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Widening and Wilding Toward a Regenerative Peace Education: Socio-Ecological Reflections on IIPE Nepal 2025

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Introduction

A regenerative peace education involves reweaving relationships, of human and more-than-human; relearning how to be good participants in the earth community; repairing and healing from harm of centuries of colonialism and its myriad ongoing effects through justice and accountability; and growing new seeds for new possibilities from what we are able to compost (Knox Steiner, forthcoming)

In this reflective article, we consider how the relational socio-ecological dimension of peace might be called *regenerative peace education* and discuss how these insights might open peace pedagogy and practices for cultivating dynamic webs of caring relations and generosity of spirit among humans, other living systems and the natural world upon which our survival depends and of which we are a part. We hope that in deeply exploring these considerations using the example of the IIPE, the insights might inform other peace education contexts and endeavors.

We begin by naming the threads that brought us to this collaboration and build toward a description of our participation in a workshop at IIPE Nepal 2025. We review foundational concepts in this pursuit, engaging with modernity, peace, interbeing, and sentipensar. We then describe the learning ecosystem of the IIPE and delve into the mosaic thinking that forms the substrate to stabilize this ecosystem. Mosaic thinking is contrasted to the mutable dynamic aspects within the liminal spaces – interstices, intersubjectivity, and interbeing. Next, we engage in a detailed description of a “Hospicing Modernity” workshop, our roles, and our

reflections on the hospicing and regenerative immersion. Finally, we consider how IIPE might enhance, deepen, or further emphasize the socio-ecological dimensions of peace through our relationships with each other, the inner workings of the institute, and the institute's location in more intentional ways.

The Threads of Our Interconnectedness

This co-writing emerged from an intense shared learning experience during an IIPE ritual-workshop on hospicing modernity (Machado de Oliveira, 2021) and our intergenerational dialogue, that is weaving the threads of our encounters and experiences over the years, bringing us closer together. Our relational starting point is our shared and overlapping experiences from the International Institute on Peace Education and deep love and care for the Earth. We choose to write together because relationality is at the heart of what we are investigating – the pedagogical dimensions of a socio-ecological peace practice.

We three authors have shared IIPE, most recently in the summer of 2024 in Nepal. Janet is the Education Director of IIPE, which she has been involved in since 1997, when she began working with Betty Reardon, IIPE Founder at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her roles include theme development and organizing the program in collaboration with each participant. She oversees the program as it unfolds in a kind of meta facilitator role. Stephanie is an Assistant Professor and Academic Coordinator of the University for Peace in Costa Rica and has attended IIPEs in 2022 in Mexico and 2024 in Nepal. At IIPE Nepal she served in several space-holding and leadership roles beyond her workshop on hospicing modernity, including reflection group facilitator, plenary panel facilitator, and World Cafe table host. Dani*el*a is Postdoc at the Center for Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research (ZIN) at the University of Münster, where she is building an Innovation Hub on Socio-ecological Sustainability. At IIPE Nepal, she was also a workshop presenter.

Foundational Concepts: Modernity, Interbeing, and Sentipensar

In this section, we explore the conceptual foundations we engage throughout this article: modernity, peace, interbeing, and sentipensar. At the outset, it is important to note, however, that each of these ideas is more than a “concept” or a theory - they are ideas that live in our bodies and shape the world, which is why they are relevant to the social-ecological dimensions of peace. Later in the article, we will explore the way mosaic thinking is used to build the schedule and flow of IIPEs; for now, you might imagine these concepts in a mosaic together, brushing up against each other, placed together to create a vivid picture.

Modernity Problematicized

One way to understand the multiple intersecting planetary crises of our time is through the lens of modernity/coloniality, a term which underscores the fact that violence and unsustainability are necessary for modernity to exist (Machado de Oliveira, 2021). As Vanessa Machado de Oliveira (2021) explains in her book *Hospicing Modernity*,

[modernity/coloniality] functions as a reminder that the benefits we associate with modernity are created and maintained by historical, systemic, and ongoing processes that are inherently violent and unsustainable. In other words, this term underscores the fact that modernity cannot exist without expropriation, extraction, exploitation, militarization, dispossession, destitution, genocides, and ecocides (p. 18).

Modernity, as Machado de Oliveira describes it, is more than a concept or theory. She writes

Modernity is a ‘who’ rather than a ‘what’ - it is presented as a multifaceted, living entity. In this sense, modernity is not a concept, label, or object of analysis. Rather, it is a worlding story, a complex adaptive living system that actively does things, including conditioning the habits of knowing and being of those whose lives and livelihoods are intertwined with it (p. 16).

At the root of the violence embedded within modernity is separation, or what Machado de Oliveira refers to as separability, and particularly the separation of humans from “nature,” as if we are outside of nature rather than an integral part of it. This separation, which occurs at ontological, epistemological, and metaphysical levels, makes possible the violence of humans against each other and against nature. This separation has enabled both hierarchies and erasures. Through colonization and the process of land theft, there have been attempts to erase indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing and living. These continue as evidenced by living examples such as Chief Ninawa Hurii Kui, who has collaborated with Vanessa Machado de Oliveira.

Chief Kui, International Indigenous Scholar from the Amazon in Brazil, articulates how this separation has diminished our abilities to feel and relate:

The climate catastrophe and biodiversity apocalypse are not technical, but relational problems created by a sense of separation from the land/planet imposed by colonialism. From this perspective, colonialism presents a cognitive, affective, relational, and neurological impairment based on illusions of separation and superiority that have damaged our relationships with our own selves, with each other, with other species and with the

land/planet we are a part of, with deadly consequences for all involved (Moving Worlds Report, 2023, 90).

Chief Kui invites us to consider these illusions of separation and superiority as causing neurological impairment that results from damaged sensitivities to others with whom we share the earth, the inability to feel in connection to others.

The neurobiological impairment creates dis-ease in our collective body, with symptoms of human greed, vanity, arrogance, and indifference. These symptoms are driving destruction of ecosystems that are essential for survival, like the Amazon rainforest, and placing humanity on the path of premature extinction (Moving Worlds Report, 2023, 90).

Relating to our peace education efforts, it is important to note that modernity is both the foundation of and perpetuated through compulsory modern formal schooling, such as national and private formal schooling systems. Given these understandings of modernity at ontological, epistemological, metaphysical, affective, relational, and neurobiological levels, our peace education efforts attempt to address these levels of violence and separation, as well as integrating indigenous wisdom without appropriation. Furthermore, we acknowledge the ways that modernity's related forms of violence and separation are woven into the fabric of the institutions we are a part of and consider how to weave otherwise. To more deeply engage the socio-ecological dimensions of peace, we propose to expand Reardon's call for a holistic vision of peace to go further. We therefore embrace interbeing and sentipensante approaches to counter the illusion of separation put forward by modernity.

Peace

There are myriad ways to define and describe peace, and peace is ultimately a plural (*paces*) or pluriversal concept. Peace is fundamentally about relationships: with ourselves, one another, and the Earth, as the Earth Charter succinctly puts forward. The Earth Charter (2000) is an ethical document, a vision of hope, and a call to action, that "seeks to inspire in all people a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life, and future generations" (Earth Charter website). The Earth Charter Commission (2000) describes peace as "the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part." The Earth Charter vision of peace resonates with the interrelatedness that we aim to explore. By defining peace this way, we begin to move beyond the dominant paradigm of the war system in which patriarchy and violence are intertwined, and even beyond Reardon's paradigm of peace as "transformative response to the war paradigm". For Reardon the peace paradigm is transformative based on cultivating and educating for a foundation of an

interdependent web of values and understandings that foster the universal actualization of human dignity....and just peace” (Snauwaert, 2019, p. xvii). Our vision is similar to Reardon’s, building upon it. We look forward to developing this further to include all living systems.

Interbeing

Given the centrality of separation to modernity, a path through modernity towards something and beyond it is remembering our interbeing with all of life. We live in an interconnected, entangled world that can be characterized by *interbeing*, the term coined by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh to articulate beyond interconnectedness. The word interconnected still implies some sense of separation - separate entities that are connected. But interbeing articulates that we do not and cannot exist without everything in the universe, and that everything is interdependent. As Thich Nhat Hanh explained, “Interbeing is not a theory; it is a reality that can be directly experienced by each of us at any moment in our daily lives” (2012). It is important to recognize that many indigenous, religious, and spiritual traditions share this understanding and worldview, though many may use different words to describe it (such as interconnectedness, oneness, unity, etc.). Interbeing is thus an ontological counterpoint to the separability put forth through modernity.

Interbeing is a reality, an awareness, and something we can experience in any given moment through our bodies, our relationships, and the world around us. For example, in each breathe, we can bring our awareness to how we are breathing with the plant life around us; with each inhale, we breathe in oxygen that the plants have produced, and with each exhale of carbon dioxide, we contribute to the air that the plants around us absorb. In a very real, visceral (not theoretical) way, we are breathing together. We don’t need to be sharing proximate physical space to experience interbeing, however; even on Zoom, we can experience interbeing knowing that we are indeed sharing the physical space of our planetary home and that the lands that we are on, while distant, remain connected through ecological phenomena, and that the technological infrastructure that connects us is still of the earth. The technological platforms and server farms, while reliant on highly extractive industries, many located in conflict zones, are still part of the earth. Dwelling in this reality is very much a practice of interbeing - we inter-are with beauty and magnificence, and we inter-are with all of the destruction and violence that has been perpetuated through modernity.

Sentipensar

Interbeing is an ontological understanding and experience of reality as interconnected, and we might consider *sentipensar* as its embodied, affective expression, one that reaches beyond an intellectual understanding. Academically, Colombia anthropologist Orlando Fals-Borda first named the concept, which was

further developed by Colombian-American Arturo Escobar (2015), though the sentiment of sentipensar stretches far beyond the academy. Mexican-Austrian *Tlaltenanguense* researcher from a pre-community within Mexico City, Alejandra Barrera brought it to the forefront of IIPE learning in Mexico 2023.

Sentipensar invites an opening of capacities and sensibilities, informing not only human-to-human relations, but importantly expanding human relations' potential for recognizing and valuing the well-being of all Earth's living systems (Barrera and Gerson, in process).

Sentipensar is a relational method of integrating sensing, feeling, and thinking rather than splitting them apart. Sentipensar brings forward an indigenous way of knowing and connecting in contrast to modernity's methods of separating, categorizing, and analyzing. Rationality and thinking are prioritized in modern education, as are verbal communication. If we are to value and engage in a deep ecological way, we also need to allow for the wild, spontaneous, serendipitous, and organic ways of knowing. In fact, we do use these feeling, sensing, and intuiting capacities in all our encounters.

Our main intention in this article is to further how we are always already engaging sentipensante in experiential learning, and how we might bring it more into the light in IIPE pedagogy.

As peace educators, we are finding and feeling our way, beginning with the question of how we might educate for a more loving, generous and peaceful engagement with the Earth, air, soil, water and other living beings with whom we share and depend upon these aspects of our ecosystem. Focused on peace education, we consider these relations and how we might open our sensing, feeling and thinking toward deeper relations in peace learning. To engage these ideas further, we will explore IIPE as a peace learning ecosystem.

IIPE as a Learning Ecosystem: Mosaic Stability and Wild Filament Web-building

IIPE as a Pedagogical Form

Each IIPE brings together sixty participants, half of whom are from around the world and the other half are from the identified region of the co-sponsor. The IIPE Secretariat seeks out co-sponsors with an institutional organization to gather participants from that locale with special focus on the peace education issues of that region and the sponsors. In dialogue, the IIPE Secretariat and the Co-Sponsors generate a guiding theme. Our topic derives from one strand of the IIPE Nepal 2024 Theme as restated in Janet's plenary presentation, "Mosaic Thinking: The Substrate of IIPE Programming" (Gerson, 2024 IIPE).

The ecological and climate crisis, and the transgression of the planetary boundaries present a clearly global, shared problematic for exploring

tensions between indigenous and scientific knowledge ways of knowing and the ways of being with the challenges and necessities of modernity and the technological approaches to life.

The IIPE theme statement provided a focus for invitations to apply and proposed related contributions. In the week-long intensive residential learning experience, all the participants have both contributing and learning roles. This is one way that IIPE aims to diminish hierarchy. Those who give plenary presentations will also be at breakfast with you or be a participant in your workshop.

The program is woven from participants' proposed contributions: workshops, plenary presentations, and sometimes films, cultural sharing, author talks, or other special activities. In addition, every day participants join an assigned Reflection Group. For workshops, each person can choose one out of five concurrent offerings according to their interests in the content and the presenter. The Reflection Group participants are assigned, but there is no predetermined content. This way participants get to know some people better and to share their experiences from each day throughout the week. To maximize diverse encounters and have an open space for spontaneity, each group has at least one person from the region, a mix of genders, ages, and at least one experienced IIPE person. One or two facilitators are responsible for each group. These facilitators make up an informal communication network, which can speed up problem-solving and solutions.

IIPE form is similar to and yet different from a learning intensive or a retreat. Participants must commit to staying all week. Like spores (Barrera and Gerson, in process), participants carry the seeds of their environment – cultural, linguistic, their conflicts, questions, and experiences as peace educators from all over. In Cyprus, for example, the topic was “divided societies”. In Nepal, it was developing the education system throughout the country with rural traditional villages and the aspirations for modernization in conjunction with building post-war reconciliation. In Colombia, it was bringing different groups together from across the difficult, war-torn country to connect as co-citizens and learn to appreciate their different conditions. The intentional convergence aims to fertilize a web of relations, each participant-spore bringing their special knowledge and their particular needs to spin a web of connections – the *red* (or net) as our Spanish speaking friends say, toward building a *pluriverse*.

We intend to generate fertile ground in the IIPE space to cultivate openness, like peeling back protective seed pods, to bring a sense of commonality amongst these diverse people, or to give a sense of safety and alternative hominess. In this sense, each IIPE is conceived to cultivate the growth of connections, generating a web of relations that make up global civil society. Global civil society is loosely constituted through an expansive network cross-cutting through national borders, singular, and local concerns. This web of relations grows with encounters

with peace educators and others. IIPE's pedagogical form is woven to cross-fertilize peace thinking, learning, and action beyond each person's easily touched connections. This stretching growth feeds into a network of peace activists who support each other's activism across global times and spaces.

This worldwide human web aspires to be as fertile as what fungi botanist Merlin Sheldrake describes in his book *The Entangled Life* (2020). Entangled life refers to mycelium networks, fungi webs of growing root fibers called *hyphae* (pronounced hi-fee), each reaching toward resources and relationships they need. This metaphor reflects the IIPE peace pedagogy that aims to generate a dynamic global relational network of individuals engaged in peace practices that simultaneously preserve individuality while forming non-hierarchical, flexible, and transforming interconnections (Barrera and Gerson, forthcoming). How is this done?

Each IIPE is a unique configuration of humans in a unique place, there is some repetition and reconvening over time as participants return to IIPE. This allows relationships to strengthen and build and deepen over time. IIPE is both short-term (one week) and long-term (taking place over 40 years, with some participants having joined across many of those years).

With respect to a socio-ecological dimension for peace, this invites us into a consideration of time, and deep time, which means time beyond linearity and human time scales – the time of mountains and rivers. It is the deep time of the places we inhabit in IIPE – the Himalayas being a beautiful example. Relating to the IIPE Nepal theme, considerations of time highlight the tension of tradition and modernity, as we consider the linear time of our one week together, the flight schedules needed for us to arrive together, in contrast to deep time, spiral time, circle time, that often characterizes our lives and learning journeys more precisely. Another leveler is that there is a certain shared disorientation – almost no one is “home,” as even those from the host country do not live in the exact place where the meeting takes place, and the shared experience of disorientation creates an opening for possibilities that aren't visible when there is shared context.

Our experience draws from different forms of alternative ways of human-to-human learning. Our shared learning space is the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE). The pedagogical approach includes inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and experiential learning, bringing together learners from across the globe. The snugness of the intensive intends to warm people up to reciprocal learning and open them to a pluriverse of sentient understandings of our complex world. By reflecting on the pedagogical forms and processes of the IIPE, we explore the ways in which inclusivity, reciprocity and mutuality are already present.

When we consider the IIPE as a learning ecosystem, we can expand the learning environment beyond the presentations and workshops as content. The elements of the learning ecosystem include the IIPE structure itself; the

participants; the content they offer and bring in the form of workshops, plenaries, etc.; the site (hotel, lodging, meals, excursions, cultural performances) and the land and region. The setting and location very much inform and shape the learning that takes place and add to a richness and complexity that shift shape as the institute moves location over the years. The seeds from one IIPE carry across to others - for example, *sentipensar* was a central concept brought forward in IIPE 2022 in Mexico, which has been carried forward into IIPE 2024 and beyond. The place, the food we are nourished by, the coffee conversations, and hot tub swims, field excursions and walks, all contribute to the rich learning ecosystem that is IIPE, and the global network of peace educators who have been a part of it over its 40-plus years.

Mosaic Thinking in the IIPE formation: Substrate, Interstices, and Intersubjectivity

Envisioning a common home, and reconstructing a common humanity calls for entering liminal spaces, crossing borderlines, and venturing into borderlands and thinking of unknown-knowing (Teresa Sacco, 2024).

In this section, we add a layer to the ecosystem metaphor through mosaic thinking, the approach that Janet, as the Educational Director, takes in building and weaving the cohesive program structure for each IIPE.

Substrate

Mosaic thinking is a metaphor for bringing together the IIPE theme and the accepted participants' proposals with the *substrate*, the basic program form that is the same every year. In the craft of mosaic making, a substrate is the foundational layer, a firm, stabilizing base upon which the mosaic is built (Gerson, 2024). The substrate may become invisible or only somewhat visible, as for example, in the construction of a building. The program/substrate *as a structural element* may be more visible early on. It serves as an important reference that helps us to orient ourselves and coordinate the group. As the week continues, the program/substrate recedes from consciousness as the patterns become more familiar to all. This happens as people feel more that they know what's happening, feel more relaxed, and happily, the programming too becomes more alive.

Participants' contributions can be an experiential workshop or a short plenary presentation. Each proposal is like a *tessera*, a mosaic piece to be worked into the program, which is Janet's special contribution. The contributions are intact in this process like mosaic stones. Each has multiple facets that could fit into the program puzzle in several alternative ways. In experimenting with their placement during the planning phase, sub-themes emerge as either vertical "Day" themes or horizontal themes that run through the program week. When this process is done, it looks neat and doable. Yet it is flat! It's a map, a plan. What dynamizes the material

program plan are the sources of energy the organizers, the presenters, and the others taking part bring to each activity.

What happens in how we connect? What makes the experiences alive, people encounters memorable, and learning insights profound? This is what takes place dynamically between and among us. Three levels of depth can be described as *interstices*, *intersubjectivity*, and *interbeing* (as described above). These signify three levels or types of cross fertilization relating to socio-ecology and to peace pedagogy. These are three understandings of bridging the liminal spaces. They contrast with the stabilizing mosaic thinking used in planning and sustaining the IIPE Program.

Applicants and those accepted to IIPE have been asked to present themselves as peace educators in both their education and their professional positions. They are asked to draw on those identity elements to offer contributions for the shared learning of those others who will attend. This shared learning does offer a relational aspect. In Janet's experience, these self-identifying aspects act as stabilizing identities that help people move into a disorienting situation, disorienting in locale and encounters. They provide a grounding given the widening flood of new encounters juxtaposed to narrowing activities as the Institute starts.

Interstices

What helps on the Sunday, Arrival Day, is a process of introduction through turn-taking in facilitation movement-sound-embodied activities. This can be initiated with a Name Game, such as going around a circle from which participants step out, "sing" their name while moving in a rhythm. An additional adjective may be added to help everyone remember that person in a multi-sensory way. The group then repeats what the individual said while repeating the movement. This is also humorous – silliness being a great diffuser of anxiety. The opening games are facilitated by one person after another so that everyone has an opportunity. The first people are the ones who are familiar with IIPE. As new people arrive, they can join in.

What is amazing is that every person there is experienced with these kinds of activities. This is stated explicitly from the beginning so that experienced educator-leaders also practice letting others, more and less experienced, lead activities. This is a communal practice in empowerment through turn-taking, through shifting into different roles with each other, a very simple practice in understanding and responding to the (rotating) presenter.

This is the beginning of shifting from an identity on paper – My name is.... I am from...My language is...My work is...I am here because I want to learn...and share..., find work, etc. This shifting also dynamizes a sensory reaching out, not unlike the biological *hyphae*, the root hair filaments making connections in mycelial webs. In mosaic thinking, if each person and their stated on-paper

identities are seemingly intact, these are the starting points for generating connections.

The spaces between each person-as-piece in the program begins to morph across to others through the spaces in-between, the *interstices*. Interstices in mosaics are the spaces between the *tesserae*, the individual tiles or stones that are combined to make a mosaic whole greater than its individual parts. In human encounters, the interstices are the spaces for serendipitous, surprising, or new actions and dynamics. The roles assigned – Plenary Moderator, Plenary Presenter, Workshop Presenter, Reflection Group Facilitator, workshop participant, are also forms of *tesserae*, of pieces in the as -yet un-dynamized, about-to-be-realized, unfolding in co-constructing our learning community.

Each IIPE learning community takes on a uniqueness in the fertile ground of each place, the co-sponsors, and the participants. Each is a convergence of past participants, new people, and the context of local and global concerns. The convergences invite cross-fertilization of the subjectivities of those present. One might say that the stated identifications each person offers is a material, a concrete, or an objective way to begin to know someone. As the week unfolds, the subjectivities will emerge.

Intersubjectivities

The *intersubjectivities* entail the opening of ourselves to others in ways that allow for new growth, expandedness, or sometimes, an upheaval. The concept of intersubjectivity is used in various social sciences, psychology, philosophy and sociology. The phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl described as “self-determination through ‘position-taking’, in the form of ‘judgment’ or ‘will’, that the subject constitutes itself as an *individual* person” (Beyer, 2022 on Husserl, p. 17).

According to Husserl, intersubjective experience plays a fundamental role in our constitution of both ourselves as objectively existing subjects, other experiencing subjects, and the objective spatio-temporal world. Transcendental phenomenology attempts to reconstruct the rational structures underlying—and making possible—these constitutive achievements.

From a first-person point of view, intersubjectivity comes in when we undergo acts of *empathy*. Intersubjective experience is empathic experience; it occurs in the course of our conscious attribution of intentional acts to other subjects, in the course of which we put ourselves into the other one’s shoes (Beyer, 2022, p. 18).

There is a certain *wildness*-- unpredictable, emergent, organic -- in these opening encounters with each other, wild in the sense of the unknown, and within this

unknown are potential specks of transformation. This is what South African Professor Teresa Saco refers to as “entering liminal spaces, crossing borderlines, and venturing into borderlands and thinking of unknown-knowing” (2024). In experiencing a moment, conversation, interaction, shared activity in a way that changes your sense of the world and yourself in it. In this sense, the IIPE experience is not so much one of learning what we might understand as objective or factuality. Learning facts *is* an important part. However, the main generative component is *intersubjectivity*. Intersubjectivity captures the experience with another of experiencing new sensitivities, new understandings, unexpected turn-arounds in your worldview, and in the sense of others as well.

Gift Economy

Intersubjectivity is exemplified by empathy, the capacity to understand and/or identify with another person’s feelings, experiences, and positions. All these dimensions of intersubjectivity are related to the *peace values* of inclusivity, reciprocity, and mutuality.

These values are significant in cultivating a *spirit of generosity*, another pragmatic element of IIPE. Not only does a spirit of generosity make the interrelatedness of IIPE’s week go more smoothly; it also relates to an as-yet-unidentified dimension, a gift economy.

Robin Wall Kimmerer is an Indigenous scientist who explains a healthy, sustaining, ecological model using a berrying bush and its eco-relational interactions. In *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* (2024), she elaborates on the work of Genevieve Vaughn (2016) and Lewis Hyde (2019) on the concept of a gift economy. She explains that “Serviceberries are part of Indigenous foodways wherever they grow.” (p. 6). As a member of the Potawatomi Nation, tells us that its name is “*Bozakmin*”.

For me, the most important part of the word *Bozakmin* is ‘min’, the root for ‘berry’... That word is a revelation because it is also the root word for ‘gift’. In naming the plants who shower us with goodness, we recognize that these are gifts from our plant relatives, manifestations of their generosity, care, and creativity (2024, p. 6-7).

Kimmerer speaks with warmth, clarity, insight and a poetic, sensuous spirituality which is an increasingly recognized necessity for a true interrelated, interconnected, and holistic ecological perspective. To use these words so familiar in the ecological peace world is not enough. They are so familiar that their felt meaning needs elaboration as we aim to do here.

Kimmerer goes on to say that her Indigenous traditions cultivate a “culture of gratitude” (p. 11).

In a gift economy, the currency in circulation is gratitude and connection, rather than goods or money. A gift economy includes a system of social and moral agreements for indirect reciprocity rather than a direct exchange...The prosperity of the community grows from the flow of relationships, not the accumulation of goods” (p. 34).

This understanding of mutuality and reciprocity, where inclusiveness recognizes how soil, air, water, plants and creatures are important to acknowledge as gifts of life to all of us.

Betty Reardon referred to IIPE as a moveable feast referring especially to the rich encounters with people, even more than the delights we have with food. The idea of the gift economy helps us to understand ourselves as not only inextricably connected to each other. It also brings home how our very existence depends on so much from life around us and we each have a role in contributing to the well-being of others.

Inside of the Web: Our Learning Experience with the Ritual-Workshop on Hospicing Modernity

In this section, we will deeply explore one pedagogical intervention as an example of engaging sentipensar and intersubjectivity in our efforts to bring forward a socio-ecological dimension of peace. On Day 4, Thursday the day's subtheme was Decolonialization and Critical Pedagogy which preceded Stephanie's workshop. Next, the whole group split up, each person choosing one of five workshops to attend. Stephanie facilitated a workshop on “Hospicing Modernity”. Dani*el*a and Janet chose to attend. In the workshop, we role-played the idea of being doulas with one person acting out the role of modernity passing away. Dani*el*a took that role and Janet was one of two doulas.

Stephanie's Perspective as the Facilitator

I proposed to offer the ritual-workshop on hospicing modernity as an expression of regenerative peace pedagogies (Brandmeier, 2024) and as a way of relating to the conference theme of “navigating the tensions between tradition and modernity” (IIPE, 2024). It was also intended to build upon and extend my facilitated offering at the previous IIPE in Mexico City, in which I guided an activity around the co-sensing with radical tenderness poem by Vanessa Andreotti and Dani D'Emilia, Vanessa Andreotti, and the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective (2018).

I have described regenerative peace education in the following way (Knox Steiner, 2025, forthcoming):

A regenerative peace education involves reweaving relationships, of human and more-than-human; relearning how to be good participants in the earth community; repairing and healing from harm of centuries of colonialism and its myriad ongoing effects through justice and accountability; and growing new seeds for new possibilities from what we are able to compost.

One of the most pressing tasks of our time becomes what Vanessa Machado de Oliveira (2021) calls *hospicing modernity*, of learning to compost these toxic, violent, destructive systems, cultures, and ways of being and from this composted soil, growing ways of being that are regenerative, just, peaceful, loving, and grounded in care. Fundamentally, education transformation requires remembering ourselves as a community, and I see reweaving community (human and earth) as a fundamental task of a regenerative peace education.

The workshop I offered was based on Vanessa Machado de Oliveira's book *Hospicing Modernity* and connected to ideas around creating a regenerative peace education - a peace education that is rooted in an awareness of our interbeing and sees the main tasks of education as being unlearning separation and remembering interbeing (Knox Steiner, 2023). My curiosity became: if we think about peace education as a regenerative practice, what might happen if we practice hospicing modernity together?

One of the very generative and rich aspects of IIPE is the encouragement of experimentation. In developing this workshop, I was playing with themes that were alive for me, both as a human being trying to navigate my way through modernity and seed other possible ways of being and living, and as a facilitator-professor. With this workshop, I was able to play beyond the bounds of what I might be able to do in a graduate-level classroom, where there is some expectation of the professor delivering content, even within a highly participatory, co-creative, elicitive space of our peace education master's program. At IIPE, experimentation *is* the expectation. The experiment was very much informed by my experience with studying, teaching, and dwelling with the book, and as noted, an extension of my previous IIPE Mexico offering.

The experiment was also informed by my own experience of being in hospice with my mother, who died unexpectedly of complications from Type 1 diabetes in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic of January 2021. This was pre-vaccine COVID times (vaccines were just starting to become available for the most vulnerable, but at least where we lived, had not become available yet). She went into a coma on January 1, entered hospice on January 13, and passed away on January 16, 2021. For those three days, my immediate family and I held vigil in the hospice, where we were allowed to be in the room with her, two at a time, masked, unlike the intensive care unit at the hospital, which we were not able to enter due

to COVID precautions and the high rate of hospitalizations at that time. In hospice, we sat with her, meditated, sang, breathed, laughed, cried. We watched her body flailing, coughing (this is my daughter's clearest memory of that time - that "Gaga was coughing a lot"), writhing, and then...stillness, quiet. We sat and witnessed life leaving her physical body. As much as the workshop was inspired by the book, it was also deeply informed by bearing witness, singing to, praying to, speaking to, and loving my mother in the final breaths of her earthly life. Given this personal experience in hospice, I wondered how it might inform hospicing modernity.

With that in mind, I designed the workshop as a ritual-roleplay-ceremony. I took on the role of host and ceremony leader, and as we began, I announced that modernity had begun its demise, and we were gathered to engage in the act of hospicing. (You will hear from participants who played the role of hospice caregiver and a dying modernity below).

The intention was to treat modernity as a dying being - not a *dimension*, or a concept, or a paradigm, but an actual living being (as described in the quote shared earlier in the paper) and offer him/her/they/it the care any dying being deserves - to relieve suffering as much as possible, to listen, to witness. Along these lines, I offered invitations to participants, such as:

- To stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) of watching and witnessing this world dying, and the discomfort that might bring up
- To use this time to put down the question, "What can I get out of this workshop?" or "How can I apply this in my context?" in the spirit of disrupting transactional ways of relating to educational experiences. The invitation is to just be present without expectation of what you will receive, although I hope you do receive a lot from our time together.
- There is a way in which over-intellectualizing and even dialogue can be a form of bypassing our *sensefulness* and being in touch with what is going on in our mind-body-hearts. So, the invitation here is to also be aware of that.

Through the workshop, as we role-played the ritual of hospicing modernity, we were also trying to hospice modernity within ourselves and the way it can show up through habits of transaction, separation, and extraction. This workshop was offered in the spirit of experimentation that is encouraged at IIPE at the edges of peace education. I designed it for the specific setting of IIPE and the audience of global peace educators, had never offered it before, and invited us to be in the messiness and experimentation together through the process. I was very forthcoming with participants in this experiment that I didn't know how it would go. In short, I was prepared for it to fail.

We began with a song, *Oh Death* by Rising Appalachia (add link), and I offered a brief overview, and the aforementioned invitations about the work we were about to do together. It is worth noting that participants chose to be there and chose this topic, and I offered a warning at the beginning that the workshop was about hospicing and death, and that these can be heavy and triggering themes, and to take care of themselves and each other (and they really did). We then built an altar to honor the gifts that modernity had offered us, such as the technological developments such as airplanes and smart phones that allowed us to find out about the IIPE, apply, and travel there.

The next stage involved getting into roles. Participants chose whether to be a hospicing doula or modernity. We had three groups of four, with three doulas and one person acting as modernity. To begin, groups spent a little time getting into their roles with the others who were taking the role on. Then we divided into groups. I guided participants through a hospicing experience of three stages:

Stage 1: Modernity has been given the terminal diagnosis but is still conscious. You are able to converse with modernity. See what happens.

Stage 2: Modernity enters the next stage of the death process and is no longer conscious or able to speak. Modernity is invited to act this out, and the doulas are invited to bear witness, and take in the teachings of this moment.

Stage 3: Modernity takes its last breath and comes to stillness if they weren't there already. We are all invited to sit with this stillness. *Modernity is a part of us, and when modernity dies, a part of us dies with them.*

In the final stage of the workshop, I invited participants to grieve modernity, just asking the question, "How would you grieve modernity?" There was open time and space for this, and then a closing round of reflections (had we had more time, I would have invited participants to write a eulogy for modernity, and then we would have built an altar to seed the new world that is being birthed after modernity).

This workshop was intended - and I believe it met this aim - of being a regenerative peace pedagogy - a pedagogical act that directly engaged participants in feeling themselves as part of the larger earth metabolism that we are a part of. It was an example of a transrational (Cremin, Kester, & Echevarria, 2018) and sentipensante pedagogy (Rendon, 2009), and thus meant to be a transrational, embodied, and affective exploration of the theme of decolonial peace education.

Janet's Experience Role-playing Doula

My acting as a doula in the workshop role-play necessitated deep attentiveness. The doula is a responsive role. Modernity dying as enacted by Dani*el*a, was played without words, or without any direct responses to me or Oschan, the other doula. I opened my senses to take in the external cues from Oschan and from Dani*el*a's actions. I simultaneously listened carefully to what my body felt in response to this situation. I re-experienced the times I have been a kind of midwife to the deaths of people very dear to me. I remembered the success of feeling-with, being present, and breathing with those dear ones. I aimed to do this with Dani*el*a's character. Their curled-in shape, lack of talking, and lack of eye or hand contact gave us no directives. Responses as doulas required patience, creativity, not unlike talking to a tree. Oschan or I sporadically asked them a question. Some of their movements could be taken as responses, but not definitely. As they let go, we two also had to let them go. Their stillness signaled a powerful emptiness.

In witnessing Dani*el*a's painful state, I had to be very patient with myself. I had to remember that they were the focus. Our presencing their passage was for them primarily. As a witness, I also had to attend to my own pain in being with their experience. Though painful, and frightening, I found solace and patience in my breathing. I hoped that my breathing would find its way into their consciousness. I imagined myself as a huge protective presence, taking care to bring a sense of safety from outside. I hoped that they could feel this, although they could not say it to me. They were being diminished before our eyes, I thought, on their own journey, taking leave of us.

I was relieved after the role-play ended when we could actually comfort Dani*el*a, thankful that they were not actually dying, but rather their own lively self-reviving.

Dani*el*a's experience as a participant in the role of the dying modernity

I raised my hand to take on the role of modernity that is dying. There were three of us and we discussed how we understood this role and how we would shape it. The image of a drug addict dying of an overdose had arisen in my mind. I tried to get into this reality and go into the role, play with this basic idea, and at the same time be open to what would emerge in the process, what would feel coherent and authentic at that particular moment.

It started directly with the death struggle. I lay twitching on the floor in Stage 1, my body was cramped and twitching at the same time, full of strength and vigor, the remaining life energy culminating in these last moments with unimagined intensity. I was completely introverted and had almost no contact with the outside world. My sensory channels were largely closed. At the very foggy edge of my perception, I sensed that the two doulas were there, but I couldn't understand their attempts to make contact and their offers of care, let alone respond to them. On the one hand, I was wrestling with death, fighting an agony death struggle to keep

breathing and moving; on the other hand, I was floating completely in my intoxication, melting in the ecstasy of delirium and dissolving in elation.

In Stage 2, I breathed my last breath, my movement ended in a standstill in the embryonic position, and I died. The dissolution and fusion came to completion; it was an abyss and a redemption at the same time. The calm of the standstill formed an indescribable contrast to the frenzy of before. I let myself fall and was carried by the emptiness, depth and vastness, by nothingness.

I wasn't there in Stage 3. I was dead. And I don't know what happened after my death.

And then the role play was officially over. The group was invited to come back together and share what it was like in a final round. Voices came to me, I perceived them and was thus in contact, in connection, without knowing how or who I was. Without feeling whether I had my own materiality or knowing how I was in the world. I lay on the ground, motionless and blind. But little by little, I felt and heard the other living beings: I heard a bird chirping, felt a breeze on my skin, heard the voices of the other workshop participants and felt sunbeams on my body. In the end, it was the sun that brought me to life: the warmth I could feel gave me the energy to make my first small movement. Still curled up in the embryonic pose, I stretched and turned my head a little so that some of the sun's rays touched my face directly. It was a magical moment. I was lying there; there was nothing but me and the sun in the universe. I was one with everything.

I lay there and enjoyed the moment of complete dissolution and intense aliveness at the same time. I felt the life pulsating inside me, felt myself materializing and, like a plant sprout that sticks its head out of the ground and unfolds its leaves, I was able to move my limbs bit by bit. Full of wonder, marvel and amazement, and filled with trust, love and gratitude, I made contact with the world through more and more channels: Sensing, listening, sniffing, skimming. Finally, I opened my eyes. Sitting in front of me were two fellow creatures, my doulas were still there! With joy and complete surrender, I fell into the care of these beings who sat there smiling at me. I felt like a newborn baby perceiving its first counterparts. I looked up at them from the floor, stretched out my arms and they took them gently, helped me up, and were close to me. Simply there. I felt their presence. I was filled with wonder and amazement. I was handed a bottle of water and I made contact with the water: I wet my lips, let a little steel run into my mouth, drank my first sip, felt it run down my throat until the water became one with me. I dripped water onto my hands, touched it with my fingers, stroked it into my face and enjoyed getting to know this element through direct contact and interaction. Amazement and awe accompanied me as I took my first clumsy steps through the world and the reflection circle welcomed me like a safe womb.

Dani*el*a's Digesting and Reflecting on the Experiences of the Workshop. These experiences in the workshop were so intense and so vividly embodied that they completely blew me away. At the same time, it was not easy to digest them, to process them, and to make them communicable in language. On the embodied level, the insights were there, could sink deep into my cells, be felt, experienced and metabolized. On the relational level, in connection, in conversation with others, I was able to begin to describe what I had experienced and to clarify how strongly the learning moment had expressed itself. But there remained a large gap between what I could express linguistically and the depth of what I had experienced. I carried with me for several months the desire to digest this learning experience more intensively and to make it more accessible to the cognitive level and thus shareable. Finally, two things helped to make it possible: reading the book and the intensive, diverse, mycelial and lively exchange about the conglomerate of experiences and insights from the book and workshop.

It feels like the conversations contribute to the microorganisms that then support the digestion and composting process. All our spores contribute something and in my inner compost heap much more moves when I am in contact with others, in lively exchange or encounter. Now writing is about looking at the compost, turning it over and taking the soil into my hands.

When I look back on the IIPE and the workshop and try to summarize my learning in language, it begins with the conference title, which, nourished by the insights of the workshop, changes in this way: "The Hospicing and Midwifing of Change: Navigating the Tensions Between Modernity and the World to Come". It is no longer just about the tension between tradition and modernity, but I can clearly sense the tension between the world as it is dominant at the moment and the world that is not yet there. Between the world that is dominated by various forms of violence, is based on the exploitation of all living things and is therefore deeply unsustainable and un-peaceful, and the world that recognizes that everything on the planet is interwoven and part of each other and in which all living entities can live and thrive. The world that brings up so much pain, anger, sadness and despair in me and the one that I so deeply long for and desire and that brings up an intensive longing, a sense of connectedness, an empowering stillness and a loving, caring feeling inside of me.

The experience with "Hospicing Modernity" makes me realize the dualism that lies in these words and in this juxtaposition. Shows me that there is a form of violence in this splitting that also perpetuates the illusion of separateness: a basic modern assumption that cuts us humans off from the fullness of life and the interconnectedness of the living web. And which thus sows fear and insecurity in us and feeds the spirals of violence.

Instead, the workshop and the book have clearly shown the attitude that the doulas propose and embody: an attitude of being there, being awake, holding,

accompanying and caring. It is not about silent, passive witnessing or approving acceptance. But it is about being there with decelerating calm. And about a deep recognition of what is and has been. To hold on and endure, to be in connection - with the beauty of life, with the horror of destruction, with the gifts of modernity, with the costs of exploitation that these entail. This attitude is at the heart of hospicing modernity.

And in the same qualities, there is already a part of the new world that I wish for! And it is precisely these qualities of the doula that accompany not only dying and death but also birth and life! We do not plan and create this vivid, regenerative world, we enable it to be born, to give birth to itself. Decomposition processes take place in the compost heap, while at the same time seeds begin to germinate, absorb the nutrients of the humus-rich soil and strive towards the light.

Widening and Wilding: Arising Questions

We have explored how IIPE can be considered a learning ecosystem. This learning ecosystem is organized by mosaic thinking for program structure. The program form then serves as a stabilizing substrate. In contrast, we have explored the dynamic concepts of liminal space, the space of unknowing and learning as sentipensar, interbeing, interstices, and intersubjectivity in order to delve deeper into how to amplify IIPE's pedagogical potential for cultivating socio-ecological dimensions of peace.

For us, *regenerativity* forms an umbrella concept over the dynamic concepts that form the core of the socio-ecological relational dimensions for peace. In this last section, we ask how we can enact this pedagogically and relationally? This hospicing modernity workshop was one such attempt to enact this at IIPE. Moving towards a regenerative peace education is to remember ourselves as part of the larger planetary metabolism - of cycles of birth and death, of seasons, digestion, ebbs and flows.

We now consider how to expand IIPE's pedagogical potential as a regenerative eco-learning system with these reflective inquiries:

1. How might the site that holds the IIPE be engaged as a peace educator? Following the reflections of Patel & Ehrenzeller (2023), we note that *engaging place* as a more-than-human teacher (Abram, 2017) can be fruitful. The Nagarkot hotel where we stayed sat on a hilltop with a magnificent panoramic view of the Kathmandu Valley, nearby hills, and, on a clear day, the snow peaks of the Himalayas. The surrounding, the place, the environment around us, was intensely part of the learning journey – as space is always the “third pedagogue” as Italian early childhood educator and philosopher, Loris Malaguzzi would have reminded us, although it was not mentioned explicitly in the IIPE program. This was apparent in Stephanie's April 2025 post-IIPE Zoom-from-Costa Rica, repeat of the

Hospicing Modernity workshop for Tony Jenkin's classroom group in Washington, DC. With a nearly identical script and flow, the substantial difference in setting made it obvious how much this shaped the experience.

2. How might we further engage interstices? Minna Kim and Stephanie wrote after IIPE Mexico about community dreamwork as intercultural peacelearning. From a socio-ecological and regenerative peace learning perspective, they call for reconsideration of the overfilled week structure.

When we design a schedule to be completely filled, where is the time for emergence, rest, and play? When we have formal sessions from morning until night, what does this communicate about our perceptions about the relationship between informal spaces and peace learning? Might we need to allow for the interstices to expand rather than scheduling every waking moment, so that within these intentionally carved-out open spaces, something new, unforeseen, and emergent might sprout? How might we find this balance of content exploration, integration time, and unstructured space where unplanned learning can flow? (Kim and Knox Steiner, 2023).

3. How Might Rewilding Be Materialized in IIPE as a Regenerative Socio-Ecological Peace Learning? In nature, life grows in cracks, in the liminal spaces between. At IIPE, there is a tension between allowing space for organic learning to emerge and making the most of the short time we have together, all while considering the minimalized budget and the valuing of giving a space for everyone's voice and contributions. This could be understood as the tension between in an objective-driven, forward progressing Modernity and the organic Mycelial Web of feeling, sensing, thinking relations, between what is to accomplished and what is emerging, striving to be born. We might acknowledge that learning is wilder than anyone can fathom or plan for, and that a critical part of allowing space for wild learning is to not control, to allow for experimentation, and to leave open spaces for wildness to grow.

4. How Might We Allow Unlearning Modernity's Transactionality and Engage More Intersubjectively? To engage in intersubjectivity, we need to encourage moving beyond the instrumentation of others (and nature). At the heart of regenerative peace pedagogies is tending to our relationships, moving towards greater reciprocity, and engaging in the spirit of generosity. In the Hospicing Modernity Workshop, Stephanie invited participants to set aside the often-transactional question, "What can I get out of this workshop?" and try to just be present intersubjectively to allow for its unfolding.

There is a value in every participant giving a presentation, especially when remembering that IIPE was originally organized to include local teachers who could not afford to travel to other locales. IIPE was formed to include local people

in global peacelearning discussions. This also enable further reciprocity and insights that global elites could not otherwise know.

Now, almost all the IIPE participants are “global citizens” with graduate degrees in Peace Education and with traveling and presenting opportunities. That said, how might we value other ways of presenting and contributing so that sentipensante may exist and breathe with the week of programming?

5. How Can Responsibility, Feedback, and Accountability Be Enhanced? How do we both offer and receive feedback in ways that are life-affirming and honor the whole community? Feedback is a mechanism that strengthens voice and intersubjective relational dimensions of peacelearning. It is interrelated with responsibility and accountability.

Responsibility held by each individual and collectively are vital for social-ecological relations as a basis for learning peace. And how can accountability be activated? At IIPE Nepal community guidelines were elicited from the community in response to some conflict that flared up among the group. Other mechanisms are surely available. Holding onto the principle of interconnectedness through intersubjectivity and even interbeing may light up alternatives as situations occur in the eco-learning of IIPE. Life is feedback!

6. What Does IIPE Seed?

Modernity as stated separates us and emphasizes individuality. What more might we do to enhance the sense of ourselves within our *collectivity*? The web of peace educator relations is a network. Collaborative projects like this help us bring our unique diversity into deeper learning-relationships, and these cases vibrations through the whole network and beyond to diverse global learning environments.

Returning to the idea of hospicing modernity, and this tension between tradition, modernity, and the world waiting to be born, the question that arises is: When is it time to *compost old structures* and let something new be born? What comes next, and how will we recognize it? Ultimately, tension between stability and flexibility/flow - the stability, consistency, and continuity that old structures provide, and the emergent, organic way that life is here already wanting to spring forth.

We know from our own experiences that IIPE seeds numerous relationships that deepen over time, such as this very one we are writing our way through. It has seeded projects and initiatives around the world. Modernity might have us try to quantify or codify this in some way (and a research project along these lines could indeed be worthwhile), and yet the seeds of IIPE are far wilder than could be captured in data or, as Dani*el*a writes above, in words.

Conclusion

In this reflective article, we considered how the socio-ecological dimension of peace might be intertwined with *regenerative peace education*. Given the ecological and climate crisis, education for and about peace must deeply rethink socio-ecological relations considering humans' relationships to the natural world, starting with acknowledging our interdependence. Peace requires deep attention to the collapse of ecosystems due to human actions, especially the mindset of modernity which encourages separation and domination, extraction, and objectifying of nature. We must discuss how these insights can widen peace pedagogy toward cultivating dynamic webs of caring relations and generosity of spirit among humans, other living systems and the natural world upon which our survival depends.

In pursuit of socio-ecological dimensions of peace, we have reflected on the dynamic yet amorphous intersubjective experiences most fully described in a workshop "Hospicing Modernity", led by Stephanie Knox Steiner at the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) Nepal 2025. IIPE has been explained as a pedagogical form, a weeklong residential experiment in building a peacelearning community. Using an intersubjective method, we came to see both IIPE and our collaborative effort of co-writing as two forms of *regenerative peace education*.

We speak from our experiences in traditional formal education and from our efforts to widen and *wild* -- to open through intersubjectivity, sentipensante, and creative processes -- the how and what that we teach. In this effort, we start with foundational concepts of modernity, peace, interbeing, and sentipensar. IIPE is presented as a form using Janet Gerson's art-based metaphor of *mosaic thinking*, that is, by explaining the material aspects of the substrate (base) and the tesserae (pieces), the liminal spaces as interstices, and the dynamic relating as intersubjectivities with the regenerative dimensions of mycelium networks from botany, and the gift economy from Indigenous traditional and feminist regenerative thinking. Dan*iel*a Pastoor has generously shared a deep subjectivity in their role-play experience of dying, being hospiced, and (fortunately) regenerating.

We hope that our modest exploration here will inspire and motivate others to collaborate even when the results remain wild by the standards of traditional scholarly writing. IIPE was founded in 1982 by educators in response to the potential of nuclear weapons to end human life. This collaboration similarly closes with unresolved issues and questions. These questions are the seeds and spores for the regenerative dimensions of peace education to grow, so that IIPE may continue to evolve, despite darkneses descending. We invite dialogue with other peace educators. May these insights boost your dedication to lifelong learning for a more peaceful world. At minimum, may the foundational concepts —modernity problematized, peace, interbeing, and sentipensar -- and the organizing concepts --

substrate, interstices, and intersubjectivity -- inform other peace education contexts and endeavors.

We close with a poetic invitation to join us in widening and wilding the mosaic and peace learning ecosystem.

Invitation to Widening and Wilding the Mosaic

As we leave this space,
what whispers will you carry with you,
and what seeds will you plant in our shared learning ecosystem?
For you too, dear reader, are now a part of it, in this ever-widening and wilding vast web of connection.

In the quiet interstices between our words,
where learning is wild and unplanned,
what new forms might emerge
not bound by time,
but nurtured by peace and place and presence?
How will you widen and wild this mosaic of peace learning?

Let us listen to the land that holds us,
the trees that teach us patience,
the air that breathes life into our dreams,
The mountains that remind us of deep time.
The intercultural language of laughter.
Let us remember that peace grows in cracks,
in the unstructured spaces,
where our hearts and minds can wander freely,
without the weight of schedules or expectations.

May we find new ways of being,
in the rhythm of reciprocity,
in the dance of responsibility and accountability,
in the sacred feedback loops of our shared journeys.
And may we honor this mosaic,
this living, breathing ecosystem
we are all a part of,
and together,
May our peace learning contribute to
Co-creating a world
where peace is not just taught,
but felt,
and made whole
through our relationships and collective wisdom.

May our collective learning for peace-
From, with, and as the earth -
Be far wilder, deeper, and wider
than we can imagine through the stuckness of modernity-
Reaching beyond it,
rooted in the earth,
soaring through our shared dreams.

Stephanie Knox Steiner, 2025

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