

Francesco Ferrari / Laura Villanueva / Davide Tacchini / Binyamin Gurstein (eds.)

# Transdisciplinary Approaches on Reconciliation Research

Studies in Honor of Martin Leiner



V&R



# Research in Peace and Reconciliation

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Transdisciplinary Approaches on Reconciliation Research

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**Davide Tacchini** is currently Research Fellow and Associate Coordinator of the PhD program “Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation” at the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, Germany and Adjunct Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Parma, Italy. His current research interests include Reconciliation and Migration, Religion and Reconciliation, Reconciliation in the Qur’an and the Muslim Tradition. Among his recent publications: “Reconciliation and Refugees”, 2022 (with Barakat, Z., Leiner, M., Dajani, I., Eds), “Islam and Democracy, Muslim Voices Amongst Us” (2019, with the Hon. Amédée Turner), “Migration and Reconciliation in the 21st Century”, (ASR 13) 2020.

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**Laura Villanueva** a scholar-practitioner with 16 years of experience specializing in long-term peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, joined the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies (JCRS) in 2022. She has worked in various regions, including Colombia, Japan, and the Middle East, implemented the Satoyama for Peace approach, and has also played a role as a founding member and peace advisor for several civil society organizations that focus on peace and reconciliation. Having previously served as the Executive Director for the Center for Peacemaking Practice at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, she was appointed by the JCRS in March 2022 as the Director of the Practice at AAR-MENA. On June 2023, the center's 10th anniversary, as the founder and director, she launched the JCRS's fifth pillar, Satoyama for Peace: Ecosystems for Peace and Reconciliation. She is currently working on her upcoming book, "The Ecosystem Turn: Satoyama for Peace." Her latest research delves into an eco-systemic perspective of peace and reconciliation based on the Satoyama for Peace approach.

Francesco Ferrari, Laura Villanueva, the JCRS team

## Introduction

At the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies (JCRS) we define the aim of reconciliation research as the scholarly description, interpretation, and evaluation of processes of creating “normal” and if possible, “good” relationships between states, groups, organizations, and individuals reacting against past, present, or preventing future grave incidents such as wars, civil wars, genocides, atrocities, forced displacement, enslavement, dictatorship, oppression, colonialism, Apartheid, and other human rights violations and injustices. While on the surface the good relationships are between States, groups, organizations, and individuals, on a deeper level, we always deal with five dimensions of reconciliation:

- With oneself
- With the other(s)
- With the own group
- With environment
- With transcendence

Reconciliation is about personal encounters between victims and perpetrators (through and beyond Truth and Reconciliation Commissions), but also about changing structural violence, such as poverty and exclusion, and creating a culture free from hatred and negative stereotypes about the other group by fostering justice and mutual respect. Reconciliation, the long-term work to create better relations between (former) enemies after massive carnage, is a promising alternative to continuing tensions, violence, and the destruction of lives through never-ending hostilities. It is demanding, also on a psychological and spiritual level. It is costly but certainly much less than the culture of security through weapons and armies. Reconciliation fosters the creation of a “culture of peace.” The peace sought via reconciliation is not an ideal one, but that what is at stake is the reconstruction of communal relationships after open warfare. A common misunderstanding concerning reconciliation is the perception that reconciliation implies that victims would accept the wrongdoings of the perpetrators giving up all claims to justice, reparation, or security against the repetition of violence. Reconciliation, on the contrary, includes justice, reparation, work on trauma, security building, and a long-term and consistent confrontation of the violent past and the guilt of the perpetrators, including their punishment.

Reconciliatory processes involve several practices:

- Political and legal provisions, like treaties of cooperation, and clarifications of territorial disputes;
- Creation of a common security architecture, with disarmament and crisis management;
- Apologies and symbolic acts to show friendship and to honor the victims by politicians representing the country;
- Reparations and other attempts at restoration;
- Cooperation in regard to economic, legal, ecological, and international issues, including mutual help in cases of disaster;
- Cooperation in civil society, such as city-twinning, youth, and student exchange programs;
- Confrontation with history: opening of archives; the work of historians; preservation of a past narrative through museums and memorials; confrontation with individual history through the right of victims to know;
- Encounters between victims and perpetrators, through and beyond Truth and Reconciliation Commissions;
- Intentional strategies designed to humanize the image of the other, to overcome negative stereotypes, to build historical dialogue and common schoolbook commissions, changing education towards more understanding of the other group;
- Changing the discourse of religious leaders concerning the other group, especially if the difference between the groups is also a difference between religions;
- Individual medical, psychological (trauma therapies), and social help for the victims;
- Specific practices for intergenerational issues related to reconciliation (survivor-witness-programs, formation also beyond schools).

Reconciliatory processes are multidimensional and take into account the following:

- An orientation towards the past: The past must be dealt with if reconciliation is to take place. Telling of the victims' narratives and their acknowledgment by both the perpetrators and by the society are paramount in reconciliatory processes;
- Conserving the past: The past must also be remembered by building museums and memorials, by books written by historians, by archives, and by the conservation of the sites of suffering;
- Truth: Truth must be sought, known, and acknowledged by all, including the perpetrators;
- Guilt: Individual perpetrators have done wrong through their free will. They are responsible for their deeds and must confess their guilt;

- Words of apology and forgiveness: Granting forgiveness demands, in many cases, the verbal expression of guilt from the perpetrator's side. Official apologies often pave the way toward reconciliatory processes;
- Empathy: It is vital for the public and also for perpetrators and victims to show empathy and compassion for the victims;
- Emotions: Reconciliation with the former perpetrator and with oneself, social and individual healing can happen only through the expression of emotions;
- A vision of a common future for victims and perpetrators: This leads to new cooperation and provides security for both partners, cf. "Never again." It includes the acceptance of the perpetrator into the moral community, which is possible through an accepted apology or/and through punishment including reparations;
- For religious people, human reconciliation is related to reconciliation with God. In Christianity, the reconciliation of the world with God (2 Cor 5:19) is the presupposition of inter-human reconciliation. In Judaism inter-human reconciliation is a precondition for the reconciliation with God on the "Great day of reconciliation (Yom Kippur)", and in the eschatological future;
- In the academic field, Reconciliation Studies are a new trans-disciplinary approach that aims at overcoming the shortcomings of traditional security policies and peace-building strategies.

Martin Leiner's "Hölderlin Perspective" is the JCRS's unique approach to reconciliation. In his novel "Hyperion", the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) wrote: "Versöhnung ist mitten im Streit und alles Getrennte findet sich wieder." [Reconciliation is in the middle of strife, and all that was separated finds each other again.] In antithesis to a widespread notion in political science, where reconciliation is seen as an event that occurs only after the end of the conflict, the "Hölderlin Perspective" pays attention to those elements in a conflict that speak for and potentially lead towards reconciliation: groups or individuals who disagree with the conflict, common laws and customs, moments of economic cooperation, common feelings, correlations of acting and reacting, etc. According to the Hölderlin Perspective, reconciliation starts now, already in the middle of violent conflict, even if it might take many years before a stable peace is possible. Through the "Hölderlin Perspective," at the JCRS, we study reconciliation as a comprehensive process, which includes civil society as well as political leaders, specialists of several disciplines as well as grassroots activists, lawyers as well as psychologists, religious leaders as well as historians, popular media as well as classical literature, women as well as men. Often reconciliation is lived as a spiritual path, but it can also be seen in completely pragmatic terms.

Reconciliation processes are so complex that they only can be understood through a combination of the approaches of different disciplines. This conviction was pro-

nounced in 2012 by Susan Flämig and Martin Leiner in “Reconciliation in the Middle of Dispute. Introduction to the Series”, their opening essays to the collection RIPAR (Research in Peace and Reconciliation) and JCRS manifesto on reconciliation research. This programmatic text underlines that transdisciplinarity means more than interdisciplinarity: it is not about just exchanging results at the borders of disciplines, but continuous cooperation, and unlimited willingness to learn and to reformulate the disciplinary research. In reconciliation processes, transdisciplinarity includes disciplines such as Applied Ethics, Archeology, Architecture, Arts, Biology, Communication Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Ecology, Economy, Education, Diplomacy, Geography, History, Informatics, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Media Studies, Medicine, Military Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology, System’s Theory, Theologies of different religions, and others. As editors, we are sure that professor Leiner is delighted about every discipline present in this volume. Martin Leiner is a prominent voice and a much beloved colleague in the community of scholars of Reconciliation Studies and Systematic Theology. Being an ordained pastor, he is deeply respected both in Academia and Church. As editors, we are proud to present the following articles, which show the depth of contributions each discipline can make to a transdisciplinary perspective on reconciliation. This volume presents two separate sections, one focused on more theoretical interpretations and the other on case studies.

The first section is opened by **(1) Zeina M. Barakat’s** *Forging Peace: Moderation in Times of Extremism* (Applied Ethics). The author observes that in today’s world, conflicts are becoming more common and people are increasingly intolerant towards views that differ from their own. The increasingly polarized political strife and religious dissent in the Middle East and the global effects of the Russian-Ukraine war highlight the need to move toward moderation and study how to bring reconciliation in the world. This chapter is extracted from the author’s experience living under Israeli occupation and her previous works, *From Heart of Stone to Heart of Flesh: Evolutionary Journey from Extremism to Moderation* (2017) and *Envisioning Reconciliation: Signs of Hope for the Middle East* (2022). The first examines the crucial factors affecting human transformation from radicalism to moderation and intolerance to tolerance, temperance, and middle-ground. It investigates factors mitigating extremism. The second delves into the concept of reconciliation and explains its meaning and practice. It explores religious radicalism, focusing on Islamist extremism, though such symptoms exist in other faiths. The author thematizes reconciliation within oneself and with others, between people and nations. The message is humanity-inspired, and remarkable peace-builders’ influence is strongly felt.

**(2) Atin Basuchoudhary’s and Andreas Freytag’s** *The Political Economy of Reconciliation: A Theoretical Primer* (Economy) moves from the thesis that even if

conflicts end, quite often, the roots of future conflict remain in fertile soil. The process of reconciliation among erstwhile enemies may be a way to deter future conflagrations: a number of examples, such as in Rwanda or South Africa, but also, to a lesser extent, in reunified Germany, witness it. Nonetheless there is, according to the authors, a lack of understanding of the relationship between socio-economic developments, conflict, reconciliation, trust, and peace. Is economic growth beneficial for peace and reconciliation? How do inequality, unemployment, and poverty enter this equation? Is reconciliation a prerequisite for economic and social development? In economics, the topic of reconciliation is so new that there is no proper tool to measure it. A preliminary conclusion from observing these processes is that to be sustainable and effective, reconciliation processes may require cultural change. The authors use evolutionary game theory to model this process of cultural change. They postulate three cultures in a population – Conciliatory, Non-conciliatory, and Reciprocative. They then use the replicator dynamic to identify stable evolutionary outcomes.

(3) **Benoît Bourginé's** *The Theology of Grace According to the Pauline Corpus* (Catholic Theology) asks: What is grace? Christian theology proposes a dossier on grace so dense and opaque, so mired in polemics, that it inspires legitimate apprehension – a strange fate for a notion that evokes a freely-given gift and implies the hope of the glory of God. Ploughed in all directions, this field has no shortage of workers; one is always the last to enter, behind so many others. Within the confines of the article format, this study limits its scope to the Pauline corpus. The economy of grace as it unfolds in teaching to the first Christian generations can only be fully considered with reference to the fertile soil of the religion of Israel and the Greco-Roman cultural context. It is, therefore, appropriate to start with the Old Testament before examining the theology of the Pauline corpus situated within the Greco-Roman context and first-century Judaism. This study shows that according to the Pauline theology of grace, God shares himself with the faithful in his Son and the Spirit so that they may live in the freedom of love, which is his own life. By grace, God places his human partner in harmony with the Trinitarian relationship. Grace conveys from the depths of God to the depths of the human heart the pulse of unquestioning love, creator of communion.

(4) **Fanie du Toit's and Angelina Mendes' *Assessing Working Assumptions about Reconciliation*** (Philosophy/Conflict Analysis and Resolution) sets out a variety of cases where reconciliation processes appear to have had a positive impact. A group of twenty individuals were interviewed on their personal experiences of “reconciliation in practice” in more than twenty cases worldwide. These individuals all have in-depth experience and unquestionable integrity in pursuit of reconciliation, both personally and professionally. An important part of the method was to select individuals who have spent the better part of their professional careers as practitioners, academics, and/or professionals engaged with reconciliation in some

of the most challenging contexts and who have produced influential leadership, insights, and reflections on these journeys. Additionally, and importantly, sixteen of the twenty interviewees are from the countries where the cases they described, occurred. Four are outsiders, but outsiders with a long history of intimate and ongoing involvement with the cases they describe. Each case centered on an example of reconciliation that had, in the view of the interviewees, “worked” or, stated differently, had achieved some measure of effectiveness. These examples were then explored in terms of questions kept fairly consistent across all interviews.

(5) **Francesco Ferrari’s** *Philosophy after Auschwitz: Questioning Reconciliation, Addressing Damaged Relationships, Facing the Irrevocable* (Philosophy) builds on Martin Leiner’s definition of reconciliation as a series of processes that are involved in addressing and seeking to repair damaged relationships after a wrongdoing, particularly after massive human rights violations. In this regard, the author refers to the fundamental relevance of Auschwitz in giving momentum to the development of transdisciplinary reconciliation studies, and then engages in a dialogue with key texts by philosophers – such as Hannah Arendt; Theodor W. Adorno; Martin Buber; Jean Améry; Jacques Derrida – who placed Auschwitz at the center of their thinking, as an event that imposed to reconsider the very concept of reconciliation as well. The concluding paragraph finally introduces Vladimir Jankélévitch’s notion of “irrevocable” in order to reformulate the concept of reconciliation after Auschwitz in ethical-philosophical terms.

(6) **Martin O’Malley’s** *The Heart of Flesh That Suffers Can Heal. Cognitive and Affective Aspects in the Reconciliation Archetype of Christian Theology* (Applied Ethics) is based on the assumption that reconciliation dynamics are central to most religious systems and that scholars from theological fields have produced important insights on the topic with broad relevance. His article attempts to analyze the dynamic of reconciliation as a healing turn that cannot circumvent the experience of suffering and sinfulness. Sin, in his Christian understanding, is the turning away from the goodness offered in a God-gifted world. Whereby rejecting this gift is itself the source of suffering; as Augustine of Hippo emphasized in his fifth-century *Confessions*, remedying the rejection of God’s gift requires somehow coming to grips with the cause of suffering and making sense of it in a process-oriented to transcending the suffering. According to the author, the reconciliation dynamic is an archetype because it is relevant to dealing with the trauma of conflict such that transcendence and freedom from that trauma may be authentically experienced as healing. Within this wavelength, the suffering servant narrative in the chapters of Second Isaiah is analyzed to observe the judgment-exile-reconciliation dynamic of not only Christian soteriology but also the dynamics of post-conflict reconciliation.

(7) **Luis Peña’s** *Ecology and Spatiality of Reconciliation. The Territorialization of Life* (Social Geography) discusses the notion of spatiality and ecology of reconciliation. Its central thesis is that reconciliation and peace studies have ignored the

role of these dimensions because they are ontologically rooted in a perspective that privileges the temporal and human-to-human aspects of processes. Asserting the ecology and spatiality of reconciliation involves overturning the anthropocentric-historicist ontologies to give way to a biocentric, spatialized, and critical realist perspective about social processes. The article has two main parts. The first discusses how the spatiality and ecology dimensions have been overlooked in reconciliation and peace studies. The second part exposes the notion of peace and reconciliation as a process of restituting the collective functions of the space, a concept learned from the ethnic-territorial social movements. The objective is to show that ecology, spatiality, and reconciliation studies can help understand and build better relations after violence because they share an interest in understanding interdependence and the future.

**(8) Maximilian Schell's** *Jonah and the Question of a Christian Culture of Emotions. The Appreciation of Aggressive Emotions as Challenge and Chance of Theological Reconciliation Research in the German Context* (Protestant Theology and Psychology) proposes a heuristic approach through the discussion of a "Christian Culture of Emotions." This conversation oscillates between the movements of allowing and containing aggressive emotions in view of the (not least theological) dangers of delegitimizing and negating especially aggressive emotions and decisions of injured parties in the process of restoring relationships. Based on different philosophical and theological reflections and two lectures of Jonah's denial attitudes and aggressive emotions by Miguel de la Torre and Karen Bray, Schell's paper shows what consequences can be associated with Christian Cultures of Emotions that focus either more strongly on the moment of allowing or containing aggressive emotions. As an outlook, possible areas of conflict are named in which a Christian Culture of Emotion could be relevant in the space of the churches within Germany.

**(9) Ralf K. Wüstenberg's** *Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Scarring Over: Political Dimensions of Moral Concepts* (Protestant Theology) acknowledges that to speak of reconciliation in the context of politics is controversial. His contribution deals with the transitions to democracy in South Africa and Germany in light of the moral values as laid out in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ethics. Investigating the political processes in South Africa and Germany, according to Wüstenberg, it is striking that the contours between the church and the world tend to merge. In the midst of the TRC hearings, one could have the impression that: *here* is reconciliation, *this* is what reconciliation is. In its political dimension, reconciliation nonetheless constitutes something more and different than the mere "shadow of forgiveness" (Bonhoeffer). Along these lines of argumentation, the author will explore the signs of forgiveness within the interpretive horizon of Christian forgiveness and, remaining in the same meta-world as Bonhoeffer, to view the "shadow of forgiveness" as being stronger than the shadows themselves.



The second section is opened by **(10) Toyomi Asano's *Pursuing Reconciliation Between Democratized and Industrialized Nations: Overcoming "political resonance" and the "disjunctures" of shared memories and values in the case of Japan-South Korea Relations*** (Political Science and History). The author develops the thesis according to which the current deterioration of relations between Japan and South Korea is not merely a deterioration of relations between the two governments but should be called a deterioration of relations between the nations. He shows to which extent, despite the existence of shared national interests, such as maintaining a liberal economy through economic security measures in the face of a growing Chinese economy, deterring the threat from North Korea's nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and sustaining a livable global environment, the political option of acting to pursue these shared interests seems not to be possible. According to Asano, this situation exists despite the fact that Japan and South Korea have achieved almost the same level of economic development and have undergone social change that is symbolized by democratization. Today, both are similarly democratic societies. And yet, we see clashes between the governments over the violation of the human rights of victims, linked to democratic values, that are finally linked with historical memories and are also reflected in media reports and public opinion polls. Asano calls this a deterioration of relations between the nations, and not only between governments.

**(11) Josefina Echavarría Álvarez's *Peacemaking in Colombia: Artistic Practices and Pedagogies for Reconciliation*** (Peace Studies) develops a thesis according to which in the face of the challenges to the implementation of the Final Agreement between the Colombian government and the guerrillas FARC-EP, artistic practices give life to peacebuilding and reconciliation, constituting key elements for the pedagogies for reconciliation. The essay starts with a literature review on peace research proposals that highlight the Philosophy for Peace and the capacities of individuals and communities to reconcile in plural and diverse ways. Afterwards, the article discusses the institutional architecture of the Transitional Justice System, emphasizing the Truth Commission. Finally, the text shows three qualitative research examples of auto-ethnography: semi-structured interview and focus groups about the photography exhibition *The Witness (El Testigo)* by Jesús Abad Colorado, the documentary films of Daniela Abad Lombana and the Association *More Art More Peace (Más Arte Más Paz)*. The research results draw key findings regarding the pedagogies for reconciliation in the Colombian post-accord context.

**(12) Vladimír Handl's, Anežka Brožová's, David Emler's, Šárka Navrátilová's, Alena Zelená's *Czech-German Youth Exchange and Co-Operation Programmes as an Instrument of Czech-German Reconciliation*** (Law) analyses the role of historical reflection and reconciliation praxis in the area of Czech-German youth exchange and cooperation. It deals with the question, how the conflicted history has been reflected in the informal youth work and how approach(es) to the reconciliation between the

nations have changed over the time. The main focus is on the Czech-German Youth Forum and the Czech-German Youth Exchange Coordination Centres “Tandem” as two key structures which have enabled the strengthening of engagement of the Czech and German youth in the cross-border projects since the mid-1990s. The analysis shows that para-public activities in international relationship go beyond the binary distinctions of public-private or state-society. Youth co-operation, such as within the Czech-German Youth Forum, have made an extraordinary contribution to the reconciliation process. Even if the Forum has been mainly regional and most visible in relatively small groups, these groups have an important role as multipliers in Czech-German relations. The Forum thus contributes to the atmosphere of understanding, to growing mutual knowledge between states and nations and have a multiplier effect; its direct impact on policymaking, though, is seen as limited.

**(13) Karina Korostelina’s and Kelly Christine Benedicto’s** *Understanding Reconciliation in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in Leiner’s Framework of Reconciliation Practice* (Psychology, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and Education) lies on the assumption that reconciliation processes have multiple components and dynamics, each contributing to the restoration of relationships between conflictual parties and the building of mutual trust and respect. By utilizing qualitative evidence, this paper aims to analyze how Leiner’s framework of reconciliation practices helps scholar-practitioners understand the various perspectives and obstacles to reconciliation in the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This paper includes an analysis of 24 semi-structured interviews with experts conducted in December 2018 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The results advance existing scholarship by showing Azerbaijani experts understand ten major impediments to reconciliation. Simultaneously, results also outline several perspectives for future resolution of the conflict and building mutual co-existence.

**(14) Christine Schliesser’s** *“The Duty of Memory is the Duty to Do Justice”* (Paul Ricoeur). *Remembrance and Reconciliation in View of Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Protestant Theology) takes Ricoeur’s famous statement as a guideline to explore the relationship between memory and justice, remembrance, and reconciliation. Her thesis is that remembering and forgetting – in their individual and collective dimensions – serve as a “normative bridge” connecting the past, present, and future. Due to this function, their significance for reconciliation processes is as fundamental as it is neglected. Schliesser explains this thesis in three parts. She first offers some thoughts on the individual as well as collective remembering and forgetting, then she explores the meaning of reconciliation. A key element in reconciliation processes is the concept of justice underlying them. The author argues that reconciliation processes benefit from a transformative concept of justice as a supplement to a concept of justice as *iustitia retributiva*. In the third part, she tests the relevance of what her discussion has yielded so far against the reality of post-genocide Rwanda,