the most important qualities a human being can model, enables the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life, particularly as one assesses the meaning and purpose of one's life pursuits. This duo self-control and self-reflective process is considered by many as the essence of humanness (see e.g. Bandura, 2001). Aostre Johnson (1998) describes its potential in education:

[T]he ability to look deep into ourselves, to understand our own motives and emotions, to reflect on our lives, and to set and monitor our life goals. ... [This] self-reflective capacity is supported by an intellectually challenging environment that allows for solitude, silence, and intensive but relaxed concentration. (p. 31)

Mitch Bogen (2011) suggests the practice of self-reflection that includes self-acceptance is the beginning of expansive compassion. However, one important distinction for Nichiren Buddhists is that this compassionate self-acceptance does not entail seeking to deny or negate the lesser self's excessive attachments and desires which "contribute to suffering and a sense of unworthiness" (para. 41, drawing on Chodron, 1997). Rather while seeking the motivating power of the greater self "desires and attachments common to all human beings" are redirected toward personal and

social well-being and “the advancement of civilization” (Ikeda, 1974, pp. 139-140). Bogen notes self-reflection should not be confused in any way with weakness often brought on by mere admission of mistakes or expressing how another decision might have brought about a better outcome. Self-reflection instead begins with self-acceptance, or the willingness “to feel what we are going through,” and empathy, or the “compassionate relationship with the parts of ourselves that we feel are not worthy of existing on the planet” (Chodron, 1997, p. 100).

Although self-reflection requires developing humility to understand and learn from those different from oneself it simultaneously nurtures a greater reverence for life. Through understanding the common relationship between oneself and others compassion can even extend beyond empathy for others’ sufferings to the capacity to take joy in their happiness (Bogen, 2011). Bogen concludes that axiomatic in any kind of dialogue that is to bring about long-lasting change in the world is a process that proceeds from the inside out. In fact, the basis for all human flourishing might even be said to stem from what Thoreau called the cultivation of “self-culture” (Bogen, 2011; see e.g. Richardson, 1986).

Ikeda (2010b) draws on Jungian thought which distinguishes between the “Ego” (the outer psyche) and the “Self” (the inner psyche that unifies the conscious and unconscious) to explain the human tendency to ignore the totality of the greater self whose inner fortitude is inextricably linked to an opposing “other”:

The failure to acknowledge and reconcile oneself with the existence of an opposing ‘other,’ is the basic flaw in an apathetic, cynical approach to life, in which only the isolated self exists (p. 55).

This ‘opposing other’ which Jung calls the shadow self represents unacknowledged aspects of ourselves we often project on others making them the target for various ills. This tendency is at the heart of all human misunderstanding and the greatest block to any constructive kind of human dialogue. Offering many insights on the spiritual dimension of what from a Buddhist perspective Ikeda calls “the human element,” one of his key insights is the importance of the human being itself. The human element encompasses the importance of both the self-transformative dimension, along with the educational one, for informing how individuals discern issues in the world (Ikeda in Bourgeault, Ikeda, & Simard, 2003). Ikeda’s anecdote to human misunderstandings remains consistent, beginning and ending with the human being and its inherent potential for transformation:

The human being is the point to which we must return and from which we must depart anew. What is required is a human transformation—a human revolution. (1996a, p. 54)

Ikeda (1996a) explains that the struggle to rise above egoism, and live in larger and more contributive realms of selfhood is at the root of human revolution. Human revolution involves reaching for a higher level of self-realization, which in turn, creates the inner and outer conditions for a constructive dialogue with others. When self-realized people engage in dialogue, they have the capacity for empathy, a quality that opens the door for compassion, the exercise of which can lead to the transformation of the world. In fact, Ikeda is convinced compassionate, self-reflective

dialogue emanating from empathic selfhood can lead to a new consciousness capable of comprehending alternatives to violence, injustices, and poverty. Dialogue between self-realized individuals has often helped create the conditions needed for a new trajectory in human affairs and global history (Urbain, 2012). For example, Paupp (2012) describes the case study of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis that resulted in President John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev coming to a peaceful resolution. Kennedy's subsequent "peace speech" (June, 1963) opened the door for negotiations on a nuclear test ban treaty signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain.

### I-You relationships

Martin Buber in *I and Thou* (original version in 1923) distinguishes I-It relationships characteristic of monologue from I-You relationships characteristic of dialogue. In the former, others and the outside world are considered objects; in the latter, one attempts to grasp the essence of another (Urbain, 2010). The formality in lectures and sermons that draw privilege over one's audience are examples of I-It relationships. In lectures, "listeners inevitably feel uninvolved" (Ikeda as cited in Strand, 2009, para. 8). In contrast, Ikeda shares how his mentor Toda stressed the maintenance of the tradition of every voice being heard in group discussion gatherings in the Soka Gakkai emphasizing: "Dialogue is the only way to communicate with another about life's problems" (Ikeda in Strand, 2008, para. 8). I-You relationships are established void of superficial judgments and trappings, but go straight to another's heart wherein lies the bonds of a common humanity (Urbain, 2011). This relationship beyond words is not just a new paradigm of worship in Buddhism, but one that sets an important precedent for religion and all secular discussion "because it makes religion answerable to life rather than life to religion" or some external authority (Strand, 2009, para. 9).

### A Compassionate Desire to Bring out the Best in another through Courageous, Sustained Non-Vindictive Engagement

Ikeda (2005) sees Buber's I-You relationship as a way to arrive at a common humanity through "the logos," the principle governing the cosmos (Urbain, 2010, p. 127). Dialogue based on this principle puts human reason in the service of a more humane and harmonious world through a compassionate desire to bring out the best in another. This compassionate desire arises from one's entire being yet it can never be accomplished by oneself alone for it requires "a you to become" (Buber, 1996, p. 62).

The struggle for human liberation in neo-Marxist thinking is similarly rooted in compassion. With a sense of shared being, it strongly supports the assumption that the basis for thought and action should be grounded, as Herbert Marcuse argued just before his death in 1979, "in compassion, [and] in our sense of the sufferings of others" (Martin, 2004, para. 29 citing Giroux, 2001, p. 9 citing Habermas, 1980).

Sustained, compassionate dialogue can heal and repair the walls of suspicion and mistrust that have long built up amongst people, hindering the human desire for peace. Understanding the nature of reality is not achieved by detached contemplation, but by means of compassionate and sustained

engagement (Urbain, 2013; Ikeda, 1996a). The very encounter with difference serves as a function for the kind of tension whose potential once recognized becomes the substance from which two human beings can transform mistrust into harmonious stability. Unlike pride in one's own glory or one's own superficially defined human identity, by nature "exclusive and non-transferable," compassion is universal, inclusive and "without hindrance" (Ikeda, 2009b, p. xxi citing Weil, 2001, p. 172). Compassion can cross the most restricted frontiers extending across all national, ethnic and religious boundaries. The potential for deep compassion comes from deep self-reflection. It is guided by a heart that recognizes that difference in another is that part of oneself calling attention to itself to transform a side of itself that needs addressing. The desire for compassion is actually a desire for one's greater happiness. It is one's own heart telling oneself that the difference in another is what one needs to more fully realize happiness. Recognizing the power of compassion might be thought of as the same ability and desire we inherently possess to recognize the inner universality of all living beings, an essential component for realizing our richest and most fulfilling existence. The compassionate desire to bring out the creative possibilities and the highest potential in another is inner universality's highest expression.

The path of dialogue embarked upon by Ikeda began in his words with his encounter with Arnold Toynbee in 1972. Toynbee was convinced that history is "an Odyssey" shaped by "challenge and response" where we would "be committing an unforgivable sin against the innumerable generations of those still unborn" were we to act like "Ajax" and "not like Odysseus" (Ikeda, 2009b, p. xxiii citing Toynbee, 1992, p. 53). Odysseus proved himself more eloquent, winning over Ajax the divine armor while Ajax fell upon his own sword, "conquered by his [own] sorrow" (Humphries, 1955, pp. 305-309).

Ikeda (2005c) recalls Gandhi's assertion that in this era of incessant cycles of violence and reprisal, humanity has the great opportunity to choose violence (the law of brute beasts) or non-violence (the law of human beings). Describing nonviolence as "supreme courage" and "the highest form of humility," Ikeda observes the essence of Gandhi's teachings was fearlessness (Ikeda, 2005c, p. 62). Gandhi moreover taught that "the strong are never vindictive" (as cited in Ikeda, 2005c, p. 62) and that dialogue can only be engaged in by the brave. If our children are encouraged to speak together sharing stories of hope, courage and confidence, persevering in the face of pessimism, fear, and distrust, they will have the "weapons" with which to oppose domination on all levels (micro, macro, meso and meta). Then the anger which breeds violence and war will eventually transform the current culture of fear, disempowerment, frustration, aggression and destruction into a culture of courage, empowerment, resilience, hope and creativity. Ikeda (2005c) states:

Violence is born from a wounded spirit: a spirit burned and blistered by the fire of arrogance; a spirit splintered and frayed by the frustration of powerlessness; a spirit parched with an unquenched thirst for meaning in life; a spirit shriveled and shrunk by feelings of inferiority. The rage that results from injured self-respect, from humiliation, erupts as violence. (pp. 61-62)

The SGI organization and Ikeda its president have maintained a tradition of fearless dialogue. During WWII, the Soka Gakkai challenged head-on the forces of Japanese militarism by expounding the principles of Buddhism. This resulted in many members and founder, first

president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi being imprisoned as “thought criminals.” Makiguchi died in prison at age seventy-three. Second president Josei Toda emerged from two years imprisonment declaring to uphold his mentor’s spiritual legacy through faith in the global human family and widespread dialogue among the common people who had suffered the most in the aftermath of the war. He bequeathed to his youthful successors the mission of building a world free of nuclear weapons. With this historical and philosophical basis, the Soka Gakkai International is currently engaged in activities for peace, culture, and education, forging bonds of solidarity with citizens in 192 countries and territories worldwide. Ikeda like the members of SGI are committed to engaging in dialogue with people throughout the world and contributing to the greater happiness of humankind (see Brief History). In 2009, Ikeda encouraged SGI members:

There is no such thing as happiness for oneself alone. You must strive both for your own happiness and the happiness of others! Aim first for the peace and security of society, for peace in the world! To achieve this, you must first and foremost establish within the life of each individual an indestructible pillar of “justice”...carry out courageous dialogue; patient and persistent dialogue. Engage in a struggle of words to refute the erroneous and reveal the true! Is this not the correct and ideal path to follow as a human being? (See SGI Australia, 2009, p. 25)

### Group Discussion and Equality

Dialogue can only function effectively when rooted in a sense of equality and mutual respect. The inherent equality of all human beings is a major tenet of Buddhism, as well as in ideal democracy. When individuals share their life experiences, they gradually come to know, understand and respect one another, even though at first, they may “harbor traditional mutual animosities” (Ikeda in Wilson & Ikeda, 2008, p.253). The key to SGI’s success according to many is its emphasis on the concept of community and its ability to assimilate into local cultures, doctrines and practices universal in their application. Its discussion meetings provide inspiration and support for positive life-changes exemplified by participants’ stories of personal transformation (see e.g. Métraux, 2012; Strand, 2014; Barker, Wilson, & Dobbelaere, 1996; Dobbelaere, 2006). But most of all SGI’s success is based on a tradition of equality in discussion without interference from any secular or other authority, or other arbitrary, human-like personality who must be indisputably obeyed. This leads to mutual reasoning through exchange of ideas. Guided by mutual tolerance so as to arrive at a fuller, more impartial and all-encompassing truth, the essence of the Soka Gakkai spirit is founded on heart-to-heart dialogue, “free from all forms of vanity and pretention” (Ikeda, 2004a, p. 787). It is also within the realm of such egalitarian mutual seeking that the human mind feels free to entirely open up to another.

SGI, unlike many other newer religions, has flourished in particular in the United States. With a history beginning in 1960, it now currently includes over 12 million members in 192 countries. As the world’s largest Buddhist lay group and the largest, most ethnically diverse Buddhist school in America (Strand, 2008), this growth is entirely attributable to a reliance on discussion groups rather than formal services where the predominant relation is between one worshipper and a deity. Ikeda (2008 in Wilson & Ikeda) asserts if religions or ideologies insist on universal equality they must do more than merely express the ideal but back it up with advocacy and substantiating action.

Is it possible that the notion of a deity with an arbitrary, human-like personality who makes revelations about what must be obeyed without question hinders the very mood of mutual tolerance and openness it professes to uphold, he asks? Isn't a more open atmosphere necessary if it is to fulfill the human desire to disagree and ultimately arrive at truth? Ikeda notes that Buddhist scriptures have always been written in the form of questions, dialogues and discussions among Shakyamuni and his followers and not in divinely delivered revelations. This question and open dialogue format embodies a natural mutual seeking of truth that is the basis of relationships founded on equality.

### A Dialogue of Infinite Possibilities

Dialogue intent on empowering others is a challenge which “can be taken up by anyone – anytime” opening a world of “infinite possibilities” (Ikeda, 2009a, p. 16; see also 2001c, 2007). On the other hand, making others dependent upon whether or not we are happy gives up one's power and allows others or external circumstances to control our emotions, self-esteem and overall well-being. This kind of thinking results in desires to “get rid of them” or “get rid of that which is making us unhappy.”

Eisler (2015) proposes seven concrete steps for transforming an inappropriate and increasingly dysfunctional “command-and-control” organizational world into one where people successfully navigate with innovation and flexibility the rapidly changing environment. She notes how from a dominator's perspective, diversity is perceived as a central threat. Conversely from a “partnership perspective,” diversity is viewed as an “opportunity for greater creativity, for sharing new perspectives, creating new ideas and relationships,” presenting “possibilities for unusual and generative cross-pollinations” (para. 22).

Ikeda (2001c) after 9/11 remarked:

Every single person lost was irreplaceable and immensely precious—a much loved sister, father, son, mother or friend. Each individual's life contained infinite possibilities waiting to be realized. (p. 105)

These words are based on his unwavering belief that each and every human life is invaluable and irreplaceable. Equally strong is his belief in the power of one human being in dialogue with another to elevate another's innate potential, transforming both parties to effect a positive change in their immediate environment. In fact, Ikeda (2004a) is renowned for having said “A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and, further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind” (p. viii).

Ikeda (2007) describes dialogue as:

...a process through which we uncover and reveal our human grandeur. Dialogue withers when our hearts are closed to the infinite possibilities of the other and when we assume we already know all we need to know about them. (para. 10)

Dialogue only becomes limited when people are bent on merely defending their position. Rather, dialogue presents infinite possibilities for creating in the moment the most invigorating opportunities when people come together in search of the unknown. It is when dialogue is conducted with this open-minded spirit of discovery that it flourishes unlimitedly. Based on compassion and the desire to build on what we have in common, our differences transform into rich sources of value.

## Conclusion

Dialogue is the means by which human beings can reaffirm and reinvigorate a shared humanity. The most accessible and available alternative to war, the commitment to dialogue is the point at which human beings discover the essence and practice of what it is to be human. Ikeda (2005b) observes that to some extent any ideology (in the widest sense of the term) embodies an orthodoxy or set way of understanding the world. Unlike orthodoxies and many “isms” however, the key feature in the practice of being human or what might be called humanism is that it doesn’t require “externally defined norms of behavior” (p. 5). Rather Ikeda clarifies humanism makes central “the free and spontaneous workings of the human spirit” and the potential of that spirit for “autonomous judgment and decision-making” (p. 5).

Humanity possesses the unique capacity to manifest cosmic subjectivity through its potential for compassionate action based on wisdom and reason. Compassion as an expression of cosmic subjectivity is the rationale for SGI Buddhism’s foundational premise of the tremendous dignity of human life. This does not negate the value of animals or natural life in any way, nor does it make for their possessing any less dignity. Rather the capacity for cosmic subjectivity implies an obligation to practice compassion for the sake of all living things and to act as “creative managers of the ecosystem” (Matsuoka, 2005, p. 59 drawing on Ikeda, 1995b). Cosmic subjectivity is the ability of human beings to demonstrate respect for the dignity of all life in the cosmos, a respect embodied in the spirit of inner universality or what might also be called cosmic universalism.

Ikeda reiterates throughout his lifework, to nurture and lead all forms of life toward happiness is humanity’s greatest honor for it gives the lives of human beings their most essential and “genuine meaning” (Ikeda, 1995b, p. 182). Such noble actions are the antithesis of war which is entirely at cross purposes with the nobility of the human spirit. Humanity becomes thus the core standard of itself. With no fixed rules, what Ikeda calls “cosmic humanism” (Ikeda in Ikeda et al., 2000, p. 15) draws its meaning through a consideration of humanity as part of nature, as integral to the environment and as connected to both inner as well as the outer cosmos. The empathic recognition of our inner universality evolves through the practice of cosmic humanism where through heart to heart, one-on-one dialogue we encourage one another to reveal the greater universe within the inner cosmos of our lives. With brilliant sun-like force we begin to eradicate war, violence, injustice, inequalities and all that is darkness (Kawada, 2006). Human beings embody the greater universe’s capacity for creation by possessing this same dynamic ability. We also possess the universe’s ability for harmonious resonance. Recognition of our inner universality means understanding our non-dual relationship with the universe, central to any understandings of peace. The empathic recognition of our inner universality and in particular, the empathic recognition of

our infinite and inexhaustible potential and dignity as human beings, are notions indispensable to enabling humanity's evolution toward a more peaceful and creative coexistence.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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**Book Review for Amster, R., Finley, L., Pries, E., & McCutcheon, R. (Eds.). (2015). *Peace studies: Between tradition and innovation*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.**

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**BOOK REVIEW FOR AMSTER, R., FINLEY, L., PRIES, E., & MCCUTHEON, R. (EDS.). (2015). *PEACE STUDIES: BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION*. NEWCASTLE, UK: CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING.**

Peace studies have had a long tradition of associating with higher education at since the Vietnam War. This tradition, combined with service-learning, has increased with President Obama, who made university education with an increased focus on community building a priority. He strengthened programs to help forgive students' college debts either through community service or teaching in underprivileged schools. These programs encouraged institutions of higher learning to engage in more curricular activities that reflected these goals.

It seems as though many books that are written on peace studies with a focus on service learning, or other activist exercises, come in two varieties. In one sense, there are books that are theoretical, which, while providing readers with the underpinnings of activism, rarely provide readers with the practical implications or applications of the theories. The other types of books are the ones where the readers are provided with a variety of practical strategies and personal experiences with peace studies education, but very little theoretical background, leaving the activities feeling ungrounded. Finally, many previous books on peace studies tend to repeat many of the same activities, inciting very little innovation, particularly for those well versed in the area. *Peace Studies: Between Tradition and Innovation* seeks to get away from those trends.

This collection of essays provides readers with a variety of advances in the peace studies tradition, which range from local advances, to those stretching across many different countries. They cover a wide variety of topics, including those concerning the environment, indigenous peoples, economic inequality, domestic violence, anti-war activism, racism, and others. The readings also vary according to methods. Some are theoretically based, as suggested in the previous paragraph, while others are based off of the author's experiences and research endeavors. The readings also span some historical events and practices, such as those practiced by Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other traditional peace activists, as well as more modern movements, such as Occupy Wall Street, Idle No More, and College Brides' Walk (among others), in order to help promote peace studies in higher education today.

One interesting point in many of the readings is the importance of recognizing traditional means of peace activism while realizing that the old ways can, at times, be alienating for younger generations. The authors point out that less traditional, more technical (read: social media) and spontaneous ways of activism are becoming increasingly important in promoting peace and fighting against injustices all over the world. It is essential that modern peace movements are inclusive, which means using a variety of methods for organizing in order to be successful in this new, global world.

A great strength of this collection of essays is how the contributors are able to connect instances of injustice, such as racism or domestic violence, with the larger anti-war and anti-violence movements. It is not enough to fight against the "endless war," or to fight against colonialism, but rather that these peace protests need to be more inclusive and recognize the struggle to fight against all forms of violence and injustice; that diversity of people and causes is the key to achieving peace at home and abroad.

This book comes highly recommended for those looking to include peace studies in their academic programs. It could easily be incorporated into most social science and history classes that seek to include aspects of service-learning into the curriculum. Students and educators get a glimpse as to what peace activists/practitioners of higher education have done in the past in terms of activism, what is being done now, and what can be done in the future. It points to readers the importance of thinking globally while acting locally, through a range of possibilities. The readings provide the audience with ideas as to what they could do to improve their communities and subsequently their life worlds, while bettering the planet in total.

The collection of essays will inspire readers as to what is possible in terms of what happens when people come together in the form of collective action and fight for social justice with the intent on achieving their goals through peaceful interventions. It also provides scholars with new avenues for research and activism in terms of their academic endeavors, thereby increasing the diversity of academic conversations, especially for what counts as "academic discourse."

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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**Book Review: Wood, H. (2016). *Invitation to peace studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.**

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**BOOK REVIEW: WOOD, H. (2016). *INVITATION TO PEACE STUDIES*. NEW YORK, NY: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.**

Houston Wood's new textbook, *Invitation to Peace Studies*, makes significant progress with the mainstreaming of gender while capturing a very current picture of challenge and change by attending to the multidisciplinary currents that have been diverging and converging in the field over recent decades. A professor of English at Hawai'i Pacific University, Wood has credentials in both the humanities and the social sciences and a personal history as an activist and member of alternative communities. He has been teaching introductory peace studies to an international student body for the past decade. With *Invitation to Peace Studies*, Wood "aims to weaken the barriers between disciplines and to encourage a broad, integrated research approach" (252). The book also aims to present Peace Studies as a field that integrates research, pedagogy, and practice. Picking up on the work of scholars such as Kent D. Shifferd, Wood describes the field of practice as an historically novel, informally linked *global peace network*, a promising space of agency that includes perhaps millions of organized groups, large and small, and extends nearly everywhere. The text's multidisciplinary range makes room for a broad invitation to students to consider occupations that contribute to the global peace network. There are lots of roles to play.

Instructors will find *Invitation to Peace Studies* adaptable to varied pedagogies. The writing is accessible, concise, and straightforward—not the voice of an expert speaking to initiates but of a dedicated learner who has done the work of gathering the evidence that peace work is underway and anyone can join. Structured in 13 chapters, the text fits neatly into a semester with plenty of room for supplementation. The chapters are organized into three sections: 1. The Global Peace

Network, 2. From Violence to Nonviolence, and 3. Disciplinary Perspectives, including chapters on biological foundations, peace psychology, the sociology of violence, and inner and outer peace. Each chapter includes recommended readings, films, and internet sources, as well as review topics and critical thinking questions.

*Invitation* improves on commonly used introductory textbooks in a number of ways, including a richer approach to women and gender. A chapter is devoted to gender, but the result is not just “add women”<sup>1</sup>; attention to women and gender occurs nearly throughout the text. The crucial role of women in the global peace network receives attention, supported by a citation of research findings that “simply including women in decision-making groups tends to reduce levels of violence.” Chapter 5, “Building Gender Security,” opens with a discussion of the dangers of being female, gender nonconforming, or a sexual minority, then credits women and “LGBT-identified citizens” with strengthening elements of the global peace network, citing evidence that their growing influence in politics, peace work, and knowledge building increases both negative and positive peace (34-5).<sup>2</sup> The book is careful to represent women’s strategic agency—not just victimhood—for example, with a box about Pussy Riot in a chapter on nonviolence and a photo showing members of Nepal’s Dalit Feminist Uplift Organization illustrating a discussion of unarmed peacekeeping.



Members of the Dalit Feminist Uplift Movement, Gulariya, Nepal (photo: Peace Brigades International)

Wood helpfully breaks conflict down by levels: macro (national and international), meso (regional), and micro (individual and small group relationships). He points out that peace studies’ male bias is reflected in a history of emphasizing male-based perspectives at the macro and meso levels and ignoring micro-level violence (including suicide), which accounts for far more death globally than war. He credits a new “critical mass of women in peace studies” with “bringing attention to the immense harm that war does to girls and women, as well as to the more frequent harms that gender- and sex-based violence inflicts on families and communities, even when no wars are being fought” (88).

My enthusiasm for this textbook owes much to the circumstances of my entry into teaching in the field five years ago. Like many other peace teachers, I began with some movement experience, training in a traditional discipline, and a strong desire to share peace learning with students. The growing body of scholarship on women and gender and a visible impetus toward mainstreaming gender in peace education, policy, and practice had barely reached the available textbooks. *Invitation to Peace Studies* is the textbook I wish I had found then—although, given the exhaustive work that it takes to produce a textbook as comprehensive as *Invitation*, the kind of disciplinary integration that it represents has probably only begun to be possible.

The text will be of value to instructors who are newly incorporating gender analysis into their teaching as well as those who have a long-time commitment to feminist analysis. Instructors will want to take advantage of the text's flexibility by supplementing it with current developments, such as the strategies and impacts of the Occupy and Black Lives Matter movements. There are also opportunities to build on its gender perspective. For example, references to militarized peacekeeping forces need to address the unintended consequences of their deployment, particularly instances of the sexual exploitation of women; discussion of the "movement of movements"—the global growth of civil society—could refer to the significant role of the four UN Conferences on Women and transnational feminist networking in articulating connections between equality, development, and peace; the tactical innovations of LGBTQ movements such as ACT-UP could be added to discussion of nonviolent movements; and discussion of the micro level opens space for addressing sexual and gender violence where our students encounter it, in homes, communities, and campuses.

Houston Wood told me in a personal communication that, while preparing this book, he became increasingly convinced of the centrality of gender to peace. He envisions a second edition in which boxes applying a gender perspective would appear in nearly all of the chapters. Such a strategy would go a long way toward breaking down the potential divide between a "neutral" (masculine) body of knowledge and a separate, feminized body of knowledge and practice. Whether or not *Invitation* sees future editions, textbook projects currently underway can build on Wood's work. But *Invitation* is also a useful snapshot of the state of research. Its integration of research from multiple disciplines offers glimpses of what is at stake in advancing peace knowledge. As feminist academics found in the early years of building Women's Studies curricula, the mainstreaming of gender into fields of knowledge proceeds in predictable stages. Wood takes peace studies beyond the "add women and stir" stage, making progress with both the "bifocal phase," which gives attention to how women are marginalized and excluded, and the "new questions and methods" phase, which generates new critical paradigms for the whole body of knowledge, such as a systemic approach to gender and its intersections with other categories of privilege and oppression.

Going forward from Wood's overview, it will be important to work against the potential boxing off of the micro level as feminized space. Researchers can tell empirical stories that articulate the systemic linkages among macro, meso, and micro violence and the ways they are mutually productive. The concept of gender as it applies to peace studies needs continual maintenance and renovation not only because gender is so frequently conflated with women, but also because masculinity and femininity are readily essentialized along the lines of the central concerns of our field—violent men, peaceful women—sometimes to strategic effect. This critical work will

include intersectional methodologies and findings, as well as theoretically informed empirical research on how fuzziness about the concept becomes problematic in practice.<sup>3</sup> Peace research on masculinity has tended to emphasize militarized masculinities; there is need for more advanced work on alternate masculinities engaged with peace. There is much more to do to integrate LGBTQ issues and activism into the field and to raise the visibility of the work already underway.

In peace studies as in other disciplines, the historic split between teaching and research has been gendered, and pedagogy and practice have also been stratified by gender. What will peace studies look like with further transformation of the field? In her TEDx talk, Peggy McIntosh describes the defensiveness expressed by male participants in her groundbreaking seminars on gendering the liberal arts when the question of foundational concepts came up: “When you’re trying to lay down the foundation,” they said, “you can’t include the soft stuff.” How to revisit the story of the founding gestures of the discipline to make gender visible? How might the foundational concepts of peace studies be transformed? What would Chapter One look like?

## Notes

1. See Sarah M. Pritchard, “Women’s Studies Scholarship: Its Impact on the Information World,” The Feminist Task Force of the American Library Association’s Social Responsibilities Round Table. <http://libr.org/ftf/wsscholar.htm> And Gray, “Begin Everywhere: gender and peace studies,” Gender Eyes, Metta Center. <http://mettacenter.org/gender-eyes/begin-everywhere-gender-peace-studies/>
2. Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (Columbia UP, 2012).
3. See for example Sanaam Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (Lynne Rienner, 2007).

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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**Book Review: Herman, J. (1992/2015). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books.**

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**Keywords:** Violence, Terrorism, Abuse

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**BOOK REVIEW: HERMAN, J. (1992, 2015). *TRAUMA AND RECOVERY: THE AFTERMATH OF VIOLENCE – FROM DOMESTIC ABUSE TO POLITICAL TERROR*. NEW YORK, NY: BASIC BOOKS.**

Trauma and Recovery, written over two decades ago by Judith Herman, M.D., offers to its readers an insight into her research and clinical practices regarding victims and survivors of traumatic experiences ranging from domestic abuse to terrorism. Herman uses this book as a platform to show the commonality between victims and/or survivors “flight or fight” towards reconnecting and establishing some level of normality when trying to recover from their psychological trauma. Divided into two parts – Traumatic Disorders and Stages of Recovery - allows for readers the ease to navigate through the material. The author’s use of clinical examples helps explain her recovery stages model which lends towards psychotherapy. Her use of vivid imagery allows readers to gain further understanding about traumatic encounters and how one could work towards recovery.

The language of the text is both formal and informal as she mixes theory with practice. The concepts emerged from the twenty (20) years of work Herman conducted at the Women’s Mental Health unit in Massachusetts (Herman, 1992, 2015), being a professor and supervisor at a university teaching hospital (p. 4), and being a part of the women’s movement where she was able to speak about the many crimes that were being done to women during a time when their voices were being silenced by many.

Part I consists of six chapters that focuses on Traumatic Disorders. Herman looks at the *Forgotten History* of psychological trauma which stemmed from the investigation of trauma over the past

century, and includes: hysteria – the disorder of women; shell shock or combat neurosis – focusing on victims from World War I to the Vietnam War; and, sexual and domestic violence – which had a breakthrough due to feminist movements in Western Europe and North America (Herman, 1992 p. 9). With regards to hysteria, the concept was not easily accepted by society as many considered it to be a strange disease that originated in a woman’s uterus. Freud, for example, had failed to acknowledge women’s accounts of childhood abuse that caused them to be “hysterical” and thus invalidated his patient’s feelings about their experiences, as he thought the women either “imagined or longed” for the sexual advances (p. 19).

The author suggests that the notion of psychological trauma would not have made any advancements if it were not for various political movements over the centuries (Herman, 1992). For instance, after World War II, many veterans were beginning to display similar signs as those of women who were labeled under “hysteria”, after being exposed to the horrors of the war. However, to traditionalists (p. 21), this was seen as a sign of weakness in men who were supposed to exhibit signs of honor and glory achieved from fighting for their country. Out of this stemmed the anti-war movement originated by Vietnam Veterans against War, who sought out to raise awareness on the effects of war. Out of their actions, psychological treatment programs emerged that were staffed by veterans to offer counselling to other veterans (p. 27).

It is important for us to tap into the history of a concept to truly understand the potential it has going forward, and this is what Herman sought to accomplish with Chapter one of her book. By revisiting the forgotten history of hysteria, we as readers can understand the concept of trauma. Part one also introduces Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) focusing on the evolution of the term and its inclusion into the American Psychiatric Association diagnostic manual. The chapter entitled *Terror* looks closely at the symptoms of PTSD which Herman identifies as: hyperarousal - always being on the alert or easily startled; re-living the traumatic event or constant intrusion; and constriction or the numbing of a person’s feelings (p. 34 – 42). Herman indicates that when a person possesses all of these symptoms, it would interfere with the victim’s planning of their future (p. 46). Moreover, when experiencing these symptoms, the person often disconnects from their body and their environment, where they often feel betrayed or lose faith that things will get better. Survival or recovery will be dependent on the person’s level of resiliency – how well they are able to bounce back from a traumatic experience; which she focuses on in Chapter three - *Disconnection*.

*Captivity* considers the effect that perpetrators would have on victims who have a prolonged relationship with them. To the victim, the perpetrator holds some level of power over their lives – either through force or intimidation (p. 74). Instilling fear into the victims psyche allows the perpetrator to control the actions of the victim to the point where they lost control over their lives and daily activities. For example, the bond a battered woman would have with her abuser could be comparable in a sense to that of a hostage situation (p. 82). The feeling that the victim has lost all control over their lives at the hand of the perpetrator is emphasized in these examples.

Oftentimes, we fail to consider the traumatic experiences and abuse that children face, in which they too would develop hysteria and PTSD. Chapter five *Child Abuse*, states that when children experience repeated trauma it tends to form and deform their personality into adulthood (p. 98).

Additionally, when children experience chronic childhood abuse, it takes place in a familiar climate of pervasive terror in which their caretaking relationships have now become distorted (p. 98) and they are unable to carry out stable or “normal” adult lives. Herman ends Part I of “Trauma and Recovery” ends by looking at a new diagnosis *Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD)* which Herman states, occurs after prolonged and repeated trauma in patients will require differing levels of treatment and methods to begin healing and recovery.

Part II consists of five chapters and looks at Herman’s Recovery stages model; the first four introduces and discusses the stages in detail. Anyone that has experienced a traumatic event will be able to apply the stages Herman presents through her use of actual situations to showcase the challenges a person would encounter when working towards healing and recovery. It is essential for the patient to establish some level of safety before they can move towards recovering. Establishing safety, Herman’s first stage, expresses the challenges the therapist encounters to ensure the patient feels safe, especially if they are still in a threatening or unsafe environment. Once the patient has established safety, the therapist allows them to remember and mourn through the telling of their traumatic story; which is the second stage. Herman suggests the patient looks at their life story before and after the abuse, and through remembrance, they may then go into a state of mourning as they re-live the story. Her final stage allows the person to now reconnect with their self and their environment once they have come to terms with their past. Herman calls this the reconnection stage, as the patient works on developing a new self (Herman, 1992). Part II concludes as Herman highlights the importance of using group therapy sessions to allow victims to connect through their common experiences – *Commonality*. Group therapy helps reassure the patient that they are not alone or alienated by their experiences and now have support through their recovery process (p. 215).

An epilogue was added in the 2015 edition of *Trauma and Recovery*, which Herman uses to bring her readers up-to-date on her research projects and concepts introduced since her first edition in 1992. She begins by highlighting areas wherein the United States (U.S.) has failed in upholding a “human rights” stance, by creating new symbols within the judicial system – the “War on Drugs” – which seeks to oppress most men of color with mass incarceration; as well as, the prisons or streets becoming the home to many mentally ill persons who have no other option as there is a lack of mental health care facilities to assist in rehabilitating the individuals.

Moreover, Herman brings to the forefront the U.S. approach on terrorism and the “national trauma” (p. 248) since the September 11, 2001 attack. Since then, countless amount of wars have emerged in the Middle East and environs. The U.S. has also increased National Security measures within U.S. borders and created the need for Homeland Security throughout the nation’s airports. Herman references that “terrorism has replaced communism” (p. 248) as the new world enemy that is constantly growing; this is true in some extent, however, we should consider there are differing approaches to the two concepts. With terrorist attacks, nations have some inclination of what they could expect from terrorist groups when they make threats, but it may be difficult to know who and where the terrorists are located. Communist societies are known throughout the world, so it would not be difficult to determine who or where communists exist, the difficulty would lie in the actions they would use to oppress others.

Institutional betrayals have also become prevalent as the widespread abuse of children by some Catholic priests in the U.S. was being suppressed by the church. When the scandal was discovered, many learned that the church was harboring pedophiles for decades (p. 255), without considering the ramifications this would have on the victims who sought out the church for spiritual guidance. Another institution that has betrayed its members are universities across the U.S. that has fostered an astounding amount of sexual assaults against many young women, which in a sense has violated their rights to obtain equal education (p. 265). Furthermore, there has been very little change in the past fifteen years regarding women and trauma, as rape seems to be a sexual initiation rite for young women in the United States (p. 254). Referencing these different levels of betrayals brings awareness on the different types of psychological trauma many victims face, outside of war.

PTSD is also being revisited in the epilogue. The diagnostic manual of American Psychiatric Association – DSM-5 – has removed the classification of PTSD as an anxiety disorder, but recognizes traumatic disorders separately (p. 257). Violence against women is now being recognized as a violation against human rights, however, women are still not able to hold their perpetrators accountable for offenses made towards them (p. 264). Additionally, treatment advances are still a great concern especially in veterans (p. 268) as those who begin treatment often do not complete the process.

I found Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* book insightful as it allows readers to understand the concept of psychological trauma and steps taken toward recovery. The book not only looks at the challenges therapists have when working with trauma patients, but recounts the challenges patients encounter when narrating their trauma during the healing process.

As one of the recommended texts for a Conflict Analysis and Resolution course I recently took, the materials discussed, I believe, will be very useful for those in the peace studies field. Peacebuilders who are actively engaged in conflict-ridden situations are usually exposed to highly traumatic situations – natural disasters, wars, interstate conflicts, and organizational conflict, to name a few. Because most peacebuilders may not have psychological backgrounds, this may limit them in how they approach victims/survivors to dealing with the traumatic experience effectively. This book can help those without a psychological background get a grasp of this aspect of trauma and recovery process that could lend to peace studies.

Peace educators need to know the differing terminologies or the dangers of labeling people as being traumatized who may have experienced a conflict, because everyone does not process trauma events the same, so introducing this book into peace programs should help future practitioners understand trauma and the steps to recovery – following Herman's theory as a foundation. This would further challenge students to explore and gain understanding of trauma related events that are often correlated with conflicting situations. As with trauma and recovery, a peace builder has to work with conflicting parties as they transform, reconstruct, and rebuild their relationships into a healthy manageable one, by ensuring safety is established and trust is regained.

Peace educators and peacebuilders must be equipped with tools that would help them in the conflict resolution and management process, having some understanding of trauma would assist in this aspect. Peacebuilders are not therapists, but understanding the basic concepts of trauma and

recovery will help how they approach someone who may have experienced a traumatic event in a conflicted region or organization. Thus, a limitation would be that many practitioners in the field of peace do not necessarily have training in trauma or are often insensitive towards the issue of trauma as it relates to conflict.

Overall, I recommend this book to anyone wanting a thorough understanding of trauma, PTSD and steps taken to recover.

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Occupy or Die**

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**Keywords:** Occupy, Prisons, Government

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## **OCCUPY OR DIE**

Occupy the streets  
Occupy the air  
Occupy the parks  
Fight for what is fair

Occupy the press  
Take back the debate  
Occupy the prisons  
Challenge the state

Occupy the mansions  
Drink the rich man's wine  
Occupy the White House  
But don't occupy Palestine

Occupy the Capitol  
Speak truth to power  
Occupy the Pentagon  
This is our finest hour

Occupy the courts

Be the people's jury  
Occupy the banks  
Unleash the people's fury

Occupy the office  
When the boss isn't nice  
See that the pie expands  
And demand a bigger slice

Occupy the home  
No one is a slave  
Strive for what is equal  
And make him behave

Occupy the heart  
Get the cynics on your side  
They will have to jump onboard  
Once they've seen you turn the tide

Occupy the mind  
As Gil Scott-Heron said:  
The revolution begins  
Inside a conscious head

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **Peace is a Woman**

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**Keywords:** Peace, Relationship, Woman

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## **PEACE IS A WOMAN**

Peace is a woman,  
Soft and sweet,  
Hair, cheeks, lips,  
Arms around me,  
I can't say enough.

The world could end,  
Tomorrow.  
It wouldn't matter,  
So long as she's here,  
Tonight.

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## America the Wicked

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**Keywords:** Capitalism, Profit, Supremacy

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## AMERICA THE WICKED

Its three symbolic colors  
Stone, steel arms of liberty  
A flaming torch to guide them  
Over the famed frontier  
Once owned by people unworthy  
Smashed to pieces—for profit  
Bumps on the road to progress

The Red represents them.

A supremacist world  
Whitewashed over rainbow  
A platform on the hills  
Crystal buildings of Olympus  
A city in the smoky clouds  
An adjacent slum—in shambles  
Left in the capitalist wake

The White represents them.

The stars are stitches of conquest  
Multiplying like drops of blood

All in the name of “Destiny”  
Manifested in glorious hate  
Niggers, Spics, Japs, Osamas  
Gooks, Frogs, Wops, Krauts  
Poor white Protestant male trash

The Blue represents my tears.

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## State of Dissent

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**Keywords:** Power, Peace, Domination

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## STATE OF DISSENT

I wish you could understand  
That true peace is not made  
Through self- righteous anger

How many times has your shrill voice  
Frightened away the unaware  
With its quaking demands?

Such a pitiable quest for attention,  
I tire of your infantile tone  
Stop sneering at power!

Instead, harness what you hate  
And get off your high horse  
Then, maybe I'll join you.

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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Black and White

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**Keywords:** Black Lives Matter, Racism, Police Brutality

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## BLACK AND WHITE

They shot Brown,  
After a li'l fight,  
Brought him down,  
The cop was white.

They choked out Eric G,  
Said he resisted arrest,  
In this land of the unfree,  
As any man can attest.

Tamir Rice was just a child,  
With a harmless toy gun,  
But a white cop went wild  
And killed him just for fun.

Crawford was shot in a store,  
In the back while on his cell,  
Now he'll never shop no more,  
Those police can go to hell.

And why did Akai have to die?  
At the bottom of a staircase

His girlfriend held him and cried  
For this unjust nation of disgrace

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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## **The Disease**

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**Keywords:** Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Youth

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## **THE DISEASE**

I saw him stare her down  
With those glazed-over eyes  
There was a slap and a punch  
She fell and hit the ground

He took off his tattered belt  
And went for her backside  
As I cried, "Daddy, no, no!"  
I can't tell you how I felt

One day he was at it again  
Her face covered in tears  
He tore hair from her head  
Right in front of my friend

I reached beneath the table  
Pried loose the wobbly leg  
Daddy didn't see it coming  
I hit him as much as was able

I wanted to send him to hell  
But as he lay on the floor

He looked me dead in the eye  
To say, "Son, I taught you well."