



VISUALIZING PEACE – THE STATE OF THE ART

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While the importance of visualization of war, conflict, and violence has gathered great momentum in disciplines such as International Relations (IR), far less has been said about the visualization of peace in IR, history, and even in Peace and Conflict Studies.¹ As Maria Elena Díez Jorge and Francisco Muñoz Muñoz point out, “[v]iolence has received the attention, while peace and its entire semantic sphere have been left out of the spotlight”.² It is this relative blind spot that this special issue wants to address as it aims to reflect on the politics, policy, and pedagogy of visualizing peace. Among other questions, it will reflect on how peace is visualized in cultural artifacts and what these representations of peace (and their absence) do politically. In other words, what is presented in the picture of peace and what is left out? What consequences can this have for the construction of politics? In addition, the special issue considers how visual artifacts can contribute to real-world peace after violent conflict. How can visualization in film, photography, or documentaries help build peace and contribute to conflict resolution, reconciliation, transitional justice, and peace pedagogy? If we accept the argument of the cultural turn and believe in the co-constitution of culture and politics and in the idea that cultural artifacts such as movies take part in the construction of a dichotomous understanding of self and other, thereby contributing to the legitimization of violence and conflict, then this may also work the other way around: Cultural artifacts like movies can play an important role in peace processes.

When considering the visualization of peace, one must start with the conceptualization of “peace” itself. The concept and its meaning

have been a matter of debate since the inception of peace studies. Within these debates, two main questions are central: First, whether peace is something more than the mere absence of war; and second, whether peace is to be understood as an (ideal) state never to be achieved or as a process. Dominant in the debate is the distinction that Johan Galtung first drew between negative and positive peace in 1964.³ To Galtung, negative peace refers to the absence of direct, personal violence, whereas positive peace requires the absence of structural and cultural violence, manifested in exploitative and oppressive economic and political structures and the (cultural and normative) legitimization of direct and/or structural violence. In his view, the differentiation between negative and positive peace is closely tied to his typology of violence. Extending the concept of violence to include structural and cultural dimensions “leads to an extended concept of peace.” While this distinction is widely used, the question remains whether peace is perceived of as a state or a process⁴ or as both, as Lothar Brock argues.⁵

Ernst-Otto Czempiel’s procedural understanding of peace is characterized by decreasing violence alongside an expansion of justice.⁶ Alternatively, Dieter Senghaas conceptualizes a peaceful society through his civilizational hexagon, which includes six elements: a monopoly on the use of force, the rule of law, participation, social justice, a culture of constructive conflict resolution and interdependency and emotional self-control of its members. Like the social contract theories within the dominant liberal peace paradigm that link it to the idea of statehood and democratic governance and nonviolent forms of conflict resolution, Senghaas’ “peace” is essentially a civilizing process.⁷

In contrast, many religious traditions refer to peace as a state of mind that might only be achieved in the afterlife.⁸ But peace may also be achieved at the individual, community, national, and global level in the form of social and communal harmony in plural societies – a dominant theme in Asian and African discourses on peace. These various conceptualizations of peace are by no means uncontested and have provoked debates on whether peace indeed means or should mean more than the absence of war; and whether in its positive form it is doomed to remain a utopia never to be reached and to broaden a concept that in the end becomes meaningless. These different understandings and conceptualizations of peace also inform the representation of peace in visual artifacts.

The articles in this special issue on visualizing peace build upon these literatures to illuminate the possibilities of how (the impossibility of) visualizing peace could foster or impede a more peaceful engagement in or after violent conflict situations. To lay the groundwork for the multidisciplinary exploration to follow, the introduction is structured as follows: Part one engages with research on the visualization of peace by examining images of peace in paintings, political posters, photography, and movies and shows that conceptualizations of a negative peace are dominant in much of the research. Part two then reflects on the possibilities how visualizations can contribute to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and peace education. Specifically, this involves the ideas of peace art, peace media, and peace movies. The third part will offer an overview of the articles of the special issue and consider what we learn from them with regard to how peace is (not) visualized and how this could contribute to a more peaceful engagement between former enemies.⁹

IMAGES OF PEACE: FROM PAINTINGS TO MOVIES

Only a handful of scholars in disciplines such as history, political science, media studies, and psychology have engaged in researching the visualization of peace in a number of media, including paintings, drawings, political posters, and photography.¹⁰ For example, Thomas Hippler examines images of peace and political iconography in paintings from the Middle Ages to the 17th century showing how representations of peace change over time, dependent on context and underlying conceptualizations of peace.¹¹ While he highlights the visualization of some of the positive effects of peace found in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco *The Good and the Bad Government* such as social relations, joy and wealth, he argues that these positive normative aspects disappear in Hobbes' *Leviathan* where peace is solely depicted as protection and security. "Hobbes's peace [...] no longer relies on any normative principles, and it does not produce anything but precisely peace, however, clearly a sort of empty peace."¹²

Turning to one of the most famous paintings of peace in early modern history, Hippler examines the depiction of the Westphalian peace in Münster in 1648 by Ter Borch, which shows the ratification of the peace treaty in the city hall of Münster between the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Spanish Crown. In contrast to previous visualizations of peace, there is no mythological, idealized, or

personalized form of depiction. Instead, the painting depicts the signing of the treaty which is based on mutual recognition and symmetry rather than hierarchy between those involved in the conflict. Instead of a “victor and a defeated party,” Hippler notes, Borsch depicts “a community of equals” in which neither side is depicted as the “more legitimate.”¹³

Benjamin Ziemann has examined the peace iconography of in peace movement posters produced in the aftermath of the Second World War. He argues that in premodern art peace was commonly depicted through three iconographic traditions: (1) “the glorification of the peaceable ruler”; (2) “the combination of positive virtues in portrayals of good government”; and (3) related to “classical mythology such as Mars or Minerva.”¹⁴ However, representations of peace in peace movement posters were unable to articulate a genuinely positive vision of peace. Rather, the posters were predominantly able to visualize peace through the negation of the binary opposition of violence, conflict, and war or through oppositional metaphorical images. In the 1960s, this included war and conflict as a danger to the security of family life commonly depicted by mother and child, both stereotypical symbols of peacefulness and innocence.

This changed in the 1970s and 1980s when posters started to depict peace movements themselves by showing crowds of people in collective action and peaceful coexistence vaguely indicating what peace might be like once achieved. “We see young and old, men and women, and also a wide range of sociocultural groups and strata such as doctors, nuns, punks and respectable gentlemen in suits and ties, all brought together in a happy, tolerant and dynamic camaraderie.”¹⁵ This frequently also included “colorful images of peace and harmony” such as depictions of wild flower meadows, trees, play grounds or the dove and olive branch symbol.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the posters fail to offer concrete visual material for a positive peace as they “articulate a vision of peace implicitly or negatively, through the negation of a threatening danger.”¹⁷

Picking up on the inherent problem of visualizing peace in photography, Frank Möller argues that peace is commonly depicted through its absence or through its abundance.¹⁸ On the one hand, one may consider negative peace as the absence of all forms of violence, but visualization then becomes a futile exercise as it is impossible to visualize a void without reference to the binary existing opposite. On

the other hand, one may hold that everything which does not depict violence is in fact depicting peace. However,

[i]f peace is understood – still negatively but more narrowly – as absence of direct, physical violence, then peace photographs are redundant, threatened by irrelevance, as the vast majority of images, including the most trivial ones, produced at any given point in time would, due to the absence of depictions of the use of physical force, qualify as peace photographs.¹⁹

Möller suggests four potential ways forward. One could involve the showing of “islands of seeming nonviolence in an environment otherwise dominated by war,”²⁰ for example, the depiction of a flower in the bombed-out trenches of the First World War. A second possibility for visualizing peace may be to photograph the aftermath of violence such as an empty home left in a hurry when fleeing from an advancing war front. Nevertheless, in both cases the problem remains that peace visualized through violence, and not in its own right. And it is still represented in contrast or opposition to war. However, anthropology of peace research points out how peace and war are always about coexistence in the everyday (in line with the first way forward offered by Möller).²¹ We here also need violence to be able to visualize peace. “[A]ftermath photography, commencing when physical violence has stopped, is inseparably connected with the preceding violence as the condition of possibility for its existence.”²²

A third possibility for visualizing peace is the representation of a peaceful past or as a potential for the future. “Showing that (some form of) peace had been possible before violence gained the upper hand should not be reduced to mere nostalgia; such images may indicate that peace might be possible again should violence stop.”²³ Similarly, visions of peace “may show gradual reductions in levels of violence when dealing with conflict; they may document actions of nonviolence in situations that would earlier have been dealt with violently thus indicating that nonviolent conflict resolution is possible not only theoretically but also in practice.”²⁴ Again, there is no concrete visualization but only a suggested vision of peace. Finally, peace may be depicted in photography by showing postconflict cooperation between former enemies or other forms of nonviolent conflict resolution such as negotiations or peace agreements in a similar fashion to

the Ter Borch painting of the Westphalian peace ratification in Münster.²⁵

Several studies in peace psychology have examined the visualization of war and peace by children in different locations around the globe.²⁶ Interestingly, despite the different cultures and the varying closeness to actual conflicts, many of the findings indicate a common form of visualizing war and peace.²⁷ Similar to the above-mentioned difficulty of visualizing peace in contrast to war, this research finds that children appear to be far more able to draw more detailed and concrete pictures of conflict than of peace as “children’s understanding of war precedes their understanding of peace.”²⁸ According to this research, children, especially those between three and five years, “were more likely than older children to say they could not draw peace or that they did not know what it was.”²⁹

Many of the images of peace in the drawings— such as doves, butterflies, hearts, plants, the environment, the sun, spring and olive branches, as well as colors such as blue and green – correspond to the standard metaphorical symbols and images encountered in other media outlets. Beyond these symbols, researchers have shown that children visualize peace by depicting interpersonal relationships and interactions in families and friendship, or as being nice, sharing, playing games, or the holding of hands by people of different skin color.³⁰ In contrast, war was drawn in less metaphorical and more concrete ways by depicting military weapons, fighting, and colors such as red, gray, and black. Overall, “children included significantly more objects and more figures in their war drawings than in their peace drawings.”³¹ Moving away from interpersonal relationships and interaction experienced in their everyday lives, war was frequently visualized as a group conflict with more visualized participants than depictions of peace.³²

Most interestingly, children “conceive of peace primarily in terms of *negative peace*, associating peace with issues such as the absence of war, the absence of war activities, or with a state of stillness.”³³ Very similar to peace photography outlined above, children appear to visualize peace as the end of war or absence of conflict. As Kathleen Walker et al argue, children drew peace as inactivity, or as a state of nothing going on: “They often drew one or two inactive figures standing side by side.”³⁴ These findings may point to a dominant imagery of war in western culture including the news, history, or popular culture which provides ample material for the visualization of war but

very little with regard to the visualization of peace. While the peace drawings of children can be considered a mere reflection of a dominant visual culture of war, it is important to realize that these first steps of visualizing the world also have a socializing effect and are constitutive of a dominant imagery of politics at a very young age.³⁵

While the study of representations of war and peace in movies has become a cherished topic in Critical International Relations, the focus has predominantly been on the visualization of conflict, violence, and war rather than peace.³⁶ In the wake of the so-called aesthetic turn,³⁷ these studies refocus on the gaps between representation and the represented, as these gaps are always the product of power relations. Research has found overall that we find very similar, clear-cut roles attributed to good and evil protagonists, as well as narrative structures and emotional effects that work to sustain a particular moral order about the managing of war regardless of the cultural origins of the movie.³⁸

This, for example, includes a focus on technology in war movies, specifically modern weapon systems and information technology, and creates an effect of war as a war game.³⁹ “War movies provide a space outside of the military where ‘boys’ can enjoy the libidization of gadgets.”⁴⁰ This representation of war as technologically highly advanced practice abstracts war from its human consequences. But these technologies at the same time sustain dominant values of capitalist modernity, for instance, the value of technological supremacy, speed, mobility, domination, and efficiency. All these aspects support a certain quantification of the value of objects which “silences moral anxieties over technologies and economics.”⁴¹ The focus on technological (military) progress and power furthers the effect of an increasing abstractification, which distances the audience from the reality of what war technology does to the human body.⁴² If technological superiority breaks down, as in *Black Hawk Down*, the focus shifts toward heroic (male) individuals who practice war as a (legitimate) means to create order.⁴³ While movies such as *Black Hawk Down* demonstrate the horror of war, its everyday effects and the injustice of violence remain abstract due to the imbalance in representing human suffering. Moreover, the context and larger political and economic structures of the conflict depicted are rendered invisible. What the audience is left with is a clear-cut dichotomy between self and other in which a moral hierarchy is firmly established.

Another way of relating war movies to larger structures of meaning found in the literature is through an enquiry of the gender relations depicted. According to Pin-Fat and Stern, “war depends upon representations of gender” and the insight that representations of war “inform articulations of masculinity and femininity” are considered as almost commonplace in IR analysis.⁴⁴ Cynthia Weber, for instance, argues from a critical feminist perspective in *Imagining America at War* that war movies do not represent the moral grammar of the US society through a focus on the political, diplomatic, or military context, but their gender relations as a supposedly stable ground.⁴⁵ According to this research, war movies are structured through representations of masculinity and femininity, where hypermasculinity is seen as gendered requirement to survive in a war.⁴⁶ Linda Åhäll’s study of notions of masculinity and femininity in war movies demonstrates how gendered identities are not only produced and reproduced, but also policed following hegemonic ideals as represented in war films. In her study of a Second World War movie, she demonstrates how the topos of the female heroine cannot coincide with the image of the (female) protagonist as a mother.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Pin-Fat and Stern find a very similar strategy in the “scripting” of Pfc Jessica Lynch during and after her “rescue” as a prisoner of war from a hospital in Iraq.⁴⁸ Hence, feminist readings of war movies point to a more general insight about representation, namely the framing of identities in terms of self and other relationships.

While feminist approaches tend to focus on gendered stereotypes (masculinity and femininity, gendered roles, the use of emotions), this can be broadened to other dichotomies, such as the rational/modern/civilized West vs the irrational/archaic/wild Orient.⁴⁹ But self-other relations in war movies do not necessarily have to simply reproduce binary worldviews. Lacy shows how self-other relations in *Apocalypse Now Redux* and *Three Kings* (2003) at first sight seem to stabilize specific perspectives on the relationship between self and other.⁵⁰ While both movies seem to represent a dominant reading of the wars they depict, there is still some degree of subversion that may serve as a resource for visualizing peace, for instance, in the way the death of Iraqi civilians is depicted in *Three Kings*, which actually re-introduces the suffering of the other as a material reality of war.

While our literature review identified discursive strategies that may strengthen or subvert dominant narratives and downplay or highlight the suffering of the other, a crucial task concerns the question if

and how such strategies can be applied for peacebuilding, in forms of conflict resolution or peace education.

VISUALIZING PEACE IN PEACEBUILDING, CONFLICT RESOLUTION & PEACE EDUCATION

Peace Art

There are three overlapping strands of literature on peace art, peace media, and peace movies which engage the idea of using forms of visualization to aid peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and peace education. It has become widely accepted among scholars and practitioners that art can play an important role in/for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and peace education.⁵¹ The general argument is that art, and visual art in particular, can contribute to peace by being or providing a number of important means of alleviating conflict.

First, visual art has the potential to contribute to peace as a picture, sculpture, or performance which can help retrieve and process traumatic memories more easily than oral or written art. A range of scholars have shown how art therapy and the form and practice of visualization can be helpful for individuals who have personally suffered in conflict as memory is often encoded in a visual form.⁵² Visual art can therefore contribute to the healing of trauma on an individual level but also aid the reconstruction of society through providing a medium of reconciliation. "The arts, in addition to dealing with the past and reconstructing the present, enable concrete envisioning of a better future, as used in guided imagery in cognitive behavioral therapy."⁵³

Secondly, peace art can be understood as a cooperative project between former adversaries which may lead to lasting cooperative relationships after its completion.⁵⁴ While Craig Zelizre argues that "the arts have often had a significant impact on bringing together divided communities,"⁵⁵ Koelsch holds that "cooperation between individuals increases individual trust and increases the likelihood of future cooperation between these individuals."⁵⁶ Art offers an opportunity to "explore, celebrate, and leverage differences through a creatively integrative and artistically collaborative exercise."⁵⁷ As Ephrat Huss notes: "Creativity as a socially and culturally mediated practice is a natural way to reignite communication, team work, problem solving, cultural understanding, and decision making."⁵⁸ By successfully negotiating small nonpolitical

issues such as the color scheme of a joint painting, it can provide a positive experience which has the potential to create trust and empathy. The creation of a joint piece/peace of art illustrates the possibility of cooperation on larger issues.⁵⁹

Thirdly and related to this, some researchers point out that visual art has the potential for individual and societal transformation as the production involves a number of important societal functions such as communication, coordination, contact, and cohesion which are also needed for peace after conflict.⁶⁰ The experience of cooperation in visual artistic products can help “bridge differences when referring back to political issues.”⁶¹ “On a social level of rehabilitation, the arts have the potential to be a self-initiated, culturally contextualized method of mobilizing people into positive action and problem solving by restoring symbols of meaning that help reorganize community solidarity and resilience.”⁶²

Related to this, fourthly, “art is a tool that can communicate and transform the way people think and act. Arts can change the dynamics in intractable interpersonal, inter-communal, national, and global conflicts.”⁶³ Visual art can offer an alternative way of thinking by providing an opportunity for people to break out of their familiar structures and provide an awareness of alternative means of engaging with society.⁶⁴ The seeming contrast of art to politics enables many to engage in a more reflective, flexible, and open way with alternative positions and provides the ground for innovative solutions. Art can generate “empathy and identification with parts of the other that initiated a positive climate for conflict negotiations.”⁶⁵ In particular, visual art can be helpful in fostering peace as the interpretations of the visual are broader, less direct, and less confrontational than text and allow for more room for different mutually accepted perspectives. The ambiguity of visual art helps “to break down the binary understandings of strong/weak or victim/aggressor that tend so freeze people in rigid stance.”⁶⁶

Peace media

The role of media in conflict and war has received broad scholarly attention since first studies on the use of media for war promotion during the First World War emerged.⁶⁷ Research on war propaganda and the ways in which media instigate violence in ethnic conflicts has shed light on the intricate relationship between war and (mass)

media.⁶⁸ From the role of the radio in the Rwandan genocide⁶⁹ or in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia⁷⁰ to the use of the media to legitimize war in Iraq or Afghanistan, studies have shown the negative contributions of the media on conflict escalation.⁷¹

Assuming more or less strong media effects, an emerging field of scholarly research and professional practice looks into the ways in which media may also positively contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.⁷² Believing that “peace and reconciliation in a society can be achieved either by countering the actors and processes that fuel conflict, or by supporting their opponents in the peace movement,”⁷³ scholars and practitioners of peace media have proposed a number of measures and possibilities of aiding peaceful coexistence via (visual) media. For example, in 2008, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) proposed a strategic framework for designing peacebuilding media which emphasized conflict-sensitive and peace-oriented journalism, peace-promoting citizen or entertainment media, advertizing or marketing for conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as media regulation in order to prevent the incitement of violence.⁷⁴

The shared assumption “that media have the power to influence the development of peace in a conflict environment”⁷⁵ is also at the core of peace journalism. Emerging as a new field in Peace and Conflict Studies in the 1990s, peace journalism in its opposition to war journalism was first conceptualized by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge in their seminal article *The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers*.⁷⁶ While the literature on peace journalism and the ensuing debate on its ideological basis, the representation of conflicts in the media and linked professional practice focuses on the textual media and peace journalistic approaches also play a role for photojournalists.⁷⁷

As Möller notes, photojournalists may depict peace negatively through its absence; they show war and violence realistically – within the limits of the genre – in order to visualize the need for peace; or they intervene photographically in violent situations so that others can intervene more efficiently.⁷⁸ In practice, however, photojournalists are often constrained by the media environment, including economic concerns and gatekeeping by editors as illuminated by these two quotes: “We [photographers] tell ourselves we’re against war, but photo editors and photo competitions tend to reward violence. War photography may be creating an attraction to violence.” Moreover, “attempts

at peace and rebuilding are usually considered much less photogenic” by picture editors than attempts at war and destruction.⁷⁹ Apart from these constraints, covering peace is problematic. Understanding peace as a nonevent, Hamelink asks:

Does peace exist as a real set of events? Is peace not an aspiration in people’s minds rather than a real-life process with newsworthy human interest and political features? Peace is not a clear-cut process or state about which reporters can write. To a large extent peace is, for journalists, a nonevent. War matches the media logic better than peace. The acts that constitute war are more limited and relatively easy to comprehend. The peace effort is multi-interpretable, highly complex and multi-layered.⁸⁰

Based on the assumption that textual and visual media can influence peoples’ perceptions, attitudes and, ultimately, behavior and similar to concepts such as Communication for Development and Communication for Social Change and Advocacy Communication,⁸¹ peacebuilding practitioners increasingly implement projects in conflict settings to promote peace and support reconciliation processes using visual communication channels. Here, the idea is that visual media can aid conflict transformation and peacebuilding as it facilitates changes to different levels of the conflict including cognitive change, affective change, and behavioral change on the individual level as well as and changes in the relationships that allow for collaborative interaction between the members of warring parties.⁸²

The international nongovernmental organization *Search for Common Ground* (SCG) is particularly active when it comes to employing visual means of peaceful engagement with conflict in the field of peacebuilding intervention. The NGO has offices in fifty-nine countries and works with 802 partners worldwide. It entertains various media formats to promote peace and reconciliation in conflict zones. Apart from peace video games and music videos, SCG uses soap operas such as the “multi-nation, episodic” soccer-drama *The Team* to “help transform social attitudes and diminish violent behavior in countries grappling deeply rooted conflict. . . The television series addresses the very real divisive issues facing societies in a dozen of African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries, using sport as a unifier to surmount barriers.”⁸³ This entertainment format is used by various peacebuilding actors and in different conflict contexts to overcome divisions,

deconstruct enemy images, and promote peace and reconciliation. For instance, the Israeli/Palestinian version of *Sesame Street* is considered to foster tolerance between the two communities by educating children on peace and has also been applied to other contexts.⁸⁴

In reference to a participatory video project conducted by the NGO Mercy Corps in the Rift Valley of Kenya in the aftermath of the 2008 election violence, Baú links Communication for Social Change (CSC) with conflict transformation theory to assess the project's potential to contribute to peacebuilding.⁸⁵ She finds that both the filming and the screening of these films have facilitated a dialogue between different groups, thereby contributing to social change and peacebuilding. Though the participatory videos were considered mere instruments to assess the organization's work and receive beneficiary feedback, Baú finds that the videos became a tool for conflict transformation which had emancipatory effects such as the facilitation of self-reflection and observation of events.⁸⁶

Peace Movies

How and to what extent can films potentially contribute to peacebuilding? As indicated above, movies may tell us something about dominant if partial views of the world and the roles war and peace play in sustaining or disrupting these particular worldviews. The focus on one set of protagonists, their suffering, and heroic actions points toward a certain moral grammar in war which helps to sustain a political and symbolic order in international politics.⁸⁷ Movies may stabilize (and possibly subvert) audience expectations about norms, ideologies, and structures of international politics by forming generic social, geopolitical, and moral meanings.⁸⁸ Mark Lacy argues that cinema becomes a space where “‘commonsense’ ideas about global politics and history are (re)produced and where stories about what is acceptable behavior from states and individuals are naturalized and legitimated.”⁸⁹ In order to critically analyze such attempts at reconstructing meaning we must also study what is left out in a narrative. Brent Steele argues in this respect that critical analysis needs to enquire into the perspective of the other that may not be dominant in a movie.⁹⁰ War cinema seems to be dominated by movies that normalize the idea of war as the natural order of things in international politics and works as a distancing technology that suppresses moral anxiety over politics and events.⁹¹ Movies may thus help to sustain

protracted conflicts by strengthening self-other dichotomies and identities by providing (selective) information about societies and conflicts, through the use of emotions, (gendered) stereotypes, and narratives.⁹² Hence, they constitute potentially very influential forms of banal nationalism⁹³ that may reach an audience of millions.

Given that peace has been notable through its absence in movies and studies discussed so far, the question arises if movies may affect the normalization or subversion of war *and* peace as concepts and imaginations? For Lacy, movies such as *Three Kings* may use the power of images to create moral proximity to lives of others in situations of war.⁹⁴ Peace movies, in this respect, may expose, for example, colonial violence and resistance by bringing the audience closer to the suffering of the victims (Lacy cites the example of *The Battle of Algiers*). To some extent, cinema has the potential of re-introducing moral anxiety in a context where decision-makers or the military aim at establishing moral certainty; in this sense, cinema may work similar to critical theory as an enlightenment project. Drawing on the work of Richard Rorty, Lacy argues that popular culture may play a role in “the construction of ‘other-respecting’ citizens”.⁹⁵ In this respect, the function of war movies may be the cultivation of a moral responsibility toward others.

Films may also help in promoting transitions to peace by subverting dominant narratives and self/other dichotomies, through alternative narrations that challenge a dominant discourse. Popular culture can be especially important once the political transition toward peace is already under way. In such cases, films may strengthen existing changes in attitude. An example could be *The Hunt for Red October* as a transitional movie at the end of the Cold War; as such, movies can be vehicles of reconciliation, which draw on strategies like personalization in order to present the other as real human beings (the “Romeo-and-Juliet plot”).⁹⁶

Chérie Rivers argues that films may provide a resource to generate agency and help local communities to go beyond what she terms victimology.⁹⁷ In the case of peacebuilding in the Congo, participation in the Salaam Kivu International Film Festival (SKIFF) may provide a window onto a community whose engagement with cinema is transforming individuals into agents of social change. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that agency is evident not only in participation in screenings and discussions of films but also in the films themselves, some of which are authored by the growing population of youth in

Goma, who are beginning to recognize the role of art in consolidating peace. Rivers terms this practice “restorative cinema” that may contribute to a bottom-up form of peacebuilding through art as a practice that conveys voice and social agency to local actors.⁹⁸

Armaking facilitates the complex process of working through individual and collective trauma and restoring agency to a population whose measure of normalcy has been displaced for generations.⁹⁹ While this requires mutual efforts to facilitate peace, reconciliation, and rehabilitation, Rivers argues that film is, first, a commemorative medium that safeguards personal and communal experience against threats of omission, erasure, and forgetting. Second, in instances of collective trauma, where cultural mores limit verbal processing of events, film can break the silence by speaking the unspeakable, creating both a model and a space for conversation and healing. And third, the expressive/reflective process of cinematic creativity itself emerges as a tool of self-discovery and rehabilitation, especially for youth.¹⁰⁰

OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This collection of articles opens with Frank Möller’s introduction of his “patchwork” approach to thinking about the visualization of peace. His analysis includes questions about methodologies of engagement with visual representations of peace, digitalization, and the linkage between image and imagination. Möller argues that depictions of peace are various, omnipresent, and obscured by our habits of seeing. Möller calls for engagement with a political and critical form of peace aesthetics that combines insight from artistic practice and the social sciences, art history, and media and communication studies both analyze and create own peace images.

Juha A. Vuori, Xavier Guillaume and Rune S. Andersen follow with a conceptual framework for studying the use of color to visualize peace constructed from an identifiable set of norms. Building on a semiological understanding of color-use as visual signs, the authors employ chromatological analysis of the use of UN blue and the white flag to signify peace in international conflicts and peacebuilding operations. They argue that “peace signs” constitute a visually identifiable set of norms and practices which have developed historically through conflict and peacebuilding practices. Representing peaceful intentions does not merely serve a functional purpose; however, it is indicative of evolving shared meanings and understandings within international

practices of conflict and security. Vuori, Guillaume and Andersen conclude by situating the use of color in a broader context of visual language in global politics as indicative of an emerging constitutive practice for the development of an international society.

The idea that visuals can aid conflict transformation and peacebuilding by way of facilitating cognitive, affective, and behavioral change is complicated by Eva Ottendörfer's article on the peace process in Timor-Leste. In it, she demonstrates the susceptibility of visuals designed for postconflict peacebuilding and reconciliation to take on ambivalence within the broad political discourse that undermines their effectiveness. Focusing on the intermediality in the visualization of peace, Ottendörfer's study of the East Timorese Commissions for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation's (CAVR) documentary *dalan ba dame (Road to Peace)* and the commission's final written report *Chega!* exposes the contradictory narratives represented by the two media produced by the same institution. Ottendörfer's compelling analysis thereby contributes to the research on visibility of peace in two important ways: first, by alerting researchers on the ways in which the interaction of different media can foster ambivalence in peace-promotion visuals. Second, by underscoring that despite visuals' immediacy, circulability, and ability to generate emotions, it is not a given that visualizations of peace will contribute to peacebuilding.

Moving from multimedia to feature film, Axel Heck analyzes the 2016 Danish film *A War* to consider how filmmakers visualize peace in a movie about armed conflict – in this case, the war in Afghanistan. The film contrasts the lives of Danish soldiers and Afghan civilians on the front lines with those of the family of Commander Claus Pedersen who are home in Denmark. Heck contextualizes the Danish involvement in the war in Afghanistan and employs a method of narrative analysis which shows the strong interconnection between the visualization of peace and of war by focusing on the film's images of peace at the warfront and the home front. War is not confined to the scenes set in Afghanistan, nor is peace only visible in scenes of the family in Denmark which makes a persuasive case that the absence of physical or structural violence is not necessarily a visualization of peace. Heck concludes with a recontextualization of the film in light of its international reception to assess the effects of *A War's* particular depictions of conflict and peace.

Engelkamp, Roepstorff, and Spencer develop the method of visual metaphor analysis (VMA) to study representations of peace in visual

material such as film. This method, based upon discourse analysis, considers visual metaphors as linguistic frames that stand at the border between text and image. To operationalize VMA, the authors suggest the examination of a process of double visualization in the material. To demonstrate the value of such an approach, the authors use VMA in an analysis of peace metaphors in the film *Mango Dreams*. This film is set in India and tells a story of two men with a violent past – one is haunted by the violent memories of Partition, the other by the events in Gujarat in 2002 – who throughout a journey across India become friends and find peace. The analysis reveals how the film employs the conceptual metaphors of HOME, JOURNEY, and BRIDGE to visualize a positive peace. Apart from the methodological contribution it makes, the article offers important lessons for peace research by demonstrating how studying visual metaphors can mitigate the dominance of negative peace over positive peace within most current analytical frameworks.

Reflecting on the politics, policy, and pedagogy of visualizing peace, these articles point toward the coexistence of peace and war as a material reality in everyday life. Visualization of peace, whether in the form of a peaceful past or a utopian future, serves as discursive resources to overcome narratives of violence that are predicated on dichotomous understandings of self and other. Visual representations of peace may depict forms of postconflict cooperation between former enemies or address the interaction of enemies at critical junctures in times of transformation. Forms of nonviolent conflict resolution such as negotiations or peace agreements, as depicted in the painting of the Westphalian peace ratification in Münster, may serve to empower social groups that struggle to overcome entrenched conflicts. It is our hope that by taking the politics, policy, and pedagogy of visualizing peace seriously, researchers and practitioners will better understand the social and political processes of transitioning toward more sustainable peace.

NOTES

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2. Maria Elena Diez Jorge, and Francisco A. Muñoz Muñoz, "Uncovering the Virtues of Peace within Visual Culture: The Case for Nonviolence and Imperfect Peace in the Western Tradition," *Peace & Change* 41, No. 3 (2016): 330.

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9. The third part of this introduction which will provide an overview of the following articles of the special issue will be written once the final line up of the special issue is known following peer review.

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