

Rethinking Peace

Absorption Capacity and the Poverty of Grammar in Generative Relational Being

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Abstract

This paper offers a relational account of peace within the framework of Generative Relational Being. Peace is defined as the maintained capacity of a relational system to absorb, at the rate of its own generation, the asymmetry that its generation produces. Two claims follow from that definition. The first holds that a system which continues to generate continues to produce asymmetry requiring absorption, so that on the premises adopted here no terminal condition exists in which the demand for absorption has ended. The second holds that the failure of absorption fixes destabilisation without fixing its direction, and that what a system does with an asymmetry it cannot absorb depends on the operations its relational grammar admits. Organized violence is characterised as the operation available to a grammar whose only admissible response to destabilisation is the determination of an enemy, and the account declines the reading on which violence is itself generative, on the ground that a system described as generative has thereby been supplied with a reason. Taken together the two claims decompose the question of perpetual peace into two questions carrying different answers, which is offered as the paper's reply to the demand for a verdict in the form of yes or no. Four conditions are stated under which the operations available to a system at destabilisation are enlarged. The paper is a discussion paper: it supplies mechanism and conditions, and it supplies no forecast, no criterion of outcome, and no political adjudication.

Keywords: peace; absorption; relational asymmetry; relational grammar; organized violence; destabilisation; standing; generative relational being.

A note on the standing of this paper. This is a discussion paper. It takes a question older than the discipline that inherited it, whether war may be brought permanently to an end, and asks whether the demand for a verdict in the form of yes or no is a demand the question can bear. The order of exposition follows the order of the argument: the established traditions and what each leaves unspecified are set out first, the definition of peace is introduced as what they leave open, and the two claims are stated with the conditions under which they hold. The argument is conducted at the level of relational systems in general, illustrated in relations small enough to be examined directly, and it adjudicates no political question and evaluates no political order. Should the established traditions be shown already to supply the rate condition posed here, the later sections lose their ground. Objection, correction, and counter-evidence are welcome at huangwanhong@serendip.ngo.

1 INTRODUCTION

The question of whether the world can bring war to an end is among the oldest in political philosophy, and it has been asked in a form that admits two readings which are ordinarily conflated. On the first reading the question asks whether a condition can be reached in which the disposition toward organized violence has been eliminated, so that the work of holding peace has been completed. On the second reading it asks whether the recurrence of organized violence can cease, so that a system which continues to change continues to meet its changes without war. The two readings make different demands on a theory, and this paper argues that they carry different answers. Presenting them together, under a single demand for a verdict in the form of yes or no, has made the question appear undecidable when only one of its halves is.

This paper approaches the question through the framework of Generative Relational Being (Huang, 2025), a theory of how subject, meaning, value, creation, and normativity co-emerge through generative relational processes. The framework supplies three commitments that do the work here. Relations are treated as prior to the terms they relate, so that a conflict is analysed as a condition of a relational field in place of a property of the parties. Generativity is treated as a phenomenon exhibited by relations and never as an aim, a distinction the paper enforces at the points where its violation would be most convenient. And asymmetry is treated as constitutive of relation, so that the task set by the framework concerns what a system does with the asymmetry it produces, and leaves the abolition of asymmetry outside its scope.

From these commitments the paper takes a definition. Peace is the maintained capacity of a relational system to absorb, at the rate of its own generation, the asymmetry that its generation produces. The definition is offered in place of the readings on which peace is the absence of violence, the stability of a configuration, or the holding of an agreement, and Section 3 separates it from each of the three. Its principal consequence is that peace is a rate in place of a state, so that a system may be quiet and lack it, may be stable and lack it, and may hold an agreement and lack it.

Two claims follow. The first, developed in Section 4, holds that a system which continues to generate continues to produce difference, hence asymmetry, hence power requiring absorption, and that the production ceases only where generation ceases. On the premises adopted here there is therefore no terminal condition in which the demand for absorption has ended. The first reading of the question receives a negative answer, and it receives that answer as a consequence of the framework's own axioms in place of a judgment about human dispositions. The second claim, developed in Section 5, holds that the failure of absorption fixes destabilisation and leaves its direction open. A system facing an asymmetry it cannot absorb under its existing rules does what those rules admit, and the admissible operations differ across systems. Where the rules admit renegotiating which parties count, the outcome is institutional

innovation; where they admit redefining who the parties are to one another, the outcome is the reconstitution of a community; where the sole admissible operation is the determination of an enemy, the outcome is organized violence. Organized violence is characterised accordingly as the operation available to an impoverished grammar at the moment of destabilisation, and the characterisation is stated with the observation that would defeat it.

The account declines one move that is available in its own vocabulary and that the literature on the persistence of war makes tempting. On that move, war is described as a highly productive system, generating identity, solidarity, legitimacy, industry, and memory, and the task of ending war becomes the task of supplying an alternative cycle with comparable productive power. Section 5.4 sets out the reasons for declining it. Within the framework adopted here, organized violence redirects the space in which subjects may be formed and produces the subjects its own continuation requires, so that what appears as production is subject formation under a rewritten grammar. The framework also holds a general prohibition on converting a dynamical explanation into a normative justification, and the productive reading of war violates it directly: a system described as generative acquires a reason, and to supply a reason is to supply legitimacy. The consequence for the practical part of the argument is substantial. The remedy indicated by this account is the enlargement of the operations a grammar admits, in place of the substitution of a functionally equivalent generator.

The paper's relation to the rest of the framework may be stated briefly. A companion work treats the position of an intervener who acts inside a degenerating relation under conditions in which the information available about the relational state has itself become part of the struggle (Huang, 2026a). That work is addressed to those who conduct and design processes of intervention, and it asks how a relation may be kept from degenerating under uncertainty. The present paper is addressed to the system, and it asks under what conditions a system discharges as organized violence the asymmetry it fails to absorb. Results established in the companion work are cited here and taken as established. A second companion treats the evolution of historical constraint, including the conditions under which a system leaves a stable configuration (Huang, 2026b); Section 6 draws its account of timing from that work and adds to it only what the peace question requires.

Three limits on what follows are stated here so that later sections may be read against them. The paper supplies mechanism and conditions, and it supplies no forecast: nothing here permits the prediction of when a particular system will discharge what it cannot absorb, and Section 6 gives the reason why such prediction is unavailable in principle to any party inside the system. The paper states conditions and declines an objective, so that no quantity is defined which could be maximised and no aggregate is formed across parties, a discipline whose ground is that an aggregate licenses the sacrifice of one party's position for a total. And the paper conducts its argument at the level of relational systems in general. Its illustrations are drawn from teaching, family, collegial and organisational relations, its formal target is a

property of theories in place of a doctrine, and it adjudicates no political question and evaluates no political order. A reader who wishes to carry the argument further does so on their own authority.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 locates the account among existing traditions of peace research by reading each as the specification of a channel through which asymmetry is absorbed, and identifies what each leaves unspecified. Section 3 defines absorption and states the definition of peace with the three distinctions it generates. Section 4 states the first claim and the formal property of theories it engages. Section 5 states the second claim, the three routes available at destabilisation, and the characterisation of organized violence, together with the reasons for declining the productive reading. Section 6 treats the timing of discharge and the epistemic consequence of the account of timing. Section 7 states four conditions under which the operations available to a grammar are enlarged, and examines the proposal that absorption may become distributed across a system. Section 8 returns to the question as posed and gives the paper's answer. Section 9 states the scope of the argument, the points at which it would fail, and the problems it leaves open.

2 TRADITIONS OF PEACE RESEARCH AND THE CHANNELS OF ABSORPTION

This section locates the present account among existing traditions and states what it adds. Its objective is twofold: to acknowledge what each tradition establishes, and to identify a question that the traditions share and leave open. The method is a single reading applied uniformly. Each tradition is read as the specification of a channel through which the asymmetry arising in a relational system is taken up, together with an implicit account of when that channel ceases to take it up. The section treats five traditions in this way, then turns to the relational and complexity literatures, whose proximity to the present account requires a separate treatment, and closes by naming the shared omission that Section 3 addresses.

2.1 *The Established Traditions and Their Saturation Conditions*

The tradition of the balance of power holds that organized violence is restrained where the costs of initiating it are raised by the countervailing capacity of others, and it has developed a sophisticated account of how such capacity is assembled and signalled (Waltz, 1979; Jervis, 1978). Read as a channel, balance takes up asymmetry by counterweight: an asymmetry that would otherwise be exercised is met by an opposing capacity and its exercise is deferred. The channel saturates for a reason internal to the framework adopted here. Where a system continues to generate, it continues to produce new asymmetries, so that any balance achieved is a balance among the asymmetries present at the moment of its achievement. What such a system admits is a dynamic balance, continuously reassembled as its terms change, and the static form of the balance is available to it only as an approximation over intervals in which

generation is slow.

The liberal tradition holds that the density of relations among parties, in trade, in institutional membership, and in the internal arrangements by which parties govern themselves, alters the incentives that bear on organized violence (Keohane & Nye, 1977; Doyle, 1983; Russett, 1993). Read as a channel, interdependence takes up asymmetry by delay and by distribution: a response that would be immediate in a sparse system propagates through many intermediate relations, and the propagation both slows it and spreads it. The channel is correctly described as a form of practical wisdom, since it uses the structure of the relational system to do work that no party need do deliberately. Its saturation condition concerns what distribution accomplishes. A response that has been distributed has been distributed and has not thereby been taken up, and tension distributed across a network may accumulate within it. Whether increased connectivity damps a local disturbance or carries it further depends on the structure of the couplings and on the character of the feedback they support, so that the number of relations settles less than the kinds of relation and the loops they form.

The tradition concerned with exploitation holds that organized violence is sustained by arrangements through which value produced in a relation is extracted from it, and that the removal of extraction is a condition of durable peace. Generative justice states the position in the vocabulary closest to the present account, holding that value should return to those whose labour, ecological setting, and expression produced it, and that such return is sustained where it is organised from below (Egash, 2016). Read as a channel, the removal of extraction restores the return of value to the relation that produced it, which is precisely the condition under which asymmetry is taken up. The tradition establishes something the present account adopts without qualification. Its saturation condition is a matter of completeness. The removal of extraction removes one term by which asymmetry is injected into a system, and a system whose extraction term has been set to zero continues to generate, hence continues to produce difference, hence continues to produce asymmetry from sources that the removal does not touch. Section 4.4 develops this point at the level of the formal claim.

The pacifist tradition holds that organized violence rests on the moral consciousness of those who conduct and permit it, and that a transformation of that consciousness is the condition of its ending. Read as a channel, moral transformation takes up asymmetry by altering how the parties interpret what they owe one another. Its saturation condition concerns the standing of the interpretation. Moral meanings are themselves produced in relations, so that the question of who is entitled to say what a norm requires, and by what process such a saying is revised, arises prior to the appeal to the norm. A tradition that begins from a moral consciousness assumed to be shared has assumed the answer to that prior question. The framework adopted here treats normative meaning as emerging from below, which places the prior question at the centre of the account and connects this tradition to the previous one.

The tradition of international law holds that organized violence is restrained where legal

Table 1: Five traditions read as channels of absorption, with the condition under which each channel ceases to take up asymmetry.

Tradition	Channel	Saturation condition
Balance of power	Counterweight to an asymmetry already present	A generating system produces new asymmetry, so balance holds dynamically and approximates a static form only where generation is slow
Liberal interdependence	Delay and distribution of response across many relations	Distribution redistributes a response and leaves it in the system; effect depends on coupling structure and feedback
Removal of exploitation	Restoration of the return of value to the relation that produced it	One injection term is removed while generation continues to produce asymmetry from other sources
Moral transformation	Alteration of what the parties take themselves to owe one another	Normative meaning is produced relationally, so the standing to interpret and revise it is prior to the appeal
Legal constraint	Symbolic conversion of a claim into a contestable form	Operation depends on continued reproduction of legitimacy and compliance in the relations governed

and institutional costs are attached to it, and where processes exist by which claims may be brought. Read as a channel, law takes up asymmetry symbolically: a claim that would otherwise be pressed by force is converted into a claim of a kind that may be pressed by argument. Its saturation condition concerns the conditions of that conversion. A legal instrument operates on the strength of reasons that are recognised as reasons, and its capacity to take up asymmetry depends on the continued reproduction, in the relations it governs, of the legitimacy and the compliance on which recognition rests.

Table 1 gathers the five readings.

2.2 *Relational and Complexity Approaches Already Present*

Relational peace research and complexity approaches to conflict stand close enough to the present account that their proximity requires explicit treatment, and each is examined here in turn.

Relational peace research treats peace as a quality of the relationships holding between actors, assessed through the practices the parties maintain toward one another, the ideas each holds of the other, and the recognition each extends, and it applies the assessment across the state, group, and individual levels (Söderström et al., 2021). The programme establishes that peace is describable as a property of relations and supplies a vocabulary for saying which relations possess it, which is a substantial advance over accounts that reason from the attributes of parties. The present account adds a dynamical question that the descriptive frame leaves

open. A relationship possessing the described qualities at one moment continues to generate, and generation continues to produce asymmetry within it, so that the qualities described are maintained through work. What that work consists of, at what rate it must proceed, and what a relation does with the asymmetry the work fails to take up, are the questions this paper takes up. The addition is a rate condition and an account of failure, placed beneath a description this account accepts.

Complexity approaches treat protracted conflict as an attractor of a social system, so that a configuration persists through the mutual reinforcement of many components and resists interventions directed at any one of them (Coleman et al., 2007). Peace research in the transformation tradition has drawn adjacent conclusions from practice, holding that the object of intervention is the web of relationships in which a conflict is embedded and that the work extends well past the settlement of a dispute (Lederach, 1997). The present account accepts the systems apparatus and the attractor language, and it narrows its own attention to the mechanisms by which a relational system takes up or fails to take up what its own generation produces. Two differences are worth stating. The attractor language identifies that a configuration self-reproduces and leaves open which operations a system has available when it leaves one; Section 5 concerns exactly that. And the present account declines to describe the violent configuration as productive, for reasons given in Section 5.4, where a large part of the attractor literature treats the self-reinforcement of conflict as a form of productivity.

Two further bodies of work bear on the argument and are used later at specific points. Structural and cultural accounts of violence establish that the absence of direct violence is compatible with harm sustained by arrangements and by the meanings that legitimate them (Galtung, 1969, 1990), a result the definition in Section 3 carries forward in its own vocabulary. Work on the timing of peace initiatives establishes that the availability of a settlement varies with the condition of the conflict and not with the merits of the proposal (Zartman, 2001), which Section 6 recovers as a statement about the distance of a system from a stability boundary.

2.3 The Question the Traditions Leave Open

The established traditions of peace research share a feature that becomes visible under the uniform reading applied in this section. Each specifies a mechanism by which asymmetry is taken up, and each is correct about the mechanism it specifies. None specifies a rate condition. The question of whether a channel takes up asymmetry as fast as the system produces it is distinct from the question of whether the channel operates, and it is the second question that determines whether the system meets what it generates. A system may possess every channel described above and produce asymmetry faster than the channels take it up; a system may possess few of them and generate slowly enough that the few suffice.

Stating the missing condition also identifies the paper's contribution and its limits. The

contribution is a definition of peace in terms of the rate condition, an account of what follows when the condition fails, and a decomposition of the question of perpetual peace that the rate condition makes available. The limits follow from the same source: an account organised around a rate condition says what a system must do and says nothing about which channel any particular system should use, a matter this paper leaves to the traditions that have studied it.

3 ABSORPTION CAPACITY AND THE DEFINITION OF PEACE

This section supplies the paper's definition and the apparatus on which the remaining sections rest. Its objective is to define absorption, to state the definition of peace that follows, and to separate that definition from three readings with which it is easily confused. The method is argument from the framework's own commitments, illustrated in relations small enough that the mechanism is visible: teaching, family, and collegial relations serve throughout. The section proceeds in four steps. It first derives the continuous production of asymmetry from generation. It then defines absorption and states what distinguishes absorption from the concealment of power. It then states the definition of peace. It closes by separating the definition from the absence of violence, from stability, and from agreement, and by stating why the definition yields no aggregate quantity.

3.1 *The Production of Asymmetry by Generation*

Generation produces difference. A relation in which something is generated produces, in generating it, terms that were not there before: a capacity acquired by one party, a claim established by another, an understanding held by one and available to the other only through the first. Difference so produced is distributed unevenly across the parties, which is to say that generation produces asymmetry. Asymmetry in turn confers a capacity: a party positioned asymmetrically holds some capacity to affect the conditions under which the relation continues to generate. That capacity is what the framework calls power.

Two consequences of this derivation govern the rest of the paper. The first is that asymmetry is constitutive of relation and is available for no programme of abolition. Teaching, rearing, giving, and writing for a reader are asymmetric throughout, and a relation from which asymmetry had been removed would be a relation with no content to generate. The second is that the presence of a good relation supplies no evidence for the absence of power. A relation may run without any party experiencing the exercise of power over them while the asymmetry that confers it is continuously present. The image the framework uses for this is friction under a vehicle in motion: forward motion at speed is evidence that the drive exceeds the friction and is no evidence that the friction is absent, and the moment the drive ceases the friction becomes apparent by halting the vehicle.

3.2 *Absorption and Its Distinction from Concealment*

Absorption names what a generating relation does with the power that its asymmetry confers. The power enters the cycle by which the relation generates and becomes part of what is generated in common. A teaching relation illustrates the mechanism in a form that is easy to check. The teacher holds, throughout, the capacity to fix what will count as understanding, and in a relation that is generating, that capacity is continuously taken up by the learning, the correction, and the growth that the relation produces jointly, to the point where neither party experiences the relation as an exercise of authority. The capacity was present the whole time.

Absorption is to be distinguished from two things it resembles. It is not concealment: a concealed power remains outside the cycle and is available to be exercised the moment the concealment lapses. Absorption also differs from suppression: a suppressed power is held down by something, and the holding is work of a different kind, performed against the relation, where absorption is performed through it. The formulation the framework uses is that absorbed power has entered the generative cycle and become part of common value generation, in the way that friction under a moving vehicle is cancelled by work being done in place of being covered over.

This yields the framework's account of how good relations degrade, which is the result the definition of peace will generalise.

Claim 3.1. (Degradation without a perpetrator). *Oppression requires no production. It requires only that absorption cease. A party whose asymmetry was continuously taken up by what the relation generated holds the same asymmetry when generation slows, and holds it now unabsorbed.*

The claim explains what an account treating asymmetry as merely a precondition of oppression leaves unexplained, namely why good relations degrade, and why they frequently degrade without anyone acting wrongly. A mentor who ceases to invest has not become an oppressor by acquiring anything. The mentor has ceased to surrender a power that was held throughout. Power in this account is not seized. It is subsided into.

3.3 *The Definition of Peace as a Rate Condition*

The definition of peace adopted throughout this paper follows from the account of absorption given above, and is stated here in the form used in the sections that follow.

Claim 3.2. (Peace as absorption capacity). *Peace is the maintained capacity of a relational system to absorb, at the rate of its own generation, the asymmetry that its generation produces.*

Three features of the definition are load bearing. Peace is a capacity and is therefore maintained through work, so that its presence at one moment supplies no assurance of its presence at the next. Peace is stated as a rate condition and is therefore relative to the system's own generation, so that two systems may possess very different absorptive machinery and be equally at peace, and one system may acquire more machinery and lose peace by generating faster than the machinery takes up. And peace is stated of relations, so that a system is at peace in the relations where the condition holds and lacks peace in the relations where it fails, with no total defined over the two.

3.4 Separation of the Definition from Adjacent Conditions

The definition of peace as absorption capacity is separated here from three conditions with which it is commonly identified, and each separation carries a consequence used later.

3.4.1 Peace and the cessation of violence. Quiet in a relational system admits two readings that differ in every respect bearing on this account. A quiet system may be one in which the condition of Claim 3.2 holds, and it may equally be one whose generation has ceased. Where little is generated, little asymmetry is produced, and a modest absorptive capacity suffices to meet it, so that quiet is compatible with a relation generating vigorously and taking up what it produces, and compatible equally with a relation whose parties have ceased to produce anything requiring to be taken up. The tradition of structural and cultural violence reached an adjacent conclusion by another route, holding that arrangements and the meanings that legitimate them may sustain harm in the absence of direct violence (Galtung, 1969, 1990). The present definition adds that the quiet relation may also be one in which the capacity for harm has declined together with everything else the relation might have produced, and that the two cases require different descriptions.

3.4.2 Peace and stability. Stability is a dynamical property and carries no evaluation. A configuration is stable where it recovers from small perturbations, and recovery capacity is distinct from optimality, from justice, and from health. The separation cuts against the present account as much as against any other, and the direction in which it cuts must be stated plainly: a system that has lost the capacity to hold live perturbations may be more stable than one that retains it, since it has fewer perturbations to recover from. Degradation and stability are therefore compatible, and a long quiet period supplies evidence about recovery capacity and no evidence about absorption. The consequence for this paper is that the definition of peace may never be read off from the observed persistence of a configuration.

3.4.3 Peace and agreement. An agreement records a convergence and leaves open how the convergence was reached. Convergence produced by parties who continue to hold their own

accounts and have found a shared practical matter differs from convergence produced by the elimination of one party's account, and the two are recorded identically. A companion work develops the sharper form of this point, holding that certain agreements are the completed form of degeneration, since the signature places beyond contestation the characterisation under which one party entered (Huang, 2026a). The present definition yields the same conclusion from its own terms. An agreement is an instrument and takes up asymmetry only where the parties retain, after signing, the capacity to reopen what the instrument fixed.

3.5 *The Withholding of an Aggregate Quantity*

The definition of peace as absorption capacity withholds a quantity available for maximisation, and the withholding is deliberate. Absorption is stated per relation, and the conditions given in Section 7 are stated per party. No operation is defined that would sum absorption across parties into a total, and the reason for withholding one is that a total licenses an exchange: where a system-level quantity exists, a shortfall in one relation may be offset by a surplus in another, and the offsetting is precisely the sacrifice of a party's position for a sum. The discipline is inherited from the framework and is the same discipline that prohibits treating generativity as an aim. It costs the account something concrete, since it yields no reportable measure of how peaceful a system is, and Section 9 records the cost among the account's limits.

4 THE CONTINUITY OF THE DEMAND FOR ABSORPTION

This section states the first of the paper's two claims and fixes its reach. Its objective is to establish that on the premises adopted here no condition exists in which the demand for absorption has ended, to identify the formal property of theories that the claim engages, and to state precisely what the claim leaves undetermined. The method is deductive from Section 3, followed by an examination of one case in which the conclusion is frequently resisted. The section proceeds in four steps: the claim and its derivation; the structure of theories that posit a completed condition; the case of a system from which extraction has been removed; and the limits on what the claim licenses.

4.1 *The Continuous Production of What Must Be Absorbed*

The first of the paper's two claims concerns what a system produces so long as it continues to generate, and it is derived from the account of asymmetry and absorption given in Section 3.

Claim 4.1. (Continuous production of what must be absorbed). *A relational system that continues to generate continues to produce difference; difference so produced is distributed unevenly and is therefore asymmetry; asymmetry confers the capacity to affect*

the conditions under which the relation generates. The production of what must be absorbed therefore ceases only where generation ceases.

The derivation runs entirely within Section 3 and adds nothing to it. Its force lies in what follows for the idea of a completed condition. A condition in which the work of absorption had been finished would be a condition in which nothing further was produced that required taking up, and by the claim that condition is a condition in which generation has stopped. A system may reach it. What it may not do is reach it while continuing to generate, which is to say that the completed condition is unavailable to any system of the kind the framework describes.

Two features of the claim deserve emphasis, since both are frequently lost when conclusions of this shape are restated. The claim is internal: it holds on the premises adopted here, and a reader who declines the premises declines the conclusion with them. And the claim concerns the demand for absorption and concerns nothing else. It says that a generating system keeps producing what must be taken up. It says nothing whatever about whether the system takes it up, and nothing about what happens where the system fails to. Those are the subject of Section 5, and the distance between the two sections is the paper's central structural point.

4.2 *Theories Positing a Completed Condition*

Claim 4.1 engages a structural property that appears across theories of very different content, and the property is stated here as a property so that the engagement concerns a form of argument.

Claim 4.2. (Zero remainder). *A theory positing a terminal condition assumes a system with zero remainder: a system in which the production of what must be absorbed has been exhausted, so that the evolution of the system's constraints has come to rest and the system has entered a closed loop.*

Theories with this structure appear across traditions and across political positions, and the property is visible independently of the content each supplies. A theory that identifies a mechanism sufficient to remove the source of conflict, and that projects the operation of the mechanism forward without limit, has the structure whether the mechanism proposed is material, institutional, moral, or technological. What the claim above says of such theories is precise and narrow: their terminal condition requires a system that has stopped producing what must be absorbed, and any system to which the framework's premises apply and which continues to generate fails that requirement. The claim adjudicates nothing else about them. In particular it leaves untouched every question about what such theories establish concerning the mechanisms they identify, which may be substantial and is assessed on other grounds.

A companion work reaches the same structural point in the setting of normative theory, holding that a theory of value which assumes a zero remainder relocates the problem of how constraints evolve in place of resolving it (Huang, 2026b). The two appearances of the structure are treated here as one structure showing at two levels, and no stronger relation between them is claimed.

4.3 The Case of a System from Which Extraction Has Been Removed

A system from which extraction has been wholly removed tests Claim 4.1 more sharply than any other case, and it is the case the framework's own commitments make most pressing. Suppose such a system. Value returns to the relations that produced it; no party's product is taken from the relation in which it arose; the parties, by hypothesis, are satisfied with the arrangement. The question is whether such a system has reached the completed condition.

By the claim it has not, and the reason is instructive. The removal of extraction removes one term through which asymmetry is injected into a system, and it is the term the tradition treating exploitation has correctly identified as important (Egash, 2016). Generation continues after its removal, and generation produces difference from sources the removal leaves untouched. A capacity developed in one relation and unavailable in another is such a source. The accumulation of a history in one relation and its absence in another is such a source. A party's standing in the interpretation of a shared past is such a source. Each yields asymmetry, and each yields it without any transfer of value away from the relation that produced it.

The conclusion is a statement about completeness and carries no critical charge against the tradition in question. Removal of extraction removes an important injection term. A system from which one injection term has been removed continues to receive injection from the others, and its behaviour thereafter depends on whether its absorptive capacity meets what remains. The vocabulary of nonlinear dynamics states the same point compactly: reducing one forcing term leaves a system's capacity to amplify perturbations intact where the feedbacks that amplify them remain.

4.4 Limits on the Claim's Reach

Claim 4.1 withholds three things, and each withholding is enforced in the sections that follow.

The claim withholds any statement about violence. Continuous production of asymmetry is compatible with continuous absorption, and a system that meets what it produces meets it indefinitely without any terminal condition being reached. The inference from the absence of a completed condition to the recurrence of organized violence is blocked at Section 5, and the block is the paper's principal result.

The claim withholds any normative conclusion. It is a dynamical statement about what a generating system produces, and the framework maintains a general prohibition on converting

statements of that kind into justifications. Nothing in the claim supplies a reason for anything, and in particular the observation that a system continues to produce asymmetry supplies no ground for any arrangement by which asymmetry is handled.

The claim withholds any historical prediction. It quantifies over relational systems on stated premises and identifies no trajectory that any particular system will follow. The illustrations used throughout this paper are drawn from relations small enough to be examined directly, and the argument is conducted at that level by design. A reader who carries the argument to a larger setting supplies the additional premises such a carrying requires, and does so on their own authority.

5 THE BRANCH AT DESTABILISATION AND THE POVERTY OF GRAMMAR

This section states the paper's second claim and gives the account of organized violence that the title announces. Its objective is to establish that the failure of absorption fixes destabilisation while leaving its direction open, to identify what settles the direction, and to characterise organized violence in those terms together with the observation that would defeat the characterisation. The method is analytical throughout, with one extended argument at the close directed against a reading of war that the framework's own vocabulary makes available and that the framework must decline. The section proceeds in four steps: destabilisation and its necessity; relational grammar and the operations it admits; the characterisation of organized violence and its falsifier; and the reasons for declining the reading on which violence is itself generative.

5.1 *Destabilisation as the Failure of Absorption*

Destabilisation names the condition in which a system faces an asymmetry it cannot take up under its existing rules. Section 4 establishes that the demand for absorption is continuous, and it follows that absorptive capacity is under continuous test. Where the test is met the system continues in altered form, since an absorbed asymmetry has entered the generative cycle and has changed what the system generates. Where the test fails the system holds an asymmetry that its rules provide no way of taking up, and something must give.

Two properties of this condition should be stated before the account of what follows it. Destabilisation is generic and requires no explanation in terms of anyone's conduct: a system whose generation outpaces its absorption arrives there through the ordinary operation of both. And destabilisation is a condition of the system in place of a condition of any party, so that the question of who brought it about is separable from, and frequently less informative than, the question of what the system can now do.

Claim 5.1. (Destabilisation and direction). *The failure of absorption fixes that a*

system must reorganise and leaves open how it reorganises. Destabilisation is necessary for any system that generates faster than it absorbs; the direction the reorganisation takes is settled by something else.

5.2 *Relational Grammar and the Operations It Admits*

Relational grammar names the rules by which a relational system updates itself: the distinctions its parties are able to draw, and the operations available to them for reorganising their relations. The framework's use of the term carries a specific commitment, which is that the long-run behaviour of a system is settled by its update rules in place of the resources available to it. A system with scarce resources and a grammar under which capacity produces value and value returns to those who produced it may sustain generation; a system with abundant resources and a grammar under which resources purchase standing and standing secures resources may fail to. Resources are a state of a system. Grammar is its rule of evolution, and it is the second that governs behaviour over time.

At destabilisation the grammar becomes decisive, since what a system does with an asymmetry it cannot absorb is whatever its grammar admits doing. Three operations may be distinguished, and the distinction organises the remainder of the paper.

The first operation renegotiates which parties count. A system whose grammar admits it responds to an unabsorbable asymmetry by altering the terms on which parties enter the arrangement: extending the class of those whose claims are received, altering what may be claimed, or establishing a position from which a claim may be pressed that previously had nowhere to go. The outcome is institutional innovation, and the asymmetry is taken up by machinery that did not exist before.

The second operation redefines who the parties are to one another. A system whose grammar admits it responds by altering the description under which the parties stand in relation: a boundary formerly dividing them is reinterpreted, a matter formerly held by one is recognised as shared, or a common undertaking is established that neither party previously had. The outcome is the reconstitution of a community, and the asymmetry is taken up by a change in what the parties are to one another.

The third operation determines who the enemy is. A system whose grammar admits this operation responds by producing a description under which one party becomes the kind of party against which force is the available response. The outcome is organized violence.

5.3 *The Characterisation of Organized Violence*

The three operations of renegotiation, redefinition, and the determination of an enemy are compatible with one another, and a system may have two or three of them available. What

matters at destabilisation is which of them a system's grammar admits, since a system exercises what it has.

Claim 5.2. (Poverty of grammar). *Organized violence is the operation available to a system whose grammar, at the moment of destabilisation, admits the determination of an enemy and admits neither the renegotiation of which parties count nor the redefinition of who the parties are to one another. What prepares organized violence is accordingly the poverty of the grammar, and hostility is its product.*

The claim reverses the ordinary order of explanation, which treats hostility as the condition that makes violence available. On the account given here the determination of an enemy is an operation a system performs because it is the operation the system has, and the hostility observable afterward is the state the operation produces. This is why the removal of hostile parties so frequently leaves the situation unchanged. The operation remains in the grammar and is performed again by whoever occupies the position it requires.

The claim is empirical in form and is defeated by a specifiable observation.

Claim 5.3. (Falsifier of the preceding claim). *Claim 5.2 fails if a system can be shown whose grammar admitted the renegotiation of which parties count and admitted the redefinition of who the parties are to one another, in operative form as distinct from nominal form, and which nevertheless discharged an unabsorbable asymmetry as organized violence.*

Two qualifications make the falsifier usable. Operative admission is distinguished from nominal admission by whether the operation was available to the parties who needed it, at the time they needed it, with an addressee obliged to receive its exercise. A system possessing a procedure that no party in the relevant position could invoke has the operation nominally. And the claim concerns the moment of destabilisation, so that a system which possessed the operations earlier and lost them, through the closure of the positions from which they could be exercised, is a confirming case in place of a disconfirming one. Section 9 records the difficulty of establishing operative admission from outside a system, which is the principal obstacle to testing the claim.

5.4 *The Productive Reading and the Grounds for Declining It*

A reading of organized violence is available in the framework's own vocabulary, appears frequently in accounts of why war persists, and must be declined. On that reading, war is a highly productive system: it generates identity, solidarity, industry, political legitimacy, technical innovation, narrative, memory, and grievance, each of which reproduces the next, and it persists because it produces all of this reliably. The practical conclusion drawn from the reading is that

ending war requires supplying an alternative cycle that performs the same productive functions without violence, since a niche vacated by one occupant is filled by another.

The reading is declined for three reasons, of which the second is decisive.

The first reason concerns the description. Organized violence does not begin with bodies. It begins with the production of a description under which a party becomes the kind of party against which force is available, and the sequence runs from subject, to enemy, to target, and only then to casualty. What the reading counts as production is the operation of that sequence: the solidarity is the solidarity of those constituted as the party opposed to an enemy, the legitimacy is the legitimacy conferred by the emergency the description established, and the heroes and the grievances are the subjects the arrangement requires in order to continue. Within the framework this is characterised as the redirection of the space in which subjects may be formed, together with the production of the subjects the arrangement needs. Generation continues in it. What has changed is the space of what the parties may become.

The second reason concerns what the framework may say. The framework maintains a prohibition on converting a dynamical explanation into a normative justification, and it is unusually exposed to violation of the prohibition because it conducts its explanations in the vocabulary of generativity. A system described as generative has been supplied with a reason, and a system supplied with a reason has been supplied with legitimacy. The sentence that a destructive arrangement served some subsystem's capacity to unfold its own dynamics is observationally defensible in many cases, and it is the self-justifying form common to the arrangements the framework exists to describe. The framework therefore holds that an arrangement may be explained dynamically and that the explanation supplies no ground whatever, and it holds the line most firmly at the point where its own vocabulary would make the crossing easiest. Describing organized violence as generative is that point.

The third reason concerns the practical conclusion. Substituting a functionally equivalent generator requires identifying what war produces, judging it to be needed, and supplying it otherwise, and each step carries the difficulty just described. The account given here yields a different practical conclusion from Claim 5.2 directly. What a system does at destabilisation is what its grammar admits, so the object of intervention is the range of admissible operations. The task is the enlargement of that range, which requires no judgment about what violence produces and no search for an equivalent, and which addresses the condition that Claim 5.2 identifies as the one that prepares violence. Section 7 states the conditions under which the range is enlarged.

6 CRITICALITY AND THE TIMING OF DISCHARGE

This section treats the question of timing that Sections 4 and 5 leave open. Its objective is to explain why an identical asymmetry produces no reorganisation in one period and a reorgan-

isation in another, and to state the epistemic consequence of that explanation for anyone who would act on the account. The method is the adoption of results established in a companion work on the evolution of historical constraint (Huang, 2026b), restated here only so far as the peace question requires. The section proceeds in three steps: the two variables that govern discharge; the separation of trigger from cause; and the consequence for what may be known and therefore targeted.

6.1 *Perturbation Supply and Distance to a Stability Boundary*

An account with one variable would predict that sustained production of unabsorbed asymmetry eventually reorganises any system, and such an account is defeated by the long periods in which systems produce grievance continuously and reorganise not at all. The companion work supplies the second variable. Whether a perturbation carries a system out of its present configuration depends on the distance of the system from a stability boundary, and that distance changes on a timescale far slower than the perturbations themselves.

Away from the boundary a system absorbs or damps what reaches it, and the perturbations that arrive produce no lasting effect, which is the ordinary appearance of a durable arrangement. Near the boundary the system's sensitivity grows, and a perturbation of a magnitude that would previously have been damped carries it across. The two variables are therefore the supply of unabsorbed asymmetry and the distance to the boundary, and neither alone settles what happens.

The consequence for peace research is direct, and it recovers in the present vocabulary a result established in the study of when settlements become available. Work on the timing of peace initiatives holds that the availability of a settlement depends on the condition of the conflict in place of the merits of the proposal (Zartman, 2001). The present account gives that finding a mechanism: what varies is the system's distance from a boundary, and an identical proposal encounters a system with a different sensitivity to it.

6.2 *The Distinction of Trigger from Cause*

The account of timing given in this section requires a distinction between the perturbation that precedes a reorganisation and the condition that settles whether reorganisation occurs, and the distinction is easy to state and easy to lose.

Claim 6.1. (Trigger and cause). *The perturbation that precedes a reorganisation is its trigger. What settles whether reorganisation occurs is the accumulated change in the system's distance from a stability boundary, and that change is the work of a much longer interval.*

Two errors are excluded by the claim. The first attributes reorganisation to the event that

preceded it, which mistakes a trigger for a cause and produces histories in which the significant events are those that happened to arrive last. The second attributes reorganisation to accumulated tension alone, which identifies the slow variable correctly and supplies no account of why the discharge occurred at the moment it did. The account holds that reorganisation requires both, and that a system is therefore neither determined in its trajectory nor governed by accident.

The bearing on the argument of Section 5 may now be stated. Claim 5.2 concerns what a system does at destabilisation and says nothing about when destabilisation arrives. The present section supplies the missing half: the grammar settles the direction, and the distance to the boundary settles the timing. A system with an impoverished grammar and a large distance from any boundary is quiet, and its quiet supplies no information about what it would do.

6.3 *The Epistemic Consequence for Practice*

The distance of a system from a stability boundary is unavailable to the parties inside it. Slow variables are slow because the quantities that change them relax over intervals long compared with the interactions through which parties perceive their situation, and a party's evidence about the system is gathered at the timescale of those interactions. The consequence is a structural blindness and is no deficiency of anyone's attention.

Three implications follow, and each constrains what the rest of the paper may recommend.

The importance of an act is settled by the system's condition and is therefore unavailable at the time of acting. The same act is inconsequential in one period and decisive in another, and the difference lies in the system in place of the act. This accounts for the retrospective character of judgments about which events mattered.

No practice may take the distance to the boundary as its target. A recommendation of the form that a system should be kept away from criticality names a quantity that no party can observe, and a practice organised around an unobservable target reduces to the practice its proponents would have followed anyway. Section 7 states its conditions in terms that are available to the parties who must satisfy them, and the constraint is the reason for doing so.

The account predicts where to look and withholds any prediction of when. What it identifies is a class of systems in which the operations available at destabilisation are few, and a direction of change, namely the closure of positions from which those operations could be exercised. It supplies no timetable, and Section 9 records the absence among the account's limits.

7 CONDITIONS OF GRAMMATICAL ENLARGEMENT

This section states what follows practically from the account. Its objective is to identify the conditions under which the operations available to a system at destabilisation are enlarged, and

to examine the proposal that absorption may come to be performed by a system's relations generally in place of being performed by a designated party. The method is the statement of conditions in place of objectives, for reasons given below, followed by an examination of the distributed proposal against a result established in a companion work. The section proceeds in three steps: the form in which the practical content is stated; four conditions; and the distributed proposal with the two limits that bear on it.

7.1 The Form in Which the Practical Content Is Stated

The practical content of this account takes the form of conditions on arrangements and takes no form in which a quantity is set for maximisation. Two reasons support the choice. An objective supplies a quantity, a quantity aggregates across parties, and an aggregate licenses the trading of one party's position against a total, which is the operation Section 3.5 withholds. And an objective directs attention to the achievement of an outcome, where the account holds that what matters at destabilisation is the availability of operations, a property of the arrangement in place of any outcome it produces.

Conditions do different work from objectives and do less of it. They eliminate some arrangements and leave the remainder undetermined, so that the account settles which arrangements are admissible and leaves the selection among admissible arrangements to judgment exercised in a particular case. They are checkable by parties who lack the capacities of those who designed the arrangement, since a condition asks whether something is available and not whether a judgment was correct. And they bind symmetrically, applying to the party that established the arrangement as much as to the parties within it.

7.2 Conditions on the Availability of the Enlarging Operations

The conditions set out below concern the availability of the first two operations of Section 5.2, since the third requires nothing to be established and is available to every system by default.

7.2.1 Positions from which a characterisation may be refused. The first operation of Section 5.2, the renegotiation of which parties count, requires that a party hold a position from which a characterisation applied to it may be refused, and that a refusal offered from that position be capable of registering as a refusal. A companion work develops this condition in detail as the criterion of standing and identifies its three components: a position from which the refusal may be made, an addressee obliged to receive it, and a reception capable of counting it (Huang, 2026a). Its bearing here follows from Section 5.4. Organized violence proceeds by the establishment of a description under which a party becomes the kind of party against which force is available, and a party able to refuse a characterisation applied to it holds the capacity that operation must overcome. The condition is accordingly the most directly protective of the

four.

7.2.2 Plurality of positions from which the system's state may be interpreted. The renegotiation of which parties count and the redefinition of who the parties are to one another both require that the state of the system remain open to interpretation from more than one position. A system in which a single authority establishes what the situation is has foreclosed the renegotiation of which parties count, since the terms of the renegotiation are among the things the authority establishes, and has foreclosed the redefinition of who the parties are, since the descriptions available are those the authority supplies. Plurality here concerns positions in place of opinions: what is required is that more than one position exist from which an account of the situation may be offered and received.

7.2.3 Occasions on which the question of who counts may be reopened. An operation available in principle and exercisable on no occasion is available nominally. The condition requires that arrangements carry occasions at which the question of which parties count is reopened, established in advance of the condition that would make the reopening urgent. The requirement follows from Section 6: since no party can observe the system's distance from a boundary, an arrangement that provides for reopening when reopening becomes necessary provides for it at a time that cannot be identified. Standing occasions are the available substitute for a judgment that cannot be made.

7.2.4 Matters held in common that survive disagreement. The second operation of Section 5.2, the redefinition of who the parties are to one another, requires material from which a redefinition may be built. Matters held in common and surviving the parties' disagreement supply that material: a practical matter both must address, a place both inhabit, an undertaking neither can complete alone. A companion work reaches the same requirement from the side of intervention, finding that what survives a divergence of accounts is the shared practical matter and that intervention proceeds from it (Huang, 2026a). The condition is the weakest of the four, since it concerns the availability of material in place of the availability of an operation, and it is stated because the second operation is unavailable without it.

7.3 Distribution of Absorptive Capacity

A proposal concerning the long-run development of peace recurs in discussions of it, and deserves examination because it is consistent with the framework's own commitments and because the examination yields a correction. On the proposal, absorption is at present performed by designated parties, first by individuals holding personal authority and then by institutions holding delegated authority, and it may in time be performed by a system's relations generally, so that many relations continuously take up, redistribute, and reinterpret what arises, without

any party occupying the position of the one who absorbs. Analogies are offered from systems that route without a controller and from bodies that regulate without a governing organ.

The proposal is consistent with the framework, which treats relations as prior and therefore has no reason to make absorption depend on a designated party. Two limits nonetheless bear on it, and together they change what the proposal may claim.

7.3.1 Independence of distribution and contestability. A companion work establishes that the distribution of a function across many positions and the contestability of what those positions do vary independently (Huang, 2026a). Distribution is a property of a system's topology. Contestability is a property of what a party may do about a characterisation applied to it, and it is secured by the conditions of Section 7.2. A system may distribute a function widely and provide no position from which its exercise may be refused, and a system may concentrate a function and provide such a position. The consequence for the proposal is that distributed absorption is a topology and is no achievement in itself. A system in which absorption is distributed and contestability is absent is a system in which what a party suffers has no addressee, since the function that would receive a refusal is performed by everyone and by no one. Section 5.2's first operation requires an addressee, and a system of that description has lost it. Distribution accompanied by the conditions of Section 7.2 enlarges the operations available; distribution alone disperses the position from which they would be exercised.

7.3.2 Historical availability and the limits of a progression. The proposal that absorptive capacity may become distributed is frequently stated as a progression through stages, with distribution as the mature form toward which arrangements develop. The progression should be declined for two reasons. It reads a topology as an achievement, which the preceding paragraph excludes. And it treats a sequence of arrangements as a development toward a form, which supplies a direction to history that the framework's account of constraint evolution withholds (Huang, 2026b), and which invites the reading of a stable arrangement as a healthy one that Section 3.4 excludes.

What survives the removal of the progression is a claim about availability, and it is worth keeping. The forms of coordination available to a system are bounded by the relational infrastructure it possesses: by what its parties can convey to one another, by what its arrangements can record and recover, and by the intervals over which they can hold anything. Forms unavailable under one set of conditions become available under another, and the availability is a matter of conditions in place of maturity. The practical stance that follows concerns the patient enlargement of what is available under present conditions, and it declines the demand for arrangements that the present relational infrastructure cannot sustain.

7.3.3 *Apparatus for mutual interpretation and its concentration of authority.* Apparatus that renders the interpretive commitments of one party legible to another is a specific case of expanded availability, and it is examined here because it is often raised and because the account gives it two answers. Suppose an apparatus that makes the interpretive commitments of one party legible to another: the distinctions each is drawing, the assumptions each is holding, the sense each is giving to the terms in dispute. Such an apparatus would reduce one class of divergence, namely the class in which parties give incompatible senses to the same terms and take one another to be asserting what neither asserts. That class is real and is substantial.

The apparatus also concentrates something. A capacity to render the interpretive position of every party legible is a capacity to characterise every party, exercised from a position that the conditions of Section 7.2 would require to be refusable and that its own operation makes difficult to refuse, since a refusal is itself material the apparatus interprets. The framework's treatment of interpretive authority applies directly, and the requirement it generates is that those characterised by such an apparatus hold the capacity to contest the apparatus, the standards it applies, the authority that deployed it, and the process by which its outputs acquire force. An apparatus meeting that requirement enlarges the operations available. An apparatus lacking it supplies a new instrument for the operation Section 5.4 describes.

8 THE QUESTION OF PERPETUAL PEACE AND ITS DECOMPOSITION

This section returns to the question with which the paper opened and states the paper's answer. Its objective is to show that the question conjoins two questions carrying different answers, to give both answers, and to address the objection that an account which declines a verdict in the form of yes or no has said nothing. The method is the application of Claims 4.1 and 5.1 to the question as posed. The section proceeds in three steps: the decomposition and the two answers; the objection and the reply to it; and the conditional hypotheses the account makes available for investigation.

8.1 *Decomposition of the Question and the Answers It Yields*

The question of whether war can be brought permanently to an end admits the two readings distinguished in Section 1, and the paper's two claims bear on them separately.

On the first reading the question asks whether a condition can be reached in which the work of holding peace has been completed, so that the demand no longer arises. Claim 4.1 answers this reading in the negative. A system that continues to generate continues to produce what must be absorbed, and the completed condition is available only where generation has ceased. The answer holds on the premises adopted here and is a consequence of the framework's own account of generation, which is worth emphasising because negative answers to this question are ordinarily grounded in claims about human dispositions. Nothing of that

kind is used. What is used is the observation that a relation which generates produces difference, and that difference so produced is distributed unevenly.

On the second reading the question asks whether the recurrence of organized violence can cease. Claim 5.1 establishes that the failure of absorption fixes destabilisation and leaves the direction open, and Claim 5.2 identifies what settles the direction. The second reading therefore receives no negative answer. The permanence of destabilisation entails nothing about the permanence of violence, since the inference from the first to the second passes through the grammar, and the grammar is the term the account holds to be variable.

Claim 8.1. (Decomposition of the question). *The question as ordinarily posed conjoins a question answered in the negative with a question left open, and the form of a demand for a single verdict conceals the conjunction. Destabilisation is permanent, and the direction of reorganisation remains open under that permanence.*

8.2 *The Objection from Emptiness*

The objection from emptiness runs as follows. A theory which responds to the question of whether war can end by declining to answer has contributed nothing, since the question was the whole point, and an elaborate framework that arrives at uncertainty has arrived where anyone begins.

The reply has three parts.

The first part concerns what has been declined. The account declines a prediction about the trajectory of any particular system, and it declines no question that its premises settle. One half of the question is answered, and answered in the negative on internal grounds. The other half is shown to depend on a variable term, and the term is named, characterised, and equipped with a falsifier. An account that identifies the variable on which an outcome depends has done the work that a theory does, and the demand for a verdict on the other half is a demand for a forecast about systems whose future configurations are unavailable to inspection.

The second part concerns what a theory is ordinarily expected to supply in comparable cases. A discipline studying how a class of phenomena arises, propagates, sustains itself, and subsides is not commonly held to have failed where it declines to state that the phenomena will never recur. What such a discipline supplies is the mechanism, the conditions under which the mechanism operates, and the interventions that bear on those conditions, and the value of that supply is independent of any verdict about permanent absence. The present account is of that shape. It states how organized violence becomes available to a system, what its availability depends on, and what enlarges the alternatives to it.

The third part concerns the demand itself. A verdict about permanent absence presupposes that the class of configurations a system may occupy is fixed and available to present

description. Systems whose relations continue to generate produce configurations that were unavailable to description earlier, including configurations in which the operations of Section 5.2 are exercised through arrangements that presently have no name, and configurations in which organized violence takes forms whose material conditions do not yet exist. A verdict covering all of them is a verdict about a class whose membership is open. What the account offers in place of the verdict is a statement of what would have to hold in any member of the class, which is available where the enumeration of members is not.

8.3 *Hypotheses in Conditional Form*

The account yields hypotheses of conditional form, and their statement is what distinguishes the position taken here from a general profession of uncertainty. Three are offered, each stated so that its failure would be recognisable.

Where the operations available to a system at destabilisation are enlarged in the sense of Section 7, the proportion of unabsorbed asymmetries discharged as organized violence declines, and the decline is observable across systems compared at similar distances from a stability boundary.

Where the positions from which a characterisation may be refused are closed, the closure precedes the discharge, and the interval between the closure and the discharge is occupied by the establishment of the descriptions that the third operation requires. The order of the two is the content of the hypothesis, and a case in which the discharge preceded the closure would defeat it.

Where a system's absorptive channels operate and its generation accelerates, the system approaches destabilisation despite the operation of the channels, and the approach is visible as the accumulation of asymmetries that the channels handle individually and fail to clear in aggregate. This hypothesis is the one most exposed to difficulties of measurement, since the aggregate it refers to is not a quantity the account defines, and Section 9 records the difficulty.

9 SCOPE, POINTS OF FAILURE, AND OPEN PROBLEMS

This section states the reach of the argument, the points at which it would fail, and the problems it leaves for further work. Its objective is to make the account assessable by a reader who holds none of its commitments, which requires that its claims be stated with the conditions under which they hold and with the observations that would defeat them. The method is enumeration in three parts. The section states five claims with their conditions, four points at which the account fails, and five open problems, each with an indication of what would settle it.

9.1 *Scope of the Argument*

The argument is carried by five claims, and each holds under a stated condition.

The definition of peace as absorption capacity holds for relational systems in which generation produces difference distributed unevenly across parties. Where a system generates nothing, the definition applies vacuously and the analysis that follows it has no purchase.

The claim that no terminal condition exists holds on the framework's premises concerning generation and asymmetry. A reader who holds that generation may proceed without producing difference, or that difference so produced may be distributed evenly, declines the claim with the premise.

The claim that destabilisation leaves direction open holds wherever more than one operation is admitted by a system's grammar, and it is the account of what happens where fewer are admitted.

The characterisation of organized violence holds where the third operation is performed at destabilisation by a system to which the other two are unavailable in operative form. It is a characterisation of a class of cases, and it is not an account of every occasion on which force is used.

The conditions of Section 7 hold as necessary conditions on the availability of the first two operations. They are offered as necessary conditions alone, and no claim is made that a system satisfying them avoids organized violence.

Three terms carry the argument and are used in the senses fixed here. Absorption names the entry of power into the generative cycle of the relation in which it arose, and it carries no implication about anyone's intention. Grammar names the distinctions a system's parties can draw and the operations available to them for reorganising their relations, and it names no code and no written rule. Standing names both the capacity to refuse a characterisation applied to oneself and the qualification to press a claim, and the merger of the two senses is deliberate and is argued in a companion work (Huang, 2026a).

9.2 *Points of Failure*

The account would be defeated at four points, and each is listed here with what would carry it away.

The characterisation of organized violence fails on the observation stated as Claim 5.3, namely a system that possessed the first two operations in operative form at destabilisation and discharged as violence nonetheless. The characterisation is the paper's headline claim and this is its principal exposure.

The definition of peace fails if absorption admits an aggregate. Section 3.5 withholds one, and the withholding is what keeps the account from licensing the exchange of one party's position against a total. A demonstration that absorption across a system composes into a quantity

would restore the aggregation the account exists to exclude and would carry Sections 3, 7, and 8 with it.

The claim that no terminal condition exists fails if a system may continue to generate while the difference it produces is distributed evenly across its parties. The claim is a derived one, so the failure would be a failure in the derivation or in a premise.

The account of enlargement fails if the conditions of Section 7.2 are unsatisfiable in principle, which would be shown by an argument that a position from which a characterisation may be refused, with an addressee obliged to receive the refusal, cannot exist in systems of the kind described. A companion work records the same exposure for the same condition (Huang, 2026a).

Three observations would not count against the account. A system satisfying the conditions and discharging as violence for reasons unconnected to the operations of Section 5.2 falls outside the characterisation and does not defeat it. A period of quiet in a system with an impoverished grammar is accounted for by Section 6 and confirms nothing either way. And a failure to predict the timing of a particular discharge is a limit the account states in advance.

9.3 *Open Problems*

The account leaves five problems open, and each is stated with what would settle it.

Establishing operative admission from outside a system is the principal obstacle to testing Claim 5.2, since the distinction between an operation available to the parties who needed it and an operation available in name is a distinction about what could have been done, and evidence about it is generated by the same arrangements the claim assesses. What would settle the problem is a procedure by which the availability of an operation is established from records produced before the destabilisation.

Whether the three operations of Section 5.2 exhaust the responses available at destabilisation is undetermined. The account requires the third to be available by default and requires nothing about the completeness of the enumeration. What would settle the problem is either a fourth operation exhibited in a case, or an argument from the framework's premises that the three are exhaustive.

Whether absorption can be established from inside a relation is undetermined, and the difficulty is that a party well placed to report on it is a party whose own position is among the things being absorbed. A companion work records the same problem for the same reason (Huang, 2026a). What would settle it is a criterion available to a participant that does not depend on the participant's assessment of the relation's condition.

Whether the conditions of Section 7.2 can be held by a system in which absorption is distributed is undetermined, and Section 7.3 gives the reason: distribution disperses the addressee that the first condition requires. What would settle it is an arrangement in which a

distributed function nonetheless supplies an obliged addressee, exhibited in a case or constructed in principle.

Whether the account extends to systems in which the parties are of different kinds is undetermined. The illustrations used here concern relations among parties who can each hold an account of themselves, and arrangements in which one party's characterisations are produced by apparatus, as in the case considered in Section 7.3.3, may require conditions the account does not supply. What would settle it is an examination of the four conditions in that setting, which the framework's work on interpretive authority equips but which this paper does not undertake.

9.4 *Summary of Results*

The paper defines peace as the maintained capacity of a relational system to absorb, at the rate of its own generation, the asymmetry that its generation produces, and separates that definition from the absence of violence, from stability, and from agreement. It establishes on the framework's premises that the demand for absorption is continuous, so that no completed condition is available to a system that continues to generate. It establishes that the failure of absorption fixes destabilisation and leaves its direction open, and that the direction is settled by the operations a system's grammar admits. It characterises organized violence as the operation available to a grammar that admits the determination of an enemy and admits neither the renegotiation of which parties count nor the redefinition of who the parties are, and it states the observation that would defeat the characterisation. It declines the reading on which organized violence is itself generative, on the ground that the reading supplies a reason and thereby supplies legitimacy, and it draws from the declining a different practical conclusion: the object of intervention is the range of operations available at destabilisation. It states four conditions under which that range is enlarged, and it examines the proposal that absorption may become distributed, finding that distribution and contestability vary independently and that distribution alone disperses the addressee the first condition requires. And it answers the question with which it began by decomposing it, holding that the permanence of destabilisation is established and that the permanence of organized violence follows from it only through a term the account holds to be variable.

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