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In defense of peace journalism: A rejoinder

Kurzfassung: Der Autor, ein Verfechter der neuen Philosophie, entgegnet den Angriffen von Loyn und Hanitzsch auf den Friedensjournalismus, indem er herausarbeitet, dass der Friedensjournalismus über hinreichend viele neue Einsichten und mutige Prämissen verfügt, um den konventionellen Journalismus herauszufordern und einigen seiner Grundsätzen Paroli zu bieten. Darüber hinaus beruht der Friedensjournalismus auf einer sehr klaren Epistemologie, die auf eine ausgewogene und reichhaltige Konfliktdarstellung abzielt - eine Darstellung, die der herkömmliche Journalismus wegen struktureller, psychologischer und gewohnheitsmäßiger Einschränkungen weder leisten will noch kann. Infolgedessen ist es der Friedensjournalismus wert, als eine wesentliche Entwicklung in der Journalismuslehre und -forschung angesehen zu werden.

Abstract: The following is a contribution to the ongoing debate about the merits and demerits of Peace Journalism. The writer, a proponent of the new philosophy, answers Loyn's and Hanitzche's attacks by claiming that peace journalism has enough of novel insights and daring propositions to challenge conventional journalism and defy some of its basic tenets. Furthermore, Peace Journalism stems from a very clear epistemology, which aims at a more balanced and more comprehensive account of conflict. An account, which conventional journalism, due to structural, psychological and habitual constraints, will not and cannot perform. Consequently, peace journalism is worthy of being termed a significant development in the study and research of journalism.

I. Introduction

Peace journalism has taken a lot of heat recently from researchers and practitioners alike. Though some of the criticism bears merit, one might suspect that to a larger degree, it is the "new-kid-on-the-block" syndrome, which carries the brunt of this attack. In order to be accepted as one of the guys, the newcomer must suffer the taunts and hecklings of the old guard just to prove him worthy of their confidence. Peace journalism is undergoing a protracted right-of-passage ceremony, and it isn't pretty. In this article, I will refer to two of the most prominent critics of Peace journalism — Thomas Hanitzsch, of the IPMZ at Zurich university and BBC correspondent David Loyn. They are united in their disrespect for the burgeoning orientation journalism may take and they don't spare any description to disparage it. They do, however, differ in their emphases and nuances, and some of their concerns have strength that deserves careful and comprehensive response.

II. Objectivity and other alternatives

Hanitzsch and Loyn's disapproval of peace journalism can be collapsed into two major claims: that it is incompatible with the true nature of journalism and that it is redundant because it really means good or better journalism. Each of these claims rests on several, more specific, contentions regarding this new perspective on the conduct of journalism.

The former cluster is an assault on the very essence of peace journalism which I will respond to in a more thorough and systematic fashion. The latter is more delicately expounded, and to it I will relate more briefly toward the end of my rejoinder. In this rebuttal paper, I will take issue with some of Hanitzsch and Loyn's claims with a constructive mindset in order to encourage a productive and beneficial brainstorming of sorts rather than being querulous and argumentative.

Journalism, according to Hanitzsch (2004), ventures to "... facilitate a common, socially binding reference necessary for the co-orientation of the social universe through providing information of immediate topicality" (p.192). Loyn passionately declares that reporters' sole purpose is "to be witnesses to the truth" and such commitment can only be kept by adhering to objectivity, which is "the only sacred goal we have" (2003:4). Such an admirable goal is feasible if and when reporters "preserve their position as observers not players"(2007:3) and if they heed the "only guiding lights of good reporting", which are, in addition to objectivity fairness and balance (op. cit, 2003:1). These are highly determined and staunchly held views about the nature of correspondence and the precepts of authentic journalistic coverage. They are advanced by an experienced reporter and a knowledgeable analyst of journalistic theories. However, strong-mindedness should not be substituted for single-mindedness. When a definition relies on essentially contested concepts such as truth, objectivity and co-orientation, it is bound to have alternative or complementary means of interpretation, thus rendering the definitive statements "the only way" or "the only guiding light" in a rather dubious light.

The concept of objectivity has always been somewhat slippery, and it is mainly evoked when it is perceived to be absent. Few reporters could attest to total neutrality or impartiality. At best, journalists will admit a measure of detachment from their own personal biases in practicing their craft. The critical sociologist Michael Schudson claims that "the belief in objectivity is a faith in 'facts,' a distrust in 'values,' and a commitment to their segregation" (1978). This fascination with gathering and reporting hard and raw data sanctifies the *what is* and foregoes the *what if*. This inclination for emphasizing eyewitness accounts of events and validating facts through a variety of sources to establish a balanced picture of what happened echoes the traditional role of journalism as the *fourth estate*: telling the story independently of the other estates, or authorities, namely, government, religion and business. Unlike the latter three which promote biased narratives of reality, the fourth estate—the press, stands firm in its impartial and unyielding account of the real world. This idea dates back to Thomas Carlyle, when he wrote (1841):

„The affairs of the nation were there deliberated and decided; what we were to do as a nation. But does not, though the name Parliament subsists, the parliamentary debate go on now, everywhere and at all times, in a far more comprehensive way, out of Parliament altogether? Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact,—very momentous to us in these times. Literature is our Parliament too. Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal everyday extempore Printing, as we see at present.“

This is surely a noble idea but completely unsustainable. Objectivity on an issue, certainly significant and noteworthy enough to be mentioned on the news, denotes more unawareness or even ignorance than a predisposition. A more realistic depiction of the spirit of journalism maintains that objectivity is simply untenable and that journalists should aspire for something like a neutral perspective on any controversial issue. As such, they should carefully study and then report the viewpoints of both sides. It does not mean that the journalist has no stand in the conflict, only that his or her personal opinion does not interfere nor misrepresent the professional conduct of reporting an event "as it is". Unlike objectivity that boasts no opinion and no judgment, neutrality is an opinion restrained and judgment reserved.

Peace journalism asserts that a more appropriate standard for good journalism should be *fairness* and *accuracy*. Within such orientation, taking sides on an issue is permitted as long as the side taken presented accurately and the other side is

given a fair chance to respond. Hence, the improbable attempt at objectivity is replaced by a balanced and evenhanded account, which encourages fairness. Peace journalism, in its emphasis on presenting all sides of a conflict and in its endeavor to contextualize a controversy, accomplishes these measures without compromising the thoroughness of investigation or the accuracy of coverage. In this manner, another possible understanding of what true journalism may be is exposed.

Loyn praises objectivity and truth as the compass for journalists. Reporters need only to witness the truth, he declares, and must always be observers, not players. However, this persistent assertion runs into trouble when posited within the context of some vexing analogies from the recent past. Let us assume for a moment, that the conflict covered is the Second World War and the diligent reporter is dispatched to the Auschwitz death camp. There, beside the gas chambers, he objectively and assiduously illustrates what he sees. The situation is awfully real and horrifically true. The reporter keenly observes what is transpiring before his eyes. Is this good journalism, or is it callousness, collaborating with evil or even betrayal? Is this genuine reality or media reality, to use Baudrillard's intriguing distinction (1995)? Is this even a conceivable scenario, that journalism can maintain its regular routine of coverage and observation under the most atrocious circumstances? Does good journalism require aloofness in order to produce proficient reporting?

This position can be considered excessive and unwarranted. The Holocaust was unique and immeasurably ghastly and evil, and thus it is disadvantageous to use it as a basis for any counterclaim. But my point is deliberately blunt and unequivocal in order to demonstrate how futile and vain objectivity and neutrality may turn out to be. It does not have to be the most calamitous example of the past to spell out the risks of being mere spectators under any circumstances, as daily reports from Darfour, the Congo, Rwanda and Iraq remind us. Similarly, regarding news accounts about AIDS, or cancer, lethal drugs or hideous crimes; do they too stand the test of being conveyed to the public "objectively"? Is it unprofessional to report a major breakthrough in the research of a deadly disease with a distinct supportive slant and emotional relief? Is it dishonorable to firmly take sides against genocide and ethnic cleansing? Is it amateurish to passionately promote awareness against massive raping and barbarism? Do these instances permanently and undeniably belong within the category Hanitzsch characterizes as public relations? His logic is that peace journalism is public relations and not real journalism because "it advocates and promotes a certain way of action", or particular perspectives, as Loyn calls it. This "certain way of action" is actually survival and abolition of war and destruction. Such an accusation is akin to blaming doctors or researchers seeking to cure heart disease for engaging in public relations since they aim to advance a certain way of action to prevent heart failure. Does the necessity of peace truly require that it be "defined by a client or host organization" in order to be presented in a favorable way? Is writing a non vehement description of war akin to promoting anyone's outside agenda? Defenders of the current conduct of journalism might at times muddle the priority scale of the human agent: first there is the family man and the society member who shoulders the human and civil duty to undercut and defame war and violence, the way he may with any other menace which threatens his community; then comes the reporter, who aspires for excellence in his trade. The consecration of the objectivity totem reminds me of Klaus Mann's riveting and disturbing novel, *Mephisto*, a story of an actor who abandons his conscience and continues to act and ingratiate himself with the Nazi party so as to improve his job and social status. When confronted with criticism, he responds: "What do you want from me, I am only an actor!". This is not to say that a comparison can be made between journalists and collaborators with demonic regimes, but only to demonstrate that in covering dire situations such as war, objectivity may sometimes lead us astray despite our good intentions.

Hanitzsch makes an interesting point concerning the viability of objectivity: in close-knit conflicts such as neighborhood quarrels, "it is difficult to remain impartial and to deliver a balanced and comprehensive account of the conflict" (2007:6). I firmly agree with this notion; it is almost impossible to be objective in environments of intimate conflicts, especially deep-rooted ones, fed by unsatisfied basic needs (Burton, 1990; Peleg, 1999). But in today's world, where rampant national, religious and ethnic rivalries are as bonding, obligating and committing as any family feud, such a distinction is no longer valid. In such a struggle-laden reality, peace journalism is not a luxurious delusion but a concrete inevitability.

III. The nature of true reporting

Another attempt to disqualify peace journalism is by claiming its lack of epistemological base. Hanitzsch approaches this issue from several directions, albeit inconsistently. First (2004), peace journalism has a naïve epistemological perspective, then it matured to epistemological realism, since it assumes there is a true and proper version of reality and accordingly, peace journalism attacks conventional journalism as "misrepresenting reality" by showing only partial facts (2007:5). Finally, Hanitzsch admits, peace journalism has no epistemology at all and its proponents need to define it. I concur with Hanitzsch that news does not mirror reality, and that it is based on "cognition and contingent (re)construction of reality" (ibid). However, this does not necessarily mean that there is indeed an immaculate version of reality, only a more considerate and fair-minded one: A version which, in probabilistic and not absolute terms, contains the vagaries of war and diverts the relish of conflict into thoughtful and trustworthy channels to cope with human differences. This, in my book, is a dignified epistemological heritage to pursue.

Hanitzsch identifies overemphasis on individualism and voluntarism as a major weakness of peace journalism. He is convinced that if such prominence is given to the reporter to change her worldview and professional orientation, than it surely must transpire at the expense of the environment, that is- the structural constraints in which the journalist must operate. News coverage cannot ignore its sustaining surroundings and must be responsive to organizational, logistic and economic pressures and conditions. Individual correspondents do not work in a vacuum and cannot alone improve the world or even their immediate vicinity. Although they seem plausible, such allegations misfire: Peace journalism aims at individuals as agents of change and as harbingers of an innovative mind-set toward the ethics and practice of journalism. The goal is to constantly expand this orientation and render it commonplace rather than a passing fad of a handful of eccentrics. By so doing, peace journalism is thoroughly cognizant of the structural confines of the journalistic setting and one of its foremost challenges, as I perceive it, is to mitigate and tone down the effects of structuralism. Perhaps Shinar's question of whether "structural reform is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of Peace journalism" (2007) should be posited as a guiding principle or a working hypothesis rather than a mere speculation to fend off the assertion that "the structure is the message" (Tehranian 2002, Hackett, 2006). The structure occasionally manacles the message, and the message must break free. The skills of peace journalism are indeed earmarked for the individual reporter but are relentlessly in tune with the changing environmental circumstances and consequently provide an opportunity for reform and improvement. Diligent dissemination and adherence to the principles of peace journalism may tame the environment, and making it more congenial to journalists. At a later stage, the individual effort can be aggregated into groups and ultimately into larger communities and societies, fanning public opinion and public debates (Freedman, 2003:3), and eventually turning into a new culture of journalism. Though the above might be perceived as a linear sequence, whereby structural change stipulates the successful work of the individual reporter, this is not the intention. Basically, the environment and the agent co-change together and affect each other at the process. This is truly a dialectical and a cyclical progression of mutual adjustment between a reformed structural conditions and improved journalistic skills.

This leads me to grapple with the seemingly affirmed notion that peace journalism is utterly incompatible with the character of reporting (Wolsfeld, 1997, Fawcett, 2002) or as Loyn ardently proclaims "reporting and peacemaking are different roles" (2007:3) and the subsequent critique that advocates of the new paradigm "overestimate the power of journalism" (Hanitzsch, 2007:6). Though I agree with both contentions, this is precisely the *raison d'être* that propels peace journalism. Conventional reporting, with its emphasis on conflict and violence, its event-focus rather than process-focus and its preoccupation with winners and losers, is irreconcilable with the demands of conflict de-escalation (Kempf, 1999). If journalism is to remain simply a channel to convey information and updates through the eyes of detached though highly professional reporters, it will indeed be overrated by those who expect more. To expect more is to comprehend journalism as a dynamic and creative opportunity to change things for the better, not by an elitist group of writers who know best but by the people themselves. The public will be able to participate, to become aware of issues and dilemmas, to weigh and assess them and make choices for the benefit of all when it is presented with a broad, fair and evenhanded picture. This is the vision and the responsibility of peace journalism: not allow market structure or culture restrictions foil journalistic missions and to raise the bar in terms of accuracy and integrity.

IV. Journalism and conflict

The importance of such a task is heightened in times of conflict, when old war-prone and propaganda-prone journalism rejoices the most and marvels at the drama and sensationalism accrued. Peace journalism is capable of becoming a third side to facilitate communication in times when lack of confidence and mistrust are rampant, and to ease tensions between rivals. Preventing conflict from escalating and diverting it from a destructive to a constructive path (Pearce and Littlejohn, 1997; Kriesberg, 1998) is not merely a journalist's job, but rather, everyone's job. Journalists may potentially employ their aptitude to help contain escalation processes better than an average person due to the nature and expediency of their occupation. Their accessibility to the scene, their research into the background of a given conflict, motivation of actors, decision-making procedures and accumulative and comparative experience from other similar developments enrich their abilities to cope with such dire circumstances (Carruthers, 2000; Dor, 2001). This is where peace journalism steps in: Reporters who unreservedly uphold transparency, balance and sensitized thoroughness in covering disputes, do have the potential to change the course and intensity of events, and this is a power of journalism to be reckoned with.

In order to elucidate how peace journalism can actually contribute to de-escalation, it should be anchored to precepts of conflict theory (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005:33). Every conflict has a conflict environment within which it is nurtured and growing. In his classic spatial model of conflict escalation, E.E. Schattschneider demonstrated that every fight consists of those who are directly involved and the audience of spectators around them. The spectators, writes Schattschneider, are "an integral part of the situation for, as likely as not, the audience *determines* the outcome of the fight" (1960:2, emphasis in the original). Bringing the audience in is the obligation of reporters. They supply the news from the front, or the inner circle, and they inform the readers, listeners and spectators. The more comprehensive the information about the conflict, the more knowledgeable the audience becomes. But it has to be knowledge about the *conflict* as a whole: its roots, back-

ground, participants, their positions, interests, fears, and hopes. This is not advocacy, intervention or attachment. This is certainly not being subjected to an "external" agenda. This is pure and full-fledge reporting with, yes, a normative intention to encumber the evil spirit of war. When reports play down the aura of winning in battle and the glorification of combat; when stories from the front are less exalting in their adoration of audacity and triumph; when news accounts concentrate on suffering and pain rather than annihilation, the expectant audience receives a different picture of the situation and diverse data are then collected in the process of evaluating a conflict. Positions may shift and stands reconsidered as a result of these new insights and the conflict may lose its supporting fuel if the attentive public (Rosenau, 1974) becomes less enthusiastic and less encouraging toward the direct contestants. As a result, adds Schattschneider, "... the bystanders are a part of the calculus of all conflicts" (ibid, p. 4) and contentions expire or prosper according to the ability to sway the opinion of the audience. The route of conflict is determined by the involvement of the critical mass, those bystanders, when *they take sides and interfere*. But by so doing, they cease to be outside actors and become, sometimes very vehemently and assiduously, insiders. This analysis does not minimize the role of the original actors, who incited and mobilized the audience to begin with. The journalists are not outsiders here but go-betweens. They carry the messages of the inciters and if they don't exercise discretion (or professionalism) they become collaborators to the inflammation.

This is what Mitchell (1981), Azar (1984), Burton (1990), Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005) and others refer to when they elaborate on the cognitive dimension of conflict. This is the most crucial aspect of conflict, whereby images, labels, frames and prejudice are created and aggregated (Peleg 1999, 2002, 2006; Pruitt and Kim, 2004). The cognitive or attitudinal dimension of conflict sustains the behavioral dimension and stimulates the violence associated with it. Peace journalism, when it is methodically and systematically adopted, can rise to this virtuous undertaking. It can mobilize the critical mass to replace the ecstasy of combat with the harmony of concord. Thus, the answer to the initial accusation that peace-making is at odds with the nature of journalism, is that the two can be brought together, or at least the current gap can be attenuated, by modifying the latter in order to better accommodate the former. After all, journalism is about supplying us with proper reports; peace-making is about being able to read such reports in the first place.

The latter point leads me to the cause-and-effect problem, which both Loyn and Hanitzsch address. The two critics join one another in claiming that peace journalism's crusade against conventional reporting is substantially flawed since its causal sequence is wrong: it is not omitted coverage that elicits popular propensity towards war, but a war and violence-prone culture that inspire selective writing. Consequently, the proponents of the "new orthodoxy", as Loyn calls them, should redirect their attempts at changing the world to their societies rather than their fellow reporters. Hanitzsch argues that "a peaceful culture is the *precondition* of peace journalism rather than its outcome" (2004:200) (original emphasis). This is an interesting claim which deflects the onus of social accountability and commitment from the agent to the environment. I agree that a belligerent and masochistic political culture, which extols aggression and worships power, inspires a certain kind of journalism coverage. However, I feel more comfortable with a cyclical rather than a linear causation: a quarrelsome culture is reflected in a confrontational and aggressive press while argumentative journalistic ethic stirs conflictual attitudes among readers. Hence, both agent and surroundings are 'culprits' in fomenting a climate of contentiousness. The remedy, according to peace journalism, is attending both wings of the equation: improve journalistic principles and amend social standards and cultural norms. Social and cultural values are not constants; they are dynamic, malleable and amenable to change. In previous centuries cultural icons were philosophers, poets and heroes. They were role models to emulate and revere. They were the ones who coined new phrases, dressed in the latest fashion and furnished innovative ideas and observations. They set the pace and direction of inventive style and ultimately, paved the way for changes in and of culture. In today's world, cultural promoters are PR experts, advertising wizards and journalists. They are the inventors and disseminators of catch phrases, moods and mind-sets. We live in a communication age, where public spaces are being created in communicational interfaces such as websites, chat rooms, talk shows and news magazines. In these open arenas, journalists who are equipped with the talents of rhetoric, writing and persuasion enjoy a huge advantage. They build a reputation of adroit and competent public figures, which are to be trusted and followed. Thus, when Hanitzsch indicates that "to adhere to the peace journalism philosophy means to divert political responsibilities from politicians and policy makers to journalists" (2004:204) he is correct, save for one small though crucial nuance: it is not to journalists that responsibility is conveyed but to the population at large. Journalists are the go-betweens who empower their constituencies-- the readers, by supplying them with the knowledge to choose and check their elected leaders. This is the democratic, participatory and deliberative face of peace journalism.

V. Journalism – more than an economic venture

The detractors of peace journalism unwittingly belittle the capabilities of reporters in the communication age. A statement such as "journalists demand simplicity" is especially demoralizing. Why should reporters settle for basic, uncomplicated and unsophisticated descriptions in their work, only to gratify what is perceived to be a low threshold of readers' satisfaction? Even if supposedly the current situation and the attention span of the average news consumer is meagre. Why should journalists adjust themselves to such dismal banalities rather than challenge and hopefully bring about a blessed change in

reading habits? This is a rather bleak discernment of human potential, which rests, I am afraid, on the unabashed capitulation to the idol of profit and the abandonment of journalism as the vanguard of social transformation. Peace journalism gives more credit to journalists and their trade. They are sufficiently competent to become agents of change by delivering a full and honest picture of what takes place in the world; an account which is unbound by patriotism, prejudice, injustice, and chauvinism.

Hanitzsch protests "why should journalism ignore its audiences? What is the big deal if the media disregard their audiences' interests and, thus, put at risk their economic existence?" (2004:199). If journalism is purely business, an income source, and nothing more, then he is correct. No laborer should jeopardize his or her livelihood. But if journalism is stripped of all other values except economic ones, then reporters need not be bothered with "non-financially viable" issues such as truth, honesty and fairness. Journalism is a communication channel between writers and readers (Peleg, 2003). However, the influence and adaptation efforts along such a channel are reciprocal: reporters may well heed public atmosphere but they should also endeavor to stir, alter or calm it. Journalists must not enslave themselves to the ever changing moods of their prospective audience because they might lose their integrity in the process and become reporting chameleons. On this point, I tend to concur with Loyn, when he argues: "to help the language of reporting, there is a constant if unspoken dialogue between reporter and reader: shared assumptions that make it easier to report some stories than others" (2007:4). Nevertheless, by admitting this, Loyn digresses from his initial criteria of truth seeking and "what happens" as the gateways to professional coverage. A reporter might run into an ethical dilemma when she encounters a story which rings true but incongruent with the public spirit or with the contemporary *volonté des tous*; should she dispatch the report or not? Peace journalism is more qualified to handle such a dilemma since it relies more on engaging the audience and providing the readers with the fullest extent of information rather than satisfying its audience with selective but propitious facts.

In the social movements literature the term *frame resonance* is used to indicate the attempts of social leaders to reframe their messages to fit the cultural norms and values of their constituencies so that they would resonate with their prospective followers (Snow and Benford, 1988; Oliver and Johnston, 2000; Westby, 2002). But as much as affinity and understanding between reporters and their readers are important, this is not meant to be a spineless maneuvering to satisfy all readers at a whim, not even "shared language and assumptions", as Loyn sees it. Adjusting worldviews, mindsets, idioms, and images, even words, to establish a flowing and understandable communication between senders and receivers, coders and decoders of messages, both sides must be creative and inventive: the reporter by offering the fullest range of information possible, and the reader by exercising a thoughtful and prudent discretion. Regrettably, this is not the setting of the purely commercial journalism world where the reader is king. In the desired alternative world of journalism, the reporter partakes in shaping and reshaping the readers' menu for choice by expanding, not acknowledging, horizons. Peace journalism, which does not placate or courts the public taste, fits right in there. It challenges the conventional wisdom and defies the "taken-for-granted", which conflict and war are especially fraught with. "Impartiality lies in diversity", emphasizes Lynch (2003:3) and peace journalism is the quintessential pursuit of obtaining and maintaining diversity in the coverage of news.

Contrary to Hanitzsch and Loyn's observation that the media has little or no political influence, a growing body of research literature from Lippmann to Postman attests that the potential power of various media channels in molding and affecting opinions can be remarkable (Lippmann, 1925; Wagner, 1983; Postman, 1985). Iyengar and Kinder for instance, conclude in an elaborate experiment that "television news does indeed influence the priorities the American public assigns to national problems ... by calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies and candidates for public office are judged" (1987:63, emphasis in the original). If this is a viable scenario then surely the orientation of normative journalistic work ethos must be attentively practiced for the benefit of a more knowledgeable, and eventually, better society.

VI. The most challenging and the least concerning

The most challenging criticism of peace journalism in my opinion is the assertion that peace journalism uses a wholesale approach in condemning conventional reporting. The advocates of the new philosophy generalize and oversimplify their analysis of current coverage of conflicts when they lump all media channels into a single "war-prone" bracket. Similarly, they relate to news consumers as "a passive mass that needs to be enlightened" (Hanitzsch, 2007:6). This is an insightful and valuable comment. In my sense, peace journalism is certainly at fault here but I would attribute it to the fervor of youth and to the sweeping, all encompassing observations of inexperience. I do believe, however, that despite the diversity of media outlets, the tendency to describe strife and contention in news coverage is overdramatic and sensational. However, were there only one media outlet to broadcast the conventional war narrative, the emergence of peace journalism would nonetheless have been worthwhile. As for capturing the audience as an inert mass and thus, denigrating readers' capacity to independently form their own positions, I would argue that peace journalism is far more gracious than any other journalistic orientation in supplying readers with the opportunity to formulate their own stands on current affairs. The approach

of peace journalism is geared toward the stimulation and maximization of readers' judgment ability and prudence. By challenging routine coverage methods and by providing the broadest possible range of accounts, peace journalism writers entrust the onus of interpretation to their readers. By doing so they do not treat the audience as a passive monolith, but rather, supply an elementary and essential commodity for all readers—the apathetic, the ignorant, the news addicts and the media-savvy, to be used however they see fit. In summation, peace journalism is about supplying background for questions rather than furnishing answers.

The second type of criticism is shorter and gentler. It perceives peace journalism not as an aberration but as a lost and misguided child, needing to be redirected home. Here, the spirit of criticism is softened to "if you can't beat them, join us", that is, if you cannot get rid of the new trend, try to incorporate it into the current paradigm. Hanitzsch acknowledges at some point the merits of peace journalism but adds that it is "... already present—in the outfit of 'good journalism'" (ibid) and therefore, he concludes, we don't really need it. According to him, it essentially boils down to the old discourse about quality in journalism. It is basically an internal debate or kind of a "domestic" affair. This urge to adopt peace journalism is in actuality an attempt to ignore its innovative principles and to preempt the fundamental challenge it presents to conventional journalism. Peace journalism is not merely *good* journalism; it is *different* journalism and a departure from the traditional way of covering news stories, particularly conflict and violence, not only in nuances and emphases but in substance. Peace journalism is not to report what *is seen* but to report what *can be seen*; not simply to reflect reality but to explore reality and unearth what is not ostensibly reflective; to wisely utilize structural and organizational imperatives and to be subdued by them; to regard and cultivate readers' interests but not to be manipulated by them. This is the profound shift in the nature of journalism that the new philosophy offers. For those who were raised on the precepts of standard prototype reporting, some of these novelties may be difficult to accept. By their nature and putative accomplishments, the virtues of peace journalism can certainly be classified as good journalism. However, this is true since peace journalism escapes the confines of the old doctrine— not because it is a more elaborate version of what used to be.

VII. Conclusion

Some fractions of the criticism still baffle me. For example, when Loyn (2003) declares that "news is what's happening and we should report it with imagination and skepticism, full stop", I fail to understand why imagination is needed. If his version of good journalism is merely reporting what is seen, isn't imagination superfluous? In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "the lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact". It seems to me that these characteristics would not suit Loyn's devoted reporter. Furthermore, when he writes that "we do not seek out peace-makers unless they are actually successful" (ibid), does he mean that when negotiations fail, or when diplomats disagree, they are not news worthy? As I recall, some famous breakdowns of negotiations or cessations of talks, such as between the Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David in 2000 or regression in cease-fire talks between American and Viet-Cong representatives during the Paris peace process in 1968, were highly dramatic and heightened ratings when they occurred. The peace-makers involved in such unsuccessful attempts were vehemently sought by conventional reporters for interviews and photos.

Less puzzling though disturbing and alarming is the insinuation that peace journalism might "bring memories of authoritarian regimes" in its aspiration for more social responsibility (Hanitzsch, 2004). Though I don't see this as fair criticism, I don't suspect any malice either. The social responsibility associated with sinister political systems is really an alias for obedience and submission. It is a pretense of social order which is imposed from above and an excuse to execute the most horrendous deeds in the name of political conscientiousness. Peace journalism is diametrically opposite: its social responsibility is a bottom-up one and is built on public awareness and people's deliberation. In the same vein, when Hanitzsch hypothesizes whether reporters that incite or stir violence should be silenced "in the name of social stability" (ibid, 2002), he must be aware that, first, incitement and agitation entail by law punitive acts and second, peace journalism abhors censorship. It is the absolute embodiment of information flow and full disclosure.

The fact that few Seymour Hersh have become famous does not prove that an alternative way to report wars is not feasible; it does mean, however, that much effort still needs to be invested in ameliorating the dominant beliefs about the nature and promise of journalism. When Loyn admonishes that advocates of peace journalism cannot see that insisting on objectivity is "a useful vaccine against the relativism of attached journalism", he fails to see that peace journalism is a more powerful immunization, capable of inoculating the entire body against the absolutism of mayhem and destruction.

Peace journalism has a normative special agenda in the same way that the aspiration for secured and harmonious life is a human normative agenda. Destructive conflict and wars are a threat to all human kind. The cynical few who make fortunes from bloodshed should not be perceived as a legitimate "other party", which does not get a fair share in news coverage. Peace journalism is a tool to bolster the joint effort to expose violence and fighting for what they are and to align people across borders, cultures and loyalties in a common crusade to diminish the exultation of war.

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