JOURNAL FOR THE
STUDY OF PEACE AND CONFLICT

A Publication of
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Editor’s Introduction

Welcome to the 2014 issue of the Journal. We are pleased to publish a rich and varied collection of research and pedagogical essays that contribute to our ongoing discussions of micro, meso, and macro peacebuilding efforts. This open submission issue continues our tradition of exploring the study of peace and conflict with an interdisciplinary approach.

We open our section of research articles with a study by Paula Cueller of the contributions that domestic court cases in Latin America have made to the global development of the concept of human rights. She focuses in particular on the concept of “the right to truth” and how that has grown out of the experiences families and domestic court cases from Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Columbia, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Her article is a careful accounting of how the tragedies of human rights violations has produced an important understanding of the role of truth and empathy in the transformation and healing of deeply divided societies where dictators have torn the social fabric. She also helps us recognize the ways that traditional legal systems can contribute to the pursuit of social justice.

While emerging from a very different disciplinary approach to assessing peacebuilding work, the second research article, written by four faculty at the UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing also turns an analytical lens on a global institution and its contributions to developing local norms. This time a cross-national study conducted in Kenya and Malawi is used to assess the impact of the Millennium Development Goals in regions where HIV infection is a persistent issue for women. This study by Anne Dressel, Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu, Peninnah M. Kako, and Patricia E. Stevens, is timely given the current assessment and revision of the MDG goals which need to be renewed in 2015. A strength of their study is the research team which included natives from the countries where the data was collected. The authors make a strong case for the need to use gender analysis in the study of HIV infection impact. Their rich qualitative data gives us a deeper understanding of both the issues faced by the HIV-positive women as well as creative and successful development projects the women have achieved in their communities.

From the article on addressing HIV in women we move to another health care related study of peace building, this time in the United States and focused on the work of birth professionals. While it is about people located in a mid-sized city in Wisconsin, this study is crossing boundaries and borders and how peacebuilding practices, in particular the work of talk, can improve the client experience in one of the most stressful yet beautiful events in life, the birth of a child. As birth professionals, the authors, Lynn Van Airsdale and Margie Franzen, became interested in how supporting doctors, nurses, midwives, and doulas to develop connections outside of the birthing room might ease common conflicts. This article reflects on their exploratory study of their community meals, “Intercourse dinners” where talk becomes a place of growing empathy and connection and what that might mean for cooperation among birth professionals inside the workplace.

Ciara McHugh, a student at Marquette University, uses case studies of Rwanda and the United States to unpack the relationship between gender, violence, and language. Much like in Van Airsdale and Franzen, this piece helps us to understand the significance of communication and “talk” in escalating or de-escalating a conflict. McHugh explores the connections of
rhetoric, beliefs and actions. Her study helps us to see the continuing negative social impact of gender-othering and its role in propaganda production.

Assumptions about how social norms shape peace work also rise to the surface in Muriel Schmid’s theoretical essay on peace activism and the balance between peace and justice. Her jumping off place is a 1993 essay by Paul Salem, “A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective.” Key to this article is to re-visit the claim that Western approaches to peacemaking differ from non-Western approaches in how the relationship between peace and justice is viewed. Using Biblical analysis, contemporary examples, and the work of scholars who see more connection than disparity in the concepts, Schmid builds an argument that the tendency to separate peace and justice needs continual monitoring, and that complexity and connectivity of issues are important aspects for activists to include in their operational labors.

Rounding out the research papers in this issue of the Journal is an article by Catlyn Origitano. It provides us with a thoughtful study of how public memorials to war (to those lost and to those who survived) have changed over time from stone sculptures of men (heroes) to places of education and veneration. She uses three case studies of diverse memorials to chart how we have moved from visitor as distant observer to visitor as engaged and connected through evoking empathy and providing education.

Our issue also includes three pedagogical articles. Karl F. Bahm and Khalil Dokhanchi provide us with an excellent set of guidelines for how to structure study abroad. Eight times they have led a study abroad trip to Bosnia and Hercegovina. Their article reflects on what has worked and how they have achieved their goal of reducing the “empathy deficit” they see in their students. Challenging student assumptions about war and peace begins in the classroom within walls and later expands to several weeks of experiential education designed to capitalize on the power of personal interactions linked with reflective space.

The second pedagogical article is more about setting norms and advocating for strong classroom principles around ethics in responding to conflict. Christian Goebel takes up perhaps the greatest ethics challenge in our discipline, how to teach soldiers to be good soldiers while also being good human beings. He delves into the issue of the need for teaching to kill but how that use of dehumanization of the other creates larger ethical dilemmas in the work of the soldier not on the battlefield.

And Andrea Hilkovitz relates her experience as a literature professor challenging her students to make sense of the historically important play Lysistrata. She has had much success linking that literary example with the work of women peace builders in Liberia as portrayed in the film, Pray the Devil Back to Hell. Each of these pedagogical articles serves to expand our personal practice as faculty while also raising up key issues in the study and practice of peace and conflict.

Finally, we end with a series of four book reviews. These reviews help us stay current in the many issues and theories that shape our interdisciplinary field of peace and conflict studies. Highlighted in this issue are five books on diverse topics. One is the results of a study of millennials and the attitudes towards the military and military service. While located in military sociology it provides useful data and insights for audiences across the disciplines. There is also a review of a pair of books on civilian resistance. Together these books provide a rich resource on the use of nonviolence and the analysis of its impact. Another book takes on the complex
question of how local and global peace building efforts intersect and relate. Finally we include a review of a book that offers a theoretical exploration of how to bridge religious differences through the commonalities of prayer.

This issue has been made possible by the efforts of many people. We extend our thanks to the authors for trusting us with their work and for their consistent and timely participation in the review and editing process. We also could not complete such a monumental task without our volunteer reviewers who put in countless hours to provide us with much needed guidance on our selections and revisions of the pieces included in this issue of the journal. Ultimately though, the most important appreciation goes to my colleague Kathryn Blakeman who manages the production and editing process of the journal from start to finish, completing her work for the Institute as always with great grace and patience.

Dr. Lynne M. Woehrle, Editor
Professor of Sociology, Mount Mary University
The Influence of Latin American Domestic Courts in the Development of the Right to Truth

Paula Sofia Cuellar*

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”
George Santayana

Introduction

Usually when someone thinks about the development of human rights throughout history, countries like France, England and the United States come to mind. This western view of human rights, deeply rooted in the collective imagination of the people, impedes understanding the great influence that countries in Latin America have exerted on expanding the catalogue of human rights and their scope.

The contribution of Latin America to the development of human rights has occurred not only through the multiple writings of its scholars, jurists or politicians, but also through the suffering of its people. This suffering has provided a field of study for the origin and expansion of human rights around the world.

When discussing the legacy of the Cold War in Latin America, the former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Laureate, Doctor Oscar Arias once expressed that the “superpowers provided the weapons, we provided the corpses.” In this case, we might paraphrase his words to say that “Europe provided the theory, but Latin America provided the suffering.”

This paper aims to depict briefly some of the contributions made by domestic courts in Latin America to the emergence and development of human rights by focusing, particularly, on the “right to truth” or the “right to know the truth,” as it has also been called throughout its recent history. Specifically about that right, this paper will trace its journey from its origins in Argentina, with the so called “truth trials,” to its progressive recognition by other domestic courts in this region.

* Paula Sofia Cuellar (El Salvador) holds an L.L.B. degree from Central American University José Simeón Cañas and an M.A. in human rights and education for peace from University of El Salvador. Paula also earned an L.L.M. degree in international human rights from Notre Dame and a post-graduate diploma in human rights and democratization processes from the University of Chile. She has worked as a judicial clerk for El Salvador’s Supreme Court of Justice in the Constitutional Chamber and recently served as head of the International Unit. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in history and human rights at the University of Minnesota. cuell020@umn.edu

The content of this paper has been partially published as part of one chapter of the author’s master’s thesis: Paula Sofia Cuellar Cuellar, “The Judicial Enforceability of the Individual Dimension of the Right to Truth Through the Writ of Amparo in El Salvador,” University of Notre Dame, Center for Civil and Human Rights, Working Paper No. 6, Spring 2010.


In addition, it plans to illustrate the role that victims and their relatives have played in the birth and expansion of the right to truth, not only through the work by its national institutions, but by the victims of forced disappearances and relatives. In their cases, although many years have passed since the abduction of their loved ones, they are still facing the uncertainty of their whereabouts and, therefore, postponing their right to mourn.

Finally, although its focus is specifically the development of the right to truth by the national courts of different countries within Latin America, to better understand this paper it is necessary to provide a little background about the development of that right at the regional system of protection of human rights. This is because the jurisprudence of both the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is previous to the one formulated by the domestic courts.

1. Origins within the Organization of American States

In the Americas, the right to know the truth has been widely and repeatedly addressed by the two supervisory organs under the American Convention on Human Rights and, more recently, by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States. For almost twenty-five years, both the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights have dedicated a large part of its jurisprudence to the recognition and to the development of that right, particularly in response to the practice of forced disappearances that has plagued the region for many years. This right emerged in transitional societies mostly as a necessity to overcome the secrecy in which authoritarian regimes carried out a wide number of atrocities during the course of a dictatorship or an armed conflict. Moreover, it came about as an instrument for the relatives of the disappeared to learn the whereabouts and fate of their loved ones and to untangle a web of denial knitted by the former authoritarian governments.

The right to truth was addressed for the first time in 1986 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in its annual report dealing with the consolidation of democracies that have emerged from a repressive past. In that report, the Commission outlined the problems that incipient democracies had to overcome in light of the heinous crimes committed by previous governments and highlighted the duty of the former to carry out investigations in order to disclose the truth. The Commission specifically stated in the report that “society has the inalienable right to know the truth about past events, as well as the motives and circumstances in which aberrant crimes came to be committed, in order to prevent repetition of such acts in the future. Moreover, the family members of the victims are entitled to information as to what happened to their relatives.”

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4 Id.

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collective level. Additionally, it recognized its inalienable character. This implies that this right is not to be subjected to derogations or limitations, no matter the circumstances surrounding it.\(^5\)

On the other hand, in order to achieve compliance from the States when dealing with the right to truth, the Commission affirmed in that same report that both freedom of speech and prompt legal recourses were necessary. As a consequence, the Commission began to establish the legal foundation for the right to truth and linked it with those rights contained in articles 13.1\(^6\) and 25.1\(^7\) of the American Convention on Human Rights.

Several years later, the Commission explicitly referred to the right to truth in one of its individual reports. The report was based on a case submitted by the relatives of Manuel Stalin Bolaños Quiñonez, who was forcibly disappeared by agents of the State of Ecuador and, moreover, in the lack of political will of the latter to investigate the crime. In that individual report, the Commission explicitly declared that the victims’ next of kin have the right to know the fate and the whereabouts of their loved ones. Furthermore, it affirmed that, in light of that right, the States have the correlative obligation to conduct a thorough investigation, as part of an effective and prompt judicial recourse.

In words of the Commission, in the case of *Manuel Stalin Bolaños Quiñonez v. the State of Ecuador*, the “family of Manuel Bolaños has the right to know the truth about what happened to him, the circumstances of his detention and death, and to know the location of his remains. This flows from the obligation of the state to use all the means at its disposal to carry out a serious investigation of violations committed within its jurisdiction to identify those responsible.”\(^8\)

Therefore, in that report, the Commission stated that Ecuador had violated the right to truth, as a derivation of articles 1.1\(^9\), 8.1\(^10\) and 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

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\(^6\) Article 13.1 “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one’s choice.” Organization of American States, American Convention on Human Rights, San José, Costa Rica, 22 November 1969.

\(^7\) Article 25.1 “Everyone has the right to simple and prompt recourse, or any other effective recourse, to a competent court or tribunal for protection against acts that violate his fundamental rights recognized by the constitution or laws of the state concerned or by this Convention, even though such violation may have been committed by persons acting in the course of their official duties.” Organization of American States, American Convention on Human Rights.

\(^8\) Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report No. 10/95, Case 10.580, Ecuador, September 12, 1988, paragraph 45.

\(^9\) Article 1.1 “The States Parties to this Convention undertake to respect the rights and freedoms recognized herein and to ensure to all persons subject to their jurisdiction the free and full exercise of those rights and freedoms, without any discrimination for reasons of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, or any other social condition.” Organization of American States, American Convention on Human Rights.

\(^10\) Article 8.1 “Every person has the right to a hearing, with due guarantees and within a reasonable time, by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal, previously established by law, in the substantiation of any accusation of a criminal nature made against him or for the determination of his rights and obligations of a civil, labor, fiscal, or any other nature. Organization of American States, American Convention on Human Rights.
Rights. The right to truth in connection to article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights was not mentioned in this case.

Two years later, after the resolution adopted by the Commission in the case of Manuel Stalin Bolaños Quiñonez v. the State of Ecuador, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights included the right to truth in one of its judgments. Sadly, the individual complaint filed before it by the Commission also revolved around the forced disappearance of another human being, with the slight difference that his disappearance was attributed in that occasion to two agents of the State of Peru. In this case, the lack of interest by the State to conduct a thorough investigation to resolve the crime was also present, as in the case of Manuel Stalin Bolaños Quiñonez v. the State of Ecuador. In its judgment, the Court stated that the relatives of Ernesto Rafael Castillo Páez had “the right to know what happened to him and, if appropriate, where his remains are located. It is therefore incumbent on the State to use all the means at its disposal to satisfy these reasonable expectations.”

On the merits, the Court declared that the right to know the truth, although not expressly incorporated in the American Convention on Human Rights, was contained or subsumed in the obligations that the State has under articles 1.1 and 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights. However, despite its inclusion on the merits, the Court did not directly refer to the right to truth in its verdict.

The second case that contributed in a significant way to the development of the right to truth, and particularly to the enhancement of its scope, was the case of Bámaca Velásquez v. Guatemala. In it, the Court declared that the right to know the truth “is subsumed in the right of the victim or his next of kin to obtain clarification of the facts relating to the violations and the corresponding responsibilities from the competent State organs, through the investigation and prosecution established in articles 8 and 25 of the [American] Convention” on Human Rights. Thus, in that occasion, the Court went further and linked the right to truth to article 8 of the American Convention on Human Rights and not only with articles 1.1 and 25 as had been previously stated. Moreover, in that same case, the Court affirmed that the denial of the right to truth constituted a cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment for the relatives of the victims. This was stated on the grounds of the anguish that the relatives of the victims have to endure while wondering about the fate of their loved ones and about the clarification of their whereabouts. In particular, the Court expressly said that the “ignorance of the whereabouts of Bámaca Velásquez caused his next of kin the profound anguish mentioned by the [Human Rights] Committee” in Elena Quinteros Almeida and María del Carmen Almeida de Quinteros v. Uruguay.

The argument of the Court was based upon the “continued obstruction of Jennifer Harbury’s efforts to learn the truth of the facts and, above all, the concealment of the corpse of Bámaca Velásquez and the obstacles to the attempted exhumation procedures that various public authorities created, and also the official refusal to provide relevant information.”

11 Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Castillo Páez v. Peru, Judgment of November 3, 1997, paragraph 90.
12 Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Bámaca-Velásquez v. Guatemala, Judgment of November 25, 2000, paragraph 201.
13 Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Bámaca-Velásquez v. Guatemala, paragraph 165.
14 Id.
Therefore, the Court declared that the suffering to which “Jennifer Harbury was subjected clearly constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment”\(^1\) and, subsequently, a violation of articles 5.1 and 5.2 of the American Convention on Human Rights on the terms established in that corpus of law.

Finally, in this case, the Court stated in its verdict that “the State should order an investigation to determine the persons responsible for the human rights violations referred to in this Judgment, and also to publicly disseminate the results of such investigation and punish those responsible.”\(^2\)

Through the above decisions, the two supervisory bodies of the Organization of the American States gave birth to the right to truth, and began to provide it with substantive content. These decisions are significant because the right to truth is not enshrined as such in the American Convention on Human Rights and, therefore, it had to be implied from the rights already included and given substantive content through the jurisprudence drafted by both bodies. Indeed, when the Court mentioned the right to truth in its individual dimension within the judgment adopted in the case of *Ernesto Rafael Castillo Páez v. the State of Peru*, it declared that although that right did not exist in the American Convention as such, it was a concept that was being developed in “doctrine and case law”\(^3\) at that time.

2. The emergence of the right to truth within a domestic jurisdiction: Argentina

In March 1976, the military “overthrew the government of María Estela Martínez de Perón with the objective of stabilizing the economy and suppressing ‘leftist subversion’,”\(^4\) In October 1983, democracy was restored in Argentina. However, the country would never be the same again.

During this period of time, the Military Junta developed the practice of forced disappearances in order to create a state of fear among its population. During that moment in history, thousands of people simply vanished from their homes, offices, schools, and other places in Argentina. “Kidnappings in an environment of impunity were followed by silence about the fate and whereabouts of the victims.”\(^5\)

To overcome the situation, the relatives of those people who “were abducted during the ‘dirty war’ tried to discover what happened to those who disappeared. The families sought explanations from the Argentine authorities, but the authorities refused to acknowledge that they had custody or knowledge of the individuals who disappeared.”\(^6\)

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\(^{1}\) Id.

\(^{2}\) Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Bamaça-Velásquez v. Guatemala, operative paragraphs, 8.

\(^{3}\) Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Castillo Páez v. Peru, paragraph 86.


\(^{6}\) David Weissbrodt, and María Luisa Bartolomei, “The Effectiveness of International Human Rights Pressures,” 1013.
Therefore, the right to truth emerged as a right aimed to “lift the lid of silence and denial from a contentious and painful period of history”\textsuperscript{21} in Argentina. In other words, that right appeared as a consequence of the desperate claims made by the relatives of the victims, in order to find out the whereabouts and the fate of their loved ones after a period of sheer brutality conducted by the authorities of the State.

With the return to democracy in Argentina, criminal trials against the Military Juntas were instituted in that country. In December 1985, the Federal Criminal Court of Appeals in Buenos Aires released a historical verdict in which five members of the Military Junta were convicted and then sent to jail.\textsuperscript{22} Along with the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons established by the newly elected government, those criminal trials were able to “provide a great deal of knowledge about the scope of the repressive policies and about [the] responsibility [of the State] for their planning and execution.”\textsuperscript{23} However, it is important to mention that neither the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons report nor “the subsequent criminal trials were able to determine what had happened to all of the more than ten thousand victims of ‘forced disappearances’\textsuperscript{24} during that dark period in the history of Argentina.

Following the trials of the Military Junta and its subsequent conviction, the military threatened to destabilize the incipient democracy in Argentina and to subvert the rule of law. As a response, President Raúl Alfonsín enacted two laws whose aim was to prohibit criminal prosecutions against perpetrators of gross violations to human rights. These laws were the Full Stop Act\textsuperscript{25} and the Due Obedience Act\textsuperscript{26}

To overcome these major setbacks in their quest for any information regarding the whereabouts and the fate of their loved ones, the relatives of the people disappeared, in coalition with human rights lawyers, persuaded the Federal Courts in Argentina to conduct “truth trials.” These trials were based upon the fact that “although the amnesty laws had blocked criminal proceedings, family members still had the ‘right to truth’ and they could pursue that right through judicial investigations.”\textsuperscript{27} In response to these investigations, the

\textsuperscript{24} Id.
\textsuperscript{25} The Full Stop Act extinguished criminal actions sixty days after its enactment. In María Fernanda Pérez Solla, “Enforced Disappearances before Argentinean Tribunals,” 693-694.
\textsuperscript{26} The Due Obedience Act created the presumption that subordinates in the security forces duly acted on orders and could accordingly not be punished. In María Fernanda Pérez Solla, “Enforced Disappearances before Argentinean Tribunals,” 694.
Federal Courts in Argentina ordered the opening of incidents of inquiry on the fate of some victims of enforced disappearances. Specifically, the “truth trials” consisted of a series of juridical procedures which aimed to “obtain official information about the fate of victims before criminal courts in the absence of the legal possibility to impose criminal sanctions.” These trials helped to clarify the facts, “further establishing responsibilities and opening the way to full prosecution in evolving political and legal contexts.”

The recognition of the right to truth at a domestic level and, consequently, the opportunity to submit lawsuits for the truth was made possible for the first time through a settlement reached by Argentina before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 1999 in the case submitted before that entity by Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó. Through that settlement, Argentina “committed itself to admit the right to truth by means of a law and to define an appropriate procedure for its effective enforcement.”

Within the domestic realm, that case was submitted in 1995 by Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó, the mother of Alejandra Lapacó, who was disappeared by the security forces in March of 1977. The argument that supported the case was the refusal by the Argentinean authorities to “determine what had happened to her daughter.”

In 1995, Mrs. Lapacó “petitioned the Federal Court of Appeals [in Argentina] to issue a written communication to the Headquarters of the Army Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Defense, asking it to submit all the existing information on the fate of the persons who disappeared while in detention kept by the Army and the security and intelligence branches which were under the operating orders of the First Army Corps from 1976 to 1983. As grounds for this petition, she alleged the right of family members to know the fate of their loved ones and the right of society to a detailed account of the methods used by the military dictatorship to exterminate tens of thousands of Argentines, or, in short, the ‘right to the truth’.”

That petition was initially declared admissible by the Federal Court of Appeals of Buenos Aires. When accepting its competence, the Court declared that the judicial enforceability of the right to truth was nothing more than the response of the State towards its obligation to provide all the mechanisms available to determine the fate and the whereabouts of the persons disappeared during the dirty war. Additionally, the Court stated that the Full Stop Act and the Due Obedience Act were, by no means, an obstacle to investigate the fate of those disappeared, especially according to the principles and the obligations enshrined in the American Convention on Human Rights, which was part of the law of the land. Finally, that Court affirmed its competence to continue the investigations since the amnesty laws impeded the imposition of sanctions, but not the closure of the process and, thus, of the investigations.

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29 Id.
32 Id.
33 Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó v. Carlos Guillermo Suárez Mason, paragraph 11.
34 Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó v. Carlos Guillermo Suárez Mason, paragraph 13.
Nevertheless, that original decision was later reversed by that same court when further measures aimed at the investigation of the armed forces were requested. The decision to declare her petition inadmissible was later upheld by the Supreme Court of Argentina and, thus, the petition filed by Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó was finally dismissed.

The main arguments for the last verdict were, in words of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, that the “purpose of investigative proceedings is to determine the existence of a punishable act.”

Therefore, there “would be no point in gathering evidence for the prosecution without a subject against whom it could be brought,” since the adoption of some actions towards that direction “would entail[ed] a reopening of the proceedings and the consequent introduction of legal action against persons who were acquitted in final judgment for the conduct that is the subject of this case.”

However, through that same judgment issued by the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, an important contribution to the development of the right to truth was made, although as a part of a dissenting opinion by one of the judges. In fact, due to invaluable contribution of the arguments expressed about the judicial enforceability of the right to truth when amnesty laws had been adopted during transitional periods, it is important to translate in full the words of the two judges Enrique Petracchi and Gustavo Bossert.

Both judges, in their dissenting opinion, argued that the fact that criminal prosecutions were banned for certain persons and for certain acts through the Full Stop Act and the Due Obedience Act did not imply, automatically, the closure of the investigations conducted against those persons. On the contrary, it was only through the continuation of a thorough investigation that it was possible to determine if the acts perpetrated by those persons were, indeed, covered by the benefits granted by the amnesty acts and, thus, if they were undeniably free from the imposition of sanctions.

Therefore, those judges concluded that, in order to avoid arbitrariness in the application of the benefits of an amnesty law, it was crucial for the investigation to continue until its end to assure that the beneficiaries of the law would only be those whom the amnesty originally intended to cover. That implies that, despite the fact that for a variety of reasons a criminal prosecution against certain persons and certain acts may be banned, it does not exempt the competent authorities from their obligation to determine if, indeed, the crimes judged or the perpetrators prosecuted fall into those categories.

As stated previously, due to the impossibility to enforce the right to truth within the domestic jurisdiction, Carmen Aguilar de Lapacó brought her case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. When facing international condemnation, the State of Argentina decided to recognize the right to truth in its domestic jurisdiction and, thus, it reached a friendly settlement with the petitioner. In that case, the State expressed that the

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35 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report No. 21/00, paragraph 15.
36 Id.
37 Id.
39 Id.
40 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report No. 21/00, paragraph 2.
protection and the guarantee of the right to truth involved “the exhaustion of all means to obtain information on the whereabouts of the disappeared persons. It is an obligation of means, not of results, which is valid as long as the results are not achieved, not subject to prescription.”  

The recognition of the right to truth at a domestic and at a regional level, as well as the establishment of the “truth trials” at a domestic level highlight two particularly relevant contributions by Argentina to human rights. On one hand, it is important to mention that those two achievements could not have been possible without the many struggles fought by the victims, their relatives, the human rights organizations, and the international community, in times when blanket amnesties seemed the most politically expedient measure. In the words of Emilio Mignone, “if not for the intervention of human rights organizations—despite their structural weaknesses—and the involvement of the international solidarity movement, ‘Argentine history would have been different. The truth about what occurred during the dark period ... would not have come to light and the political parties would not have felt compelled to heed those social grievances.’” On the other hand, it is imperative to recognize the imagination and the originality that lay beyond the whole idea of the “truth trials.” In that sense, these trials “illustrate the challenges encountered when less than perfect mechanisms are available to address the past, and highlight the creativity necessary to modify such mechanisms to better suit their purpose.”

Finally, on June 14, 2005, the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina declared unconstitutional both the Full Stop Act and the Due Obedience Act. To support its judgment, among other situations, the Court alleged that, based on the American Convention on Human Rights and on the jurisprudence developed by both of the supervisory organs of the Organization of American States, the State has an obligation to investigate, prosecute and punish those who have committed violations of the right to life and to humane treatment or who have engaged in disappearances, obligation which cannot be limited or abolished by the enactment of an Amnesty or Due Obedience Laws. Following that judgment, the domestic courts in Argentina were able to open and to reopen criminal prosecutions against those presumably responsible for gross human rights violations and for serious violations of international humanitarian laws during the dirty war.

Among the first perpetrators to be brought to justice after the declaration of unconstitutionality of the amnesty laws was Miguel Osvaldo Etchecolatz for gross violations to human rights committed during the dirty war. On September 19, 2006, the First Oral Federal Court from La Plata found Miguel Osvaldo Etchecolatz guilty and, thus, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The First Oral Federal Court from La Plata, besides passing the judgment, also declared the understanding of the term “reconciliation” as an equivalent to the formula of “forgive and forget,” totally the opposite of what law represents. Indeed, the rule of law and the right to

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41 Id.
truth are the basic steps that need to be followed in order to restore the victims and their families and to deter future exterminations.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{3. The right to truth within an ongoing conflict: Colombia}

Since the middle of the twentieth century, Colombia has witnessed the longest internal armed conflict in the history of Latin America. The origins of the war can be traced to a period known as “La Violencia” in 1948 during which “the Conservative Party launched a violent offensive against supporters of the Liberal and Communist parties, who were demanding socioeconomic and political changes.”\textsuperscript{45} The causes were the absence of the public authorities in certain parts of the territory, the inequitable distribution of land and wealth, and the exclusion of important sectors of the society in the political sphere. Following that period, with some variations over time, including the emergence of paramilitary groups and the dispute about the effective control over the drugs business, more than sixty years later the conflict has left a toll of 200,000 victims, 3,000,000 internally displaced people and 9,000,000 acres of land abandoned.\textsuperscript{46}

During the beginnings of the conflict, in order to confront the guerrilla groups in certain areas where the military presence was scarce, the Colombian government resorted to self defense committees that initially were born within the rural communities to protect their own interests. Over many years, these paramilitary structures “historically enjoyed the collaboration, support and toleration of units of the Colombian security forces, a fact that has led many to refer to the paramilitaries as a ‘sixth division’ of the army.”\textsuperscript{47} Nowadays, although now legally outlawed, “they exert a very high degree of political influence, both locally and nationally.”\textsuperscript{48}

The crimes that finally led to the banning of these structures in Colombia were, first, the massacres of nineteen merchants who were travelling within its territory in a caravan of vehicles in 1987; second, the massacre of the members of the judicial commission who conducted a visit \textit{in loco} to investigate the fate and the whereabouts of the nineteen merchants in 1989. Subsequent to the massacres of the members of the judicial commission by paramilitary forces with the aid of the official forces in the area, the “State began to adopt measures, including legislative measures, to counter the armed control exercised by paramilitary groups in several parts of Colombia.”\textsuperscript{49}

To conduct the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of those persons belonging to paramilitary structures, several laws were passed in Colombia. Within


\textsuperscript{46} For more information, see webpage: \url{http://www.laht.com/article.asp?CategoryId=12393&ArticleId=332464}, accessed March 11, 2014.

\textsuperscript{47} Human Rights Watch, “Smoke and Mirrors: Colombia’s Demobilization of Paramilitary Groups,” Volume 17, No. 3, (2005), 1.

\textsuperscript{48} Id.

those laws, in order to comply with international standards, the State introduced different elements of transitional justice, such as the right to truth, among others, and invested both the attorney general and the judicial system with competence to investigate, to prosecute and to impose sanctions. The “current legal framework for individual and collective demobilization rested and continues to rest on the one hand, on Law 418 of 1997, which was extended by Congress by Law 782 in December 2002.” On the other hand, it rests on Law 975 which came into force on July 22, 2005.

The first two laws establish a series of benefits that may be “granted on behalf of those who confess and have been or were accused of or tried for political crimes, and have not been convicted by a firm judgment, provided that they choose to participate in an individual or collective demobilization.” Also both “echo the limitation of benefits for those who have been involved in conduct constituting atrocious acts of ferocity or barbarism, terrorism, kidnapping, genocide, and homicide committed when the victim does not participate in combat.” Thus, as it can be seen, these laws do not provide an extinction of criminal liability for several crimes and, as a consequence, not so many paramilitaries were encouraged to demobilize.

As a consequence, in order to “facilitate peace processes and the reintegration into civilian life of groups or individuals who are members of illegal armed groups,” the Justice and Peace Law was passed in 2005. This law was intended to create an alternative system for those persons who do not benefit from Law 782. As a result, the “bill establishes an alternative criminal system of justice, which entails the suspension of a criminal sentence and its replacement with an alternative punishment. Benefits are granted commensurate with the individual’s contribution to attaining peace, justice, and reparation to the victims, as well as her or his own re-socialization.”

On the right to truth, the Justice and Peace Law establishes that society as a whole, and especially the victims, have the inalienable right to fully and effectively know the truth about the crimes perpetrated by those groups organized outside the law, as well as the whereabouts of the persons that were either kidnapped or disappeared. Furthermore, according to that law, the investigations and the criminal proceedings to which it applies, must aim to discover the fate of the victims of those criminal conducts and to provide the pertinent information to their relatives.

To guarantee the effectiveness of the right to truth, the Justice and Peace Law states that, during the conduction of the proceedings under that law, the public officers must have at their disposal all the necessary means to ensure the revelation of the truth about the facts

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50 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 4, July 22, 2005, Colombia.
51 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Follow-up on the Demobilization Process of the AUC in Colombia, paragraph 62.
52 Id.
53 Id.
55 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 7.
56 Id.
under investigation. Moreover, along with the collaboration of the people that had demobilized, the police have the duty to investigate the whereabouts of those kidnapped or disappeared and the obligation to duly inform their relatives the results obtained.

As a remedial measure, particularly as a measure of satisfaction and as a guarantee of non repetition, the Justice and Peace Law has addressed the necessity to verify and to clarify the facts and to disclose publicly and fully the truth that arises from judicial proceedings, as long as that truth neither generates more unnecessary damages to the victims, the witnesses or other people, nor represents a threat to their personal security. Additionally, as part of those measures, it includes the search for those disappeared and the remains of those killed, in order to give them a proper burial, according to the traditions of the family and of the community. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of the acknowledgment of the wrongdoings and the assumption of responsibilities related to them. Finally, it addresses the necessity to preserve the archives by the judicial authorities, in order to contribute to the development of the historical memory of the country, as a manifestation of the right to truth.

After the Justice and Peace Law was adopted, it became the target of several criticisms made both by the national and the international community. Despite the fact that both the legislative and the executive branch claimed that the law complied with the international standards established for transitional processes, the judicial branch, particularly the Constitutional Court of Colombia, had some reservations about those arguments, and that was when the judicial enforceability of the right to truth came into play within the country.

Following a petition for an application for a constitutional review filed by Gustavo Gallón Giraldo and others, the Constitutional Court of Colombia ruled on the constitutionality of several provisions enshrined in the Justice and Peace Law and on how those provisions had to be interpreted by the authorities entitled to enforce them, in order to be compatible with the Constitution.

Particularly on the provisions related to the right to truth, the Constitutional Court of Colombia declared that the Justice and Peace Law did not “establish judicial means to ensure disclosure of the truth about specific crimes committed by members of specific groups,” nor “to uncover the overall criminal enterprise in question,” since it established a voluntary and an open confession in order for the perpetrators to become recipients of the benefits enshrined by the law. Therefore, according to the Court, in order for the law to be constitutional and to ensure the compliance of the right to truth, the confession given by the perpetrators must be “complete and truthful, thus ruling out the possibility that events not included in that

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57 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 15.
58 Id.
59 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 49.1.
60 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 49.2.
61 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Article 49.4.
62 Colombian Congress, Law No. 975/05, Articles 56 and 57.
63 For more information, see: Re 975 Act, Application for Constitutional Review, Constitutional Chamber of Colombia, C-370/06, 18 May, 2006.
65 Id.
statement might later be confessed without thereby losing the legal benefits.\textsuperscript{66} In other words, according to the Constitutional Court, the beneficiaries must only have “a single opportunity to tell the truth, and if their statements have concealed the truth about their participation as members of the group in a crime directly connected with that membership, the benefit of the alternative penalty is to be revoked.”\textsuperscript{67}

Finally, the Constitutional Court of Colombia added a requirement in order for the perpetrators to enjoy the benefits of the Justice and Peace Law, which is crucial for the effectiveness of the right to truth. That requirement was “to report on the missing persons, inasmuch as it would be unconstitutional for the State to grant a reduced penalty to those responsible for forced disappearances without requiring them not only to demobilize under the Law but to reveal, from the very moment their eligibility is being determined, the whereabouts of the missing persons.”\textsuperscript{68}

To support its judgment, the Constitutional Chamber of Colombia relied on the jurisprudence provided by it in prior cases on the right to truth. Thus, the Constitutional Chamber recalled the decision adopted in a previous application for constitutional review filed by Ricardo Danies González,\textsuperscript{69} through which it declared that the victims of a crime not only have a right to economic reparations for the harms caused, but also the right to know the truth about what happened in their case through a criminal proceeding.\textsuperscript{70} Indeed, in the judgment provided in that prior case, the Constitutional Chamber arrived to the conclusion that an integral restoration of the rights that have been violated by a crime implies an obligation for the State to guarantee the victims have, at least, their rights to truth, justice and economic reparation for the wrongdoings.\textsuperscript{71}

Specifically on the right to truth in the application for constitutional review filed by Ricardo Danies González, the Constitutional Chamber of Colombia defined that right as the possibility to know what happened and to look for the harmonization between the procedural truth and the substantive truth. The Chamber further established that the right to truth entails a special relevance in cases of gross human rights violations and abuses.\textsuperscript{72}

However, in that same decision, the Constitutional Chamber of Colombia also determined that, for a person to invoke his right to truth during a judicial proceeding, that person must have suffered a real, tangible and specific damage by the denial of the truth, whatever that harm might be and even without trying to pursue an economic reparation.

\textsuperscript{66} Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Statement by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the Application and Scope of the Justice and Peace Law in Colombia, paragraph 26.
\textsuperscript{67} Id.
\textsuperscript{68} Id.
\textsuperscript{69} Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Statement by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on the Application and Scope of the Justice and Peace Law in Colombia, paragraph 20.
\textsuperscript{70} For more information, see: Re 600 Act, Application for Constitutional Review, Constitutional Chamber of Colombia, C-228/02, 3 April, 2002.
\textsuperscript{71} Re 975 Act, Application for Constitutional Review, Constitutional Chamber of Colombia, C-370/06, 18 May, 2006, paragraph 4.9.2.
\textsuperscript{72} Re 975 Act, Application for Constitutional Review, Constitutional Chamber of Colombia, C-370/06, 18 May, 2006, paragraph 4.9.3.
Furthermore, even if economic reparations have been awarded, the victim can continue the judicial proceeding just to know the truth about what happened.\(^{73}\)

Finally, the Constitutional Court of Colombia recalled that, in previous decisions, it had recognized as constitutional rights both the right of the victims to know the truth about what had happened to them and the right of society to clarify the truth about macrocriminality processes that massively and systematically affect their human rights as a whole. According to the Court, those rights derived from the rights of access to justice, due process and an effective remedy, the right to be free from cruel, inhumane and degrading treatments, as well as from the obligations of the States to respect and ensure the rights of the people under its jurisdiction.\(^{74}\)

4. The development of the right to truth through constitutional jurisprudence: Peru

Like most of the countries in the continent, Peru was the subject of economic, social and political turmoil during several decades of the past century and of numerous successive authoritarian regimes. All those situations led to the emergence of one of the most violent guerilla movements in the region, ironically, when the first democratic elections were about to be held after twelve years of military regimes. Indeed, “the day before the vote, members of [Shining Path] burned ballot boxes in the Ayacuchan town of Chuschi, inaugurating a period of political violence that is remembered as one of the most sorrowful eras of Peruvian history.”\(^{75}\)

The emergence of Shining Path and of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement and the attempts by the government to crash them unleashed a ruthless repression by the security forces, which, in its way, took the lives of many civilians, eroded the democratic institutions of the country, and suppressed many of the fundamental rights and freedoms provided by the law for long periods of time. Certainly, the “worst abuses began in 1982, when the democratic government of Belaúnde Terry ordered the armed forces to spearhead an attack against the Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.”\(^{76}\)

In the middle of the decade of the nineties, the government successfully halted the violence exerted by the guerrilla movement under the administration of Alberto Fujimori, in spite of a few isolated incidents of recurrence, such as the takeover of the Japanese embassy by the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. However, as stated before, that achievement was not exempted from numerous gross violations of international human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian laws, such as torture, extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, among others.

In 2000, after Alberto Fujimori fled Peru, Valentín Paniagua became the interim president of the country and, in the most radical act executed under his brief administration, he decided to create the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation. That decision was also saluted

\(^{73}\) Id.

\(^{74}\) Re 975 Act, Application for Constitutional Review, Constitutional Chamber of Colombia, C-370/06, 18 May, 2006, paragraph 4.9.4.


\(^{76}\) Id.
by the next president, Alejandro Toledo, who actually added the term “reconciliation” to the denomination of the Commission.

The duties of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation were, among others, to contribute to the clarification of the crimes and the human rights violations perpetrated both by the terrorist organizations and by the state agents, to determine the fate and the whereabouts of the victims and to establish responsibilities, whenever deemed appropriate.  

The creation of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation in Peru and the terms of its mandate, particularly its obligation to cooperate with criminal justice and its further decision to create a unit “charged with the investigation of specific cases,” raised high expectations among the victims, their relatives and the society in terms of truth, justice and reparations which the states authorities were neither ready, nor eager to fulfill as a whole.

Despite the initial reticence of some state authorities, it is important to highlight the fact that progress at domestic level in terms of transitional justice has been made by the State of Peru after the release of the report by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation and after several judgments provided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights against the State, particularly after the case known as Barrios Altos v. Peru.

In terms of the right to truth, the Constitutional Court of Peru decided to recognize the enforceability of that right at a domestic level. That situation “can be seen in the case of Genaro Villegas Namuche, where the Constitutional Court recognized that the right to know the truth has a societal dimension and an individual/next of kin dimension.”

Throughout that judgment, the Constitutional Court of Peru declared that, although the right to truth was not expressly enshrined in its constitutional text, it was completely protected under its legal framework and directly enforceable, particularly based on the duties that the State has to protect fundamental rights and to provide access to justice in case of violations. On the question on the right to truth not being included within the Constitution, the Court held that it was necessary to develop the rights that are implicit in its text, particularly when a case that is brought before the judiciary introduces novel and special circumstances which have to be considered in order to rule according to the realities that those situations demand and to enhance the rule of law.

Additionally, the Constitutional Court affirmed that, although along with the right to truth there were other human rights at stake, such as the right to life, liberty, personal integrity, among others, the right to truth in fact had an autonomous configuration, which distinguished

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79 Eduardo González Cueva, The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Challenge of Impunity, 70.
81 Ximena Medellín Urquiaga, Digesto de Jurisprudencia Latinoamericana sobre Crímenes de Derecho Internacional, 252 - 254.
it from the fundamental rights to which it was actually linked. That obeyed to the special object that was aimed to be protected through it and to the specific outcome that was intended to be achieved. 82

Finally, the Constitutional Court of Peru argued that the right to truth had a constitutional rank, since it constituted a natural consequence of the principles enshrined in the constitutional text, such as the rule of law, the respect of democracy and the human dignity. In its individual dimension, according to that body, the right to truth derived from the principle of human dignity, since the harm was not only to the life of a person or to his personal integrity, but to the ignorance of his fate and of his whereabouts by his relatives, which affected also the human dignity of the latter. In its collective dimension, the right to truth derived from the respect to democracy and to the rule of law because, through the exercise of that right, society as a whole was able to learn the pain and the suffering that some human beings are capable to inflict on others, in order to avoid impunity and to prevent future acts. 83

Conclusion

One of the most important measures that must be adopted during a transitional process is the disclosure of truth, both at an individual and at a collective level. Although difficult to listen to in the beginning, the truth can help the victims and their relatives to continue their lives without remorse in their hearts and to coexist with the wrongdoers. Moreover, it can help the perpetrators to expiate their sins and to unload the heavy burden that they had to carry for many years. Additionally, it can help bystanders to develop feelings of empathy towards the victims and to acknowledge what some persons are capable to do to their fellow human beings. Despite the negative feelings that may arise at its beginning, the truth can help society as a whole to come to terms with its past and to provide them with a fresh start. Indeed, as it was stated since biblical times by the apostle John, “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” 84

In that sense, the birth and rise of the right to truth has been a response to the perverse practices developed by authoritarian regimes in Latin America, which resulted in the abduction and subsequent disappearances of fellow human beings. As can be clearly seen throughout this paper, Latin America has made great contributions to the development of human rights, particularly in those cases related with transitional periods. However, these developments have come at a very high cost, and have been deeply rooted in very difficult moments in its history which have been plagued with gross human rights violations.

About the development and enhancement of the right to truth in the juridical spectrum, it may now be seen in the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that there is a consensus that this right derives from articles 1.1, 8.1, 13 and 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights. This jurisprudence has been adopted by national courts within its

82 Ximena Medellín Urquiaga, *Digesto de Jurisprudencia Latinoamericana sobre Crímenes de Derecho Internacional*, 252.
84 John 8:32.
domestic jurisdiction. Examples of this statement are the jurisprudence developed by the domestic courts in Argentina, Colombia and Peru.

Within the past five years, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States has also adopted several resolutions in which it has acknowledged the emergence of the right to truth within the international sphere. In them, the General Assembly has stressed that “the regional community should make a commitment to recognize the right of victims of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law, and their families and society as a whole, to know the truth regarding such violations to the fullest extent practicable.”\(^{85}\) Furthermore, it has stressed the importance for States “to provide effective mechanisms for society as a whole and, in particular, for relatives of the victims, to learn the truth regarding gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian laws.”\(^{86}\)

In order for post-conflict societies to come to terms with their past, it is essential to know what happened, particularly in cases of forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, respecting, on one hand, the right to mourn that the relatives of the victims have, and on the other hand, the necessity of society to have a holistic account of past abuses.

Given the importance to recognize at a domestic level the contributions made by national courts in Latin America to the expansion of the right to truth within their domestic jurisdictions, this paper has focused on the case law developed by Argentina, Colombia and Peru. The obligations that have emanated from national experiences have actually contributed to clarifying the fate and the whereabouts of the victims of human rights violations or abuses, despite the impossibility to obtain criminal convictions, such as the case of the “truth trials” in Argentina.

Although there is still a long way to run to provide the right to truth as such with legally and binding effects within the international sphere, there is no reason to dismay in this effort because history has proven that the unthinkable can become a tangible reality. Therefore, as an obligation and as debt to the victims of human rights abuses around the world, not a step back should be taken in the quest for justice.

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\(^{86}\) Id.

Anne Dressel, PhD, CFPH*
Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu, PhD, RN
Peninah M. Kako, PhD, RN
Patricia E. Stevens, PhD, RN, FAAN

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between health, peace, and development by examining research focused on HIV-positive women in Malawi and Kenya. Several themes were identified including women’s resiliency, women’s empowerment, child-headed households, the strength of social support groups, and community involvement. Our findings indicate that these themes address five of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) dedicated to: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Based on our findings, we recommend the development and support of policies that build upon women’s existing social networks and capacities as a way of enhancing women’s empowerment in an effort to meet the MDGs. Also of key importance is the need to improve the livelihoods of the millions of orphans in Eastern and Southern Africa, as this has implications for the peace and stability of the region.

Keywords: U.N. Millennium Development Goals, HIV-positive Women, Malawi, Kenya, Social Support Groups

* Anne Dressel, PhD, CFPH, is the Director of the Center for Global Health Equity at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she teaches courses on global health, ethics and human rights, as well as study abroad courses which focus on community health in Malawi and Kenya.

Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu, PhD, RN, is an Associate Professor in the College of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research focuses on the structural factors affecting the health and well-being of East African women.

Peninah M. Kako, RN, PhD, FNP, BC, APNP, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research focuses on addressing the health needs of HIV-positive women in Eastern Africa.

Patricia E. Stevens, PhD, RN, FAAN, is a Professor in the College of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has done extensive research in the area of HIV/AIDS and is an expert in qualitative research methods and community based participatory research.
Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time, and is a major concern of the international community. The Millennium Development Goals set timebound targets, by which progress in reducing poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion -- while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability -- can be measured. They also embody basic human rights -- the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security.

--United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2013)

To advance the status of women and girls, address poverty, and improve the health and well-being of the world’s poorest people, the United Nations and partners around the world set forth the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the turn of the 21st century. This series of eight goals serve as a framework for development, and include specific, measurable targets for each goal, to be met by 2015. This paper will discuss research that has been ongoing since 2005 with HIV-positive women in Malawi and Kenya, and will provide insight into the health and social policy and the health interventions that are possible based on this research, which would help meet at least five of the U.N. MDGs: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health, and Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases.

Malawi and Kenya were selected as research sites to build on the rich strengths that two participating researchers brought to the team as natives of Malawi and Kenya. These researchers are familiar with the health care systems, cultural norms, and languages of their respective countries. While the studies that are the basis of this paper are limited to HIV-positive women in Malawi and Kenya, larger themes can be applied in other contexts to demonstrate that development, health, and peace are inextricably woven in a tapestry of interdependence where each is necessary to sustain the others.

Background

Malawi and Kenya

Malawi and Kenya are located in East Africa, and are both former British colonies. Kenya has a population of over 43 million people, and its GDP per capita is $1,800 (USD). While Nairobi, the capital, is a large metropolis, with a population of 4 million people, 78% of the country’s residents live in rural areas (CIA World Factbook 2012).

Malawi is a landlocked country, southwest of Kenya, with a population of 16.3 million. Its GDP per capita is $900 (USD), and over 80% of people live in rural areas. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, and in terms of health indicators, has one of the worst infant mortality rates in the world, ranking 213th out of 222 countries (CIA World Factbook 2012).

Poverty

Low-income countries, like Malawi and Kenya, often lack the financial resources to sustain an adequate health care work-force or health care facilities. Many communities in low-income countries lack clean drinking water, sanitation systems, food security, and the
transportation infrastructure needed for people to reach a health care facility. Poor health leads to missed days of school and work, or even death, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Exacerbating poverty, health, and development problems, fuel prices in Malawi and Kenya are among the highest in the world. In early 2014, for example, one gallon of unleaded gasoline was more than twice as high in Malawi compared to a gallon of gas in the United States (Mytravelcost 2014). Not only do high gas prices contribute to high food prices, due to agriculture and transportation costs, but they also contribute to poor health outcomes due to lack of fuel for ambulance transport.

Food insecurity and inadequate nutrition are problems in both countries and of special concern for women living with HIV, who require sufficient amounts of nutritious food in order to manage their illness successfully. The proportion of income spent on food in countries like Malawi and Kenya is much higher than the proportion spent on food in the United States. In Kenya, 44.9% of annual household expenditures are spent on food, compared to only 6.8% of annual household expenditures spent on food in the United States (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2012). In Malawi, the Centre for Social Concern found that in 2012 a family of six living in urban Malawi needed $106 per month to meet basic food needs, while the minimum monthly wage in Malawi was only $20. Thus, food insecurity and inadequate nutrition are a major concern. The effect of inadequate nutrition is obvious in both countries, which have high prevalence rates of moderate to severe stunting. The prevalence rate in Kenya is 35%; while Malawi has one of the highest rates of stunting in the world, with a prevalence rate of 53% (UNICEF 2009).

As previously noted, a high percentage of the populations of Malawi and Kenya live in rural areas, which also contributes to poor health, especially for people living with HIV. The World Health Organization has observed that rural people have poorer health than their urban counterparts. High poverty rates and limited access to education, medication and health care facilities are primary factors that contribute to worse health outcomes for people living in rural areas (Strasser 2003).

**HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rates**

According to UNAIDS (2012), the highest burden of HIV/AIDS is borne by sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, over 34 million people are currently living with HIV, and an additional 30 million people have died of AIDS-related causes over the last 30 years. Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have the highest prevalence rates of HIV in the world. Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than two-thirds (69%) of people living with HIV, but only about 12% of the world’s population (UNAIDS 2012). The current world-wide prevalence rate of adults living with HIV is less than 1 percent (0.8%) (UNAIDS 2012). In Malawi, however, the rate is 11%, with the southern part of the country experiencing rates as high as 20% (National Statistical Office of Malawi 2008). In Kenya, the prevalence rate is 6.2%, with rates in certain areas, such as Nyanza province, as high as 13.9% (NACC and NASCOP 2012). By comparison, the prevalence rate of adults living with HIV in the United States is only 0.6% (UNAIDS 2012).

The burden of HIV/AIDS exacerbates poverty levels in low-income countries, like Malawi and Kenya. HIV/AIDS affects many people in their most productive years (ages 15-49), thus
impacting not only the individual’s health, but also their employment and wage-earning capacity, as well as the overall development and economic growth of nations (UNAIDS 2012).

In addition, while there are national health care systems in Malawi and in Kenya wherein the government pays for most of the health care of its citizens, there are additional costs for people living with HIV as they attempt to manage and cope with their infection. Transportation to health care facilities, particularly for rural dwellers, sometimes has a cost attached due to the distance needed for travel. People living with HIV also require essential nutrients in their diet in order to maintain their health, which can only be purchased with cash. These might include cooking oil, fruits and vegetables, adequate protein sources, and multivitamins. HIV infection impacts people’s ability to work and to be productive particularly if they are subsistence farmers and their households are dependent on the crops that they harvest. This has important implications on food security for households in which there is an adult family member living with HIV. When the family member dies, there are also costs associated with the funeral and burial (Kidman et al. 2010).

Gender Disparities and HIV

Globally, young women are twice as likely to become infected with HIV as young men (UNAIDS 2012). This health disparity is striking in both Malawi and Kenya, with HIV adult prevalence rates significantly higher for women in both countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women 12.9%</td>
<td>Women 8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men 8.1%</td>
<td>Men 4.3%</td>
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Table 1. Adults Living with HIV by Gender (CIA World Factbook 2012)

Gender disparities and cultural norms in Eastern and Southern Africa increase women’s vulnerability to HIV. The patriarchal nature of society that forms the basis for gender inequality in much of the world has important implications for women in Eastern and Southern Africa where HIV is prevalent. Because women are often poorer than men, they also have limited negotiating power in their sexual relationships (Kako et al. 2012). They lack the power to negotiate condom use, and may experience sexual predation by older men (Mkandawire-Valhmu and Stevens 2009; Kalichman and Simbayi 2004). Women also have limited decision-making power on issues affecting their health including seeking HIV testing, treatment, and care (Anderson et al. 2008; Dahl et al. 2008; Dunkle et al. 2004).

These inequities underlie the complex intersections of HIV and gender-based violence in the lives of women. Violence against women and gender disparities have important implications for health and development at local and macro levels with obvious implications for HIV prevention and treatment (Jewkes et al. 2010). In societies where there are barriers to women completing their education, development can be impeded. Whereas when women are educated, their families and communities are healthier (Gakidou et al. 2010).

Violence against women impacts health, development, and peace both overtly and implicitly. The physical effects of violence are often apparent. The covert effects are less obvious, but equally devastating. In East African countries such as Malawi and Kenya, these might include a man forbidding his partner to get tested for HIV, or he, himself, refusing to get
tested (Mkandawire-Valhmu et al. 2013). Without testing and subsequent access to antiretroviral medications (ARVs), women risk their lives and at times the lives of their unborn children. Furthermore, without access to ARVs, women die, leaving orphaned children behind. Kenya alone has an estimated 2.4 million orphans, half of them orphaned as a result of AIDS. In Malawi, there are approximately one million orphans (UNAIDS 2012). To break the cycle of vulnerability that contributes to the spread of HIV, it will be critical for governments in Eastern and Southern Africa to prioritize addressing the orphan problem, and take into account the large populations of orphans in the region. Children with no parental support may be forced to relocate from their communities to urban areas in order to survive, where they could resort to a life of crime when their alternatives for survival are limited. It would naturally be more challenging for such children to become productive citizens who contribute to the development of their nation, which has obvious implications for peace and stability. The needs of orphan populations will have to be met as a way of not only minimizing the spread of HIV, particularly for vulnerable orphaned girls, but also to enhance peace and stability in the region.

Methods

HIV-positive women were the focus of our qualitative studies conducted in Kenya and Malawi. A critical ethnography was employed in Malawi (Mkandawire-Valhmu and Stevens 2009), while a narrative inquiry methodological approach was utilized in Kenya (Kako et al. 2013). The critical ethnographic approach allowed us to examine the circumstances of women’s lives in ways that empowered them, invoked social consciousness, and promoted emancipatory change in structures and processes of domination (Madison 2005; Thomas 1993). The narrative inquiry methodological approach was employed in Kenya, allowing us to explore biographical first-person details (Reissman 1993, 2008; Chase 2005), to elicit women’s experiences with HIV diagnosis.

In Kenya, narrative in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 women (20 urban and 20 rural), who self-reported as HIV-positive. In Malawi, 12 focus groups were conducted with HIV-positive women at four antiretroviral clinic sites, for a total of 72 women. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in the subject’s native language (Kikamba and Kiswahili in Kenya, and Chichewa in Malawi), and audiotaped for later transcription and translation.

A post-colonial feminist theoretical framework informed both studies, which recognizes a woman’s world that is situated within a patriarchal society (Gortner 1993). Central to the feminist perspective informing our studies is the idea that men, as a social group, have greater access to resources and hegemonic authority and exercise oppressive power over women. This hegemony is made manifest not only in the policies and practices of institutionalized structures, but also in daily interactions within human relationships. Applying a post-colonial feminist lens to this research allowed us to more fully understand the experiences of the women we interviewed, in terms of their limited interpersonal power in their relationships with men, as well as the larger societal structural forces in which these power relations are situated (Mkandawire-Valhmu and Stevens 2009; Anderson 2004).

We drew on the work of postcolonial feminist scholars such as Chandra Mohanty and Uma Narayan who advocate for the formation of strategic partnerships across race lines, class lines and geographic borders in an effort to address oppressive realities in the lives of women.
It is on this basis that we developed a multicultural research team with the capacity to work across geographic borders resulting in the generation of knowledge that would have important policy implications for women in both Kenya and Malawi. Our position in U.S. academia provides us with the opportunity to advance this knowledge through publication so that it reaches a broader audience and it can have greater impact in terms of policy.

Findings

Women and Children

The following sections are based on the narratives of women in Kenya and Malawi who participated in our research, revealing one of the major concerns for HIV-positive women as the well-being of their children. This daily concern multiplies when women think of the future should they become sick or pass away before their children are old enough to fend for themselves. Major themes that we identified in relation to women’s concerns about their children included: 1) protecting children from HIV infection; 2) valuing education; 3) desiring to live long enough to watch their children grow; and 4) coping with the death of a child.

Protecting Children from HIV Infection

Given the high prevalence of HIV in both countries, women expressed worry over their children contracting HIV. For some of the women, their children had already been infected through mother to child transmission. In that respect, concerns included keeping the children healthy, disclosing HIV status to the children and ensuring that the children did not transmit the infection to others. For other women, the concern was ensuring that their children who were not HIV infected did not contract HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Valuing Education

Without education, children are at risk for a lifetime of poverty. Women saw formal schooling as key to their children’s future livelihoods and well-being. Women also saw education as an important HIV prevention strategy. They believed that education, particularly for their female children, translated into more and better options apart from marriage at a young age, which in their opinion, would place their daughters at greater risk for HIV infection, due to societal gender inequities previously discussed. Women spoke of how they believed the education of their children would lead to a better and healthier community. As is the case with most African societies, community is an essential element and the well-being, sustenance and livelihood of the entire community is at the heart of most rural dwellers. For the women in our studies, their ultimate goal was the stability and livelihood of their communities. They saw their own health and well-being as being key to not only the well-being of their children, but also that of the entire community.

Desiring to Live Long Enough to See Their Children Grow

In order to fulfill their dreams of seeing their children complete their education, women believed that they needed to remain healthy and thus avoid death. This was an important motivation for women to remain adherent to their life-saving antiretroviral treatments. Many women spoke of how, when they were sick, children had to skip school in order to care for
them. In this case, role reversal occurred and children became guardians and at times household heads, particularly when the woman’s partner was not present or if there was conflict in the home. One woman from Malawi, for instance, said, “the child at home also had to know because she is a big girl. The first day she was sad, but after a few days had gone by, when she realized that I was getting better, she too was free, and she was even giving me the medication.”

The women thus made every effort to remain healthy as they knew that their health had direct implications on their children’s ability to complete school. A Kenyan woman, for instance, said,

since I was sick, I prayed to God and told Him to keep me until the last child grows to a point of being able to find something for himself to eat.

A Malawian woman said:

For me, I do have worries...Perhaps I will die early, my husband will get up and go back to his home. Where will my children be? These people with whom I do not get along....will they take care of these children? So I just pray hard that God should keep me until they reach an age that they (the children) can reason.

It is important to note here that children’s migration from rural to urban areas as a result of orphanhood can often lead to other challenges when the children are unable to cope in their new urban environment. Girls, for instance, are at risk for engaging in high risk behaviors, such as transactional sex, in order to meet their basic needs, increasing their risk of acquiring HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Migrating to urban areas also makes it more unlikely that they will complete school if they do not have a permanent home and guardian to supervise them.

**Coping with the Death of a Child**

As mentioned earlier, some of the women had children who were also HIV infected. Women whose children were living with HIV infection appeared to cope well as they spoke positively of their trust in the anti-retroviral medications that their children were also able to access. On the other hand, death of a child due to AIDS-related illness took an emotional toll on women. One woman from Malawi, for instance, spoke of how the death of her child had affected her to the point where she needed to start taking anti-retroviral medications sooner than anticipated because of her poor health, ”so when the child died, because of too much reflecting, my body wasted. This is why I started the medicine."

**Overcoming Socioeconomic Constraints**

In resource-limited countries, women living with HIV face great socioeconomic constraints because in most cases they lack reliable income to support themselves and their families. In Kenya and in Malawi, as in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, women bear the brunt of HIV because they are the most likely to be infected by HIV and also affected as caregivers of others living with HIV. To live with HIV, women need to find creative ways of meeting their socioeconomic needs for themselves and their families, while adhering to difficult HIV treatment regimens. Despite living with HIV, women in our study shared how they found hope
in mutual support. From the focus groups and individual interviews that we conducted as part of our studies, three themes were identified describing how HIV-positive women living in rural Malawi and Kenya overcame their socioeconomic constraints by strategic collective participation: 1) in social support groups; 2) with creative microfinance; and 3) through community engagement.

**Social Support Groups**

Women utilized social support groups as trusted spaces to safely disclose their HIV status. Disclosure of HIV often has negative consequences, including stigma, gender-based violence, and even abandonment. However, when women met in support groups with other women living with HIV, they felt safe to disclose their status and to share common experiences of how to better take care of themselves in order to live longer, healthier lives, and thus renew hope. As one woman described:

We started our group after we noticed that there were so many people who tested positive and that there was a need to come together to comfort ourselves. We are doing well in the group because we talk and share a lot. We remind people on adherence, taking the drugs the right way and we inquire to know how one is doing. That is what we do in the support group.

Women reported using support groups as forums for mutual support. They took pride in helping one another learn to live positively and cope with their HIV illness. Another woman said, “I came to know that many people have so many challenges, and at least I could talk to people -- we could laugh and at the end of the day, I could feel relieved.” In addition, by coming together, women were able to share life experiences and build on each other’s knowledge about living positively by sharing life stories. One woman described this experience as, “we come to know how someone is doing and we educate each other on how to take drugs. We also discuss what food to eat and how to come out of stigma.”

**Creative Microfinance**

HIV illness requires that women eat healthy meals, while also providing for their families. Widespread poverty compounded with food insecurity can threaten to erase gains made by increased antiretroviral therapy access in resource-limited countries such as Kenya and Malawi. To find creative solutions and address the socioeconomic constraints they face, women in our study described how they engaged in creative microfinance to deal with poverty and food insecurity. Creative microfinance hinges on women’s collective agency and included: Merry-Go-Round, income generation activities, and table banking.

Merry-Go-Round is predicated on the collective agency of rural women. When women come together, they value the collective effort of raising funds to assist one another, thus they formed Merry-Go-Round clubs within their support groups. These clubs provide women with an opportunity to pool together money during monthly group meetings. Women in a Merry-Go-Round group take turns receiving the lump sum collected each month. One woman explained the process: “money from Merry-Go-Round will reduce some of the problems in my home like buying books for that one boy there. The money has profit to us like even you can buy [tea] cups with that money.”
Income generation activities assisted women to improve their livelihoods. By coming together, they were able to learn new ideas about income generation possibilities. Women in our studies reported that they routinely engaged in collective income generation activities as part of their support groups. Women were able to articulate the important need to engage in income generation activities so that they could take care of their children.

During support group meetings, women were able to share fundraising ideas including rope making, basket weaving, soap making, and mat making. One woman concluded, “we educate each other through our experiences that we have and we make ropes, baskets and many others activities.” Another woman explained that women’s obligation to support their children was the greatest motivation for women to engage in income generation activities, stating, “in the group we weave baskets and mats using locally available materials. We sell the things we make and generate income for us to use to care for our children.”

Women also shared their ability to create a collective banking system that they termed “table banking.” In table banking, women lent each other money from a pooled collection. Those who borrowed from this collection paid it back with interest. Because “table banking” is built on trust among group members, women went to great lengths to foster relationships and trust among the support group members. As one women described, “after knowing each other well, we lend money to anyone who wants and she will pay back with interest; that is table banking.”

**Engaging the Community**

The Kenya study involved interviewing community leaders as well as HIV-positive women. The community leaders interviewed provided perspective on the positive impact that HIV-positive women had in engaging the community, reducing HIV-related stigma and addressing broader health needs in the community. Engaging the community was also reported as an important source of support for women to deal with socioeconomic constraints related to HIV illness. Community leaders, in speaking of the role of women in sustaining the economy of the community, commented that women were the ones who participate in food production activities such as small-scale farming. Community leaders were able to recognize the critical place of women, especially those who are living with HIV in their communities. As one community leader said, “women play a very big role in the community, being the mothers taking care of children and they are the ones who work on the farm.”

Community leaders also described the critical space women occupy in their community as peacekeepers because of their unique ability to work together to solve community problems even when they are not well, stating, “women are gifted in that they try to keep the family together. When they know that they are positive, they are advised to accept, because the situation cannot be reversed. The best thing is to try and keep the family in peace and stay together.”

Building on their ability to come together, women in our study were able to influence the community leaders to introduce mobile clinics in the communities in an effort to increase access to healthcare for women living with HIV. One community leader spoke of how women were influential in bringing mobile clinics to their area:

> With mobile clinics, we have so many right now. As a community, we sat down with medical teams and we discussed the need to have mobile clinics and the idea was good.
and it was taken in. So we have no problem these days as compared to before when people, especially women with children, from these far places would start their journey a day before so as to reach [the clinic] on time.

By engaging the community, women were able to take what they learned in support groups to the community level. Community leaders spoke of how they were able to partner with women living with HIV in their communities to encourage HIV disclosure as a means of reducing HIV-related social stigma within the community. One leader described how they engaged women to reduce stigma:

Actually what we normally do is that we come together with those women who are positive and hold seminars and forums and we call the community around and we come and sit together and we share; then they are advised of the need for testing and when they go for the test and they are found positive, then they are given the way forward.

By engaging the community on HIV-related issues, women reported being able to demystify HIV to help others know their HIV status. As one leader said, “we tell them that even if you are found positive, there is hope of living for a long time.” Another leader emphasized the value of women in demystifying HIV by openly discussing issues related to HIV in the community, stating, “another thing we are doing is that we are making it known that HIV is there and we need to accept them so that they may feel part of the community, and when we meet at the Baraza (community meeting), we educate the people on acceptance of the sick and not to isolate them at all.” Reducing stigma leads to greater willingness to get tested for HIV, which can help to reduce the spread of the disease. This directly correlates with the U.N. Millennium Development Goal to combat HIV/AIDS.

Implications for the Millennium Development Goals

Our research with HIV-positive women in Malawi and Kenya addresses at least five of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Creative microfinance activities, such as Merry-Go-Round, Income Generation Activities, and Table Banking, help women to improve the financial situation of their families, thus easing the burden of poverty within their own households and reducing hunger as more money becomes available for purchasing food. These activities directly respond to the first MDG: eradicate extreme hunger and reduce poverty.

Women’s social support groups helped to empower the women in our study, which addresses another MDG: promote gender equality and empower women. Given that HIV disproportionately affects women in Malawi and Kenya, in part because of the limited education and resultant opportunities available to women, being part of a social support group empowers women with the capacity to improve their own health and the health of their children and families.

Through the social support groups, women were able to exchange ideas and gain knowledge about HIV prevention and treatment. The women participating in the groups demonstrated an understanding of HIV prevention and the importance of taking medication to stem mother-to-child transmission of HIV during pregnancy and childbirth. By minimizing
mother-to-child transmission of HIV, fewer HIV-infected babies will be born, thus addressing the MDG to reduce child mortality.

In addition, by adhering to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment protocols, and having more funds available for a healthier diet through income generation activities, HIV-positive women who are or become pregnant, are more likely to remain healthy during pregnancy and delivery, thereby addressing the MDG to improve maternal health.

Finally, given the tremendously high burden of HIV/AIDS in Malawi and Kenya, it is imperative that we find cost-effective solutions to help reduce the incidence and prevalence of this disease. Our research indicates that facilitating support groups for women living with HIV is one such approach that has shown promising results, and responds to the MDG: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. It is also a program that could be expanded to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, at little to no cost.

Conclusions

The United Nations has been working with individuals and organizations around the world to develop a post-2015 agenda to continue the work of the Millennium Development Goals. The World Health Organization has urged the post-2015 MDG facilitators to realize a future free from AIDS (UNAIDS 2013). HIV/AIDS can be eliminated, if transmission of the disease can be stopped.

Currently, women in sub-Saharan Africa bear the largest burden of HIV/AIDS. Gender disparities and violence against women facilitate the continued spread of the disease. The scourge of HIV/AIDS impedes the development of countries like Malawi and Kenya by increasing morbidity and mortality rates of women and men in their prime earning years. In addition, orphaned children, who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS, may struggle to raise younger siblings by themselves and may not be able to complete school, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty caused by this disease.

The resilience of women who participated in our studies, however, offers hope and the potential for optimism through their capacity for self-empowerment, group social support, and economic entrepreneurship in order to improve their lives and the lives of their children. Our studies point to the need for women’s perspectives to be incorporated into development programs and healthcare interventions. Building on women’s capacity and supporting women’s initiatives are key to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Women’s perspectives on how to address the orphan problem in Eastern and Southern Africa will be critical to enhancing stability and peace in that region. Future development agendas will need to involve genuine partnerships with women to ensure that the goals that are set are indeed met. It is only by ensuring the health and safety of society’s most vulnerable—its women and children—that the world can be truly at peace.

Acknowledgments
The authors would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback that strengthened the arguments made in this paper.
References


Intercourse: Encouraging Inter-professional Dialogue and Collaboration

Margie Franzen and Lynn Van Airsdale*

Abstract

Models of care for pregnant women have historically described themselves in polarizing terms. Historian Judith Leavitt writes of two camps: “the ‘brought to bed’ in her own home to birth” and another, “drugged and ‘alone among strangers’ in an impersonal hospital” (1986, 196). Beyond the physical dichotomy of home and hospital, popular texts and academic studies continue with divisive rhetoric of either/or and persecution/revolution when discussing women’s options for maternity care. In an attempt to remedy this divisive tendency, the idea was born to literally bring different birth professionals to the table for food and discussion in order to foster familiarity and cooperation between individuals from different groups. It became a monthly dinner series titled Intercourse.

“Intercourse,” a series of semi-facilitated dinner discussions organized for birth professionals and based in Madison, Wisconsin, is a forum for peacebuilding. At the dinner, participants are openly invited to offer stories from their professional life and to listen without defensively “saving-face”; an occasion of mediated storytelling through “intercourse.” We define peace as a place of intersecting boundaries from which professionals view their roles as complementary instead of oppositional. The productivity of social/professional relationship is put into a theoretical framework to answer the questions: How do social encounters foster professional connection? How can individuals see themselves as part of a collaborative health system conducive to referrals and cooperation? To this end, we review academic definitions of inter-professional peace and relate principles of inter-professional relations and clustered connection to the discursive format of “Intercourse.”

Introduction

What does it mean to intercourse? In Merriam-Webster’s dictionary we find: “Intercourse: 1: connection or dealings between persons or groups 2: exchange esp. of thoughts or feelings: COMMUNION 3: physical sexual contact between individuals....” (Merriam-Webster 1996, 609). “Intercourse,” a social-networking opportunity for professional peacebuilding, makes use of this wordplay to engage the diversity of professionals working with birthing women in Wisconsin. How is peace and peacebuilding defined in this context and why is it important? Peace researcher William Eckhardt has explored the importance of cooperation between peace educators, researchers, and activists, and provides a very applicable definition of peace.

* Margie Franzen is a medial interpreter, specialty translator, and independent researcher. Lynn Van Airsdale is an acupuncturist and independent researcher. They are based in Madison, Wisconsin.
At all levels of analysis, ‘peace’ refers to an ideal state of either no conflict at all or, more likely, to some optimum degree or kind of conflict which contributes to the growth and development of all the parties involved...Some conflict may be essential, to challenge us to higher levels of growth and development (Eckhardt, 1988).

Bringing different birth professionals together potentially fosters trust necessary to productively turn topics of conflict and disagreement to paths of collaboration and growth. More understanding among practitioners may result in the improved quality and continuity of patient care.

Since June 2012, the authors have invited birth professionals to a series of Intercourse dinners in Madison, Wisconsin. After the inevitable chuckle elicited by such a request, the invitees cannot help but be curious about what, exactly, they are being invited to do. The play on words in the Intercourse title references the relational nature of the word intercourse, a meaning used less and less frequently in English over the years. So, in fact, birth professionals—doctors, midwives, doulas, acupuncturists, nurses—are also reminded that, while sexual intercourse is the bread and butter of their profession, communicative intercourse is just as important to building a satisfying career as a collaborative birth professional.

Intercourse, the dinner series, provides a playful yet productive forum where professionals working within highly specialized clinical boundaries may listen to the experiences of each other. At first glance it appears as a small social gathering of three to four invitees and their families, but it is, in fact, primarily designed as a professional peacebuilding opportunity. The dinner’s emphasis is on getting to know one another in a relaxed atmosphere, one in which semi-facilitated conversation interweaves professional experiences in order to potentially arrive at a deeper interpersonal rapport. Inter-professional connection implies some negotiation of boundaries, and the dinners enable a crossing over of boundaries through listening and discussion of professional experiences.

How are birth professionals unique in their need for an increased peacebuilding dynamic? What theoretical grounds in the peacebuilding literature call for increased professional empathy through social encounters? The theoretical matrix we have chosen to support our questions draws from the idea that people’s attitudes may be influenced by direct contact with others and by indirect contact resulting from clustered networking. After explaining how the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and the Small-World Hypothesis (Uzzi and Spiro, 2005) lend theoretical weight to the seemingly modest dinner series, we provide examples of collaborative outcomes to date. The professional productivity of a bottom-up, micro approach to peacebuilding complements other top-down approaches to inter-professional collaboration happening at the academic or institutional level. We argue that in-and out-groups have typified the birth professions and then offer Intercourse as a method for maintaining the utility of in- and out-groups while not having a division of labor which can result in tense working relationships. We suggest, based on our small sample, the potential for strengthening the professional peacebuilding goals using small social gatherings, with particular attention paid to the birth professions. In conclusion, we pose other questions of how the format of Intercourse as an intimate gathering might remain sustainable and credible with a professional hierarchy spanning clinic staff, providers, academics, and administrators. We also
ask: what outcomes are measurable and what follow-up, if any, would further the interprofessional peacebuilding born of Intercourse?

From Hungary to ‘Hungry’: Why Invite Birth Professionals to the Table?

Intercourse dinners began in June 2012 in response to a ruling in human rights law and the subsequent prosecution of a midwife in Hungary. Just one month before, in May 2012, several professional groups convened in The Hague to discuss repercussions of Ternovszky v. Hungary, a case brought to the European Human Rights Court in 2010. Plaintiff Anna Ternovszky went to court because her midwife Agnes Geréb faced criminal prosecution for attending homebirths. Geréb had attended Ternovszky’s first birth at home, and had been requested by Ternovszky that she attend the birth of her second child at home. It was during this second pregnancy and faced with the possibility of not being able to have a legally-attended midwifery birth at home that Ternovszky took her case to the European Court of Human Rights. Ternovszky won the case against Hungary and she was granted the human right to decide place and circumstance of birth. The Hungarian government, however, proceeded to arrest Geréb and disregarded the court’s decision that a country cannot “bring legal proceedings against healthcare professionals for supporting women in their choice to birth outside a hospital (Hayes-Klein 2012, 18).

The conference in The Hague discussing this case was unique in its inclusivity and breadth. Lawyers, midwives, ethicists, doctors, doulas and mothers shared the podium to voice various perspectives on the issue of human rights in childbirth. International in scope, the conference sought a “meaningful debate on how women’s choices can be respected at the same time that birth professionals are empowered to deliver care within the boundaries of their expertise and judgment” (Hayes-Klein 2012, 17). The conference’s webinar was disseminated widely, as was the conference’s documentary film Freedom for Birth in the months afterward. In Madison, Wisconsin, the webinar was made available by one of this paper’s co-authors. Midwives in Madison, Wisconsin, also hosted a film viewing with panel discussion. Notably, in both instances, attendees were midwives or those already active in one particular side of birth issues. Obstetricians, family doctors, administrators, lawyers, academics—all competently represented as conference speakers—were absent for the discussion on what consequences the Human Rights Court decision might have locally.

The question became: how to emulate the civil discourse among professional in-groups and out-groups at a more local level? How might gatherings welcome local members who do not immediately share common interests with the birth activist organizers, but whose professional colleagues are participating inter-professionally in global civil discourses on birth? Interweaving the academic literature on peacebuilding practices with sociological theories of inter-professional connection supported the premise that top-down discussions and international conferences are only one aspect of conflict resolution. In the birthing context, women and the birth choices availed to them depend also on the quality of trust and collaborative work happening at a local level.

Both keynote speakers at the conference in The Hague, midwife Ina May Gaskin and sociologist Raymond De Vries, are American and were chosen for their research on how the United States has grappled with contentious legal, medical and personal boundaries for the past
century. As Leavitt writes in her history of childbirth in the United States, models of care have been split between “the ‘brought to bed’ in her own home to birth” and another, “drugged and ‘alone among strangers’ in an impersonal hospital” (1986, 196). Leavitt’s descriptive account ends with the 1950s, though her book’s concluding thoughts bring the analysis to the present day:

Childbirth remains as it has always been, a cultural event as much as a biological one. Problems emerged during the middle of the twentieth century because the hospital acted to homogenize the birth experience and make it similar for all women. But childbirth cannot successfully be reduced to one kind of experience and at the same time satisfy the wide range of expectations women bring to it. The diversity that women seek will continue to reflect the differences of the women themselves. (1986, 218)

Thankfully, professional tensions between in- and out-groups of the home versus hospital dichotomy are not severe in Madison, Wisconsin. Women have access to specialized obstetricians and fertility treatments, certified nurse midwives hold hospital privileges at one hospital, licensed midwives run a free-standing birth center¹, state insurance covers home birth attended by nurse midwives, licensed midwives also offer home birth services, and family medicine doctors still attend the births of their women clients.

To move beyond general tolerance of legalized options towards true collaboration and referral among these options entails forging personal connections so that providers trust each other. The diversity women seek also touches on the racial diversity of mothers. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services (Onheiber and Pearson, 2012) birth professions face continuing racial disparities in maternal-fetal health outcomes, and so any diversity in birth options must ethically address how available options impact these outcomes. In September 2012, the Wisconsin Guild of Midwives, in response to the resignation of leader midwives of color (among them Jennie Joseph, a midwife who had spoken passionately about racism and reproductive rights at the conference in The Hague in May 2012) sponsored a full-day workshop led by the Groundwork Anti-Racism Collective entitled “Birthing Justice: Dismantling Racism, White Privilege, & Oppression in Reproductive Care Work” (Gretchen Spicer, personal communication, June 18, 2012). While Intercourse dinners did not specifically aim for each dinner session to be racially diverse, it did happen that midwives of color, students of color, and providers politically active in racial disparity issues have attended the dinners and participated through sharing their experiences. We argue that building momentum on improving maternal-fetal outcomes will hinge on personal and professional connections made among racial communities and leaders. Intercourse dinners operate according to the premise that social contact influences professional trust in a field where specialists rely on each other to peacefully provide women with a diversity of options.

¹ Since the first writing of this paper, the free-standing birth center in Madison, Wisconsin, has closed citing continuing financial problems and inability to break into the system of health maintenance organizations.
Building Peace, Building Professional Quality

Before discussing the concept of \( Q \), a quotient of collaborative creativity at the theoretical crux of why Intercourse is a powerful professional forum, it is worthwhile to establish what can be meant by \( P \), that is, peace and peacebuilding. The terms run the risk of encompassing too much as to become meaningless, as put forth by Cutter (2005) and Denskus (2007) in a review of the peacebuilding literature. A. Cutter, citing the UN Department of Political Affairs, enumerates the responsible parties in peacebuilding: “Effective peace-building also requires concurrent and integrated action on many different fronts: military, diplomatic, political, economic, social, humanitarian, and the many imponderables that go to make up a coherent and stable social fabric” (Cutter, 2005, 780). Her review of peacebuilding indicates that few implementable strategies exist. Local actors struggle with how to become “self-sufficient, in terms of developing their own capacity to deal with reconstruction and to rebuild their societies” (Cutter, 2005, 781). This seemed analogous to the incongruous situation of highly inter-professional efforts at an international level in the birth world, but continuing territorial miscommunication among individual providers of birthing support. Other literature on peacebuilding seems written for consultants or outsiders on how to resolve conflict (Cutter, 782). Yet, Intercourse was designed as a way for professionals to build rapport within and despite their role within their local birth community.

One important point taken from research in peacebuilding is: peace cannot be built where there is no peace to start with (Cutter, 2005, 783). Cutter also points out that a “lesson common to all the literature is the need for sustained attention” (2005, 783). In the birthing context, then, peacebuilding can be thought of as a process where providers, administrators and support staff feel invested in respecting the boundaries and expertise of each other. It is a process that cannot happen with just one conference or even with a few high-profile players inciting better relations. For inter-professional conferences to motivate improvements in birth choices and care outcomes, there must first be some degree of trust to discuss areas of disagreement. Intercourse was born out of a modest attempt to purposefully provide a place where this trust could be developed and where creative solutions to differences of opinion or knowledge bases might begin.

Intercourse provides an actual place of intersection where birth professionals can network. As Denskus (2007) points out, peacebuilding has turned into a “non-place” (656). That is, there is a void created between high-level conversations, like the one on human rights in childbirth in the Hague, and the lived experience of birthing women and providers of maternity care. Denskus’ work with UN efforts in Kathmandu – seemingly unrelated to the case of Hungarian midwives and Madisonian birth professionals - describes peacebuilding as “a lifestyle for a small community of global ‘cosmopolitans’” and as a bureaucratic “virtual world” (660). For birth professionals, the “global cosmopolitans” are the high-profile politicians or birth activists. The analogous virtual world consists of regulations and protocols regarding home-to-hospital transfers or regarding interdisciplinary protocols among specialized providers. Intercourse has indeed been able to provide a real space for the people creatively implementing such protocols in specific situations, so far with a midwife and nurse negotiating a transfer of care from home to hospital in Madison, Wisconsin.
The frustrations voiced in the literature on peacebuilding between in- and out-groups pointed us in the direction of sociological research on connectivity among diverse professionals in order to portray Intercourse as a theoretically valid exercise. Inter-professional peace is thus defined as increased respect for multiple ways of approaching birth, increased openness to birthing women about the options available to them and increased positive clinical outcomes for the diversity of birthing women. And, Intercourse is defined as a sustained space where these goals can be furthered.

Contact Theory and the Meeting of In- and Out-Groups

Bottom-up social contact among members of professional in- and out-groups potentially carry more peacebuilding power than top-down professional contact. The Contact Hypothesis, originally written to address post-war racism (Allport, 1954), serves as a theoretical basis for believing Intercourse dinners to not only be enjoyable get-togethers, but also a professionally productive series. The Contact Hypothesis has been re-invoked in the inter-professional relations literature as the hypothesis that “prejudice reduction would occur when members of different groups met on equal status footing to pursue common goals through cooperative interaction, in such a way as to allow the development of close relationships with members of the out-group” (Brown and Hewstone, 2005, 258).

Cooperative interaction and equal status footing present certain challenges to inter-professional contact. Professional conferences, for example, tend to be open to and attended by those already in the “in”-group. Conferences also do not ensure equal status footing, as the power hierarchy of authoritative voices of the organizers, presence of board members, and invited speakers influence how in-group members will choose to show their solidarity with their particular profession. This seems especially true of the obstetric and midwifery models of care, two professions rooted in a history of competition, collusion and collision. Its polarizing history continues to mediate present-day contact among these entrenched in- and out-groups, with professional pressure so strong that not even a respected in-group member is immune to negative peer-pressure, as related by this anecdote:

Several years ago, the distinguished Dutch gynecologist/obstetrician, Professor Gerrit-Jan Kloosterman, was invited to London to give a lecture to an international association of obstetricians and gynecologists. Kloosterman, Chair of Obstetrics at the University of Amsterdam at the time, was well-respected and well-known for his support of the Dutch practice of midwife-assisted births at home. He was in the middle of his lecture-an analysis of the Dutch system, which showed that the continued use of midwife-attended homebirth posed no danger to mothers and babies-when a strange thing happened. While he was talking, several members of the audience got up and left the room, noisily, in an obvious display of displeasure with his presentation. After he finished the lecture, Kloosterman and the president of the association discussed the small protest. They asked themselves, “Why doesn’t this happen in other specialties?” They agreed it would be unheard of for physicians to walk out in the middle of a lecture about cardiology, even if they thought the data were suspect. Protocol in the science of medicine dictates that disagreements about data be hashed out in collegial exchanges: One does not protest against data, one challenges the data on the basis of methodology or analytic technique. (De Vries 2004, 13) When in-groups gather, the pressure to
save-face and uphold association ideologies is strong, evidently strong enough in this case to compel members to disengage completely. Because conference formats in the form of presentations, power-points, and short question/answer sessions do not entail meaningful cooperative interaction, the option to disengage, reject or retain prejudices is within easy reach of in-group members.

Superficial contact does not dispel prejudice. In fact, Allport warns: “[t]heoretically, every superficial contact we make with an out-group member could by the law of frequency strengthen the adverse mental associations that we have” (1954, 252). Again, conference settings, while definitely useful for professional networking, are also limited in the contact they afford participants. In terms of time, contact is superficial – not sustained as prescribed by the peacebuilding literature - because it is brief and limited to the schedule decided upon by organizers. Contact organized in this top-down fashion also tends to be superficial along other dimensions as well. Attendees meet each other out of context – place, family, and hobbies – and within a promotional in-group atmosphere. In the example above, perhaps a lack of personal relationship allowed the members who walked-out to do something they never would have done to a personal friend. Or, perhaps their need to assert themselves professionally led them to react in a way they would not have done if they had understood better the overall culture in which Kloosterman’s model of collaborative care worked.

Working together on a consistent basis models how in- and out-groups may actively appreciate each other’s expertise. Again, such active appreciation of different bodies of expertise has been historically difficult for birth professionals. In what was called a “landmark project” and the “2011 Issue of the Year: Successful Models of Collaborative Practice in Maternity Care” (“Successful Model for Collaborative Practice, n.d.), both ACOG and the ACNM prized manuscripts outlining collaborative practices between obstetrics and midwifery. One of the finalists, in fact, depicts a Wisconsin community in “Marshfield Clinic-Eau Claire Obstetrics and Midwifery: A Successful Models of Collaborative Practice,” and is representative of other paper titles in which top-down infrastructures are described (Shaw-Battista 2011, 664). What is left unexplained is how trusting relationships are formed and sustained, a topic still particularly challenging across the birth professions, and, indeed, to peacebuilding ventures in general (McCroskey and Einbinder, 1998; Freshman, Rubio, and Reid Chassiakos, 2010; Skaerbaek, 2010; Barnes, Carpenter, and Dickinson, 2000; Hayes-Klein, 2012; De Vries, 2004; Hutchison, et al., 2011; Rink, 2012; Djoy, et al., 2011, Cutter, 2005, Denskus, 2007).

Studying the structure of care certainly helps implement cooperative goals and has also contributed to improved outcomes of collaborative practice (Shaw-Battista, 2011; Reece, 2006; Freshman, Rubino, Reid Chassiakos, 2010; Thistlethwaite, 2010; Thanhauser, 2010; Freshman, Rubino, Reid Chassiakos, 2010). Nevertheless, “the practice of medicine is not only improved by new and better science or by better systems of incentives, but by attention to the values and ideas that are at play in the structure and delivery of health care” (De Vries 2004, 244). In other words, top-down approaches to disseminating evidence-based practices or to structuring institutional boundaries only partially lead us to develop high-impact maternity care. The other piece of the puzzle lies in the social relationship within these boundaries, from the bottom-up, among individual agents of the values and ideas that De Vries mentions.

According to the Contact Hypothesis, neither “[c]omplete de-categorization” nor “loss of group identities for individuals” need accompany empathetic professional relations (Brown and
Hewstone 2005, 264). Intercourse dinners respect the human need to belong to groups and, at the same time, tap this need as a motivation to bring people from all professions together. Including professionals in this social invitee list gives them a non-competing group to which they may belong while also honoring their professional commitment. As Allport states: “there is a saving psychological principle that may be invoked if we can learn how to do so in time. The principle states that concentric loyalties need not clash. To be devoted to a large circle does not imply the destruction of one’s attachment to a smaller circle” (1954, 43). In the case of “Intercourse,” an intentionally smaller social circle, members of historically contentious professions may safely come and share the value and ideas they lend to the care of birthing women.

Interestingly, the confirmation of highly effective bottom-up, interpersonal approaches to inter-professional networking is not found in medical literature. And, as we have mentioned, even articles and prescriptions on peacebuilding have difficulties with moving beyond an institutional approach to conflict resolution.

**From Contact to Fully-linked Cliques**

The concept of the small-world is similarly popular, recognized by many in the song lyrics to *It’s a Small World*: “It’s a world of laughter and a world of tears, It’s a world of hope and a world of fears, There’s so much that we share, That it’s time we’re aware It’s a small world after all.” (Lyrics to “It’s a Small World” by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman). The truth of these lyrics has actually stood up to empirical rigor in Uzzi and Spiro’s sociological study (2005) and may partially be what motivates Intercourse participants to connect with each other.

Intercourse provides contact and is an organizing force between groups. It takes ‘small worlds’, of which will be defined shortly, and creates a place for different groups, or circles, to converge. This convergence is being shown to impact inter-professional dialogue, as well as patient care in the pregnancy and birth setting. The essential point is that all professional roles and experiences are invaluable to all aspects surrounding pregnancy and birth. Some in-groups do coincide in a single member; a Certified Nurse-Midwife, for example, may identify both with the in-group of midwife and of nurse. She may, however, feel quite apart from the nurse who works in a Labor Delivery unit of a hospital or from a Certified Professional Midwife attending births in women’s homes. The lesson is that opportunities for the coming together of different knowledge bases can result in increased professional connections and may support creativity in problem solving. It begins with the convergence of “small worlds”.

According to Uzzi and Spiro, a ‘small-world’ can be defined as a ‘fully-linked clique’, which is a cluster of people who know each other or work together on a project. Intercourse is an example of bringing members of these cliques together to form noncompeting concentric social circles, as described by Contact Theory. As “teams are combined into a systemic-level network, the global network is made up of fully linked cliques that are connected to each other by actors who have had multiple team memberships” (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 453). A large community made up of small cliques achieves connectedness and cohesiveness by “persons who are members of multiple clusters” (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 451). Team memberships delineated professionally – nurses, doctors, doulas, acupuncturists, midwives, etcetera – are examples of fully-linked cliques achieved through educational paths and subsequent professional
association. Pulling layers back further, these teams or groups “[are] both highly locally clustered and [have] a short path length, two network characteristics that are normally divergent…[which] has prompted researchers to speculate that a small world may be a potent organizer of behavior” (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 448). The inter-professional mixing of Intercourse is meant to organize different healthcare professionals who generate conversation and spontaneously exchange information. These intermingling ‘small worlds’ not only generate creativity and new ideas, but they also form friendly relationships, breaking through prior boundaries and generating a feeling of camaraderie.

Inter-professional collaboration impacts many, if not all professions. Indeed, though Uzzi and Spiro’s data specifically looked at Broadway musicals, “small worlds have been found to organize a remarkable diversity of systems including friendships, scientific collaborations, corporate alliances, interlocks, the Web, power grids, a worm’s brain, the Hollywood actor labor market, commercial airline hubs, and production teams in business firms” (2005, 448). The Intercourse group’s focus is labor and birth, and if birth were a Broadway musical, predictions of it’s artistic and business success would be measurable by the so-called ‘small-world’ quotient Q, a mathematical way of quantifying the small-world effect. In the language of Q, small-world networking depends on decreasing the “average number of intermediaries between all pairs of actors in the network” (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 453). Intermediaries, or friends of friends of friends of - is called the “path length” PL. Whereas, the fraction of a professional’s “collaborators who are also collaborators with one another” is called the “cluster coefficient” CC. Professionally, the goal is to increase closeness among individuals (that is, decrease the PL) and increase the common endeavors across professional boundaries (that is, increase the CC).

The closer the PL ratio is to 1.0 – where everyone is “best-buddies” - and the more the CC ratio exceeds 1.0 – where everyone is working on the same projects - the larger the small world quotient, Q, and the greater the network’s small world nature (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 453). Translating this to inter-group output, Uzzi and Spiro argue “that as the distribution of connections and cohesion across the small world changes, the likelihood of creativity discoveries should also go up and down,” and further, “structural and relational mechanisms by which a small world affects behavior suggest that when the small world Q of the network is low, the ability of creative artists to develop successful shows is also low,” and this is due, in part, to the importance of “between-team” links, that, as the intermingling of individuals from groups and groups between groups, the exchange and implementation of ideas increases in a parabolic way until things become homogenized. At this point the cycle starts anew, where different groups and ideas start sharing again to begin another cycle of innovation and collaboration.

The word ‘clique’ usually connotes a strong sense of inclusivity and exclusivity; the ingroup implies an out-group, but they do not need to be concepts suggesting an impenetrable boundary. Both Contact Theory and Small-World Theory refer to in- and out-groups, and the small-world clustering helps explain how contact actually forms ties among people who actually have not come, or who would not normally come, into direct contact with each other. Uzzi & Spiro cite Newman et al., 2001: “The ‘true’ clustering in a bipartite network is the clustering over and above the ‘artifactual’ within-team clustering, which is the between-team clustering or how clustered actors are across teams, a view that draws on the theory of cross-cutting social ties and community embeddedness” (2005, 454). The cohesiveness that can impact larger communities made up of many different groups is often due to individuals cutting across
member lines. It is suggested that if “at least one person in a cluster also is in another cluster, that person could create shortcuts between many people. This means that people and their ideas no longer have to travel along long paths to reach distant others because they can hop from cluster to cluster” (Uzzi and Spiro 2005, 452). Intercourse dinners have clustered professionals together in conversations about ideas, concerns, and related stories. Uzzi and Spiro relay it perfectly when they state that, “resources, ideas, or infection can rapidly spread or dissipate in social systems.” The key is to have open borders so that resources and ideas are encouraged to spread. When we separate or isolate, we dampen the natural flow of interaction between what appear to be different groups.

High-Impact Intercourse

Trudging out an initially catchy and creative idea too often relegates it to the status of cliché, overused to the point of losing its original effect and import. An analogous situation happens with professional cliques, and the lesson of Q is that professional collaborations benefits from networks which make it easier for new collaborators to find each other or for existing collaborations to import new blood into their group. Marginal benefits to small-world relationship increase to a certain point after which a higher Q lead to diminishing positive marginal benefits and even become negative. In this case, the probability of artistic or financial disappointment increases (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 488). On the other hand, too low of Q measure hurts collaboration more than too much relationship. That is, a professional world where no one knows who to collaborate with yields less collaboration than a professional environment where the same people tend to collaborate together.

Doctors, midwives, and nurses may suggest that institutional boundaries such as hospital reputation, insurance policies, or state laws affect collaborations in maternal care, especially considering the topics of papers submitted to the ACOG and ACNM call for collaborative practices (“Successful Model for Collaborative Practice, n.d.). Studies on Q have shown, however, that the relationship effect is robust despite these other considerations (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 488). Collaborative success hinges on a healthy mix of trusted relationship of established in-group members and of new, imported ideas from out-group members invited to join a network (Brown & Hewstone 2005, 330-331). Midwives, obstetricians and perinatologists work overbooked days of appointments and on-call schedules, often peppered with teaching responsibilities, various committees and board duties. Acupuncturists and nurses tend to be physically separated from the doctors and midwives, usually by clinic or department location. Moreover, the lack of personal contact with other birth professionals is shaped by a staunch professional hierarchy. Some professionals, such as doulas, interpreters, therapists or childbirth educators, work on an independent basis and so are on the fringes of larger top-down institutional collaborations. Subsequent study and review of Intercourse dinner outcomes, then, might ascertain whether they fulfill a connective role and support a higher Q among all these in- and out-groups.

Both Contact Theory and the Small-World theory offer explanations for why social interaction can be professionally productive. According to Contact Theory, the social nature of Intercourse lowers “intergroup anxiety” and motivates people who would normally just mix with members of their established in-group to initiate new relationships across disciplines.
Small-World theory treats social interaction as the conduit for an export/import exchange of ideas. “Just as conventions are learned and gather strength within networks of personal contact...innovative extensions often emerge when artists are exposed to other conventions...inspiring or forcing creativity” (Uzzi & Spiro 2005, 461). The theoretical link between managed intergroup anxiety and inter-professional creativity is summarized by Uzzi & Spiro’s phrase “safe experimentation” in Small-Worlds (2005, 460).

“Intercourse,” through shared story around the table, makes it more likely that a wider diversity of professionals can “lower the risks of experimentation” and more likely that professionals “see opportunities for creativity” (460). In this way, Intercourse can support high-impact collaborations by creating shorter path lengths among birth professionals, initiating more common projects among the participants, and then providing a social circle whose members feel comfortable with “hopping” professional cliques.

This co-authored paper, in fact, is an example of a common project born out of an Intercourse dinner. At the first one in June, 2012, the co-authors formed a professional relationship which then led to a belief we would co-research and co-present a paper together. We have also heard of examples of shorter path lengths among professionals. At one Intercourse dinner, a midwife who had been written about in spring editions of the local paper *Capitol City Hues* was invited as well as a Labor and Delivery nurse from one of the birthing Hospitals. It turned out that the nurse had read the article and had wanted to meet this particular midwife. After the dinner, the midwife needed to transfer a woman in her care from home to hospital, and it so happened that the transfer happened as this nurse started her shift. The midwife gave us this feedback on the benefit having an established initial relationship through Intercourse with this nurse:

I recently attended a client’s birth at --- hospital (a transfer) and saw Thy coming on shift. I instantly gave her a hug and asked the discharge nurse if Thy could be my client’s nurse. That initial friendship and relationship that was built over your dinner table, Margie, has resounding impacts on being able to trust Thy, know she will be kind and supportive to a client already going against the grain. It’s a rewarding feeling to be able to see other practitioners and providers in their place of work and know that we have shared memories and experiences. It’s helpful to know that I can come to a birth setting that I am not familiar with (the hospital) and trust that those who are familiar with that setting artfully and safely accept my clients and accept me into that setting. I know that I can do that with Thy, after Intercourse, after dinner, and after sharing oxytocin with her. (Tehmina Islam CPM, LM, personal communication, January 16, 2013)

Because this nurse worked solely in the hospital and because the midwife takes clients for home birth, the chances of them meeting outside of Intercourse are hard to predict. And so, this example demonstrates how Intercourse was able to bring together members of in- and out-groups together in a way that benefited a birthing woman who also needed to cross in- and out-group boundaries during her labor. This transfer was “creative” in the sense that Tehmina felt confident to advocate for who cared for her woman client in the hospital, a detail that is not included in standard protocol.

Anecdotes of relationships formed over the Intercourse table continue to unfold as participants take the stories shared and continue forward in their work-world. An African-
American nursing student, for example, whose midwifery apprenticeship had been sidelined because of logistical difficulties with her midwifery program, shared the table with a Madison midwife active in the Wisconsin Guild of Midwives diversity training this past Fall. She offered her midwifery practice as a way for the student to begin again to assist and witness some births. Again, this is not only an example of connection, but of creativity: thinking of how else midwifery students might seek out experience other than institutionally-based internships.

At a special international incarnation of Intercourse in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, the filmmaker of “Ik stond erbij” attended with an Amsterdam-based birth doula, who did the subtitling for the film. In the ensuing conversation, he learned more about the relatively new professional niche of birth doulas in the Netherlands, important for his work listening to how fathers view their supportive role in birth. In the feedback the birth doula wrote,

It was great to discuss Niel’s process in making the film. Also, the discussions around “birth and death” and that Niels (as was I) were surprised that they received some negative feedback about including the father’s discussion of miscarriage. It reinforces the need to TALK about birth, and death and not hide it away. (Jennifer Walker, personal communication, January 26, 2013).

The message that talking about birth and relevant experience such as miscarriage tends to be tucked away or taboo, suggest an additional value for “Intercourse.” Just as people tend to come together with others when intergroup anxiety is lowered, as suggested by Contact Theory, and just like creativity is bred out of safer experimentation, as suggested by Small-World theory, this lowered anxiety and safer story sharing bring silenced topics to the surface.

Conclusion

Inter-professional can be supported by peacebuilding efforts from top-down, institutional approaches, but our project shows that it can also grow from bottom-up, individual efforts. Both approaches coincide in the premise that adult professionals learn and cooperate better when they feel safe and supported to do so. And, in the birth professions, where historical tensions and current stereotyping tend to dictate how professionals respond to each other’s expertise, opportunities to engage in informal yet meaningful social relationships may better inform professional collaboration and referrals. Our hypothesis that social interaction has positive professional effects finds currency in Contact Theory and Small-World Theory. Qualitatively, we have also received supportive feedback from Intercourse participants to date, which suggest anecdotally that benefits of our Intercourse dinners align with the those found in both theoretical models. The conventional split between social and professional activity can be porous.

Introducing Intercourse dinners as a social-professional event series is possible in many communities, not just Madison, Wisconsin. This could support research and scientific evaluation of a broader sample in the future. A web-based social-networking platform to support Intercourse communications is currently being weighed for its pros and cons. On one hand, a webpage would help create an Intercourse identity among participants. On the other hand, social networking over the Internet may create false expectations among potential participants and detract from its spontaneous, social nature. Likewise, the dinners to date have been held in
the facilitator’s home and there is no charge for the meal. For the sustainability of “Intercourse,” it may make sense to finance it with grants and individual contributions, though this may take the dinners out of home and into a more public home-base such as a restaurant or private dining space.

As more Intercourse dinners are held, it will become increasingly important to see if participants benefit from relationships formed and use them in a peacebuilding and peace-keeping capacity in their professional work. Improving measurable outcomes, after all, carry much weight when determining how professionals spend their energies. Again, as with social-networking, any survey and feedback mechanism should not become burdensome because that would detract from the social nature of the series and may lead potential participants to decline an invitation for fear of creating more work for themselves. Also, positive outcomes may surface at different time intervals afterwards or in circuitous ways. Extensive data, such as that used in Uzzi’s (2005) discussion of Small-World Theory, is not currently available for the Madison group, and it is unclear whether such a quantitative argument would motivate more people to come to the dinners. Again, Intercourse aims to develop personal networks as a small, safe and social event series. As such, responsibly sustaining the event would necessarily need to respect the value in keeping it non-institutionalized.
Bibliography


Femme Fatale: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the
Societal Impacts of Gendering Language

Ciara Jacqueline McHugh

Introduction

Frantz Fanon begins one of his most influential works, *Black Skins, White Masks*, in saying, “We attach a fundamental importance to the phenomenon of language and consequently consider the study of language essential for providing one element in understanding the...[social] dimension of being-for-others...”¹ This phenomenon, which integrates words, syntax, and terminology to define and categorize the world around us, is important to our most fundamental being. We use language to navigate through the societal environment into which we are thrown as social creatures; yet, from time to time this language navigates society towards oppressive environments, such as acts of genocide. The term genocide was officially coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin from the Greek root “génos” which denotes birth, race, stock, or kind and the Latin root “cidium” which signifies cutting, killing. Article Two of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide further defines it as the “intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” and has subsequently included additional groups such as gender within the definition.² In other words, genocide takes place when one group strategically targets for destruction some “other” fundamentally because their identity has been classified as the “Other.” This process, from classifying to destroying, is what underlies the exploration within these subsequent pages.

Relying upon social theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir and Iris Marion Young, this paper seeks to delve into the role that language has played in propagating psychological and physical violence against women. In an effort to come to an understanding of the continuum of the detrimental effects rhetoric can have on society, particularly when it is employed in the service of targeting half of any given population as “Other,” this study will be a cross-cultural comparison examining the consequences of rhetoric. The paper will use two examples to explore the way gendering language has been used in political contexts: the Rwandan genocide and the U.S. political climate. First, this study will explore the anti-Tutsi rhetoric that targeted gender during the Rwandan genocide of 1994. In exploring the ways that an insistence upon the “Otherness” of women was used to instigate violence against an entire ethnicity, this article will lead into a comparison of the way the American woman is targeted in similar ways, albeit with seemingly less violent results. Through media and political examples of anti-feminine rhetoric in both cases, evidence of the destructive nature that oppressive

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language has in society will be made apparent. These subtleties will lead to an implication of the bridges between patriarchal oppression in cultural rhetoric and the grave results it has upon an entire population - relating especially to the most extreme type of oppression, that which manifests in genocide.

**Language, Gender, and “the Other”**

Humans are social beings. We act, think and exist in intersubjectivity, within a relativity that is inescapably part of the human condition and is manifested in our communicative nature. Consider the ways in which we describe ourselves: mother, student, cousin, police officer, friend, doctor, etc. These titles all point to the ways in which one relates to others; the words describe our social constructs: familial, institutional, societal. This inescapable intersubjectivity has required the employment of communicative tools used to facilitate our interactions with those around us; the most ubiquitous of these is language. We use language to express our own subjectivity to those with whom we interact. Language has become the cane upon which we lean in order to help us navigate the rocky terrain that is social interaction. Consider our world without language; to imagine a world without the power to communicate would be to see complete confusion, inefficiency, chaos and isolation.

As much as society creates, maintains and relies upon language, once used, this communicative tool has an existence and fosters consequences of its own. This is to say that as much as society affects language, so too does language affect society. Following Iris Marion Young’s multifaceted definition, “Rhetoric refers to the way claims and reasons are stated, and [it] accompanies all argument. I include in this category the affective dimensions of communication, its figurative aspects, and the diverse media of communication.”

Due to its ubiquitous nature, rhetoric shapes our perceptions of the world, especially socially, which leads to its powerful influence on our actions and interactions with others. We understand situations through predetermined frameworks that are formed by the words we use to describe our field of perception.

To make this ideology of the influence of language more clear, the effects of gendering language can be explored. Gendering language is a carefully constructed term in itself; it denotes the idea that language is an entity capable of inflicting consequences on human relationships and interactions: specifically those concerned with the idea of masculinity and femininity. The term “gender” promulgates the notion that the sex binary - man and woman - is naturally linked to social characteristics between each group - masculine and feminine. As noted by the feminist writer Kate Millet, “popular attitude...assumes these psycho-social distinctions to rest upon biological differences between the sexes, so that where culture is acknowledged as shaping behavior, it is said to do no more than cooperate with nature.” By extension, a necessary link between a “man” and “masculinity” and “woman” and “femininity” is formed, and confines individuals within these groups to these societal characteristics. The use of these words fosters the perception of the facticity of the sex binary, which is in fact an artificial

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construct rather than a reality in itself. Scholars note its artificiality in distinguishing between the two terms sex and gender. “While sex and gender seem to common sense inextricably bound together...the two realms are not inevitably bound in anything like a one-to-one relationship, but each may go into quite independent ways.” Yet, in reality the interactions between “women” and “women”, “men” and “men” or “women” and “men” remain molded by the tool with which they interact in the first place: language.

Feminist theorists have long explored the way in which language is propagated by and propagates this false binary in society. From an existentialist perspective, Simone de Beauvoir described this phenomenon through the term “The Other” in her work, The Second Sex. In the introduction, she states, “The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself... [O]ne finds the expression of a duality – that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes.” This sentiment highlights the fact that humans naturally do categorize entities around them, distinguishing such entities from themselves as the Other. However, this “Other- ing” is not an innate distinction within the division between Man and Woman. Rather, the sex binary is a socially created duality through language, and is not an innate facticity of our being.

Regarding this culturally manufactured sex binary, Beauvoir describes the societal experience where Man is posited as the Self, the norm or the standard. As a consequence Woman is left to exist as the Other, the lack or the inferior. This distinction is normalized such that it appears to describe a natural state rather than a creation of society. The result for women is catastrophic. If women are taken to be innately inferior, then treating them as such becomes “natural” as well. In his work A Rhetoric of Motives, Kenneth Burke notes the gravity of linguistic effects upon a population. He states, “The very...ideals of an “impersonal” terminology can contribute ironically to...disaster: for it is but a step from treating inanimate nature as mere “things” to treating animals, and then...peoples, are mere things.” This statement notes the simple jump that can occur between linguistic categorization and concrete tragedy. On the ladder of oppression, the first step is separating oneself rhetorically from another human being. After that first movement, steps towards hierarchical placement of groups and systematic violence against the inferior groups all come into reach.

Rwandan Case Study

The Rwandan society is one in which linguistic distinctions of various types have had grave consequences for group interactions. Although scholarship on the subject disagrees on many “facts” due to a combination of a blurry oral history and racially prejudiced biases, it is agreed that that within Rwanda, there have been three groups distinguished from each other by title: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Such distinctions had existed during the pre-colonial era; however,

9 Throughout this article, the terms “Woman” and “Man” will be used to denote the artificially created ideological gender binary. These terms are to be considered different from those of “women” and “men”, which simply denote the concrete populations that are subjected to this binary.
they were radically adjusted by European influence under colonial regimes in the late 19th and early 20th century. Prior to that time, movement between the groups had been relatively adjustable, and individuals were defined according to social function and wealth rather than strictly limited to racial bloodlines. “Tutsi” designated the wealthier class and included those with larger landholdings and more possessions — “Hutu” described the farming class who made up the largest percent of the population — “Twa”—the smallest percent of the population referred to the tribal peoples of the outlying lands.11 In the pre-colonial societal structure of the region, a certain amount of fluidity between groups existed. Although rare, gaining or losing economic wealth did allow for potential movement between these classes, meaning that a Hutu could become a Tutsi by retaining some land or a Tutsi could become a Hutu by forfeiting property. Therefore, one must “consider ethnicity in central Rwanda at the onset of European rule as underpinned by a class-based ideology” that was not purely equated with ethnicity.12

With the arrival of European colonialism, which began with German and transferred over to Belgian influence, the terms began to shift direction. In order to facilitate domination, the colonialists utilized and naturalized these once-fluid distinctions to divide and conquer the entire population. Classified as taller, fairer-skinned and from Northern African backgrounds, Tutsis were thus designated as being closer to the European ideal than their darker-skinned counterparts – the Hutus. This racial category thus elevated its members to political dominance. These linguistic identifications were cemented into place with the introduction of identity cards that everyone was required to have on their person at all times. While tensions between the two ethnic groups escalated, decolonization began to take place. The Europeans officially removed themselves from Rwandan territory, but the change was only physical. The psychological and political barriers, especially between the various groups, remained intact and proliferated.

As the decolonization process all over Africa moved forward, questions regarding the subsequent direction and leadership of the state echoed across the continent. In the Rwandan case, the past ethnic rhetoric had instilled a deep sentiment of reverse discrimination against the Tutsis. Upset at their treachery in collaborating with and benefiting from the colonizers, the Hutu majority saw their Tutsi neighbors as the enemy. The continuously swelling sentiment against Tutsi- and Belgian-domination climaxed into state violence after World War II. This resulted in the flight of many Tutsis to surrounding states such as Burundi and Uganda. A militant refugee population formed and named itself the Front Patriotique Rwandais, or the FPR. Conflict between the subsequent government, which was dominantly Hutu, and the FPR remained constant as the years continued until 1994 when one event tipped the country over the edge. On April 6th, 1994, while peace negotiations were occurring between the FRP and the government of Rwanda, the presidential plane crashed, killing President Juvénal Habyarimana and a number of other high-level political Hutus. Blame for the death of the president was quickly put on the FPR. Propaganda targeting Tutsis as those responsible for the “assassination”

11 This understanding of the ethnic distinctions is highly abbreviated due to this article’s length constraints. For a deeper understanding of the Rwandan history see, for example, Mahmood Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
subsequently sparked the strategic genocide of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and moderate-Hutus throughout the territory.

Although this anti-Tutsi targeting was spread through diverse avenues, including with the use of explicit language at political rallies and in governmental meetings, the most successful dissemination of anti-Tutsi sentiment was transmitted through propaganda meant for the masses. The Rwandan people had a selection of news sources available to them: radio and print, national and local, governmental and independent. Arguably, the principal source of such propaganda was the radio station *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*. The influence of this media source was vast, and the power the station held over the general public manifested itself concretely during the 100 days of the massacre in the summer of 1994. “Controlled and supported by key members of the government, the “hate radio” station *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (hereafter RTLM) led propaganda efforts through broadcasts calling for the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group. RTLM is commonly believed to have played a significant role in fuelling the violence.”

After the genocide and subsequent to international tribunals, scholarly and legal explorations have recognized the undeniable role that such government-sponsored media played over the course of the four-year civil war.

The Disk Jockeys of the radio station RTLM portrayed their show as an independent program for unbiased and accurate news. Claiming falsely that they were autonomous from government-sponsored stations, RTLM originally allowed both Tutsis and Hutus on their talk shows and refrained from using blatantly anti-Tutsi rhetoric. Since they did not distinguish themselves as extremists during the station’s early development, a loyal audience-base accumulated widely through the years. However, this façade was shallow and misleading. Any FPR soldier, moderate Hutu or Tutsi representative on the show would either be cut off when their views differed from those of RTLM’s or would be depicted negatively.

The station’s anti-Tutsi rhetoric became more unambiguous as conflict between the FPR and the government continued, moving from underlying tones of disdain to outright calls to violence against Tutsis. Anti-Tutsi songs such as those of Simon Bikindi would emanate through the radio waves, shaping the listening audience’s perspectives. The name *Inyenzi*, meaning “cockroach” in Kinyarwanda, defined the FPR and former Tutsi refugees, as despicable insects. This term appeared ubiquitously throughout RTLM broadcasts and their partner magazine *Kangura*, which cited the genetic incompatibility between the two different “families.”

The effects that this widely disseminated rhetoric had upon the Rwandan society were great. The most apparent consequence of their influence stemmed from a brief broadcast on

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the day that President Habyarimana’s plane was shot down. Seeking to elucidate the rumors surrounding the event, those who tuned in to RTLM heard confirmation of the death of the president. During the brief broadcast, all blame was immediately placed squarely upon the FPR, and the DJ signed off by saying, “They will indeed be struck by misfortune. And you have clearly heard that those who...desired and provoked it are themselves being struck by misfortune.”

After years of civil war, the entire population of Rwanda – Tutsi and Hutu alike – would have immediately understood to whom the term “they” was referring: Tutsis and Tutsi sympathizers.

The underlying connotations in these words must be explored in order to understand their subsequent concrete manifestations of violence. First, there is a transparent Other-ing occurring in the consistent use of “they”. The word “those” implies a definite removal of Tutsis from the Rwandan Self and a clear separation from the Hutu norm. Second, there is a false generalizing of all Tutsis, whether they were directly apart of the FPR or not, into the Other. Finally, there is an inherently understood call to violence against this Other in the expression “struck by misfortune”. Once separated from the Self, a movement to violence against that group was quickly facilitated. The undeniably violent impact of these simple words is witnessed in the fact that within days of transmission the massacre of thousands of the Other directly followed the broadcast.

Gendering language was also among such violent linguistic tools that were found on RTLM’s shows. The speakers on the show, both guests and DJs, consistently used the sex binary to disseminate their anti-Tutsi sentiment. This was accomplished through the demonizing of Tutsi women as well as through the feminizing of Tutsi men. Although RTLM’s DJs were certainly not the creators of the traditional, hierarchical understanding of the Man/Woman binary – where the former was politically and socially more influential than the latter – they nevertheless used its structure to reinforce ethnic divisions. The propagandistic language that RTLM perpetuated through its radio waves relied heavily upon pre-existing notions of the Woman as the Other. This reliance was apparent in their frequent use the term “brothers” to address the listening Hutu audience. Notably absent, was the word “sisters” to speak to the female Hutu population.

Yet, this gender-based Other-ing posed a problem. Despite the fact that the Hutus constituted the majority of the population, half of the Hutu population was still comprised of women. In order to account for this, RTLM regularly performed two gestures. When speaking directly to the situation of women, they emphasized a distinction in ethnicity. For example, although Hutu women did not seem to merit a direct address by the radio announcers, the Tutsi women earned mention on the radio through a negative identification. The DJs on RTLM consistently made generalizations about Tutsi women, using metaphors to describe them as jealous, controlling and conniving against men. There were also unmistakable innuendos of Tutsi women acting as objects of diversion for the FPR in Western relations. To discredit the FPR during peace mediations with the UN, representatives from the FPR were portrayed as “talking

nonsense, bringing along beautiful women of loose morals to use in their game of lies.”21
Women were tools in the struggle, using sexual powers to obtain their goals.

This overly sexualized and menacing portrayal of Tutsi women was reinforced beyond the
radio waves in the extremist, Hutu-controlled magazine Kangura’s cartoons and infamous “Hutu
Ten Commandments”, in which the first commandment states “Every Hutu male should know
that Tutsi women, wherever they may be, are working in the pay of their Tutsi ethnic group.
Consequently, [a Hutu man who associates with Tutsi women] shall be deemed a traitor.”22 In
both cases, the Tutsi Woman was not simply an Other who was incapable of agency; rather, she
was an Other that could only impact society in a negative way.

When making reference to the different “ethnic” groups, RTLM DJ’s also emphasized a
distinction according to gender norms. Parallel to the demonizing of Tutsi women, Tutsi men
were feminized, meaning they were brought down to the general lesser societal level of
Woman. In one particular emission in January of 1994, they attacked two government officials
by questioning their relationship to each other. During the show, Kantano Habimana, one of
RTLM’s journalists describes a time when he was speaking with Minister Bizimungu Pasteur on
the show. This case is interesting, as Bizimungu was Hutu, but openly supported the Tutsi FPR.
Kantano describes Bisimungu in relation to Minister Mazimpaka Partick, a Tutsi. He jokes,
“They’ve liked each other since a long time ago...One would think they are fiancés.”23 This is an
attempt to remove the two prominent officials from the group of Man so as to discredit their
very beings in the eyes of the public. By describing Hutu Bisimungu as the fiancée of the Tutsi
Mazimpaka, Kantano works to discredit their political authority. Beyond simply attacking the
Tutsi Man, this description dissuades any moderate-Hutus from sympathizing with the Tutsis,
since even a well-known Hutu politician can be marked as relating too much to the “Other”.

This “Other-ing” was not limited to easily identifiable political targets; RTLM
continuously presented dialogue that attributed feminine qualities to all Tutsi men. The DJs
twisted physical descriptions of fair Tutsi skin and tall Tutsi strides that were once associated
with power under colonialism into inadequacies that pointed to their weakness as men. Hutus
could identify a Tutsi when they noticed a “tall man... [who] walks very elegantly...[and] is very
proud”24 and has other attributes associated with that of Woman. RTLM lowered all Tutsi men,
by their appearance, from the level of Man –the norm– into that of Woman –the Other. This
minimizing and demonizing of both Tutsi women and men through gendered associations was
employed as a means of justifying the violence that was soon to come, where Tutsi men were
slain like animals, and Tutsi women were subjected to the most extreme forms of sexual
violence, which often also precipitated death.

The horrific scenes of these 100 days were not left unnoticed by the rest of the world; nations
around the globe watched and listened to the horrors that were taking place in this

21 Kantano Habiman, “PDF 0205,” Radio Télévision Milles Collines, 22 April 1994, pp. 18,
22 “Appeal to the Bahutu Conscience,” Kangura No. 6, accessed March 13, 2014,
23 Kantano Habiman, “PDF 045,” Radio Télévision Milles Collines, 06 January 1994, pp. 7,
24 Kantano Habiman, “PDF 045,” Radio Télévision Milles Collines, 6 January 1994, pp. 7,
small African country. During the conflict, there was much discussion on the rights and responsibilities of interventions by security forces in the West. Yet the reaction from most states was unresponsive. During the months of the genocide, after receiving intelligence of the deadly effects of RTLM’s emissions, discussions within the United States were held to discuss the jamming of the station on the Rwandan airwaves in order to stop the programs from reaching listener’s ears and furthering the violence. However, defense lawyers of the US cited that, “International law required the U.S. government to respect the sovereignty of the Rwandese Government by not jamming” the RTLM airwaves. Justifications for the lack of intervention thus rested on principles of state liberty. Ideals surrounding freedom of the press and freedom of speech restricted any action against RTLM during the genocide.

**U.S. Case Study**

This ideology of freedom that U.S. citizens revere above all others is a value that underlines social discourse and political structures throughout the country; a platform upon which social actions are decided. Yet, despite this reverence, American history is imbued with instances of societal repress of freedom and, thus, subsequent violence towards a number of social groups: Native Americans, immigrants, African Americans and, notably, women. Such oppression is visible in historical laws, such as slavery and land rights, and yet these examples are not limited to the legal political realm. The political oppression has always been fostered by the underlying rhetorical structure of compartmentalizing these groups within the American social structure; the lack of freedom has been justified within a long-employed language of Other-ing.

The American Woman has been identified as naturally and inherently distinct from American Man. This difference was fostered through linguistic channels that shaped perceptions of the group of Woman and its role in American society. From American political institutions to media rhetoric, Woman has been relegated to the status of Other, separated from the standard Self that is Man. Rodger Streitmatter explores this phenomenon in his work *Mighter Than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History*. He explains the how negative media coverage of the suffragist movement in the early 20th century, and in particular “the paternalistic tone that dominated late eighteenth and early nineteenth century magazines,” slowed the momentum of Women’s Rights. “Newspapers routinely referred to women in the movement by such degrading terms as ‘poor creatures’, ‘unfortunate women’, ‘old maids’ and ‘unsexed women’, while calling men involved in the movement ‘Aunt Nancys’” These are clear examples of utilizing gendered language to further marginalize the disenfranchised group.

Comparable to the physical consequences that followed Rwandan media portrayals, concrete manifestations of this violent rhetoric appeared against the women’s suffragist movement. Led by activists such as Alice Paul, peaceful picketing lines and parades in front of...
the White House were consistently met with angry public crowds, who often expressed their
distain through throwing stones and other objects at the protestors. However, the most acute
element of violence the suffragists endured was on November 15, 1917, which came to be
known as the Night of Terror: “Under orders from W. H. Whittaker, superintendent of the
Occoquan Workhouse, as many as forty guards with clubs went on a rampage, brutalizing
thirty-three jailed suffragists...According to affidavits, other women were grabbed, dragged,
beaten, choked, slammed, pinched, twisted, and kicked.”28 Despite this uphill battle against
vicious rhetoric and physical violence thrust upon them by media and political opposition, the
suffragist movement was ultimately successful in gaining the federal backing for universal
suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Unfortunately, however, Woman as the Other in society has not been brought to an end
with the legal success of the suffragist movement. Present day anti-Woman propaganda is ever-
and still works to instill in the American psyche an image of Woman as Other. Media
and pop-culture representations of the Woman are centered on portrayals of women as objects,
specifically sexualized objects. An example of this objectification includes the representation
of female super-hero characters, which – despite putting women in roles capable of subjective
action – reduce women to their physicality through the use of tight, scantily composed outfits
and through obliging them to require Man’s authority by including the necessity of a romantic
dependence. The presence of female characters in roles of subservience and of sexual appeal in
movies and television is overwhelmingly apparent. After having broken down most legal barriers
of oppression of the Woman, the remnants of Other-ing have moved into the somewhat more
hidden realm of propaganda.

Parallel to such portrayals of ideal “Woman,” an absence of the portrayals of women in
positions of authority is widespread in American culture. Consider a person discussing a general
job position of a politician, doctor, police officer or other professions that carry certain
connotations of authority. As a standard, one tends to use the subject pronoun “he” to describe
this neutral example in quotidian conversation. This subliminal subtlety is ubiquitous and thus
affects the psyche of society without their awareness. The result of such rhetoric is the omission
of female presence in society, which unconsciously disregards their social legitimacy. Such
unconscious preferential selection of “he” / “him” / “his” as the neutral example shows the
linguistic absence of Woman in positions of power, which overflows into reality with female
absence in powerful public positions. Frantz Fanon warns that the unconscious tensions that
exist within these subtle linguistic devices ensnare socio-psychological agencies and direct the
permanent values of human reality.29

When women do attain a certain level of power in a social context, response to such
upward movement is scrutinized much differently than the male experience. If one takes into
consideration modern day female politicians in the American government, the image of these
women continues to be based in their objectification. For example, two female politicians were
recently brought onto the American stage during the 2008 presidential election: Hilary Clinton
and Sarah Palin. In large part due to the heavy hand of the American media, focus upon these
two women was limited to a gendered binary. At one extreme, Hilary Clinton was attacked from

29 Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 24.
the perspective of being hyper-masculine. The media outlets relied heavily on rhetoric that did not focus on her actions or political leanings, but rather on her emotional and personal characteristics. Descriptions on her character such as “raging bitch”, “anti-family” and “liberal feminist” were highly prevalent in media discussions about her, and created a perspective where her womanhood was attacked in lieu of her political positions. On the other hand, there were moments when the media saw fit to designate her as more feminine than masculine by referring to her as “Mrs. Clinton”, designating her by her relationship to a man, rather than “Senator Clinton,” which would highlight her political status. On the other side of the spectrum was the hyper-feminized figure of Sarah Palin. During interviews with news correspondents, she was subject to questions during the campaign that were never asked of men in the same situation, such as those regarding her choice of hairstyle, dress or other physical characteristics. In both cases, the rhetoric surrounding each woman was structured around her as Object more than as Subject.

The danger in such media representation of figures such as Hilary Clinton and Sarah Palin is much more grave than the effects it might have had on their political campaigns. Attention to the way in which the media portrays these women is necessary, since “discourse about representation assumes that the person who represents stands in some relation of substitution or identification with the many represented, that he or she is present for them in their absence.” As women in positions of power, they were not merely assumed to be representing their respective political parties, but also the population of all women in general. Such females in positions of social power bear the weight of representing the American Woman, whether they intend to or not. Rather than being regarded primarily as a business leader or a political figure, society tends to fall into gendering language that focuses on their group membership according to the sex binary. Group representation then assumes that the person of Hilary Clinton exemplifies a generalized experience of Woman, for example. When the media discusses her characteristics, such descriptions trickle down into assumptions made of women in general. The danger as described by political philosopher Iris Marion Young is that, “Members of a gender...group have life histories that make them very different people, with different interests and different ideological commitments. The unifying process required by group representation tries to freeze fluid relations into a unified identity, which can re-create oppressive exclusions.”

Conclusion

Despite the many differences that separate the two countries, gendering language has dominated both Rwandan and American society. In the case of Rwanda, Woman was associated with the Other by linking the Tutsi men to the lower rank of Woman as well as objectifying and demonizing Tutsi women. Related rhetoric shaped perceptions to make the Tutsi population as the Other. In the US, there is also the frequent use of gendered Other-ing language, but in this example it is leveled primarily against the population of American women. In both cases,

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30 These two cases have been drawn from and are built off of examples from Miss Representation, directed by Jennifer Siebel Newson (2011; Ross, CA: Girl's Club Entertainment, 2014), DVD.
31 Young, Inclusion and Democracy, 123.
32 Ibid., 122.
gendering propaganda created concrete consequences for populations within each culture – personally, socially and politically. What makes this system difficult to overcome is the fact that, typically, those within the culture do not identify the propaganda as harmful, making it a silent enforcer of its ideology. When the structure of the propaganda is obfuscated from the public and is successful in shaping public sentiment, it becomes a difficult enemy to combat. Propaganda takes public perception by the hand and guides it blindly towards integrating its rhetoric into the quotidian life. The gendered ideology then seems to be inherently natural and undeniably true to its audience.

The rhetorical Other-ing of Woman in both the American and Rwandan experience manifests in concrete realities within each society. The gravity of the issue has been indirectly acknowledged in a number of ways, including through international legal trends to try initiators of propaganda in human rights violations. The most prominent DJs of RTLM were put on trial by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 2000 and were convicted for incitement of genocide and crimes against humanity. This verdict demonstrates international recognition of the effect that propaganda has on societal actions. One Rwandan genocide perpetrator acknowledged the radio’s role in saying, “The radio encouraged people to participate because it said the enemy is the Tutsi. If the radio had not declared things, people would not have gone into the attacks.”

Although placing full blame for the Rwandan genocide on propaganda is a dangerously far leap, a study by Harvard researcher David Yanagizawa-Drott claims that “9.9 percent (approximately 51,000 persons) of the total participation in genocidal violence was caused by the propaganda” such as that of RTLM. These statistics point to concrete evidence of Kenneth Burke’s above claim regarding the path between rhetoric and violence.

However, as previously mentioned, by definition, propaganda tends to be hidden in plain sight; therefore, such cases are not well recognized while they are taking place. Nevertheless, its concrete effects on society still exist. In the case of the present-day American Woman, most citizens do not acknowledge the presence of the Other-ing of gendered rhetoric that takes place on a daily basis. While much has been done to forward sexual equality, the reality is that percentages of women to men in places of power rest unequal. Undoubtedly, the portrayal of women in the American media serves to reinforce rather than undermine this situation. Moreover, this American case suggests that propaganda is not always a pre-mediated endeavor by an institutionalized actor. Rather a message can be so deeply ingrained in an invented perspective that it is taken as reality, and the perception becomes self-enforcing. It is clear that whether conscious or unconscious, gendered Other-ing has concrete implications both in the short- and long-term, as well as in institutional, interpersonal and personal interactions.

This paper has explored a gamut of detrimental effects to which the Woman is subjected through the tool of gendered propaganda. Although it has not delved further, other groups beyond women are just as much affected by gendering language, notably on men, the gay community, transgendered individuals, etc. Linguistically gendered toxins permeate deep into every pore of society, manipulating every aspect of social interaction. Since we are social beings, condemned to intersubjectivity, the effects of this situation must be further and continuously

34 Yanagizawa-Drott, Propaganda and Conflict, 2.
35 Yanagizawa-Drott, Propaganda and Conflict, 29.
explored. Beyond her work regarding Other-ing in our intersubjectivity, Simone de Beauvoir also gives us a complex hope for a pursuit of liberation from this reality. She says in her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, “The freedom of one...almost always concerns that of other individuals.” 36 Our own subjectivity remains inescapably intertwined with that of others’. “Man [and Woman] can find a justification in his [or her] own existence only in the existence of other men [and women]...I concern others and they concern me. There we have an irreducible truth. The me-other relationship is as indissoluble as the subject-object relationship.” 37 The bonds of the binary are rooted in other individuals around us; yet, so too must freedom from those bonds be found within our social intersubjectivity with each other.

37 Ibid., 72.
Bibliography


“‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14)

Revisiting Salem’s Critique of a Western Ideology of Peace

Muriel Schmid

Abstract

In 1993, Paul Salem published a provocative critique of the Western ideology of peace. He argued this ideology, shaped by Christian principles, had imposed on the non-Western world peacebuilding models favoring peace over justice. The current essay revisits Salem’s critique twenty years later in order to evaluate its potential in addressing issues related to the contemporary dialogue between Western and non-Western approaches to conflict resolution.

Keywords: Christianity, conflict resolution, Middle East, New Testament, peacemaking.

In his seminal essay published in 1993, “A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective,” Paul Salem provocatively argued that the West had imposed on the non-Western world an ideology of peace, rooted in Christian values, that led to the erasure of other paradigms for conflict resolution. Furthermore, Salem suggested that this ideology of peace had favored, in many instances, peace over justice and ignored deep socio-cultural needs expressed by other nations around the world:

[T]he Christian religion does specifically exalt the category of peace over, for example, other quite important categories, such as socio-political justice or obedience to a strict moral code. This exaltation—or over-valuation—of peace and blanket denigration of war and the traditional military virtues is, to a considerable degree, characteristic of the Christian worldview; but it is not a central part of the ancient Greek, Babylonian, Roman, Jewish, or Islamic worldviews. If Salem echoed an issue often debated among peace activists regarding the balance between justice and peace in conflict resolution practices, the specificity of his approach was to frame the tension between peace and justice as a specific Christian/non-Christian debate. The present article seeks to discuss Salem’s argument concerning the cultural divide between

* Muriel Schmid was born in Switzerland where she studied theology at the University of Neuchâtel. She received her MA in 1992 and PhD in 1998. She then taught for a few years in Switzerland before joining the faculty at the University of Utah on 2004, where she founded and directed the Religious studies program and developed research on religious peacemaking. She spent time in Palestine-Israel with the World Council of Churches in 2010. During the summer of 2012, she completed a certificate in Peace and Conflict studies at the European Peace University in Austria. In 2014, she left the University of Utah and accepted the position of Program Director with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Chicago (www.cpt.org).


Western/Christian and non-Western/non-Christian conflict resolution practices and revisit, twenty years later, his view that Western/Christian practices have favored peace over justice. Part of Salem’s argument depends on the geo-political context of the early 1990s and could not be written today in the same exact vein. Nonetheless, the fundamental element of his critique still deserves attention: is there a Christian peace ideology that ultimately undermines claims for justice?

In order to offer some answers to this question, three domains will be examined: firstly, biblical material, in particular New Testament’s passages, will be discussed, demonstrating that the concept of peace found at the roots of Christian tradition is undoubtedly paired with justice; secondly, a brief presentation of Palestinian liberation theology, which is deeply informed by the experience of the identity of Christians in the Middle East, will open new avenues to address the potential divide between Western/Christian and non-Western/non-Christian; thirdly, a closer look at Salem’s own genealogy of the Western model of peace will show that the ideology of peace is not so much a Christian paradigm as it is drawn from classical social contract theories.

As a brief prelude to these three fields of inquiry, it is important to note that 9/11 has deeply affected how we discuss the relationship between religion, violence, and conflict. More specifically, Christianity has been forced to re-read its past in light of a long history of religious violence, challenging a common assumption that Christianity has been, at least in recent years, fostering democracy and nonviolence. Moreover, Western society has had to address its prejudices about Islam in an unprecedented way and take seriously into account divided views within Islam about its interpretation and political applications. These two shifts have at the same time modified the perception of the role of Christianity in conflict resolution practices and it has become difficult to simply pit peaceful faith traditions against vengeful and violent ones; the dividing line has grown much blurrier than in the past.

**Biblical tradition and the concept of peace**

The scope of this essay does not allow for an in-depth exegesis of all relevant biblical material pertaining to the notion of peace. However, in order to offer a response to Salem’s perspective, it is helpful to look at a couple of important biblical passages and concepts that have informed the Christian ideology of peace he denounces. It is worth noticing at the same time that Salem himself does not refer to any of the foundational Christian texts in his critique, but only discusses an overall cultural Western paradigm that he attributes to Christianity. Textual evidence depicts a complex picture of Christian discourse on peace and by extension, of the reception of such a discourse in Western culture. Two very brief biblical passages from the gospel of Matthew will illustrate this complexity: Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers,

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4 All citations from the Bible will be made according to the New International Version.
for they will be called sons of God;” and Matthew 10:34: “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

a) Matthew 5:9 is one of the 8 Beatitudes attributed to Jesus in the Sermon of the Mount in Matthew’s gospel. It is arguably the most famous and most cited passage of the New Testament when it comes to its direct application to peace studies and nonviolent principles; as such it encapsulates the general sense that one of the main tenets of Christianity is peacemaking. In his essay on Jesus as role model in Matthew’s gospel, David Sim aptly notices:

The Matthean Jesus places great store in peacemaking (5:9), reconciliation and non-retaliation. Disciples are not simply to refrain from killing, but are to resist the temptation to become angry, to insult others and to call their brother a fool (5:21-22). They are also to reconcile themselves with their accusers (5:23-26) and not resist those who are evil. When struck on one cheek, they are to offer the other; when sued for one garment, they are to offer another garment as well; and when forced to go one mile, they are freely to go a second mile (5:39-42). Jesus demands that his followers must love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them as they strive for perfection (vv. 43-48).

b) At first glance, Matthew 10:34 stands in direct contradiction with Matthew 5:9 and it has indeed puzzled numerous Christian readers of the New Testament who saw in this saying a

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direct negation of Jesus’ nonviolent philosophy. Many interpretations, therefore, suggest a metaphorical meaning to the word sword, putting the emphasis on the overall peaceful message that Jesus proclaims as well as the direct textual context of this saying which addresses ideological conflicts. In this chapter of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus sends his disciples to preach his message to the world. After describing their tasks and responsibility, he warns them that many will reject them and family ties will be tested by their preaching; the sword, then, stands as a symbol of those dissensions.

The idea that Jesus would have preached physical violence seems unlikely in light of the textual evidences we possess (the few possible recordings of Jesus’ sayings as well as the main interpretations of Jesus’ message during early Christianity). However, in the Jewish context of 1st-century Palestine, his message would certainly have been controversial. The metaphorical reading of the sword seems therefore to be a valid and hermeneutically sound interpretation reflecting the controversial nature of his message. For the purpose of our discussion of Salem’s argument, the contrast between Matthew 5:9 and 10:34 leads to two remarks.

1) A broader textual inquiry into the Jewish textual tradition shows a possible correlation between peace and the sword. In his dissertation on Matthew’s Beatitudes, Charles Ray presents a detailed analysis of Matthew’s 5:9 that sheds light on the tension between peace and the sword. Based on a careful analysis of non-Christian textual sources, Ray reveals a dialectical relationship between the sword and the making of peace: the sword, symbol of the advancement of God’s reign (a reference that resonates with Matthew 10:34), will rest at the end of times when peace is made; at the same time, peace will be made only when the sword rests. This dialectics reminds the reader/believer that God is always the ultimate peacemaker. The full realization of God’s peace is eschatological in nature and depends on God’s manifestation.

2) If in Judeo-Christianity, peace is the ultimate manifestation of God’s kingdom, the participation of human beings in God’s plan is expressed by the theology of the covenant. This theology irremediably links the two concepts of peace and justice. In an essay discussing Moses as a political figure, David Rapoport reminds us that:

Contracts prescribe specific actions but Biblical covenants always seek to alter the mutual attitudes of the parties as well, establishing a fellowship animated by hesed, steadfast love and fidelity... The initial portion of the Covenant (The Ten Commandments) associates all moral behavior with an exclusive commitment to YHWH.

The covenant, which establishes a mutual and reciprocal agreement between God and his/her people, is grounded in the law given to Israel. All throughout biblical history, Israel is then held accountable and judged according to her fulfillment of God’s law, which generates an ongoing debate about the interpretation and the function of the law. The Hebrew Bible has

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conserved many traces of this debate; several prophetic voices (Amos in particular) constantly remind Israel of her duty and call to act justly. Thus, justice, harmony, and community are part of an interpretative process that shapes Israel ethical identity through the covenant.

When Jesus calls for a true obedience to God’s call and fulfillment of God’s law, he is one of several prophetic voices that demand peace with justice as part of the covenant. The last paragraph of this essay will discuss the fundamental difference between contract and covenant and how it may answer several of Salem’s points. But let us first briefly look at the basic tenets of Palestinian theological vision that challenges any Christian understanding of peace without justice.

**Palestinian liberation theology and its claim for a just peace**

Christian theologians in Palestine are formulating a Palestinian liberation theology. Its politicized reading of biblical themes opens numerous perspectives that are not limited to the Palestinian context, but shed new light on Christian political ethics in general. In the context of our discussion, it also offers a vocabulary to address Salem’s critique of a Christian ideology of peace.

In December 2009, Palestinian Christians published a *Kairos* document modeled after the South-African document from 1985, calling for the recognition and support of other Christians worldwide in their struggle for just peace. The document contains two important theological claims: it articulates a strong critique against Christian theologies that justify situations of oppression and it encourages Christians to rediscover the prophetic role of the Church as a way of challenging oppression and suffering. Palestinian liberation theology is at the heart of the *Kairos* document and puts at the center of Christian ethics the unbreakable link between peace and justice. In their stand for a Christian perspective that holds together peace and justice, Palestinian theologians need to tackle two main Judeo-Christian concepts: the status of the Promised Land and the role of Exodus as the exemplary liberation narrative.

a) Theology of the land: a full discussion of the theology of the land and its implications for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exceeds the purpose of this essay; however, this specific issue illustrates how the context of Palestinian Christianity demands a reexamination of traditional theological claims and invites Christian worldwide to revisit the fundamental link between peace and justice. According to Yohanna Katanacho, it is essential to address the theology of the Promised Land in order to establish a Christian standard for justice. As a Palestinian Christian himself, Katanacho interprets this discussion as one of the central tasks of Palestinian theologians and reminds his readers that it is essential to understand the Promised Land as a concept belonging to the theology of the covenant:

Some Christians argue that the state of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecies. God gave her Haaretz. But what about many biblical passages that teach that Israel must obey God in order to dwell in Haaretz and replace the wicked peoples who provoked his

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10 The document is available online: Kairos Palestine, [http://www.kairos palestine.ps/](http://www.kairos palestine.ps/) (accessed 03/20/14).
holy anger (cf. Deut. 28:58-68, 30:15-20, Josh. 23:12-16, or Ezek. 33:21-29)?... If the new inhabitants disobey God, then they will be scattered among the nations. 11

The theology of the land cannot thus be dissociated from the theology of the covenant and its ethical demands. Palestinian Christians insist on the necessity to reaffirm this hermeneutical circle and at the same time, they remind us that ignoring the fundamental relationship between peace and justice is in fact a perversion of Judeo-Christian principles. They openly denounce the “use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transform religion into human ideology and strip the Word of God of its holiness, its universality and truth.” (Kairos Palestine 2:4)

b) The Exodus narrative: current Palestinian liberation theology is revisiting traditional Christian readings of Hebrew Scriptures; in this process, the very notion of liberation is put under scrutiny and the traditional interpretation of Exodus as the model for liberation narratives is questioned. The daily reality of the Israeli military occupation does not allow Palestinian Christians to espouse Exodus as the testimony for God’s power to free his/her people from bondage and oppression; on the contrary, the Exodus narrative has a direct impact on Palestinian lives today and ultimately justifies their very oppression.

In 1988, at the time of the dissension between the Vatican and theologians in South America, Mark Roelofs wrote a provocative essay defending the vision of liberation theology against the Marxist accusation it met then. He insists on the fact that liberation theologians have not only “recovered the memory of Moses’ liberation of the Hebrew people enslaved in Egypt,” but also recover “Moses as the founder of a tradition that besides being religious is at once political and radical.” 12 Palestinian theologians are denouncing the contradiction between theologies of liberation based on Exodus and its liberation narrative that do not incorporate the radical elements of the prophetic biblical mindset and its claims for justice.

Before discussing further Salem’s critique, we can briefly formulate a first set of remarks inspired by the biblical and theological elements discussed thus far. 1) Salem does not go back to actual Christian theology nor does he go back to biblical texts in order to elaborate his argument; he bases his entire critique on a broad cultural understanding of Western Christianity that does not take into account the diversity within Christianity. 2) When Salem writes his article, liberation theology has spread to the Western world and the movement has brought to Western society the concerns of the oppressed as well as a desire for social justice inspired by the prophetic biblical mindset; Salem ignores entirely this tradition. 3) Liberation theology has found fertile ground in non-Western societies (and among minorities in Western societies) equating Christianity with a struggle against oppression and a quest for justice; Salem does not discuss non-Western branches of Christianity and their contribution to socio-political interpretation of Christian tenets.

Social contracts and the Western ideology of peace

Salem establishes a clear genealogy of the Western ideology of peace. Starting with the notion of *Pax Romana* and its imperialist vision, he identifies several steps of Western intellectual and political history that contribute to the construction of such an ideology. For our purpose, the politics of social contract will help us interrogate Salem’s genealogy.

Salem points out to the importance of social contract theories in shaping Western approaches to agreement and negotiation. Salem sees two explicit problems in this connection when it comes to conflict resolution. Firstly, Hobbes’ ideal of the agreement depends on the presence of a trustworthy enforcer; the postulate of such an enforcer is somehow tautological: participants are able to trust the enforcer if they already trust the process itself; this trust needs to be built over time. Secondly, Locke’s view of negotiation is predicated on participants possessing goods or personal rights that they want to protect; in a society where individuals do not have anything to protect or save, the motivation for negotiation is likely to fall apart. Salem’s perspective uncovers two important limitations of contract theories in their application to social justice. Salem’s critique of the social contract may deserve more attention today, in the post-9/11 context, than ever before. The common equation between Christianity and democracy has contributed in recent years to the widening of the divide between Western and non-Western political and religious values.

The model of the covenant, biblically rooted, stands as an alternative to social contracts. Gordon Freeman suggests that covenants present the clear advantage of being dependent on a pre-established relationship between all parties:

Covenant offers a different conception of polity. Although covenants developed in the Bible, the key to their presuppositions can be discovered in pre-biblical sources.

Covenant is an alternative to complete subjugation. For some unfathomable reason, it is to the self-interest of each party to enter an agreement establishing a relationship and exchange rather than to engage in power manipulation or subjugation. The individuality of the partners is legitimized and mutually regarded as more significant than the fear of chaos and the need for a structure to protect against it. Agreement and choice, for the moment, at least, have more to offer than simply protection.

Covenants are part of an ongoing relational process where parties are able to reach an agreement based on trust and respect rather than competition and fear. In the classical distinction between negative peace and positive peace, covenant can be regarded as a tool to implement positive peace and transformative collaborations. Thus, the covenant model can be translated into the following components in terms of conflict resolution:

1. **Self-interest**: based on the dynamics of the covenant, negotiation with an outside party is based on the community’s own needs; peace is never opposed to the needs of the community, but becomes the response to it.

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13 Strong voices have addressed critique against classical theories of social contract: John Rawls and his seminal study *Theory of Justice* for instance or Carole Pateman’s thesis that denounces the traditional model of social contract as an enabler of gender imbalance and sexual contracts.

2. **Choice**: the agreement is based on trust and reciprocal commitment; the covenant is only the sign of a trust that is already established.

3. **Relationship**: once an agreement is reached, both parties are mutually bound by the agreement; they have entered into a relationship.

In response to Salem’s critique, those three components could serve as guidelines to develop a Western model of collaborative peace that does not sacrifice justice.

**Conclusion: lessons to learn**

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the debate about the danger to separate peace from justice is not unique to Salem’s view of Western conflict resolution models; even among Westerners engaged in conflict resolution practices and peace building efforts, a similar debate exists. Salem, thus, voices an important and shared concern among peace activists.

In his little text, “The Meeting Place,” John Paul Lederach\(^\text{15}\) reflects on four concepts attached to processes of reconciliation and conflict transformation: truth, mercy, justice, and peace. Inspired by Psalm 85, he comes to the following conclusion:

[T]he primary practical and operative task of those working for reconciliation is to help create *the social space and the mechanisms* by which Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace can meet together.

Too often in the midst of conflict we envision these social energies as contradictory forces, voiced by different persons within the conflict. They are seen as pitted against each other. Those who cry out for Truth and Justice are seen, and often see themselves, as adversaries of those who plead for Mercy and Peace...

When these four voices are seen as contradictory forces, we find ourselves mired and paralyzed by the conflict produced. We argue endlessly over which is more important, justified or legitimate. When we see them as contradictory, we are forced into a false dichotomy of choosing between one or the other, as if they were in a boxing match of winners and losers. Such a dichotomy does not exist. It is as if we were asked to choose between rain or sunshine. Each is different but needed for sustaining life and growth.

Three of the same concepts are mentioned in the Beatitudes: peace, righteousness (justice), and mercy. The biblical tradition holds those values together. However, it may not be enough to simply go back to the biblical texts in order to address Salem’s concern regarding the imperialistic impact of a Christian ideology of peace. By ignoring the biblical tradition, Salem’s argument insists on the cultural internalized dimension of a Christian ideology of peace and its invisible ramifications. In so doing, Salem invites his readers to rethink the relationship between the text, its multiple interpretations, and its translation into actions. Lederach is an inspiring example of a peace activist that has taken up this challenge seriously; Palestinians theologians, too, articulate in a very unique way the necessity to read the text in dialogue with its various contexts of interpretation and application.

In an article published just 3 years after Salem’s, Mohammed Abu-Nimer\textsuperscript{16} charts the differences between Western and non-Western (in his case Middle Eastern like Salem) approaches to conflict resolution in a more positive way. He concludes his essay on the following series of differences that I summarize in the box below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Middle Eastern</strong></th>
<th><strong>Western</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate and spontaneous intervention</td>
<td>Legal system first</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go between</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public settlement</td>
<td>Private settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third-party authority as mediator</td>
<td>Collaborative decision-making process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third-party as respected members of the community</td>
<td>Third-party as professional outsiders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inside knowledge of the history of the conflict</td>
<td>Acquired (superficial) knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural and social notion of justice</td>
<td>General social norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of the community at large</td>
<td>Court system intervenes to put pressure</td>
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<td>Mediators with status in the community</td>
<td>Mediators with professional credentials</td>
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<td>Mediators emotionally involved</td>
<td>Neutral mediators</td>
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<td>Mediators are figures with power</td>
<td>Mediators do not have any specific power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validation through public settlement</td>
<td>Validation through legal system</td>
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Based on the results of his comparison, Abu-Nimer then draws two main lessons that each model can learn from the other approach:

The Middle Eastern approach can benefit from adopting the Western cooperative and collaborative problem solving approach. The collaborative/participatory process of decision making is crucial to reaching a lasting agreement. The intervention in the Middle Eastern context is based on a hierarchical system of mediators and procedures. Western conflict resolution approaches, on the other hand, could adopt the involvement of the community and society in placing pressure on the disputants to reach an agreement rather than using legal procedures which focus on sanctions and relate only to tangible resources rather than relationships.\textsuperscript{17}

Abu-Nimer’s understanding of the possible complementarities between Western and non-Western approaches to conflict resolution prevents the establishment of a strong dichotomy between them. Additionally, Abu-Nimer’s emphasis on the important role of the community in Middle-Eastern models of conflict resolution represents a good complement to Salem’s critique of the social contract, suggesting that social relationships and collaborations can be based on wide range of interests.

Salem’s critique still represents a valuable challenge for the West, especially the U.S., and its desire to bring peace to the world. As Westerners, it forces us to revisit the tenets of our


\textsuperscript{17} Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “Conflict Resolution Approaches,” 49-50.
ideology of peace and examine its foundations and ultimately wonder if the concept of just peace is part of our belief-system.

Works Cited


Cultivating Imaginative Citizens: Memorials’ Role in Peace building

Catlyn Origitano*

Abstract

Public memorials depicting men enshrined in stone, flanked by etched names or dates are ubiquitous in the United States and elsewhere as markers of memory. Newer memorials are beginning to move away from these tropes, which, for centuries, defined the memorial. In this paper, I will trace the transition in memorialization from what I call the imitation of heroes to imagining with the venerated. In order to demonstrate this shift I focus on the ways in which these memorials begin to individuate the venerated and require the visitor to become an active participant. Ultimately, my goal is not merely to point out this shift but to argue that this transition is important because it includes imagination in a way that has a powerful effect on the visitor.

Keywords: Imagination, Memorials, Monuments, Perspective Taking

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is currently collecting donations in order to add an Education Center adjacent to the 75-meter Memorial Wall. Included in the Education Center is the exhibit ‘Making the Names Visible,’ which displays photographs of 58,000 faces whose names are etched on The Wall. The purpose of this exhibit and the Center in general, is to transform the Wall that Heals to the Wall that Educates. This addition, as well as the explicit transformation in the purpose of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, can be seen as a response to an overall shift in memorialization. In this paper, I argue, using three exemplar memorials (the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe), that memorialization has undergone a transition in its purpose from imitation of a hero to imaging with the venerated. I see this transition occurring primarily through a recent focus on the individuals who visit and who are venerated. It is not merely interesting to note this transition in memorialization, but also, I argue, that the recent incorporation of imagination is a powerful tool for the cultivation and education of visitors as recent advancements in cognitive science suggest. Ultimately, then, as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial reforms or as new memorials are built, imaginative components need to be incorporated.

* Catlyn Origitano is a PhD Candidate in Philosophy at Marquette University. Her main areas of research are aesthetics and ethics, especially where the two meet.


3 The terms memorial and monument are often used interchangeably and, insofar as both refer to an object or space designed to commemorate a person or event, they can be. For my project I will use the two as synonymous and although I admit that there may be memorials or monuments that do not fit this prototypical definition, I am, for the time being, not going to venture into that side of the memorial discourse.
In order to show this transition in memorialization, and ultimately to make my argument, I will employ Kirk Savage’s work in *Memorial Wars* as a guide. In his book, Savage outlines the history of memorialization in the United States, focusing on the transformation of the memorial landscape of Washington D.C. Part of his work is the definition and description of different kinds of memorials such as the hero, therapeutic and victim memorials. I will use Savage’s classification of memorials to anchor my argument, first by giving Savage’s descriptions and then showing how a respective memorial fits his descriptions. These classifications will serve as markers of the transition in memorialization. I will add to Savage’s discussion by arguing that each exemplar memorial, of its respective classification, individuates the venerated and the visitor differently throughout time.

**Imitation and the Hero Memorial**

The Lincoln Memorial is a staple of Washington D.C.’s memorial landscape, drawing 6.2 million visitors annually. The Memorial was designed by architect Henry Bacon and dedicated in 1922. The monument was in various levels of planning or discussion since the time of Lincoln’s death, though construction on the Memorial as it is presently known did not begin until 1914. Though the Lincoln Memorial is one of the most recognizable U.S. memorials, featured on two forms of U.S. currency, it is not always identified as a certain kind of monument. I will argue that the Lincoln Memorial is a hero monument because it elevates Lincoln to a god-like status and because the purpose of the monument is to instill in visitors virtues to emulate.

Traditionally, hero monuments were reserved only for royalty or nobles who were venerated not only because of their social status, but also because why they had their status: a “divinely ordained social order.” In Washington, as there were no royals to memorialize, hero monuments took to honoring wartime commanders, either presidents or soldiers. Even though the U.S.’s heroes did not have the same explicit God-sent narrative, the hero monuments of the U.S. maintained many of the divine qualities. In particular, the hero monuments often transformed the portrayed individual into a god, and the visitors into worshipers who venerated and imitated the hero. The godlike status of the hero was often achieved through the structure of the monument: setting the figure high above the observer or larger than life. Additionally, the monument often removed the hero from his complicated relationship to history, or as Savage puts it, “[hero monuments] made no attempt to represent the historical forces or ideologies that had motivated these men” but rather “the statues simply glorified the individual leaders as

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6 Savage, *Memorial Wars*, 82.
7 Ibid.
exemplars of the nation’s continuing greatness.” The purpose of presenting leaders as godlike was a kind of imitative education; specifically that those who gaze upon the monuments should be inspired to emulate the virtues of these men. The memorials, then, were supposed to impose on visitors a certain ethos and inspire them to achieve particular virtues like valor and patriotism.

The overall size and layout of the Lincoln Memorial is the most prominent indication that it fits the hero classification. The Lincoln Memorial features a colossal size Lincoln seated on a chair, looking out onto Washington D.C. Lincoln’s statue is flanked by two small rooms that contain inscriptions of his Gettysburg Address and second inaugural speech. Savage describes the site as an “enclosed temple, dim and sequestered” and Lincoln as a “colossal effigy [sic] seated on a throne.” Lincoln’s position is much like an Olympian god in a temple: “His gaze does not return ours; his eyes look through us to the distance.” The inscription behind Lincoln’s head also explicitly calls the space a temple: “In this temple as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the union the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.” Even his words seem to be more than human; as Savage argues their length, unusual for memorials, transforms Lincoln’s speeches into “a biblical message.”

Further, the memorial removes Lincoln from his complicated relationship with history and attempts to present him as a hero of a very certain story, namely the story of unification. As the inscription over Lincoln’s head states, he is the man who saved the union. The memorial’s architect and sculptor specifically and strategically chose this story, of Lincoln as unifier, because they wanted to “shift away from Lincoln as emancipator to Lincoln as unifier.” Lincoln is portrayed, then, not as a complex human who struggled with decisions of emancipation and unification but rather as a savior of the Union; if not a god, then at least a martyr.

While the temple aspects of the monument certainly suggest it is a hero monument, hero monuments must also inspire emulation and veneration in its visitors. The Lincoln Memorial, with its focus on unification, certainly suggests a specific narrative that should be celebrated in the U.S.’s history, including virtues that accompany that narrative like being strong, coming together and putting aside one’s differences. In addition to its overt narrative, the memorial transforms visitors into pseudo-worshippers; after all, if Lincoln is a god in the temple, then the visitor is the ardent worshipper. Part of this worshipper status can be seen in what the visitor must do in order to read the long ‘biblical’ passages on either side of the statue. Savage explains, “To read the huge text panels on those side walls, viewers have to stand back and experience the full scope of each space.” Savage claims that this positioning creates an experience that is “extraordinary and authoritative,” namely, “The monument

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8 Ibid.
9 Savage, Memorial Wars, 211.
10 Savage, Memorial Wars, 218 & 219.
11 Savage, Memorial Wars, 223.
13 Savage, Memorial Wars, 223.
14 Savage, Memorial Wars, 220.
15 Savage, Memorial Wars, 220-1.
creates an actual, if temporary, community of readers, who must obey a particular decorum: who must stand at a certain distance to see the text panels in their entirety, which is not the way we ordinarily read." Savage’s description of the visitor as forming a community is important because much the same is said of those who come together to worship. Further, the idea of there being a decorum that one must obey sounds very similar to one’s experience in a church or at a worship service.

One could suggest that the reason for this religious language is not that the memorial is a temple to a god, but rather that it is closer to a burial tomb; people are obedient and quiet out of respect for the dead rather than reverence for the divine. I find this possibility rather unlikely. There are no relics of Lincoln; this is not where he is buried or where anything he owned resides. Additionally, people who visit the memorial, while they may form a community of readers, and certainly stand at the feet of Lincoln, do not necessarily behave as they do at a grave. Compare the way tourists visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the Lincoln Memorial: which is more likely to wind up as someone’s Christmas photo? There is a certain amount of reverence at the Lincoln Memorial but it is due the memorial being a hero monument rather than a burial site.

Although I argue the Lincoln Memorial is a hero memorial, Savage thinks that its classification is not so clear. In particular, Savage argues that Lincoln, as he is depicted and experienced, is not a god-like figure but that viewer’s identify with his human struggle. In order to make his point, Savage references literally the smallest elements of the monument and tries to make them responsible for overriding all of the god imagery: a “riot of curves” in Lincoln’s coat and hair and that Lincoln’s nose is slightly off kilter. These imperfections humanize Lincoln and reveal his struggles as a president.

The only other feature that, for Savage, speaks to Lincoln’s humanity, and which Savage dedicates the most time to, is Lincoln’s hands. Savage notes that the hands extend beyond the throne’s armrest, which he says then “compel us to move closer.” He also points out that at that time most sculptures put an object, like a pen, in a statue’s hands in order to make them look productive. However, Lincoln’s hands are noticeably empty and therefore restless. His final point is that if one tried to hold her hands as Lincoln does “you will begin to feel the subtle muscular stress that spreads up the forearms and shoulders.” This recreation of Lincoln’s pose by the visitor is supposed to add to her viewing of Lincoln not as a god, but a man struggling with a divided country. However, Savage ends his claim about the memorial’s engagement with visitors by noting, “[i]t will not occur to most viewers to identify with Lincoln at a muscular level, the statue beckons them nevertheless to make sense of its interior complexity, its restless pose.”

Further, Savage seems to acknowledge that the visitor gets very little out of the monument nowadays:

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16 Savage, Memorial Wars, 6.
17 Savage, Memorial Wars, 224.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
If we view it simply as an object meant to impart a lesson, we might easily criticize it for its lack of content, particularly its failure to represent emancipation in even the most cursory way. But this was not the way the sculpture was meant to be addressed, and to experience its force now requires some effort and will. Raised on a high throne, the colossal Lincoln holds a pose that is majestically upright, much like the Olympian figure Taft and Roosevelt and others wanted him to be.\(^{22}\)

Savage’s quote here is extremely telling because he seems to have gone back on his previous argument that Lincoln is shown as being restless in favor of him now being “majestically upright.” In addition, he agrees that Lincoln is venerated on a throne, like a god, a move that surely complicates one’s ability to see him as a human and to feel a connection with him.

Although Savage may be hesitant, the Lincoln Memorial fits all of the requirements to place it within the classification of a hero monument. Further, Lincoln, ultimately, is not individuated as a human being, but rather treated like a god; everything that made him human is replaced in favor of a unified narrative of a unified country. The visitor as well is encouraged to be one of the masses, soaking in the bravery and valor of their leader. The Lincoln Memorial, then, serves as an exemplar marker of traditional memorialization. It is from this starting place that the transition in memorialization can be seen in later memorials, such as the Lincoln Memorial’s neighbor the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

**The Therapeutic Memorial**

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) is a prime indicator of the transformation of memorialization, specifically from a hero memorial to a therapeutic memorial. Rather than focusing and elevating one individual, these newer monuments focus on a larger number of people and have a sense of healing to them. These two qualities are also present in the third type of memorial I will discuss, the victim memorial. The difference between a therapeutic memorial and a victim memorial, for Savage, is that the former still focused on the heroic aspects of those who died: “Male valor, not victimization, was the rationale for the monuments, and in that respect they mimicked the traditional rhetoric of the war memorial.”\(^{23}\)

The VVM, though not truly a victim memorial, is also not a hero memorial. Rather, Savage claims, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was “a monument that existed not to glorify the nation but to help its suffering soldiers heal.”\(^{24}\)

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was designed by May Lin and dedicated in 1982. The memorial is made of two large pieces of gabbro chosen specifically for their reflective

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\(^{22}\) Savage, *Memorial Wars*, 223.


\(^{24}\) Savage, *Memorial Wars*, 266.
quality. Together the pieces form a 75-meter wall sunken into the ground in a large V-shape. The Wall contains the names of service men that were either confirmed Killed in Action or remain Missing in Action from the Vietnam War. The names are written in chronological order starting at the apex of the two walls. Over time, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial moved from a single monument (The Wall) to a collection of monuments including the Three Soldiers Statue and the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. Although the monument currently may seem uncontroversial and a natural part of the D.C. landscape, Savage claims that, “No single work since the Washington Monument has done more to change the direction of the memorial landscape.”

It is considered transformative because it is the capital’s first war memorial dedicated to all U.S. troops who served in a national war rather than just to a leader or battalion and claims to include all the names of the U.S. dead.

Not only is the memorial different from its predecessors because of its inclusion of all the KIA and MIA, but also because of its explicit purpose, namely as a place for healing. The memorial’s statement of purpose claims: “The hope is that the creation of the Memorial will begin a healing process.” Savage argues that the healing aspect of the VVM is two-fold: “for the veterans themselves, who had endured not only the trauma of combat but a crushing rejection from society afterward, and for the nation that had been so bitterly divided over the justice of the cause.”

In addition to signifying a change from hero monument to a more therapeutic monument, I also want to add to the understanding of this transition by focusing on individuation, again, as it concerns both the visitors and the venerated. The defining feature of the VVM is the Memorial Wall with the names of the all the individuals who are KIA or MIA. The VVM more so, obviously, than the Lincoln Memorial but also more than other war memorials, attempts to pick out and focus on the individual in a real way. By offering time and space to the individual, rather than a leader or one battalion that helped win a battle, the VVM carves out a space for each individual. Further, unlike the Lincoln Memorial, those venerated are not lifted up to a godlike position. In fact, quite the opposite happens. The Wall in which the names are placed do not tower over the visitor but rather slope up to meet her. Further, the venerated do not offer a value or virtue that the visitor must identify and emulate; the story is not about the nation’s continued greatness and supremacy but rather about the real people who lost their lives fulfilling their duties.

The visitor is also encouraged by the monument to connect with and experience the memorial on an individual level. The first indication that the individual visitor’s experience is encouraged and valued in this monument comes from Lin’s own account of its purpose. She writes, “I thought the experience of visiting the memorial should be a private awakening, a private awareness of that loss” and further, that the memorial spaces were “places where something happens within the viewer.” The focus is now, with this memorial, on the personal experience that the viewer has rather than the inspiration of a collective goal or...

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25 Savage, Memorial Wars, 261.
26 Savage, Memorial Wars, 266.
27 Savage, Memorial Wars, 267.
28 Ibid.
virtue. Savage comments, “Despite the location of her monument in the heart of the nation’s capital, she insisted that the memorial encounter was solitary and private rather than social and collective.”

Another way the visitor seems to be more involved directly with the VVM is the way one interacts with the monument. The memorial, as mentioned, has a unique quality insofar as its stone literally reflects the visitor. The visitor then truly sees herself in the monument. This reflection is in stark contrast to the visitor at the Lincoln Memorial who is dwarfed by Lincoln, whose gaze never meets Lincoln’s and who becomes one in a mass of people. At the VVM, one feels that she, the visitor, has a place in history and a connection to not only the people who have died but also to this event. Perhaps because of the reflective nature of the stone, visitors interact with the VVM in a unique way: taking rubbings of names and leaving personal notes and mementos. Visitors, then, make for themselves physical reminders of the memorial to take with them or to leave after they are gone.

While the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is certainly different from the imposing giants of previous memorials, it is not the end marker of this shift in memorials and still maintains a number of complications of previous monuments. For example, it memorializes only to those missing and killed in the Vietnam War, but not to all of those who served. The VVM does not give a complete picture of the historical event or, at least, privileges certain veterans. In addition, as Savage points out, the definition of “killed” is controversial: the names included do not take into account people who died from exposure to Agent Orange or who committed suicide. In addition, as mentioned, the memorial is still valorizing the military man (although later, included monuments to women and men of color). Despite these issues, the VVM paved the way for future memorials that place an even greater emphasis on the individual venerated and the engagement of the visitor. One extremely potent example is The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (MMJE) designed by Peter Eisenman and its conjoined Information Center by Dagmar von Wilcken.

**Victim Memorial**

The MMJE, erected in 2005, consists of two levels, an above ground field of stelae (stone slabs, generally taller than it is wide, erected as a monument) and a subterranean Information Center. The field of stelae covers an area of 1900m² and contains 2711 concrete blocks. The blocks are of varying heights, which get taller as one walks toward the middle. The ones near the perimeter come up to a visitor’s ankles, knees and waist progressively, and their shape, at this point, is noticeably reminiscent of a tomb or grave plot. As visitors begin to move into the space, the slabs become taller and ultimately dwarf the visitor. Eisenman describes this experience as purposefully disorienting: “The uncertain frame of reference that results further isolates individuals in what is intended to be an

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unsettling, personal experience.” The memorial, then, becomes a sort of maze or labyrinth-like structure. One can only see a singular way out, the way ahead, and the exit always seems to be above. Adding to the maze-like experience, the ground is made of stones reminiscent of a cobblestone path. One must pay attention to where she walks because the small stones may cause her to stumble and the path itself does not seem straight because the slabs lean slightly.

The Information Center below the sea of slabs is smaller than many of the other Holocaust information sites in Germany but it is powerful. It consists of a number of different rooms, such as the Room of Dimensions which contains “diary entries, letters, and last notes that were written during the Holocaust;” the Room of Families, which focuses on 15 Jewish families who were victims of the Holocaust telling their life story; and the Room of Names where, “names and brief biographies of murdered and missing Jews from all over Europe can be heard.”

One thing to note about these rooms and the exhibits inside them is the way they try to focus on individual victims. Memorializing an individual does not seem like a radical idea, this is after all, the purpose of funerals and gravestones. However, the Holocaust, with its large number of victims, can be difficult to conceptualize on an individual level. Eisenman agrees, “an individual can no longer be certain to die an individual death, and architecture can no longer remember life as it once did...The enormity and horror of the Holocaust are such that any attempt to represent it by traditional means is inevitably inadequate.”

In order to represent the individual, Eisenman and von Wilcken utilize nontraditional forms of memorization. For example, the Room of Families displays and tells the stories of 15 families affected by the Holocaust. The exhibit allows the visitor to hone her perception and thoughts from 6 million to a collection of 6 people; the stories of each family then focus on each member, offering details about their lives, interests, relationships before, during and after the Holocaust. The displays of each of the families are featured on large slabs that come down from the ceiling. The slabs from above are then mirrored below connecting the Information Center to the memorial in a powerful way.

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34 Peter Eisenman, “Architect of the Field of Stelae: About the Memorial.”
Additionally, The Room of Names gives time and attention to each victim of the Holocaust. Although the visitor is unable to hear all the names (doing so would take 6 years, 7 months and 27 days), hearing individual names and stories allows the visitor to begin to see the Holocaust on a more individual level. This individuality is important for the visitor because it helps her imagine what it would be like if she was in that situation; if those were her family members or her friends.

Eisenman’s memorial and the accompanying Information Center is certainly a different kind of memorial than the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Yet, if one looks at the transformation of memorials and memorial spaces over time, Eisenman’s work does not appear as a radical break from traditional memorials but rather a result of an evolutionary process. Not only is the physical presence of the memorial different, the focus is as well. The Holocaust memorial is truly to the victim, and not to valorous military men. Along with all of these changes, I want to add that there is a change in how the visitor responds to the memorial. While Savage claimed that previous memorials wanted the visitor to be inspired to imitate the heroism and virtue of the individual enshrined, these victim memorials do something different; I argue they provoke the visitor to undergo the imaginative activity of perspective taking.

Eisenman’s memorial does something that the Lincoln Memorial does not and that the VVM only begins to do; namely, it individuates the venerated and encourages the visitor to be active. Individuating the venerated is a difficult task given the number of European Jews killed in the Holocaust but the Information Center takes on that task and accomplishes it. The Room of Families, for instance, by focusing on 15 families begins to make this mass murder more personal and focused. Each description contains photographs of the family as well as individual family members. It tells the visitor where they were from, where they were deported to and where they died. The Room of Families puts a face and a story behind at least a number of the victims.

One could argue that the Room of Families does just what any other memorial does by taking a select group of people and having them serve as markers for the rest. That might be the case if not for the Room of Names. Here visitors hear the names and short biographies of every Holocaust victim in both German and English. Individual victims are then given their time and are remembered. Further, this list does not only include those who died but also those who lived and survived the concentration camp system. Therefore, the MMJE, more so than many before it, venerates individuals in a real, meaningful way.

In addition to a shift toward venerated individuals, the visitor is also actively engaged with the memorial. The experience of the MMJE, for example, requires the participation of the visitor. She must walk through and immerse herself in the experience of the monument. She cannot merely stand back passively and take in the monument. The same can be said about a visitor’s experience of the Information Center. The information is on the walls and floors of the Room of Dimensions so that the visitor is constantly moving and readjusting herself in order to read or look at the notes and information. The Room of Sites has individual stations where the visitor picks up a phone and can press a number of buttons that have different concentration camps next to them. The visitor then hears, through the phone, the testimony of a victim, including her experience in that camp. This is a particularly potent experience and one that is very individuated: the visitor hears the personal story of a victim, and because it is over the
phone it feels, in a way, like a private conversation; as if the visitor is giving the venerated time to talk, to tell her story.

**Imagining with the Venerated**

As I have demonstrated, there has been a real shift in memorializing. Such a claim seems uncontroversial since, over time, many things, especially forms of art, shift. Savage as well points out a shift in memorialization from a focus on heroes to a focus on victims. I have contributed to this transition discussion by focusing on three major monuments that are situated in crucial periods of transition and added to the understanding of these transitions. In particular, I have shown how not only is there a change from hero to victim, but that the change can be understood in a richer way: the transition is also toward an individuation of the venerated and an active, engaged individual visitor. I think I have successfully shown this transition in memorialization but one could ask why this matters. I see this transition as being of the utmost importance because it is also marked by a change from imitation of a hero to imagining with a victim. This latter move, since it incorporates imagination, transforms memorials into potent tools of education. Before I discuss the importance of imagination, I will briefly address possible criticisms of my argument thus far.

One could argue that my choice of memorials is skewed in favor of my conclusion. In particular because the memorials are to entirely different things: the first to a specific man, the second to military members of a war and the third to a group of innocent civilians killed in a war. The topics of these memorials are so different that it is unfair to compare them to each other and use them to analyze each other. Yet, just because the events that are memorialized are not the same, does not mean that they cannot be compared. In fact, one must note the difference in what is memorialized as none of these memorials needed to be erected. What we can see in looking at these memorials is that there is a shift in public conscience over what should be memorialized from presidents to everyday humans.

Further, these monuments are not actually that different in what they are looking to commemorate. While Lincoln is an individual person, much of the reason that his monument was erected was to commemorate the unification of the nation after the Civil War. The expressed purpose of the monument was to shift the story of Lincoln away from emancipation and toward unification and the monument does what it can to put forward that message. The Lincoln Monument, then, is more than merely a monument to Lincoln but also to certain ideologies and events. The VVM and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe are monuments to both people and an event, much like the Lincoln Memorial. The shift is in which people and what parts of an event is to be memorialized. Ultimately, all three memorials are to people and events and despite whatever differences there may be in their content, they do serve as appropriate markers of memorialization throughout time.

As I mentioned previously, one of the main points of the hero monument was to give an exemplar to the people to whom they could turn to and emulate the virtues therein. I, then, need to justify my understanding of the more recent memorials as a turn towards imagining with the venerated. I should clarify that by ‘imagining with’ I am referring to a perspective taking activity. Perspective taking is the activity of mentally projecting oneself into the position of another. This activity relies heavily on imagination since one cannot actually put herself in other’s position. Perspective taking is not necessarily synonymous with empathy since, in
general, empathy concerns the recognition of another’s feelings. Perspective taking can include the act of empathy but need not: I could put myself in another’s positions and not recognize another’s feelings, but perhaps only recognize my own feelings in that position. That is, if I say “imagine what it would be like to be A” my imagined content might not be what A’s feelings actually are in that position, but rather feelings that I have when I imagine being in that position which could be entirely different from A’s actual feelings.

I want to suggest that memorials such as Eisenman’s encourage visitors to put themselves in the position of the venerated and that this is in contrast to the visitor’s experience at older memorials. The Lincoln Memorial, for instance, does not encourage the visitor in any way to put herself in the position of Lincoln and wonder about his decisions, or his responses to injustice. Rather, the visitor is, as I argued, passive and told what to think or feel, namely that this is a great man worthy of honor and emulation. In the VVM, the visitor is encouraged to be more active and to, in a way, imagine with the venerated. By giving the visitor individual people, through their names, the visitor has something to which she can anchor her imagination, some content to with which she can begin to imagine. She is encouraged to be active in a way that she was not with other memorials: to take a rubbing, to touch the names and to be a member of a procession. The VVM does not encourage complete imaging with but the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe does. By giving the visitor personal information and details about victims, the visitor is now able to imagine what it might be like to be in that position. By walking through the memorial, the visitor is now an active participant in the experience and the overall design of the memorial space is one that stimulates similar feelings in the visitor as those experienced by the venerated thereby, again, encouraging the visitor to imagine with the venerated.

The Power of Imagining

The idea that newer memorials encourage imaginative perspective taking is not merely an interesting point in the transition of memorialization but it can have a real measurable impact on visitors. Recent work on imagination in cognitive science has begun to reveal the real potency of mentally rehearsing activities. Many know that if one is faced with a big test or race that one should picture herself going to take the test or running the race; one needs to picture the beginning, middle and end and picture herself doing well in it. This picturing activity is supposed to help one when it comes time for her to undertake the activity. Recently cognitive scientists, like Ian Ravenscroft, have begun to reveal that this mental practice has a real, measured effect on the brain. In his article “Fiction, Imagination, and Ethics,” he argues that imagination possesses the ability to allow one to recreate or reenact mental states and in doing so can allow people to practice certain situations within their minds. This practice could then lead to ‘perfection’ when it comes time to deliberate or act in the real world. In order to support his argument, Ravenscroft mentions simulation model work and attempts to draw parallels between it and the role of fiction in moral development. Ravenscroft cites that pilots often train to fly a plane on a flight simulator before they can take over the reins of a real plane. He suggests that there are similarities with fiction: that it, like the flight simulator, will train one
for real life events. Others have supported this claim by reference to studies done by neuroscientists that show that imagining events and actually performing them operate similarly within the brain. Therefore, mentally practicing the event can be similar to actually performing the action.

Novels are most often the medium pointed to for this training work: when I read a book, I am imagining myself in the place of the protagonist and this imaginative activity is a practice for future events. I want to suggest that memorials can do a similar type of work. As I argued previously, memorials like the MMJE, encourages the visitor to take up the position of the venerated. A large part of this encouragement is that the venerated is at first individuated and treated as a human being. This individuation is important because without it the visitor cannot truly engage. If the other is a god, perspective taking cannot occur, at least not in a real meaningful way because I cannot imagine what it is like to be a god. If I am faced with imagining what it is like to be a member of the military, I can, with greater ease, perspective take. However, I have no information to help me with my activity, only a name. Being privy to not only an individual name but also a story or a family history allows me to perform this imaginative activity with ease. Just as one imagines with a protagonist in a novel she reads, so one can imagine with a venerated individual if given enough and the right kind of information.

Memorials, which encourage perspective taking can, similar to novels, serve as training for future activities in perspective taking. This training relates to peace building in a real way: if the MMJE can stimulate visitors to put themselves in the position of a victim of the Holocaust then she might be more inclined to see and stop future similar injustices. Additionally, memorials that individuate the venerated can build peace because often the act of de-humanizing and de-individuating people is a part of genocide. Jews, for instance, were likened to pests, like lice, and by doing so, the claim that the Jewish people must be exterminated fit the narrative. Jews were treated as horde of pests, not as individual humans and memorials that try to bring back that individuation can help correct the dehumanization of genocide.

Further, the engagement of the visitor itself can be helpful for peace building. If the individual visitor is encouraged to engage with the monument, she is, in a way, encouraged to engage with history. Events are no longer static things that occurred to other people at a different time, but now become dynamic and living. If the individual feels a part of history in some meaningful way, she may be more invested in the future; she may see her actions as directly contributing to history.

Looking Forward

Technology is helping push this individuation and interactivity to new levels. The most recent development in Holocaust memorialization is taking this interactive element to places not yet seen. For example, USC scientists are working on Holocaust holograms that attempt to preserve history, teach about what occurred, but more importantly, include perspective taking and engagement in an entirely different way. These holograms are a product of New

Dimensions in Testimony, a “high-tech initiative to record survivors’ first-person accounts for interactive 3D exhibits that live on long after the storytellers have passed.” The hologram allows a Holocaust survivor to tell his or her story, but then also, thanks to Siri-style natural-language technology, allows observers to ask questions that trigger relevant, spoken answers.

This example, and others like it, clearly indicates a desire for memorials to transcend their status quo of markers of memory. Rather, there is a movement to include features that require visitors to enter into the perspectives of those involved in the Holocaust and thereby become pseudo-participants. This shift to incorporate perspective taking as a tool of education is not only being employed in newer memorials but also to update older ones. For example, According to a 2011 New York Times interview entitled “Auschwitz Shifts from Memorializing to Teaching,” the Auschwitz museum and its directors are currently involved the movement away from the standard memorialization and toward that of education and engagement with its visitors. Therefore, as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial undergoes its shift toward education, it should incorporate the individual insofar as doing so can encourage visitors to imagine with the venerated. This imagining with is a powerful tool of education, not only for what happened in the past but also for what should not happen in the future.

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39 A special thanks to Marquette University for awarding me the Smith Family Fellowship for the 2013-14 academic year which afforded me the opportunity to travel to these monuments in order to conduct research and to Matthew Ross for his helpful insights and suggestions.


Teaching War and Peace in Bosnia: The Liberal Arts and the Uses of Critical Empathy

A Course Description

Karl F. Bahm
Khalil Dokhanchi

Introduction

This paper is about our attempt as an historian and a political scientist to develop a study abroad program dealing with the theme of war and peace. As academics, we knew well the value of books and traditional, classroom-based intellectual inquiry. But we were also well aware of their limitations, and thought a visit to a region that had recently experienced war and was currently attempting to build a lasting peace would provide invaluable additional understanding to our students. One of us is a specialist in international relations and peace studies with particular expertise in land-mine issues; the other is a specialist in Eastern European history with a particular focus on ethnic identity and inter-ethnic conflict. A colleague at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, Judy Dwyer, was a social worker who worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Zagreb, Croatia during the Bosnian war. As we sat talking one day in 2001 and put all of our experiences and skills together, we thought: why don’t we take students to Bosnia? Neither of us had ever developed such a course before, or for that matter had ever even heard of such a war-focused study abroad course. But, perhaps more akin to fools than angels, we went ahead.

Over the past twelve years we have travelled with students to Bosnia and Hercegovina eight different times. They have been profoundly successful and transformative experiences—not only for the students, but for us as well. What we have learned is that in order to fully understand these kinds of wars—not just why they happen and how they can be prevented or responded to once begun, but also what is truly lost in such conflicts, why they matter—students need to be able to empathize, to identify with the whole variety of identities at play in the conflict: not only this ethnic group and that ethnic group, but also victim and aggressor, participant and bystander, men and women, and government and governed. And it also means going beyond the roles and identities as they are deployed and shaped in war-time, to also understand and appreciate the social and cultural structures before and apart from the hostilities—to really understand the war, one must know the peace as well.

This faculty of academically informed, critical empathy, we believe, is at the core of the idea of the Liberal Arts, and something that is sorely lacking in today’s society, even in today’s universities. A recent study by the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research has revealed that over the past three decades, American college students’ ability to empathize has been steadily declining; dramatically so since 2000.¹ The growing inability to imagine others’

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points of view and to feel and respond to others’ problems—two of the key indices measured by the Michigan study—has obvious negative implications for the goal of teaching about war and peace, and enabling students to effectively engage in issues of war and peace.

But it has been our experience that it is precisely the teaching of such things, particularly when students can be physically brought into societies struggling with the after-effects of civil war, poverty, racism, hatred, or other forms of social dysfunction, that can help reverse the empathy deficit. Most specifically, we feel that it is the intellectual and ethical confusion into which students are plunged in such places that can have the most salutary effect; when they are required to negotiate for themselves, without overweening professorial instruction, the conflicting values and identities that make such problems so notoriously difficult to resolve. Putting the students into situations in these kinds of societies, where they are essentially forced to experience the issues from all perspectives—not simply to intellectually understand those perspectives but to the extent possible to viscerally feel for themselves the conflicting attachments, hopes, fears and resentments of the various identity categories, and especially the conflicting pulls on their loyalties—quickly creates profound confusion and frustration within American students, for it runs completely counter to the popular media’s predilection, and the students’ own desire, for simple us-them, good guy-bad guy, black-white dichotomies. But this confusion, we discovered rather accidentally, can be profoundly productive for the students’ learning. On the simplest level, it drives home the reality of the complicated messiness of war. But beyond that, it forces the students to construct their own narratives, based on their own experiences, about what is involved in this history, and what it means. This is also, it is worth adding, the very core idea of the Liberal Arts—from the Latin liber, meaning “one who is free.” Rather than mere instruction in what to know in an intellectually neutral, purely analytical way, the goal of a Liberal Arts education is to free the students to construct their own knowledge out of their own experiences and empathetic interventions in the world—to not only know, but to feel and care. We have structured the War and Peace in Bosnia course in a way designed, we hope, to facilitate critical empathy and so encourage not only a better, truer understanding of what happened in that country in the 1990s, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, to help create a more promising foundation for engaging in peace and social justice work back in the students’ own countries and communities.

What follows is not so much a theoretical argument, as simply a practical description of our course. We begin with a discussion of the challenges we have faced, assumptions we have encountered in teaching about war and peace, and the resulting purposes we had in mind as we set out to develop the Bosnia course. We then move on to describe the courses we developed—a spring, on-campus orientation course and the summer study abroad course—to try to serve those purposes. In so doing we also try to bring attention to our learning curve—what we’ve learned, hiccups we’ve encountered, changes and adaptations we’ve made over the years.

Challenges in Teaching War & Peace

One common belief that we often encounter among students is that wars occur not so much because of any specific human action, but rather because ‘human nature’ dictates that wars will periodically occur. The effort to understand and prevent war, in this view, becomes a futile exercise in bleeding-heart naïveté. Wars simply happen. But whether or not wars are ultimately preventable or an ineradicable part of the human experience, it remains true that wars are not the only human activity. They occur at certain specific historical junctures, and not at others. They are therefore as susceptible to intellectual analysis and explanation as anything else in the human experience. Why now, and not then? Why here, and not there? We wanted students to learn to question and analyze the specific contexts of war.

A subset of the ‘war is natural’ theory is the conviction that wars are more natural and inevitable in certain regions; that some societies are just more prone to war than others. The Balkans are infamous in this respect. The idea of ‘ancient ethnic hatreds’ fueling a never-ending war that has no other rational explanation, or resolution—most notoriously expressed in Robert Kaplan’s fateful influence book Balkan Ghosts—thus became semi-official U.S. policy towards the violent disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. This is an attitude, which, disturbingly, we often find among people in the Balkans themselves—the idea that every generation must have its war. And it is an attitude aided by Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” thesis, which sees any conflict between Christians and Muslims, or, in the case of Serbs and Croats, between Orthodox and Catholics, as due to an inevitable and unavoidable ‘civilizational’ incompatibility, a view which remains alarmingly fashionable in the post-9/11 West. But, while we cannot simply dismiss the reality and deep-rootedness of these conflicts, such a view, like the ‘war as human nature’ theory, fails to account for the equally deeply-rooted commonalities and integration within these regions and between these ostensibly different ‘civilizations.’ The history of peace and positive interaction between the various communities of the Balkans is at least as long as that of the hostility and warfare between them, and, we are convinced, at least as important for an understanding of the nature of those identities and their prospects for the future together. In studying the darkest side of humanity, students can be overwhelmed by the cruelty of war. It is imperative for them, too, that they understand that war is only one moment in the rich history of these societies and that they can recover from it and move on.

An alternative, yet equally simplistic and analysis-resistant assumption we often encounter is that violence is committed by ‘bad’ people, for evil reasons. The fixation with charismatic ‘evil-doers,’ like Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot or Slobodan Milošević, tends to absolve us of the need for rational explanation and for understanding the larger context. These are not

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2 Robert D. Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993). During the Bosnian war, President Bill Clinton invoked Kaplan’s argument as justification for the U.S. refusal to intervene militarily, although he had campaigned in 1992 for such intervention.


4 This ‘other’ history has been chronicled by many of the historians who best know, and love, the region: e.g. Robert J. Donia & John V. A. Fine, Bosnia: A Tradition Betrayed (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Michael Anthony Sells, The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
normal people, the argument goes, and their actions cannot be considered a profitable subject for historical or political analysis—only, at best, for criminal psychology. Such a belief implies, too, that once the war-bent leader is dead or removed from the scene, there need be no concern for a repeated outbreak of violence. People do not make wars; evil or deranged leaders do. But this assumption overlooks the question of why so many people follow such leaders; why perfectly ordinary individuals pick up weapons and with no compulsion or signs of prior hatred turn them against their former neighbors, friends, even family members. The inescapable implication that the vast majority of humanity are guileless sheep is not only deeply distasteful, but it flies in the face of everything else we know from history. The scholarly literature on the Nazis’ genocidal violence during the Second World War, which used to be fixated on Hitler’s personal anti-semitic mania and putative control over the German population, has for some decades now been calling attention instead to the role of the many thousands of “ordinary men” (and women) who participated in and benefitted from the abuse and murder of their fellow countrymen.\(^5\) While debates continue to rage over the precise motivations and meaning of this participation, there can no longer be any question of such mass violence being entirely explainable by the actions of a leader or even a small clique of fanatics. While such individuals may be key to understanding the events that lead to the outbreak of war, they do not carry it out alone. The perspectives and motivations of those who do are perhaps an even more important subject for inquiry if we are to develop a meaningful response to war.

And in the case of civil wars like those of the former Yugoslavia, the stark and unpleasant reality is that much of the violence, while itself condemnable, is committed for reasons which are quite understandable. Most of the time our students, secure in their sense of their own righteousness, approach study of these wars with the conviction that they could never engage in such actions; that they would always be able to differentiate between an easily recognizable ‘Right’ and ‘Wrong.’ Entertainment news and 140-character attention spans love clearly defined, evil-doing ‘Aggressors’ and innocent ‘Victims.’ History sometimes obliges, but mostly the reality is far more complex. The Second World War and the Holocaust are again useful cases in point. The Holocaust survivor Primo Levi has written about the moral “Gray Zone” that the denizens of Auschwitz—-inmates and guards alike--found themselves inhabiting.\(^6\) And more recently, the histories of the civil wars in both Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia are full of examples of such blurring between the categories of Victim and Perpetrator.\(^7\)


Broz, for example, has written a revealing book about how the lines of moral complicity and resistance became blurred for many ordinary people during the Bosnian war.\(^8\)

Understanding and responding to war in multicultural societies like the former Yugoslavia is made additionally difficult by the tendency to overlay the Victim-Perpetrator dichotomy with ethnic stereotypes. Mainstream US media reports and the claims of the combatants themselves present the conflict as a narrative of This Group vs. That Group: clearly defined, self-contained and fixed identity-communities that are manifestly and starkly differentiated from each other. In this narrative, the conflict tends to be viewed as an, if regrettable, yet nevertheless easily comprehensible, almost inevitable result of fundamental differences and incompatibilities. It is easy for students to come to the conclusion that such wars are carried out by, e.g., ‘the Serbs’ or ‘the Muslims,’ without any differentiation within those categories. The reality, of course, is that such identities, whether ethnic or sectarian, are constructs. Not all Serbs are Chetniks, and not all Muslims are Mujahedeen. In fact, before the outbreak of the wars, individuals’ ethnic-sectarian identities, while not completely negligible, played a surprisingly inconsequential role in their daily lives; indeed their ethnic identities were sometimes not even known to their closest friends.\(^9\) And even more problematically once the wars began, many Yugoslavs, particularly in Bosnia, ‘belonged’ to multiple ethnic communities. The plight of a Serb, for example, who had married a Croat, or someone whose mother was Bosnian-Muslim and father was Serb, became truly wrenching and dangerous, as we have heard first-hand from many people during our visits.

It is important for students to understand the role of individuals in war. But it would be just as misleading to reduce the complex social phenomenon of war to nothing more than the deeds of autonomous individual actors. Socially constructed identities are powerful forces, for both good and ill. Individuals can manipulate the loyalties to such identities to gain support for their cause and their war. But those same identities can also be a support and protection in times of crisis. What is most important for students to understand about war is the interaction between the individual and the ‘collective,’ and that there is variation within the so-called ethnic groups.

An additional problem with the ethnic dichotomization is its elision from all analysis of the ‘invisibles.’ One important example is the Croats, who tend to be relegated to a minor role in examinations of the conflict. The war between the Serbs and Muslims overwhelms the narrative to the point that one finds the Croats only at the margins of the analysis, although in terms of practical consequences they benefitted from the war more than any other group. There are also minority groups, like the Bosnian Jews and Roma (Gypsies), or for that matter those who steadfastly resist any ethnic-sectarian identification, who are completely absent from the analysis, and yet who played a role in the war—as victims, rescuers, and even perpetrators.

A final assumption that we wanted our students to reconsider has to do with the idea of peace. Students, in fact most people, rarely think about what ‘peace’ actually means, assuming


\(^9\) There is still relatively little scholarship on this phenomenon. An eloquent example, however, is found in the film “Comrades,” (dir.) Mitko Panov, Pirej, 2002, about a group of men who served in the Yugoslav army together during the 1980s. We have heard many similar stories from people during our visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina.
that it is merely the absence of war. But conflict occurs in a variety of forms short of active warfare, none of which can properly be considered ‘peace.’ If war is not natural or inevitable, then neither, in fact, is peace. Most notably, as the U.S. experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq have illustrated, while battles may be easily won, the ensuing period can be even more explosive and more difficult to predict. Issues of state-building, physical security, disarmament, pursuit of war criminals, refugee settlement and the creation of economic opportunity often interact with many others aspects of post-conflict society.

Designing Our Course: Putting the Liberal Arts into Practice

Our primary goal in developing the War and Peace in Bosnia course was less to impart specific knowledge about that conflict than to help our students develop a set of skills that would allow them to better address and engage with issues of war and peace. While the focus is specifically on Bosnia, we emphasize throughout that the skills and perspectives developed to analyze that conflict are applicable to many other conflicts as well. But we did not want a cookbook-style methods course: ‘Here’s how you make peace.’ Instead, we wanted to encourage our students to question their own assumptions and ‘common-sense’ explanations for the wars; to consider the different perspectives and theories about what happened and why; and to examine with a critical eye the different options for intervention (or non-intervention) that were debated at the time. Above all, in the spirit of the Liberal Arts, we aimed to free students to construct their own narratives of what happened, and what it means, rather than passively receiving the answers from us, or anyone else.

The On-Campus Preparatory Course

After our first study-visit to Bosnia and Hercegovina in 2002, it became clear that our students needed better intellectual preparation for what they would see and do in the country. Put simply, we needed to design an orientation course that was more than simple pre-departure advice (how to deal with jet-lag; how to say “hello” and “thank you” in the local language), but would provide students with the necessary academic learning about the history and basic theories of conflict, peace-building and international intervention that they will need to engage in a meaningful way with the people and on-going civil reconstruction efforts that make up the activity of the study-abroad course. To that end, we developed a traditional, semester-long, on-campus course on The Wars of Yugoslavia: Seminar on Peace-building (HIST 315/POLS 356), which is offered each year the semester before our departure. The course is open to any student, but is required for those who intend to participate in the summer semester’s study abroad trip.

The course is divided into three sections. The first and most basic thing the students need is an understanding of the larger historical context of the war. One part of this is to bring home to the students that the history of the Balkans actually is so much more than conflict and war. Due attention is given to the many wars in the region, going back to the collapse of the Roman empire and the Ottoman conquest. But our historical investigations bring home to the students how much of Balkan history is in fact not involved in war. While the conventional wisdom about Yugoslavia, for example, from the perspective of the post-1990s, is that it was a ‘failed state,’ an unnatural conglomeration whose violent disintegration was inevitable, from
the perspective of the 1960s, Yugoslavia was in virtually all respects—economically, socially, culturally, politically—an impressive ‘success story’ that offered a great deal of inspiration to other multicultural and developing societies all over the world, and its collapse hardly a foregone conclusion.

To encourage critical thinking and to help the students begin to understand the nature and role of ethnic identities, our approach is to emphasize history not simply in terms of an objective, ‘true’ chronology of events, but more importantly in terms of memory and how different collective memories of the ‘facts’ are constructed, maintained and changed over time by different sectors of the population, and how those collective memories—which often conflict diametrically with the established ‘official’ history—can affect the experiences of ordinary people. In pursuit of both those goals, we ask students for example to read Ivo Andrić’s classic *Bridge on the Drina*, a novelistic tracing of the history of the town of Višegrad from Ottoman times to the outbreak of the First World War.\(^\text{10}\) In group discussions we ask students to generate a list of the conflicts that occur throughout the book, and then discuss their causes. Is this region really plagued by endemic conflict? And where there is conflict, do the people of this region fight only because of ethnicity, or are there other reasons for these conflicts? Instead of being told so by a textbook, in working with this rich historical document, students are able to begin to think in concrete terms for themselves that while there have been severe conflicts in the region, these are mirrored by periods of peace and integration. Left to define the conflicts and groups on their own, they are quick to recognize class, gender, regional and role-based identities as at least as important and influential as ethnicity in the characters’ lives, and in their conflicts. ‘Conflict’ itself becomes for them less a ‘fact’ than a matter of definition; and it is not always, or essentially, rooted in ethnicity, thus dealing a serious blow to the ‘ancient hatreds’ thesis. The film “Comrades,” referred to earlier, makes very much the same point, introducing the students in a very immediate and sympathetic way to a number of real people for whom ethnicity in Yugoslavia was only one of many identities and hardly the most prominent or meaningful. The palpable confusion, fear and helplessness felt by these young men as the wars overtook and destroyed their lives and the world they had loved so much mirrors, in a different way, the confusion about the war felt by our students, a fact of which they become immediately conscious.

Once our students have begun to question the ‘naturalness’ and inevitability of this war, we can look into the 1990s wars and their real causes in more detail. Here, too, we emphasize that we are not going to ‘give’ them the ‘true’ explanation for the war, but that we want them instead to develop their own thesis as to why the war occurred and what it was about. Putting to use what they’ve learned about the larger history, we ask them to consider a simple time-line for the war: when should it start? Should a meaningful history of the war begin in 1389, when Ottoman forces defeated the medieval Serb kingdom, as some, especially Serb nationalists, would have it? Or with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the creation of the first Yugoslavia in 1918? The genocidal violence of the Second World War, which

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remains in living memory for many in the region? Or was the death of Tito in 1980 the more important catalyst to the war? Or Milošević’s rise in 1987? Or was it perhaps really the larger geo-political ending of the Cold War in 1989? As we discuss all of these various perspectives together, our goal is for students to recognize that how one answers this seemingly simple question depends very much on one’s beliefs, or assumptions, about what the conflict was about: ethnicity, power, economics, etc. In the final assignment for this first section, students write short Reaction Essays, where they are asked to reflect on these questions and their implications, then make their own choices in constructing a time-line and explanation for the war, and justify them. If these groups really hate each other so much, then why did they agree to a common Yugoslav state not once, but twice? If Tito was all that held Yugoslavia together, and his absence from the scene explains the war, then why did it take another 10 years for the wars to break out? This exercise is perhaps the most challenging activity because students are used to simple cause and effect and expect us or a textbook to provide it for them. But instead of that, they have to wrestle with the region’s history and make sense of it for themselves. They also have to appreciate that there are different ‘histories’ and that one of their tasks as peace-builders is to understand the significance of these different versions of the past for the present and the future. Some of our peace studies students initially complain that there is too much history in the course; they want to focus on the immediate problems facing the country today. But it is our job to teach them that peace-building occurs in an historical context. One cannot resolve a conflict without understanding how the populations became engaged in conflict in the first place.

The second portion of the course builds on the realizations achieved in the first section and focuses on the idea of ethnicity. What does it mean to ‘be’ a Serb, a Bosnian-Muslim, a Croat, or for that matter a Yugoslav? What are the determinants of these identities? What kind of practices determine whether one belongs to one group and not another? Are these identities fixed or do they evolve over time? Who gets to decide who’s what? What do ordinary people ‘get’ from their ethnic identities? And, perhaps most importantly, what happens to ethnic identities once war has begun? An intriguing film that we use, called “Picture Me an Enemy,” features two refugees now in the US, one a part Serb-part Croat woman from Croatia, the other a Bosnian-Muslim woman, who discuss their lives in Yugoslavia before the war—who they were and how they thought of themselves and others—and the pressure under which they then came to identify exclusively with ‘their’ group, as well as the stereotypes to which they were subjected by ‘others’ (including Americans) after the wars began.11

We focus particular attention in this section on the nature, origins and evolution of Serb identity and its role in the Bosnian war, in part because so many students come into the course with a distinct, if unreflected, anti-Serb bias. Tim Judah’s book, The Serbs, offers a unique and very useful perspective on the war by focusing on the interaction between Serb collective memory and the events of the war.12 Constantly shifting back and forth between history and the present-day of the 1990s, he charts the ebb and flow of Serb collective memory and how it

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12 Tim Judah, The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Judah is a journalist who witnessed many of the Bosnian war’s worst atrocities first-hand. Among the many books written by journalists about the war, his is exceptionally well-grounded in the larger historical context.
was manipulated by Serbian leaders to mobilize the population for war. Once students become sensitized to the flexibility and mutability of ethnic and national identity, we have them work with the texts of some speeches by Slobodan Milošević from shortly before the outbreak of the wars, as well as the infamous 1986 nationalist “Memorandum” from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, to analyze the language and images being deployed, how they fit, or don’t, Serbian history, and what kind of impact they were likely to have had on their audience—why they ‘worked’ to mobilize the population for war. While it’s important to help students realize that identities are constructs, it is equally important that they understand that these identities have meaning to people; people act on identities because they believe in them. This perspective is reinforced by the students’ viewing and discussion of the film “Pretty Village, Pretty Flame,” a Serbian film about the Bosnian war based on actual events.13 Managing to be simultaneously sympathetic and critical, this film effectively allows our students to interpret—to feel—the events of the war from within a Serb perspective and imagine how they might have felt, what they might have seen as their options, and how they might have responded.

At the same time, we want the students to resist the temptation to generalize from the acts of many to the all. Horrendous acts of violence, war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed in Bosnia in the 1990s, and many of them were committed in a collective manner. But not every Serb is a war criminal, or even a nationalist. Not all of the victims were Muslim and not all of the aggression was committed by Serbs. We spend a significant amount of time discussing the very vigorous—though mostly neglected by the West at the time—Serbian opposition and anti-war movements, focusing particularly on the role of dissident media like the radio station B-92, which also allows for a discussion of the ways in which the Milošević government manipulated the public media and how vulnerable the students feel the United States might be to such popular media manipulation.14

In further pursuit of this kind of critical empathy we discuss in substantial detail the 1995 massacre at Srebrenica. This atrocity is generally described in the press and even most of the scholarly literature as the massacre of ‘8,000 Muslim civilian men and boys’ by the Bosnian Serb army. But the city’s swollen refugee population included a number of Bosnian Serbs as well, and at least a few of those killed were in fact women. More importantly, although there can be no rationalizations for the killings themselves, our goals in this course make it imperative that the students think about what happened within the larger context, which included the reality, again rarely discussed in most Western accounts, that the city also sheltered a small Bosnian army unit, which periodically raided the surrounding, primarily Serb, communities and did kill Serb civilians. The Bosnian-Muslim commander of that unit, Nasir Orić, was convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague of war crimes in 2006, only to have that conviction reversed on appeal in 2008. Informed by a number of documentaries from varying viewpoints, our discussions of this case raise in a pointed and vexing manner the issues of how one defines ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator.’15 How are ‘combatants’

13 “Pretty Village, Pretty Flame,” (dir.) Srdjan Dragojević, Cobra Films, 1997. Interestingly, the film has been condemned both by Bosnian-Muslim nationalists as pro-Serb and by Serb nationalists as anti-Serb.
14 There are chapters on both the official use of media and the opposition media in Serbia in Udovički, Burn This House.
15 For example, “Safe Haven: The United Nations and the Betrayal of Srebrenica,” (dir.) Ilan Ziv, Icarus Films, 1996; and “Yugoslavia: The Avoidable War,” (dir.) George Bogdanich, Hargrove Entertainment, 2002, a revisionist pro-
defined, and what constitutes ‘justifiable’ action in war-time? As in all other parts of this course, the goal is not so much to ‘instruct,’ to tell the students what is ‘true,’ but also certainly not to minimize, relativize, or in any way justify any of the horrors of the war. It is, rather, to confront the students with the messy and confusing reality of war; to force them into a position where they must negotiate for themselves among the competing values, principles, needs and demands that characterize all wars, and so develop an appreciation—a critical appreciation—for the predicament of those who live through them.

The final section of the course examines the fraught questions of the international community’s response to the conflict, and what comes after. On this issue too, at the beginning of the course students tend to be certain in their views about what the ‘right’ thing to do is. By the last third of the semester, however, they have lost much of that certainty, beginning instead to view all options critically, with a self-conscious eye towards their complexity—the costs and trade-offs inherent in all such acts of international policy. To begin with, the discussions are designed to help students distinguish between the various types of options and approaches to intervention, ranging from the least degree of commitment to the most: peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building. The idea is for the students to begin to grasp the distinction between negative and positive peace, and how different policies and structures can contribute to different notions of peace and what is necessary to sustain them.

The question of international intervention into the Yugoslav conflicts obviously provides an excellent opportunity for making comparisons to the U.S.’s ongoing interventions around the world today—it is a question which has far more resonance to students in the 2010s, than it did for the American public in the 1990s, and our students who are veterans returning from those theaters bring with them a very unique, though not necessarily unified, perspective that adds a great deal to the class’s discussions. For this question, too, we tend to focus particular attention on the issue of Srebrenica—the actions that the international community (in the form of the United Nations) took and why, how well they worked (or didn’t), and what other actions might have been taken. The documentary “Safe Haven: The United Nations and the Betrayal of Srebrenica,” referenced earlier, is particularly good on the frustrating position in which the Dutch peacekeeping soldiers stationed in Srebrenica found themselves. Also excellent for viscerally, but entertainingly, highlighting both the stupidities of official international action and the frustrations of the ordinary soldiers hoping to do good (while simultaneously keeping a similar eye on the stupidities of Bosnian behavior too) is the Academy Award-winning Bosnian film “No Man’s Land,” with whose director, Danis Tanović, we meet during the study abroad trip. And Samantha Power’s ‘A Problem From Hell’: America and the Age of Genocide is an invaluable resource which lays out in a very clear and judicious, yet still human and passionate way what the various options facing the United States were and what each would have cost, in every sense of that word. The films and readings we utilize on this question all have very clear standpoints—they take sides. But in the way they are written or presented they also allow, in fact demand, that the students assess those positions, understand their limitations and costs, and develop their own conclusions.

Serb view; or a similar film which focuses particularly on Orić, “Srebrenica: A Town Betrayed,” (dir.) Ola Flyum and David Hebditch, Fenris Film, 2009.

From there we move to the issue of ending the war and constructing the peace. For this we have the students work very closely in groups with the text of the Dayton Peace Accord itself. Aside from the specifics of the treaty, this is important because it helps students to understand that peace doesn’t just happen; it requires a foundation and a plan. Whether or not this particular plan is a good one—whether it sets the foundation for a sustainable peace, responsive to the real causes of the war and the real problems facing the post-war society—becomes the guiding question for the students, and each group, responding to a particular article of the treaty, is asked to make that judgment and defend it to the rest of the class. In addition to putting the provisions into the context of the larger history of the war and the region that they have gained during the previous weeks, this requires students to grapple with the question of goals beyond the simplistic ‘stop the fighting’: Is the goal simply to maintain stability in the existing context (peace-keeping), or to create a better future (peace-building)? What kind of a society do they wish to see emerge? Do they see the re-establishment of the status quo ante as the most desirable goal? Or do they believe it is best to separate the warring parties as autonomous or independent entities? Do they believe that accountability and facing the problems and crimes of the war and pre-war period are the most secure route to a true peace, or would it be better to turn a blind eye towards past wrongs and ‘move on’? Should the post-war society be built on the basis of compromise and reconciliation—that all ethnic groups had legitimate grievances, all groups were equally victimized, and equally guilty—or does peace demand that rights and wrongs, guilty parties and victims, be identified as the basis for moving ahead? Does ‘justice’ mean that sanctions against wrong-doers be meted out only on the basis of strictly individual accountability, or is there a case to be made for denying the fruits of victory to nationalist groups, e.g., Radovan Karadžić’s Serbian Democratic Party and the war-created Republika Srpska within Bosnia?

In studying the text students are always astonished to discover how minutely detailed, and very long, a peace treaty actually is, and needs to be. And in discussing and evaluating its provisions, they learn in a very practical way that the signing of the peace treaty doesn’t necessarily mean the end of conflict. Rather, they leave numerous problems that need to be addressed and numerous challenges that could bring the country back to war. Issues ranging from refugee return, the repair of destroyed homes and roads, disarmament, police protection, landmine removal, bringing war criminals to justice, and minority rights (e.g. the place of Roma and Jews in the new society) are among the issues that are discussed and debated. For the capstone project, the students, again working in small groups, choose one of these issues which they independently research, and then report their findings back to the class: what are the specific problems and how were they caused by the war? What is done, or not done, about them in the Dayton treaty? And what more do they feel needs to be done? This is revelatory work for the students, as most of them have never thought about the end of a war as a period of challenge and difficulty, or peace as something that must be constructed.

Perhaps the most important lesson in this section is that peace is possible in this region. We hope that our students will come to believe that it is not only possible but morally necessary to think about what moves a society towards real peace rather than merely settling

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on the first possible plan to end hostilities. The ‘reality on the ground’ needs to be responded to, but it should not dictate the goals of the peace and the future of the country. Realism and vision both have their place in this kind of work, and they need to inform each other.

The Study-Abroad Course

Immediately following the spring semester course, students who are interested and able have the opportunity to travel to the country that served as our primary case-study, the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, for a four-week, six credit course. Our purpose in bringing students to Bosnia is on the one hand simply to deepen and enrich the knowledge and understanding they gained the previous semester; to make it more ‘real’ by confronting them with the physical reality of the scars of war and the pressing needs of a society trying to recover from war. But it is no mere cliché to add that our students also learn a tremendous amount about themselves from this experience—about what they are capable of, what ties them to others and makes them human, what makes them different and unique, what they want from life. One early student reported later, “It is rare that an experience can called ‘life changing.’ However, the War and Peace in Bosnia program more than meets that description. I find that the Bosnia experience still informs my life and the way I see the world, ten years since.” In similar manner, we have also learned a tremendous amount about ourselves through the eight trips we have made to the country—about ourselves as scholars, as teachers, as citizens of the world.

There is no book-learning or lectures or structured academic discussion during the trip. Nevertheless, this is meant to be a true study-abroad, not simply a travel-abroad course—though it is ‘study’ of a notably different type. The emphasis throughout the course is, first, that students reflect on what they are seeing, hearing and doing, and attempt to relate it all back to their academic learning from the spring semester—or, conversely, note where the academic, book-learning fails in confrontation with the reality they have experienced. To that end, students are required to keep a journal—not simply a diary or travelogue of what they’ve done and seen, but an intellectual, academically-informed, but still very personal working-through of their experiences in the country. The journals are not graded, but they are collected and commented on periodically throughout the trip. Secondly, and more importantly (though this wasn’t completely clear to us when we first began in 2002), the course calls for students to become personally involved, not merely in terms of developing strong feelings about the country and what happened to it, but also in terms of giving something of themselves to the country and its people; to become in some small way a part of Bosnia’s recovery.

Our first concern in introducing the country to our students was that they should become familiar with all of the major population groups and their cultures. The country has historically been ethnically inter-mixed, but certain areas and cities have been associated with particular ethnic groups (an ethnic segregation which is much more pronounced now, after the war). Thus, we spend substantial amounts of time in Sarajevo (majority Muslim), Banja Luka (majority Serb), and Mostar (nearly equally divided between Muslims and Croats, but considered the unofficial ‘capital’ of the Bosnian-Croats). During the first two trips we had scheduled the stay in Banja Luka towards the end of the four weeks, purely out of logistical considerations. But we observed both years that the students exhibited a certain low-key hostility towards the idea of going to Banja Luka by that time—we believe because they had
already ‘bonded’ so emotionally with Sarajevo and the Bosnian-Muslims, coupled with their lingering belief that ‘the Serbs’ collectively were somehow the ‘bad guys’ in the war. After that we moved the stay in Banja Luka to the first week to prevent the students’ developing an unwarranted preference for one group over another, and, while a certain anti-Serb bias persists to some degree, it has been much less marked. The students find, somewhat to their surprise, that they rather like Banja Luka, and the abstraction of ‘the Serbs’ becomes much more personalized and nuanced for the rest of the trip. A former student commented, “As a history major, the course taught me an important lesson on the consideration of multiple sources and points of view . . . In addition, it was useful in helping us dispel stereotypes and the often incorrect assumptions we had made about the Balkan wars.”

We also make shorter visits to Foča, Goražde, Višegrad, Srebrenica, Gradačac, Travnik, Tuzla, Žitomislići and Jasenovac. All of these sites played important roles in the war—some of them quite horrific roles. Foča, for example, was the site of one of the war’s infamous ‘rape camps’ and a mass killing of Muslims (we take a look at the building that housed the rape camp, now a “Youth Center”). Jasenovac was the site of a concentration run by the Croatian fascists during the Second World War, where nearly 100,000 people—mostly Serbs but also Jews, Gypsies, and anti-fascist Muslims and Croats—were murdered, a living memory which played a powerful, but too often overlooked role in the mentality and fears of many Serbs during the war. In traveling from one such site to another, from the site of one ethnic group’s victimization to that of another, in such close proximity, it brings home to the students in a way that no book or even documentary ever could, how complicated and inter-connected, shared (though not necessarily equally), are the horror and sadness of, and also responsibility for, the war. The memorial to the Srebrenica massacre is an excellent case in point. The huge memorial cemetery and brand-new interpretive center is a somber and deeply moving place—one visited by hundreds of foreign visitors every year. Just a couple kilometers down the road there is a memorial erected by the Republika Srpska government to the memory of those Serbs from the region killed during the war, most notably by Nasir Orić’s raiders. This memorial receives very few visitors of any sort—foreign or Serb. The juxtaposition of the two ‘dueling memorials’ and their dueling senses of victimhood, and the prominence of the one and neglected state of the other, prompts very useful questions and discussion.

In all our travels, too, the students are able to see for themselves the physical destructiveness of the war. Although there is a bit less of that to see every year, outside of the major cities and even in Sarajevo and Mostar if one knows where to look, there is still plenty to see—bullet-pocked facades; burned-out buildings; ghostly, burned-out entire villages; ruined bridges; ominous signs and red-tape warning of landmine fields; and the collections of plaques on virtually every school, office, or apartment building in Sarajevo listing the inhabitants, pupils or colleagues who were killed during the war. Seeing the destruction first-hand, so many years after the end of the war, brings home to the students, again in a way no book or film can, what war means, what it costs, and how long-lasting its effects are.

Another valuable effect of these travels, however, is to enable our students to see how closely these groups lived together and how integrated their lives actually were, physically, socially and culturally. The physical and cultural remains of centuries of peaceful interaction are just as easily observable, and just as impressive, as are the remains of the war. Students can see the personal and cultural integration, . . . and then ask themselves how it could have
disintegrated into such hatred and inhumanity. And in a similar vein, they see how simply beautiful the country is—the dense forests and green-clad mountains, the shockingly clear rivers, the elegant fusion of Eastern and Western architecture. Bosnia ceases to be merely a byword for war and hatred, and becomes for the students a real place, and a place of great beauty and humanity. The war no longer seems in any sense natural or inevitable to them. And the juxtaposition of those realities with the still inescapable reality of the war, again, provokes very useful questions in the minds of our students.

In each location we meet with representatives of the three dominant ethnic-nationalist political groups—the Serbian Democratic Party in Banja Luka, the Croatian Democratic Union in Mostar, and the Party of Democratic Action in Sarajevo—giving them the chance to talk about how they view the war—what it was about, and what it achieved or destroyed—as well as what they see as the most important problems facing the country today. We also talk to representatives of non-nationalist parties which attempt (without, so far, much success) to represent all the peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina, like film director Danis Tanović’s Our Party. It is interesting, and important, for students to hear such radically different perspectives on what happened and what it means, expressed with such conviction and sincerity. And this is also where it is crucial that the students have already been exposed to the academic study of the war’s history. The students on our first trips were often overwhelmed by the disparities and felt at a loss as to what to believe. The prior academic learning gives them the tools to compare those perspectives critically to each other, and to the history they learned, and to react to them with their own perspectives. In all of our meetings, the students are not expected merely to listen, but rather, explicitly, to engage. The meetings are described to them as interviews, and they are the interviewers, their job to understand their interlocutors’ points of view on their own terms, but also to probe, even to challenge (politely). And the people we meet expect no less. One of the things we learned in our very first trip was that everyone we met in the country, every group, official or unofficial, wanted to interact with our students. They wanted to respond to our students’ questions and beliefs; they wanted to hear what our students thought about their country and what happened to it. Most Bosnians and Hercegovinians feel forgotten by the world, and our students have always been enthusiastically welcomed by all groups.

In order to afford the students a fuller and more realistic and human view of what happened, it is of course important that we go beyond the ‘official’ standpoints, and include other types of community voices. The students also meet with people who fought in the war; people who were victimized by the war, losing loved ones and/or homes; concentration camp survivors; international community and local NGO aid workers; community activists; academics; university students; and high school teachers and pupils. Given the relevance of gender for the way the war was fought and its consequences, we make a particular point of meeting with several organizations that deal particularly or exclusively with women’s issues. We also make a particular point of meeting with community activists from the two most important—though usually quite forgotten—minority populations in the country: the Jewish community of Sarajevo, and Roma rights activists in Tuzla. The visits with these groups not only frustrate the standard This Group vs. That Group narrative that still dominates accounts of the Bosnian war; they also give the students a rare look at the nature of these two populations and their identities, which tend to be known by the typical student from our region only as crass
stereotypes. It is extraordinary—and in the current international climate invaluable—for them to hear, for example, about how the Jewish community in Sarajevo opened a free pharmacy during the 1991-95 siege to help the entrapped, mostly Muslim population; and how during the Second World War, the city’s Muslim population worked actively to hide and save Jews from the Germans. After this trip, the categories ‘Muslim’ and ‘Jew’ appear quite different to our students.

This also connects with our desire that the students come to see Bosnia and Hercegovina, its people and history as more than simply war. Even if the war is our reason for bringing them to the country, in order to truly understand that war and what it meant to the people who lived through it, it is essential that our students understand that the war of the 1990s was only one period in a very long and rich history. To help them to an appreciation of the cultures and peoples of the country we include, for example, visits to an Orthodox church service in Banja Luka, a Catholic mass in Mostar (or alternatively in Međugorje), a Jewish Shabbat service in the Sarajevo synagogue, and a visit to the main mosque in Sarajevo. Seeing and participating in these things personally on the one hand helps provide our students with a richer texture than books can provide to their understanding of what, e.g., Serb or Muslim identities are about, what they’re based on (even if religiosity is not essential to them). And in addition, the sheer beauty and ancient eloquence of the buildings and services themselves are profoundly moving, and again help to shatter the students’ preconceptions about who these people are and what they were fighting for.

The diversity of opinion and perspective the students are exposed to is extreme, and very deliberate on our part. In pursuing our goal of critical empathy, we feel it is necessary to challenge not just the usual ethnic narrative of the war, but all narratives, including the narrative of war itself. Some of the community groups, such as the Mothers of the Enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa, for instance, are highly critical of all ‘national’ leaders, most especially their own, which allows our students to consider the recent history not just in terms of this ethnic group against that ethnic group, but in terms of governmental leaders vs. ‘ordinary’ citizens. And in recent years many (though certainly not all) of the high school students with whom we spend an entire day have no personal memories of the war and are sick to death of hearing about it and having their country associated with it. For these younger people, the war is no longer so relevant to their lives and who they are. One of our students described how he had expected to find only horror and a miserable, beaten-down people in Bosnia, but “the Bosnians' attitude caught me by surprise. Their friendly and generous outlook didn’t fit with how I thought war survivors would act.” Again, the effect that we hope for is that our students, in being presented with such an extreme variety of perspectives and viewpoints will find themselves questioning essentially everything they had taken as ‘given,’ and find themselves compelled to create their own narrative—in the absence of any sure givens, to be forced to decide on the basis of their own values and experiences in the country what matters.

We also insist that our students get to know Bosnia as their peers know it. We deliberately schedule the meeting with students from the Philosophical Faculty (essentially the College of Liberal Arts) of the University of Sarajevo early in the trip in the hopes that our students will make some lasting connections, and that the Bosnian students will take our students to the most popular student bars and discos. We have not yet been disappointed in that hope. We always schedule visits to traditional music concerts (folk music--Sevdalinka--
remains enormously popular with all age groups) and also to professional soccer games, as well as arranging pick-up games with local kids—who regularly trounce us. Food, too, is incredibly important. The cuisine of Bosnia and Hercegovina—an intoxicating mélange of Slavic, Turkish, Austrian and Italian influences—in its own way allows our students to experience the history and the ethnic intermixing of the region through their stomachs, a lesson quickly learned and appreciated by them. In 2012 we arranged to have our landlady in Sarajevo give our students a cooking lesson in how to make the local meat-pie specialty, burek—a great success. These things are all fun, and when we spend so much time talking to survivors of war, rape and genocide, it is imperative for their own mental health that the students have some respite. But, again, there is another rationale for all of this that is intimately connected to our learning goals about this—or any—war. The war was not ‘natural’ or pre-ordained. It was a tragedy, and a tragedy not only in the individual sense—the killing and suffering that individuals were subjected to—but also in an historical and cultural sense. That, too, is worth understanding and knowing, by experiencing it first-hand.

Lastly, we came to feel strongly after the first several trips that we should try to arrange to have our students give something back to Bosnia. In part this is because our students take so much away, in knowledge, insights, caring and friendships, while the needs there are still so great—even now, 18 years after the end of the war—that we felt an obligation to not just come, see, express sympathy, and leave—no war tourism—but rather to do something to repay Bosnia for what it has given us and help its people in their recovery efforts in whatever small way we are able. But in addition to that, in the spirit of the recent trend towards ‘service-learning’ in the Liberal Arts, we have come to believe that student engagement not simply in their own learning process but in the subject matter itself—in this case in Bosnia’s efforts to recover from war—and the opportunity to apply what they’ve learned in a real-world context are extremely valuable, indeed essential from an educational point of view. The little that we can do to give something back will be a modest help to Bosnia; but it will, we think, be a very large help, in fact a transformative, a liberating experience, for our students. So for the last several years we have been arranging with an organization of survivors of concentration camps in Sarajevo for our students to help with English language classes for their members, most of whom are older. We are also working with an organization that provides scholarships and summer activities for children who have lost parents in the war to explore ways in which our students might be able to work in some capacity with those children.

Our short travel schedule and restricted resources limit what we can offer in this regard, but we hope to expand this type of activity in the future. However, there is a great deal our students can do and still ‘give back’ to Bosnia upon their return to the U.S. (or whatever their country of origin). We ask, for example, that they be willing to share, informally as well as in formal campus presentations, their experiences, stories and understanding of the conflict and current situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and to act as advocates, on whatever level they choose, for urging a better, more humane and more productive U.S. response to Bosnia, and to the problems of war and human rights violations more generally. One student, who worked at a day-care facility in a neighboring town, mobilized his day-care charges to design and sell t-shirts to benefit amputee children in Bosnia. He raised and sent to Bosnia several hundred dollars, not only helping out many Bosnian children, but in so doing raising awareness among the American children and their parents.
From the start of the spring semester, this sequence of courses is explicitly based on encouraging the notion of active citizenship. It reminds our students of their civic responsibility to the rest of humanity while providing them with the skills, knowledge and experiences to formulate their own visions of the kind of future they would like to see. Our aim is to call forth, and strengthen the students’ ability to empathize, critically. Empathy, unlike sympathy, requires not simply knowledge or even understanding, but personal experience and commitment. This, we believe, is the very essence of the Liberal Arts. And it is a very productive way to teach and engage with issues of war and peace. As one student remarked shortly after returning, “I’ve learned a lesson about the human spirit that I will carry with me, giving me hope as I go through my life.”
De- and Rehumanizing the Other: 
Philosophical Foundations for Military Ethics 
and Peace Building in the Armed Forces

Christian Göbel

Abstract & Introduction

The article briefly surveys some rationales and forms of ethics training in the armed forces, emphasizes the need for philosophical foundations and thus also suggests alternative approaches, exploring links between military ethics and college peace education. Based on personal experience (the author is a Lieutenant Colonel, German Army Reserve, and teaches philosophy at an American college) and scholarly interests it offers a somewhat introductory sketch of the matter and pertinent topics—not, however, without raising some new issues that may merit further consideration. The author argues that, if the virtue ethics approach to military ethics—which most countries have been taking—is understood in a broader sense and promotes a basic understanding of the humanity of all parties involved in armed conflicts, thereby also creating awareness of the military’s potential for de- and rehumanization, military ethics may even become an instrument of peace education in its own right.

Keywords: Military Ethics, Peace Education, Mission Command, De-/Rehumanization

Soldiering and Morality

Peace education and military ethics belong together. This proposition may seem paradoxical: Isn’t it absurd to teach warriors the morality of peace? Yet, in today’s world, the armed forces are not just “instruments of policy”¹ in a context of international power games anymore, used to achieve geopolitical goals, to assert political influence, or even to “satisfy occasionally the desire for conquest”;² nor are they just part of a global defense policy of deterrence.³ Today, military force is also used to enforce international law and protect human rights. Since the international community has explicitly committed itself to such goals and

3. This, however, still is an important part of any realistic politics. Wary of the all-too-human nature and the ‘radical evil’ (I. Kant) which seems to be part of it, even the best-meaning policy makers will acknowledge that discouraging aggressors from an attack may best be accomplished by military force and, if worse comes to worst, the military is needed to defend oneself. From a Christian perspective, military ethics may be seen as part of all those guidelines that are meant to help us behave and live well in a ‘fallen world’ (cf. Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966], 1:414f, 499, 596, 653 etc.).
policies (proclamation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948), peacekeeping operations and humanitarian interventions have become major military tasks, particularly in response to one of the biggest challenges of our time: “group violence through systematic instigation” (A. Sen), i.e. terrorism and political violence. For Sen, these are not primarily military challenges (he stresses the need for civil initiatives to successfully confront organized violence and create peace); yet, he acknowledges the need for military initiatives in some cases.

What I would like to propose here is that the civil initiatives Sen has in mind – “government by discussion” in J.S. Mill’s sense, dialogue, freedom of information, “democracy in the broad sense” – be used within the armed forces as well. The Bundeswehr doctrine of *Innere Führung* [Leadership Development and Civic Education] has always emphasized the fact that soldiers are “citizens in uniform.” It is certainly true that the military ‘naturally’ produces *extrinsic* violence (when used to achieve policy goals in armed conflicts), but providing troops with civic education may help prevent the military from becoming a source of further, *intrinsically* generated violence. There still is some truth in Gen. W.T. Sherman’s words, “You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it.” Yet, the use of lethal force in war can and has been ‘qualified,’ and peacekeeping and stabilization operations call for a new generation of war professionals whose qualifications and competencies need to include a ‘refined’ moral awareness and sensibility.

If the armed forces are to serve the human rights ethos and protect human dignity, our troops need to abide by international laws, social norms, and moral standards. They cannot *abuse* human rights. In 2012, new cases of US desecration of corpses in Afghanistan became public and caused worldwide outrage. ISAF condemned the “actions depicted in the video” (urinating on corpses) and declared that they “dishonored the sacrifices and values of the allied forces,” i.e. not only of the victims, their families, and Afghan culture. Germany had a similar case in 2006: Soldiers posed for pictures with bones and skulls they had found in the desert. This instance of misbehavior added to a series of problems regarding a certain lack of moral awareness in the armed forces; and it made us rethink our pre-deployment training.

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6 The term literally means “inner leadership” but the official translation conveys a better sense of the concept.
8 Letter to the Mayor and City Council of Atlanta, 12 September 1864.
9 In Sherman’s case, the decision not to burn the city of Atlanta—and, more generally, to eschew scorched earth tactics—would have constituted acts of such ‘refinement.’
10 The use of the first person plural in this article refers to a ‘Western’ perspective (NATO policy and missions), with a certain—but not exclusive—focus on Germany’s Bundeswehr and the US Army.
11 Statement issued in response to the online publication of video footage on Jan 12, 2012. In the meantime, disciplinary action has been taken against the culprits.
12 Some of these instances were ‘simply’ caused by a lack of discipline towards oneself (e.g. in connection with alcohol abuse) and/or towards comrades, superiors, and military rules of conduct; cf. Christian Göbel, “Ethik in der Bundeswehr,” *Die Neue Ordnung* 61 (2007): 358-373. Such incidents, however, also damage the military’s image within our own countries. “Military losses can often be overcome; however, moral failings constitute greater obstacles to national success” (Anthony E. Hartle, “Moral Principles and Moral Reasoning in the Ethics of the
It is, first of all, a nation’s own self-understanding that requires it to hold its troops to ethical standards. However, respect and trust-building have also become strategic necessities, especially in Afghanistan where the war can only be won with the support of the people. The new Rules of Engagement issued by Gen. McChrystal in 2009 make this very clear. The primary goal is to “win the hearts and minds of the population” and exercise “courageous restraint.” It is in our own interest not to compromise our mission, to avoid collateral damage and civilian casualties (which only “create more insurgents”) wherever possible, and to show respect for the dignity of the local population.  

If we expect this from our troops, they first need some understanding of the foreign culture. Therefore, pre-deployment training now includes sessions that raise intercultural awareness. In Germany, the coordination of intercultural training is one of the tasks of the newly-founded Zentrale Koordinierungsstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz [Coordination Center for Cultural Awareness] at the Armed Forces’ Zentrum Innere Führung [Leadership Development and Civic Education Center = ZInFu], a model institution which has gained worldwide respect for its work. Moreover, we require some degree of moral formation of all our soldiers in various stages of their careers, starting comparatively early. Recruits in basic training as well as enlisted men and non-commissioned officers receive a form of mandatory ethical orientation called Lebenskundlicher Unterricht [Knowledge of Life Lessons/Ethics = LKU] whose goals and contents were revised recently. Cadets and commissioned officers take ethics classes as part of their leadership training during their college years and later, when they attend (in the rank of captain) the Führungsakademie [Staff College]. Finally, prior to deployment abroad, entire units go through pre-deployment training together, where they are exposed to model situations which also simulate elements of intercultural and ethical relevance (e.g. how to deal with villagers, women, elders, children; how to respect local customs and address religious issues; who to talk to; how to avoid collateral damage; how to stay calm in situations of stress, etc.).

While most NATO partners recognize the growing importance of military ethics training, there are still significant differences between member nations in the amount of instruction provided and methods employed. Moreover, the term ‘military ethics’ itself can refer to a number of things – to ethics for the military or ethics of the military, i.e.:

1) The academic study of the moral justification of the use of military force (applied to specific situations and cases). One of the major—and controversial—topics of interest in this

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13 The doctrine of courageous restraint became a somewhat controversial issue (some service members felt it prevented them from effectively defending themselves). Plans for a medal for courageous restraint (recognizing soldiers who refrain from firing their weapons on civilians and their property even when they feel threatened), suggested by British Gen. Carter, never materialized.

14 With the new (6/2011) version of ZDV 10/4, LKU has become a qualification measure in professional ethics. These classes are usually taught by chaplains, and the military chaplaincies provide educational materials, e.g. through the Zentrum für ethische Bildung in den Streitkräften [Center for Ethical Education in the Armed Forces].

context is the ‘just war theory’ with historic roots in the Christian and pre-Christian tradition (Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Cicero), a topic we cannot cover in this paper;\textsuperscript{16}

2) A form of professional ethics and role morality;
3) Reflection upon the role of soldiers in democratic states;
4) The idea that soldiers need to be trained according to the universal ethical standards that are required of all civilians, so that they practice, in a special way and in particular situations, the general morality of being a good person. Thus, the military as a whole responds to the need to promote the common good and respect human dignity.

The latter—the widest possible meaning of the term ‘military ethics’—informs its understanding and practice in the Bundeswehr, which explicitly aims to also offer its personnel civic education. This has become even more important in the context of international stabilization operations. This paper, therefore, supports and recommends—partly based on what is already being practiced in Germany and in other NATO forces—a ‘virtue based education’ coupled with a ‘civic and cultural sensitivity based training.’ The character of many contemporary military operations (small and asymmetric wars, peace-keeping and constabulary missions, humanitarian interventions, fighting terrorism, but also humanitarian assistance and disaster response) calls for a new mindset of soldiers which can only be created through continuous educative efforts starting in the early stages of a military career (if not earlier). A brief introduction to the Rules of Engagement and the international laws applicable to a specific mission prior to deployment will not suffice.

Ethics Training for Soldiers: Format and Contents

What should soldiers be taught? Contents and methods of revised military ethics training seek to engage the entire ‘soul’ of service members. West Point, for instance, has explicitly incorporated classical philosophical, psychological, sociological and pedagogical models of the human soul (“domain of the human spirit”) into the theoretical framework of their ethics training, since the latter is an integral part of the entire (‘liberal arts’) education the academy offers its students during their “most formative years.”\textsuperscript{17} The goal, at West Point and elsewhere, is to (1) communicate moral knowledge and (2) help cadets develop a heightened moral sense and mature into truly moral persons. This objective is guided by the pedagogical assumption that “moral competence, including moral judgment skills, can be developed.”\textsuperscript{18}

Ethics training appeals not only to the intellect but to the entire person on the cognitive,

\textsuperscript{16} Cf. e.g. Michael Walzer, \textit{Just and Unjust Wars} (New York: Basic Books, \textcopyright2006). – Similarly, I will refrain from placing explicit emphasis on the ethical tradition of the Judeo-Christian world (or any other religion), not in denial of its important role and influence (or ignoring the valuable contributions chaplains make to ethics training in the armed forces, emphasizing, in particular, the spiritual dimension of character building), but in search of a more ‘neutral ground’ military ethics needs if it is to appeal to the increasingly multicultural (and oftentimes areligious) body of men and women enlisted in the armed forces of modern states. For a more detailed discussion of this aspect cf. Göbel, “Ethik,” 369f.


affective and volitional level.\textsuperscript{19} It helps perfect all “moral capabilities” (moral complexity/knowledge/reasoning, moral agency, moral efficacy).\textsuperscript{20} It is not enough to be convinced of an ethos, but one has to commit oneself to it, make the ‘right decision’ and act on it, thus achieving a “consistency between moral conviction and moral action.”\textsuperscript{21} This requires, as L. Kohlberg has argued, “formal education” as well as other stimuli (such as “peer interaction.”)\textsuperscript{22}

The goal to teach soldiers moral competence can further be defined as concerning the following skills (adapted from Baarda/Verweij, 14): the ability to (1) make moral choices and take responsibility for these choices, (2) “communicate clearly about moral considerations,” (3) “assess the military options available in view of pertinent moral values,” (4) recognize moral situations as such (and “in a timely fashion”). It finally includes (5) “a planned preparation for moral dilemmas – for instance, by making an overview of the potential dilemmas for a unit earmarked for an expeditionary operation.”

Some of the principles, methods, and materials used in college Ethics classes are quite successful with military personnel at all educational levels as well because they are universally understandable. The goal is, of course, not to produce ethics specialists, but to “construct soldiers grounded in a firm ethical foundation who possess the capacity to make the proper moral decision when confronted with conflicting moral options.”\textsuperscript{23} I will briefly present some of these contents in the following.

Rules of Reason

When soldiers, who committed acts of desecration, are confronted with their acts, they usually understand that they did wrong.\textsuperscript{24} They respond to questions such as “what if those corpses had been yours (or those of comrades or family members)?” They acknowledge the Golden Rule which can be found in all ethical traditions (“Treat others as you want to be treated”) and, with some explanation, understand Kant’s Categorical Imperative (“Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law without contradiction”).\textsuperscript{25} The Categorical Imperative goes beyond the Golden Rule by commanding the good unconditionally, simply because it is reasonable, not because it promises some personal advantage. It requires moral agents to use reason in the universalization of their maxims. Effectively, they universalize (and perfect) moral judgment,
not just personal preferences. The Categorical Imperative has often been criticized as not very practical because it doesn’t allow any exceptions (lying is always bad, even to protect an innocent person from a murderer) but such assessment should be reconsidered. Kant’s deontology is not an ill-suited approach to situational ethics but part of his vision of a better world, of a moral idealism which culminates in Kant’s ideas of a ‘kingdom of ends,’ ‘world citizenship,’ and ‘perpetual peace.’ Thus, the Categorical Imperative is not merely a deontological rule but a ‘spiritual exercise’ everybody is encouraged to practice—a guideline for moral self-education—and can therefore be seen as part of virtue ethics. Its goal is a world where morally relevant situations that are caused by evil people and constitute worst-case scenarios don’t happen.27

Ethicists often study worst-case scenarios that are not very realistic (e.g. the ‘trolley problem’). War, though, frequently produces actual worst-case scenarios. Therefore, soldiers need to be well prepared, not just technically (marksmanship etc.) and tactically but also morally. They need to be able to answer questions such as, How do I react when insurgents seize a fuel tanker? Use lethal force and potentially kill innocent bystanders? Or accept the risk that the tanker is being used as a rolling bomb against the military compound I have been charged to protect? Have I considered alternative options of acting (flyover, ‘show of force’)? Are there morally sound ways out of this dilemma? (These questions refer to the Kunduz airstrike, ordered by a German colonel in 2009, which has been used as a much-discussed example in military ethics classes throughout the Bundeswehr).

Now, as responsive as students and soldiers are in the classroom, the principles they theoretically embrace are easily forgotten in stressful combat situations where they seldom have time to pause and reflect, and only want to survive. (The same goes for everything else they have learned). The best remedy for that is constant training and endless repetition so that they truly internalize the principles of acting rightly. This training has little to do with mere (animal) conditioning in the Pavlovian sense, something passive, that is done to and with you, mindless drill or a form of brainwashing which is not much different from what terrorists do in their terror camps. Such an assumption would entail a misunderstanding of the word ‘training’ (which, incidentally, is something one can also do without a trainer). It means to get the best out of oneself. It is an adequate translation of the Greek word askesis which is an essential part of virtue ethics—a moral practice that is not mindless but thoughtful, that includes reflection, free assent and appropriation as well as internalization of ethical principles, so that in a morally relevant situation one does not need to reflect anymore but does—‘naturally’ and ‘spontaneously’—what is right and good to do, out of habit, as a result of the cultivation of volition. Moral training is nothing else but hexis or habituation (Aristotle), virtue through exercise.28 When Stoic philosophers further developed this practice they explicitly used warrior-

26 Spiritual exercises were an important part of practical philosophy in antiquity; cf. Pierre Hadot, Philosophy as a Way of Life, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).
28 Cf. Christian Göbel, “Werde, was Du bist. Sein-Sollen und Sollen-Sein des Menschen: Praktisch-interkulturelle Überlegungen zu Moral und Bildung,” in Sein und Sollen des Menschen, ed. Christoph Böttigheimer et al. (Münster:
and athlete-allegories to describe the process of moral self-education, since the latter requires the willingness to overcome hardship and struggle to be a moral person. One has to ‘fight’ for victory after victory, yet mostly over oneself.\textsuperscript{29} And even peace activists use the term ‘training’ in a similar context of ‘practice’: Gene Sharp—who was recently awarded the Right Livelihood Award for his lifelong work in the field of non-violent resistance and conflict resolution—suggests replacing national service or basic military training with “nonviolent action training.”\textsuperscript{30}

However, moral formation and military training which focuses on ethical rules of reason alone is not enough. Humans are not only reasoning animals but also emotional beings. Anger, stress, fear, negative emotions—especially in times of war and combat situations—run counter to our reasonability. Rules of reason need to be supplemented with empathic elements, compassion and an appeal to the moral sense—phenomena that are naturally human as well (among the classic philosophers arguing thus are D. Hume, A. Smith, A. Schopenhauer\textsuperscript{31}).

**Dehumanization, Empathy and the Appeal to the Moral Sense**

Shooting another human being is not an easy thing to do. Shooting at someone one does not recognize as a human being is much easier. Sometimes, even combat veterans describe this: when they see the other, looking at them, they aim high.\textsuperscript{32} The phenomenon resulted in surprisingly low firing rates during World War II and previous wars. Grossman summarizes the well-known studies conducted by S.L.A. Marshall and concludes that, in “World War II, 75 to 80 percent of riflemen did not fire their weapons at an exposed enemy, even to save their lives and the lives of their friends. In previous wars nonfiring rates were similar.”\textsuperscript{33}

For French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, ethics itself arises from a similar phenomenon—“from my proximity to the Other,” my encountering with his face “which

\textsuperscript{29} Cf. Seneca, On Providence 4. Cadets and students in military ethics classes still respond to athlete examples which can illustrate the need for excellence, i.e. to accept a challenge and perfect oneself as a human being and acquire arete (virtue).


\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Gwynne Dyer, War. The Lethal Custom (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), 56f. The psychological impact killing has—even on those who are forced to kill an aggressor (examples also include traumatized police offers and civilians)—cannot be doubted even if some of the research into the ‘fear to kill’ as a mass phenomenon demonstrable on the basis of historical accounts (e.g. World War II, US Civil War) has recently come under scrutiny; and methods, data, premises, interpretations, and conclusions of studies including S.L.A. Marshall’s classic book, Men against Fire, have been contested. The fact, though, that killing enemy soldiers is described by many veterans “as the most stressful event” (Franklin D. Jones et al., ed., War Psychiatry [Washington: Office of the Surgeon General, US Army, 1995], 298) has been confirmed by many studies. See also Rachel M. MacNair, Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress: The Psychological Consequences of Killing (Westport: Praeger, 2002); Charles W. Hoge et al., “Combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, mental health problems, and barriers to care,” New England Journal of Medicine 351, no. 17 (Oct 2004): 13-22.

summons me,” “puts a responsibility on me” and says, “Don’t kill me!” Humans are not ‘natural born killers;' a constant ‘war of all against all’ (T. Hobbes) is not the state of our nature. T.W. Adorno argued that atrocities like the Holocaust are the result of a “psychological factor” which “numbs moral considerations,” namely the “inability to identify oneself with others.” Adorno “raised the question which type of military education was needed in his essay Education after Auschwitz (1967);” and he “pleaded in favor of an educational system that would encourage children to become (self)critical citizens and to act courageously.”

Regaining the perspective of the Other, letting his face appeal to me, rediscovering my own humanity and the humanity of the Other, could, therefore, help re-humanize the world. This may even work in a military context where dehumanization (‘object dehumanization’) has become a tool that is used to reduce man’s reluctance to kill. Marshall’s–and even Grossman’s–studies ultimately aim at improved combat training that prepares soldiers not just physically but also mentally to be more efficient in their use of lethal force by desensitizing them. The objective is to build “bullet-proof minds” and increase their “willingness to kill,” e.g. through the use of realistic, man-shaped silhouettes on the shooting range and “classical and operant conditioning,” so that they “can cope with the unusual and unexpected as if it were the altogether normal.” Grossman offers a detailed account of the psychological tools which have been developed to help soldiers “overcome, or bypass, the resistance to killing members of one’s own species,” such as desensitizing through classical conditioning (Pavlov) and behavioral engineering (Skinner), the development of “denial defense mechanisms,” which include “careful rehearsal and realistic mimicry of the act of killing” and purposeful use of a language which creates “manufactured contempt” and denial of the victim’s humanity and role in society. The effectiveness of these tools is reinforced by other “psychological weapons,” such as “leaders”, “groups”, and “stress inoculation and fear” (i.e. “practicing to be miserable” through military training). Studies of firing rates in Vietnam, the 1982 Falklands War (R. Holmes) and in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq prove how successful this kind of training has been.

The technological evolution of modern warfare has further contributed to this ‘success,’ making killing much easier. The battle of man vs. man has given way to tank battles or, more recently and increasingly so, a remotely controlled weapon system against some depersonalized, objectified ‘target’ that is being ‘engaged.’ The drone that kills Taliban fighters in Afghanistan is operated from a command center in the US, by someone who does nothing but push a button. It is almost–as a veteran drone pilot put it–“like playing a computer game.” Modern weapons are not only technically more effective (they “overcome physical limitations”

36 Baarda and Verweij, Military Ethics, 16.
37 This will also reduce the danger of stress disorders; cf. Dave Grossman, On Combat (Millstadt: Warrior Science, 2008), 358.
38 Grossman, On Killing, 251-261 and On Combat, 196-223. This training has also been adopted by the most efficient law-enforcement agencies around the world.
and respond to the “need for force, mobility, distance, and protection”) but they also serve as devices which further enhance the mental ability to kill by overcoming “psychological limitations.” Factors such as ‘posturing,’ mobility and distance constitute additional “psychological weapons” which dehumanize enemies and potential victims. Admittedly, dehumanization, functionalization, and objectification happen all the time—take traffic as an example: we yell at passing cars, often unaware of the human beings inside—but its effects are much more devastating in war zones.

We will have to be realistic, though. Military training first of all has to enable soldiers to accomplish their mission, defend themselves and survive on the battlefield. It will, therefore, have to address the disinclination to kill—but without transforming humans into mere ‘killing machines.’ Mindless conditioning also dehumanizes our troops. As a result, they simply “serve the state not as men but as machines, with their bodies.” They thus lose (or give up) their dignity as human beings. In order to prevent this kind of dehumanization (which I’d call ‘subject dehumanization’ or self-dehumanization), a consciousness in each single service member has to be kept alive that the situation they are in, i.e. war, is a worst-case scenario which needs to be avoided whenever possible and, once started, ended as soon as humanly possible. We will certainly have to do everything to help soldiers deal with phenomena such as posttraumatic stress, but we will also have to keep in mind that the mere fact of having to kill others will—and should—always create some degree of stress because it goes against the natural moral sense. While technological innovations like unmanned aerial vehicles and robotic warfare lower the risk for our soldiers, their availability may also lower the bar to war. This ethical concern is currently at the center of a number of political controversies in countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain, and the USA.

In this context, the Levinasian ‘appeal of the Other’s face’ will primarily have to be understood in a figurative sense. Yet, on the battlefield, the precarious balance between a situation the individual has not gotten into by his own choice and the demands this situation puts on him here and now remains. It is the precarious balance between the mental ability to kill (when necessary as a last resort, as an inevitable part of war) and the knowledge that, on principle, killing is inhuman. To deal with this, not just military skill training is required, but the development of a strong mind and virtue in the philosophical sense of the word. Someone who retains his humanity even on the battlefield—not a mere ‘warhorse’ or brute—is a truly excellent and, thus, heroic human being, at all times fully aware of the responsibility he has towards himself and towards others: his men, comrades, civilians, and even towards the enemy.

Dehumanization (object dehumanization) has another dimension which, in Sen’s analysis, is a root cause of the group violence he describes. It stems from “confused and fallible readings of the world,” cultivated “through separating out one affiliation as someone’s only significant identity.” Identification entails division; too often identity is being defined by drawing lines between groups rather than by seeing a common ground. Small-scale examples of

this attitude occur at home, when we deem people from the next town inferior to ‘us,’ but it causes conflict and wars in the long run. The issue has, for instance, been addressed in some intense, didactically useful movies about the civil war in Rwanda, one of the worst conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes in recent years: Shooting Dogs and Hotel Rwanda. When the villains go out to kill members of the rival tribe, they just refer to them as ‘cockroaches,’ dehumanizing the others and reducing them to ugly, inferior creatures, effectively animalizing them.

Theoretically, people may be aware that humans have dignity, but oftentimes they are not willing to see the other as a human being. An additional task for any peace educator arises—to create an intercultural open-mindedness by reverting the process of dehumanization and making it clear, not only that human beings deserve to be treated with respect, but also that the other is a human being, not a dog or a cockroach, a target, the enemy, just a Taliban, Muslim, American, Westerner. Thus, the instruments of ethics and peace education I have mentioned already – teaching moral rules of reason, supporting the empathic skills every human being naturally has, helping individuals to (re)discover their moral sentiment – culminate in a form of self-knowledge which truly becomes, in the tradition of Stoic philosophy, an awareness not just of the individual’s identity but of her identity as a human being. The individual understands that she is equal to others and others are equal to her; that we all share the same nature, reason, needs, desires, hopes, emotions, fears. The goal is to help conflicting parties discover a common ground, their common human nature. Thus, empathy is not a mere ‘sentiment’ but ‘common sense’ and results from a truly philosophical act of reflection.

Rehumanization

How can we attain such goals in the military? Rehumanization can partly be achieved by reverting the process of desensitization towards killing. Grossman argues for such ‘resensitization’ with regard to society as a whole. He comments on the notably increased degree of violence and attributes it to media-induced conditioning processes similar to those practiced in modern armies (watching and engaging in virtual violence in movies and video games). The remedy Grossman suggests is more control (‘censure, not censorship’) so as to protect “the young” from being “hardwired for shooting at humans” – but he remains silent as to the situation in the armed forces. In fact, soldiers still need the mental readiness to kill in combat. A mere reversal of the desensitization process will therefore not suffice, although extreme forms of boot-camp drill, which amount to brainwashing and instill mindless ‘bloodthirstiness’ in recruits (‘boot-camp deification of killing’), and the use of dehumanizing language are outdated, inappropriate and intolerable in a context of peace-keeping and

44 There may be further, hope-inducing evidence that rehumanization is possible and that, ultimately, humans should be able to overcome ‘identity through division’ (and even wars) and build an ‘empathic civilization’ if, as Jeremy Rifkin argues, our ‘primary drive’ is empathic (The Empathic Civilization [New York: Penguin, 2010]).
46 Ibid., 252.257.317. This includes the recruits’ total dependence on drill sergeants and the use of chants like “kill, kill, kill, kill” during physical training (quoted in Grossman, On Killing, 251). The latter can even be questioned at a tactical level: a soldier’s purpose is not to kill, but to accomplish his mission.
humanitarian missions.\textsuperscript{47} More importantly, though, soldiers who have acquired the readiness to kill also need the ability to refrain from exercising this skill. They will have to distinguish between enemies and civilians, between a deadly threat and a morally relevant situation, between self-defense and de-escalation. The real problem is “unrestrained desensitization.”\textsuperscript{48} Thus, effective military training specifications should be amended rather than reverted. The demands on military professionals of our age have become more complex and complicated—along with the operational scenarios they are faced with in the field. This is not just a matter of de- and resensitization, but of moral (and operational, tactical, situational) judgment and discernment. Required is a reason-guided, ‘philosophical’ (or truly ‘human’) control of one’s mental abilities and (dis)inclinations which informs the decision to use lethal force and actualize one’s ability to kill in a given situation or not. At the same time, the incorporation of the moral standards that have been outlined above into (1) military ethics training and (2) the lived ethos of the military will also help to ‘resensitize’ soldiers.

These goals can only be achieved if all forms and stages of military training are revised and amended accordingly. Many adequate pedagogical vehicles for this are already in place, but they need to be filled with new contents and their use will have to be intensified. The creation and cultivation of a new warrior mindset as well as moral character formation necessitate a contemporaneous, alternative ‘conditioning for not-killing’ or, rather, since this part of military training clearly goes beyond mere conditioning, a truly reflective process which provides soldiers with, and constantly exposes them to, alternative options for acting. The military as an institution has already proven some ‘courage’ where such changes have been implemented, since soldiers will inevitably question—possibly in greater numbers than ever—the meaningfulness of their actions. They may scrutinize the purpose and legality of their orders and critically examine Army doctrine; and they might even have second thoughts about their job choice.\textsuperscript{49} Army ethicists don’t dodge such questions but seek to provide convincing answers. They welcome, support and generate ‘free thinking’ (within the limits of orders, laws, and policies) and mature minds.

It has already been pointed out that military ethics training and character formation take various forms. First of all, moral knowledge, or new forms thereof, need to be communicated. Ethics classes are the appropriate tool to do this. They will offer an analysis of societal values, of a soldier’s individual sense of morality, and of possible conflicts. The teaching will further include classical moral theories (deontological, consequentialist, aretological) and the above-mentioned philosophies, including a ‘Levinasian identification with the Other,’

\textsuperscript{47} Cf. Hannah and Sweeney, “Frameworks,” 77-83. Grossman (On Killing, 156ff) points out, however, that the use of dehumanizing language for the enemy can also be a spontaneous act of psychological self-protection which occurred even before armies perfected it (along with the use of euphemistic language for the act of killing another human being).

\textsuperscript{48} Grossman (On Killing, 261) makes a similar point when he describes “a safeguard in the conditioning” to kill, referring to the fact that soldiers and law-enforcement officers are “conditioned to fire only under authority” and when legally allowed to do so. There are “sanctions for firing at the wrong target” (260.314).

\textsuperscript{49} It should be acceptable that occasionally, as a result of increased ethics training, soldiers may become conscientious objectors. Cf. Julia Weigelt, “Ethik-Unterricht bei der Bundeswehr,” http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de (on the situation in Germany) and Carlos Bertha, “Teaching Military Ethics to ROTC Cadets”, http://isme.tamu.edu/JSCOPE00/Bertha00.html.
natural law and the human rights ethos. To a certain extent, the latter has long been an integral part of the military’s ethos and training–albeit in a pre-ethical, predominantly ‘legal’ sense. NATO armies are bound by national and international laws which demand respect for human dignity and human rights and, by law, supersede the potentially illegal orders one may receive from a superior (this legal framework of the military profession and its ethics includes a country’s constitution and code of military justice, the officer’s commission oath, humanitarian laws, international treaties, etc.\textsuperscript{50}). This is particularly relevant for peace-keeping missions and humanitarian interventions which are further ruled by specific mandates (UN, NATO, OSCE) and Rules of Engagement. Military ethics classes should also promote an understanding of, and respect for, pacifist approaches and non-violent alternatives of conflict-solving. Even peace studies literature could be used.\textsuperscript{51} Finally, soldiers should also be furnished historic examples of military leaders who have practiced humanity in times of war. Practical application (learning by doing) may in the final analysis be more important but military pedagogy has sometimes neglected the theoretical groundwork. The commonly used pedagogy of ‘demonstration and imitation’ needs to be preceded by thorough explanation (= EDI). The presentation of information alone is, of course, not enough. A Socratic approach which provides a forum for explanation, dialogue, discussion, and shared problem-solving facilitates true understanding.

Application is the next step. This starts with examples (possibly including movies and other instructional materials) and case studies which emphasize the possibility or need of de-escalation and non-violent solutions and, more generally, create awareness for morally relevant situations. Of vital importance is the development of realistic scenarios which are constantly updated. They will anticipate, as accurately as possible, a wide array of ambiguous situations and dilemmas that emerge in the field. This can be assured through cooperation with the armed forces’ Lessons Learned Centers whose staff may need additional ethical competence so as to focus on situations (‘lessons’) that are morally relevant and provide trainers and leaders with the material they need (in publications which propagate ‘best practices,’ e.g. the German Army’s quarterly brochure, ADEL\textsuperscript{52}). Constant training in realistic scenarios teaches soldiers to

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\item \textsuperscript{50} For more details cf. Hartle, “Moral Principles,” 130ff. – It should be noted, though, that the human rights ethos is deeply rooted in philosophy. A philosophical (and theological) idea has become its fundamental legal norm (cf. Arno Anzenbacher, \textit{Einführung in die Philosophie} [Wien: Herder, 1992], 289ff).
\item \textsuperscript{51} Bundeswehr institutions charged with the study and development of military ethics (including the Center for Military History and Social Sciences) are engaged in academic cooperation with peace research institutes outside the military (e.g. through interdisciplinary and international networks). Other nations, including the USA, do the same. The military does not (anymore) see the study of peace as undermining military efforts but has long accepted it as a universal policy goal and framework within which the recourse to military force, albeit undeniably realistic, is only a ‘necessary evil’.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Another such example is that of a military ambulance driver in Bosnia who didn’t recognize a severe traffic accident as a morally relevant situation which would have required him to act (Baarda and Verweij, \textit{Military Ethics}, 15). There was no potential conflict with the purpose of his mission; he just didn’t have explicit “orders to assist civilians” and lacked the moral sensitivity to realize that this was a situation in which he had a moral responsibility towards others (civilians). Other examples could include instances of torture and the well-known case from Iraq in which “an officer chose to mistreat a prisoner to extract information about a planned ambush on the officer’s unit” (Hartle, “Moral Principles,” 137). For more “dilemmas for use during instruction,” cf. Baarda and Verwij, \textit{Military Ethics}, 345ff. Finally, our focus here is on operational scenarios, but ethics training will also prepare leaders “to
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resolve issues of moral relevance “in their minds ahead of time” and make decisions “in advance,” so that they act ‘spontaneously,’ yet deliberately and rightly, when they are faced with a similar situation in the field.  

Successful moral character formation will also incorporate extracurricular experiences and “trigger events” which reinforce the appeal of a truly humanitarian ethos. A supportive organization and shared “living under the Honor System” are equally important. Concrete role models of inspiring leaders—who embody army values, practice humanity and courageous restraint, and support moral debate, reflection, and understanding among their subordinates—play a particular role in this process.

Some of these changes and new approaches have already been implemented in the United States, particularly at service academies such as West Point, but more could be done. Military ethics has to be taken seriously by everybody. It has to permeate the entire leadership culture of the armed forces. This focus on constant moral engagement of service members which is reinforced by trainers, leaders, superiors and a favorable (“value-laden”) command climate is a goal that the Bundeswehr concept of Innere Führung and the US Army’s new “Cadet Leader Development System” (CLDS) share. However, we are not yet effective enough as long as some superiors—and even chaplains—occasionally just revert to some vague and general reflections on ‘just war’ when they are confronted with the moral troubles and concerns of cadets. Besides, military ethics deserves a prominent place not just at service academies and similar institutions but also in ROTC programs. ROTC graduates roughly constitute thirty percent of commissioned officers in the US armed forces but military ethics still seems to get less emphasis in such programs. Similarly, ethics needs to be included in the training of non-commissioned officers and enlisted men as well, possibly following and intensifying the Bundeswehr model of LKU. In an effort to better coordinate ethics training throughout the

handle more day-to-day (and far more common) ethical dilemmas: racial discrimination, alcohol abuse, unsatisfactory performance, command influence, etc.” (Bertha, “Teaching Military Ethics”).

This is, of course, the goal of all aspects of military training (cf. Grossman, On Combat, 162.168).

Such events “jolt people out of their complacency and into a period of deep self-reflection, thus paving the way for exceptional individual development” (Hannah and Sweeney, “Frameworks,” 84). However, instructors may sometimes be able to plan the conditions for the emergence of such events. They are not restricted to theater-specific training but can also arise within cadet training (regarding academy life and violations of the honor system, e.g. lying, cheating, or situations faced on tactical training missions). Placing cadets “within a series of increasingly complex and ambiguous real or virtual situations” prepares them to “reassess their knowledge, make hard decisions” and thus get ready for the combat realities they will have to face in the field (74).

Hartle, “Moral Principles,” 137.

Baarda and Verweij, Military Ethics, 25ff.

Cf. Don M. Snider, “Developing Leaders of Character at West Point,” in Forging the Warrior’s Character, 3-22.


Bertha, “Teaching Military Ethics,” argues for the need of explicit, semester-long military ethics courses and notices an absence of such courses in ROTC programs. I tried to verify whether this claim was up to date through a brief survey of websites. A cursory inspection seems to confirm it: military ethics is mentioned nearly everywhere, but it is usually just part of introductory military science classes. At this point, however, I cannot speak as to the effectiveness of such modules.

The German approach, which combines military leadership and civic education, is similar to the West Point model of a ‘liberal arts’ education. Its goal, however, is a Bundeswehr-wide leadership culture, going beyond the
armed forces, Germany has recently established a “Central Contact Point for Military Ethics Training” (ZETHA) which trains multiplicators and offers ethics seminars for military leaders (focusing on pedagogy and implementation).

It is essential that ethics is incorporated into all stages of basic, advanced, and pre-deployment training (or theater-specific “Supplementary Pre-Deployment Training for Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Operations”). Thus, soldiers don’t just ‘study cases’ in the classroom but are put into realistic operational scenarios in simulation exercises (with the support of media technology and professional role-players, e.g. at the German Armed Forces United Nations Training Center or similar institutions). They are required to apply their skills, make actual decisions, and experience the consequences. Finally, such concrete forms of constant moral exercise have to be practiced outside training periods as well, at home and during deployment. It is a good principle of military leadership that day-to-day operations should, whenever possible, have a training effect as well. ‘Dull routine’ ought to be avoided. Commanding officers are responsible for the ongoing training of their units; and the integration of moral components could be seen as a chance to design regular exercises in a more varied and attractive way.

**Being-With-the-Other: Information as a Task of Peace Education**

Ideally, individuals—who sometimes belong to conflicting parties without really understanding why—need to get a chance to really meet ‘the Other.’ Where a direct approach is impossible, examples of successful peace mediation, which “touch the moral imagination” (J.P. Lederach), are an essential instrument of peace-building. They attest—and appeal to—a shared desire for peace, demonstrate that coexistence is possible, and emphasize the alikeness of humans. The examples Lederach has collected include a reference to the end of the civil war in Tajikistan (1992-97) where the opponents learned to trust one another when they realized that they had so much in common, as human beings, and that they were all tired of violence. The change was possible not because of the “technical skills of the peace mediators, local or national political power, fears of a broader war, pressure from the international community” or a “particular religious tradition;” rather, “it was the serendipitous appearance of moral imagination in human affairs.”

Peace education and military ethics classes will use such positive examples and case studies which prove how successful peace-building can be, as well as other ways of visualizing – and thus at least indirectly ‘meeting’ – the ‘Other’ (e.g. interviews, stories, documentaries). Peace Studies classes have made effective use of new technologies to facilitate actual “communication across cultures” (e.g. the Global Connection and Exchange Program Afghanistan which uses various online platforms to “create and maintain conversations and friendship”). The Bundeswehr’s “cultural awareness” seminars, as well as instructional materials covering the culture of deployment areas, have similar objectives. Many countries support

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international military cooperation and exchange at schools and training facilities or participate in multinational exercises which increase (joint) operability and intercultural awareness. In the field, cultural advisors and interpreters further support the process of understanding the host country’s culture through contact.

Oftentimes, information is a first task if and when our audience (college students as well as service members) tend to think in stereotypes or are simply uninformed. College professors witness an irritating lack of historical as well as political awareness among their students and are confronted with the need to address “changes in student attitudes and values, as interest in the ‘War on Terror’ and invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq has moderated into apathy and detachment.”

An increasing number of students are incapable of producing any detailed knowledge of what our soldiers do and suffer, or the atrocities they witness and commit or are forced to commit. This sense of detachment and distance, a gap between the soldiers fighting in far-away countries and “those at home” is nothing new; it did not start with today’s small wars and counterinsurgency operations. S. Sassoon noticed it during World War I, and since then it has further contributed to the post-traumatic stress soldiers suffer from when they come home, increasing their feeling of isolation or ‘alienation,’ of not being understood, of having no one to talk to. Many of our troops (both those currently deployed and veterans) complain about the public’s lack of support. But the issue here is not just an adequate understanding of our soldiers, in order to reduce and soothe the effects of PTSD. The public also needs to understand the reasons, realities, and overall costs and consequences of the conflicts our nations are involved in. We need to take an all-encompassing approach that, ultimately, also aims at understanding the other side’s thinking. Even soldiers are often unaware of, or disinterested in, the wider political implications of the conflicts they are fighting in their country’s name, and don’t look beyond their own, personal experiences.

We need to create a climate of understanding. If democracy in its broadest sense and ‘government by discussion’ (Sen, Mill) are the only ways of overcoming group violence and creating peace, we need, first of all, informed citizens and informed soldiers. A soldier is not just someone (as is sometimes said) who voluntarily agrees to a certain limitation of his civil rights and liberties. He remains part of the informed public. There is a lot of truth in a slogan the US Army National Guard recently (2012) used in a recruitment campaign – “the best soldier is an educated soldier” – but it begs validation on levels that go beyond mere career training. Civic education (classes and other measures) which aims at fostering a ‘questioning culture’ within the military is therefore part of the German concept of Innere Führung. Awareness of the political dimensions and ethical implications of his mission and his orders is not detrimental to a soldier’s respect for the hierarchic structure of the military. On the contrary, it allows him to

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63 In his well-known “Declaration” (1917), he aims to “destroy the callous complacence with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.”

64 Thus, the findings about PTSD among Vietnam veterans J. Shay famously published twenty years ago (Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character [New York: MacMillan, 1994]) still ring true and have been corroborated by numerous later studies.
maintain a sense of his individual dignity as a human person, without which the military would degenerate into an inhuman and alienating institution. Even informing college students can facilitate the process of re-humanization within the military as well, directly or indirectly. Some college students (in the US more so than in Germany) later enlist in the armed forces. Others have family and friends who serve. It is the task of any educator to shape society positively, creating open-mindedness through formation and information of a country’s young generation.

In *On Combat*, Grossman initially argues that a society can’t do without warriors, whereas “we could go for a generation without” doctors, engineers, and teachers, and “civilization as we know it would still survive.” The latter may be true, but the point is that this *state of our civilization* (“as we know it”) and its fundamental precepts–where war seems normal and an inevitable necessity–need to be changed. That is something only educators and civilian decision-makers can accomplish (not the military), and it may take generations.

Grossman’s initial argument only speaks to those who lack the courage to leave the logic of violence behind. Then, however, Grossman widens his understanding of “peace warriors” to include “those in every profession, with and without guns, who are dedicated to moving our world forward to peace;” and this is very much in line with the above mentioned suggestions for creating and promoting, through education, the hopeful and inspiring vision of a peaceful world among young people. The fact that, realistically, we also need the means to confront evil does not undermine such efforts.

**Mission Command and Ethics**

It has already been pointed out that the need for peace education, information and moral formation applies within the armed forces as well, especially when cadets and future officers are among our students. While all soldiers need moral training, experience shows that adverse incidents can best be prevented if military leaders teach by example (informal ethics training) and when they stay with their troops. Constant supervision is, in fact, sometimes the only way to guarantee discipline. But the commanding officer needs some latitude; this must foster and co-exist alongside a willingness to create a *relationship* with his subordinates and to integrate moral standards into his leadership. The German *Bundeswehr* has, in the aftermath of World War II, developed *Innere Führung* as a leadership culture meant to prevent any kind of mindless ‘command and obey.’ This includes the principle of *Auftragstaktik* [Mission Command] which has become part of NATO doctrine and is being implemented by the US military as

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66 The thesis that war is inevitable because it has biological roots in the human nature seems “scientifically incorrect” (*Seville Statement on Violence*, adopted by UNESCO in 1989).
67 Grossman acknowledges that some progress has been made in this regard. He cites the “Weinberger Doctrine” as an example (*On Killing*, 292).
68 Therefore, one of the *Bundeswehr’s* official responses to the 2006 scandal (along disciplinary action and legal charges as well as the review of pre-deployment training) was Defense Minister Jung’s call for increased and improved supervision (26 Oct 2006). – The positive effect of ethical leadership has been shown by various studies. For examples from the Iraq War, cf. Patrick J. Sweeney and Sean T. Hannah, “High-Impact Military Leadership: The Positive Effects of Authentic Moral Leadership on Followers,” in *Forging the Warrior’s Character*, 91-115.
69 Cf. *Allied Joint Doctrine for Land Operations* (AJP-3.2).
Mission command “aims to transfer the scope for decision-making to the best suited level. Only with the necessary freedom of action is it possible to immediately react to situational developments in the complex and dynamic operational environment, and to seize a favorable moment instead of waiting for orders.” This does not only have a tactical dimension. Such an understanding of leadership itself “cannot be implemented by order. It is rather the result of a long process during which all military leaders are taught common core values. Mission command is based on the willingness to accept responsibility and to cooperate as well as the ability to act independently and resourcefully,” thereby also taking into consideration political, intercultural, and ethical dimensions of a mission. The American approach mirrors some of these goals and explicitly refers to its conceptual roots in the German idea of Auftragstaktik. While the main goal is for the commander to position himself “as needed to best accomplish the mission,” Gen. M. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acknowledges that it “is not a mechanical process” one “follows blindly,” and that “Mission Command challenges commanders to cultivate a bias for action in their subordinates, develop mutual trust and understanding, and exercise moral nerve and restraint.”

To be sure, Mission Command is as such not an ethical concept but a “warfighting function.” It is meant to correct the shortcomings of Detailed Command (fixed rules and precise orders how to accomplish a mission). It addresses the complex challenges of modern warfare, human error, the dynamics and uncertainty of operations, thus aiming “to help Army forces to function more effectively.” Mission accomplishment remains the objective. However, Mission Command provides a framework for the new ‘command climate’ which is required for ethical leadership. It allows for the integration of ethical standards into military decision-making, even at lower levels in the command-structure, since it is guided by the following principles: emphasis on the “human factor” in military operations, information-sharing, clear communication of a commander’s intent, shared understanding, interaction and collaboration, “cohesive teams” and “mutual trust” between commanders and subordinates (this requires time), “shared humanity,” “concern for subordinates’ welfare,” dialogue and exchange of ideas, “critical and creative thinking,” centralized intent and planning but “dispersed execution through disciplined initiative,” personal freedom of action and situational judgment granted to “agile and adaptive” subordinates, and acceptance of “prudent risk.” Furthermore, as outlined above, human rights, ethics and “civil” as well as “legal considerations” have become an integral part and strategic necessity of contemporary military operations, since “a hostile civilian population can threaten the operations of deployed friendly forces”. ADRP 6-0 recognizes that military leaders may work in teams with civilians

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70 Cf. ADRP 6-0: Mission Command (2012). The US Army also established a “Mission Command Center of Excellence” at its Combined Arms Center (Ft. Leavenworth).


72 Mission Command White Paper, 3 Apr 2012. In the following, quotes are from ADRP 6-0.

73 “Soldiers two echelons down must easily remember and clearly understand the commander’s intent” (2-14). In the past, subordinates rarely had access to information about the context and wider dimensions of a specific order or mission. However, shared understanding also requires revised (and more demanding) training standards. The Bundeswehr has long trained military leaders at higher command levels (two echelons up).
(representatives of the host nation, NGOs, etc.) and that such “variety can produce alternative options” for acting (3-10).  

The Bundeswehr approach combines Mission Command and Innere Führung and builds on the idea that officers absorb its core values. Yet, their training is only efficacious if they actually carry these values to the battlefield (and not just their technical and tactical skills) so that they, and the men and women they are responsible for, truly are respectful and respect-worthy human beings, even in the worst conceivable circumstances of a warzone – a bit like Socrates who was praised for his philosophical composure even during the military campaigns he participated in.  

Thus, if officers and soldiers—in the way they live, not unlike philosophers—demonstrate virtues such as courage and discipline, self-restraint and respect, they exemplify what it means to be human. This is something they can truly be proud of, something that qualifies a soldier as a ‘hero.’ The oftentimes inflationary use of the word ‘hero’ for service members may be caused by confusion about its etymology. Not just the fact that someone joins the armed forces—even if it is for expressly virtuous reasons like the idealistic desire to defend and protect one’s country—and is therefore willing to be (and even die) on the battlefield makes him a hero. A hero is someone who distinguishes himself on the battlefield. This, often enough, leaves at least some room to carry out one’s mission with humanity; it makes it possible for extraordinary courage to be shown by practicing ‘courageous restraint.’  

Military ethics training usually builds upon a virtue ethics approach in the Aristotelian sense but is sometimes being reduced to a set of values and (secondary) virtues traditionally associated with the military (duty, loyalty, integrity, discipline, honor, selflessness, service, sacrifice, obedience, courage and the like). Thus it only constitutes a specific code of conduct or professional (self-)ethics. Innere Führung calls for more than that. However, the two  

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74 ADRP 6-0 doesn’t mention ethics specifically (the document often refers to classic combat scenarios) but this is one of several passages which indicate openness for non-violent solutions and demand ethical leadership as well as respect for noncombatants and the local populace. Other passages refer to interaction with locals, cultural competence, concern and responsibility for the moral and mental stamina of subordinates, rules of engagement and other legal norms; cf. 2-27, 2-66f., 2-79, 2-84, 3-9.  
75 Plato, Symposium 219e-221c.  
76 This is in line with Gen. J. Hackett’s claim that “good soldiers must first of all be good people” (quoted in Hartle, “Moral Principles,” 118).  
77 The Greek word originally means ‘protector, defender’ but refers to semi-gods who show extraordinary, superhuman strength and perfection. That is what ‘hero’ has come to mean as a moral concept: (‘over-’) human excellence and virtue.  
78 Thus, while it is more courageous to fight than to flee, it may be considered even more courageous—and truly heroic—to exercise courageous restraint. – C.N. Loynes, veteran of the Indian wars, experienced the dark flip side of this individual ‘room for humanity’ (which turned into inhumanity) when he looked back remorsefully on the battle of the Big Hole, MT in 1877: “We received orders to give three volleys, then charge. We did so. That act would hit anyone, old as well as young, but what any individual soldier did while in the camp, he did as a brute, not because he had any orders to commit such acts” (Big Hole National Battlefield Visitor Center documentation).  
79 Aristotle has, for instance, been called “the intellectual father” of the US Air Force Academy’s educational efforts (quoted in Robinson, “Ethics Training,” 30).  
80 A guiding principle here is the idea of an ethical responsibility towards one’s own profession. – An example of this may be the Pentagon’s 2006 announcement of additional ethics training for all soldiers serving in Iraq. This
approaches can be combined if, for instance, “Army values” are defined in a broader sense to include respect for those (legal and moral) principles that constitute a humanitarian ethos. 

Soldiers who are motivated by, and supported in their quest for, critical (self)reflection, freedom of thought, a desire for information, sincere respect for each individual human being, responsibility for the weak, and the effort to minimize human suffering can develop a ‘new’ understanding of loyalty—i.e. loyalty to an idea and ethos, not just to one’s ‘corps’, “to an organization or to an individual.” They may even acquire a broader concept of ‘patriotism’ which transcends the boundaries of nationalism and “unquestioning support of the government (...). True patriotism lies in supporting the values a country is supposed to cherish.”

This notion of patriotism could encompass all humankind and the cause of world peace. Thus, military ethics would instruct service members in an all-encompassing, universal form of human virtuousness.

It is important that service academies like West Point or Germany’s Offizierschulen are among the vanguards of this change and see the need for “moral empowerment,” since the commander is the central figure in Mission Command. Everything depends on the “positive command climate” he creates in his unit (ADRP 6-0: 2-29) which is characterized by the factors outlined above. The “art of command” is acquired and perfected through “experience, study, observation” (2-29). Military ethics training which focuses on character development and seeks to inculcate a refined ethos in cadets has an important part in providing leaders with the

was really a call for more discipline, “professional military values” and “professional conduct in combat” (Gen. P. Chiarelli, quoted in Robinson, 23), mainly in response to a strategic necessity arising from lost credibility and public support because of the acts of individual service members and in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib scandal. Hartle, however, emphasizes the importance of an unequivocal “institutional response.” Although incidents do happen (and ‘immoral leaders have always plagued armies’), the response proves that “military ethic remains firmly in place and central to the development of leaders of character” (139). There is “no tolerance for any deviation from the rules of war” (Grossman, On Combat, 361). – Some measures, however, may not prove effective in addressing moral issues (these also include recently publicized ethics violations such as sexual misconduct and abuse in the armed forces, Army recruiting and Navy contracting frauds, and the Nuclear Force cheating scandal in Montana). For instance, the Pentagon’s mandatory online ethics training (similar formats are used in the corporate world) may provide some useful information but it builds on little more than a ‘common (moral) sense’ and, by itself, cannot guarantee a true change of moral climate and character (http://ogc.hqda.pentagon.mil/EandF/training_EandF.aspx).

Mozart’s Don Giovanni may be seen as an example of the possible discrepancy between personal courage and a lack of ‘humanity,’ i.e. respect for the other in her otherness and wholeness (regardless of the fact that the women he betrayed share a certain responsibility for their own infelicity).

This is a key idea behind West Point’s new CLDS which, to a certain extent, is a revision and reinterpretation of traditional principles, e.g. the academy’s “Cadet Prayer” and its “moral precepts;” cf. Hartle, “Moral Principles,” 118. Similarly, the ‘relational aspect’ of military leadership had been emphasized in the past as well, e.g. by Gen. J.A. Lejeune who saw officers as ‘fathers’ or ‘teachers’ rather than ‘superiors’ (Marine Corps Order No. 29, 14 August 1920).

Ibid., 127.

Howard Zinn, A Power Governments Cannot Suppress (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2007), 112.

Hannah and Sweeney, “Frameworks,” 77.

Snider (“Developing Leaders”, 16) points out that “in the United States Code, Title 10-Armed Forces (3583)” a commander’s “exemplary conduct” and “ethical stewardship of his unit” has been established “as a matter of law.” – ADRP 6-0 offers a summary of the elements that constitute a positive command climate (2-74ff).
mindset and skills for success in this task. ADRP 6-0 stresses the role of “professional competence, personal example, and integrity” in this context (2-1). The pedagogical tools employed to educate and form such leaders have already been mentioned (formal and informal/curricular and extracurricular instruction, discussion, realistic scenarios, dilemma preparation, constant exercise, trigger events, peer interaction, leadership and lived examples). The use of role models, both concrete and historical, seems to be of particular importance in this context. Even the old ideals of chivalry or ‘officer and gentleman’ should not be seen as elitist and outdated. They can still speak to young people of today if emphasis is placed on the underlying (practical) ethos, not merely the romanticized pathos that is oftentimes associated with such ideas. In fact, the medieval ideal of virtuous and honorable Christian knights—who live by a ‘warrior ethos’ in accordance with the standards famously formulated in Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* and tend to the sick, look after the poor, fight evil, protect the weak and defenseless—has successfully been used in recent recruitment campaigns (US Marines); and it has proven effective in its continuing appeal to cadets who are willing to “fully and conscientiously commit themselves to this code of honor.”

Military ethics training alone cannot, of course, heal a society which, at times, may seem to be lacking a moral compass. More important sources, instruments and institutions of moral training in that regard include families and schools, local communities and religious institutions, public entities, and the media. However, the influence of military ethics on the ‘citizens in uniform’ should not be underestimated. It provides at least an important *additional* source of moral teaching and training for service members; and in some cases, it even seems to be the *only* way to reach these young people with moral influences. Instructors and officers in charge will have to bear the responsibility of their office, power, and authority. They should see military ethics training in all its forms as an opportunity to help young people mature into virtuous persons.

At the same time, the military needs to be as *selective* as possible in its recruitment campaigns. The complexity of modern small wars has an influence on the job profile of soldiers and, particularly, military leaders. It can’t be too much to ask highly trained servicemen to acquire the ability to deal with complex operational scenarios, and they need moral judgment skills as much as they need “the skill and will to kill.” The degree of professionalism in modern Western armies will facilitate the accomplishment of such goals. Those who serve, for instance, in America’s armed forces today are not draftees, unprepared civilians who need to be transformed into warriors in times of emergency or national necessity (as in World War II). It may further help that many nations, including Germany, have reduced the size of their armed forces in response to a changing world. A smaller army can, ideally, afford to be more selective, hold soldiers to higher standards, and offer more professional training in all regards.


88 Grossman, *On Combat*, 159 (Grossman only describes selection tests used by law-enforcement agencies to determine this *second* qualification in applicants).

89 It is imperative that recruitment officers evaluate a candidate’s motivation for joining the armed forces as carefully and sincerely as possible, not dictated by a quota system.
the *Bundeswehr* approach emphasizes the need to include ethical understanding, agency and efficacy among the *requirements for deployment* as well. It is now becoming a factor in the screening, selection and validation process by which superiors and psychologists assess an individual’s readiness to be deployed to a mission area.90

Soldiers ought to demonstrate dignity, humanity, responsibility and respect towards any other person, not just towards their “band of brothers” (Shakespeare, *Henry V*). Some military ethicists, however, call for a different approach than virtue ethics, arguing that soldiers need to be prepared to solve “*conflicts* between requirements of various virtues” as well.91 Yet, this does not mean that a purely *utilitarian* approach would have to be chosen (possibly coming down to a mere strategic self-test in which the morality of one’s actions is only judged on the basis of their compatibility with the “operational effectiveness of the Army.”92) For, the Aristotelian approach is incomplete without the development of a particular virtue which helps address any situation and determine—in the light of all relevant factors—what is right and good and virtuous to do, i.e. the virtue of prudence. A military leader needs the latitude to judge a situation for himself and use prudence.93 Mission Command provides this latitude and encourages such judgment; and *Innere Führung* and ethics training – as well as commanders who foster “a culture which encourages ethical debate”94 – are ways of preparing soldiers for such situations. If this approach is successful, soldiers are morally mature agents with strong characters who act in a positive command climate. They will thus (1) recognize a morally relevant situation and (2) have the means to respond to it adequately, rather than being paralyzed by a dilemma or a highly stressful situation in which they have to deal with conflicting options and demands.

Nevertheless, situations of such difficulty may necessitate more concrete help. In response to this need, the German armed forces seek to equip military leaders with decision guidance that is *usable in the field*. ZInFü has developed a pocket-card-style moral self-test modeled after A. Pagano’s “Criteria for Ethical Decision Making in Managerial Situations”95 which have been modified and tailored to the needs of the military and stabilization operations. Military leaders are asked to apply five tests to a morally relevant situation. They will thus judge their options of acting (and of accomplishing their mission) by the following criteria96: (1) Is it

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93 Thus, again, he is also given the chance to exercise the active part of his dignity as an individual human being which has learned to use his reason. The virtue ethics approach to military ethics and its humanist foundations (religious or otherwise) are inseparable.
94 Robinson, “Ethics Training,” 34.
95 *UIC College of Business Administration Research Paper* No. 10-05 (1987). – The test does not pretend to offer a precise formula that would be applicable to any moral situation without further judgment. It does, however, offer concrete guidelines for moral decision-making. Its guiding principle is similar to the idea behind Mission Command, which is primarily seen as a “guide for action.”
96 My overview is limited to the criteria used by the *Bundeswehr* (Elßner, “Praxisorientierte Ethikausbildung,” 85-92), but I will use Pagano’s original words rather than retranslate the German terms.
legal? (2) The Light of Day Test (“Suppose that the action that is contemplated became a featured story on the news.”) (3) A Ventilation Test: Pagano explains that “the essence of this test is that other persons’ views and criticisms should be sought out.” The Bundeswehr version emphasizes that a decision-maker needs to be able to justify his actions before others, in particular friends and family. (4) The Golden Rule. (5) The Categorical Imperative. – While one may see a certain hierarchical order of ascending ethical significance among these criteria, the main idea is that an action should be avoided if only one of these tests has a negative result. This is in accordance with Pagano’s original idea: “Since the tests are based on ethical concepts that are imperfect, each test used separately cannot be used to judge the ethics of a given action. Taken together, however, the tests can provide useful insights into the ethics of a decision.”

The primary objective of this initiative is, of course, not that military leaders ‘literally’ rely on the use of this pocket card in a given situation. Rather, it is an additional tool that will increase a soldier’s professional competence and confidence in his own judgment and decision-making skills. Any form of military training fulfill the purpose of reducing uncertainty in the field. This is particularly relevant in the context of peace-keeping and civil affairs operations which produce new areas of uncertainty regarding legal and moral status. The Bundeswehr pocket card is mainly used during pre-deployment instruction where the five test questions are being explained, discussed, understood and applied to case studies (e.g. desecration of enemy corpses). This has proven successful and effective. More importantly, though, the pocket card format also allows individual soldiers to memorize, practice (mentally and in training scenarios), and internalize the moral self-test during deployment as well.

A final word: Is all of this realistic? Are we expecting too much? Are our recruits and cadets still willing to let themselves be challenged by these ideals? Do we live up to the standards? Not always. But that is no reason to give up. We should rather intensify our training. As long as we cannot live without armed forces we need to train them the best we can, and that includes moral training.

Bibliography


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98 Uncertainty is a factor which markedly increases the feeling of stress and contributes to the development of PTSD.
99 It is used in ZlnFü’s regularly scheduled seminars on mission-related knowledge and skills (tactical, strategic, psychological, political, cultural, legal, ethical, leadership, etc.).
100 This pedagogical principle is also rooted in the ancient philosophical tradition of ‘spiritual exercises’ (cf. Hadot, *Philosophy*, 85).


Beyond Sex Strikes: Women’s Movements, Peace Building, and Negotiation in *Lysistrata* and *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*

Andrea Hilkovitz

When I first saw *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, in fall 2009, I was struck by the many similarities between the women’s movement for peace portrayed in the documentary film and that depicted in the ancient Greek play *Lysistrata*. I had heard that women in Liberia had also staged a sex strike as part of their efforts, but I had not made more than a passing connection to *Lysistrata* before seeing the film. Others noticed these similarities as well. In his interview with Leymah Gbowee, the leader of the women’s movement in the documentary, comedian Stephen Colbert of *The Colbert Report* pointed out the connection, saying, “That’s just like the Greek play *Lysistrata*,” to which Gbowee replied that she “had not read the Greek play” and “didn’t have any idea of that play.”

The fact that Gbowee was unaware of *Lysistrata* makes the many similarities between the film and the play uncanny.

Both works are about women’s peace movements. *Lysistrata* portrays a group of ancient Greek women banding together to bring an end to the Peloponnesian War, and *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* documents the efforts of Liberian women to end their country’s civil war. Both works call attention to the uneven costs of war for women. Both works feature a female leader who is smart, strong, and strategic in her plan to end conflict and negotiate peace. The women’s movements in both works featured women staging a sex-strike, occupying public spaces, and uniting across cultural barriers to bring an end to conflict. Together, these works offer valuable insights into the role of women in the peacemaking process and attest to the power of women to come together to bring an end to conflict and to forge peace.

Both *Lysistrata* and *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* highlight the effects of war on women. When the Magistrate challenges the value of Lysistrata’s wool-working metaphor, in which she applies the wisdom of home economics to running the city-state, and demands to know what she has “done for the war effort,” Lysistrata replies:

*Done, curse you? We’ve contributed to it twice over and more. For one thing, we’ve given you sons, and then had to send them off to fight....For another, we’re in the prime of our lives, and how can we enjoy it, with our husbands always away on campaign and us left at home like widows? And quite apart from us married women, what about the unmarried ones who are slowly turning into old maids?*

*Pray the Devil Back to Hell* likewise portrays the costs of war for women. Rather than being relegated to collateral damage, women in the film are front and center. In her 2011 memoir *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*, Gbowee claims that the war story told by foreign reporters in written accounts and video clips focused on male fighters and diplomats and that, in these reports, “women are always in the...”

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* Andrea Hilkovitz is an Assistant Professor of English at Mount Mary University. She received her B.A. in English and French Studies from Rice University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from The University of Texas at Austin. She is a faculty affiliate of the Peacebuilding Certificate.


background,” “fleeing, weeping, kneeling before our children’s graves.”³ In contrast to what she calls the “traditional telling of war stories,” in which women’s “suffering is just a sidebar to the main tale,” the story told by the documentary is “about an army of women in white standing up when no one else would.”⁴ “Our stories,” Gbowee writes, “rarely are told.”⁵ In fact, Gbowee recounts how difficult it was for the filmmakers to find footage of the women’s movement; when asked why they had not filmed these women, photojournalists explained, “Why would we? They just looked pathetic.”⁶ In interviews that appear in the documentary, Gbowee and other women tell stories about the horrors of the civil war for women; in one such story, a woman is forced to watch as her husband is killed and her daughter is raped. In addition to sexual violence, the documentary film draws attention to other issues such as food scarcity and internal displacement, which affect women and children at rates much higher than men.

Both leaders capitalize upon the traditional roles ascribed to women in patriarchal societies as a means of justifying their anti-war stances. As I mentioned earlier, Lysistrata uses women’s roles as mothers and wives to critique a war that is killing their sons and leaving them alone to run their households. She also famously applies a model from the private sphere, wool-working, to the public sphere when she suggests that “the citizen body is a raw fleece” and that international diplomacy is much like unraveling a ball of wool.⁷ Gbowee also uses motherhood as a reason to get involved in the anti-war effort. In a statement that she delivered to the president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, Gbowee explicitly connected the roles of women as mothers to the popular notion that women are moral guardians: “the women of Liberia...are tired of war....We are now taking this stand, to secure the future of our children. Because we believe, as custodians of society, tomorrow our children will ask us, ‘Mama, what was your role during the crisis?’”⁸ In their negotiations with Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), this positioning of the women as mothers proved useful again, garnering the women respect in their efforts to convince the opposition group to attend peace talks in Ghana: “Our mothers came all the way from Liberia to talk to us. Well, mothers, because of you, we will go.”⁹ In Peace as a Women’s Issue, Harriet Hyman Alonso contends that “the motherhood theme,” which is used by both Lysistrata and Gbowee, “has provided women a societally acceptable cover for their highly political work.”¹⁰

The strategies used by both women’s movements are also remarkably similar. Of these, the fact that both women’s groups go on sex strikes is what most audiences focus on. In fact, I choose to teach Lysistrata partly because the play does not conform to students’ expectations about what ancient literature is like; it is filled with a lot of sexual innuendo and tongue-in-

⁴ Ibid., ix-x.
⁵ Ibid., x.
⁶ Ibid., 211.
⁷ Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 565-574.
⁸ Gbowee, Mighty Be Our Powers, 141.
⁹ Ibid., 143.
cheek wordplay that captivates their attention. In the Greek play, Lysistrata proposes the sex strike to the other women as follows: “Then I will tell you my plan....If we want to force the men to make peace, we must renounce...sex.” When the women react poorly to this proposal, and question what renouncing sex has to do with ending the war, Lysistrata explains why this strategy will be effective: “Well, just imagine. We’re at home, beautifully made up, and we walk around the house wearing sheer lawn shifts and nothing else; the men are all horny and can’t wait to leap on us; and we keep our distance and refuse to come to them – then they’ll make peace soon enough, you’ll see.” Later in the play, this strategy is put to great comic use when Myrrhine teases her husband by leaving the grotto where they are about to have sex for yet one more thing – a mattress, a pillow, a blanket, and two different perfume bottles. In Pray the Devil Back to Hell, Gbowee explains that her idea for the sex strike arose from “desperation.” The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) that she helped to launch and later led decided on the sex strike based on the thinking that “as a woman, you have the power to deny a man something he wants until the other men stop what they are doing.” In this strategy, no man was innocent; “by sin of commission or omission,” every man had a responsibility to help end the war. The women of the Mass Action dressed in white for peace and, unlike the women in Lysistrata, wore no makeup or jewelry. The intention, Gbowee later explained, was to evoke the “‘sackcloth and ashes’ described in the Book of Esther.” Whereas the sex strike in Lysistrata brought men to their knees, according to Gbowee, “it had little or no practical effect” in Liberia. However, in her memoir, Gbowee states that “it was extremely valuable in getting us media attention.” “Until today, nearly ten years later, whenever I talk about the Mass Action, ‘What about the sex strike?’ is the first question everyone asks.” Gbowee also points out that women protesters in rural areas actually had a more effective strategy in that they used the excuse of fasting and praying for peace to effectively stage a covert sex strike. The guise of prayer also protected them from their husbands, unlike the women in the capital who sometimes returned bruised after refusing sex.

As important as the sex strikes are in both women’s movements, however, they are but one part of a multifaceted strategy to end war. Beyond sex strikes, the women in both the play and the film also unite across cultural barriers and occupy public spaces to bring an end to conflict.

Lysistrata, an Athenian woman, calls women from other city-states together in an effort to end the Peloponnesian War: “[I]f all the women join together – not just us, but the Peloponnesians and Boeotians as well – then united we can save Greece.” She recognizes the need for women from all of the warring states to cooperate in order to bring peace because she perceives that the war is bringing ruin to the Greek people as a whole and is benefiting only

12 Ibid., 149-154.
13 Pray the Devil Back to Hell, directed by Gini Reticker (Fork Films, 2009), DVD.
14 Gbowee, Mighty Be Our Powers, 147.
15 Pray the Devil Back to Hell.
16 Gbowee, Mighty Be Our Powers, 136.
17 Ibid., 147.
18 Ibid., 147.
19 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 38-41.
their common enemy, the Persians. Lysistrata appeals to the male delegates from Athens and Sparta in particular, saying, “...though threatened by barbarian foes, / You ruin Greece’s towns and slay her men.”

Her idea to unite women across the boundaries of the warring states was radical at the time, particularly her vision at the end of the play that Athens and her longtime rival Sparta rule Greece together in friendly collaboration. The women in Pray the Devil Back to Hell also united across barriers, bringing women from different backgrounds together to achieve a common goal. Women in Monrovia joined with female refugees from rural Liberia, and women across West Africa supported the cause of Liberian women. Perhaps most importantly, Christian women and Muslim women joined forces in an unprecedented collaboration. As Gbowee writes in her memoir, “Christian and Muslim women had never worked together, and certainly not for anything political.”

In the film, this alliance is formed when Asatu, a Muslim woman, attends a meeting of the Christian Women’s Initiative (CWI) at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Monrovia. She stood up, announcing that what she had to say would come as a surprise to the congregation: “I’m the only Muslim in the church....We’re all serving the same God. This is not only for the Christian women....We will all work together to bring peace in Liberia.”

The Women in Peacebuilding Network recognized that Christian women and Muslim women were both suffering. They asked, “Does the bullet know Christian from Muslim? Does the bullet pick and choose?”

Both women’s movements—the fictional one portrayed in Lysistrata and the real one documented in Pray the Devil Back to Hell—attest to the power of women to come together in an effort to forge peace.

Another important strategy used by women in both the play and the film is to occupy public spaces. In Lysistrata, the elder women seize the Acropolis, which serves as Athena’s temple and as the treasury. When the Magistrate confronts Lysistrata and demands to know what she means “by shutting and barring the gates of our own Acropolis against us,” Lysistrata calmly explains that the move was intended “to keep the money safe and stop you from waging war.”

The Magistrate claims that “The war has nothing to do with money,” to which Lysistrata responds by pointing out the many ways in which men are invested in maintaining conflict, not the least of which is the need to prove their manhood in battle. So hungry are men for war that, in Lysistrata, they go “shopping in the Market Square in full armour, like lunatics” and they have squandered the funds in the treasury to the extent that “…thanks to you, our situation / Is that we’re on the brink of liquidation.”

In Pray the Devil Back to Hell, the women likewise stage sit-ins at various public locations. First, they choose to protest at the soccer field near the fish market. This location was chosen for its visibility, since Taylor passed by the field twice daily. Thousands of women came together in a Mass Action for Peace designed to get Taylor’s attention and embarrass him publicly. As a result of their protests, Taylor invited the women to meet with him. Later in the film, when peace talks are being held

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20 Ibid., 1133-1134.
21 Gbowee, Mighty Be Our Powers, 125.
22 Ibid., 125.
23 Ibid., 129.
24 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 486-488.
25 Ibid., 489.
26 Ibid., 555-556.
27 Ibid., 655-656.
in Accra, Gbowee and her team of women occupy the hallway outside the entrance to the meeting room. Frustrated by the lack of progress being made by the men in the room, two hundred women effectively locked the delegates inside until they reached a peace agreement. When security guards are called upon to arrest Gbowee for “obstructing justice,” she becomes so enraged that she threatens to strip off her clothes.  

In her memoir, Gbowee writes that “[i]n threatening to strip, I had summoned up a traditional power. In Africa, it’s a terrible curse to see a married or elderly woman deliberately bare herself….For this group of men to see a woman naked would be almost like a death sentence.” In yet another similarity between the women’s movement in the film and that in the play, the old women sent to seize the Acropolis also strip off their clothes in an assertion of power. Ironically, Gbowee and her troops are later called upon by the same security guards to block the windows when some of the delegates try to escape the meeting hall.

Though there are many similarities between the fictional women’s movement portrayed in Aristophanes’s play and the women’s movement depicted in Pray the Devil Back to Hell, there are also some important differences. Like the similarities noted before, these differences also offer valuable insights into the role of women in peace building and the power of women to bring an end to conflict and move toward reconciliation. Aside from being fictional, Lysistrata was written (by a man) as a mockery of women. In ancient Greece, the play would have been performed by an entirely male cast, with the female characters being depicted through grotesque exaggeration of their features. Rather than being seen as a great leader, Lysistrata was intended to be ridiculous. Her use of a home economics model, in particular – in which Lysistrata shows how to “unravel” the complex “international situation” by comparing the citizen body to a skein of wool – was meant to show that women had no business involving themselves in the affairs of the city-state. Moreover, Lysistrata and other female characters themselves give voice to the hopelessness of women on several occasions. At the beginning of the play, Lysistrata is frustrated that her appeal seems to have landed on deaf ears, saying, “[W]e women have the salvation of all Greece in our hands.” Her neighbor, Calonice, replies, “In our hands? Then Greece hasn’t much hope.” Later, when the women are aghast at her suggestion that they forgo sex, Lysistrata exclaims, “I didn’t realize that we women were such a total lot of nymphos. The tragic poets are right about us after all: shag, calve and dispose of, that’s the way we live.” Finally, though Lysistrata makes a rather convincing argument about why women should be involved in the political process, she does not envision a continued role for women beyond ending the current conflict, nor does she use her newfound power to effect real change in her status as a woman. At the end of the play, the wives reunite with their husbands in celebrating the end of war through dance, song, and sex.

My students are always disappointed when they realize that Lysistrata was not intended to have a feminist message, and they are very excited, therefore, when they see a real-world manifestation of the play in Pray the Devil Back to Hell. One of the differences that many of my

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28 Gbowee, Mighty Be Our Powers, 161.
29 Ibid., 162.
30 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 565-566.
31 Ibid., 30-31.
32 Ibid., 32.
33 Ibid., 138-140.
students notice is the fact that the women led by Gbowee realized that their role could not end with the ouster of Taylor and the end of the conflict. In the film, the women’s movement is shown to have an important role in disarmament as well as in electing Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the first female African head of state. Since then, Gbowee has helped to found the Women in Peace and Security Network (WIPSEN) and has continued to be an advocate for peace and reconciliation through nonviolent means, for which she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In this regard, in particular, the documentary serves as an effective counterpart to the play in that Gbowee and her group were able to achieve what Lysistrata and her group could not even imagine.

Though I teach these works in a World Literature class, I believe that they have interdisciplinary applications. In order for the reader to understand how the play and the documentary film might be used across the disciplines, I will next provide some information about my course and the context in which it is taught, details about the assignments that compose this unit, and an overview of the peace studies concepts that inform my student learning objectives for this unit.

I teach Lysistrata and Pray the Devil Back to Hell as part of a unit about women’s peace movements that I developed in my World Literature course at Mount Mary University. World Literature at Mount Mary is a one-semester survey course that covers ancient to modern literatures from around the world. Like many survey courses, it is organized chronologically to help English majors gain an understanding of the development of human writing systems and literary periods. Because the course covers a time period of nearly 5000 years and includes literatures from almost twenty nations, I have also developed some thematic groupings that help students make connections across time periods and cultures. Since I teach The Iliad in this course, and since my approach to teaching Homer’s epic poem about war was already informed by a peace studies perspective, a unit about women’s peace movements that expanded on concepts such as the gendering of war was a useful addition to the course. In addition to English students who take World Literature as part of their major coursework, the majority of students in my course take it to satisfy core and global requirements. For these students especially, thematic units such as this one about women’s peace movements help them make sense of a wide variety of literary genres produced by disparate cultures across vast periods of time. Finally, it is important to mention that Mount Mary is a women’s college, since this context informs not only the makeup of the students who take my course but also the approaches and assumptions they bring to a discussion about women, war, and peace.

After reading Lysistrata outside of class, and discussing the play in class, I present students with their first paper assignment, one of the options for which is to write about Aristophanes’s play in relation to the documentary film Pray the Devil Back to Hell. At this point I also announce the upcoming conference of the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, and I encourage students who are interested in writing about this topic to consider forming a panel or roundtable discussion. After showing the film in class, and discussing it as a whole group, I ask students to work in pairs or small groups (3-4 students) to brainstorm similarities and differences between the women’s movements. I then ask the students to share their ideas with the whole class, and I sketch out two columns on the board to help them visualize a comparison and contrast organization for their papers. Outside of class, students are
asked to respond to discussion forum prompts that help them elaborate on their understanding of the concepts covered in class by finding textual evidence to support their arguments.

Because it is a fast-paced survey course, unfortunately I do not have time in World Literature to expose students to peace studies concepts through supplemental readings or lectures. Instead, I find that video clips have been helpful in establishing a framework for class discussions about the play and the film. For the past two years, for example, I have shown several video clips from the PBS documentary *Women, War and Peace* that challenge students’ perceptions about war being the domain of men and give them a better understanding of the plight of women in conflict zones. This documentary also makes the case that women are not just victims of conflict but also agents of change, and it introduces students to the idea that women should be involved in negotiating an end to conflict and in building a lasting peace. In a similar vein, I have also shown Zainab Salbi’s TED talk, “Women, Wartime, and the Dream of Peace,” in which she distinguishes between the frontline of soldiers and the “backline” of women in conflict. My course is an elective course for the Peacebuilding Certificate at Mount Mary, which means that I often have several students in the class who have prior knowledge of core concepts from the field of peace studies; these students regularly share information from their other peace studies coursework that helps to expand on some of the concepts I introduce in class.

Though I do not explicitly teach all of the concepts listed below, my readings of the text and film are informed by a number of core concepts from the field of peace studies. These concepts shape my students’ discussions, both in class and online, and form a subset of learning objectives for the unit.

The first concept, the intersection of war and gender, informs our discussions of *The Iliad* and is also key to the reading of *Lysistrata*. First, I outline the ways in which war has traditionally been gendered; in this view, men figure as brave warriors and women are simultaneously the cause of war and the victims of war, either as the spoils of war or as the weeping widows who mourn their husbands’ deaths. According to Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, “the Trojan War is often told in terms of a just warrior (Odysseus) saving a kidnapped, innocent woman (Helen) from her aggressive, foreign captor (Paris).” In asking my students to write in the discussion forum about the ways in which the portrayals of mortal men and women differ in *The Iliad*, I am able to highlight traditional gender roles in war. In class, we also discuss the ways in which gender is constructed through war – in other words, the ways in which men in *The Iliad* need war; their manliness is dependent on finding honor and glory on the battlefield and in reaping the most spoils of war as a reward for their efforts. When we turn our attention to *Lysistrata*, my students are able to point out the many ways in which war is gendered as masculine and peace is gendered as feminine. In doing so, they see that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain phrases it, “We...are the heirs of a [Western] tradition that assumes an affinity between women and peace, men and war,” a tradition that dates back at least to the ancient Greeks. A number of other scholars in the fields of feminism and peace studies have noted the foundational role of *Lysistrata* to the notion that women are peacemakers. In *Women and

Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security, Betty A. Reardon claims that “from the ancient days of Lysistrata...women have believed in, demonstrated about, and struggled...for an attainable and viable alternative to war.”36 Likewise, Estelle B. Freedman argues, “The association of women and pacifism runs deep in western culture, going back at least to the ancient Greek drama Lysistrata.”37 Interestingly, Pray the Devil Back to Hell simultaneously calls attention to the gendering of warfare as masculine in its critique of both Taylor and LURD and perpetuates the gendering of peace as feminine in its celebration of women peace activists.

The next concept that I introduce my students to during this unit is militarism. As defined by Sjoberg and Via, “militarism pervades societies...before, during, and after the discrete event that the word ‘war’ is usually used to describe.”38 Students are able to identify Lysistrata’s concern with the fact that men are wearing armor to go to the market as a critique of militarism: in response to the Magistrate’s suggestion that dressing up in military gear is “what a brave man should do,” Lysistrata says that “a man carrying a shield with a ferocious Gorgon on it—going and buying minnows at the fishmonger’s...[is]...ridiculous.”39 Pray the Devil Back to Hell offers its own critique of militarism when the women note the fascination that child soldiers have with playing the part of the warrior, mugging with their guns for cameras, unaware of the ways in which they are being used as fodder for the war machine. To expand on this learning objective in the future, I would like to ask students to think about examples of militarism in their own lives, such as the popularity of camo print, using the example provided by Cynthia Enloe in Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link.40

As mentioned previously, I also introduce my students to the concept of maternal pacifism, since both the text and film feature a female leader who uses motherhood as a means to justify her anti-war activism. According to Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg, “Women have historically justified their collective actions in the public ‘male’ sphere as an extension of their nurturing responsibilities within the domestic sphere to encompass national and global ‘families.’”41 Though some feminist scholars are wary of maternal pacifists, Carolyn Strange contends that a maternal approach does not preclude them from being, or becoming, political: “Collective action in the peace movement has...been an effective means of political education.”42 Strange further argues that maternalism offers “tactical advantages,” as follows: “on the one hand, the moderate image of the peace mothers makes their message acceptable to a broad spectrum of observers; on the other, their emphasis on motherhood has proved the most potent device to mobilize previously apolitical women.”43 Similarly, Alonso argues that

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38 Sjoberg and Via, Gender, War, and Militarism, 7.
39 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 558-561.
43 Ibid., 217.
motherhood “is the most successful organizing tool available to women,” and Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott contend that “the practice of mothering contains prescriptions and potential for peace activism.” As much as I like using the concept of maternalism to highlight the similarities between Lysistrata and Gbowee’s strategies, I often find that students do not develop a nuanced understanding of this concept, to the point that they sometimes put forward ideas that are not aligned with the learning objectives for this unit. Many students, for example, want to make fairly simplistic and biologically essentialist arguments about the nature of women as mothering instead of seeing the ways in which the women leaders strategically adopt the discourse of motherhood to achieve their aims. As I work to help students conceptualize this idea better, I will look at the ways in which the texts themselves refuse biological essentialism. For example, in Lysistrata, Myrrhine’s husband, Cinesias, uses their child to manipulate her into coming down from the ramparts: “What’s wrong with you? Surely you can’t harden your heart against your baby!” Though Myrrhine herself says that her “maternal instinct” leaves her “no choice,” in the same scene she refuses to ascribe to traditional gender roles when she says that she does not care that their home is “going to ruin.” Another possibility for complicating this idea for my students is to point out that girls joined the ranks of child soldiers in Liberia, and not all through forced conscription. Indeed, as Strange puts it, “[t]he challenge for women in the peace movement...seems to be to tap the mobilizing powers of maternalism while avoiding its ideological pitfalls.” In this, it seems, my students are not alone.

As I negotiate the ways that feminism and peace studies sometimes overlap and sometimes conflict, the final concept that I want my students to understand through this unit is the idea that, in the words of Reardon, “the feminist movement is a peace movement.” In Sexism and the War System, Reardon defines feminism “as opposition to oppression.” Instead of claiming that women have “an innate capacity for greater sensitivity or more moral behavior,” Reardon argues that “[m]en are socialized to be warriors...while women are socialized to be victims.” This concept is particularly useful when examining the different outcomes of the women’s movements featured in the play and the documentary film. Lysistrata is not a feminist play in part because the women do not continue to oppose patriarchy after the war ends; rather, they return to their gender normative roles within the private sphere. Pray the Devil Back to Hell, on the other hand, depicts the women activists as feminist peace builders who, realizing that the end of conflict is not the same as peace, demand a role in the peace talks and remain politically active. According to Alonso, the feminist peace movement also makes connections “between institutionalized violence and violence against

44 Alonso, Peace as a Women’s Issue (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 12.
46 Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 880-881.
51 Ibid., 25, 42.
women,” drawing attention to the ways in which “the military represents an exaggerated microcosm of...power and abuse.” It is therefore not surprising that Gbowee’s memoirs recount her relationship with an abusive man while living in a refugee camp so as to underline the connection between patriarchal oppression, violence against women, and warfare.

As the title of this paper suggests, I encourage my students to look “beyond sex strikes” in their discussions of these two works. For, though the sex strikes garner attention and have served as the primary point of comparison between the two works in the media, they are but one part of a multifaceted strategy used by the women’s movements in Lysistrata and Pray the Devil Back to Hell. Limiting our discussion of these women’s movements to sex strikes arguably perpetuates gender stereotypes. At the same time that sex strikes have been made too much of in some circles, they have not been considered seriously enough in others. Though examples of sex strikes being used as a form of protest can be found in ancient and modern times, they are not well covered in the field of peace studies research, especially from a feminist perspective. Some research questions to consider are as follows: What might these two movements suggest about the potential of sex strikes if we consider them as case studies? What are the limitations of sex strikes as a form of protest? What are the benefits and pitfalls of using sexuality for contesting patriarchy and advancing women’s rights? Only by seriously engaging the topic of sex strikes will we be able to do them justice. In this sense, “beyond sex strikes” serves as a call to action.

Bibliography


\[52\] Alonso, Peace as a Women’s Issue (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 8-9.


*Women, War and Peace*. Produced by Abigail Disney, Pamela Hogan, and Gini Reticker. PBS, 2011. DVD.

The Millennial Generation and National Defense, co-authored by Morten Ender, David Rohall and Michael Matthews, is an ambitious work that seeks to illuminate attitudinal patterns among America’s college-going youth. It explores convergences and differences across a diverse span of socio-political attitudes among civilians attending colleges and universities, ROTC cadets enrolled at civilian higher education institutions, and those cadets (and midshipmen) who attend the federal military academies (Army, Navy & Air Force). The formally stated aims of this book are twofold. First, it provides a descriptive summary of millennials and examines this generation’s attitudes towards the military institution and military service. Second, it examines whether and to what extent (and to what effect) there exists a civil-military gap between those youth who are affiliated with the military (Academy and ROTC cadets/midshipmen) and those who are not (civilians). The authors use a unique data set that they have collected over more than a decade from scores of higher education institutions (public and private) located in eighteen states around the country. As the book’s subtitle indicates, the study focuses on future leaders in society; operationalized as those pursuing higher education, positioning them selves for leadership roles in the civilian and military arenas.

The book is nicely organized both by chapter and within chapters. Chapter one defines the millennial generation’s broad social, personal, and demographic characteristics, discusses the intersection of millennials and the military, introduces the concept of civil-military gap and its application to this generation, and outlines the ongoing survey project from which this book emerges. Chapter two examines in more detail issues of civic engagement in general, and attitudes toward and propensity to serve in the military more specifically. Chapter three explores millennials’ attitudes surrounding both major national defense/security threats and appropriate use of the military at home and abroad. Chapter four explicitly analyzes youth attitudes towards the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and how they have changed over time during these protracted campaigns. Chapter five examines diversity issues in the armed forces with a focus on gender and sexual orientation. The concluding chapter discusses the future of the nation’s military from the perspectives of millennial college students.

The strengths of this book are its unique data, organization, and clear presentation of tables and figures. While the data presented are not representative of all millennial college students, the institutional and geographic breadth from which the data were collected instills confidence in the patterns reported. Having multiple data collections per year also provides robustness to the data when examined over the span of the study’s history (total sample = 5,051). This is especially interesting given that the data begin in 2003 at the onset of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and continue through 2010. These data capture attitudes of college-going millennial youth during the longest military campaign in American history (and the data collection effort continues).

The organization of the book facilitates clear understanding of the historical context and the data that are the focus of the analysis. Each chapter begins with a brief literature review on the chapter’s main topic, then proceeds with the presentation of survey data, and ends with a
brief conclusion. This format allows each chapter to operate as a stand-alone reading, while at the same time providing a coherent structure for the full volume. It is also worth noting that this book is available in both hard back and as an e-book ($36 on Kindle). The many tables and figures provided in this volume are clear and easily digestible for readers at an undergraduate level and more advanced.

There are some limitations in this volume also. First, nearly all data analyses presented are descriptive. While the analyses do a nice job of explaining what these millennial respondents think about the military and how they relate to it, very little modeling is presented to get at why these millennials hold such attitudes. A notable exception is the model showing that significant predictors of millennials’ support (or lack of support) for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq include gender, race, and before vs. after 2004 (p.64-67). A more sophisticated analysis after presenting the descriptive data would have significantly increased the power of this volume. Another challenge worth noting is that the reader needs to keep in mind the scope of the data being presented. While the authors are clear in the title and initial chapter that their intent is not to speak to the attitudes and behaviors of all millennials (data are only from college students), one can lose track of this as one reads through the volume. This is especially a challenge if, for example, only some chapters are assigned to students – especially if the introduction and first chapter are not assigned.

This volume presents a lot of data and will be of interest to students and researchers who wish to know how millennials think about the military, its use, and their relationship to it. Even though a minority of civilians and military have a college education, there is face validity and utility in examining attitudes of millennial college-going youth, as they are the men and women most likely to ascend into civilian and military leadership positions. This book would serve well as an augmenting text in graduate and undergraduate courses in military sociology, political theory, or gender or African-American studies.

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Ryan Kelty
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology
Washington College
Chestertown, Maryland


In his book From War to Peace: A Guide to the Next Hundred Years, Kent Shifferd noted that when he told others that he was working on a history of peace, the common response was, “that will be a short book.” Indeed, the common wisdom seems to be that war and violence are the only ways to confront oppression and achieve liberation. The two books under review here are valuable contributions to attempts to dispel such notions, calling upon both historical evidence and careful analysis of resistance movements. Chenoweth and Stephan’s book offers a more theoretical framework within which to understand when, how and why civil resistance does and does not work, with four specific case studies to illustrate their points. Bartkowski’s contribution is a collection of essays by various specialists demonstrating the widespread and frequently successful use of nonviolent resistance in fifteen different times and places covering many regions of the globe and extending from the 18th century to the present. Taken together, these two books are excellent companion volumes, each providing illumination for the material in the other and providing valuable resources for anyone wanting specific information about nonviolent resistance. Both books provide very useful appendices listing the resistance movements, dates, goals and outcomes, along with extensive notes and bibliographies that make them very useful for those interested in further exploration of the topic.

Chenoweth and Stephan assert and demonstrate something that many may find astonishing—namely, that nonviolent resistance has been more successful at bringing about positive change to society than violent resistance. The authors examined 323 resistance campaigns that occurred between 1900 and 2006. Some were violent, some nonviolent, and some were both. They found that “nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts.” (7) Their study included campaigns against repressive regimes, those with territorial objectives (e.g., anti-occupation or self-determination movements) and a few others that fit neither category (e.g., anti-apartheid campaigns). The one exception to their conclusion about the success of nonviolence is secession movements where no nonviolent campaigns have been successful; however, only about 10% of violent secession campaigns have succeeded, suggesting that such movements are difficult to achieve regardless of the methods used. Furthermore, and equally significant, is that when violent insurgencies do succeed, they are much more likely to result in a repressive regime and the resumption of civil war within a decade. “In fact,” the authors conclude, “strikingly, the long term effects of failed nonviolent campaigns are more favorable to democracy and civil peace than the long-term effects of successful violent campaigns.” (202)

Part of the reason nonviolent resistance works, the authors argue, is that they allow for greater and more diverse participation. Nonviolent resistance has wider appeal than violent resistance because it is perceived as less risky (though it may not be in reality) and allows for many ways for individuals to participate regardless of age, gender, physical strength or ability,
technical knowledge, etc. This broad basis of support of nonviolent campaigns can erode the regimes’ pillars of support and attract the support of the international community.

The authors apply their theory to four specific case studies: the Iranian Revolution (1977-79), the First Palestinian Intifada (1987-92), the Philippine People Power Movement (1983-86), and the Burmese Revolution (1988-90). Of these, the first and third were successful, the second partially succeeded and the fourth failed. This allows the authors to explore more fully when and why nonviolence does and does not work. In Iran, the nonviolent resistance campaign attracted more participants than the violent resistance campaign, which gave them a distinct advantage. However, the nonviolent campaign centered around one strong personality, Ayatollah Khomeni, and also failed to agree upon a post-revolution vision for society. Further, a violent leftist movement allowed the revolutionary regime to target secular voices which permitted an authoritarian regime to consolidate its power after the revolution.

The first Palestinian Intifada benefited from the active participation of hundreds of thousands of people, generating strong support both within the Palestinian Territories and abroad. This forced Israel to make significant concessions. Conversely, violent resistance movements gave Israel justification for violent repression. In the end, though, the nonviolent movement’s inability to maintain discipline and unity led to its disintegration and thus, only partial success. The Philippine People Power Movement also enjoyed massive popular participation which undermined the domestic and international support of the Marcos regime. The opposition was also well organized enough to present itself as a reasonable alternative allowing for a relatively smooth transition of power. The Marcos regime had relied on a polarized society that ruled by keeping groups apart. This ultimately backfired when political opposition coalesced around a viable political alternative. In the case of the Burmese Revolution, although there was unprecedented participation, the movement failed to maintain unity and to build ties both within and outside the country, leading to its failure.

All four of these case studies demonstrate that mass participation is a crucial factor in the success of nonviolent revolution, however, it is not the only factor. Nonviolent resistance is complicated and requires unity, creativity, discipline, flexibility, broad support, clear organization and a well-defined vision. Any campaign, whether violent or nonviolent, will fail without proper planning and execution. Nonetheless, “nonviolent resistance has the potential to succeed in nearly all situations in which violent resistance is typically used, and to more favorable ends in the longer term.” (227)

In the context of these findings, Bartkowski’s book is especially interesting and enlightening. The book contains 18 essays by 19 different contributors that provide examples of nonviolent resistance in 15 different times and places. These 15 cases were chosen specifically because they were understudied. One purpose of the book, as the title suggests, is to move the study of nonviolence beyond the “usual” examples (Gandhi in India, Civil Rights in the US) to less well-known but equally significant ones. This helps show that nonviolence can be successful in a variety of geographic regions as well as cultural, religious and political systems.

Many of the conclusions about nonviolence made here are in line with those of Chenoweth and Stephan. In an introductory chapter, Bartkowski helps explain why nonviolent resistance is a) unknown to most people and b) assumed to be ineffective: “...[T]he histories of many nations have been infused with both mythical and factual narratives about violent resistance, while less heroic and often more effective means of nonviolent struggle have been
ignored, forgotten or acknowledged only in passing.” (xi) Most nations’ creation stories
“support the common belief that violence is the indispensable weapon to win freedom from
subjugation, but they ignore the power and historic role that nonviolent civilian-led resistance
has played in many national quests for liberation.” (1) In fact, Bartkowski argues that many
liberation struggles—including that of the United States—have been won, not through violence,
but through the nonviolent resistance of ordinary people.

Though coming from a wide range of times and places, the fifteen case studies share
common elements. These include broad-based support among a variety of groups within
society, creativity, flexibility, and diversity of tactics. All of this can make it challenging to
identify nonviolent action. For example, some nonviolent action is really inaction—refusing to
leave a place despite repression, refusing to purchase or use certain products, refusing to work,
etc. Other nonviolent action is very subtle—providing inaccurate information to an occupying
force, wearing homespun clothing rather than purchased clothing, refusing to acknowledge a
political holiday, singing a song that reflects a particular culture, organizing a cultural
association that celebrates a “banned” culture. Other kinds of nonviolent action are much more
overt—mass demonstrations, general strikes, etc. We see many of these sorts of tactics
throughout the examples in the book’s case studies of colonial Ghana and Mozambique, 19th
century Hungary and Poland, and 20th century West Papua, just to name a few examples.
Another important facet of nonviolent resistance is flexibility and creativity. It is important to
respond as the situation changes and to allow practices to evolve, learning from past errors.
This was demonstrated in 20th century Palestine and Bangladesh, and in Iran from 1890-1906,
for example.

Consistent with Chenoweth and Stephan’s argument, these fifteen case studies also
confirm that nonviolent resistance movements often help sow the seeds of a new state that is
autonomous and more democratic than the previous regime had been. For example, in
Mozambique the nonviolence of the 1920s through 1970s helped build the unity and national
identity which laid the foundations for a peaceful post-liberation society. Again and again these
essays point out how commonly nations explain their origins and strengths as a function of the
violence of a few heroic men, ignoring the crucial and often more important role of nonviolent
resistance performed by ordinary people in all walks of life.

It is essential that we reclaim and celebrate the history of nonviolence. As Chenoweth
and Stephan conclude, “...[N]onviolent civil resistance works, both in terms of achieving
campaigns’ strategic objective and in terms of promising the well-being of the societies in which
the campaigns have been waged. Violent insurgency, on the other hand, has a dismal record on
both counts.” (222) These books provide a very valuable service in helping us reclaim
nonviolent history. They should be required reading for everyone.

Deborah Buffton
Professor of History
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

The relationship between peace processes on local and the national levels is extremely complex. Depending on the circumstances and location, national or international groups may embrace local peace efforts or see them as a threat to national or international power. Conversely, at the local level, some peacebuilding groups fear that nonlocal initiatives will swallow them up, while other local groups appreciate the greater visibility and fundraising potential national and international efforts make possible.

This collection of essays by specialist in peace studies and conflict resolution describes five recent historical examples of local peacebuilding efforts and explores the responses of governments and guerrillas to such efforts in an attempt to understand the impact that local peacebuilding efforts have on the success of national-level peacebuilding. These five examples include Columbia (two chapters), South Africa, Belfast, and the Southern Caucasus. In additional the book contains three more general essays on Zones of Peace (ZoPs) and theories about the relationship between local and national peacebuilding.

In the post-Cold War world, conflicts are more likely to be intra-state rather than international. They are smaller but have “higher levels of devastation, despair, disease, lawlessness, poverty, and destruction of the social fabric.” (p.19) In this context, there is a need to help communities establish development and human rights efforts, decrease poverty, and establish justice and rule of law. One way to do this is through creating a Zone of Peace (ZoP), a “social sanctuary...where individuals are protected against personal violability based on agreed rules of public order.” (p. 20) ZoPs have been successful in the Philippines, Columbia, Bosnia, El Salvador, Aceh, and Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. The most sustainable ones are those created by the local community and not external organizations such as the UN or other humanitarian or religious organizations. The most hopeful response to conflict is the creation of Conflict Prevention Zones of Peace (CPZoPs), which differ from existing ZoPs by trying to integrate local and national or international players so that the two groups are not working at cross-purposes, i.e., the local group is not seen as a threat to national sovereignty, but also has some ownership in the peace process.

In Columbia over 100 local peace initiatives were established between 1998 and 2002 despite many attempts of local combatants to undermine them. In 2002 President Alvaro Uribe initiated the program of “Democratic Security” which increased the size of the police and military forces to attack guerillas so they would sue for peace. Within this process everyone was required to support the state. This came to be used to suppress all opposition, not just the guerillas. The ZoPs and indigenous communities were caught between the military and the guerillas and the ZoPs were not effective in this case. Another initiative in Columbia set up “Laboratories of Peace” run by nonlocal actors and produced mixed results. To some degree they co-opted and corrupted the work of the local peacebuilding initiatives (LPBIs) by managing funds and controlling aims and practices. On the other hand, they also raised awareness and opportunities for funding for the peace initiatives, but this also created competition and rivalry among peace groups who would otherwise be natural allies.
The experience of South Africa in the 1990s suggests that both top-down and bottom-up initiatives can be effective at the same time. However, it is essential that LPBIs engage national issues in ways that are relevant to the local level. Local peace committees in South Africa were effective in diffusing or preventing violence because they relied on consensus building, negotiation and mediation, not on legal or coercive measures that were identified as instruments of oppression within that context. Finally, the nonlocal experts were essential in helping to dismantle the local conflict system.

In Belfast the most successful peace initiatives combined both economic development and improvement of relations between groups rather than simply focusing on one or the other. Moreover, it is important to remember that peacebuilding is an ongoing process that requires continuous communication and maintenance of relationships. Finally, by framing community development within the context of peacebuilding, local groups have been able to steer clear of government oversight and extend fundraising beyond the local community.

The Southern Caucasus is a good example of the problem of trying to create a conventional nation-state in a region that has had only imperial and feudal rule. In that case, a “polyphonic” approach to peacebuilding may prove successful. This approach would respond to and accommodate different national identities within the same country. However, this would require the recognition of different ethnic groups as equal partners. An initial step would be to establish ZoPs in border towns, gradually spreading to larger demilitarized areas. The ultimate step would be the creation of a South Caucasian confederation or federal union with multiple official languages and numerous accepted ethnic identities. This would include a region-wide legislative body and a common currency. Finally, it would be essential to demilitarize the region, and guarantee Russia’s security and the West’s access to oil.

The great strength of this volume is that it begins to study individual circumstances and to ascertain where and under what circumstances specific peacebuilding initiatives have been successful and where they have not been so that peace practitioners can begin to apply appropriate methods in different circumstances and put theory into practice. This book will be useful to those who study, teach and practice peacebuilding and conflict resolution by providing concrete examples to test out various theories.

Deborah Buffton
Professor of History
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

David L. Reinhart’s book Prayer as Memory: Toward the Comparative Study of Prayer as Apocalyptic Thought is a rich and provocative text. In the opinion of this reviewer, the project of Reinhart’s book involves showing how prayer can serve as a mode of communication and critique that operates across different religious faiths. The latter serves as a means of understanding and working through the suffering that is a result of damaging religious and social relationships. Reinhart makes use of a variety of theologians and philosophers in order to pursue his case.

In order for prayer to operate across all faiths and in so doing respect the variety of religious uses of prayer, Reinhart suggests that we view at least one purpose of prayer in terms of its capacity to heal a “broken world” and the suffering associated with this world (Chapter 2). In order for this healing to occur, it is important that prayer participate in both pietism and quietism. The former addresses the religious participation in the “appropriate structures” (5) and traditions associated with varying religious worldviews, while the latter focuses upon prayer as a mystical opening to something “indescribable or wordless” (5). Without piety, religion remains rootless, and without quietism, a religion runs the risk of remaining bound to unquestioned assumptions and institutions. The presence of such is also what leads to cultural isolation and the potential conflict that is associated with the former.

Reinhart is particularly interested in this last point. Prayer risks being confined to a particular religious view and can sometimes function as an unquestioning acceptance of a particular religious orientation. At its furthest extreme, the latter is a form of prayer or religious communication that is only concerned with a singular religious view and is willing to neglect those who fall outside a particular tradition or those whom one may have perpetuated harm against in the past.

Effective prayer involves an opening to the transcendent, or G*d, as Reinhart suggests. Importantly, this also involves being open to the full community of human beings as they are my brothers and sisters in G*d. This certainly involves a religious language (hence pietism), but because grounded in the questioning openness of quietism, religious discourse avoids becoming potentially myopic. That is, authentic prayer allows us to participate in a collective memory. The hope of prayer is to face the “broken world” head on with the hopes of discovering a better way of living with, and understanding of, one another. That is, a better world.

Some of the thinkers made use of are as follows. Reinhardt draws on the thought of Karl Barth (Chapter 3) in articulating how prayer is “apocalyptical.” Prayer is a form of discourse that speaks to the significance of a morally dissatisfying world, but always with the hopes of “another,” superior world. He demonstrates how J. Habermas’ philosophical theory can help us develop a form of communicative discourse that unfolds within pietism, but that nonetheless respects different religious discourses and the tensions that unfold within them. Needing to supplement this with an account of quietism, he turns to J. Derrida as a way to accentuate the moment of prayer that remains open to the transcendent. The cultivation of a better world that involves less suffering and conflict does not only involve an acceptance of different religious
perspectives, and how, perhaps, one has perpetuated violence upon the latter, but also the willingness to remain open to novel forms of meaning and comprehension that might somehow contribute to a more peaceful world. Prayer as a listening to the transcendent is a way of being receptive to these novelties. It is also a way of suggesting that we gain insight into a situation by way of a source that is not fully known or present within the economy of cultural discourse.

On a final note, phenomenology is the study of the structures of experience, in this case specifically human experience. Reinhart does a fine job of clarifying the experiential moment of reaching for clarity and understanding we find in those moments when our current comprehension (even pluralistically understood) of a difficult situation involving conflict and suffering, is inadequate. It is with these thought in mind that I ask the following question – in this case does this transcendent necessarily need to be understood as G*d?

While clear, this text is challenging – it demands that the reader proceed slowly and carefully. Those interested in a serious study of prayer and what it affords will be rewarded through a study of this text. Thinkers interested in the intersection of religious studies and 20th Century philosophy will appreciate how Reinhart’s discussion brings these two into a productive relationship. Finally, all those focused on the importance of peace and conflict studies will find Reinhart’s book inspiring.

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Samuel Cocks
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse