Toward Centering Place in Peace Education:
Reflections and Opportunities for Praxis

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"If we are to educate to share all resources, to limit consumption and practice utmost respect for the biosphere and all who live within it, we educators have to learn ourselves to share and practice those limits and to authentically respect *all* persons as well as other life forms. Can we formulate a next phase in the evolution of peace education that can adequately respond to the planetary crises that arise from a context of the dimensions and urgencies of these days?" - Betty A. Reardon, *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility, 2021 Edition*

These provocative questions from Betty Reardon echoed audibly throughout IIPE 2024: Nepal, whose theme, "The Pedagogy and Peace Politics of Change: Navigating the Tensions between Tradition and Modernity," indeed encouraged participants to self-reflexively learn and practice our commitments to vibrant and relevant peace education. Through research briefings, Boalian Theater of the Oppressed workshops, circle work, storytelling, art-making, play, rituals, and more, IIPE participants represented our understandings of tradition and modernity to one another. These terms took on varied meanings at our summit of over 50 peace-minded educators hailing from more than 25 countries, gathering in Nepal, which has been operating as a federated constitutional democracy for roughly 10 years (International Institute, 2025). In this essay, I wish to honor the rich insights generated at IIPE 2024 by reflecting on the frames of tradition and modernity in

order to foreground a focus on place as a potent pedagogical anchor for the necessity of an ecological paradigm for peace.

As participant-observer during our week together, I found it fascinating that so many of us, hailing as we do from diverse and hybrid social and geographical locations, commonly understood the force of modernity as one of separation. By one valence, modernity seemed powered by independence, exemplified in the capacity to revolutionize, to self-identify, to come out, to claim, and to mobilize. By the other side of that very same coin, modernity seemed potentially, even gravely, injurious: a force that ruptures relational bonds and fuels disconnection, erasure, and ecocide. Tradition, meanwhile, was often portrayed as powered by cohesion, exemplified as the protector of ancient wisdom and the purveyor of sacred meaning; a force of togetherness and resilience. Simultaneously, though, we interpreted tradition to one another as like a quagmire: sticky, cloistered, stifling the growth of the foreign and distinctive, that which forcibly maintains relational bonds, is averse to change and resistant to science.

While it initially felt conceptually efficient to imagine modernity and tradition as polar opposites in this way – locked in tension by being that-which-the-other-is-not – I found that such a perfect binary failed to function in practice during our week together in Nepal. It was as if that portrayal of their relationship was too one-dimensional. Since we were conscious, as Reardon counsels us, "to learn *ourselves* to share and practice" (Reardon, 2021, p. xxv, emphasis added) our theme, inviting tradition and modernity into dialogue revealed their many imbrications within and between our bodies, lives, and in the lives of the places we traveled from and to which we would return. Their overlaps and collisions showed up in plenaries that explored gender, race, and coloniality, in reflection groups where we processed personal reactions to the theme, and in our immersion day in Kathmandu. It struck me that viewing tradition and modernity in opposition did not provide an adequate rendering of their more complicated relationships. And so, I experimented with changing my point of view. By situating myself in place, the place where we were: in Kathmandu, at IIPE, I discovered more conceptual spaciousness for understanding tradition and modernity in relationship – less as forces that cancel each other out, and more as forces that dance in tense dialogue. As a result, I want to explore the idea that intentionally connecting to place may invite new perspectives and opportunities for the field of peace education as it faces the intersecting moral and ecological urgencies of our time.

Celebrating the role that local context has always played in peace education (for example, in Reardon's (2021) framing, valuing transformation at the global level always means considering the global situation in daily decisions at the local level, and at each IIPE gathering, participants from diverse places represent what they are doing in their local contexts in conversation with the IIPE host location

and with each other), I want to advocate here for centering place in peace pedagogy as a way to transcend the pull toward strict binaries, to practically embody the work of sharing resources, and to foster cooperation among humans and across species as we reach toward an ecological paradigm for peace that sufficiently meets the demands of our time.

Epistemological experiment: Loosening colonial logics that marginalize place while stitching place toward center

While place has been honored and written about extensively as an anchoring force in Indigenous cosmologies, kinship, and governance structures (see e.g. Heath Justice, D. and O'Brien, 2022; Van Horn et al., 2021; Four Arrows in Knox-Steiner, 2022), the intentional erasure of these wisdoms by colonial violence has been significant; so significant that many of us have grown up disconnected from place and its power. Cremin, Echavarría, and Kester (2018) note that this same violence expresses itself in education as epistemic violence, nationalism, and colonialism. They go on to advocate from a decolonial perspective toward a more holistic "transrational peacebuilding education" that comprehends more than Western-dominated patterns of thinking. To this end, exploring what it means to be "emplaced," to "belong within a world of relations" (Van Horn Et. Al, 2021), will require an uprooting, for many of us, from logics of colonial violence at work in our bodies and minds (or, to put it more transrationally, our body-minds (Hemphill, 2024, p. 55)). As Knox-Steiner writes in her dissertation, "Decolonial, Pluriversal, Vitality-Centered Pedagogies: (Re)orienting Education Toward Serving Life," to formulate peace pedagogies involves as much disentangling consciousness from the death-trap of coloniality as it does fertilizing the soil of transdisciplinary, relational, and slow knowings (2022). Such a formulation is a co-created, deconstructive-plus-constructive pursuit powerfully motivated by the reality of planetary peril. To focus on place in peace education, therefore, I will experiment with pulling at threads of conceptual entanglement in colonial epistemologies (linear time, individualism, and enclosure, each one a "thread") in order to identify and loosen the net by which place has been held hostage and become de-animated in the settler-colonial imagination. Into the space made by loosening those threads, I will weave together decolonial perspectives on time, community, and land in relation to place (each one a "stitch"), before introducing some budding ideas for how to center place in a contemporary ecological paradigm for peace education.

The thread of linear temporality

Dimensionally, place is often described in terms of linear time. Where a linear notion of time is perceived as constant and unidirectional, notions of place must borrow from, respond to, or interrupt time in order to gain meaning. In shorthand, "place is pause," or static, relative to the dimension of linear time. If time is a one-dimensional arrow, then places are like ticks along the arrow's axis. Exploring the conceptualization of place in his 1977 book, *Space and Place,* humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan wrote, "if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place…" (p. 6). While Tuan's trailblazing contributions to the philosophy of place are rightly celebrated, I find his conclusion that "place…is essentially a static concept" (p. 181) sticky, reflecting the hegemonic prominence of linear temporality in Western philosophy. To interpret notions of "tradition" and "modernity" from this lens, tradition neatly precedes modernity on a one-directional timeline. By this logic, moments "take place" in time and stories begin "once upon a time." Unidirectional temporality creates the sense that time in places can be "lost", which can foster urgency from the fear of ongoing loss (scarcity) and consequently anxious efforts to prevent loss. Loosening the hegemonic dominance of forward-moving time might include inviting place to dimensionally coexist with, rather than emerge secondarily to, time, and/or to broaden the forms of temporality that might simultaneously exist with a place.

The temporal stitch: Place and time "always in process"

What would it mean for place - animated and powerful - to transcend, rather than intersect, time? For example, in decolonial scholarship for liberation, place can be considered valuable not for pausing the inevitable flow of time but rather for its reliability as a dimension capacious enough to withstand the simultaneous presence of past, now, and future. In her 2015 book, *The Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology,* Michelle Wright points to places where tradition and modernity coexist by demonstrating the limitations that a unidirectional, Newtonian understanding of spacetime imposes on the embodied reality of Blackness. To prove her point, Wright invokes the simultaneity of the diasporic necessity of return and the Afrofuturistic necessity of living in the future. She describes the commanding position that Newtonian physics, as an exclusive ontological paradigm, holds in Western thought, one whose commitment to linear narratives of progress, she contends, is both limited and requires strenuously forced argumentation to uphold. "By imagining time as a *natural* force that moves development *forward,"* Wright observes, "Newton provided Enlightenment

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philosophers with a stunningly simple yet compelling understanding of time through which they could interpellate Europe as the vanguard of civilization" (p. 40). The linear frameworks provided by the laws of Newtonian physics, are, in Wright's perspective, "essential, necessary, and useful" but both physically incomplete and practically unsatisfying, since "physics," she writes, "shows that our movements 'forward' are entropic, not linear" (p.77). Wright thus demonstrates a decolonial take on the relationship of place to time, saying that:

> Blacks across the Diaspora…cannot travel back through linear time as a collective, because our pasts comprise not one line but innumerable strands…Because 'home' is also the origin in a linear spacetime epistemology of a collective, it becomes fixed in time, untouched by change, but only theoretically: the continent of Africa, like every other continent, is always changing and never static. (pp. 83-84)

Wright does not stop with deconstruction, but engages in a constructive argument, exploring the scientific concept of "epiphenomenal time," a tripartite, holistic notion of the present that encompasses past and future in a now "always in process." She contends that the notion of epiphenomenal time allows for dialogical, rather than dialectical, dynamism between the dimensions of time and place within the mutually constituted dimension of spacetime.

It is such relationships – dialogical, rather than dialectical – that I believe peace educators sense we need to foreground in our learning and teaching spaces if we are to cultivate the types of collaborative consciousness and action required for planetary survival. Centering place in peace education could encourage decelerating the urgency impressed by linear temporality, bringing into focus reverence for how we remember, for where we return to, for who returns to the places we inhabit, and for how we imagine the future. Wright's perspective on epiphenomenal time and her introduction of the dialogical, rather than dialectical, invitation to coexistence, offer important conceptual inroads for the development of place-focused pedagogies in an ecological paradigm for peace. Just as epiphenomenal time gains coherence from the dialogical weaving together of multiple points in time mutually constituting one another, a more multivalent dimension for navigating tradition and modernity in conversation emerges for exploration and play when considered dialogically and through the lens of place. For example, the place in which IIPE is hosted is comprehended through the stories of many communities, nations, and living and extinct species that inhabit and have inhabited the hosting place, just as participants in IIPE 2024 engaged with current political leaders of Nepal at the same time we engaged local cultural and religious

phenomena that existed long before our arrival there, long before Nepal was a nation-state, and will exist long after our departure.

Peace work involves the simultaneous and non-linear processes of return, retrieval, healing, guessing, and imagining futures. Re-conceptualizing our access to pasts and futures through epiphenomenal time invites past, present, and future into active dialogue when considered through place: multidimensional, diversely constituted, in process, and transforming.

The thread of individuality and the colonial fallacy of atomic selfhood

The ontological baseline of linear temporality leads not only to an overemphasis on dialectical relationships; it also undermines Reardon's call to "share all resources" by providing the conceptual conditions for the notion of a discrete individual or "atomic" self. The atomic self is one whose life moves along the arrow of time from place to place, and who, by not belonging to a place, experiences few limitations to their urge to consume. The atomic individual, unable to control the linear progression of time, exerts agency by floating between places, dis-placing and re-placing herself at "pauses" along the arrow of time. In his book, *The Larger Conversation: Contemplation and Place,* poet and philosopher Tim Lilburn (2017) provides a searching distinction between the notion of the atomic self, the self that "floats," and an "emplaced self," one responsible and responsive to place. He issues a warning, that:

> …placeless, our identity is never fully developed and our anger, thus unnamed, is rampant, diffused. Without a relationship to land and the respect and ethical regard that come from relationship, we are dangerous…Our incompleteness makes us destructive, ravenously, disproportionately, madly, ungovernably hungry, affiliated with a hunger that may be a sort of uncomprehended mourning…(p.16)

Indeed, the capacity to rupture oneself from emplacement, moving beyond the bounds of a particular place, might be considered the defining characteristic of the modern self, which in rupturing pronounces its bounded (even if incomplete) identity. In this way, the colonial entanglements of linear time and atomic selfhood act as mutually reinforcing logics resistant to the possibilities of transcendent experience or transrational thought and action. Separation, displacement, and replacement are the atomic self's means of survival and empowerment.

Let me be quick to say that the colonial fallacy of atomic selfhood is a fallacy not because it solidifies distinctiveness but because a "floating" self is an impossibility. All living beings depend on other beings. Distinctiveness (expressed,

for example, in biodiversity) is an ecological survival necessity, whereas atomic individualism, which relies on hierarchy instead of collaboration, is deathly. As Lorde (1979) points out, the celebration of difference is the "the raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged." And, that this power begs to be employed collaboratively, since

> within the interdependence of mutual (nondominant) difference lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being (pp. 111-112).

None of this is to say that individuals or groups who favor or benefit from highly individualist paradigms never seek out or themselves change through transcendent or collaborative experiences. It is only to observe that the description of such experiences within the confines of linear and individualistic paradigms is conceptually and semantically limited by those very boundaries, a loss for those of us seeking peaceful planetary survival. Indeed, a sufficient ecological paradigm for planetary peace must offer us the capacity to retrieve some notion of what existed prior to extinction, to forecast possibilities for what is to come, and to effectively collaborate across time and space. A planetary survival paradigm is necessarily multidimensional, multidirectional, and interdependent.

The relational stitch: Places as ecosystems

How does a place come into being if not as a pause in linear time in which individuals find themselves? One way to imagine this is to perceive places as ecosystems in homeostasis, always present and always changing, their integrity stabilized by the relational compatibility of their constituents to each other. Consider silviculturist Suzanne Simard's description of the ever-changing ecologies of old growth forests:

> Trees need to be near one another, to establish in receptive soil, to join together to build the ecosystems, mix with other species, relate in patterns that produce a wood-wide web, because the forest becomes resilient from this complexity…[F]orests are complex adaptive systems, comprised of many species that adjust and learn, that include legacies such as old trees and seed banks and logs, and these parts interact in intricate dynamic networks, with information feedbacks and self-organization. Systems-level properties emerge from this that add up to more than the sum of the parts. The properties of an ecosystem breathe with health, productivity, beauty,

spirit. Clean air, clean water, fertile soil. The forest is wired for healing in this way, and we can help if we follow her lead. (p. 300)

Reconceptualizing place as like an ecosystem so described – as a web of relationships always in process – helps to destabilize the conceptual purity of a wholly independent self who displaces and replaces themselves in time and space. It helps us to comprehend the global-local connection, how contributing to the social and ecological health of the place where we can support the wellbeing of the planetary system. To put this in more concrete terms, let us consider the question of how to share clean air or water. Ethicist Cristiana Zenner (2018) points out that we cannot manage water individually, as "[e]veryone, individuals, governments, and the contrived, legal "persons" called corporations – bears responsibility for the preservation and wise use of this unique and essential resource." Zenner underlines the impossibility of managing global clean water alone, stating that it "[i]t requires action at collective, regional, and transnational levels. The challenges are practical, of course, but they are also conceptual. Thus, we must cultivate a mode of ethical discernment that relies upon careful, steady awareness of context…" (pp. 185-186).

To cultivate such an awareness, Lilburn posits that individuals come home, into wholeness and into reality, when we locate ourselves in places to which we are pleased to return, consciously taking up our role in the collaborative ecosystem. Encouraging the reader to call a place special to them to mind, Lilburn writes that being in these places,

> either actually or imaginatively, can be as reviving as taking a long drink of water. The experience of dwelling in these places is restful, vitalizing…They calm us, inform us concerning essence, allow us to feel undispersed, gathered. It can seem that we belong to them, as Coast Salish peoples say of certain salmon rivers and certain families, not the other way around…here we are taken in, at home…home, we are more than the atomic self by the measure of the place and its range of connections. We are the self in chthonic and local relationship, the self as an ampler ecology. (p. 6)

From Lilburn and Simard, we understand how places are – or can be – stabilized not by their boundaries or the likeness of the individuals within them to each other, but by the strength and complexity of relationships among distinctive beings who collaborate to form a living system. Places-as-ecosystems are systems of relationality that reliably challenge and nourish one another, encouraging resilience and survival (Kimmerer, 2022). They require reciprocity. In this view, one might say that places are constituted by trust. It follows that to center place in peace education is to center the cultivation and maintenance of trust.

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The thread of borders: Enclosure and the objectification of land

Enclosure is the colonial practice of de-animating places by drawing borders and allotting possession of land. Epistemologically, enclosure is expressed in the collapsing of multidimensional constellations of beings-in-relation into two-dimensional representations of territories from and to which individuals travel across time as described by lines drawn on maps. By rupturing himself from belonging to land in a relational ecology, the atomic self enters into a hierarchical relationship to land by which land is symbolically "possessed." In his sweeping historical-theological book, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race,* Willie James Jennings (2010) traces histories of enclosure through the stories of people who, he describes through accounts from the transatlantic trafficking of persons, became raced out of a societal need to account for their association with a place where they no longer were. "Territoriality produces space upon which racial being functions," Jennings writes, asserting that enclosure serves as a precondition for racism. "In short, [by the logic of enclosure,] the land is first a matter of possession and second, if at all, of signification. Land becomes the space for races." (p. 218). Enclosure is about defining and separating; about sacrificing the animacy and interconnection of ecosystems for possession by atomic selves.

The sympoietic stitch: Weaving places into stability

To loosen the trap of enclosure is to cultivate awareness of the many forms of connection among human and more-than-human beings that constitute places, which are, because of these multivalent connections, porous in their boundaries. Place-based survival in the face of enclosure is brought into powerful perspective by Indigenous scholar-artist Sarah Biscarra Dilley in their piece, "tʸiptukiɬhɨ wa tʸiptutʸiʔnɨ, where are you from and where are you going?: patterns, parcels, and place nitspu tiɬhin ktitʸutitʸu" (2022). Tracing their grandmother's story of resistance to the State of California and United States federal government's efforts to violently seize their people's homeland, Biscarra Dilley describes Indigenous sovereignty through "the integration of material wealth, scientific understanding, and a deep knowledge of place" (2022, p. 13). Contrasting this integration with the violence of enclosure, Biscarra Dilley writes:

> Written into words and maps that remained fixed despite the life in all things, the systemic disordering of our worlds has been suspended across generations, attempting to make such violence a new creation

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story…But…Indigenous peoples simultaneously deepen our connections - navigating narrative and physical confinement by maintaining long-standing relationships and challenging generational tensions to maintain survival. This includes relationships with other-than-human beings, place(s), and waterways, each of which contributes to a living sense of placemaking, of movement and of alliances. (p. 4)

That Biscarra Dilley portrays placemaking and movement as complementary, rather than oppositional, is a wisdom essential to the constitution of an ecological paradigm for peace. Haraway (2016) likewise advocates for teaching and learning "sympoiesis," an active "making-with" done by multiple species with the aim of building planetary resilience in the context of a changing climate. Biscarra Dilley's description of placemaking and Haraway's presentation of "sympoiesis" flow easy into pedagogical conversation with Cremin, Eschavarría and Kester's (2018) notion of a transrational approach to peace education mentioned earlier, which calls for "attention to the emotional, embodied, and metaphysical aspects of peace learning," and comprehends "rationality and critical discernment, but is also open to systemic and transpersonal approaches" (pp. 300-301). Adding another stitch to the quilt, Knox-Steiner, in chorus with Indigenous scholar Four Arrows, promotes Indigenous Worldview Manifestations in peace learning, introducing "pluriversal" pedagogical approaches that comprehend our presence in an "entangled world where we intra-act with one another, in which the more-than-human world is acting with us, where we are constantly becoming" (2022, p. 39). As constellations of distinct beings collaborate with each other in interdependent, living systems of belonging, they build the resilience and strength of places.

By taming place into functioning within the confines of linearity, individualism, and enclosure, I believe we have anesthetized place, bereaving place of its inherent power to connect, transmute, resource, and contain – the very capacities needed to help the planet survive. The colonial logics of individualism, linearity, and enclosure efficiently render "tradition" and "modernity" as "places," however superficial, through which individual selves might travel along the one-way arrow of time; "tradition" a place from which the individual ruptures themselves and "modernity" a destination toward which they pioneer. Instead of being beholden to these polarizing framworks, peace educators can choose to learn with and from Indigenous, sympoietic, placemaking worldviews, to awaken the sensibilities of learners to their emplacement, engage the embodied, emotional, and metaphysical, cultivate relationships of trust, and nurture sympoietic actions within our ecosystems to foster ecological resilience.

Stitching place toward center:
Applications for centering place in peace pedagogy

Various forms of practice and scholarship exploring place in education have emerged in recent decades, largely in the areas of community engagement in higher education (especially in the United States) (Yamamura and Koth, 2018, 2019; Dostilio, 2017); environmental education (Renshaw and Tooth, 2018); or in an effort to fuse both of those subjects with critical global citizenship education in local contexts (Gruenewald and Smith, 2008). The resulting array of literature offers a rich diversity of field research but little consensus in terminology (ex.: place-based, critical place-based, place-responsive, or emplaced education). Of these, Somerville's (2010) work on place pedagogy, which draws on contemporary feminist poststructural and postcolonial philosophies to put forward "a place pedagogy for global contemporaneity" is perhaps the most closely aligned with the goals of peace education discussed in *In Factis Pax.* To join them, and to conclude these reflections on centering place in peace education, I want to suggest a few conceptual and embodied shifts that peace educators who wish to center place might consider in terms of temporality, relationships, and the reanimation of places.

Temporality: shifting from "what to do" to "where to be"

We might play with how it is to swap temporal notions like "pause" with place-based ones, like "homeostasis." "What must we do now?" is a question often urgently posed in the aftermath of violence or shocking news. We could try adding to it questions like, "Where are we now?" "Where do we need to be?" or "What past, future, and present stories are alive here?"

We might also play with what it means that something is urgent. Poet Maggie Smith (2025) describes a "beauty emergency" as a singular, never-again-to-be-witnessed moment, like the particular colors of the sunrise on a given Tuesday, as something so sacred it demands our full, immediate attention and presence. Such an emergency is dependent on our perspective, insisting that we honor the capacity for awe awakened in us by a temporary moment of commanding beauty not by moving, but by staying exactly where we are until it changes.

We might consider which ritualized celebrations in our educational calendars receive the most focus, perhaps adding in ways of marking time that are cyclical and seasonal, like observing the solstice or equinox (Knox-Steiner, 2023). We can notice how much attention is given to moments that reinforce linearity: beginnings, endings, accomplishments, and completions (such as convocation, commencement, birthday, and retirement ceremonies) and decide if we want to

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adapt them. We can think creatively about how to memorialize the past and envision the future, bringing experiences of both into learning spaces.

Relationality: honoring our responsibilities to webs of interspecies kin

Here too, play and experimentation are in order. We can play with swapping private ownership terms like "resources" (natural, human, or otherwise) with collective ones, like "relations" (Amster et al., 2014) to gently shift our thinking about how we relate to one another and where we find ourselves. We can explore how to turn land acknowledgement statements into land-animate partnerships. We can marry efforts to educate for individual human rights (Wong and Hordequin, 2019) with the work of educating for collective responsibilities (Reardon, 2021).

We can remind ourselves that difference helps us survive. Building trust across differences in pursuit of mutual survival, flourishing, and collaboration does not only mean establishing honesty, reliability, and respect in spaces of learning, but fostering curiosity about novel forms of cooperation. Maintaining trust requires attending to and repairing harm through active accountability, which goes beyond taking individual responsibility toward taking steps toward healing in community. Restorative, reparative, transitional, and transformative justice processes at classroom, school, community, national, and international levels can aid in building shared understandings of accountability, trust, and meaningful repair.

We can consider finding new and renewed ways to mourn and heal together. Corporately, humans need to feel connected. We need to be inspired, to mourn, and to celebrate together, especially after we have suffered or have caused one another pain. As loneliness and time spent alone reportedly increase across my home country of the United States, humans here are accessing fewer avenues for expressing collective grief, exploring our spirituality in community, or moving through the motions of healing together. Witnessing, truth-telling, grieving, healing, and celebrating is what we can try to do, not only through one-on-one relationships, but in community, in interspecies kinship, together. We need to collaborate more on how we tell stories, share inspiration, take risks, apologize, and heal – together (Hemphill, 2024). Honoring shared place during such events is a way to transform them into transcendent, connecting, reciprocal endeavors.

Sympoiesis: new metaphors for cooperation and resilience

In the same edition of *Comprehensive Peace Education,* quoted at the beginning of this essay, Betty Reardon urges peace educators to identify new metaphors for describing "the meaning of the human experience and human struggle," in order to interrupt the recreation of the war system (2021, p. 60). I wonder if we have found

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ourselves at a place where some of the most powerful metaphors peace educators can employ in this pursuit are not metaphors so much as observed scientific phenomena that are generalizable to include the human experience. The emergent strategy approach of "fractal" organizing through mimicking murmurations of birds and the physically transformative power of mycelial networks is one take on this idea (brown, 2017). As it is, ecosystems are not a metaphor for places; places are ecosystems. One particular example is Suzanne Simard's "Mother Tree Project," in which scientists are observing the climate resilience of nine experimental forests positioned across a "climate rainbow" in British Columbia that spans hot to dry regions. By studying the "structures and function of the forests," especially the web of interdependent relationships by which different living beings transmit information and resources -- how they compete, share, cooperate, and adapt in order to survive -- scientists are able to gauge the resilience of varied forest ecosystems experiencing climate stressors. Behind these experiments operates the Mother Tree Project's emerging philosophy, "complexity science" (Simard, p. 304). Joining with biologist Kimmerer's (2022) cry that "all flourishing is mutual," Simard's complexity science is "[b]ased on embracing collaboration in addition to competition," with the potential to "transform forestry practices into what is adaptive and holistic and away from what has been overly authoritarian and simplistic" (p. 304). I cannot think of a more powerful metaphor for how different beings may weave their experiences and needs together toward developing a sufficient ecological paradigm for peace than the "metaphor" of a cooperative, ancient, revered, productive, and adaptive old growth forest.

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