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Display-through-foregrounding by photojournalists as self-reflexivity in photojournalism: Two case studies of accidental peace photojournalism

Kurzfassung: Der vorliegende Aufsatz untersucht die friedensjournalistische Selbstreflexivität im Falle von Photojournalisten und des Photojournalismus. In Fortsetzung der von Allan (2011) angestoßenen Diskussion darüber, dass die ‚friedensphotografische' Forschung die ‚stillschweigenden, ungesagten Regeln' untersuchen sollte, die dem photojournalistischen Bildaufbau zugrunde liegen, zeigt der Aufsatz anhand zweier Beispiele von mainstream-Pressephotos, wie Photojournalisten dem Diktat der ‚Nachrichtenwerte' entgehen können um die Mythen des Praxisfeldes innerhalb dessen sie operieren bewusst oder unbewusst zu hinterfragen. Solche selbstreflexiven, synekdotischen Bilder, welche die Rolle der Medien in der Konfliktberichterstattung darstellen, sind Beispiele, aus denen der Friedensjournalismus Lehren für eine neue visuelle Grammatik ziehen kann, die visuellen Friedensjournalismus nicht nur im Sinne einer ‚Entlarvung der Unwahrheiten' hinter der Propaganda versteht, sondern auch die Wahrheit aufdeckt, wie eine solche Propaganda von den Medien reifiziert wird.

Abstract: This article explores media self-reflexivity as understood within Peace Journalism (PJ) in the case of photojournalists and photojournalism. Carrying forward the discussion started by Allan (2011) for research into 'peace photography' to be extended to 'tacit, unspoken rules' underlying photojournalistic images, the article shows, through two examples of mainstream news images, how photojournalists can and may break from diktats of 'news values' to advertently or inadvertently critique the myths of the very practice they function within. Such self-reflexive, synecdochic images which display media's own role in covering conflict are examples from which PJ can take lessons for a new visual grammar where visual peace journalism is understood to not only 'expose the untruths' behind propaganda but also expose the truths behind how such propaganda is reified by the media.

1. Introduction

This article explores the need to understand self-reflexivity – an oft-mentioned goal of Peace Journalism (PJ) – as it applies in the case of photojournalists and photojournalism. In 2007, Shinar had called for the study and dissemination of newer research findings in PJ which included studies on media reflexivity and self-criticism (Shinar, 2007: 6-7). Answers to this call have only infrequently been made in the case of photojournalism within PJ research. This article attempts to answer and reinvigorate such avenues of inquiry within PJ by identifying how photojournalists can display the role they play during a conflict or crisis leading to critical deliberation among the public (Cottle, 2006) on such roles and what significance this has for the purposes of PJ.

The article's express purpose is to situate visual peace journalism or peace photojournalism within the larger body of academic research about visual representation in news as well as within the purview of studies of photojournalistic work and visual gatekeeping norms and routines (following Bissell, 2000; Fahmy, 2005a, 2005b) which influence the images produced and circulated by news media. These latter have delineated the photojournalistic production process as having "five levels of influence: individual, routines, organizational, extramedia (institutional), and ideological (sociocultural)" (Reese, 2007: 35). Within these five, the current article focusses on only one and the primary level: the 'individual' photojournalists' 'influence' in the photojournalistic production and distribution process.

Peace Journalism calls for reporters and editors to "make choices that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict" (Lynch & McGolrick, 2005: 5). Such choices may be made at each of these 'levels' of the 'visual gatekeeping chain' (Bissell, 2000) since important decisions beyond the original intention of the photojournalists – e.g. setting of topics and framing of images – have been demonstrated to be crucial for the resultant representations in visual news coverage (Fahmy, 2005a; 2005b). The influence exerted by such choices as they are made at levels beyond the individual photojournalists do not form part of the discussion here. What the current discussion sets out to understand is: *if* individual photojournalists working within mainstream news *can* make choices which create opportunities for the viewers to critically deliberate on the conflict being depicted, then *what* can such choices look like?

Again within this discussion, the current study merely points to one such avenue that photojournalists have taken (and thus can) while working within mainstream journalism that PJ can co-opt for its own stated goal of self-reflexivity. The avenue in question and under discussion here is the foregrounding of the newsgathering process, which as Bock (2008: 174) noted can lead to an immanent critique of the event, actor or issue being depicted in the photo by pointing out its 'staged' nature. This avenue does not preclude other ways a visual grammar of peace photography may be developed but the current article seeks to understand and identify thoroughly and theoretically this 'one possible way'. In doing so, this article also attempts to bring within PJ research the area of

"understanding news image production as experienced by photographers" which as Bock (2008: 171) notes in her review of academic studies on photojournalists, is rare and much overlooked.

Two examples of mainstream news images are used in this article to show the way images taken by photojournalists can and may break from their mainstream 'news values' orientation to critique the myths of the very practice they are engaged in. The article argues that these immanent examples of "the [photo]journalistic equivalent of the work of the break" that Lynch and Galtung (2010: 195; parenthesis added) call for in PJ, constitute 'accidental peace journalism' (Lynch et al., 2011: 11; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2013: 1043) which in turn can help in understanding the role photojournalists can play for the purposes of PJ within the constraints of visual gatekeeping and the subjective decisions made at several levels of the gatekeeping chain (Bissell, 2000: 90) by utilizing photojournalism's "rhetorical contradictions… particularly in that intersection between the artistic/subjective and factual/objective" (Schwartz, 1990 in Bock, 2008: 171).

2. Images in Peace Journalism

Since Ottosen's (2007) call for more emphasis to be placed on the visual aspect of journalism within PJ, there has been a growing body of research on visual reportage and how it relates to PJ: most notably by Fahmy and Neumann (2012a; 2012b) and Allan (2011). The problems inherent in measuring peace 'frames' versus violent 'frames' in visual coverage as in the two studies by Fahmy and Neumann and the resultant oversight of the contextualization and re-contextualization of images which are in constant circulation has been covered in an earlier article (Mitra, 2014). As such, the focus in this article is to further explore Allan's (2011) call for research into 'peace photography' (Allan, 2011: 160-62) to be extended to "the subjunctive" and the "tacit, unspoken rules" underlying photojournalistic images and make sense of the role individual photojournalists can play in doing so.

This article, shows through two examples of images produced by professional photojournalists who work for mainstream news organizations, that in certain conditions, such images which (and their image-makers who) are dictated by mainstream news values can also break from tradition to render transparent "the subtly inchoate way in which images ostensibly invite certain readings over and above alternative ones" (Allan, 2011: 162) in spite of the many levels of influences and decisions through which that news image must pass before being circulated or published (Bissell, 2000:82-3). These images, one from Israel and the other from Haiti, are imbued with a quality by the photographers which "foreground" the "common-sensical criteria" which inform their production and circulation by inciting – in one case a very public – discussion of the so called 'objectivity' of news images as well as the 'objective' role of the photographers who produce such images. By doing so, these images throw "into sharp relief" at least some of the "diverse array of ethical choices at the heart of photojournalism" itself (Allan, 2011: 163).

Allan calls for a profound reimagining of the photographic form, practice and epistemology to move beyond binaries in visual reportage for the purposes of peace photography. The discussion below argues that the case studies of two news-photos presented here show how such challenges to those forms, practices and epistemologies that Allan mentions can be and have been mounted already by individual members of the photojournalistic professional community. These challenges may contain a fragment of import for PJ's "new visual grammar" (Allan, 2011: 163). However, to make sense of them we have to first look back to an older grammar of cultural production – that of "alienation effect" (Brecht, 1964: 187) – as the way to display photojournalists' own role during conflicts which provide avenues of deliberation (Cottle, 2006) on such roles as one of the steps to 'functional transformation' (Benjamin, 2008) of conflict photojournalism.

3. *Umfunktionierung* or Functional Transformations

In his essay entitled 'The Author as Producer', Walter Benjamin's (2008: 79-95) discussion of left-wing literary production in Germany in the 1930s offers a holistic concept of the project of resistance through literary production which can be extrapolated to cultural practices in general. In his forewarnings of resistant cultural practices[1] being converted "into objects of distraction, of amusement, which [find] their way without difficulty into the big-city cabaret business", (Benjamin, 2008: 87) one finds resonances to critiques offered by contemporary commentators in the particular area of conflict and crises images like Sontag (2003), Butler (2009) or Chouliaraki (2010:107-126) which criticize "the viewing habits of a small, educated population living in the rich part of the world, where news has been converted into entertainment" (Sontag, 2003: 85).

The result of the conversion, or indeed absorption, of cultural practices into mere entertainment rather than knowledge to act upon is "the transformation of the political struggle from a call-to-decision into an object of contemplative enjoyment, from a means of production into a consumer article" (Benjamin, 2008: 88). For Benjamin, to resist the assimilation of "revolutionary themes" in cultural practices overtly in opposition to the

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[1] Benjamin (2008: 87) calls this 'revolutionary impulses' in cultural practices.

"bourgeois apparatus of production and publication" by the "class that owns it" and "propagate[s] them" means asking the question not whether a certain cultural product is "revolutionary" with an "aim at overthrowing" "the relations of productions of its time" (Benjamin, 2008: 81) but what is its position within the contemporary relations of cultural production. Benjamin calls this the questioning of the "technique" of the cultural works. He says that "demands for activism" in cultural works rather than in the 'work' of cultural production does not effectively challenge the "position of intellectuals in the process of production" (Benjamin, 2008: 84). In the cases of journalism and photojournalism, in effect, this means that the function of the journalists as journalists is not questioned. These observations by Benjamin are particularly relevant for PJ as the latter deals essentially with challenging and changing the existing and established functions of journalists: it is the reporters and editors who are to "make choices" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 5).

Benjamin (2008: 85) names this concept of changing or challenging the productive apparatus by borrowing the term "*umfunktionierung*" (translated as "functional transformation") from Bertolt Brecht – a process by which a cultural producer "wrenches" his or her work from "modish commerce" and "gives it a revolutionary use value" while at the same time discovering "his solidarity with certain other producers" (Benjamin, 2008: 87) who occupy the same position.

Evaluating cultural products and production against the benchmark of such a project of holistic transformation of the practice and the texts produced by such practice, Benjamin (2008: 89) says we will not mistake the value of cultural practices and texts according to their propaganda value and be able to also take into account their "tendency" towards questioning the practices associated with cultural production. In effect, what Benjamin is calling for as resistance maybe read as resisting the norms of cultural production as well as the content of such production. Such a concept of dual resistance to established journalism – as one form of cultural production – to both its techniques and its products has much resonance with PJ which has always argued for changes to both content and form of journalistic texts while keeping in mind the agency of their producers.

4. 'Honest' Journalism and the Authorial Hand

The claim made in the above section is not as dated as it may appear because of its emphasis on 'revolutionary impulses' and such terminology, as the ethnographic study of war correspondents in El Salvador by Mark Pedelty (1995) can show us. There are a number of important observational inferences[2] drawn by Pedelty in his study which can have resonances for PJ but the one which links the functional transformation in cultural production argued for by Benjamin to journalistic conflict coverage is the conclusion by Pedelty that by denying authorship of its 'texts', mainstream journalism abuses its own truth-claim. "Honest and committed journalism" (Pedelty, 1995: 210) instead shows its "authorial hand" in its texts by acknowledging elements of doubt as to its claims of facticity. Moving away from mainstream 'objective' journalism according to Pedelty is to stay away from propaganda but "letting the reader in on doubts and difficulties" rather than choking their "curiosity" and inhibiting "critical thought" for the intended audience (Pedelty, 1995: 226- 227).

Such self-reflexivity in journalistic texts has of course time and again been talked about and called for within PJ (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: xvi-xx; Lynch, 2008: 10-14; Hackett, 2011: 42). Peace Journalism from the very outset of its formulation, has always acknowledged that there is a need to "explain any restriction on newsgathering" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 110). But what such self-reflexive texts might look like in the case of photojournalism and how photojournalists can negotiate within the professional roles demanded of them while producing such self-reflexive texts have not been as adequately, if at all, covered.

Most pertinently for discussions of the possibilities and pathways that PJ may have to further its own cause within mainstream journalism, Pedelty (1995: 24) says that though journalists are "conduits for a system of institutions, authoritative sources, practices and ideologies that frame the events and issues", there are still "alternatives" which exist "in the cracks and margins of the current system". One such 'crack' that Pedelty identifies has particular implication for the current discussion: Pedelty finds that photojournalists are seen less as "visual authors" within mainstream journalism and more as "craftsmen and simple technicians" which makes them relatively free of facing 'flak' for being biased since they are thought to be only 'capturing' reality (1995: 155). This relative freedom for photojournalists from censorship by the powers that be within a media organization stems from the nature of the journalistic text they produce – images, which are seen and accepted to be closer to 'reality'. It is important to note here that this does not make photojournalists free of all restrictions. Instead, the

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[2] E.g. the "many indicators" that Pedelty (1995: 205-217) found of local and foreign journalists covering a war functioning in very different "social and psychological contexts": a socio-cultural variation in journalistic sensibility while covering war not fully explored within Peace Journalism research though these variations are sometimes acknowledged at the macro-level e.g. by Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2011:217) who observe that "national contexts have substantial framing impacts on mediated war discourses". How this translates to the individual agency of the journalists and their national identity and what implications it has for Peace Journalism has been so far only been considered by Weighton (2015) in the case of Kenyan journalists. For a full discussion of the need for PJ research to study such socio-cultural variations in perceptions of journalistic practice, see Mitra, 2016.

visual nature of texts they produce brings its own set of special considerations and demands – the dual need for informational and aesthetic appeal that lies at the heart of news images.

5. The Information/Aesthetic Duality of News Images

The 'restrictions' that have to be talked about in the case of photojournalism go beyond just censorship and information management practices which affect journalism as a whole but also constitutes recognising the semiotic nature (Fourie, 2012: 1-2) of photojournalistic work per se: i.e. those inherent in the storytelling techniques employed at the intersection of the aesthetic and informational at which photojournalism works. Within these dual storytelling techniques of providing visual evidence and producing aesthetically appealing images, Zelizer (2004) points to how the aesthetic aspects of photojournalism can negate the informational appeal of a photograph as choice by photojournalists and photo-editors are often dictated by stereotypes and visual 'cues' which do not necessarily provide the context out of which the photographs emerge. "All of this matters" Zelizer says "because it is not the photograph's referentiality—its ability to present the world as is—that endures in journalism's turn to the visual. Despite the fact that photographers and journalists have long stipulated that the referential force matters in news photographs, it is the photograph's symbolic or connotative force—its ability to contextualize the discrete details of a setting in a broader frame—that facilitates the durability and memorability of a news image" (2004: 130).

These aesthetic considerations have always been part and parcel of visual reportage whereas in written journalism it may be a more recent trend. Calcutt (2004: 171-186) describes this movement towards the aesthetic in written journalism in the last few decades and identifies the attendant problems of "investigation and comprehension of causes and effects" of news events being replaced by "description and affect" resulting in a diluting of the political function of the journalists' role in society to that only of a mythologizing function. Photojournalism, on the other hand, has never not been fraught with this duality (Schwartz, 1990 in Bock, 2008; Sontag, 1977: 175-177). As Hall (1973:188) remarked in his discussion of determination in news photographs, "the conjuncture of the immediate, the political, the historical and the mythic" within news images has always lent "extraordinary complexity to the deciphering of the visual sign".

Since the mythologizing function at the connotative level, the aesthetic appeal at both the denotative and connotative level, as well as the denotative informational appeal are all ingrained in photojournalism and affects choices made by photojournalists, then what form of critique can news images take that not only provides context of the conflict or crises being depicted but also lays bare its own mythologizing function – showing its authorial hand and means of production? And all of this while making a moral appeal towards recognition of the suffering of the victims of war that PJ calls for?

One of the answers to this question may lie in the duality in photojournalism between aesthetic and informational appeal mentioned above. In her ethnographic study of photojournalists at work, Bock (2008: 171) notes that the very identity of photojournalists is fraught by the tension between producing 'art and fact': the "rhetorical contradiction" at the very heart of news photographic practice "at the intersection between the artistic/subjective and factual/objective" that Schwartz (1990 in Bock, 2008) had identified. Bock (2008: 172) observed what this contradiction means for the individual photojournalists (again to be remembered as the first in a series of links in the visual gatekeeping chain): "Unlike art photographers, news photographers operate within norms that restrict them from materially manipulating their subject matter, whether in the course of recording the image or after the fact through digital techniques. Yet they are still trained to try to please the eye while providing information". One such 'norm' is not acknowledging the presence of other media personnel and equipment – a rule that photojournalists generally are at pains to follow as seen in a recent controversy. In January 22, 2014, AP.org published a report entitled "AP [Associated Press] severs ties with photographer who altered work". The 'photographer who altered work' was Narciso Contreras, a Pulitzer prize winning Mexican freelance photographer whose work had been published by numerous news organizations including a total of 494 of his photos that had been accepted by AP over the years (AP.org, 2014). The image he had altered was taken on September 29, 2013 in Syria "during an exchange of fire with government forces [and rebel fighters] in the village of Telata" (AP.org, 2014, parenthesis added). According to the AP report, the alteration that Contreras admitted to was removing "his fellow journalist's video camera [which] was initially visible on the ground at one corner of the frame… by 'cloning' other pieces of the background and pasting them over the camera, before sending that image to the AP photo desk" (AP.org, 2014; parenthesis added). Contreras was quoted in the report as saying that "he thought that having the video camera in the frame might distract viewers" (AP.org, 2014). Whatever lesson is to be learnt from the above controversy, it is safe to assume excluding media equipment and personnel from their images is something ingrained in normal photojournalistic practice.

Viewed within such a background, one particular observation by Bock (2008: 174-5) of photojournalists at work becomes extremely poignant for the current discussion. She observed that foregrounding photographic equipment of fellow media personnel does become a trope as an attempt to resolve the contradiction that photojournalists feel between producing 'art' and 'fact': "They might try to do this through synecdoche… 'one

shot that tells the whole story'". And what such synecdoche means sometimes is to include photographic equipment within the photograph "as a way to tell more of the story of the event". According to Bock, in such a way the photojournalist is "not only coping with 'what's there', but exposing the occasionally artificial nature of politically engineered media events". Such a photo, she continues, "has a denotative meaning…But there's also a connotative, ideological message too: this was a staged event for television". The discussion below argues by analysis of two photographs which also foregrounded photographic equipment and personnel, that such synecdochic photographs may not only critique staged media spectacles – in itself a powerful tool for Peace Photojournalism to 'expose the truth' – but also critique media's complicity in helping 'stage' such events and as such are examples of self-reflexive synecdoche exposing the 'truths' behind news photography.

Thus, the discussion below takes Bock's observation even further and argues following Tester (2004), that the "moral moment" in news is "strongest when storytelling" collapses "in the face of newsgathering" and vice versa, and that the "answer to the problem of how to make non-sufferers come close to the suffering is the broadcasting of the newsgathering process" (Tester, 2004: 197) and that it can have a lesson for understanding visual reportage for PJ purposes.

As such, the discussion below merges such visual foregrounding of the 'newsgathering process', as Bock observed and Tester called for, with the understanding of the "communicative modes of display and deliberation" (Cottle, 2006: 173) of visual media in a conflict which Cottle says can lead to an "expressive and moral force" that "can sometimes flesh out former Others, embodying them as active subjects deserving of recognition and political response" (Cottle, 2006:183). The discussion below presents two case studies to argue that given the recognition of journalistic and media 'agency' at the heart of both PJ and Cottle's identification of visual media's 'performativity' during conflicts, PJ has to bring into its purview such display through foregrounding by photojournalists as a mode, among others, for photojournalistic self-reflexivity.

6. Case study as research strategy

This article, in its discussion of the immanent example of foregrounding of photographic equipment and personnel by photojournalists as a way of conceptualizing the performance of deliberative display in photojournalism, is making, first and foremost, a theoretical proposition. To further the theoretical proposition, two qualitative, descriptive case studies are provided in the section below. Case study is a way to "investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1993: 59 quoted in Meyer, 2001: 330-1). In short, it is a flexible approach which focusses on the "natural context" of the subject matter being studied (Cavaye, 1996: 229 quoted in Wilson, 2011: 90). Case studies, say Baxter and Jack (2008: 545), "should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context" (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 545 following Yin, 2003). While research context (b) above is not applicable to the subject matter being dealt with in this article per se, the conditions (a), (c) and (d) are the main reasons why case studies was deemed appropriate for this discussion.

The theoretical proposition above, it was felt, would thus be well-served by a case study approach as it "is open to the use of theory or conceptual categories that guide the research and analysis of data" (Meyer, 2001: 331). However, this guidance of data sampling and analysis by the conceptual category being proposed as Meyer (2001) also notes, is both the strength and the weakness of case studies. The most obvious criticism is of course that case studies are *ipso facto* flawed because of their "lack of scientific rigour and reliability and that they do not address the issues of generalizability" (Noor, 2008: 1603). However, Meyer (2001) suggests that such criticism can be mitigated by being clear from the outset whether the case study is being employed as a methodological 'design' or methodological 'strategy' (Meyer, 2001: 348-9), a view also expressed by Wilson (2011: 90-1). The discussion below employs case study as a methodological strategy with the choice of the samples to be discussed based on their "criticality, relevance, and representativeness" (Meyer, 2001: 334) to the 'issue' at hand while the latter serves as the guiding principle of the discussion (Stake, 1995: 17 quoted in Baxter and Jack, 2008: 552). As such, the case study-based analysis below is:

   a) Descriptive so as to be able to take the "real-life context in which it occurred" (Yin, 2003 in Baxter and Jack, 2008: 548) into consideration.
   b) Multiple so as to be able to "explore differences within and between cases".
And most importantly,
   c) Instrumental in so far as it "provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory" (Stake 1995 in Baxter and Jack, 2008: 548).

7. Two cases of self-reflexive synecdoche as critique of media's role in war

The two examples discussed below are important because the images taken by these photographers challenged the stipulated 'referential force' (Zelizer, 2004:130) of the images they took and instead drew attention to the constructed nature of news images, exposing and "foregrounding" the "common-sensical criteria" behind the production of such images (Allan, 2011: 163). This simultaneous form of self-reflexive journalism which produces an image-text while calling into question its own veracity – a self-reflexive synecdoche – may only be possible in the case of images and thus photojournalism within PJ can, not only "expose the untruths" (Lynch and Galtung, 2010: 13) behind war propaganda but also expose the 'truths' behind how such propaganda is reified and circulated by the media and media professionals. The examples discussed below underline this need to understand self-reflexivity as it applies in the case of photojournalists and photojournalism.

7.1 Menahem Kahana in Israel

Menahem Kahana is an Israeli photojournalist. Since 1987, his photographs have appeared through Agence France-Presse (AFP) and as a pool photographer for other news agencies as well. His photos have won him acclaim, awards and citations (Drescher, 2009). The photo taken by him to be discussed here is one that was circulated by AFP/Getty Images and was included (most notably from a news circulation point of view) on June 30, 2009 on a 'pictures of the day' blog post on wsj.com – the online portal of the Wall Street Journal (WSJ.com, 2009).

The photo shows three photographers in profile carrying professional equipment on the left hand side of the image in front of a door frame through which three soldiers can be seen with their weapons aimed towards the viewer. Two of the soldiers are partially behind the doorframe while the third in full view as they stand and squat almost in silhouette peering through the telescopic lenses of their rifles. Behind the soldiers is a low wall beyond which a defocussed sandy horizon interspersed with trees can be seen[3]. The caption which appeared with it was as follows: "Photographers took pictures of elite Israeli infantry soldiers during urban warfare training in Tzeelim, Israel, Tuesday. The Urban Warfare Training Center simulates an Arab town. (Menahem Kahana/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images)" (WSJ.com, 2009).

Why this photograph illustrates the case in point here is because of the inspired comment on the nature of news-photography and its construction of a reality (rather than just the referent reality) that Kahana evocatively captures in his frame even in a photograph meant for circulation by a news agency. AFP did circulate this image even though the photograph effectively challenges the truth claim central to the practice of news photography and breaks the cardinal rule of not foregrounding other photographic equipment and personnel. The manipulation of reality by photojournalism, seen here through Kahana's depiction of the selective *mise-en-scène* being depicted by the other photographers, is a forceful critique that Kahana is able to produce through his photo.

In Kahana's photo, the viewer is invited through the photograph to imagine the other photographs that the photographers portrayed are taking and will take of the 'reality' (such as it is, since the soldiers are artificially posing for the benefit of the cameras in the middle of a training 'simulation') in front of them. The viewer is able to see how the door-frame/gap in the wall through which we see the actors (the soldiers) is a stage-prop for the other photographers as much as it is a metaphor for the photographic frame in Kahana's own photograph. The information and aesthetic appeal in Kahana's photo derives entirely from such foregrounding and the whole narrative value of the photograph is as a comment on the work of news-photographers rather than the Israeli soldiers' combat training exercise. It is an overt, constructed challenge to the constructed nature of the truth-claim of news photos. The photo is a near-perfect illustration of critiquing the 'referential force' of photojournalism through photojournalism itself by employing a self-reflexive synecdoche. It achieves this effect by foregrounding the referent of other photographers to question their claims of being solely the chroniclers of reality. Additionally though, there is a clever sleight of hand in meaning-making at work in this photograph which is what probably makes it acceptable for AFP to circulate it without objections. The photo's denotative meaning does not overtly challenge the truth-claim of news photography. As the caption says it is a photo of how "photographers took pictures…" (WSJ.com, 2009). Thus it claims to be merely a faithful rendition of reality as it happened. Yet the connotative meaning of the photo reaches far beyond the merely denotative one that the caption limits it to, much as Bock (2008: 174) noted. Kahana's account of taking this photograph: his version of his motives, his choices and the setting which allowed him to capture this photograph sadly is not recorded. Fortunately, another instance where the photographer chose to move away from the crowd of photographers and document a poignant picture of the moment of myth-creation in news-photo making has been explored more thoroughly both by the photographers involved and other commentators.

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[3] The photograph can be seen here: http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/photographers-take-pictures-of-israeli-elite-infantry-news-photo/94984003#photographers-take-pictures-of-israeli-elite-infantry-soldiers-armed-picture-id94984003

7.2 Nathan Weber in Haiti

The fullest reconstruction, from several viewpoints, of the moments, meanings and reactions of and from the second image to be discussed is possible largely thanks to the efforts of Pete Brook, the writer-commentator who runs a blog called 'Prison Photography'. He had gone to extra-ordinary lengths in his careful reconstruction of the death of Fabienne Cherisma – a 15-year-old Haitian girl shot dead by riot police on January 19, 2010 during a period of looting in Port-au-Prince following a devastating earthquake (Carroll, 2010). Cherisma died in front of myriad witnesses, some of them with cameras in their hands. Brooke's investigation stretching over eighteen different blog entries (January 27th, 2010 to May 14th, 2011) of the photos taken of Cherisma and the photographers who took them, led him to conclude that at least fifteen photojournalists and one journalist were present at that particular spot on a rooftop in downtown Port-Au-Prince where Cherisma died (Brook, April 8, 2010). Brook also counted five photographers (Brook, May 14th, 2011) in total of those fifteen who were subsequently awarded or nominated for awards for their photos of Haiti which included pictures of Cherisma's death. One of the first on the scene, if not the first, was Nathan Weber who took the photo under discussion here.

The photo taken by Weber shows at least seven photographers (an eighth person is partially obscured by the photographers whose actions cannot be determined clearly) standing or crouching next to each other on the left hand side of the image out of which four are looking through their cameras at the body of a woman sprawled on the ground with one arm around some picture frames. Two of the other photographers are looking at their own camera while one photographer looks at the viewer. In the immediate background is a man not carrying photographic equipment half turned and looking back at the entire scene. The setting is rubble-strewn and further in the background are a few houses and one other person looking away from the scene[4].

Edward Linsmier, one of the photojournalists who was present at the scene, recounted the event in a blog called Adjustment Layer (Linsmier, 4th February, 2010) and described Weber's action and the events surrounding him at the time when the photograph was taken as below:

> I yelled his [Weber's] name and he looked at me with a blank stare. Nathan is someone who is on point in a situation such as this. He communicates quickly, clearly and with authority when needed. He is no stranger to photographing in similar situations but something of this magnitude was new to both of us…. [A little later] we [Linsmier and his fixer] ran maybe 50 yards back and climbed back up on the roof to see Nathan in almost the exact same spot where I last saw him, except he was looking at a girl who was lying face down on the slanting concrete roof. As best as I can recall, Nathan spoke in short sentences, "I saw her fall. I thought she tripped and knocked herself out. She's dead. Fuck. She got shot. I was right here." The decision to continue making photographs was instinctual. More photographers showed up and we were all making pictures, composing the dead girl in the foreground as the looters continued to walk past her, almost over her, carrying whatever they could. Several men stopped to turn her over, seemingly to identify the body. They gently took her arms and almost had to twist her just a little to face her upward. They looked at her with little emotion and left. She had been shot in the head.

Interviewed by Brook, Weber himself had the following to say about the moment when he took the photo (Brook, March 18, 2010):

> The atmosphere was pretty intense. This is the most high emotion environment I have ever been in. At one point I felt that we all needed to back off and stop shooting. I thought that the pictures have been made and stepping away from the scene was in order. I also gave thought to heading back to the hotel and transmitting my images. Until this point there hadn't been a youth death involved in looting and I knew that I would be an important news story [sic]. I am so glad I didn't leave and I waited to see what would happen. [Question:] *How did others behave?* Everyone of the photographers on the scene were very professional. We all worked together to document the situation and did our best not to add or take away from the environment. Basically, we all acted within the Society of Professional Journalists (SP&J) ethics and guidelines.

Even though Weber absolves his fellow-photographers present at the scene of any professional misconduct, his photo of them at work taking photos of Cherisma's lifeless body which was published on the prison photography blog along with the interview on March 18, 2010, sparked public debate in Sweden about the ethics surrounding news-photography when, a year later in 2011, Paul Hansen from the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* was awarded for his work depicting the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake which included photos of Cherisma (Brook, 23rd March, 2011). Later the same year in August, Weber's image was the subject of a two-page discussion entitled

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[4] The photograph can be seen here: http://prisonphotography.org/2010/03/18/photographing-fabienne-part-nine-interview-with-nathan-weber/

'The spectacle of catastrophe' (O espetáculo da catástrofe) in the magazine *Contraponto* published by the Journalism Laboratory of Pontifical Catholic University of Sao Paulo by authors, Isabel Harari, Laysa Elias and Roberta Smolka (2011: 6-7). The writers invited journalists and photojournalists to muse on the ethical questions posed by Weber's photograph. On April 9, 2013, *Colors* magazine published a story on the debates that surrounded the photos taken of Fabienne Cherisma in their issue no. 86 entitled 'Making the News' and painted a fuller picture of the controversy as follows:

> Haiti's massive earthquake had taken tens of thousands of lives that January [in 2010], but the pictures of Fabienne struck a chord: she became an icon of Haiti's desperation….Two months after the incident, photojournalist Nathan Weber released an image he'd originally taken as "an afterthought." It showed his colleagues at work, photographing Fabienne's body. By the time the picture was released, the flood of graphic images from Haiti's catastrophe had become increasingly unsettling for its audience. Brendan Gormley, chief executive of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee, had spoken out against "disaster pornography": gratuitous images of suffering. And Haitians had begun stoning photojournalists in protest, according to UK aid worker Ishbel Matheson. "People said we looked like a bunch of vultures," says Weber. Even though grouping together is common for photographers in dangerous situations, many in the international photo-journalist community were unhappy with having "their laundry aired in public."

(*Colors*, 2013)

Subsequently, the photograph was used for an advertisement campaign by the Church of Sweden with the caption "Who owns the truth?" in October, 2013 (adsoftheworld.com, 2013). Soon after, the photos of Cherisma's death reappeared as the subject of a tumblr post published on December 21, 2013 by the website *politicaysociedad.net*. The post pairs Hansen's image of Cherisma with Weber's and purportedly quotes a report by the news website *Terra de España* about the "Controversy [that] has erupted in Sweden with the photographer Paul Hansen's image" (politicaysociedad.tumblr.com, 2013).

These instances where Weber's image was used as a centre of discussion is some indication of the powerful grip that his photo seems to have on audiences – journalists or otherwise – across places and times and the questions that it seems to bring with it. The discussions range from ethics surrounding the role of the photojournalists in crisis situations to whether photojournalists should play a part in pre-empting violence and helping victims. Weber's photograph surfaced about two months after the event of January 19, 2010 and was not circulated by traditional media outlets. The photograph was published accompanying Weber's interview by Brook (March 18th, 2010) for his blog. Since then the debates it has sparked border on a visceral reaction against the photojournalists and their opportunism surrounding Cherisma's death, as seen from the examples included above, a reaction that Brook (March 23rd, 2010) rather understatedly calls – in his exploration of Swedish reactions after Weber's photo came to light – as "skepticism toward photojournalism". The skepticism that Brook mentions or the stoning of photojournalists by Haitians that the story in *Colors* magazine describes come respectively from the public on both sides of the camera – the viewers of the images as well as the subjects of the images.

Photojournalists themselves, it seems, also see the photo itself as a comment on the daily work they do (or even an exposé: 'airing of dirty laundry'). Writers of the article in *Contraponto* include comments by photographers who approach the subject from the standpoint of critiquing the very profession they are a part of. Photographer John Sinclair calls Weber's photo an example of "*metajornalismo*" (meta-journalism) which analyzes "what the job means to photo journalists" (Harari et al, 2011: 6). The article quotes another photographer, Jesus Carlos, about Weber's image as saying, "here I see a spectacle of news or information. It puts image-professionals in the middle of a ridiculous situation. It seems like a press conference" (Harari et al, 2011: 6). These reactions from the photojournalists echo the point about the constructed nature of photography that Brooks (April 8, 2010) himself identifies as a commentator:

> The erasure of fellow media from a scene is a paradox. Journalists are required to record events as they *are*, but if a photographer depicts them as if he or she is working in isolation – as if from a unique one-off viewpoint – then what is delivered is not an objective, neutral description but a construction….I usually only see images that implicate media/photographers when the story becomes about them, when they get injured or kidnapped. Photojournalists are either the directors of a scene or the embattled hero of a scene; they are never bit-part players.

In short, the issue which Brooks as well as the photojournalists in the *Contraponto* article identify is the problem of foregrounding of photographic apparatus and photographic personnel and the challenge that this brings to a news photo's central truth-claim and news value. This problematic foregrounding – a photographic Brecht-ian "alienation effect" (Brecht, 1964: 187) achieved through self-reflexive synecdoche – is what Kahana embraced in his photograph to produce an aesthetic composition which treads a fine line between referentiality and self-referentiality which would be accepted by a news agency in spite of its critical nature. Weber's photograph has had the effect of being a more direct critique of the constructed nature of photojournalistic work. What then can be understood as shared between these two photographs and how does it relate to being relevant for

reimagining 'photographic form, practice and epistemology' for the purposes of peace photography as Allan (2011) calls for?

8. Conclusion

What is shared between the two photographs may be understood following Barthes (1981: 40-1) in so far as that each of the photographs and photographers breaks away from the "unary" tradition of news photographs. In these two photographs, the steady, unproblematic "studium" of the "literal" referent of the images which have a certain shock value of their own and thus are "received (all at once)" as such, is further "lashed, striped" by the "punctum" which inflicts a 'wound' on the viewers' expectation and perception that he or she is looking at a credible, accurate and true depiction of what happened at a certain time and place – in Israel or Haiti.

In each case, this 'punctum' made possible through the photojournalistic equivalent of the "work of the break" (Lynch and Galtung, 2010: 195) lays bare the "newsgathering process" as Tester (2004: 197) called for to enhance the moral message in news. At the same time, these "accidental" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2013: 1043) examples of visual peace journalism constitute a showing of the "authorial hand(s)" that Pedelty (1995: 210) called for in "honest and committed journalism" which allows audiences' critical faculties to engage with the image-text in question rather than inhibiting critical reactions about that image-text. For PJ, which primarily seeks to define the role that journalists (and editors) can play in constructive conflict coverage, it is thus important to frame conflict visual journalism within its performativity – what it does – rather than only the reflections and representations it produces, just as Cottle (2006) argued for.

If this "understanding of 'mediatized conflict', *of how the media do things with conflicts*, [is] necessary for engaging with the media's involvement in conflict reporting today" (Cottle, 2006: 9; original emphasis) then the examples above of photographers choosing to "display" in their image-texts the role being played by media during a conflict and thus providing a space for "deliberation" (Cottle, 2006: 173) on the subject gains significance for PJ and its discussions of usage of visuals for the purposes of peace.

It is the photojournalists who added that element of puncturing the truth-claim of journalistic photography in their photos. Their self-awareness in the examples led to image texts which 'displayed' the constructed nature of photography. There is no reason to suspect that such recognition does not exist more widely among practicing photojournalists given the reactions and recognitions by other photojournalists included here, even though their photo-texts and their traditional formats may be generally and more often "unary" reinforcing the 'referential force' of the news image. Since the constitution of meaning outside the visual text – the de-centred decoding of the text (Hall, 1993: 94) – means that while the text "functions normatively…it can, depending on the specific mode of circulation, call certain field of normativity into question" (Butler, 2009: 24) as argued for earlier (Mitra, 2014) then the same might happen with the de-centred process of 'encoding' of visual texts. The moments (subject-choice, composition, selecting and editing by the photojournalists) of production of a news photo is also a site where "politically consequential breaks" may happen from the original norm to shift "modes of recognition" and to expose the "limits and contingency" of the original norms (Butler, 2009: 24) even though individual photojournalists may be only one link in the visual gatekeeping chain. 'Display' in photojournalism through foregrounding of the photographic apparatus and photographic personnel is one form that exposing such limits and contingency of the truth-claim of mainstream photojournalism can take through achieving an 'alienation effect' on audiences leading to discussions of the relationship of the producers to the means of production which Benjamin (2008) identified as the first step to functional transformations within cultural production.

The most direct lesson to take from the examples and discussion above is that photojournalists' role in visual coverage of war is not only in exposing the untruths circulated by two warring parties in a conflict but also the untruths circulated by the ever-present third party in most conflicts – the media itself. It is imperative for future researchers within PJ to not only identify as this article does other such isolated 'challenges' to the forms, practices and epistemologies of photojournalism that already exist, but also to collate such examples, at every level of the visual gatekeeping chain, to create the 'new visual grammar' for peace photojournalism which moves beyond mere challenges to form an integral 'reimagining' of such forms, practices and epistemologies as Allan (2011) calls for.

The larger implication for PJ being argued for in this study thus is not mere showing of photographic equipment and personnel as the analysis might seem to suggest. The article instead intends to point out the need to identify how, beyond the "effort to use images as facts" (Bock, 2008: 178), news images can lead to conversations which resonate with PJ's stated aim of creating "opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005: 5). As such this study points to one immanent condition in news photographs – produced at the level of individual photojournalists within the visual gatekeeping chain of photojournalistic production and circulation – which can start such conversations. While other avenues through which peace photojournalism might pursue creating such conditions remains at the hands of more capable future researchers and practitioners, one fundamental step in the right direction that the current study hopes to point to along with Bock (2008) is to go beyond what Barthes called 'realism that is relative' to 'realism that is absolute':

images which are "original, obliging the loving and terrified consciousness" (Barthes, 1981: 119) to go deeper into the images and engage with them. In the cases studied here, this representation of 'absolute' realism was made possible through the 'punctum' experienced when photographers made appearances as "bit-part players" (Brooks, April 8, 2010) in the referent, 'relative' reality to show the 'authorial hands' behind images that media present to us. Future research in peace photojournalism will hopefully identify more such ways to engage our 'absolute' – compassionate yet deliberative – attention.

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