

# PEACE BY OTHER MEANS

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Symposium on the Role of Ethnography  
and the Humanities in the Understanding,  
Prevention, and Resolution of Enmity  
Part 5

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## **Introduction: Indigenous Insights**

The anthropologists who have written for this installment of “Peace by Other Means” are not advocating that specific mechanisms of conflict prevention or resolution be lifted from other cultures for application out of their emic contexts. Rather, the point of examining indigenous cases is, first, to seek theoretical principles of enmity prevention and reduction that may emerge from a comparative perspective and, second, to look outside the very closed and square box of the Western political and diplomatic traditions for perspectives on enmity and peacemaking that may disabuse us of our own failing preconceptions. This approach, when tried at all, tends to fail—fail, that is, to persuade professional doubters—because of its lack of appeal to those who feel culturally superior. The editor of *Common Knowledge*, in his introduction to Part 4 of this symposium, expressed frustration that “Peace by Other Means” had produced, up to that

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time, more caveats on the principles to which it is dedicated than actual contributions to what, after all, is an important intervention.<sup>1</sup> There is—we speak from experience—a hesitancy, if nothing more profound, among social scientists to be seen as “idealistic”; and “realistic” in this context often means “cynical.”

Still, we can assure the *Common Knowledge* community that there are social scientists, not infrequently consultants to international agencies like the United Nations, working assiduously along the lines described in Jeffrey Perl’s announcement of this symposium.<sup>2</sup> The international community, as it struggles to construct norms, ethics, laws, and institutions for a pluralistic, interdependent, and peaceful world, will need not caveats from scholars but, rather, their dedication to the analysis of every cultural practice that could limit the effects of enmity. The scale of this project is immense, but, as we shall see, there are perfectly realistic reasons to think that enmity can be faced down as forcefully as human polities, today, confront their enemies.

### Peace-Promoting Values and Norms

The first stage of the task is to identify values and norms that discourage enmity and promote peaceable behaviors. Violent responses to conflict are not infrequently met, in the indigenous world, with criticism, ridicule, shaming, and other expressions of disapproval, as well as social sanctions. Generosity may be favored over greediness, kindness praised instead of callousness, timidity rewarded rather than boldness and daring. One such community is the Buid of the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> Melford Spiro sees another in the Ifaluk of Micronesia: that culture, he writes, “is particularly notable for its ethic of non-aggression, and its emphasis on helpfulness, sharing, and cooperation.”<sup>4</sup> Still another culture that values nonaggress-

1. Jeffrey M. Perl, “Introduction: A Caveat on Caveats,” *Common Knowledge* 21, no. 3 (September 2015): 399–405, at 401–3.

2. Jeffrey M. Perl, “Introduction: The Undivided Big Banana,” *Common Knowledge* 20, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 412–18. For parallel work in the social sciences, see Geneviève Souillac, *The Burden of Democracy: The Claims of Cultures, Public Culture, and Democratic Memory* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011), and *A Study in Transborder Ethics: Justice, Citizenship, Civility* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2012); Souillac and Douglas P. Fry, “Indigenous Lessons for Conflict Resolution,” in *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, ed. Peter T. Coleman, Morton Deutsch, and Eric C. Marcus (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), and “The Human Quest for Peace, Rights, and Justice: Convergence of the Traditional and the Modern,” in *How Is Global Dialogue Possible? Foundational Research on Values, Conflicts, and Intercultural Thought*, ed. Johanna Seibt and Jesper Garsdal (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

3. See Douglas P. Fry, *The Human Potential for Peace: An Anthropological Challenge to Assumptions about War and Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Thomas Gibson, “Symbolic Representations of Tranquility and Aggression among the Buid,” in *Societies at Peace: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Signe Howell and Roy Willis (London: Routledge, 1989), 60–78; Bruce D. Bonta, “Conflict Resolution among Peaceful Societies: The Culture of Peacefulness,” *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 4 (1996): 403–20; and Bonta and Fry, “Lessons for the Rest of Us: Learning from Peaceful Societies,” in *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace*, vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 175–210.

4. Melford E. Spiro, “Ghosts, Ifaluk, and Teleological Functionalism,” *American Anthropologist* 54, no. 4 (1952): 497.

sive behavior is that of the Zapotec of La Paz in southern Mexico.<sup>5</sup> “We are pacifists” is sometimes heard by visitors to the La Paz Zapotec, and comparative research shows that rates of spouse abuse, physical punishment, and homicide are lower in La Paz than in most neighboring Zapotec communities. Among the Kuikuru of central Brazil, “aggression is practically nonexistent, and unease about being thought stingy, quarrelsome, or aggressive keeps village life running smoothly.”<sup>6</sup> The Trio of the Suriname-Brazilian frontier back away from disputes; indeed, they “lack tolerance for conflict and the tendency is always to move in order to avoid confrontation.”<sup>7</sup> Core values among the Comanche of North America include respect, patience, sharing, and the elevation of community concerns above self-interested ones.<sup>8</sup> As LaDonna Harris and Jacqueline Wasilewski explain, “The Comanche have always been keen students of human nature and paid great attention to constructing social spaces that reduce conflict. . . . Maintaining a certain level of social harmony kept everyone’s energy focused where it needed to be focused, on the continuation of the community into the future.”<sup>9</sup>

The Paliyan of India are an especially interesting example among cultures of this sort: they neither war nor feud and have “an explicit code of nonviolence.”<sup>10</sup> They emphasize respect, equality, and individual autonomy or freedom. The core value of respect is not merely an ideal for the Paliyan. On a daily basis, they shy away from competition, invidious comparison, and prestige seeking.<sup>11</sup> The typical response to conflict among the Paliyan entails avoidance. Peter Gardner writes that, for the Paliyan mind-set, to interfere with another person’s autonomy is an intolerable act of disrespect.<sup>12</sup> The Paliyan core value of equality is founded on the view that each person “merits equal respect by virtue of being a human being.”<sup>13</sup> Hence men do not dominate women in Paliyan society—indeed, as Gardner makes clear: “If a woman decides to bring her lover into the household

5. Douglas P. Fry, “‘Respect for the Rights of Others Is Peace’: Learning Aggression versus Non-aggression among the Zapotec,” *American Anthropologist* 94 (1992): 621–39. For more on the Zapotec in the context of this symposium, see Judith Beyer and Felix Girke, “Practicing Harmony Ideology: Ethnographic Reflections on Community and Coercion,” *Common Knowledge* 21, no. 2 (April 2015): 196–235, esp. 202–4.

6. Robert Carneiro, “Kuikuro,” in *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*, vol. 7, *South America*, ed. Johannes Wilbert (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1994), 208.

7. Peter Rivière, “Trio,” in Wilbert, *South America*, 336.

8. See LaDonna Harris, *A Comanche Life*, ed. H. Henrietta Stockel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

9. LaDonna Harris and Jacqueline Wasilewski, “Indigeneity, an Alternative Worldview: Four R’s (Relationship,

Responsibility, Reciprocity, Redistribution) vs. Two P’s (Power and Profit); Sharing the Journey towards Conscious Evolution,” *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 21, no. 5 (October 2004): 2–3.

10. Peter M. Gardner, “The Paliyans,” in *Hunters and Gatherers Today*, ed. M. G. Bicchieri (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1972), 425.

11. Peter M. Gardner, *Bicultural Versatility as a Frontier Adaptation among Paliyan Foragers of South India* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2000), 83.

12. See Peter M. Gardner, “Respect and Nonviolence among Recently Sedentary Paliyan Foragers,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, n.s., 6, no. 2 (June 2000): 215–36.

13. Gardner, *Bicultural Versatility*, 85.

as a second husband, and if her original partner elects to go along with the change (instead of moving out), her polyandry is her own concern.”<sup>14</sup> Likewise, Paliyan hunting groups are cooperative: no individual dominates, and decisions emerge from discussion and consensus.<sup>15</sup> At the conclusion of a hunt, not only are the portions of game distributed equally but each share contains identical kinds of meat (“When all have agreed that the piles are of equal size, each hunter takes one, whatever his role in the hunt”).<sup>16</sup>

Several factors in addition to these core values contribute to the low level of enmity and aggression among the Paliyan, among them their norm of self-restraint. As a Paliyan man explained to Gardner, “If one strikes, the struck man keeps still. It is our main motto.”<sup>17</sup> Avoidance, too, is much employed as a response to potential conflict in this society, where the individual is to a great extent autonomous. Gardner points out as well that the Paliyan normatively shun alcohol, when available, for they believe that the introduction of alcohol might contribute to an increase in violence, and there is ample documentation that they are right.<sup>18</sup> Still another mechanism for keeping the peace is a “self-appointed conciliator” who “distracts with wit or soothes with diplomacy” (and, Gardner adds, the conciliation “is done in a respectful way, never at the expense of the principals”).<sup>19</sup> Over a data-recording period of four and a half months in one Paliyan band, Gardner observed only twenty instances of conflict (referred to, more accurately, as cases of disrespect). The majority of these were very mild; an adult, for example, had lightly slapped a child, and a person had had his feelings bruised by the comments of another. (The offended person simply got up quickly and left.) Even the cases of disrespect involving sexual jealousy were, from a cross-cultural perspective, not serious. Very few of Gardner’s twenty cases entailed physical aggression or even a verbal response. Gardner notes that the rate, per person, for incidents of disrespect is less than one per year.

The Hopi of the southwestern United States comprise another interesting case of an indigenous culture that presupposes a close connection between peace and respect. Alice Schlegel explains that, for the Hopi, “anger and violence have no part in the life of a humble person who respects the autonomy of others” and adds that their core values include harmony and the holding of “good thoughts.”<sup>20</sup>

14. Gardner, *Bicultural Versatility*, 3.

15. Gardner, “Paliyans,” 415.

16. Gardner, “Paliyans,” 415–16.

17. Peter M. Gardner, “The Paliyan,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, ed. Richard B. Lee and Richard Heywood Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 263.

18. See Douglas P. Fry and Patrik Söderberg, “Myths about Hunter-Gatherers Redux: Nomadic Forager War

and Peace,” *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* 6, no. 4 (2014): 255–66.

19. Gardner, “Respect and Nonviolence,” 224.

20. Alice Schlegel, “Contentious but Not Violent: The Hopi of Northern Arizona,” in *Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies around the World*, ed. Graham Kemp and Douglas P. Fry (New York: Routledge, 2004), 32.

While disagreements exist in Hopi society, they seldom lead to violence. In 1906, for instance, one Hopi village was rocked by bitter conflict, so the leaders of two rival factions decided to settle the dispute with a pushing contest. They agreed in advance that the losing group would leave peacefully. The two factions assembled on opposite sides of a line drawn on the ground and en masse began pushing each other until one group flooded over the line. No violence broke out. Schlegel records that, after one faction was pushed back by the other group, the capitulating side “accepted their loss and sadly left the village. This says a great deal about the success with which the value on nonviolence was internalized and put into practice.”<sup>21</sup>

A society’s core values may lean toward war or peace, enmity or amity, hostility or empathy, but sometimes contradictory values exist within a society, especially in pluralist or cosmopolitan ones. The peoples of the Upper Xingu River basin of Brazil, for instance, disdain violence and war, but, as Marina Vanzolini shows in her contribution to this issue of *Common Knowledge*, they maintain at the same time a belief in sorcery that on occasion leads to violence. Thomas Gregor applies the phrase “uneasy peace” to their way of life.<sup>22</sup> Still, they clearly regard war as immoral, uncivilized, and reprehensible, whereas in modern nation-states war is seen as a regrettable necessity or as the continuation of diplomacy “by other means.” What if global society also fostered a view of war like that of the Xinguans and treated it, like slavery, as an antiquated institution to abolish? Reinforcing their negative attitude toward combat, the Xinguans regard all blood, and therefore the spilling of blood, whether of animal or of human origin, as vile.<sup>23</sup> (A full article on *horror sanguinis* appears in the present issue of this journal.)<sup>24</sup> In another noteworthy psychological mechanism, the Upper Xingu peoples contrast themselves with their neighbors outside the peace system—neighbors accused of warmongering, murder, and child abuse—not as a justification for attacking them but in order to reinforce their own belief that, as civilized and moral human beings, they themselves must never resort to comparable behavior. The ideal Upper Xinguan is expected to be calm and self-controlled, as well as nonviolent. “A good citizen,” as Gregor makes the point, is “peaceful in response to both the moral imperative of peace and the aesthetics of behavior.”<sup>25</sup> In line with these attitudes, the warrior role is not valued in Upper Xingu society. No material gain, prestige, or status is granted to valor in war. “Warfare was an occa-

21. Schlegel, “Contentious but Not Violent,” 33.

22. Marina Vanzolini, “Peace and Knowledge Politics in the Upper Xingu,” *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 1 (January 2016): 25–43. See also Thomas Gregor, “Uneasy Peace: Intertribal Relations in Brazil’s Upper Xingu,” in *The Anthropology of War*, ed. Jonathan Haas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 105–24; and “Symbols and Rituals of Peace in Brazil’s Upper Xingu,” in *The Anthro-*

*pology of Peace and Nonviolence*, ed. Leslie E. Sponsel and Gregor (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 241–58.

23. Gregor, “Symbols and Rituals of Peace,” 250.

24. David Livingstone Smith and Ioana Panaitiu, “*Horror Sanguinis*,” *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 1 (January 2016): 69–80.

25. Gregor, “Symbols and Rituals of Peace,” 246.

sion for fear,” Robert Murphy and Buell Quain note, “and not an opportunity to enhance one’s status.”<sup>26</sup>

If we define the absence of war and other forms of organized violence as “negative peace,” along the lines of Isaiah Berlin’s definition of “negative liberty,”<sup>27</sup> then the protection of human rights, social justice, social equity, and human security can be seen as elements of “positive peace.”<sup>28</sup> Core values promoting justice and welfare as well as peace constitute the foundation of an emerging global normative order. A consensual global order of this nature—as opposed to an order imposed globally by the strongest polities—would not embrace as given the legitimacy of coercive power and military force in international relations, for strength is not a universal value and force is not a universal norm. As we have seen, there are cultures that promote sets of values and personal qualities that martial powers condescend to as of only anthropological interest: not simply nonviolence per se but also noncompetitiveness, a readiness to retreat from disagreements, let alone from actual conflict, and a disregard for warriors and war veterans. Some also value weakness, diffidence, self-restraint, humility or meekness, patience, unceasing composure, respect for others, generosity, helpfulness, kindness, and openness to sharing. They valorize concern for others’ welfare, for harmony and consensus, for equality and individual autonomy, and they evidence little or no concern for personal status. Their minimization of sexual jealousy and their intolerance of family rancor, tactless rhetoric, and retribution are well known to ethnography. To these peace-seeking qualities and values, we could add a philosophical one (“rejection of a single truth”), defined by Vanzolini in her article in this issue, and a religious one (“mobilization of creative capacities that are not ‘naturally’ available to humans”), described in this issue by Carlos Fausto, Caco Xavier, and Elena Welper in their essay “Conflict, Peace, and Social Reform in Indigenous Amazonia.”<sup>29</sup>

A society organized to promote this list of norms could dampen and ultimately immobilize the drivers of enmity. The good news is that, in building a society of this kind, we need not start from scratch: legal and normative frameworks of the international community that are already in existence constitute means of actualizing core values that promote peace. Such values, their institutionalization, and their celebration have played a significant part in maintaining peace, especially since the end of the Cold War, when nongovernmental organizations have

26. Robert F. Murphy and Buell Quain, *The Trumai Indians of Central Brazil* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1954), 15.

27. See Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (1969), in *Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166–217.

28. See Johan Galtung, *Essays in Peace Research*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1975), and “Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some

Responses,” *Journal of Peace Research* 22, no. 2 (June 1985): 141–58; Ximena Davies-Vengoechea, “A Positive Concept of Peace,” in Kemp and Fry, *Keeping the Peace*, 11–18.

29. Vanzolini, “Peace and Knowledge Politics in the Upper Xingu,” 27. Carlos Fausto, Caco Xavier, and Elena Welper, “Conflict, Peace, and Social Reform in Indigenous Amazonia: A Deflationary Account,” *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 1 (January 2016): 43–68, at 46.

contributed at the global level toward a new cosmopolitan approach to citizenship.<sup>30</sup> Insights from the indigenous world about what norms and values encourage peace deserve a higher place for discussion on the agenda of the global village.

### Cooperation

A norm not yet mentioned but essential to any collectivity, whether peaceful or martial, is cooperation. As Siniša Malešević indicates in his contribution to this issue, “How Old Is Human Brutality?,” cooperation is a mixed blessing that enables projects, for good or for ill, that otherwise would be impossible.<sup>31</sup> As a generalization, we can say that most indigenous societies are more cooperative than those in the West, if what we mean by *cooperative* is contrasted with descriptives such as *competitive* and *individualistic*.<sup>32</sup> If we look, as Malešević also does, to the simplest type of human social organization, the nomadic forager bands that dominated human life for most of the species’ evolutionary history, we see substantial cooperation of an altruistic sort. Ubiquitously, members of nomadic forager societies share meat.<sup>33</sup> Sarah Hrdy has shown that cooperative childcare is another pervasive form of cooperation in this type of society.<sup>34</sup> Recently, Samuel Bowles has suggested that altruistic cooperation may have evolved millions of years ago via “group selection” as bands that cooperated in a united defense would have survived at higher rates than those that did not.<sup>35</sup> This proposition—that, ironically, prehistoric war led to the evolution of altruistic cooperation—has been criticized on several grounds, including the implausibility of “group selection” and the lack of evidence for warfare in the Pleistocene.<sup>36</sup> In an article published

30. See Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Richard A. Falk, *Human Rights Horizons: The Pursuit of Justice in a Globalizing World* (London: Routledge, 2000); Andrew Linklater, *Critical Theory and World Politics: Citizenship, Sovereignty, and Humanity* (London: Routledge, 2007); Alex J. Bellamy, *International Society and Its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); James Bohman, *Democracy across Borders: From Demos to Demoi* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010); David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995); David Held, Anthony Barnett, and Casper Henderson, *Debating Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

31. Siniša Malešević, “How Old Is Human Brutality? On the Structural Origins of Violence,” *Common Knowledge* 22, no. 1 (January 2016): 81–104.

32. See Spencer Kagan and Millard Madsen, “Cooperation and Competition of Mexican, Mexican-American, and Anglo-American Children of Two Ages under Four Instruction Sets,” *Developmental Psychology* 5 (1971): 32–39;

Margaret Mead, ed., *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1961).

33. Fry, *Human Potential for Peace*; Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac, “The Relevance of Nomadic Forager Studies to Moral Foundations Theory: Moral Education and Global Ethics in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Moral Education* 42, no. 3 (2013): 346–59.

34. Sarah B. Hrdy, *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

35. Samuel Bowles, “Did Warfare among Ancestral Hunter-Gatherers Affect the Evolution of Human Social Behaviors?,” *Science* 324, no. 5932 (2009): 1293–28.

36. See Douglas P. Fry, “War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Challenge of Achieving Scientific Objectivity,” in *War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Convergence of Evolutionary and Cultural Views*, ed. Fry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–22; Fry and Patrik Söderberg, “Lethal Aggression in Mobile Forager Bands and Implications for the Origin of War,” *Science* 341, no. 6143 (2013): 270–73.

in *Science* in 2015, Mark Dyble and eight coauthors argue that there is no need to attribute to war the human capacity to cooperate, and they propose instead that gender equality in nomadic forager groups may have contributed to human “hypercooperation” and “prosociality.”<sup>37</sup> Their conclusion is that “cooperation among unrelated individuals can evolve in the absence of wealth accumulation, reproductive inequalities, and intergroup warfare.”<sup>38</sup>

One way in which cooperation can be an enemy to enmity is that trust is enhanced among people who work together successfully.<sup>39</sup> Students in ethnically mixed classrooms where regular cooperative work is structured into the curriculum have been shown to develop more cross-ethnic friendships.<sup>40</sup> Class climate as well has been rated more positively overall when cooperative learning groups have been used regularly.<sup>41</sup> It has long been observed that, when a society is faced with a real or perceived threat from outside, internal cohesion and cooperation are enhanced, but external threat and shared enmity are not the only facilitators of cooperation.<sup>42</sup> Working together cooperatively can be occasioned by conditions of obvious benefit or necessity, including by conditions of interdependence. As David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Dean Tjosvold have shown, there is more than one type of interdependence, and in an article on “effective cooperation” they discuss several.<sup>43</sup> They term it “goal interdependence” when each party perceives that his or her aims can be achieved only if all other parties involved achieve theirs as well. It is “outcome or reward interdependence” when either all parties or none of them receive a reward (or share the same outcome). For example, they point out that no individual player, only an entire hockey team, can receive the Stanley Cup. It is “role or task interdependence” when members of a group perform specialized roles or tasks, all of which are necessary for the goals of the group to be achieved.

37. Mark Dyble et al., “Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands,” *Science* 348, no. 6236 (2015): 796–98.

38. Dyble et al., “Sex Equality,” 798.

39. See Morton Deutsch, “Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict” and “Justice and Conflict,” in Coleman, Deutsch, and Marcus, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, 3, 29; David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Dean Tjosvold, “Effective Cooperation: The Foundation of Sustainable Peace,” in *Psychological Components of Sustainable Peace*, ed. Peter T. Coleman and Deutsch (New York: Springer, 2012), 15–54; and Muzafer Sherif et al., *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961).

40. See Robert E. Slavin, “Cooperative Learning and Intergroup Relations,” in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, ed. James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (London: Macmillan, 1995).

41. See G. Lawrence Zahn, Spencer Kagan, and Keith F. Widaman, “Cooperative Learning and Classroom Climate,” *Journal of School Psychology* 24, no. 4 (1986): 351–62.

42. See Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973); Jeffrey Z. Rubin, Dean G. Pruitt, and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); and Douglas P. Fry, “Group Identity as an Obstacle and Catalyst of Peace,” in *Pathways to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families*, ed. James Leckman, Catherine Panter-Brick, and Rima Salah (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 79–94.

43. Johnson, Johnson, and Tjosvold, “Effective Cooperation,” 17.



An anthropological example of interdependence that comes with an obvious moral for global society is the cooperative and peaceful intergroup relations that obtain throughout Australia's Great Western Desert, where nomadic foragers must deal with sporadic and unpredictable rainfall. An area that receives precipitation one year may be dry the next. To cope with these harsh ecological conditions, a system has developed that allows for the unencumbered movement of people across vast areas, from one year to the next, so that they can track available rainfall.<sup>44</sup> The various dialect groups offer assistance to each other in times of need, reciprocally share the shifting resources, and act kindly toward others within and beyond their immediate group. The necessity of sharing the land and its variable resources has allowed people to live together without intergroup enmity and to survive under challenging ecological circumstances.<sup>45</sup> It is easy to extract a moral from the Great Western Desert that is applicable to humanity at large in the twenty-first century. Many of the severest problems that we face now—global warming and climate change, pollution of the planet's seas, destruction of the world's fisheries, desertification, deforestation, and reduction in biodiversity—are global in scale and shared by all human beings. It is fortunate that, as the peoples of the Great Western Desert have demonstrated, humans have an evolutionary gift for cooperation.<sup>46</sup> No country, no region, no subset of humanity can resolve these global problems alone: if some countries wean themselves of fossil fuels while others do not, then the mutual goal of reducing carbon emissions to levels that scientific opinion regards as safe cannot be met. Thus, humanity is linked by both goal interdependence and outcome interdependence, and the peoples of the world, like the peoples of the Great Western Desert, need to cooperate to achieve solutions. But first, the parties involved must realize that their fates are linked. Until this realization occurs, however, the motivation for cooperating can be hindered by entrenched enmities among nations, ethnicities, races, and religions.<sup>47</sup>

The task before us is to make evident to all that it is in the self-interest of each of us to cooperate with everyone else. But how? The psychologists Spencer Kagan and Millard Madsen placed children in an experimental game in which cooperation would lead to rewards, but at first they found that some children did

44. See Robert Tonkinson, *The Mardudjara Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978); "Resolving Conflict within the Law: The Mardu Aborigines of Australia," in Kemp and Fry, *Keeping the Peace*, 89–104; and "Social Control and Conflict Management among Australian Aboriginal Desert People before and after the Advent of Alcohol," in Fry, *War, Peace, and Human Nature*, 262–77. See also Fred R. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

45. See Douglas P. Fry, "Anthropological Insights for Creating Non-warring Social Systems," *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* 1, no. 2 (2009): 4–15.

46. See Douglas P. Fry, "Utilizing Human Capacities for Survival in the Nuclear Age," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 16 (1985): 159–66.

47. See Douglas P. Fry and Marta Miklikowska, "Culture of Peace," in Coleman and Deutsch, *Psychological Components of Sustainable Peace*, 227–44.

not shift from their habitual competitive response to a cooperative orientation that would have benefited other players along with themselves.<sup>48</sup> Kagan and Madsen found that Mexican children living in Mexico were more cooperative than Mexican-American children living in California and that Mexican-American children were generally more cooperative than Anglo-Americans in California.<sup>49</sup> Because they did not grasp their “reward interdependence,” “Anglo-American children behave[d] irrationally: They remain[ed] in conflict to an extent which denie[d] them toys for which they [we]re striving.”<sup>50</sup> Children participating in a psychology experiment are not the only ones who, to their detriment, become habituated to patterns of competitive interaction.<sup>51</sup> Decision makers on the international stage also tend to be trapped in competitive ways of seeing; they miss the point that, in urgent situations of interdependence, cooperation is the only viable approach for solving problems. A key question is whether leaders can be “trained” to see the necessity of cooperation under conditions of “goal and outcome interdependence,” since, as Jeffrey Sachs points out, “the defining challenge of the twenty-first century will be to face the reality that humanity shares a common fate on a crowded planet. That common fate will require new forms of global cooperation, a fundamental point of blinding simplicity that many world leaders have yet to understand or embrace.”<sup>52</sup>

Returning to the ethnographic parable of the Great Western Desert, Robert Tonkinson writes of the situation in which the desert dwellers find themselves that “to permit inter-group conflict or feuding to harden social and territorial boundaries would be literally suicidal, since no group can expect the existing water and food resources of its territory to tide it over until the next rains; peaceful inter-group relations are imperative for long-term survival.”<sup>53</sup> The same can be said of humanity on the global scale in the twenty-first century. Interdependence can lead to peace, though only if all parties involved are able to see the necessity of cooperation and amity for the common good. Scarcity does not of necessity lead to fighting. It can lead to sharing and innovation as well. In the Australian desert, Tonkinson explains, “everyone is mindful also of how much their survival rests on mutual hospitality and unfettered access to their neighbors’ natural resources in both lean and bountiful times.”<sup>54</sup>

48. Spencer Kagan and Millard Madsen “Experimental Analyses of Cooperation and Competition of Anglo-American and Mexican Children,” *Developmental Psychology* 6 (1972): 49–59.

49. See Kagan and Madsen, “Cooperation and Competition,” 58. See also Mead, *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*.

50. Kagan and Madsen, “Experimental Analyses,” 58.

51. See Alfie Kohn, *No Contest: The Case against Competition* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1986).

52. Jeffrey Sachs, *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 3.

53. Tonkinson, “Resolving Conflict,” 92–93.

54. Tonkinson, “Resolving Conflict,” 101.

## Identity and Belonging

In the previous section, we raised the question of whether leaders, trained to be exceptionally competitive, can be retrained to recognize when circumstances of interdependence require that competition be replaced by cooperation. In this section, the key issue is how a person who has been raised to regard him- or herself as having a singular social identity can be reeducated to understand that social identity is malleable and that people are capable of holding multiple identities simultaneously. Social identity can contribute to intergroup conflict, as sharply distinguished groups lock themselves into oppositional relations that play out as interethnic violence, intraethnic feuds, or international warfare. But the construction of wider social identities concomitant with the more local ones has been an effort of human beings for millennia, as nation-states formed out of city-states and then joined commercial leagues, political alliances, or federations or were absorbed into empires. A person may feel more Venetian than Italian but, when traveling, more European, as she passes border crossings easily with an EU passport and spends euros in Finland, Germany, and Spain. In Sweden, she may feel identified as Catholic and thus as bearing an identity shared by more than a billion others of the most various nationalities and cultural roots. While visiting Iran, she may feel identified as indiscriminately a Christian or a Westerner, and she may think of herself as primarily a woman, which is an identity that she shares with about half the human race. At the site of a recent natural disaster or at a genocide trial in The Hague, she may briefly feel, above all else, human.

Various ethnographic cases illustrate how social identity can be multiply layered. Across dialect groups and vast distances, the peoples of the Great Western Desert of Australia hold a concept of “one country,” which is not an exclusionary territorial concept but, rather, signifies inclusion. The “one country,” conceptualized as lacking rigid internal divisions, incorporates all the peoples of the desert into a single kinship system that transcends both individuals and local bands.<sup>55</sup> As Tonkinson explains, “kinship is one of the most powerful integrating institutions in the desert, converting stranger to family. . . . These patterns bind people into obligations and responsibilities and, in turn, make for peaceable interaction and a sense of belonging.”<sup>56</sup> To exist in a world of kinship ties means that people across bands, dialects, and distances are interlinked as relatives and, as such, that they have responsibilities to care, share, tend, and befriend.<sup>57</sup> Desert-dwellers, united in this way, assist one another in the quest for food and water, share resources and labor, and grant favors and access to resources—all of which will be reciprocated in the future. This concept of a common identity, “one

55. See Myers, *Pintupi Country*, 27, 93, 183.

56. Tonkinson, “Resolving Conflict,” 104.

57. See Robert K. Dentan, “Cautious, Alert, Polite, and Elusive: The Semai of Central Peninsular Malaysia,” in Kemp and Fry, *Keeping the Peace*, 167–84.

country,” facilitates amity and therefore has been described as a peace system.<sup>58</sup> A second ethnographic example of this kind returns our discussion to the peoples of the Upper Xingu River basin of Brazil. Among them, tribal identities exist alongside a larger common identity that crosscuts the tribes. This supratribal sense of belonging is promoted by performance of common rituals, intervillage trade, tribal exogamy, and a shared constellation of peace-promoting values. As a Xinguan explained, “We don’t make war; we have festivals for the chiefs to which all of the villages come. We sing, dance, trade, and wrestle.”<sup>59</sup>

Moving to North America, a famous example is the Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the “Great League of Peace.” According to Matthew Dennis, “the historical experience of consolidation in the interest of peace—understood in terms of balance and harmony among kins-people within a single domestic world—became central to Iroquois identity and culture.”<sup>60</sup> The new higher identity developed by the affiliated Iroquois peoples was figured symbolically as living within the same longhouse; as such, the practice of exacting blood revenge in response to homicide was replaced by the payment of compensation, and the practice of cannibalism among the member tribes became obsolete. Outsiders became insiders; nonrelatives were transformed into kin. The distinct tribal styles of pottery that characterized the period before the confederation became progressively more uniform across Iroquoia, reflecting the development of a common identity.<sup>61</sup> As both a contributor to and a mirror of this added layer of belonging, intermarriage among the member tribes increased; ritualized adoptions connected people within and across tribal lines; and, importantly, the construction of kinship imagery reinforced the new view of all Iroquoians as relatives.<sup>62</sup> Including outside groups in the same kinship system, social network, or political confederacy has important precedents in indigenous and ancient collectivities and should be examined with a deeper seriousness by social scientists, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations. Many of these precedents are worthy of study as ways to get beyond enmity. In any case, so many more people now than ever hold multiple identities and multiple citizenships that the overlapping levels of belonging tend to expand “us” to include “them,” which has always been a reliable path to peace.<sup>63</sup>

58. See Douglas P. Fry, “Life without War,” *Science* 336 (2012): 879–84; Marta Miklikowska and Fry, “Values for Peace: Ethnographic Lessons from the Semai of Malaysia and the Mardu of Australia,” *Beliefs and Values* 2, no. 2 (2010): 124–37.

59. Gregor, “Uneasy Peace,” 113.

60. Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 44.

61. See William Engelbrecht, *Iroquoia: The Development of a Native World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003). For an ancient Near Eastern comparison, see Marianne H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

62. See Paul Wallace, *White Roots of Peace: The Iroquois Book of Life* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light, 1994).

63. On the concept of expanded citizenship, see Souillac, *Study in Transborder Ethics*.

## Rituals and Ceremonies

Rituals that act to obviate or reduce enmity are reported widely in the ethnographic literature, but their significance has been largely ignored.<sup>64</sup> Continuing our discussion of the Iroquois, Dennis has documented how consolation ceremonies among the peoples of the confederacy served to reaffirm the commitment to peace.<sup>65</sup> Before the meetings of the intertribal grand council, the epic legend was recited of how Deganawidha had brought peace and unity to the tribes that now constituted the Iroquoian Confederacy. These regular reminders of the horrors of war and the benefits of peace have been important in various societies and historical periods. Apart from their function as reminders, rituals and ceremonies are used as means of reconciliation, ways to shore up relationships, after violence or other disruptions. Reconciliation rituals across diverse societies tend to share certain themes.<sup>66</sup> Reconciliation, whether between individuals or social groups, typically includes eating, drinking, smoking, trading goods, and exchanging gifts. Such acts signify amity, not enmity, and therefore signal the resumption of peaceful forms of interaction. Formalities of reconciliation often entail the invocation of extrahuman or supernatural beings or forces to sanctify the peace accord and lend it added weight. Third parties may take part in reconciliation rituals, operating in various roles, for example, as the initiators of reconciliation, as mediators during the peacemaking process, and as celebrants of the successful resumption of friendly relations between the principals. Reconciliation ceremonies can entail oratory and drama, as well as feasting, singing, and dancing.<sup>67</sup>

Ceremonies of reconciliation among the Jalé of New Guinea are rich in symbolic significance, as Klaus-Friedrich Koch, Soraya Altorki, Andrew Arno, and Letitia Hickson make compellingly clear in this passage from their study on the “obviation of grievances”:

The Jalé term for the condition described here as avoidance is héléroxo. The expression derives from hélé, denoting the ditch that separates two adjacent beds in a garden; the suffix -roxo corresponds to the English “-wise.” In [performance] of the ritual, the curer, uttering esoteric formulae, smears a mixture of soil and blood drawn from the slaughtered pig on the hams of the antagonists. That act is called kénangenep-tuk (“soil them up”). Soil, or kénan, being the substance of that which hélé divides, the metaphorical aspect of the rite becomes apparent, and the

64. On the successes and failures of contemporary peace rituals in the Western world, see Jeffrey M. Perl, “Introduction: Greco-Latin Findings,” *Common Knowledge* 21, no. 1 (January 2015): 10–18, at 14–18.

65. Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, chaps. 2 and 3.

66. See Douglas P. Fry, “Conflict Management in Cross-Cultural Perspective,” in *Natural Conflict Resolution*, ed.

Filippo Aureli and Frans de Waal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 334–51.

67. For details, see Douglas P. Fry, “Anthropological Examples of Peacemaking: Practice and Theory,” in *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory*, vol. 2, ed. Susan Allen Nan, Zachariah Mampily, and Andrea Bartoli (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2011), 550–62.

expression of “seal them up” aptly [connotes] the nature of the event. . . . While at ordinary meals it is customary to tear off a portion of one’s piece of food and hand it to a kinsman or neighbor present, on this occasion all participants, especially the reconciled parties, exaggerate these mutual exchanges. As the suspension of food-sharing has signaled the inception of the *héléroxo* [avoidance] relationship, so is its termination affirmed by the ostentatious resumption of commensal practice.<sup>68</sup>

In this *Jalé* ritual, the gap between two persons who are alienated from each other is first imagined in terms borrowed from gardening, after which the figuration is literalized by “sealing up” the gap between them with garden soil. In another peacemaking ritual from the indigenous world, the Omaha people of the North American Great Plains went imaginatively further: the relationship between enemies was refigured as one between father and son. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche explain that “the leader of the party was . . . addressed as ‘Father’ and all his followers as ‘Fathers.’ The man who received the [peace] pipes was addressed as ‘Son’ and his party as ‘Sons.’”<sup>69</sup> The “fathers” sang to the “sons” the lyric, “I have found the man worthy to receive the pipes and all the blessings which they bring—peace, the promise of abundant life, food, and happiness.”<sup>70</sup> Nonrelatives were afforded close familial ties with the implication that fathers and sons do not make war on one another.

### Conclusions: Raising the Level

Every society has developed ways to manage internal conflict. As Donald Black points out, conflict management can be bilateral (between two parties), involving processes such as avoidance or negotiation, as well as trilateral (with third parties), when mediators or judges become involved.<sup>71</sup> From a sample of twenty-one nomadic forager societies, avoidance was reportedly used in sixteen, mediation in ten, separation or distraction by a friendly third party (a peacemaker) in twelve, and wrestling or similar nonlethal contests in nine.<sup>72</sup> Given the egalitarian social structure of nomadic forager societies, courts with judges vested with the authority to render enforceable decisions are very rare. By contrast, among chiefdoms, kingdoms, and nation-states, courts are fairly frequent. The means and mechanisms through which societies deal with deviance, grievances, chicanery, and

68. Klaus-Friedrich Koch, Soraya Altorki, Andrew Arno, and Letitia Hickson, “Ritual Reconciliation and the Obviation of Grievances: A Comparative Study in the Ethnography of Law,” *Ethnology* 16 (1977): 272–73.

69. Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1911), 381.

70. Fletcher and La Flesche, *Omaha Tribe*, 383.

71. Donald J. Black, *The Social Structure of Right and Wrong* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1993).

72. See Fry and Söderberg, “Lethal Aggression,” supplementary online material, table Sr.

criminality are multiple and extremely diverse. In some societies, disputes are addressed through discussion, negotiation, the deliberation of elders, or hearings before a council or moot court, and in others through contests, duels, or ordeals. Some approaches to conflict are informal and entail criticism, harangues, debates, the withdrawal of social support, and shunning; other mechanisms, such as offering a prescribed ritual apology or appearing before a king's court, are more formal. However conflict is managed, the point to emphasize here is that every society has at least some nonviolent options for restoring damaged relationships and allowing the resumption of harmonious social life. Conflicts may be inevitable, but dealing with them through violence certainly is not.

And yet, peaceful relations are rarer, globally, than we would like. A weakness of solutions for conflict that arise in the indigenous world is that they relate to relatively low social levels. Still, practices, institutions, and ways of thinking can sometimes be retooled for application to higher social levels, which is to say that successful conflict resolution and judicial processes are available for use in contexts where previously they were lacking. The values, norms, ethics, practices, institutions, and ceremonies are already familiar to the people involved, so the principles and structures are easily grasped. If people are already accustomed to taking disputes to their village elders for arbitration, then it requires no cognitive breakthrough to imagine a pan-village assembly of elders to arbitrate disputes between people of *different* villages. Among, again, the Upper Xinguans, the peoples of the Iroquois Confederacy, and the Aborigines of the Great Western Desert, there are several examples, well worth our attention, of success in “raising the level”—that is, expanding the applicability—of indigenous modes of enmity prevention and conflict resolution.

As we have already seen, indigenous Australian societies expanded their kinship framework to encompass everyone, without exception, throughout the Great Western Desert. Indeed, even strangers encountered in this vast territory were regarded as belonging to “one country.” In a similar vein, the peace system of the Upper Xingu basin, comprising approximately ten tribes, and the Iroquois Confederacy, comprising five, reproduced institutions and ceremonies at higher and more encompassing social levels, thereby sending a clear message to all member tribes that meaningful society extended beyond village and tribal borders. Recall the Xinguan who explained, “We don't make war; we have festivals for the chiefs to which all the villages come. We sing, dance, trade, and wrestle.” All of the Upper Xingu tribes participate in such ceremonies and, in that way, reinforce the understanding that there is a level of society superordinate to the tribe and that, at this higher level, human relations are expected to be amicable. As for the Iroquois, the tribes that united to form the confederacy had until then handled village governance in village councils and tribal decision making in tribal councils. To form the Iroquois Confederacy, the council as an institution was raised to

a new plateau: a grand council of fifty seats was created, on which the chiefs of all five Iroquoian tribes served. The seats were filled by representatives selected by the matrons of the matrilineages. The chiefs of the Onondaga were made keepers of the council fire. The two tribes designated as “little brothers,” the Oneidas and the Cayugas, sat to one side of the council fire, opposite the “big brothers,” the Mohawks and the Senecas, with the Onondaga seated between the two sides. Regarding decision making by the grand council, Dennis notes that “unanimity was essential.”<sup>73</sup>

It is important for our purposes here to note that the elevation of the council structure from application at the level of individual tribes to application at the level of the confederacy was not the first such elevation and reapplication among these peoples. As William Engelbrecht observes, a prior step was taken when they added a tribal identity, such as Mohawk or Seneca, to the local identities of lineage, clan, and village.<sup>74</sup> A similar process of expanding inclusive identity upward, along the sociopolitical scale, is visible in the history of the United States. By the time that the United States first came into being, self-identification was mainly at the level of the individual states—the former colonies: citizens of the United States were Virginians or New Yorkers before they were Americans. Only over time did the larger national identity come to dominate (and even now, in places and at times, there is some resistance to it). The sense of belonging to humanity as a whole, as world citizens, is but another extension of identity on the horizon. Whatever arguments are raised and supported, however, there remains considerable skepticism that the social changes necessary to preclude war are possible. The same skepticism was evident, before 1989, that the Cold War could ever end and likewise, after the hatred and slaughter of the 1940s, that a peaceful European Union could be constructed. By now, we take both of these immense changes for granted. Given that major social change is the rule, rather than the exception, over the long term, there is no reason to doubt that values, norms, and structures that maintain peace at the national or local level can be raised to the global level for application.

We have considered here how some societies have cultivated norms and values conducive to peace or, at least, to nonviolent means of settling disputes. To prevent and reduce enmity, it would be important for all societies, and also for the emerging global society, to explicitly adopt normative policies, practices, institutions, and structures not only that are consistent with the goal of a nonviolent world but also that actively promote it. Most people, most of the time, are accustomed, in any case, to living their lives nonviolently. Homicide, for instance, is a crime everywhere, whether locally or nationally. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights already affirms that “everyone has the right to life, lib-

73. Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 95.

74. Engelbrecht, *Iroquoia*, 128.



erty, and security of person.”<sup>75</sup> The problem is one of context: among the Inuit of northwestern Alaska, as Ernest Burch explains, “to kill one’s own countryman was murder (inuag-), whereas to kill a foreigner (tuqut-) was conceptually not much different from killing a mosquito.”<sup>76</sup> Our challenge is to take the sentiments and sympathies felt, within each collectivity, and extend them beyond their immediate context to everyone, everywhere, and to grant the courtesies and respect given and received daily, within each community, to human beings universally. That sea change, when it comes, will constitute monumental progress for humanity.

The proposal that democratic citizenship expresses higher levels of belonging than membership in a nation-state is emergent in recent democratic theory. Souillac has proposed that a “transborder ethics” be developed along with an expanded model of global citizenship.<sup>77</sup> She argues that democratic citizenship already expands the experience of belonging by combining territorial identity with normative adherence to the values corresponding to human rights. In addition, normative regional citizenship counteracts the more violent and exclusionary effects of national citizenship.<sup>78</sup> We would take this position up to the level of global citizenship as well. There is great potential to foster, through democratic citizenship, the values that sustain peace. Normative solidarity around the values of positive peace, respectful and equality-based dialogue, and human rights, all of which are necessary for the growth of civility in a pluralistic world, is possible. At the global level, it is cooperation, human rights, and human survival that are ultimately at stake. If the core values on which the global society will rely are to be universally human, rather than provincial or national or even transnationally regional, we must be open to the discovery of successful norms and structures everywhere. The indigenous practices and principles that are considered in this essay and this symposium offer important insights that we are in no position to overlook. We can begin a new phase in our process of individual and collective emancipation by highlighting, as many cultures already have done, the importance of values, institutions, and also rituals that enact solidarity, promote cooperation, discourage competition, affirm our multiple identities, and celebrate every step taken toward peace and human flourishing on this planet.

—Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac

75. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: United Nations, 1948), [www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/) (accessed June 27, 2015).

76. Ernest S. Burch, *Alliance and Conflict: The World System of the Inupiaq Eskimos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 20.

77. See Souillac, *Study in Transborder Ethics, and Burden of Democracy*.

78. Étienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. James Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), and “Violence and Civility: On the Limits of Political Anthropology,” trans. Stephanie Bundy, *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 20, nos. 2–3 (2009): 9–34.