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Re-thinking visuals: Understanding discursive reformulation of visuals to inform jeace journalism

Kurzfassung: Geläufige Definitionen des Friedensjournalismus sind unzureichend, um die Implikationen der 'offenen' Natur visueller Inhalte in ihrer vollen Tragweite zu erfassen. Die normativen Diskussionen beschränken sich auf den expliziten Gehalt der Abbildungen und vernachlässigen die Wichtigkeit ihrer impliziten Bedeutung. Der Aufsatz analysiert eine Fotostrecke, die unter dem Titel *Liberated in the Hindukush* im *Foreign Policy Magazin* erschienen ist und identifiziert anhand dieser Fallstudie, wie ein gegebenes Medienprodukt zwar (und sei es auch nur unbeabsichtigt) den Beschreibungen für Friedensjournalismus entsprechen kann, seine kontextuelle Bedeutungszuschreibung jedoch diesem Inhalt entgegengesetzt ist. Der Aufsatz argumentiert dafür, dass die Normen des Friedensjournalismus überarbeitet werden müssen, um der Subtilität der diskursiven Assimilation von – insbesondere visuellen – Medieninhalten gerecht zu werden.

Abstract: Current definitions of peace journalism are inadequate to take on the full implication of the 'open' nature of visual content because normative discussions are restricted to explicit content of visuals while not underlining the importance of their implicit meaning. Analyzing a photo feature showing empowered Afghan women called *Liberated in the Hindukush* published in the *Foreign Policy magazine* as a case study, the article identifies how the particular media product in question fits existing descriptions of (if only, 'accidental') peace journalism but its contextual re-deployment of meaning is contrary to its content. The article argues that the norms of peace journalism need to be revised to account for the subtlety of discursive re-appropriation and re-assimilation of media content, especially visuals.

1.   Visual discourse as 'open'

Building on the discussion by Judith Butler (2009) about lives lost or harmed in conflict being differentiated according to their constructed (by official discourses) 'grievability' and her alternative formulation of the concept of 'shared precariousness' of lives to rethink responsibility of the individual, this article brings together analysis of existing critical discourse analyses of the representation of suffering in media to further the debate about the semiotic nature of peace journalism (Fourie, 2012) and the ramifications that this understanding has for peace journalism as a project.

Viewing 'journalism' as one of the 'fields' (Hackett, 2006: 9) within the larger scope of media in society and as a sub set of the representational processes shaping and more importantly, being shaped by the 'ideology' (Van Dijk, 1995) of societies, I critically look at the possible use of visuals for purposes of peace journalism by arguing that discursive appropriations of visuals may result in content overtly in line with definitions of peace journalism to be re-constituted for other purposes. This problem stems as much from a) the very nature of visual representation and b) uncritical normative paradigms discussing only the content of visual representation for the purposes of peace journalism.

The understanding of openness of visual representation I derive following Butler's (ibid.) argument that norms or frames of understanding of visuals are subsumed within and by their own iterable structure because their circulation depends on their ability to be constantly reproduced in different contexts with the content remaining more or less the same. This constitution of meaning outside the visual text – the de-centred decoding of the text (Hall, 1997: 8) – means that while it "functions normatively…it can, depending on the specific mode of circulation, call certain field of normativity into question" (Butler, 2009: 24). This is the site where "politically consequential breaks" are made from the original norm to shift "modes of recognition" and so the "limits and contingency" of the original norms are exposed (ibid.).

I argue that peace journalism misses a "critical dimension of the project" (Butler, 2009: 11) of providing alternative frames of understanding for its audience because it is not only a matter of finding suitable content but also of working with "received renditions of reality": the movement of an image or text from its own original ontological reality (Butler, 2009: 11). In the end, I make a case for a more nuanced, semiotic understanding (Fourie, 2012) of the nature of journalism and by extension peace journalism which by understanding its own structural limitations makes itself proof against hijacking by regimes of representations which are opposed to its stated purposes and instead emphasizes the more fundamental "shared precariousness of lives" (Butler, 2009: 28) to appeal to audiences to rethink their responsibility.

2.   Discussions of discourse in peace journalism so far

Using understanding of discursive structures to inform peace journalism is not new, indeed as Lynch & McGoldrick (2012: 5) point out, the two are "natural partners" in understanding the nature of media texts and then deploying this understand-

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ing for peaceful responses from audiences to news reportage on socially distant subjects and/or conflicts.

As such, this article builds on the call by Stig Nohrstedt and Rune Ottosen to use critical discourse analysis to inform peace journalism perspectives to "offer a more comprehensive analyses" to see "the complex discursive constructions and structures that contribute to conflict escalations and wars" (2008: 14; 2010: 3).

Discursive appropriation works best when an 'other' [societies or people represented in the news coverage as such] is "an empty signifier: a vessel into which a range of meanings…can be…safely decanted" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2012: 5).

They conclude that the "the contextual and re-contextualising perspective that emphasizes the inter-discursive relation[s]…is notoriously absent in conventional news reporting" (ibid.: 7) because of the professional "epistemological horizon" of professional journalism which regards reality to be un-problematically represented "through observation and interview techniques" (ibid.). In this article, I explore how the empty signifiers of visuals are left empty by this epistemological limitation of news journalism.

I follow Fourie (2012: 2) in viewing journalism itself as a semiotic act and in emphasizing the role of "signification, the phenomenological nature of representation and the rhetorical and dialogical nature of contemporary mediated communication".

By shifting the debate in peace journalism from its criticism of journalism as a practice, its structures and the efficacy of "the manipulative techniques of peace journalism" (Fourie, 2012: 1) to the processes of meaning-making inherent in journalism, I argue that the normative ideas about particular news content in peace journalism are rendered problematic when approached from the analytical perspective of the study of discourses in media.

Some of such normative ideas in peace journalism are what is described as 'people-oriented' content, 'context' of the conflict or showing the 'true face' (Ottosen, 2007: 13) of war. Following Shinar (2007: 200), Lynch and Mcgoldrick (2012: 4) have further defined the role of the peace journalist as "exposing lies, cover up attempts and culprits on all sides and revealing excesses committed by and suffering inflicted on peoples of all parties."

Fourie (2012: 12) argues that by acknowledging journalism as a semiotic act, we are able also to acknowledge that news media cannot tell the 'full story' or 'truth' because journalism as a symbolic form of expression and representation makes it "phenomenologically impossible" for it to "tell the full story" (ibid.). Seeing journalism as a form of narrative with "internal structures of signs and codes" telling a "story" – nothing less, nothing more – peace journalism is identifiable as only a variant of this narrative, a "genre" (ibid.) of this story hence not in itself existing in a discourse vacuum where certain ways, practices, formulations of news 'stories' lead automatically to 'discourses of peace' (Kempf, 2003) gaining prominence.

As such, 'contextualization' i.e. providing the background to conflicts, 'exposing lies' or showing 'victims' of war etc. is only one genre of journalistic story-telling using certain manipulative rhetorical devices. The objective truth implied in 'exposing lies' is simplistic as a stated goal as it does include how rhetorical devices can or may be used by journalists to expose lies. Furthermore, the same rhetorical devices used in the content that Lynch and McGoldrick (2012) show us to causally lead to "empathy and hope" (2012: 1-16) in audiences are open to being re-formulated in and by other contexts. That the narrative of a peace journalist may be appropriated by violent/war discourses to serve their purposes – a process that Lynch (2010: 78) describes and warns against, is especially true of visual representations.

Journalism seen as a semiotic act also means understanding its dialogic nature. Difference in coverage of the same event, news or people creates a cross-referential environment where by inclusion or exclusion of certain viewpoints, a dialogic relationship is opened up within media, between different media as well as between media and the users of media (Fourie, 2012).

When appropriated for different discursive purposes, the dialogue generated by the media texts shifts to the prevailing ideology – the already uttered belief-system – of the propaganda discourse that appropriates it. Here I use the word 'ideology' as "frameworks of social cognition" (Van Dijk, 1995: 17) and discourse as "institutionalized use of language and as a social practice" (Fairclough, 1995: 7).

Given this understanding, I present a case study of visual representation later in this article to show how a discursive shift in the context formation may lead to the meaning of content to be re-constituted outside the content of the visuals.

But first I draw lessons from existing studies which have investigated the construction of context and its importance for peace journalism to build my case.

3.   The context of the content

Mandelzis (2003) in her study of the news coverage of the peace talks between Israel and Palestine in 1993 in the news-papers Yedioth Aharonot and Ha'aretz, operationalizes the "contextual representational system" that worked behind the coverage to analyze their "negative socio-political consequences" (Mandelzis, 2003: 4).

In her analysis of news-texts, she found that the newspapers built up an unrealistic expectation of 'peace' to come out of the Oslo accords between the two parties in the coverage and then returned to a prevailing war discourse once these expectations had not (and could not) be met.

Importantly for the discussion in this article, she found that the "deceptive discourse of harmony" built by the media discourse followed the official government discourse (as one of her respondents, Ron Pundak says, "the government created these euphoric hopes and expectations"; in Mandelzis, 2003: 7) This example shows how when viewed from the lens of discourse analysis, media texts can be understood as potentially reconciling disjunctures between their overt narrative and discursive meaning. So without a nuanced understanding of the contextual discourses in media-texts, the discussion of peace journalism is left incomplete. In the way Mandelzis (2003) shows how the elite propaganda discourses of the two parties involved in the talks were carried over to the media-texts, the discursive process of appropriation of media discourses by official discourses is seen as important to be addressed by peace journalism.

In the discussion of the needs of peace journalism to develop strategies to address the emerging global discursive order in Hoijer et al. (2002), the authors identify several methods used by both governments and the military to put their view across, inferring that the modern propaganda strategies are about fighting a battle not only for the mind but also for control of the language. This discussion of the relationship between the national presses and the global discursive order of compassion (or indifference) situates the debate in peace journalism within the interplay of media, propaganda and compassion in the context of the Kosovo war.

I share the same goal but employing i) micro-analysis of texts to understand the discourse formation and ii) using visual texts to see the particularity of that medium in its relationship to propaganda discourses, I attempt to narrow down the discussion on discursive meaning-making to the textual level. As I focus on micro-analysis of media (visual) 'texts' rather than macro-analysis of media 'coverage' I view discourse analysis as "ideology analysis" of texts (Van Dijk, 1995) and apply it in this case to visuals. By focusing on a single photo feature and the textual discourse formation around it, I attempt to find lessons for the peace journalists about how ideological hijacking of visual content may happen in texts.

4.   Existing studies of visuals from a peace journalism perspective

Whether news visuals produced during a certain conflict reinforce peace or war frames have been studied by looking at the visual framing of the coverage. Fahmy and Neumann (2012a; 2012b) have brought visuals and their critical analysis into the peace journalism debate with their study of newswire visuals from Gaza and Sri Lanka.

In bringing visual framing analysis to understand peace/war frames, these studies have paved the way for more nuanced understanding of the role visuals can or cannot play for the purposes of peace journalism. However, I would like to critically discuss the operationalization in these two studies of how a 'peace' or 'war' frame is decided and how these formulations, while handy, can be misleading in their categorization because by defining large samples as having the same 'meaning' they do not discuss what meanings they might be given in their eventual discursive contexts. This is done almost admittedly, when Fahmy and Neumann say that future studies following their method of operationalization should "include captions" (2012a: 197) of the photos. Indeed, this would be one way of including the contextualization of the visuals. However, I try to show in the following brief points that the omission of how the photos are eventually used to support or negate news discourses in media renders studies of 'peace' and 'war' frames of visuals of a conflict limited.

a) The studies mentioned operationalize photos of the leaders of the warring factions as war frames which serve to polarize audiences (2012a: 7-8; 2012b: 182-183) while photos of international figures who are mediators/negotiators in the peace process (e.g. UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon) are taken as peace frames. However, if one critically applies Ottosen's (1995) idea of use of the rhetorical device of personification of a group or country or party in a conflict by representing them by one key figure, then one can argue that representations of UN mediators and the leaders of the warring parties in the conflicts are both examples of decontextualizing the conflict or peace process by focusing only on the photo of one person. In contexts and countries where the war itself is considered 'legitimate' or 'needed' or 'just' in official and public discourses, (and thus affecting the 'weak' field of media discourse) the photos of the international mediators may also be made to serve the purpose of polarizing the audience by labeling these mediators as outsiders who meddle because of vested interests rather than friends who seek peace for the sake of peace. The open nature of visual representation means figures representing the peace process or the conflict are both examples of 'empty signifiers' Lynch & McGoldrick (ibid.) mention that can be re-contextualized in different ways. Thus giving a 'peaceful' or 'warlike' label to the one or the other

of the actual images is a limited approach. The analytical purpose is better served by looking at the contextualization of the photos by the ultimate journalistic usage of these visuals.

b) As these two studies focus on newswire photographs, they do not take into account the context in which these photographs were then re-used by media. Fahmy and Neumann emphasize the role of gatekeepers in the visual narration of a conflict and how "news selection from the pool of available photographs [from newswires] is key in how audiences visually experience a conflict" (2012a: 20). But it is not only the selection of photographs by editors and journalists which dictate audience reaction – the discursive structure of the context in which they use the photos as evidence or illustration, also do. To say that it is only the content of a photo that dictates audience experience is to turn a blind eye to the openness of visual signifiers. Leaving texts open for 'negotiated reading' as Lynch and Galtung (2010: 195) describe is not limited as a process affecting only the audience – journalists can also negotiate their own readings into these open visuals – and use these images for narrational purposes of their own. One example of such narrational purpose is that visuals might be used to serve as 'evidence' of the reportage by journalists. This understanding follows the idea that journalists are also audiences to the extent that they are the "first source of influence" on how "incoming information" is framed and that their framing is also based on "ideology, attitudes and professional norms" (Scheufele, 1999: 115).

c) Following this understanding, categorization of visuals as simple 'peace' or 'war' frames which does not take into account the semiotic openness of visual texts which are numerously reproducible and thus may come to mean entirely differently in different contexts because of their journalistic (re)usage, is problematic. It runs the risk of taking the photos almost at their face value by not looking at the meaning making role assigned to them by re-contextualization. We will see an example of this reassignment of meaning to visual texts and thus their discursive appropriation, in the case study presented later in this article.

Fahmy and Neumann have exhorted future studies to explore the relationship between frames in media's depiction of conflicts and audience's frames of understanding conflicts (2012a: 13). In this article, I argue that before that can be done, we must first analyze the media discourse which re-deploy the visuals to see the discursive meaning within which the visual narration is framed because it is that narrative frame which comes to mediate the visual image to the audience. My attempt is to understand the rhetorical devices of representation of visuals to inform peace journalism from other scholarly work done on representation in media. Below, specifically, I take the example of the representation of 'other' women as a way into discussing some nuances peace journalism may be missing in its representational normative.

5.   Representation of women: lessons for peace journalism

The option assumed to be available to the peace journalist to subvert elite-oriented journalism is to shift focus from "able-bodied elite males" in their reports to a people-oriented focus with emphasis on "suffering all over: on women, aged and children" (taken from the table showing differentiation between Peace/Conflict Journalism and War/Violent Journalism as appendix in Ottosen, 2010: 19).

Taking this idea of suffering, especially – as delineated above – of women as a category to focus on I undertake secondary analysis from a peace journalism perspective of existing academic analyses of media representations of women and then apply similar methods to a photo feature on Afghan women published in March, 2013 in the Foreign Policy magazine. In doing so, I argue that mere circulation of more and alternative visuals depicting suffering of victims of acts of war (Ottosen, 2007: 14) may not help in building peace-oriented frames in media texts. Looking at the politics behind and specific to the "frenzy of photography" (Butler, 2009: 86) in visual representation I argue that such uncritical normative ideas are problematic because it misses the aspect of these very visuals being co-opted by what critical discourse analysts would call official "regimes of representation" (Hall, 2001: 225).

Visuals on the surface may relate to the existing delineations of the normative paradigms of peace journalism but at the level of discourse, these delineations do not hold any more.

As such, it is more important to, at the level of discourse, explore "the conditions [that] are set for astonishment, outrage, revulsion, admiration and discovery, depending on how the [news/media] content is framed by shifting time and place" (Butler, 2009:11).

In a study of three photographs of Afghan women widely circulated in international media, Mackie (2012) takes the example of the picture of a young Afghan woman without her veil surrounded by other veiled women in front of a bakery in Kabul. Looking at the same photograph from the lens of peace journalism, it may be seen that it is a depiction of a woman going about her daily life rather than a man carrying weapons or in an antagonistic mood. It is shot in a de-militarized setting showing the human side of a conflict zone.

But once the argument opens up to how the meaning is reconstituted in the accompanying texts or captions with the photograph – as Mackie (2012) goes on to show – this visual of a young Afghan woman is rendered deeply problematic in its

explicit orientalist 'desire to unveil' the mysteries of the east and implicit discursive construction of the idea of a masculine first world vs. feminine third world where the latter is in need of liberation from its own shackles. The argument of the Afghan war as a just war to free the women of Afghanistan were used first in official discourses (Laura Bush's radio address on November 17th, 2001 cited in Mackie, 2012: 117) and the visuals of 'newly unveiled' women in 'liberated' Afghanistan in the news media followed this idea of liberation of women as a justification for the war on Afghanistan, a topic explored by Fahmy (2004) in her study of international newswire photographs from Afghanistan during that period.

In the discussion of another photograph of a woman called Bibi Aisha who had been disfigured by male members of her community for running away from an abusive marriage, Mackie notes that the photographer Jodi Bieber's argument for taking the photograph was capturing her beauty in spite of her disfigurement and thus restoring her dignity as a woman (Bieber, 2010 cited in Mackie, 2012: 124). Yet again, it can be seen as a commendable project of empowering women that could fall within the paradigm of peace journalism. But discourse analysis of the editorials accompanying the photo leads Mackie to conclude that the feelings of horror and indignation invoked by the photo was reconstituted around the discourse that this sort of male terror will increase if and when the US troops leave Afghanistan making Aisha's face a cogent argument for the war on and in Afghanistan.

In both cases, the visuals themselves may qualify for what is called peace journalism and in the case of the second even the original intention of the photographer, yet the appropriation of these photos by official discourses of propaganda meant that the visuals had been re-employed in the justification of war.

To further the understanding of the semiotic constructs at work in such (re)employment of visuals, I would link an existing critique delineating categories used in news to mediate suffering to an understanding of the narrative devices used in mainstream media that lead to such category formation. I meld together two different, yet what I would argue, not disparate approaches to representational issues in media. While the first provides the narrative categories with which to understand media representation of suffering, the other gives insight into the narrative process by which these issues of suffering are iterated for the audience.

I begin from understanding the different tropes of news described by Lilie Chouliaraki in her journal article, The mediation of suffering and the vision of a cosmopolitan public (2008) and link her categorization of news to the process of 'simplified complex representations' in media argued for by Evelyn Alsultany in her book Arabs and Muslims in the Media Race and Representation after 9/11 (2012).

5.1   The narrative categories

Chouliaraki (2006, 2008, 2010), through her inclusive use of language and image to understand the mediation of suffering in television, analyzes the implications that a narrative composed by the interplay of these two have on 'cosmopolitan connectivity' (Chouliaraki, 2008: 372). I follow her arguments here to focus on the "conditions of possibility" of "mediation to shape a cosmopolitan sensibility" (Chouliaraki, 2008: 374) for the purposes of a more nuanced understanding of how visual news can be understood for the purposes of peace journalism.

In her analysis, Chouliaraki (2008: 371-91) describes two dimensions of spectator-sufferer relationships:

1.   How close or far away does the news story place the spectator vis a vis the sufferer and
2.   How is the spectator invited by the news story to react vis a vis the sufferer's misfortune: to look at it, feel it or act on it?

Through her operationalization of "situated ethics", Chouliaraki (2008: 378) also brings normative paradigms into the practice of media just as peace journalism avowedly wants to do. As such, Chouliaraki identifies three kinds of TV coverage of suffering which produce differential affect in its audience:

a) Adventure news: a class of news that presents suffering as presentation of curiosities by emphasizing 'facts' and singular space-times within the narration resulting in blocking audience engagement[1] with distant sufferers.

b) Emergency news: a class of news that produces a demand for action on the suffering viewed through mediation by enacting a moral engagement (see footnote 2) by demanding emergency action needed to alleviate the suffering portrayed.

c) Ecstatic news: an extra-ordinary class of news that manages to bring the global audience together in the act of simultaneous watching, engaging and even suffering and/or feeling sympathy, e.g. the visual of planes crashing into the World Trade Centre on September, 2001 or the Asian Tsunami in December, 2006 where the genre of news 'broadcast' moves

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1.   Chouliaraki calls this "blocking… pity…" (ibid: 378). However I use Alsultany's (2012) differentiation between pity and empathy as negative and positive emotions, hence I have chosen to call this simply 'engagement' so as to avoid obfuscation of concepts.

away from itself to 'live footage' giving a sense of historical rupture and shared suffering at the same time (Chouliaraki, 2008: 379).

Chouliaraki (ibid: 381) shows how these ways of reporting news creates a "hierarchy of suffering" whereby the audience is called upon a) to watch, b) to feel and c) to act. To engage audiences in the suffering portrayed, Chouliaraki calls for a move away from abstract space-time in news reportage to "chronotopes" which place suffering in the context of "lived experience" by giving suffering historical depth and a future perspective and making victims sovereign agents who are thoroughly "humanized and historical beings" who can feel, reflect and act on their own fate (ibid.: 380ff.).

Chouliaraki (ibid: 391) concludes by saying that it is the class of emergency news which has the greatest potential for promoting social solidarity and thus cosmopolitan engagement with suffering.

This nuanced understanding of news reportage can go a long way in addressing some of the concerns that peace journalism has been grappling with. The goals of cosmopolitan engagement with distant suffering lie within the purview of peace journalism. This can lead to active engagement of audiences with the news texts, and thus a discourse of viewing wars as the biggest contributors of global human suffering may have a higher acceptance than the polarizing discourses of 'us' and 'them' and the notion of 'just' wars.

At the level of practical application and academic analysis, peace journalism has a lot to learn from the understanding of media aesthetics and how it is deployed in news texts. If peace journalists have to become self-reflexive in their use of images as exhorted by Ottosen (2007), then the consideration that the nature of news texts "as mechanism of representation that by definition involves taking of sides" (Chouliaraki, 2006: 262) is imperative. This defining characteristic is even more ingrained in the very semiotic nature of visual representation. Such an understanding of news visuals and texts is necessary because then ethical criticism from peace journalism perspectives stand to become more nuanced than an "explicit naming of the good and the bad," and rather it can engage, "with the distribution of spectator's own orientation towards action upon suffering" (Chouliaraki, 2006: 262) in the texts it produces by taking into account and using semiotic aestheticization implicit in news for its own explicit purposes.

This semiotic understanding can be seen as key to peace journalism because Chouliaraki (2006) in her analysis of the footage of the bombing of Baghdad in the Iraq war has shown how even mentioning the sufferers or victims and even an overt appeal to sympathize with them can be ethically and morally challenged because of the semiotic sub-ordination of that act of inviting empathy to the visual appeal of the tableau vivant of war.

In the same way, the quality of the appeal for peace and understanding, that a peace journalist might put out to his or her audience, can be morally and ethically challenged if it does not critically engage with the quality of that message and be aware of any semiotic sub-ordination of peace discourses by war discourses within the texts and visuals.

Then there is the quality of the affect that this message is supposed to produce which has to be taken into consideration by a peace journalist as well. Chouliaraki (2010: 107-126) sees the trend in humanitarian communication moving towards styles of appealing to audiences that are ambivalent in their outcome. The humanitarian appeal in them is geared towards personal guilt rather than collective action leading to call for immediate acts rather than to engage in the domain of politics. As such, they rarely go beyond the everyday and the individual. What implication this emerging style of communication has had for journalism in general is yet to be seen and evaluated but the implications of these for peace journalism is writ large. By shifting attention to the context of a conflict, peace journalism wants to call for a more nuanced, longer term, politicized engagement from its audiences but the nature of the message being used to do this might instead be producing affect which calls for short-term, immediate actions.

How then are these tableaux vivant of war, which make appeals for short term actions (e.g. donating money; signing a facebook petition) rather than long term understanding and engagement, given semiotic preference in visual media? Chouliaraki's semiotic categorization gives us the direction in which to think but not an easily applicable tool with which to understand this process to evaluate news products. Thus, I argue that for a furthering of Chouliaraki's critiques, Alsultany's narrative analysis of media products (American television shows) is necessary to understand news trope formation.

5.2   The narrative process

A way of evaluating the semiotic quality of the message is through the understanding of the narrative device of 'simplified complex representations' (Alsultany, 2012) in media and how overt acts of including social 'others' in mainstream media with the stated agenda of destroying the boundary between 'us' and 'them' may also lead to essentialization of the 'other' and thus recreate the binarial differentiation that it set out to address and correct. At a broader, more conceptual level, this process might be seen as stemming from using the same process of identity formation that presupposes 'difference' as its building block that Butler (2009: 28) describes and decries as resulting in the (re)use of 'domestic' progressive values to create further polarization and justifying war in the foreign arena.

Alsultany (2012) in her analysis of the apparently sympathetic representation of Arab and Muslim women in US television shows found that depictions of these sections of societies while 'complicating' the narrative for its audience by challenging simplistic 'Muslims equals fundamentalists' perceptions still 'simplifies' it enough so as to serve the end of encouraging pity and outrage at the 'other' and distant (Islamic) societies. The example she gives us is of 'male terrorism' – discursively hinted through the structure of the media product – to be purportedly part of these 'other' societies and directed against the vulnerable women in them. These women then are used as metonymic devices to stand in as evidence of the oppression inherent in these societies.

The metonymic device used in this case is reminiscent of the discussion of the use of personification to 'build the enemy image' in news media by Rune Ottosen (1995). And indeed, the effect is the same, justifying war against these societies to put an end to the broader category of 'oppression' – be it state sponsored or fuelled by male domination.

Alsultany describes such "simplified complex representations" in the case of depiction of Muslim women in US television as having three iterations:

1. A disclaimer which says that the representation of the Islamic women in the media text to follow should not be taken as representation of all Islam;
2. Liberated Muslim women speaking of their former, oppressed lives iterate the 'barbaric nature of Islam' nullifying the previous disclaimer;
3. The exercise is geared towards producing an excess of affect and then channelized through its discursive formation against the oppressive, male-dominated, 'other' societies.

Following Alsultany's analysis of the discourse behind "media's eager cultivation of pity and outrage" (Alsultany, 2012: 99) which uses women victims of male terrorism in Muslim societies for purposes beyond only of showing and giving voice to victims, we can conclude that giving coverage to the weaker sections of societies at war can be just as polarizing as simple propaganda saying they are hiding weapons of mass destruction (Nohrsted & Ottosen, 2008). And that it largely depends on the semiotic construct of the media-product in question.

5.3   Synthesizing categories and processes

In a study operationalizing ideology analysis, Vaughan (1995) in her study of newspaper editorials about the 1982 Lebanon Crisis, shows us how the ideologies expressed in the opinion leading articles in the media reconcile within itself obviously oppositional stances: while war and wanton destruction of property for a political goal is justified, the massacring of civilians is considered wrong though both are caused by the violent pursuit of political goals. I would like to draw attention to the kind of news product that Vaughan analyzed – the longer format media products e.g. editorials.

I argue that this ability to reconcile causally related events by media to the extent of justifying one while condemning the other is inherent in the rhetorical structures of longer format media products through its use of the tropes of 'adventure' news in the guise of 'emergency' news (Chouliaraki, ibid.). I would like to extend Alsultany's (2012) theoretical understanding of the 'simplified complex representation' in entertainment media products to include this form of ideological reconciliation of oppositional ideas within longer format news products, for example the editorials that Vaughan studies, because they share the same logic of the three iterations of simplified complex representations. "We must consider television and print news alongside TV dramas because the former…produce their own version of simplified complex representations", says Alsultany (2012: 74).

Pursuing this idea of linking entertainment media narrative devices with news media's, I argue the parallel to be as below:

1. Disclaimer: through their self-reflexive positioning as a more engaged form of media product implicit in the audience expectation from longer format journalism.
2. Nullifying the disclaimer: through their use of compressed space-time and disguising the causality of events in building arguments for their own case.
3. Producing an excess of affect through and because of their perceived 'more engaged' longer format.

Thus in light of Alsultany's arguments, I would like to point out here that the episodic presentation of 'facts' and singular 'space-times' identified as adventure news by Chouliaraki happens within the content of longer format news products while their form proclaim themselves (and thus shape audience expectation) to be emergency news. By longer format news products I mean the following:

1. Editorials shaping opinion
2. Journalistic blogs giving foregrounded subjective look at news events
3. Photo-features offering a longer, lingering look at a place or people.

I argue that in these formats, more than other news products, rhetorical arguments to formulate opinions among its audi-

ence: an iteration of "situated ethics" (Chouliaraki, 2008: 375) i.e. normative paradigms brought within the practices of media, can be used as an enactment of 'moral engagement' with the issue at hand. In short, reading Chouliaraki's categories through the process described by Alsultany, we can become aware of the fact that adventure news can disguise itself as emergency news.

At the same time, the dynamics of narrativization described by Alsultany for television shows can be better understood (and thus applied to news visuals and texts) through Chouliaraki's categories – by claiming to provide context and a broader understanding of an issue, the 'more complex' forms of journalism listed above posit themselves in a self-reflexive way inviting more audience attention and engagement as well as a call to action (i.e. emergency news). At the same time they show the qualities of adventure news within them that serve to block empathy from its audiences.

Thus, providing alternative pictures to visuals which serve to polarize parties on TV shows or visual news coverage cannot merely be providing pictures of peaceful life, victims or non-aggressive sections of society. Understanding the semiotic construct in which these kind of visuals stand to be re-organised and then using that semiotic understanding to be able to provide the conditions for de-escalating conflict situations has to be the guiding force for critical examination (and thus the new normative for peace journalism).

Synthesizing the categories of news described by Chouliaraki (2008) and the narrative dynamic of simplified complex representations discussed by Alsultany (2012), I propose we can form an understanding of disguised discourse formation and as a result the re-constitution of meaning within (content) and without (form) a longer format media text to study how the 'grievability' of the victims depicted is differentially recreated (Butler, 2009) in such media products and what it means for the purposes of peace journalism. As I would be concentrating on visual texts in this article, I use a photo feature – as an example of longer format photojournalism – for critical analysis.

6.   Show and "Don't tell"

Case Study: FP photo feature Liberated in the Hindukush

I follow Van Dijk (1997: 17) in using critical discourse analysis as ideology analysis where ideologies are "frameworks of social cognition" and thus both socially constructed as well as cognitive functions as "typically, though not exclusively expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication…such as pictures, photographs and movies." Acting as an 'interface' between cognitive representations and processes and the societal positions and interests of groups, this definition of 'ideology' as opposed to its classical definition as a system of ideas lends itself to both micro and macro analysis of discourse in texts which are socially circulated i.e. media texts.

Applying this to a multi-modal (caption/text and visuals) ideology analysis of a photo feature called 'Liberated in the Hindukush: Don't tell these women nothing's changed in Afghanistan' published on 20/03/13 in Foreign Policy magazine (FP, 2013), I show how the visuals lend themselves to space-time compression by discursive reformulation and how the discursive context implicitly hinted in the narrative structure using metonymic symbols of active women justifies past violence though the content itself may conform to standards of peace journalism.

6.1   FP photo-feature as accidental peace journalism

Jacobson (2010: 106) in pointing out the obvious overlaps of feminism and peace journalism says that the major bias that media is guilty of is that they "tend to focus on women's vulnerability in wars and conflicts, but that they rarely report on strong women working to promote peace and human rights. We found that women in particular, and civil society as a whole, are clearly marginalized in conflict reporting."

The photo feature published in Foreign Policy magazine does indeed report on strong women – women politicians and protesters as well as women in varied professional roles like women-tailors, policewomen, women journalists etc – and not only as victims of war.

It also goes a long way in providing a broad view of the civil society in Afghanistan. Looking only at the content, we see that of the 19 photos in the feature, six show women or female children participating in leisure activities outside of their homes. Another three show women politicians casting ballots or campaigning. One of the photographs show a procession of young Afghan women who are members of "Afghan Young Women for Change protest[ing] violence against women in Kabul in April 2012" (FP, 2013). Another eight photographs show women in professional roles and one shows young female children studying in a school.

The feature does shift focus from 'able-bodied elite males' (Ottosen, 2010: 19) of Afghanistan. Indeed, in all of the photographs, if there are any males included at all, they are relegated to the background or out of focus (for example, "Afghan fashion designer Shahr Banu Zeerak directs models before a fashion show in Kabul in February 2013") (FP, 2013).

Going against the grain of mainstream depictions[1] of Afghanistan "as a monumental mountainous setting, with wild and fierce looking men", (Becker, 2004: 301) the photo feature can also be said to be exposing 'lies' in mainstream depictions of Afghanistan. Further, the call in the sub-headline of the photo feature to not tell these women nothing's changed in Afghanistan (FP, 2013) tells the audience that Afghanistan is more than just a hopeless conflict zone full of only male aggressors and other retrogressive elements of society. This same call is also a self-reflexive comment for the audience about 'not telling' women what to think or know. Instead, the audience is asked to engage with the fact that things have indeed changed in Afghanistan. As such it is a message of hope for Afghanistan. But the photo feature includes another message too.

By asking the audience to look at these empowered women and calling attention to the fact their social position can radically change if the Taliban come to share power in Afghanistan after the international troops leave, a message of empathy for these women is the second message apparent in the photo feature.

With its dual message of hope and empathy for Afghanistan and especially Afghan women, on the surface at least the photo feature qualifies for the standards of accidental peace journalism as it shows "news patterns that resemble those of peace journalism". (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2011: 11) The majority of the photos included in the feature also qualify as having 'peace focus' according to the parameters of coding used by Fahmy and Neumann (See both 2012a; 2012b). Three of the photographs show policewomen or women Afghan army personnel with weapons (FP, 2013). One could argue that the message of empowerment of these women is dominant over any perceived violent role in these photographs but following the codes used by Fahmy and Neumann (2012a, 2012b) these have to be read as violent frames.

However, the meaning of these photographs within the feature is also mediated for the audience by the discourse of the context that is provided for them by the photo feature in the introductory text and captions.

6.2   Discursive justification of violence

The sub-headline of the photo feature tells its audience what not to tell the women portrayed in the pictures, that "nothing's changed" in Afghanistan (FP, 2013). This is a very overt direction to audiences of how 'not to think' about Afghanistan– it is not a place where women are subservient in society any longer i.e. after the foreign interventions of the past years. This is the iteration of the disclaimer that Alsultany describes in her analysis: as an opinion forming longer format feature using photographic evidence of women in active roles, Liberated in the Hindukush, (FP, 2013) sets out by claiming that the picture of Afghanistan in this photo feature is more complex because it challenges stereotypes of Afghan women, e.g. none of the primary women subjects in these photos appear in burqa.

It then goes on to nullify that disclaimer – the expectation of promised complexity – by compressing the 'spaces' and 'times' of the lives of these women to create simple tableaux vivant of Afghan women in various poses affirming the narrative of their liberation. Following Chouliaraki (2008), we can see this process in how the Afghan women are posited vis-à-vis the audience and how the audience is asked to react to the photos.

6.2.1   Space-compression

The places and spaces in the photographs have their meaning constituted outside of them by the context provided by the photo feature. The actual places in Afghanistan represented in the photographs are the following: Bamiyan (1 photo), Herat (3 photos), Mazar-i-Sharif (1 photo) and overwhelmingly, Kabul (14 photos). The progression of photos (see footnote later) as presented to the audience does not follow any logical pattern of moving from one place to the next, rather appearing at random one after the other.

Without defined cartographic places being represented in the narrative logic of the photo feature, the place of the photo feature is defined for the audience as "across post-Taliban Afghanistan" (FP, 2013) – the specificity of places (and the overabundance of photos from Kabul in the feature) is masked. The Afghan women are placed far away from the audience in a space called Afghanistan fluid in its definitions (e.g. it can be described as "in the Hindukush" too) without any other specifics being deemed necessary (FP, 2013).

There is a further cuing of the audience to understand the space(s) represented in this photo feature. Though only three of the photos show women in visually identifiable outdoor spaces while the rest depict them in indoor settings, the audience's attention is shifted to the non-domestic nature of these spaces shown in the feature. 'Public' life enjoyed by liberated Afghan women might happen in indoor settings (within the world represented by the photo feature, I am not making larger claims about the status of women in Afghanistan unlike the photo feature). But the photo feature defines the space differently by saying in the introduction that the photos are from "across" Afghanistan and also by including a quote from an

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1.   For more discussion on the kind of mainstream depiction of Afghanistan that I refer to here see Fahmy (2004), Griffin (2004) and Fowler (2007).

Afghan woman, Zakiya Mohammadi who says that "[o]nce the Americans go we'll have to sit at home again, bored" (FP, 2013) the cue for the audience is to think of the Afghan women as taking part in the life outside home in the grand stage of "post-Taliban Afghanistan" (FP, 2013) instead of the individual schools, hospitals, homes, shops or offices which the photograph show. These spaces together are re-assigned meaning as signifiers of 'public' spaces.

The conflation and thus de-contextualization of the individual spaces of each photograph and the violence on meaning perpetrated through it, that I refer to here, are best understood by using the example of the photo "Afghan girls attend[ing] class at a camp for the displaced in Kabul in October 2011" (FP, 2013). The lived experience of being 'displaced' or the situated-ness of the photographic space at a camp for the displaced, disappears when the audience attention about the place of the photograph is diverted solely to it being a 'class' – a liberating 'public' space conferring education. That the public space represented may be itself situated within a marginalized space outside the broader public arena of Afghanistan is masked.

The individual captions for the photos do provide more detail in some case and allow for the kind of reflection that I have just presented in the example above but mostly leave out specifics of these places with the overall effect of making room for the more generally defined space of all-of-Afghanistan.

In giving (journalistic) space to depiction of Afghan women in active roles as part of the civil society in what is still a conflict-ridden country, the photo feature also takes the reader away from the (actual) spaces from which the photos of these Afghan women come. Present definitions of suitable visual content in peace journalism allow us to acknowledge the first but not the second.

6.2.2   Time compression

The time represented in the feature also serves to place the audience far away from the 'here and now' of space discursively represented in the photo feature. There are 19 photographs in total included in the photo feature. The date lines in these 19, range between years 2005 and 2013. They do not follow any chronological pattern and appear in random sequence. There are no photographs from years 2006, 2007 and 2008 among the 19 photos.

Without any chronological sequence, these portraits of liberated Afghan women are also 'liberated' from real life space-time situated-ness. These detached icons of liberation exist in a vacuum of time which is then redefined by the introduction at the bottom of the first photograph. Lacking any time-pattern that the audience can discern for themselves in the presented progression[1] of the photographs, the audience is asked in the introduction to the photo feature to look at the time represented in the feature as limited by two events: "since the fall of the Taliban in 2001" in the past to the "end of 2014" when the "international troops are due to withdraw from Afghanistan" in the future. Particularities of events of the years during the presence of the foreign troops are relegated as meaningless. The decade and a half becomes one long evidently benevolent 'occupation' and the time-float in the socio-historic parade of Afghanistan on which the tableaux of liberated Afghan women is displayed.

The dual compression of space and time of where and when the photos appear from is done through the editorial criteria of evidence – the choice to seek out proof of liberation of Afghan women. For the audience, these evidences, in themselves, serve a time and space-less role by being re-defined by the broader time and space frames of the photo feature significantly re-shaping the meaning of the photos. The logic of the individual photographs is subsumed by the larger narrative logic of the photo feature.

This is again best understood by the example of the photograph of the women protesters protesting against violence against women that I mentioned before. Because they are taking part in the public role of protesting on the streets, the actual violence against women that they are protesting is relegated in importance. Being able to protest is selectively presented to the audience as evidence enough that Afghanistan is a better place for women after the foreign intervention, masking the original narrative intention of depicting a protestation of that very 'fact' by the photograph.

In other words, the photo feature is adventure news posing as emergency news by discursively de-constructing the space-time portrayals or chronotopes of the explicit content of each photograph through its narrative structure and then re-infusing it with a larger message of empathy for the Afghan women facing the threat of Taliban repression yet again.

The intention of the photographers[2] who took the individual photos as well as the actual content of each individual photographs, can no longer be 'read' by the audience outside the discourse provided by the photo feature. Meaning has been made without to make sense of that which is within.

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1.   As a web-based photo feature, the audience follows a certain progression starting from women doing Taekwondo in Herat in 2013 to women medical staff in Mazar-i-Sharif in 2012. If followed, the progression of time in years in the photo feature would go like this: 2013-'09-'11-'10-'12-'05-'10-'10-'11-'13-'12-'12-'12-'10-'12-'11-'05-'11-'09-'12.

6.3   Context beyond the photographs

Thus, at the level of discourse, the photo feature produces an excess of affect in asking for empathy for these liberated Afghan women after the Taliban come back. This empathy from the audience however is predicated on the justification of the Afghan war as to have been needed for the liberation of women in Afghanistan as 'proved' by their grievable fate that they stand to become oppressed again, once the international troops leave. Thus an excess of affect for women in Afghanistan serves to justify past (and possibly future) violence against the male oppressors here represented as the Taliban.

The double negative: "don't tell …nothing's changed in Afghanistan" (FP, 2013) and thus the idea: some things have changed in Afghanistan for women, is established through the discursive construct of the 'context' given for its audience in which it to see the photographs. The preponderance as we see is on pictures of 'active' and 'participating' Afghan women and girl-children. In conveying this message, the photo feature uses selective portrayals of some women as metonymic symbols to point to a larger assumption about Afghan society – i.e in post-Taliban Afghanistan, women are now 'free' to engage in public activities. They can now take part in sports (e.g. photographs showing female boxers, gymnasts, Taekwondo athletes), take up jobs (e.g. photographs showing female student-midwife, a tailor, a fashion designer, a radio journalist and three of Afghan women soldiers and policewomen carrying weapons), study (e.g. photograph showing female children in a class in a camp) as well as participate in politics (e.g. photographs showing women politicians casting ballots and campaigning). This is the explicit message of the feature as iterated in its introduction: "Afghan women have gained the rights to vote, work, and pursue an education. They're running for president, they've claimed seats in parliament, and they've even competed in the Olympics." (FP, 2013) The photographs serve as 'evidence' of liberated women which are gathered from a detached and de-historicized swathe of space and time in Afghanistan but the device of producing these evidence is disguised in the photo feature. The effect of a longer, lingering look is emphasized without calling attention to its limitedness of scope. The context serves to bring the 19 disparate photos together to represent the idea of a (longer) 'decade-and-a-half-long' portrayal of status of women in (lingering) all-of-Afghanistan to substantiate the original directive for the audience – don't say nothing's changed in Afghanistan. But implied in this directive, is more than just a statement about change in Afghan society.

In taking individual frames of empowered Afghan women and placing them in the abstract space-time of all of Afghanistan, Liberated in the Hindukush also claims knowledge of the threat posed for these women by a return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan and uses it as the 'cogent argument' (Mackie, 2012) for empathy for these women. The introduction to the photo feature also dialogically references itself to a journalistic piece written for Foreign Policy by Reuters journalist Amie Ferris-Rotman. It is another 'more engaged' format of news-writing – a dispatch – and using quotations from it, the photo feature builds its own credence as an engaged visual format showing a truer picture of Afghan women's lives. The credence of the context subsumes the evidential credibility of the individual photographs.

The liberation and its sustenance are predicated through the introductory framing of the narrative on the presence of the international troops in Afghanistan who have made progress for Afghan women possible. And more importantly, the threat of regression to earlier oppression looms large over these active and participating women. The introduction makes it clear: "But international troops are due to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, and the Taliban threatens to step into the vacuum they'll leave behind." "Already," the FP dispatch from Kabul by Rotman is quoted, "many of the women who've come so far -- journalists, politicians, and rights workers, among others -- have begun to retreat from public life out of fear for their safety" (FP, 2013). The individual agency of these women in Afghanistan is thus subsumed by the larger and benevolent agency of the international troops and the just war waged against the Taliban in their name.

6.4   In summation

This photo feature in its simplified complex representation (Alsultany, 2012) of using adventure news (Chouliaraki, 2008) in the format of emergency news (Chouliaraki, 2008) collapses the progressive agenda of empowering women with waging war in Afghanistan and thus forms a disguised discourse which re-constitutes the meaning within (content) from without (form). The 'grievability' of the women depicted is differentially recreated (Butler, 2009) in this case because they face the impending return to former oppression once the international troops leave and the Talibans return. The ultimate meaning

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2.   Indeed some of the photographers (of which five are Afghan and six from various other countries) whose photos are included in this photo feature may be more self-reflexive and sensitive about the work they do. Brazilian photographer Mauricio Lima (1 photo included in the photo feature in question) said about his work in Afghanistan: "I am there to witness that moment, so that the world will be aware of what is happening. That, in a way, is part of my context, but even the pain of someone who I do not know, touches me" (Tita, 2012; my translation from Portuguese, S. M.). Afghan photographer, Massoud Hosseini (3 photos in *Liberated in Hindukush*) has been quoted as describing how he took the photograph that brought him the Pulitzer prize: "somehow I decided to just start recording, it was a kind of reaction. Okay, should I help or take pictures? I was crying…. What should I do? Why didn't I help anybody? This has changed my life" (Murray, 2012).

thus constructed for the audience is that not only was a just war fought for these worthy women, but that there is indeed even a case for continuing the war for the sake of them. Indeed the prospect of continuing presence in Afghanistan to protect women is not at all explored by the photo feature. The just war was in the past, the future is uncertain, is the only message. And ironically, with its (re)assigning meaning to the photos of these empowered women as grievable because they might soon lose their 'freedoms', the photo feature goes against its own statement of change for women – things have then really not changed in Afghanistan for women. But this is beside the point.

There is a hierarchy of meaning-making as seen in this analysis. The individual image is subservient to the discursive meaning given to it through its context and the way it is used within a larger narrative structure – thus calling for certain kind of subjects in visual content is incomplete as a critical project on mainstream visual news, rather it is the form in which the content is used and reused that has to be addressed. The lesson for peace journalism from this analysis would be in formulating its definitions in a way which addresses meanings formed both inside and outside content and for them to come "into critical contact" (Butler, 2009: 28) rather than simply neglect the discursive form while calling for or analyzing the content.

7.   Discussion

This article looked at the discursive depth of an example of visual representation in media that fit all norms of peace journalism on surface. The photo feature Liberated in the Hindukush shows women in active and empowered roles but we see that the meaning of the sets of visuals as constructed and re-constructed outside their own frames, reifies propaganda discourses of justification of past violence and possibly of continued armed presence.

The example takes the images of women from an 'other' society and shows how these are made to serve the purpose of propaganda narratives, even if, on surface, it is providing alternative viewpoints, giving space to news about women and their lives.

In the case study, the photo feature analyzed was fit to be called peace journalism even if 'accidental' (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2012) as defined in current literature as well as fitting the normative of gender balancing in news content argued for by Jacobson (2010). But this explicit quality is problematized when the same sample is analyzed for its discursive (re)formulation of individual photographs within the narrative logic of a photo feature by using theoretical tools developed by Chouliaraki (2006, 2008, 2010) and Alsultany (2012). Peace journalism as a sub-set of journalism which is

1.   a form of representation and
2.   hence an abstraction of reality and
3.   thus only a space-time structured portrayal of reality or an aspect thereof (Fourie, 2012)

may not only be unable to visually portray the 'true' face of war as Fourie warns but may also serve to reify the same official regime of representation that peace journalism avowedly wants to deconstruct for more balanced representations.

Following Butler's broad framework, Chouliaraki's methods and Alsultany's theoretical tool as well as their respective arguments, I have critically engaged with the simultaneous de and re-contextualization of images of women to show how the "indefinite circularity" (Butler, 2009: 86) inherent in visuals may lead to simplified, polarized discourses while giving the appearance of a complex (or balanced) narrative (Alsultany, 2012). The definitions given by the scholars of peace journalism are not able to identify 'simplified complex representations' in news products stressing a certain kind of content over the form in which they are expressed. I offer that the project of peace journalism has some basic structural limitations which it needs to address.

1. Peace journalism has to bring within its discussion the process of how complex, contextualized, balanced visual portrayals – e.g. 'giving voice to the voiceless' – when it is visual in nature, can also come to be re-deployed for purposes of justification for violence.

2. Use of visuals in and to understand peace journalism – for academic analyses or journalistic use – needs to be more nuanced because otherwise the politics of 'pity' i.e. garnering sympathy rather than engagement and empathy stands to be collapsed into each other within a discourse of compassion while missing the negative and positive impacts of these emotions.

The present definitions of peace and war frames (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012a; 2012b) when applied to visuals which stand to be reused and their meaning reconstructed are inadequate to take on the full implication of the open nature of visual texts.

8.   The new normative for peace journalism

Lynch, (2010: 78) says that "violence requires propaganda narratives to justify its use…and moreover, is promiscuous in its opportunistic appropriation and assimilation of images and concepts connoting purposes and meanings" – following in this light, I ask if some of the normative paradigms of peace journalism when applied to visuals in news have to become sensitive to the subtlety of this appropriation and assimilation which become apparent with critical discourse analyses of visual representations in media.

Also, following Fourie's call to peace journalism practitioners to develop a semiotic understanding of their craft and thus be conscious of the discursive openness of their texts and as seen in this article, especially visuals, I argue that the way forward for peace journalism is to recognize that norms prescribed by it are "subject to an iterable structure". I argue that for peace journalism, the challenge is to actively and critically engage with the knowledge of how the "received renditions of reality" re-construct discourses by "breaking out" of the original frame of reference (Butler, 2009: 11). Visuals "circulate by virtue of their reproducibility" and "that very reproducibility introduces a structural risk" for the norm within which they were produced (ibid.: 24).

The structural risk in our case is how visual content conforming to peace journalism standards are reiterated in contexts which are in opposition to the norms of peace journalism. The effort in peace journalism should be to identify and address these structural risks posed by and within its own normative standards and its dyadic categorizations of what peace journalism is and is not.

Perhaps an operational and practical tool in using visuals for journalists could be to appeal to the "shared precariousness" of lives in this world through and in their texts as espoused by Butler (2009) as a way to reduce structural risks of being appropriated by polarizing discourses.

This approach could mean turning the tables on propaganda discourses by identifying those points where the official propaganda discourse can be made to break out of "the quotidian acceptance of war" to be replaced by "more generalized horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice and an end to violence" which Judith Butler points out as a discursive possibility as exemplified in the case of the circulation of the photos of torture of and poetry written by inmates of the Abu Ghraib prison (2009: 11).

Allowing peace journalists liberation from the notion of any truth that they might expose and instead advocating for the journalistic practice to be based on an appeal to the notion that because we share a dependence on social relations as human beings, doing violence to each other goes against our shared precariousness as human beings in this world, might be a much more useful basis for the peace journalism project.

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