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Syrian Civil War: Can Stakeholder Objectives Align for Peace?

Author: Peter J. Crowley
Title: Graduate with Masters
Affiliation: Northeastern University
Location: Malden, MA, United States of America
E-mail: petefc@comcast.net

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: CAN STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES ALIGN FOR PEACE?

Abstract

This paper addresses the "wicked problem" of aligning stakeholder objectives for determining a ground for peace in the Syrian Civil War. Specifically, it examines the power-sharing and partition solutions to the conflict. The findings are that, though encompassing its own array of problems in establishing a long-term peace, partition offers the best solution through which stakeholder objectives can be most closely met.

Introduction

The Syrian Civil War has caused a vast amount of privation for five and a half years, with food shortages, approximately 470,000 deaths and the wounding of 11.5 percent of Syria's population (Boghani, 2016). Syrian refugees fleeing the conflict have led to the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II, with 2.7 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, 1 million in Lebanon, .6 million in Jordan and 10 percent of the total number of Syrian refugees in Europe (*BBC News*, 2016). While the war has been an anathema to the Syrian people and caused social problems for regional and European countries, the vacuum created by the war has been a haven for terrorist groups to thrive in, particularly ISIS and Jahbat al-Nusra.

Late winter and early spring of 2016 saw efforts under UN Peace Envoy Staffan de Mistura to build peace in Syria. These efforts were strongly backed by international actors involved in the conflict, Russia and the United States. However, the ceasefire that was established has all but crumbled and the fighting continues as of the time of writing this paper in early 2016 August.

The seemingly impossible nature of establishing a lasting peace to the conflict is indeed a wicked problem.

Wicked Problem: Civil War Peacebuilding

Though peace negotiations have been underway since early 2012, there remains no definitive formula for building peace. Any proposed peace solution is a 'one shot' attempt that will have consequences – for good or ill – that cannot be reversed. Also, the problem of the Syrian Civil War is unique in that, though there have been countless civil wars throughout history, this conflict has unique individual components reflecting the internal dynamics of Syria in conjunction with regional and international dynamics. Furthermore, peacebuilding in Syria can be considered as a symptom of other problems, among which are sectarianism in the Middle East; Russian and American imperialism; the Wahhabi influence of Saudi Arabia and Gulf States; terrorism; mass migration; minority rule; proxy warfare between Saudi Arabia and Iran; and authoritarianism in the Arab world.

While successful peacebuilding in Syria would bring about an end to hostilities, the societal fault-lines caused by the war may have proven to be so extensive that a future Syria will not resemble what it once was. For example, peace may require the partitioning and the effective disintegration of the Syrian state. In this sense, initial peacebuilding efforts cannot fully overcome the ruptures within Syrian society; even if Syria retains its territorial integrity, societal divisions will likely remain for generations. Thus, successful peacebuilding in Syria cannot fully solve all problems. Peacebuilding requires continued efforts by stakeholders to monitor and help interweave fractured communities to breach societal divides and prevent a recurrence of civil war.

The question that this case study will address is: *Can stakeholder objectives and peace in Syria ever align?* To gauge whether these apparently diametrically opposed factors can find common ground, the study will categorize stakeholder objectives as: the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad leaves; the Assad regime remains in power; and indifference to the regime's future (i.e., its existence is not a primary concern). Stakeholder aims will then be analyzed through possible peace agreements, to consider which type of peace would most closely satisfy stakeholder objectives. The findings are that a Syrian partition would both satisfy and discourage stakeholders equally enough so that they may agree to peace under these terms. However, there are a myriad of other dilemmas in sustaining a long-term peace under partition.

A Brief History

The secular Ba'athe Party came to power in Syria in 1963, followed by a 1970 coup that reversed millennia of Alawite neglect and discrimination by Sunni rulers in the region, including from the Ottoman Empire and the Egyptian Mamelukes (Farouk-Alli, 2014). The authoritarian Ba'athe party regime of President Bashar al-Assad began in 2000 upon his father, former Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's death. The younger Assad briefly experimented with political liberalization and openness known as the 'Damascus spring', including closure of the Mazaa political prison and the release of political prisoners. However, within a year of taking power, he had resumed the authoritarian policies of his father (Draege, 2016, pp. 189-192).

During the 2000s, two opposition movements developed in the country, one which advocated for gradual change within the system, known as the 'reformists', and another that sought downfall of the Assad regime, or the 'radicals'. The former was composed of secular leftists and the latter was comprised of moderate Islamists and socially conservative, economically liberal businesspeople. As the civil war developed in 2011, it would be the radicals who would gain support from Western powers and regional Gulf States, while the reformists would gain some marginal backing from Russia. In large part, international backing for these opposition groups reflected their stance towards the regime: reformists were willing to negotiate with Assad, while the radicals refused to do so. The larger group that the radicals would morph into was the Syrian National Council (SNC) and the reformists would develop into the National Coordination Bureau for the Forces of Democratic Change (NCB) (Draege, 2016, pp. 189, 197-204).

The events leading to the civil war did not initially involve either of the two opposition groups (Draege, 2016, pp. 196-197). Following the successful ousting of Tunisian and Egyptian regimes, mass mobilization in Syria led to protests that the Assad regime overreacted to with violence (Lust, 2014, p. 781). This created anger that spread from Damascus throughout the country to foment into an insurgency (Lust, 2014, p. 781), creating a conflict between the opposition, which has been overwhelming Sunni, fighting the Shia Alawite regime. The Assad regime has largely received support from the country's minorities, including Christians, Kurds and Druze, due to their fears of the radical elements within the Sunni insurgency (Carpenter, 2013, pp. 1-2). As the civil war has developed, terrorist groups, including al-Nusra and ISIS, have thrived in the Syrian region. Complicating matters, regional and international stakeholders have become involved, with the U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States supporting the radical opposition seeking the regime's downfall, and Hizbollah, Iran and Russia supporting the Assad regime.

Literature Review

Scholarly literature has much to say about stakeholder objectives in the Syrian Civil War and peacebuilding. In this literature review, the definition of a wicked problem will be established, including through examining the scholars Williams and van 't Hot's (2014) perspectives. It will examine the regional and international dynamics of the conflict through looking at the work of several international relations academics, including the Cato Institute scholar Carpenter (2013) and *World Affairs* editor Totten (2016). The conflict's internal dynamics will be discussed through analyzing literature on the fractured Syrian opposition, the Kurdish factor, the geographic imagination of ISIS and the political patronage of the Assad regime. Lastly, in order to gauge the prospective for peace, the work of several conflict resolution scholars, including Sisk (2013) and Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009), will be outlined.

Wicked Problems

Authors Williams and van 't Hot (2014) offer a detailed analysis of wicked problems through a systems theory approach. They define wicked problems as unique and complex; also, because wicked problems are engaged with and impact reality, the solutions offered are 'one-shot' solutions (Williams & van 't Hot, 2014, pp. 7-9). In other words, 'one-shot' solutions to wicked

problems have an indelible impact that leave 'traces' which cannot be undone (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 163). Rittel and Webber offer an example of building a freeway, which has an irreversible effect on a multitude of lives (1973, p. 163). Highway construction, like other solutions to wicked problems, is implemented in the real world; each attempt at a solution irrevocably affects reality (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 163).

According to Williams and van 't Hot, the primary elements of systems theory are inter-relationships, perspectives and boundaries. Inter-relationships concern the complex, interwoven threads between stakeholders and 'agents' involved in a wicked problem. Perspectives refers to the plethora of ways that the problem can be understood. The boundaries aspect of the systems approach applies to the limits of the research (Williams & van 't Hot, 2014, pp. 7-9).

The work of Pacanowsky (2014) and Grint (2008) offer additional ways to understand and define wicked problems. Pacanowsky (2014) focuses on the role that teams within organizations play in approaching wicked problems, highlighting the spirit of inquiry and asking innovative, creative questions (pp. 35-40). Grint (2008) illustrates the complicated nature of wicked problems, including their lack of clear relationship between cause and effect. Perhaps most revealing for peace in the Syrian conflict, Grint (2008) writes about the importance of the social inclusion of all stakeholders: "In this world we must avoid alienating significant constituencies...We need to start by asking 'what do we all (or at least most of us) agree on?'" (p. 7).

Syria: International and regional stakeholders

The international and regional impact of the Syrian Civil War has led to a voluminous amount of scholarly literature on the conflict. As a matter of practicality, availability and the author's lack of extensive non-English language knowledge, it relies primarily on English language scholars' writings within Western publications. This is balanced with the author's significant reliance (about 50 percent of the author's Syrian news intake) upon non-Western English-language news media's coverage of the five-year conflict, including *RT*, *Al Jazeera* and the Iranian, English-language state news *Press TV*.

The copious amount of literature on external actors in the conflict should be read with a degree of cynicism, due to the politics surrounding the conflict that often infiltrates academic writing. For example, the American editor Totten (2016) writes with clear disdain for Russia and Vladimir Putin, as is a common framing in contemporary Western media. He indicates how Russia has joined the axis of 'terrorism', through its intervention in Syria on behalf of the Assad government. However, Totten (2016) offers some valid analysis: he briefly examines the world through the perspective of the Russian government, which, according to him, is concerned about the expansion of the EU and NATO. Additionally, he highlights Russian efforts to "win favor" with Iran, as they have the similar objective of lessening American influence in the Middle East, a region which sits on Russia's "underbelly" (Totten, 2016, pp. 11-12).

Reflecting the libertarian, non-interventionist philosophy of his employer, Cato Institute scholar Carpenter (2013) depicts the Syrian Civil War as a complex web of interests that the U.S. should minimize its involvement in (pp. 1-7). Carpenter views the motivation driving U.S., Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies' support of the Syrian opposition as being primarily due to Iran's

support for the Syrian leader (Carpenter, 2013, pp. 1-7). Additionally, he highlights the Turkish fear that Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria could push Turkish Kurds to advocate for similar autonomy in Turkey (Carpenter, 2013, pp. 1-7). Lawson (2014) complicates Turkey's relations with the Kurds through discussing Turkey's adversarial relations with Turkish PKK, PKK's Syrian affiliate the PYU (a key fighter against ISIS) and Turkey's recent rapprochement with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) of northern Iraq (pp. 1354-1358).

Literature on other components motivating regional and international stakeholders comes from scholars Hokayem (2014-2015) and Szekely (2016). One of the chief elements influencing the Gulf States' support of the Syrian opposition is to reverse the loss of Iraq to Iranian influence, which followed Saddam Hussein's 2003 overthrow (Hokayem, 2014-2015, pp. 59-71). Hokayem (2014-2015) indicates that that the Gulf States' financing of rebels included funding the Salafist militant group with ties to Al Qaeda and Ahrar al-Sham (pp. 59-71). To reduce Iranian influence in the region, Hokayem (2014-2015) writes that Gulf States supported jihadi terrorist groups, with Kuwait becoming the "main Gulf hub for jihadist propaganda" (p. 69). Meanwhile, regarding Iran's support of Assad, he asserts that the ouster of Assad would likely lead to the severing of Iran's connection with Hizbollah (Hokayem, 2014-2015, pp. 59-71). Adding to Hokayem's (2014-2015) analysis, Szekley (2016) analyzes the interrelationship between the Assad regime and Hizbollah through a principal-agent approach. The dynamics of this relationship have fluctuated throughout history, allowing for greater funding and support from the regime when it is a more unitary actor, such as in pre-2011 Syria, but this has resulted in less autonomy for Hizbollah (Szekley, 2016). Thus, Szekley's (2016) work suggests that while Hizbollah's aim is to ensure the survival of the Assad regime; if Assad is ousted, Hizbollah would likely survive and have greater autonomy.

According to Szekley, the regime of Hafez al-Assad (president of Syria from 1971 to 2000) initially had difficult relations with Hizbollah during the Lebanese Civil War, as the Assad regime allied with the secular Shi'a Amal movement and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) factions to gain influence in Lebanon (2016, pp. 460-461). Following the war, Hizbollah proved to be a powerful force in Lebanese politics and, to sustain Syrian influence in Lebanon, Hafez Assad developed close relations with Hizbollah (Szekley, 2016, p. 461). Since the early 1990s, both Hafez and Bashar al-Assad maintained a mutually beneficial alliance with Hizbollah. Through this alliance, Hizbollah was granted a crucial military supply route through Syria (Landis, 2010, 68). Meanwhile, it allowed the Assad regime to maintain its influence in Lebanon and have Hizbollah act as a deterrent towards Israel and the United States (Landis, 2010, pp.67-68).

Syria: Internal Actors

The realist scholar Waltz's (2000) theory on regime survival consists of regimes' efforts to survive through strategizing methods (p. 38). In electricity shortage years prior to the Syria conflict, the Assad regime helped ensure its survival through rewarding electric power distribution to districts deemed politically important (De Juan & Bank 2015). De Juan and Bank (2015) have found that where the regime offered greater patronage through electric distribution, regions saw less violence in the civil war.

PhD researcher Draege (2016) offers an insightful account of the fractured nature of the opposition prior to and throughout the civil war, which are categorized as reformist (seeking gradual reform) and radical (seeking the regime's ouster). Draege (2016) writes that international supporters of the opposition, including the Gulf States, Turkey and the U.S., have supported the radical faction in its refusal to negotiate with Assad, while the moderate opposition has been more willing to engage with the regime. His work raises the question as to what degree the external actors who support the opposition are obstacles to peace (Draege, 2016).

Scholar Hamdan (2016) offers an interesting analysis of ISIS within the context of Middle East history and geography. Hamdan (2016) revisits the European territorial division of the Middle East following the Ottoman Empire's demise, contending that the 'artificial creation' narrative of state boundaries may be largely false. For instance, Hamdan (2016) writes "Iraq – was constructed based on preexisting Ottoman vilayet (provincial) boundaries" (p. 608). Hamdan (2016) discusses ISIS members' employing this 'artificial creation' narrative in their efforts to build a global caliphate, and erase the Sykes-Picot line between Syria and Iraq. However, Hamdan (2016) contrasts ISIS's rhetoric in support of a global caliphate with their local strategies based on the political conditions in the Middle East.

As an example, Hamdan (2016) highlights the starkly different strategies that ISIS adopted in the neighboring countries of Syria and Turkey. In the Syria town of Dayr al-Zur, close to the Iraqi border, ISIS has focused on state formation efforts, including integrating tribal leaders into government (Hamdan, 2016, pp. 614-616). From Dayr al-Zur, it has also been engaged in dismantling the Syrian-Iraqi border, with the goal of creating a global caliphate (Hamdan, 2016, pp. 614-616). Meanwhile in Gaziantep, Turkey, ISIS has operated under the radar, pragmatically respecting the Turkish-Syrian border, to facilitate the movement of fighters and weapons to Syria (Hamdan, 2016, pp. 617-618).

Peace

Doctoral candidate Pitrof (2015) offers an account of Syrian Civil War peace efforts. The sticking point to peace is the status of whether the Assad regime should stay or go. Among the multifarious obstacles to peace, she cites the diametrically opposed aims of stakeholders, the lack of a unified opposition and need for a neutral third party to facilitate the peace negotiations. Her latter suggestion contrasts with the February 2016 peace agreement that has been heavily orchestrated by two parties involved in the conflict, the United States and Russia (Pitrof, 2015, pp. 157-172).

Scholar Sisk (2013) analyzes the viability of territorial partitioning, consociational power-sharing and alternative centripetal methods. Consociational power sharing consists of political inclusion, "consensus decision-making and the institutionalization of the norms of peaceful coexistence in the state" (Sisk, 2013, p. 10). Meanwhile, the alternative centripetal method focuses not simply on inclusion into the political process, but the building of interethnic institutions within the political structure (Sisk, 2013, pp. 10-11). Sisk contends that while consociational power sharing may work in the short-term, in the longer term it is likely to harden societal divisions and thus may make conflict recurrence more plausible. Instead, he asserts that long-term peace is more probable through the centripetal building of multiethnic political parties,

and encouraging intra-ethnic competition rather than interethnic competition (Sisk, 2013, pp. 7-20).

There is disagreement in the scholarly community over whether the partitioning of regions yields long term peace after civil wars, with Sambanis and Wohl (2009) advocating against partition and Chapman and Roeder (2007) arguing on its behalf. Chapman and Roeder (2007) claim that partition ends the ethnic security dilemma and creates new institutions that face higher deterrence costs in returning to conflict. While Chapman and Roeder's (2007) research is on ethnic nationalist civil wars, it is instructive for peacebuilding in Syria as ethnic and sectarian identity are similar essentialist group identities. These identities rest upon hardened, "eternal and unchanging" beliefs in social categories that foster in-group cohesion and out-group animosity (Smeekes, 2015, p. 56).

Stakeholder Objectives

The primary stakeholders in Syria either seek the dismantling of the Bashar al-Assad regime, support Assad remaining in power or are more indifferent to Assad's future. International, regional and internal actors that would like to see Assad ousted are the U.S., Turkey, the Islamic State, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and a fractious array of largely Sunni rebel groups in the SNC. Supporters of Assad include Russia, Iran, Hizbollah and, generally speaking, the Alawites and other minorities in Syria. Stakeholders that are more ambivalent to Assad's future are the Syrian Kurds and the internal reformist movement, which includes the NCB (Draege, 2016). The more indifferent, ambivalent Kurds in northern Syria have established de facto non-contiguous states in Jazira, Afrin and Kobani, collectively known as Rojava, though they still rely on Assad's government for many public services (Krajeski, 2015, p. 88, 102).

Stakeholders' interrelationships vastly complicate the Syrian conflict. Much like a Russian matryoshka doll that has seemingly endless amounts of smaller dolls inside, within the Syrian Civil War there are a host of other interrelational quandaries. In one layer, the great powers U.S. and Russia have fueled the conflict through the latter's supplying weapons to the Syrian government and airstrikes against opposition forces; the U.S. has supported the opposition, including a failed effort to train rebel fighters (Bennett & Hennigan, 2015) and airstrikes against ISIS-held regions in Syria. Regional struggles for state power exist between Iran, on one hand; and the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, on the other. These regional power struggles run parallel with the sectarian character of both the regional actors and the internal actors involved: Shia Alawite against the Sunni Turks and Arabs.

In the regional dynamic sphere, not only does Russia support Assad to mitigate American influence in the Middle East, but it seeks to garner favor with the Iran, which sits on Russia's vulnerable "underbelly" (Totten, 2016, pp. 11-12). Meanwhile, as Assad enables the Iran-Hizbollah nexus in the Middle East, American Gulf State and Israeli allies want Assad out of power. Their desire is heavily influential on the U.S.'s call for Assad to step down. Yet at the same time Iran and Hizbollah, and Russia are fighting ISIS (Pleitgen, 2015). Additionally, Turkish opposition to a Kurdish state on its southern border is yet another layer to the civil war. This tangled web of regional and international alliances, along with aligned and unaligned local militant groups, makes this conflict seemingly insoluble.

But we have not even reached the matryoshka doll's core yet. The stakeholder that should matter most, the one that has been affected by five and a half years of brutal violence from the regime, opposition groups and terrorist organizations, are the Syrian people. This population, consisting of about 60 percent Sunnis, 6 percent Druze, 9 percent Kurds, 12 percent of both Christian and Alawi (Galen, 2013, pp. 1-2), is divided by a de facto partition of the country (Stephens, 2016). Though on the whole the Syrian opposition is made up of Sunnis, many Sunnis feel "trapped between religious extremists and a government that treats them as second class citizens" (Cambanis, 2015). Thus, in this situation, many Sunnis protect their local areas against radical extremists and unenthusiastically ally with the Assad government (Ibid). The minorities within Syria, fearing the radicalization of the opposition, are largely supportive of Assad. The Syrian Kurds seek autonomy, hoping to develop a permanent state, though they temporarily have been appeased through Assad's 2011 citizenship offer, which co-opted them away from the opposition (Krajeski, 2015, pp. 100-101).

The Syrian military, staffed by a predominantly Alawite officer corps, has remained largely intact during the five plus years of civil war (Alam, 2016). Opposing the military and the Assad regime, is the much divided Syrian opposition, which consists of groups under the SNC rubric, along with radical extremist groups not limited to, al-Nusra (which recently changed its name to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, or Conquest of Syria Front) and ISIS. Also in the opposition is alliance known as the Army of Conquest, of which both the Free Syrian Army and al-Nusra are a part (Hubbard, 2015). The radicalization of the opposition has morphed from less extremist armed groups seeking the ouster of an authoritarian leader to rebel groups that view the Alawite Assad regime as non-Muslim apostates, "more disbelieving than Christians or Jews" (Farouk-Alli, 2014, p. 207). However, that is not to say there are no longer 'moderate' elements within the opposition, but the influence has largely waned in favor of radical Islamists. While the moderate elements of the opposition are more willing to negotiate Assad's future, the SNC and Syrian rebels that are most powerful, due to their support from Western and Gulf allies, want the regime deposed.

Peace and Stakeholders

Can the diverse stakeholders' interests each be addressed to bring about a long-term peace to Syria? What do the stakeholder objectives tell us about the prospect for peace? The non-terrorist opposition and their supporters have continued to voice their unwillingness for the Assad regime to be part of a transitional government in Syria (Wintour, 2016). On the other side, the regime and its supporters will not agree to Assad stepping down. This has been the primary obstacle to establishing peace since negotiations began early on in the civil war. The intransigence of each side is solidified by a military stalemate and de facto partition on the ground (Stephens, 2016). Thus, the potential for stakeholders agreeing to a power-sharing government remains unlikely for the foreseeable future. Short of success on the battlefield by Assad's military or the opposition, which is unlikely to arrive soon, a unitarist or power-sharing government seems to be off the negotiating table. Even if Assad agreed to step down, opposition forces would want the top-tier of the regime and military removed as well (Wintour, 2016). This is something that the regime would never agree to, and as the opposition is heavily influence by radical ideology, it is improbable that the latter will settle for anything less.

Nevertheless, let us assume that Assad would agree to step down and the opposition agrees to allow for some of the former regime to be part of the transitional power-sharing government. Problems arising from permanent power-sharing governments include the inability of the government to operate; for instance, Lebanon has been unable to elect a president for two years (Kechichian, 2016) and power sharing in Northern Ireland still remains tenuous. During this author's recent trip to Belfast, he was told that only 20 percent of the city has integrated Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods and school segregation is widespread. Compounding this is fears of renewed violence in Northern Ireland following the Brexit vote. As Sisk (2013) writes, long-term power sharing tends to harden societal divisions and make conflict recurrence more likely; politicians try to outbid each other through trumpeting their ethnic identity, helping foster an ethnic security dilemma – where populations rely on co-ethnics for security (pp. 7-20).

While power-sharing agreements are initially beneficial for peace efforts, sustainable long-term peace requires building integrated institutions (Sisk, 2013). This ranges from multiethnic (or multi-sect) political parties, civil service and military; ultimately, this allows for intra-sect competition, rather than competition between sects (Sisk, 2013, pp. 7-20). Yet contemporary Syria is an extremely ruptured country; Alawites and other minorities have little trust in a possible quasi-democratic, Sunni-led, power-sharing government, recalling a history of oppression and neglect at the behest of Sunni rulers (Farouk-Alli, 2014). Meanwhile, the opposition views the minorities and Sunnis who have not rebelled as enemies.

Ultimately, the terms under which a power sharing government could be established remain unacceptable to both the opposition and the Assad regime. Perhaps then, the only thing that stakeholders in the Syrian conflict could agree upon is to consolidate their military gains and to simply quit the conflict. This would allow stakeholders to sidestep the insoluble question of whether the Assad regime remains or abdicates. It would turn the de facto partitioned regions into regions which have established borders, patrolled by UN peacekeeping troops from unaligned countries. Assad would remain the president of much of western Syria, including Latakia, its surrounding mountains and Damascus. Though the opposition is divided, their attempt at unity in the Geneva III peace conference (Lund, 2016) is proof that under the right circumstances, they can come together and operate as a coherent whole. This same kind of unity would be required of the opposition to govern their newly partitioned regions in the tips of southwest and northwest Syria and the eastern desert along the border with Iraq. Meanwhile, the fight against ISIS would continue in much of eastern Syria and the question of a Kurdish region in Rojava would have to be delayed for at least five to ten years, to allay Turkey's concerns (Liveumap MiddleEast, 2016).

The partition of Syria would partially satisfy stakeholder objectives, through ensuring that their enemies do not achieve their objectives and addressing each of their interests, albeit through half-measure. It would ensure that opposition areas would no longer be under the rule of the Assad regime and would allow the Assad regime to remain in power. The opposition's concern about Sunnis living in government-controlled areas could be addressed by allowing civilians to move to opposition regions, if they so choose. General concerns that Syria would lose its territorial integrity can potentially be allayed by holding a referendum in ten years on whether

partitioned regions would reunify and recreate Syria. However, this referendum could fuel violence that may result in civil war recurrence.

Chapman and Roeder's (2007) research indicates that partitioning can lead to long term peace following civil wars involving ethnic nationalism, through eliminating the ethnic security dilemma. Also, they contend that partition heightens the cost of conflict recurrence: the natural deterrence that nations face in warring one another would be in place under partition. Additionally, partitioning solves the problem of competing sects within a power-sharing government. While these authors focus on ethnic nationalism, it is equally relevant to the sectarian nature of the Syrian Civil War (Chapman & Roeder, 2007).

Problems with Partition

Though stakeholder interests can be satisfied more closely through partitioning Syria than other peace solutions, there remain several potential predicaments to short and long-term peace under partition. For instance, problems include the location of borders and whether hostile parties will continue fighting to extend their borders after an agreement is signed. Also, if one looks to the partition of greater India, it caused forced migration on a mass scale – a problem inherent in most partitions. Another dilemma is the disunity of the Syrian opposition. Once they achieve a state, will they fight amongst each another to gain power, much like the civil war in the newly partitioned South Sudan? An additional problem is the question of partisans in government and opposition held regions. Therefore, any agreement has to address a voluntary population transfer, including allowing former fighters (regime and opposition) to move to the newly partition state of their choosing or be given amnesty within the region in which they reside. At the same time, a partition agreement would have to prevent forced migration.

Though Chapman and Roeder (2007) assert that the costs of interstate war deter partitioned regions from engaging in conflict with each other (pp. 680-681), this still remains a possibility. Also there remains the question of whether the Kurds will accept a delayed permanent status on their autonomous Rojava regions, despite their decades without Syrian citizenship (Krajeski, 2015). Yet the Kurds likely know that this is just a temporary measure to appease Turkey and the Rojava region will continue to operate as a de facto partitioned region, free of regime or opposition control.

Another point of dispute that may arise from partition is that, if ISIS is defeated, will the regime, Kurds or opposition take control of their region. On one hand, this could incentivize stakeholders on all sides to defeat ISIS as quickly as possible. On the other hand, it could lead to renewed conflict within ISIS territory as ISIS's time of defeat nears, in order to ensure control of their territory. Additionally, war crimes investigations will have to be set for a later date, for the time being restorative justice will have to outweigh retributive justice. Lastly, international and regional stakeholders will have to assist in institutional building, particularly in rebel-held areas that will have to start from scratch.

Conclusion

It is likely that all of the stakeholders in the Syrian Civil War will claim that they want peace. However, stakeholder intransigence conflicts with this goal. Such obdurate attitudes will extend the war for another five years at minimum, resulting in another half-million dead and continuous waves of mass refugees. Furthermore, the entire world, from Bangladesh to Paris to Orlando to Lebanon, is feeling the painful reverberations of the Syrian Civil War. Partition stands as the best option to appease stakeholder objectives while building peace.

Yet the partition entails a host of problems, making peacebuilding in Syria a truly wicked problem. This case study has offered a potential solution upon which peace can be successfully negotiated, while leaving problems inherent in partition for peace scholars to examine. For instance, the question of the control of ISIS-held territories could be addressed through a peace treaty of newly-formed partitioned states, in which they could divide the territory equally or make it contingent upon what group is most successful in fighting ISIS.

Though great powers are often reluctant to embrace partition, they are likely to do so when it serves their national interest. For instance, the U.S. supported the independence of Kosovo from Serbia and Herzegovina, though Russia opposed it; Russia embraced and orchestrated the partition of Crimea from Ukraine, though the West opposed it. In Syria's case, a partition would serve great power objectives through ending the war, and, thereby, reduce the flow of migrants to Europe and help seal the stateless vacuum from which international terrorism emerges.

The most important stakeholder is the Syrian people. Will partition serve their interests? Within the context of the privation that they have suffered, they will likely welcome peace under any terms that allow for their most basic human rights. It is highly plausible that Syrian minorities would be relieved to be assured that – for those living in Kurdish or regime regions – the radical Sunni opposition will not be ruling there. Similarly, for many Sunnis under regime control who fear the rise of Islamic extremism in the opposition, though they may be less-than-pleased with the Assad regime, will prefer Assad than the radical alternative. For Sunnis and others within opposition-held regions, many of whom view Assad as a war criminal, they will no longer be under his rule. As long as the Syrian people are allowed to (but not forced to) migrate to and from partitioned regions, it is likely that the Syrian people would see partition as the best possible option to end a destructive five-and-a-half-year war.

Through partition, stakeholders do not receive all of what they want, but they all receive something. Thus, partition is the best option for attaining peace. However, a host of problems would still remain in preventing civil war recurrence and human rights violations within the nascent states of a former Syria. But alas, building a sustainable peace under partition is yet another wicked problem.

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PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Collective Memory, Embodiment, and Religiosity: A Sociological Analysis of *Stigmata*

Author: Charlotte A. Kunkel
Title: Professor of Sociology
Association: Luther College
Location: Decorah, IA, United States of America
E-mail: kunkelch@luther.edu

COLLECTIVE MEMORY, EMBODIMENT, AND RELIGIOSITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF *STIGMATA*

Abstract

The fictionalized tale of a young woman's physical identification with her ancestral past raises questions of race, collective identity, embodiment and psychological stability. Perry uses the metaphor of stigmata to make sense of the main character's lived experience. Therefore, the question becomes in what ways are collective memories legitimated through religion, and what stories are denied due to the absence of a religious narrative? From a sociological perspective, I analyze Perry's text, *Stigmata*, to reveal the religious narrative, the cultural resistance to embodied memories of slavery, and the medicalization of collective experience.

Introduction

It has been nearly 150 years since the abolition of slavery and we are still suffering its legacy. I see that legacy, for example, in the disproportionate numbers of women of color working as maids. I see it in the news media, in my children's schools, and in my workplace. I see it in the shuffle of an elderly black man, in the downward glance of a black woman I pass. I see it in the overrepresentation of young black men in jail and the disproportionate numbers of black women who are poor and/or receive welfare. I also see it in the entitlements of my white sisters and brothers, in their expectation that if they can do it, anybody can. I see it in the oft-perceived

notion of whites that racism is all but gone if only "those folks" would quit talking about it. Racism is alive and well. Slavery may have ended but white supremacy has not. Yet, there are many who deny the enduring effects of slavery and who would have us believe racism is a thing of the past.

Consider this: it seems to be easier for some to believe that Jesus Christ walks among us, minimally in the good will of others (perhaps white others?), than it is for some to see that racism is rampant among us. This is what I think Phyllis Alesia Perry is trying to tell us in her 1998 novel, *Stigmata*. Why is it easier for some of us to believe in the existence of Jesus than to believe in the existence of racism? I will propose that it *is* easier because claiming a religious narrative is a matter of Faith, whereas social science tries to illustrate the continued legacy of slavery as objective fact. I will argue that Perry ultimately suggests history is a matter of faith buoyed by embodied narratives.

To illustrate this theme, I will first discuss the religious narrative in the text, to document the correlations that Perry makes between Catholicism and the African American experience. Secondly, I will discuss why there is cultural resistance to embodied memories outside a religious narrative. And finally, I will discuss the cultural practice of the medicalization of collective experience, and how this medicalization of some peoples' deviance serves to maintain the status quo. In other words, medicalization serves to support some historical memories and not Others.

In the text Perry tells us a story of a multigenerational family. Bessie Ward (Ayo) is the great-great grandmother. She is kidnapped from her African homeland and enslaved in the US. She makes a home in Alabama upon gaining her freedom. She tells her story to her daughter, Joy, to commit the memory to paper in the form of a diary. This diary is passed down to Grace, the mother of Sarah and grandmother of Lizzie, who is the main character. Generational memory is key to the story.

The story begins with Lizzie DuBose meeting with her therapist for an exit interview from a mental hospital in 1994. Juxtaposed with her story are excerpts from her great-great grandmother's diary dated 1898. Perry slips in and out of time as well as narrators in a non-linear fashion. At times Lizzie becomes her grandmother Grace and/or her great-great grandmother Ayo. We also meet Lizzie at 14 when she inherits her grandmother's trunk that contains, among other things, her grandmothers' quilt and diary. Lizzie's story spans 20 years, 14 of which are spent in mental hospitals. At 34, Lizzie returns to Tuskegee, and her Baptist parents, Sarah and Dr. John DuBose. Lizzie's story (as is the story of all the women in the text) is a story of struggle with her past and her present while raising the issues of sanity and memory. The diary reads:

> *We are forever. Here at the bottom of heaven we live in a circle. We back and gone and back again.*
> *I am Ayo. Joy. I choose to remember.*
> *This is for those whose bones lie in the heart of mother ocean for those who tomorrows I never knew who groaned and died in the damp dark beside me. You write this daughter for me and for them (p. 17).*

Perry connects the experience of the Middle Passage--the collective memory of those who were enslaved—with Ayo's granddaughters of the present, "we are forever." And this is a choice that Ayo makes to remember but also imposes on her daughters. Memory connects them, in a circle.

The Religious Narrative

Perry invokes religion in many ways in the text, perhaps most directly in the use of the phenomenon of stigmata. In addition to stigmata, she invokes a religious narrative by writing about Catholic schools, reincarnation and dust.

Stigmata refers to wounds that appear on the body, usually head, hands or feet, that are believed to resemble the wounds of Jesus during the crucifixion (Melton, 2008, p. 317). Most commonly accepted in the Catholic Church, stigmata is overwhelmingly a female phenomenon. St. Francis was the first person to be documented as a stigmatic, but historically women outnumber men 7 to 1 (Harrison, 1994). Culturally it is significant that women are more often stigmatics and are often the keepers of memory but lack legitimacy as women, both in the church and society.

> Lizzie has stigmata. However, her wounds are not those of Christ but of her enslaved great-great grandmother. Wounds appear around her wrists and ankles, the marks left from the manacles her grandmother wore during the middle passage. She also has wounds from a whipping by "Bessie's" plantation mistress. Lizzie's wounds are interpreted as the result of a suicide attempt—thus her subsequent institutionalization. It is also in an institution years later, where Lizzie meets Father Tom. He conveys to Lizzie that she has stigmata,

> "Years ago, a devoted monk named…well I can't remember the name…became so fixated on the passion and crucifixion of Christ that he was stricken with wounds on his body that corresponded to the Savior's torture and death. It's called stigmata, child. That's what you have" (p. 213).

He also tells Lizzie that the monk is considered a saint, a healer. Many do question the sanctity of those who appear to suffer stigmata—one critic argues that whether one believes those with stigmata are pure and holy depends on one's personal beliefs (Simpson, 1984, p. 1748), and yet the Catholic Church has at least 321 documented cases (Poulain, 1912). Another says, "Cynics may find in stigmata only wish fulfillment, illness, or fakery, but the faithful ought to find in it vibrant and disturbing symbols of Christ's Incarnation and painful, redemptive death on the cross" (Hansen, 2001, p. 191). Hansen also reasons that because "we are so far away from the Jesus of history that He can seem a fiction, a myth…" thus, stigmatics offer us witness to the Crucifixion (p. 190). The question, here, then is whether we can find the vibrant and disturbing symbols of slavery as redemptive. I believe Perry is giving witness to the history of slavery that seems so far away as to be mythical. Lizzie tells her doctor. "it's the same MO as stigmata, you see. A mysterious physical trauma. I wasn't praying when it happened, though. I was remembering. Remembering something unbelievably traumatic" (p. 214). Perry compares traumatic memory of slavery with religious narrative (Woolfork, 2009). She also refers to

redemption, Lizze's that is—she says "I've polished my story of redemption and restored mental health—the one responsible for my impending freedom—to such a high shine that I've dazzled Harper and everyone else" (p. 5). Traumatic memory is legitimated through religious narrative.

As evidence, Perry doesn't only use religion in the text as fantastic, but lays the foundation of a culture that accepts the Catholic tradition. Although Baptist, Lizzie attends Catholic schools (p. 6), and often refers to Catholicism (p. 32). Perry writes, "Our Lady is an island of lukewarm Catholicism in a town that teems with black Baptists and Methodists. That's the funny thing about going to Catholic school in a Baptist town, especially if you weren't Catholic at all. Hail Mary's by day and tent revivals by night" (p. 207).

Legitimation of religious narrative also occurs in the humanizing of dust, as in "ashes to ashes and dust to dust, and to dust we shall return." Perry is always writing about dust—and I think it connects Lizzie with the religious narrative once more. Lizzie's first experience of time traveling leaves her waking in the morning with the dust of Africa on her feet (p. 25). The doll and diary from the trunk are "falling apart, becoming dust as I watch" (p. 47), "everybody were all ground to dust by the weight of the years" (p. 43). Throughout the novel she finds herself "raising dust, pushing dust, washing dust from my face" (p. 113-114), "dusting dirt off my hands" (p. 121), "I lie on the floor on my belly, my face in the dust" (p. 126). And there is dust on the church, "I look through the windows, not the ones I'm used to, the ones with the dust of the ages" (p. 40). She dusts the pulpit (p. 113.) Lizzie writes, "We make love there for the first time amidst the dust and this seems appropriate; I'm always surrounded by dust, made of it, always caught up in it as it swirls and resettles and rises again and again to worry the living" (p. 129). Grace leaves to try to shake off the Johnson Creek dust (p. 144) and her father tells Lizzie "This all fits you Lizzie. Strange letters, quilts and old dusty bits of the past. I think your Grandma Grace must have had some kind of premonition about you" (p. 23). Ayo tells "Joy you learn to watch the trails in the dust left by the feet of yo children. You read they minds" (p. 50). And finally Lizzie warns, "She thinks after all the pain and strain I just disintegrated. That that dust under Bessie Ward's stone marker in Johnson Creek is all that's left of me. But she doesn't know any better" (p. 202). The numerous references to dust not only reference the Christian refrain, "from dust to dust, and to dust you shall return," reminding the reader of human mortality, but of the circle of connection that collective memory invokes. Perry reminds us simultaneously of our mortality and immortality, life beyond death.

This brings me to reincarnation. Lizzie believes she is the reincarnation of Ayo and Grace. She also knows this is problematic. "How come mystics can talk about reincarnation all day long and I get committed for it" (p. 5)? "My doctors talked a lot about denial. Every time I calmly explained to them that I knew reincarnation was real because Grace and I were living it, they said very pointedly, "You're in denial, Elizabeth" (p. 70).

And she sees her stigmata as proof. When Dr. Brun looks at her back, Perry writes, "Her gaze is hot, I can feel it as it steps tentatively through the maze of scars, from neck to waist and beyond, permanent remembrance of the power of time folded back upon itself. Proof of loves intersecting from past to present" (p. 204). And Aunt Eva agrees, "Think of it like this, the past—that's what you call it—is a circle. If you walk long enough, you catch up with yourself" (p. 117). Again Perry invokes this notion that the past, present, and future are intersecting, in

this case in the phenomenon of reincarnation. Historical traumatic memory is embodied in reincarnation, another religious narrative. The circle of life is embodied in the physical experience of stigmata. Lizzie's embodiment of the scars of slavery give the reader a literal sign of the memory of our slave past.

Whether reincarnation or transubstantiation, the sociologically interesting thing to me is the moment Lizzie finds peace with herself, or multiple selves! She is in the garden at the hospital, in the dirt, and she has a vision of Ayo's mother, the full brown woman. "She takes my hand. This is the hand of my mother, she says. And of my grandmother. Petals of the flower. Your life is many lives" (p. 176). And I am reminded of Goffman, "of course, we are actors in many lives" (1973, p. 202). Goffman's theory of impression management, that we manage our impressions so others will accept us, lays the groundwork for a symbolic interactionist perspective on mental health and collective memory. If one's impression of self is not accepted, the theory argues, we risk the stigma of a deviant identity. In Lizzie's story that is the stigma of mental illness.

Sanity

Sociologists have long recognized the consequences of individualizing social problems. Medicalization has become a primary form of individualizing, depoliticizing, and controlling unwanted or deviant behavior (Conrad, 1975). The label of mental illness urges us to focus on what is wrong with the individual, to turn away from the social context in which behaviors occur, and to treat the person rather than change the society. Perry keenly criticizes our cultural tendency to individualize not only the social problem of racism, but of its memory as well.

Perry illustrates this sociological perspective of mental illness when Ruth tells Lizzie, "Sanity," she says to the ground, "is a mutual agreement between folks trying to control their world." And she elaborates, "Yeah, Men used to lock women up in asylums because the woman wanted to wear trousers or because they decided they didn't want to be good Christian matrons anymore. The definitions of sanity change everyday" (p. 192). Perry presents a gendered critique of social control as well as a critique of Christianity. She clearly articulates the perspective that mental illness or "insanity" is a social construct. Sanity is an act.

Lizzie is forced to call her experience a suicide attempt—she must admit she tried to commit suicide in order to be released from the hospital. An individualistic tale is preferred over any other. If she is crazy, then we need not look to our society to find the problem—it's just her. The mentally ill know this, Lizzie tells us, "I realize that I don't know if I am sane or not, it's all a matter of point of view anyway" (p. 68). So she lies—and thinks to herself, "Ah hah. I fooled you, I fooled you." Which brings her back to religion—Perry writes about her taunt—"Words last heard in the schoolyard at Our lady of Mercy school keep running through my head" (p. 6).

When Lizzie is accused of hearing voices she rejects the assertion and offers, "There are no voices, Doctor," I say flatly. "What I am trying to tell you is that these are memories, that's what they feel like" (p. 139).

Memory/Story

From a sociological perspective, our culture is our story. It tells us how to survive, what's important, what to do and not do. Culture is shared by society and is the glue that holds us together. Our collective consciousness is what guides us—it is our story. Collective memory then serves a very important purpose—it provides the story or culture of our survival. It gives us a collective identity. Now add a Marxist perspective and we can see that those who control the cultural stories control the society. So when cultural critics write of collective memory it is often the question of *whose* memory is being privileged in the telling that becomes the crux of the tale.

Perry problematizes the cultural/material denial of our collective past in our denial of the continued and painful racism of the present. She posits that this denial comes in the form of stigmata or physical manifestations on the body of her main character, Lizzie. Further, she posits this denial in contrast to the general acceptance of another groups' history, that of Christians, in particular Catholics.

This counter position becomes central to the story. She forces us to ask why we readily accept Catholicism and its' collective memory, including the embodiment of Jesus Christ, while we reject the African American collective memory, particularly the embodied experience of slavery. Religion becomes the trope for allowing Catholicism to "work" or any ethnic group to embody its collective memory (for example, this has also worked for Jews). It then becomes particularly poignant to recall that not only were enslaved Africans explicitly prohibited from practicing or maintaining a religious tradition, but also were prohibited from creating and maintaining an ethnic identity. Given this, Perry employs religious codes to embody a collective memory for African American's collective past. Perry invokes storytelling and the power of memory of a particular ethnic group, African Americans. In the story of Ayo, Grace and Lizzie the codes of stigmata, dust and reincarnation tell the story of slavery. Perry questions White controlled memories of slavery alongside the lived or embodied collective memory of African Americans. Which story is privileged today? She makes a clear argument for remembering with pain, all the gruesome details of our slave past.

Toni Morrison (1987) calls this rememory, the act of "intentionally and actively not forgetting" (Parker, 2001). Perry captures this in the quilting of Grace and Lizzie. "Mother puts down her sewing and picks up the drawings piled in the middle of the dining room table. She shuffles them, like cards. Those scenes have come to me from deep-buried, but ever-present memory. Treasures from the vault" (p. 69). Rather than denying those painful parts of our past "cutting them out" (p. 75), Perry implores us to remember, "maybe you're marked so you won't forget this time, so you will remember and move on" (p. 213). Lizzie agrees, "So I won't forget again." (p. 193). Perry also sees this as positive—as a path to healing (June, 2010). Memory, even painful memories allow us to live deeply and fully. Lizzie tells it like this: "I'm just a typical nineteenth-century nigger with an extraordinary gift. The gift of memory. That's all that sets me apart really, I remember" (p. 204).

Conclusions

In summary, I have argued that Perry clearly weaves a religious narrative throughout her text, largely through the notion of stigmata but also through references to Catholicism and reincarnation. Perry develops this religious narrative to underscore a particular historical narrative that works—Catholics perceive stigmata as the embodied narrative of their collective

history. I think she invokes this historical reference of Jesus to highlight a particular ethnic groups' memory that is legitimated by religious faith, whereas the African American historical past is all but denied for lack of a legitimate narrative. Furthermore, Perry illustrates how lacking a legitimate collective memory leaves one subject to the individualized labels of social control, i.e., medicalization and institutionalization. Individual narratives are more easily denied, repressed, and controlled, stigmatized if you will, but collective stories are much more difficult to depoliticize. Catholics as a group have been able to embody their memories and legitimate them in a religious narrative. In the absence of a legitimate collective narrative African Americans must rely on each other to remember their past. And they must do this in the face of enormous pressure—a hegemonic white supremacist culture. As Father Tom writes to Lizzie, "True faith is belief in the midst of unrelenting pressure" (p. 232).

Perhaps we need not have the literal wounds of Jesus or the literal marks of slavery to remember. Just as believers see "Jesus" in good works and good people, we can see the effects of slavery's legacy. The physical manifestations are here—in the material conditions of our collective lives—globally and locally. Racism is built into our institutions and experiences of peoples who are racialized as bodies. We simply must *see* them, and recognize the collective stories of all groups to understand them not as individualized ailments or personal memories, but a collective memory of a shared past. We must choose to remember. History is a matter of faith, a collective narrative, buoyed by embodied memories.

In today's world of police shootings, travel bans and anti-immigrant sentiment, the necessity of recognizing our shared traumatic history is greater than ever. Perry reminds us, one road to peace is to collectively remember and acknowledge the embodied narrative of slavery.

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Supporting Literacy and Peace Education with Youth: A Community Engagement Mentorship Study

Author: Alexia Georgakpoulos,
      Cheryl Duckworth
      Kristie Jo Redfering
      Yehuda Silverman
Title: Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution and Communication
      Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution and Peace Education
      Research Assistant
      Research Assistant
Association: Nova Southeastern University
Location: Ft. Lauderdale, FL, United States of America
E-mail: georgako@nova.edu
      cheryl.duckworth@nova.edu
      Kjredfering@gmail.com
      ys232@nova.edu

Supporting Literacy and Peace Education with Youth:
A Community Engagement Mentorship Study

Abstract

This study addressed the issue of early literacy and peace education among community youth (ages six to nine years old) involved in the mentorship program, *READING PEACE PALS*. 65 mentors engaged with 110 youth from the Boys and Girls Clubs in South Florida to teach peace education through collaborating on creative forms of literacy, art, and writing. The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness of the program in terms of how youth and mentors perceived it in relation to cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning of peace education and literacy. Youth positively perceived their mentors, conveyed that what they learned would impact their engagement with others in their community, and perceived enhancement in their literacy skills. Mentors overall also reported positive impact for the children regarding literacy, concepts of peace and peaceful behaviors.

Supporting Literacy and Peace Education with Youth: A Community Engagement Mentorship Study

Peace education posits that schools should play a fundamental role in educating youth in more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. Rosen and Salomon (2011) assert that schools are responsible for transmitting "the national (or tribal) received culture, thereby preparing the young generation to contribute to society in its current and anticipated form" (pp. 135-136). In fact, traditional education systems differ from peace education in several ways. First, students are taught patriotism and to accept national policies with very little in the way of critical thinking, and to ingest and regurgitate information. Second, textbooks and other curricular materials focus disproportionately on war and conflict history, while conflict resolution and peacemaking discourse is absent. Third, reproduction theory asserts that "societies are economically, socially, and politically stratified, and that schools reproduce that stratification; so that schools, rather than ameliorating the class divisions which cause structural violence, replicate and reinforce those divisions" (Harris, 1988, p. 27). Lastly, the structure and system of schools creates peer competition and authoritarianism. These factors perpetuate social injustice, violence, and create obstacles to creative problem solving.

In addition to the lack of curriculum that covers peace education, too many children continue to begin school ill equipped for learning while violence and issues of bullying in schools are starting at a much earlier age. By first grade, the consequences of reading failures among youth are profound. According to the Children's Movement of Florida (2014), 43% of third grade public school students in Florida cannot read at even minimally proficient levels and 90% of Florida's children go to public school. Youth who cannot read "proficiently" by third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school by age 19 (Jarrett & Johnson, 2014). Kidd and Castano (2013) recently built on the literature that demonstrates how literacy develops empathy in youth, a key outcome desired by peace educators. Thus, our study is focused on using literacy via peace-themed art, books, and poetry to build student peace-making and literacy skills.

The Peace Education Literature: Challenges, Models, Debates

Harris and Morrison (2003) suggest that peace education addresses violence on three levels: peacekeeping, peace-building, and peacemaking. Peacekeeping is viewed as the creation of an "orderly learning climate" in schools (Harris & Morrison 2003, p. 11). The primary charge of peace-building is to affect the underlying desire in students for a non-violent, socially just future. Peacemaking is manifested in various conflict resolution and management strategies including bullying prevention, peer mediation, development of negotiation and problem solving skills, anger management, and crisis intervention.

Peace education ensures opportunities for both academic and social learning. The literature suggests five areas of violence prevention in schools that are widely utilized: bullying

prevention, conflict resolution, peer mediation, anger management, and crisis intervention. These areas seek to address violence both preventatively by imparting the knowledge to foster attitudinal development such as tolerance and empathy, and responsively by teaching the skills to manage conflict and crisis without the use of violence. Campbell (2003); Duckworth, Williams, and Allen (2012); Smith, Daunic, Miller, and Robinson (2002); Erickson, Mattiani, and McGuire (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2005); Lantieri (1995); Peterson and Skiba (2001); and Smith, Cousins, and Stewart (2005) provide insight into components of violence prevention programs including instruction in negotiation strategies, community involvement, peer mediation, common goal setting, and bullying prevention. These approaches to violence prevention are often employed as "stand-alone" programs. At times, approaches that are more comprehensive in terms of building an overall school peace culture are utilized. Because the approaches address conflict through different lenses, the use of multiple programs is considered more comprehensive and thus better able to prevent violence and build school cultures of peace.

Peer mentoring programs in schools have shown improvements in behavior and well-being (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011). One peer-mentoring program indicated a 78% increase of mentees being more aware of what bullying is, while 65% of mentees expressed a better understanding on how to handle bullying situations (Gladson, 2011). Importantly, such programs have been critiqued for failure to ensure access for more marginalized students (Bickmore, 2001). We endeavored to address this important critique by partnering with the Boy's and Girl's Club, an organization that focuses on mentoring lower-income youth.

Research Questions Framing Our Study
The following research questions are presented in this current study to address literacy and peace education learning:
RQ1: Did students perceive cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning in relation to literacy and peace education?
RQ2: Did students perceive social impact in relation to their learning of peace education?
RQ3: How did student and mentor perceptions of learning and social impact compare in the study?

Methodology
The Reading Peace Pal Mentorship Program was designed and created by the first author of this study and all authors of this study were involved with the execution and assessment of the program. The purpose of this study was to discover what perceptions youth and mentors had about the program and if this mentorship program that integrated literacy, art, and writing enhanced children's perceptions of cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning of peace education (understood here as teaching them positive conflict resolution skills) as well as literacy, (understood here as ability to read, comprehend, and synthesize a book). Open-ended questionnaires were developed for qualitative purposes using extant research on three constructs

of learning that integrated Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) model for how to evaluate a training program based on the impact of learning. Kirkpatrick's model follows four steps for learners and these steps were qualitatively assessed for *youth* in terms of youth and mentor perceptions in the current study:

Step 1: Reaction - How well did the youth like the learning process? (Affective Learning)
Step 2: Learning - What did youth learn? (Cognitive Learning)
Step 3: Behavior - What new skills resulted from the learning process for the youth? (Behavioral Learning)
Step 4: Results - What are the results/impact of the learning process for the youth? (Impact of Learning)

Reaction and learning resonate with Bloom's (1956) concepts of learning as he identified affective learning and cognitive learning as two domains in the taxonomy of learning. Affective Learning refers to the emotional aspects of learning, when a new experience, concept or skill impacts our passions and feelings. Cognitive Learning refers to how much children think they processed their learning through their recognition of understanding and to the extent that they gain knowledge. It has often been identified with learning that is reflected most popularly by students' own perception of learning (Kelley & Gorham, 1988; Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987; McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, & Barraclough, 1996). Behavioral Learning is popularly associated with Skinner (1953) and focuses on how much children believe they will behave differently based on the result of their learning experiences. It is the extent to which children can effectively apply skills that they have learned. In addition, this study was interested in the perceived impact and results of learning on society, which is how children perceived if the mentorship program will impact them and their community in the future. In terms of the Impact of Learning, the Kirkpatrick Model has been a popular method to evaluate training programs like the one designed in this study (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006): thus this study integrated the concept of Impact from this framework since impact is an important element that emerges from affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning. It was important in this study to understand not only students' and mentors' perceptions about learning, but also the potential larger classroom and community impact of their learning in relation to the mentorship program. These three forms of learning, coupled with impact assessments, are often used in educational assessments even today, though of course today they are understood in a constructionist rather than post-positivist sense (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 2004).

Participants
Sixty-five mentors comprised of adults in the South Florida community participated in the study and one-hundred and ten children (ranging in age from six to nine years old) from several Boys and Girls Clubs participated. Mentors were recruited through email and invitation throughout the community and youth were recruited through the director of the Boys and Girls Club. All participants filled out consent forms per the study's research approval board at NSU, and minors were required to secure parental consent prior to the start of the study. Demographics for mentors and children are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Subject Demographics

Mentor Variable	Measure	Count(Percent)
Occupation	Education	18(27.7%)
	Mental Health	7(10.8%)
	Social Science	6(9.2%)
	Student	10(15.3%)
	Other	24(36.9%)
Sex	Male	7(10.8%)
	Female	48(73.8%)
	No Response	10(15.4%)
Race	African American	18(27.7%)
	Hispanic	14(21.5%)
	White	19(29.2%)
	Other	5(7.7%)
	No Response	9(13.8%)
Child Variable	Measure	Count(Percent)
Age	6 – 7 Years Old	42(38.2%)
	8 – 9 Years Old	52(47.3%)
	No Response	13(11.8%)
Grade	Grades 1 - 2	65(59.1%)
	Grades 3 - 4	29(26.4%)
	No Response	16(14.6%)
Sex	Male	49(44.6%)
	Female	44(40%)
	No Response	17(15.5%)
Race	African American	70(63.6%)
	Other	23(20.9%)
	No Response	17(15.5%)

Peace Pal Program Processes

Mentors were paired with one or two children and worked on three activities together: Peace Art, Peace Essay or Lyrics, and Peace Book Reading. For the Peace Art activity, the children were asked to think about different perspectives of peace and then create a visual representation of what peace looks like to them. Children presented their art to the mentors and discussed the meaning of their art. In the second activity, Peace Essay or Lyrics, mentors asked children to write an essay or song lyrics that conveyed how they would prevent youth violence, or write about a bullying incident they witnessed and how they would have resolved the situation. After writing, mentors asked the children how they could apply their essay in their lives. Finally, the third activity involved mentors helping children read a book that squarely focused on peace education. Mentors then discussed what the children learned from the book, and how the readings related to their essays and drawings. Mentors also asked the children what they could do to make their lives more peaceful and how they could promote peace with others around them. Following the completion of the Peace Pal Mentorship Program, all mentors and children

received open-ended qualitative questionnaires that consisted of seven questions to assess mentor and student perceptions of the three forms of learning along with perceived impact. Questions in the open-ended questionnaires included the following:

- What did you learn that you liked from your mentor and book that are valuable for your community/society/world? Explain why? (Affective Learning)
- What did you learn from your Reading Peace Pal and book that you did not know before? Explain? (Cognitive Learning)
- Did you learn any new behaviors from your Reading Peace Pal and book? Explain? (Behavioral Learning)
- Will what you learned from your Reading Peace Pal impact your community, society or world? Explain? (Impact)

Data Findings, Analysis, and Discussion
Participant responses were analyzed by employing qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2014). The findings of this study were captured into two sets following an extensive content analysis: one set for children, and the other set for mentors. Each set was comprised of four assessments: cognitive learning, behavioral learning, affective learning, and impact/results in society. The major themes of their responses were categorized, along with sub-categories and Table 2. Cognitive Learning (Children) examples where helpful to analytical depth and clarity. Taken together, 18 categories, 36 sub-categories, and more than 140 cumulative examples emerged from over 1,000 combined children and mentor responses. The qualitative data was double-coded separately by two study authors to enhance trustworthiness.

In assessing the cognitive learning responses from the children, they were asked to explain what they learned from their Peace Pal Mentor and book that they did not know before. Three major categories are illustrated in Table 2: Treating People Positively, Understanding Vocabulary, and Bullying Awareness. For the category *Treating People Positively*, two sub-categories were identified that encompassed positive regard: being kind, and being respectful. Each subcategory had examples that were pulled from the children's responses, and often these were stated quite similarly in many other responses from the children. In many instances, children stated they learned "to be kind". In the second category, *Understanding Vocabulary*, responses were more descriptive through the children's indication of understanding a word in either a deeper context or through learning the word for the first time during the Peace Pal Mentorship Program. Three sub-categories emerged from the *Understanding Vocabulary* category: peace as a concept, peace ambassador, and upstander. Children frequently commented that they had not heard of the words peace ambassador and upstander before, while many children also learned and understood more about what peace means. The third and final category of the children's cognitive learning was *Bullying Awareness*. This category revealed many different strategies that children learned, which were ultimately compartmentalized into two sub categories: reacting to a bully, and bullying prevention.

Similar responses were also recognized when assessing children's behavioral learning. Three categories emerged from the responses: Proactive Behaviors, Preventative Behaviors, and Spiritual Behaviors (Table 3). The first category, *Proactive Behaviors*, was conceptualized

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Treating People Positively	Being kind Being respectful	• Sharing with one another • If I include others, they might include me • Be nicer to my friends • You can't always be mean • Be friendly with others • Be respectful to my teacher • You have to be respectful to get respect back • Not to disrespect my surroundings
Understanding Vocabulary	Peace as a Concept Peace Ambassador Upstander	• Peace has a lot of meanings • Everybody can be a peace ambassador • Be an example for others • Be a mentor • Stand up for others who are being bullied
Bullying Awareness	Reacting to a bully Bullying prevention	• Standup for yourself • Move away from bully • Tell an adult/teacher/principle/staff • Be bold/brave/strong in your heart • Say something • Bullying is not a good choice and you can get in trouble • Do not bully and do not touch anyone • Always give peace to everyone • Express yourself through writing/talking about it

through recognition that children learned, through the Peace Pal Mentorship Program, to intervene when possible in a bullying situation with some sort of concrete action, such as "help people when they are in trouble", which was a common response under one of the sub-categories, assistance. The only other sub-category identified for *Proactive Behaviors* was *defending responses*, such as "stand up for myself and for others."

Table 3. Behavioral Learning (Children)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Proactive Behaviors	Assistance Defend	• Help people when they are in trouble • Stand up for myself and for others • Tell an adult/teacher/principal/staff
Preventative Behaviors	Bullying Reduction	• Do not bully people • Do not be mean • Not to spread rumors

		• Do not call names
		• Do not judge people
		• Need to act good so people will be my friends
		• Will include others
		• If someone is lonely, I can be their friend
	Inclusion	
Spiritual Behaviors	Personal Reflection	• I will pray for the bully and for the people being bullied
		• I will meditate

The second category that emerged, *Preventative Behaviors*, had a copious amount of responses that were divided into two sub-categories: bullying reduction and inclusion. Although inclusion can also be seen as a proactive behavior, in this context, the children were indicating that through including others and reaching out, one could possibly prevent a bullying situation from occurring. For bullying reduction, many students elaborated on behaviors of what would constitute bullying others, such as "do not call names" and "not to spread rumors". Some children, however, learned of other behaviors, which emerged into a third category, Spiritual Behaviors. These internal behaviors and skills were reflected in the children's responses, such as "I will pray for the bully and for the people being bullied."

The children also responded to what they liked about what they learned, either through their Peace Pal mentor and/or the book they read together. This is represented further below in Table 4 as *Affective Learning*. In addition, children were also asked to explain what they learned that was valuable for their community, society, and world. Reponses that specifically used the words "liked" and/or "enjoyed" throughout all of their responses were coded, and were utilized in developing the three categories that emerged: Peace Pal Mentor Support, Peace Conceptions, and Behaviors. Many children enjoyed spending time with their Peace Pal Mentor, and this was indicated through three separate sub-categories: advice, reading, and writing. For example, many children enjoyed reading a book together, and other children appreciated the positive feedback they received from the poem that they wrote.

Table 4. Affective Learning (Children)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Peace Pal Mentor Support	Advice	• Solving a problem by yourself or with an adult's help
		• Positive feedback on poem
	Reading	• Reading a book
	Writing	• Writing a poem
Peace Conceptions	Building Peace	• We could think of a day as peaceful

		• Learning to be peaceful
		• Learning about peace
		• Learned about how to say peace in a different language
Behaviors	Bullying Prevention	• Being nice to kids even after they have been bossy to me
		• Helped me realize why bullying/violence needs to stop
		• What not to do to others

The second category, *Peace Conceptions*, emerged from the different responses on how the children formed their ideas about peace. Whether this was through the art they drew, the poem they wrote, or the book they read along with the discussions they had, most children perceived that they could connect to the idea of peace and felt moved to learn more; this sense of emotional identification with a concept is key to affective learning. Finally, the third category, *Behaviors*, had one sub-category: bullying prevention. Some of the children particularly related to learning about bullying prevention, which was evident in their responses indicating that the Peace Pal Mentorship Program "helped me realize why bullying/violence needs to stop."

For the final category, children were assessed on impact/results in society. The children were asked if what they learned from their Peace Pal would impact their community, society, or world and actions they could take (Table 5 below). Two major categories were established: *Peace Education* and *Transformation*. Three sub-categories were further established for *Peace Education*, which indicated various ways in which the children were impacted: art advocacy, literacy interest, and peace ambassador. For art advocacy, some children found meaning in the peace drawings they created. Other children were inspired in other forms of art, such as to "sing a song of peace and harmony". For literacy interest, some children responded that they now want to read more books and learn more, especially from their Peace Pal. The majority of children's responses, however, showed ways in which the child wanted to be a peace ambassador. This ranged in responses from "share with everyone what is wrong with bullying" to "tell others about the book and the lessons about peace". Many children also indicated that they would share the experiences they had in the Peace Pal Mentorship Program with their family and peers.

Table 5. Impact/Results in Society (Children)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Peace Education	Art Advocacy	• Draw about peace to show others
		• Sing a song of peace and harmony
		• Making peace signs
	Literacy Interest	• Read a book
		• Want to stay here and learn more. You (my Peace Pal) taught us a whole dictionary of learning
		• Tell others about the book and the lessons about peace

		• Help stop bullying by being a peace ambassador • Teach my sister and friends about peace • Try peace at home • Want to help people be respectful and kind • Will share this (experience) with my family and friends • Share with everyone what is wrong with bullying • Want to tell people about bullies and that they need love • Want to spread (this experience) around to the world • Want to tell (and) show people how to be nice
	Peace Ambassador	
Transformation	Internal Transformation	• Will be respectful to my family and be kind • Will respect and honor everyone • Want to be nice (and) kind, and never want to be mean • Have more empathy for others • Care about people • Get to know people and not listen to what other people say about them • Learned how to not bully
	External Transformation	• Help old people • Helping my friends and others • Help other people (kids that are blind or speak another language) • Help people when they have problems • Want to help other people who are getting bullied • When I see people in my community and in the world being bullied, I can stick up for them • Try to stop bullying, look out for it and turn the bullies in • Can stand up for someone at school and it'll be easier when I grow up to stand up for people • Want to be nice and play with everyone • Want to practice the things we read about • Share stuff with neighbors • Stop people from littering in the world

For the second and final category of impact/results in society, the children's responses showed that various transformations had occurred, which resulted in two sub-categories: internal transformation and external transformation. For example, children responded that they would "have more empathy for others" under internal transformation. For external transformation, many children indicated wanting to help others in different ways, such as "help other people (kids that are blind or speak another language)" and "when I see people in my community and in the world being bullied, I can stick up for them". There were also other responses that had further effects for the impact/results in society, such as "share stuff with neighbors" and "stop people from littering in the world". These results indicated all the different ways the children responded, showing the many outcomes of the Peace Pal Mentorship Program.

All mentors also responded to questions comprised of the same four assessments: cognitive learning, behavioral learning, affective learning, and impact/results in society. The mentors responded with their own interpretation of what the children learned from them and the program in general. For cognitive learning, the mentors responded to what they believed the children learned from them and the book they read that the children did not know previously. From the mentors' responses, (Table 6), two main categories emerged: *Techniques* and *Comprehension*. For *Techniques*, two sub-categories emerged: internal techniques and external techniques. The internal techniques described methods in which the child could process their experiences and analyze them. For example, a mentor indicated that "the child learned the difference between what is right and wrong and provided examples." These internal techniques served as awareness guides for the children, which allowed them to further reflect on themselves and their surroundings. The qualitative data established a second category: *comprehension*. The mentors discussed what the children's revelations were, and they were divided into two sub-categories: peace and process.

Table 6. Cognitive Learning (Mentors)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Techniques	Internal Techniques External Techniques	• The child learned that friends that set a bad example are not real friends because they can get him/her in trouble as well • The child learned the difference between what is right and wrong and provided examples • The child learned that being bullied can turn someone into a bully by using the same poor behaviors against others that were done to him • The child learned how apply meditation and that one person can make a world of difference • The child learned that it is good to say no to peer pressure and try to encourage others to say no too • The child learned how to stand up for others who are being bullied • The child learned to reach out to the kids being teased
Comprehension	Peace Concept Enrichment	• The child learned what peace means • The child learned the value of family and music as forms of peace • The child learned peace prevails over bullying • The child learned how to be successful through peace without fighting • The child learned the importance of being

	Processes for peace	calm • The child learned about teamwork • The child learned there are different ways to combat bullying

The first sub-category, peace concept enrichment, explained that the mentors responded numerous times to what the children learned about various concepts of peace. For example, they pointed out that the children learned "the value of family and music as forms of peace" and "how to be successful through peace without fighting." These responses differed from those in the processes for peace sub-category, which emphasized ideas that were not specifically about peace but spoke to small group and interpersonal relations, such as teamwork. Similar responses were noted in behavioral learning under Table 7 below, which asked mentors if they thought the child learned any new behaviors. Two main categories emerged: *Preventative Behaviors* and *Proactive Behaviors*. There were also two sub-categories that were revealed through Preventative Behaviors: internal behaviors and external behaviors.

Table 7. Behavioral Learning (Mentors)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Preventative Behaviors	Internal Behaviors External Behaviors	• To be nice to his/her friends and others to avoid fights and getting angry • Practice peace, love, and harmony • Patience and kindness can help change a child's behaviors potentially • How to speak in a calm voice, wait their turn, and not to cause trouble • Not to pick on people because of disability
Proactive Behaviors	Individualistic Behaviors Altruistic Behaviors	• To tell a staff member/parent • To confront your friend as to why they are being mean • To stand up for themselves • How to stop, think, and tell someone when you face trouble • Being responsible in voicing concern when they or someone else needs help from bullying • To make a new friend who encourages a positive environment

The second category that emerged, *Proactive Behaviors*, focused more on addressing bullying situations when they are occurring, whereas *Preventative Behaviors* addressed behaviors that would help reduce bullying situations from occurring in the future. Two sub-categories were also utilized in conceptualizing the similar repeating responses from the mentors for Proactive Behaviors: individualistic behaviors and altruistic behaviors. Individualistic behaviors focused on what behaviors and skills the children learned for themselves when facing

bullying, such as "how to stop, think, and tell someone when you face trouble." Altruistic behaviors, on the other hand, were more focused on expanding children's horizons creating positive environments in the future. For affective learning, the mentors responded to what the children learned from them and the book they read (Table 8). In addition, mentors also addressed whether what the children learned was valuable for their community, society, and world. *Feelings* was the sole category of affective learning, which was divided into two sub-categories: positive feelings and negative feelings.

Table 8. Affective Learning (Mentors)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Feelings	Positive Feelings	• The children are confident self-assured girls and they should inspire others to be like they are • The child is sweet and kindhearted, so I think she has more confidence now to speak up when she sees bullying
	Negative Feelings	• The child was distracted during the book and struggled with some of my questions • The child did not seem interested by the end of the reading • The book was too simple. Also, the child's poor behavior, home life, and social skills need to improve in order to have any effect on this child's life

Some mentors emotionally responded positively to a particular question, such as "the child is sweet and kindhearted, so I think she has more confidence now to speak up when she sees bullying". While this was not as common, other mentors responded negatively to a particular question, such as "the child did not seem interested by the end of the reading". These responses further elaborated on the word "patience" that was addressed in some of the mentors' responses evaluating the children's cognitive learning. Some mentors mentioned that the children learned patience, and a few others were not well behaved. These sentiments emphasize the need for peace education programs to be consistent, and well integrated into the life of a school as part of building a culture of peace in the school community. Too often such programs are marginalized, under-resourced or treated as electives; our data emphasizes that under such circumstances this approach will see inconsistent and perhaps transient results.

Finally, the mentors addressed the impacts/results in society. Two main categories emerged: *Personal Impact/Results in Society*, and *Perceived Impacts/Results In Society*. There is an important discrepancy to note in these categories, and that is some mentors were confident that the children learned something, whereas others were not as sure. Mentors were asked about what they perceived the children learned that would impact their community, society, or world. Mentors were also asked what the children wanted to do about what they learned (Table 9).

For the Personal Impact/Results in Society, two categories emerged from the mentors' responses:

be an example and work for change. For the sub-category be an example, these responses indicated a confident response from the mentor that the child wanted to be a better individual and help the immediate environment, mainly in school and in class. The second sub-category, work for change, indicated further initiatives beyond being a better individual and building peace in a more holistic matter. This is evident in some examples such as "their ability to go out into the community and show others how to accept one another". Similar responses were noted in the final category, Perceived Impact/Results in Society, and these were divided into two sub-categories: short-term and long-term.

Table 9. Impact/Results In Society (Mentors)

Category	Sub-category	Examples
Personal Impact/Results In Society	Be An Example	• The child wants to spread it [what she learned] among her friends (she said it herself) • He wants to have a party in his classroom at school with all of his friends. He really liked how happy all the kids in the book were during peace week. • Stop being a bully • Wants to attend other sessions like it • She wants to be an example to her peers and promote peace • To reach out to an adult if bullying is happening • Their ability to go out into the community and show others how to accept one another
	Work For Change	• Become a president • Have the skills to be excellent peace ambassadors now and in the future • Help make a better world • Wants to change his school • Mentor other children • They want to teach others and make a change • To try and implement peace practices in his school
Perceived Impact/Results In Society	Short-Term	• I perceive that the student wants to help her friends if they are being bullied • I think the student learned to speak up and help • She will probably want to report bullying in the future • They want to apply it in the moment, but not sure if one time will allow the values to stick. They need a daily reminder

		• I think they will learn that love is a form of peace
	Long-Term	• I perceive the student will now be better equipped

The short-term and long-term sub-categories emerged through the time span of how long the student may apply the lessons learned through the Peace Pal Mentorship Program. Many responses from the mentors indicated that they perceive the children would want to help others, and some mentors observed that a daily reminder would be needed. Nevertheless, there were some perceived long-term responses, such as "I think they will learn that love is a form of peace". Programs like this must be integrated into sustained, comprehensive peace education curriculum. The data thus suggests that, when treated as a part of sustained and well-integrated peace education curriculum, mentors perceive that such peace literacy programs can have tangible impact in a school and local community.

Concluding Discussion: Limitations, Context and Future Directions
Most students had excellent experiences in the Peace Pals Program and learned from their mentors. This discussion does recognize that the study had to rely on self-reporting, yet the rich descriptions in this qualitative study provided insight into the perceptions of the mentors and children in this study. Other studies might extend our design, take an ethnographic approach to observe student behavior in classrooms or employ a longitudinal methodology, which follows up with students and mentors perhaps twelve months later. While some mentors had lower optimism towards how they felt children would perceive various aspects of the program, the children's strong optimism suggests that they gained confidence, concepts, and skills needed for building peace. Consistent with the program's objectives, these data are evidence that indeed, the Reading Peace Pals Mentorship program did enhance children's perceptions of cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning (Anderson 1979; Rubin et al., 2004) of literacy and peace education with positive assessments also toward impact of their learning on others and society. With the rise of violence, bullying, and conflict among youth today that negatively impact our communities, such programs have the potential to teach children peaceful conflict resolution skills. The future goal of this research is to roll out the Reading Peace Pals Program on a national and global level through partnerships with youth organizations and schools. One significant challenge to this, however, is the lack of autonomy that schools and teachers have in the current politicized climate of high-stakes testing and state standardized curriculum, even for young elementary schoolers.

Nevertheless, promoting the value of peace is imperative and as studies like this one continue to show evidence of the powerful impacts of peace education on youth and society at large, it seems there is practical wisdom to substantiate its prominent placement in schools and youth organizations. A paradigm shift in our thinking is necessary about what schools should value as lessons of peace may be equally important as competencies in math, science and reading especially when the survival of humans depends on it. While a full policy discussion on this is

beyond the scope of this study, and can be found elsewhere (Hantzopoulos, 2016; Duckworth, 2015b), the research team recognizes the impact this context has on the ability of school leaders to build cultures of peace. While understanding this, our data suggests that as one part of a comprehensive and sustained program focused on building a school and community wide culture of peace, such projects are vital to developing the peace literacy of our youngest students.

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PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

12/12 New Delhi: Public Resistance to Public Sexual Violence

Author: Jyoti Grewal
Title: Dean, University College
Association: Zayed University
Location: Dubai/Abu Dhabi (UAE)
E-mail: jyotnoor@gmail.com

Keywords: Sexual violence, Rape culture, Misogyny, Resistance

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12/12 NEW DELHI: PUBLIC RESISTANCE TO PUBLIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Abstract

Contemporary India has witnessed an upsurge in public performances of sexual violence, particularly against women. It has led to the nation asking if it has developed a rape culture. The December 2012 brutal gang rape and death of Jyoti Singh altered the public discourse of resistance to sexual violence in the nation. Entrenched socio-cultural structures continue to feed misogyny but a globalized India is seeking to alter the course of misogyny and its violent expressions. I argue that the narrative of resistance has changed as it has sought public venues for its representation. Discourse about sexuality and its control has clearly moved from the private to the public sphere, and most powerfully in the challenge it offers to sexual violence against girls and women; in this shift, India is witnessing a revolutionary shift in its public discourse and performance of sexual agency.

Article

On May 9, 2017 the Supreme Court of the Republic of India upheld the death sentence for four men who brutally raped and dismembered the innards of 23-year old Jyoti Singh on December 16, 2012. The medical establishment struggled to save her; even as she mumbled to her mother that she wanted to live, she died on December 29, 2012 in a Singapore hospital. The Supreme

Court described the sexually violent crime as a "story of a different world", "brutal, barbaric, and diabolical", "…she was treated as an object of enjoyment…", and "If ever a case called for a hanging, this was it". (Madan, 2017) Debate continues if justice was served, or not; contending opinions abound on whether a case of brutal rape, and the death of the victim, warrants a death sentence for the perpetrators. It is quite remarkable that the highest judicial seat would consider this extreme expression of misogyny as a story belonging to a different world or describing it as diabolical. It is neither; the "story" is one that India, its peoples, and its various institutions own as their own. It is the lived social reality of systemic sexual violence pervasive in the culture, even sanctioned and sustained by it. It is a product of inequitably gendered socialization, endorsed and supported by heteronormativity and entrenched patriarchy.

This paper engages with public performance of sexual violence against females, girls and women; perpetrators of such violence are overwhelmingly males. It highlights the perversity in the public performance of violence against women. Ever since Jyoti Singh's death the outcry, and resistance, against such violence is also increasingly public, the defense of such violence is equally public and it deliberately trivializes both the performance and the violence by declaiming the standard "blame the victim" narrative. Undergirding the argument is culturally entrenched misogyny that unapologetically claims public spaces as male-owned and so marks women as interlopers. The discourse of resistance has made public the misogynist discourse that was culturally entrenched and invisible to Indian masses who mostly accept(ed) it as 'tradition/culture/proper'. Now it is becoming increasingly clear that this misogyny is a method at once to endorse the ownership of public spaces as masculine spaces and to oust women from them. Women continue to upset the established norms of public spaces as they are increasingly entering them and demanding an equal presence and ownership.

India's systemic sexual violence is simultaneously a tool of hegemonic domination and a method of social control against all those who appear to deviate from the normal, normalized, even normative, functioning of society. This violence cuts across all genders, classes, ages, castes, and regions; it has a particular ferocity in some areas of this extremely diverse nation. It is performed in various spaces, public and private. It exists. In the last thirty or so years South Asian feminists of every hue and persuasion have shone the spotlight on (sexual) violence against female fetuses, children, women, and men. Once it was named, there was no going back; silences were shattered as the stories were told, loudly. The re-telling of this vast sweep of violence has transgressed barriers of orthodoxy as feminists and their allies describe and detail the acts of patriarchal aggression, its frequency, and demand an end to sexual violence.

One event radically altered public discourse of resistance to sexual violence and has changed the narrative to a widespread national and international commentary: Jyoti Singh's violent death. Jyoti Singh's brutal rape and eventual death mark a turning point in the discourse of resistance to sexual violence in 21st century India. The boundaries of silence were transgressed in public

spaces. These spaces are now global. And India is dead center in them. Twenty-first century India and Indians are global participants and actors. As resistance to sexual violence against its women, India's loud voice can be heard in public, even global, spaces, and it is demanding an end to all violent aggression and discrimination against women. Globalized India's discourse/s of resistance are irrevocably public.

Culturally pervasive and entrenched gendered sexual violence in much of India runs the lifecycle of the female, and could take any of these forms: forced female feticide, abject neglect of the girl child, restriction of access to education, dowry deaths, honor killings, acid attacks, widespread groping in public transport, any form of uninvited touch on her body, rapes, verbal harassment, coarse language, lower pay for the same job as males, degradation of widows, devaluing of single women, or abandonment of aged mothers. Anindita Datta describes this wide arc of pervasive violence against women as "genderscapes of hate" that originate from gendered prejudice and "are maintained through a steady flow of violence directed at women over their life course in their everyday lifeworld and lived spaces…over which women are constantly devalued, degraded, humiliated…" (Datta, 2016). In the realm of social meaning, violence is normalized as "classic patriarchy" (Kandiyoti, 1988) that scribes misogynistic violence as a way to maintain traditional values that stabilize society. Misogynistic patriarchy seeks to continue its domination by making (sexual) violence the punitive act against the transgressors of tradition; definitions of tradition are dynamic and wholly the realm of said patriarchy.

Rendering social meaning to tradition is a knotty discourse. It calls on mythologies and thousands of years' old notions of "*bharatiya sanskar*" (Indian values). Much of the *sanskar* is derived from the ancient epics. For example, an abducted and then recovered queen Sita from the epic *Ramayana* is asked by her husband to undergo the *agni-pariksha* (trial by fire), to prove that she remained sexually faithful after her abduction before he would accept her back as his wife; such a story has a powerful effect on mass perceptions of women's sexuality. She passes the trial but is banished anyway; she was pregnant with his twins at the time. Often, the husband-wife couple is upheld in the *sanskar* as being the ideal (*adarsh*) couple with perfect marital morality; they have a powerful hold on the collective (un)consciousness. It speaks of *Sati* as an act that a widow undertook as if by choice, entirely obscuring the forced burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. From the *Mahabharata*, it recounts tales of a royal Draupadi's public disrobing by her brothers-in-law, without critically analyzing that her husband treated her as a commodity in a gambling bet; she was 'saved' from the ultimate humiliation of a public rape only by piteously imploring a god to save her. Various mythological female characters become the ideal to which an ordinary Indian woman ought to aspire; any detraction from that is cause for correction, punitive and violent correction, towards the epitome of Indian womanhood. This call to "tradition" feeds the genderscapes of hate, aligning itself to the Laws of Manu that supposedly is the last word in (de)scribing womanhood and its duties. Supporting interpretations, and interpreters, of tradition fall continuously into the fallacy of fixity, cultural and

developmental, because it serves misogyny and classic patriarchy. Modern India's women exercise their agency and resist these ascribed cultural roles; and they come up against the walls of genderscapes of prejudice that circumscribe women's access to agency via violence. For all the ills of globalization, holding on to and re-enforcing *bharatiya sanskar* becomes the panacea. Globalized India's patriarchy articulates its authority and sole power as maintaining tradition in the face of rapid changes wrought by globalization; it sees itself and its traditional weight as fixed and immutable. Power and gender are mutable (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995), hence these expressions of sexual violence are dynamic and new.

The space, place, and situationality of globalized India's women are those of rage and fear. These occur simultaneously. And they occur as much in private as in public, at times one eliding into another. Globalized India has to contend with the reality that domestic violence and public sexual assaults against women are related; one creates a sense of untethered male power that can then manifest in the public sphere with impunity. In both, misogynistic patriarchy "display(s)…machismo power through the possession of attitudes and assertiveness against women in public" (Bhattarcharyya, 2015). Privately, beating a woman or marital rape or denying a female child adequate nutrition are accepted as normal; often times not perceived as violence. In the public location, for example, exist sex-selective abortion clinics, which perform female feticide, an illegal act. The fact that female feticide happens at all opens the door for a certain level of acceptance of sexual violence against women. Her family and/or husband are likely to force her towards such an abortion. The national average sex ratio is 908F:1000M with Haryana at the lowest with 725F:1000M and one district (Jhajjar) coming in at under 325F:1000M[1] (Census of India, 2012). Traditional orthodoxies construct masculinities which are then performed literally on the body of the women. Another public site of extreme prejudice is Haryana's rough, and illegal, self-governance locale, the *khap panchayats*; these control women in villages and towns alike. *Khap panchayats* are high caste all-male councils who self-appoint as keepers of *sanskar*, traditional values. (Deol, 2014) These *panchayats*' motivations are not as gatekeepers of tradition and religion as they claim but as custodians of high caste male privilege, preference, power, and implementers of violent misogyny. Haryana's women exist in fear of *khap panchayats*. Haryana's women also transgress with courage the violence of the *khap panchayats*; some step out of the house to work, others marry for love, and still others refuse sex-selection abortions. The price to pay can be death, or to be precise, murder. Within the context of globalized India, modern misogyny meets 'traditional' cultural prejudices against women where men imagine/think they could be left behind in the race for acquisition. New-fangled forms of social control have intensified and augmented its methods in the basest way possible: enlarging the arc of sexual violence and control.

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[1] Kerala is the highest with 1084F:1000M.

In the last quarter century, public performances of sexual violence against girls and women have been both reported more and have mutated to become increasingly aggressive. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has been one of the primary statutory bodies that records complaints. Its publication on categories of violence reads as a register of misery: acid attacks, marital rape, honor crimes, witch hunting, infanticide, abductions, eve-teasing, police brutality and apathy, trafficking, to name only a few.[2] Public discourse, particularly in all forms of media, is gradually shifting to naming, addressing, and challenging the culturally entrenched perceptions among men that sexual violence is acceptable, even normative. In 2014, traveling in a Uber cab, a financial executive woman was raped; focus quickly shifted to Uber's corporate competition and its lack of policies of vetting drivers (HT Correspondent, 2014). She was largely forgotten. Professional women who use private taxis are fearful of the drivers; media reports abound of rapes, and sometimes rape and murder, of professional women in metropolitan cities. In early June 2017, a woman with her infant fled from domestic abuse in the middle of the night; the driver of the autorickshaw and his friends along the way, flung the infant to its death and gang-raped her. She wandered around hospitals in the area asking doctors to revive her child; her husband claimed *his* life was shattered when he learned of his wife's gang-rape (Madan, 2017). In unorganized public construction projects, women laborers are subject to violations that go largely undocumented. Young professionals in tier two towns and metropolitan centers are the focus of acid being thrown on them with the explicit intent of disfiguring them. Migrant sex workers in shantytowns have no access to health or hygiene facilities, or legal recourse when subjected to multiple forms of violence. Girls and women walking to schools and colleges endure uninvited touch to their bodies or verbal harassment that is sexually explicit. Coarse language between men, unapologetically used in public spaces and widely heard, refers to *maachod-bahenchod* (motherfucker-sisterfucker). It creates an inner logic whereby the speakers/audience of men are desensitized to the act of sexual violence against his closest female relatives; and for those women hearing it, it re-enforces their rape-ability. The tragic litany of this shameful violence is endless. It is notable that the increased aggression has "the effect of circumscribing women's movements through intimidation and fear for their safety and security" (Bhattacharyya, 2015). In a remarkable show of male privilege and gender insensitivity, political, religious, and sometimes intellectual leaders of the country have made observations about women wearing jeans, wearing make-up, not pleading for mercy to their assaulters, or being foolish enough to leave the *chardivari*[3] of their homes. In their narrative, it is these transgressions that invite violence. Many women seek that security then; withdrawing from a public sphere to remain safe, they make a rational choice not a free one, to embrace the *chardivari*. Many women also are transgressing the tyrannical boundaries of gendered norms and spaces, in public and private lives. Petra Doan speaks of trans-gender groups exercising their agency in the acts of such transgression (Doan, 2010). In an extension of the argument, a

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[2] Government of India established the National Commission of Women in 1990; it remains one of the most powerful voices for women throughout the country. It influences a great deal of legislation.

[3] Literally, four walls. Implication here is that there is security within those walls, completely overlooking that those four walls could be the prison where many could face incestuous or marital rape, and other violations.

culturally specific transgression is crashing the figurative *chardivari*, when being cis-gendered, women live and perform their public and private lives beyond those normative roles and spaces. They experience the backlash on their beings as inequities, mansplaining, discrimination, and in extreme cases physical and sexual assault, practices which continue to push them back behind those *chardivaris*; their continued staying power chips away at the edifice of modern misogyny and begins to claim public spaces as their own, with certainty.

Extending John Allen's argument on spatiality of power, social construction of space is based on differentiating power inequities (Allen, 2003). Private and public spaces for women have come to be constructed as spaces of fear buttressed by misogyny, of inequities born of human, intellectual, cultural and social capital that is dominated by men, and of active exploitation of women sustained by being relegated to an underclass, even an under-caste. A culturally normalized patriarchy defines the parameters of women's activities, denying her agency for self-actualization. Sexual violence becomes the accepted and acceptable tool for containing her, constraining her, and circumscribing for her the boundaries of space. In both, private and public spaces, women recognize the potential of sexual violence. The overt and explicit forms are easily identifiable; it is the "contemporary prejudice and discrimination (that) is subtle, covert, implicit, and often nonconscious" (Anderson, 2015) which is silently and actively feeding a misogynistic patriarchy.

Ironically, a space where contemporary violent misogyny endorses and extends the logic of its existence is the Internet; it is covert and yet public. The Internet offers an analytical conundrum as it is at once private and public. It has amplified the (virtual) voices and the (actual) reach of like-minded misogynists. Online misogyny also has its own logic; it has a far reach in the public spheres and yet can keep the perpetrators entirely private. Gendered sexual(ized) violence has made the internet its attendant. Easy and cheap availability of smart phones, rapid turnover of models making them entirely accessible even in the rural areas, and widespread telecommunication networks at less cost than food are globalized India's reality. In 2015, onlookers in the viewing gallery of the House filmed two Karnataka Legislators watching pornography on their smart phones; this, while the House was in session. Via the virtual reality there is easy access to pornography; earlier, it took some effort and clandestine meetings to meet in private. Now there is a wide variety of pornography available for one's private viewing in all sorts of public spaces. Who watches it and how it is watched have both altered, affecting the various ways in which girls (children in general) and women are commodified, sexualized, and violated. There is much opportunity for further research on the intersections between increased violence and Internet pornography. Another public/private/anonymous space is the comments section in online postings; it is replete with references to sexual(ized) violence, often about the rape-ability (or not) of other commentators or authors/bloggers. Most of the comments are sexually explicit and almost all related to some form of violence. This private/public linguistic performance of (misogynistic) violence slowly but surely erodes sensitivity and numbs

sensibilities; and as groups form and feed each other, this de-sensitizing takes on an immoral imperative that eventually performs itself on the bodies of girls and women.

While it is a depressingly morbid tale of reality for globalized India's 500 million plus women, the resistance to public gendered violence has also been public. Electronic and print media are the obvious resistance-scapes to the genderscapes of misogyny. What is even more remarkable are the inventive ways in which women have performed their resistance by inverting the script. Sampat Devi Pal founded an all-women vigilante group in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh (a state where there are plentiful reports of girls and women raped and then publicly humiliated either by being paraded naked in the streets or, in a macabre claim to inerasable power of masculinity, are hanged off of trees). Gulabi (Pink) Gang's moniker, comes from the pink saris that they wear; it's not an actual gang but an identifiable group of women, interconnected because of their belief in their cause of challenging the violent hegemonies of patriarchy. Their weapons are a sense of Self and a bamboo stick. Gulabi Gang has captured the imagination of many across the northern states of India and beyond.[4] Notable is that its membership is from Dalit and tribal women.[5] Sampat Pal believed in delivering alternative forms of justice whenever any form of injustice emerges. (Desai, 2014) Gulabi Gang members begin with dialog and hunger strikes, but when those fail, they do not mind using their sticks; the movement now has a network of over 400,000 women. (Desai, 2014) Faith in the legal and law enforcement system has evaporated. Government-sponsored crisis response centers and awareness programs exist but appear to be apathetic or ineffectual, or so is the perception of many activists. In November 2016, Breakthrough India, an NGO, organized an all-women motorbike ride through the streets of the nation's capital, New Delhi, to reclaim the streets. (Bardi, 2017) In a show of defiance, women bikers rode through the streets, making a point in a loud public way of owning these public spaces. They define themselves as "rebels with a cause." (Bardi, 2017) It was a calculated public display of rebellion: reclaiming streets where women face verbal and physical harassment; riding motorcycles so that they are not enclosed in a space of an automobile; dressed in gear that defies the 'proper' way an Indian woman is to dress; hyper-visibility that contravenes claims to public spaces as a male space. SlutWalk India (Besharmi Morcha) in metropolitan cities and the more conservative tier-two towns, declaims "because we've had enough." 'Enough' had happened centuries ago. However, the culture of hegemonic violent misogyny has roots and purchase for which there are more defenders than rebels.

A systemic, historically legitimized, culturally endorsed and socially upheld set of gendered inequities need an armageddon to uproot them. Law, legislations, law enforcement are only a portion of the solution; any of those have dynamic and slow effects, if any, on the Indian

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[4] Several accounts in electronic media on Gulabi Gang demonstrate that this particular form of discourse of resistance—vigilantism--has a reach that is resounding far outside Uttar Pradesh.
[5] Dalit is the lowest caste that was known erstwhile as Harijan, Mahatma Gandhi's name for those unfortunately marked as untouchables.

culture/s of misogyny. There are statute books filled with laws enacted in the recent decades; law enforcement is largely apathetic. Vast amounts of government money have been expended in organizing training and awareness centers; their effects are miniscule. The double standard of sexual morality continuously strengthened by a strong belief in male-preference and privilege, and propped by socio-religious inequitable gender power relationships, has led to a globalized India that is at war within where girls and women are the trope for ownership of India. The fruits of the 21ˢᵗ century are in historically male spaces; women are the intruders, the trespassers, even the competitors, as they upset the established norms and positionality. One powerful way to push back these trespassers is to reduce them to their sex. Post-colonial emasculated men perform their masculinity in public and private using sexual power as an expression of patriarchal violence and the only way to establish and maintain domination in an inequitable sexist hierarchy. Misogyny manifests in violent humiliation that is intentionally public; it has extreme leverage in a shame culture. The endemic nature of a culture that accepts sexual violence as normative is still alive, but the bastion of patriarchy is already feeling the collective strength of the push against it.

A powerful salvo pierced the shame of silences, publicly and with rage. When news of Jyoti Singh's death was announced, innumerable Indian households watched how this salvo was launched on their television sets in December 2012. Tens of thousands of young adults, college/university students and their professors, middle-aged women and men, mothers and fathers with their children, cascaded down Rajpath towards the seat of Government of India, demanding an end to the culture of sexual violence, and seeking justice. Each of them was Jyoti Singh. To control the crowds, police were called out and on a very cold winter's day they used fire-hoses to push back the crowds, drenching them in freezing water and then arresting them. How symbolic that the establishment should attempt to uphold the order of tradition when its youth and their allies were raging on its doorstep, seeking to break through (and down) the systemic cultural practices. From all metropolitan cities and tier-two towns, reports poured in of similar marches, filled with rage and sadness. There was no mistaking that the discourse of resistance against sexual violence had been made irrevocably public. It was a day, then two weeks, of grief, misery, sorrow for all those who had been victimized by India's heteronormativity and its attendant sexual violence. These demonstrations and marches eventually symbolized hope. It is hope based on the theoretical axiom that gender and power are not fixed in time and place. The hope remains that our youth can be socialized to be gender sensitive and seek equitable gender relations, that activism can work across generations/classes/castes/regions to raise awareness, that law and its enforcement will be just and active, that a culture that trivializes, normalizes, or silences the women and men who have faced sexual violence is undergoing change, imperceptible as it might be. Neither Bharat (India) nor its *sanskar* have remained fixed in time or place. To honor Jyoti Singh is to believe that violent misogyny and its protector patriarchy will be demobilized, slowly but certainly, by a generation that seeks to re-invent itself for the twenty-first century where discourses of

'tradition' are disrupted and boundaries transgressed with interventions of a scale that make gender-based violence a rarity, rather than the normal. The odds may be stacked against radical change in re-authoring genderscapes because of the social meaning that history, institutions, and socio-economic structures render to patriarchal power. However, the alternative of a sustained violently misogynistic rape culture that is weighing down the potential of India's future is not acceptable either.

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Okinawan Perspectives on the Formation of Japan's Neo-Patriotism

Author: Hiroshi Aoyagi
Title: Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies
Affiliation: School of Asia 21, Kokushikan University
Location: Machida City, Tokyo, Japan
E-mail: haoyagi@kokushikan.ac.jp

OKINAWAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMATION OF JAPAN'S NEO-PATRIOTISM

Abstract

This article will examine the emergent system of "Abenomic Jingoism" in reference to Okinawan perspectives– in order to expose its bureaucratic absurdity and harmfulness to humanity. It will uncover the cultural logic of AJ that tries to justify loyalty to the US-Japan Alliance – and by extension the pro-American system of military capitalism – by connecting it to the paradigm of Japanese nationalism that has once again gained a footing in Japan. While such a political configuration speaks to the corporate mindset of Japanese nationalists, or the collective sense of nationalism within Japan's privileged populace, its exclusive and outdated attachment to national security at the cost of cosmopolitan engagement with cultural diversity is being condemned by a large number of citizens who feel that Japan ought to overcome what may be more properly called an "Abenorisk" paradigm.

Introduction: Abenomic Jingoism versus Okinawa

The more one learns about Okinawa, Japan's distorted politics come into one's view. More Japanese mainlanders ought to realize this fact and raise their voice!

– Toyoko Yamazaki[6]

A new form of Jingoism that can be attributed to what Samir Amin calls the "return of fascism in contemporary capitalism" (Amin, 2014, p.1) is being permeated in Japan, and Uncle Sam is on its side this time! The latest steps taken by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and his Cabinet to safeguard Japan's corporate-military expansion in the global market are apparently building up a system of oppression which demonstrates a deeply disturbing pattern of escalating infringements on civil liberty, democracy, the Peace Constitution, and even basic human rights in the name of national interests. Yet, unlike the administrations of North Korea, the PRC, and Syria for that matter, this "emergent reactionary dictatorship" receives no apparent restraint from the US government since it is highly committed to the US-Japan Security Alliance (   ), and particularly the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan.[7]

My aim in this article is to examine this emergent system of "Abenomic Jingoism" (hereafter AJ) in reference to Okinawan perspectives– in order to expose its bureaucratic absurdity and harmfulness to humanity. More specifically, I will uncover the cultural logic of AJ that tries to justify loyalty to the US-Japan Alliance – and by extension the pro-American system of military capitalism – by connecting it to the paradigm of Japanese nationalism that has once again gained a footing in Japan. While such a political configuration effectively speaks to the corporate mindset of Japanese nationalists, or the collective sense of nationalism within Japan's privileged populace, its supreme, exclusive and perhaps outdated attachment to national security at the cost of cosmopolitan engagement with cultural diversity is being condemned by a greater number of citizens who feel that Japan ought to overcome what may be more properly called an "Abenorisk" paradigm and instead make a serious change towards inter-/national recuperation (e.g., Uekusa, 2013).

Motive of the Current Investigation

My reference to Okinawa is motivated by the fact that this Japanese colony with its distinct ethnic identification is becoming internationally recognized as unjustly oppressed by the Japanese state. The Abe administration continuously sets aside approximately 74% of Japan's total acreage for US military facilities, which adds up to approximately 18% of Okinawa's total

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[6]A final passage from *A Destined Person* (   ), a 2009 novel turned television drama.
[7] This treaty was signed in 1952 and amended in1960 in order to "maintain peace" in East Asia, and it allowed the United States to exert its power on Japanese domestic quarrels. The latter article was deleted in the amended version, and was replaced by articles that demarcated mutual defense obligations.

land area. This, along with the exploitation of Okinawan industry, economy and lifestyle by the Japanese market economy, has been recognized in Okinawa as "structural discrimination (   )" that affects the lives of Okinawan people. As native Okinawan scholar Yasukatsu Matsushima contends:

> The stimulation and development plan of the government was intended to narrow the economic gap between Japanese and Okinawans, but since Japanese enterprises claimed leadership rights in terms of conception and execution, the gap has widened all the more. The government's stimulation and development plan was also linked to the consolidation of American military bases in Okinawa. The Okinawans, who had been made dependent on the stimulation and development plan, were threatened with a decrease in aid money (the "stick" in the "stick and carrot" approach), if they expressed opposition to the military bases, or were led to expect increases in aid, (the "carrot") if they agreed to land reclamation or extension of the stimulation and development plan. In this way, the authorities destroyed the harmony of local communities and labor unions and undermined resistance to the government. The colonial tactic of "divide and rule" is alive and well in 21st century Okinawa! (2010, p.189,190)

Such a perspective is shared by the people of Okinawa as seen by their use of the catchy phrase "colander economy (   )," which signifies a subsidized economy that causes more damage than brings benefits to the local society. "Colander" is used here as a metaphor to demonstrate that any purported subsidies and commercial benefits brought to Okinawa by the Japanese leaks out of Okinawa and ends up profiting the Japanese themselves while reshaping Okinawan landscapes and lifestyles in the image of the Japanese.

Added to this are the Cabinet's attempts in July 2014 to interpretively amend Japan's Peace Constitution and exercise military power in the name of a "proactive contribution to world peace (   );" its efforts in December 2014 to enforce the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets (   ) – an act that prevents people from being politically informed; and the administration's undemocratic attempts in September 2015 to push security bills (   ) through the Diet. This series of events rekindled fury among a large number of concerned people in Okinawa, generating anew a public outcry that accelerated the "all Okinawa struggle (   )," resulting in mass-scale civil protest against AJ and a corresponding rise of public concern on the future wellbeing of Okinawa and its future positioning in Asia as well as the rest of the global community (Figure 1).

Figure 1. A scene from the general assembly of All-Okinawa Struggle, held
in Nago on September 17, 2015 (photo taken by the author).

Okinawa is currently playing a greater symbolic role than ever before in the growing series of nationwide civil movements to "rebuild Japan into a truly peaceful national community" – to borrow the words of Yoshikazu Tamashiro, leading activist, member of Okinawa's prefectural assembly and co-founder of the Committee for All-Okinawa Struggle (   ). With its 400 years of ethnic struggle against external influences and 130 or more years of annexation by the Japanese government, alongside the painful memories of those who underwent immense suffering during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, the majority of people in Okinawa had enough of "war in the world" (   ). The "will of Okinawa" to attain a peaceful world (   ) in which all people coexist in mutual respect is mightier than ever, and such a collective will – often signified by the principle of "bridging all nations (   )" – is gaining external understanding and sympathy as it attracts public attention outside of Okinawa.[8] In effect, the phony quality of "Japan the Beautiful" is highlighted, inviting more and more Japanese citizens to be collectively conscientious about their political standing, and become critical about AJ and the administrative status of their nation-state.

As an acquaintance of the Henoko area in the northern part of Okinawa's main island since 2005, I have been conducting fieldwork amidst the controversial relocation of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to the Henoko district of Nago City (   ). The following discussion is built on my participant observations and interviews regarding popular protests and mass movements in the field.

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[8]The idea of "bridging all nations" comes from part of an inscription that appears on a bronze bell that was cast in 1458 and hung at the main hall of Shuri Castle in the capital city of Naha. The entire inscription reads "The Kingdom of Ryūkyū is a splendid place in the South Seas, with intimate relations with China, Korea, and Japan, between which it is located, and whose people which express much admiration for these islands. Journeying to various countries by ship, the Kingdom forms a bridge between all the nations, filling its land with the precious goods and products of foreign lands; in addition, the hearts of its people emulate the virtuous civilization of Japan and China."

Revisiting Imagined Community

Theoretically speaking, the current investigation is intended to elaborate on the interconnectedness of nation, affect and aversion in post-Cold-War Asia in which we the citizens of global community are witnessing inclinations toward nationalism in various parts of Asia (as much as elsewhere). To better map this out, I wish to revisit Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of "imagined community" in order to evaluate the applied significance of the idea of nationalism to the political configuration of an imagined Japan or the so-called "Japan the Beautiful (   )" (Abe, 2013), and the current relationship between Okinawa and Japan. In proposing the idea of "imagined community," Anderson tried to illuminate nations and nationalisms as sociocultural products of a particular state of modernity, and a corresponding state of capitalism, in which people become preoccupied with political identification of a specific kind: the envisioning of affective bonds within apolitical territory in which these people are considered to operate as "nationals" – whether or not they actually recognize each other or directly engage in social exchanges with each other. Print media play a crucial role in this national configuration: i.e., facilitating and modulating the imagination of people towards the habitation of the same, discretely measured, homogeneous community called "the nation-state." As Anderson argues:

> [Nation] is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism (1983, pp. 6-7).

Agents of print capitalism – be they publishers of newspapers, magazines, novels, textbooks, or ads – aggravate national consciousness by bringing up geopolitical issues (fully or partially) in their publications in order to attain a greater number of readers and maximize their profits (Figure 2). People are encouraged to become "national readers" (so to speak) as they participate in the growing market of print capitalism, and in so doing acquire a common language, alias "national tongue," even though their vernaculars may vary locally. Thus, they become "nationally literate" as they engage in the act of ensuring a coherent, meaningful and homogenous national community (Anderson, 1983, p. 37, see also Higson 1998, p. 355). According to Anderson, all of this is a part of "becoming native" in our modern nation-state.

Figure 2. Examples of media aggravated nationalism: a prewar ship
company poster (left, from the author's collection), and a 'Proud
to be Japanese' poster from 2017 (right, from BBC News Asia).

This apparently pro-establishment projection of national imagination revolving around the cultural logic of print capitalism is subject to a critical revision. However suggestive it may be, Anderson's emphasis on nationalist literature prevents him from exposing the way conservative administrations co-opt the extant cultural logic in order to keep the system running, thereby not making any changes with respect to public demands. Moreover, Anderson does not address what happens when nationals do not take the establishment for granted. This latter point makes the current example of Okinawa's "struggle for nationhood" worthy of critical investigation.

What is currently happening in Japan's civil society that revolves around Okinawa provides us with insight into the idea that nation is not simply a politically-moderated phantom in which collective consciousness manifests itself, but rather it can be carved out of the struggles between the dominant and the dominated classes. In such a setting, national consciousness – as an amalgamation of various perspectives and experiences – is constantly formulated, deformed, and reformed through political and symbolic interactions between human agencies with differentiated social standings within one and the same community.

In all fairness to Anderson, his exposition of nationalism as a cultural logic rightly indicates the need for a common language in the modern nation-state to function as a shared means to publicly disseminate notions of national identity and affect. I would like us to recall Franz Fanon's definition of "oppressive language" that he formulated in the context of his work for Algerian independence (Fanon, 1961; see also Zahar, 1974): "oppressive language" refers to the dominant language of the oppressor (French in the case of Algeria and Japanese in the current case of Okinawa) which is coercively imposed on the colonized to replace their own language (Algerian

vernaculars in the one case and Okinawan "dialects" in the other).[9] Fanon argues that the colonized ought to fight back against this kind of linguistic subjugation which results in cultural and social epistemicide in order to reformulate their identities and work in the direction of liberating themselves. In the political economic language of Japanese imperialism, voices of the Okinawan people have long been inaudible – even though officially their subaltern subjectivities have been invisibly "invited" into the national imagination of Japan.

Today, after more than 140 years of Japanese colonial oppression, the people of Okinawa are no longer quiet, and those who have been resisting the idea of "invited Japanese agency" are managing to raise their voice more loudly than ever before against the oppressive language of AJ, which signifies Japan's continuous treatment of the Okinawan nation as its colony. These disseminated voices from Okinawa are exposing to the world how distortedly and coercively the Abe administration tries to preserve the imagined community of "Japan the Beautiful" for the sake of what dominant bureaucrats, politicians and privileged merchants in Japan today call "safety and security (   )" for the nation, but which in reality amounts to wanting to maintain the status quo and thereby their positions in the established pro-American system of the Japanese politico-economy.

Voices from Okinawa and the Collective Imagination of New Japan

Movements in Okinawa toward the public re-appropriation of Okinawan vernaculars and the corresponding collective self-empowerment of the people of Okinawa are growing in the face of the increasingly oppressive stance of AJ. In my fieldwork observations, I have discovered that some of these movements have aversion to outside influences (esp. Japanese influences) while others are more or less generous and inclusive toward outsiders. Centered in these movements is a small group of Okinawan ethnic-nationalist intellectuals who engage in organizational and lobbying activities that aim to attain independence from Japan and the US for the people of Okinawa, also known as Lewchewans (   ). These activists developed programs for Okinawans to revive their own languages and study their heritage: programs that are now widely known as "movements to speak in Islanders' vernaculars (   )" and are practiced by educational institutions and local media all around Okinawa. This movement was backed up by Okinawa Prefectural Government, which designated the 18th of September "the official day for Okinawan citizens to speak in vernaculars (   )" by earlier ordinance in 2006 and saw

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[9]This refers to the fact that Okinawan vernaculars have been treated as one of Japan's local dialects since the annexation of Lewchew Islands by the Japanese. In the1940s, linguistic prohibition was imposed on Okinawan residents by local administrators as a part of Japan's assimilation policy. One effective means to exercise such a prohibition was to force any students who spoke in their Okinawan vernacular to wear the so-called "dialect tag" [   ] around their neck as a means of punishment in school. Voluntarily or not, most residents submitted to this form of oppression to the extent that their offspring took Japanese language for granted, and thus could no longer fully comprehend or handle their native tongue (e.g., Tanaka, 1981, pp.118-121).

it as an opportunity to raise local consciousness (Figure 3).[10] These activists also publish culturally, socially and politically informed pamphlets and books on related subjects. They send delegates to the United Nations General Assembly in order to register Okinawa on the list of global body's decolonization, and participate in events that aim to build ties with other indigenous peoples of the world. And, in May 2013, they established The Association of Comprehensive Studies for Independence of the Lewchewans (ACSILs) with the vision of achieving the long-sought goal of Okinawa "becoming a sovereign island of peace and hope that exists in friendship with other countries, regions and nations of the world."[11]

Figure 3. A 2015 Okinawa prefectural poster advertising vernacular
movement.

Other more open and collaborative groups of Okinawan and Japanese activists try to generate supportive ties and networks that will eventually develop into a colossal wave of national liberation from AJ in Japan. Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy (SEALDs) was perhaps the most solid, well-organized example of these networks.[12] Its former body came into being as Students Against Secret Protection Law (SASPAL) in 2014, and one of their focal activities until its dissolution in August 2016 had been to initiate massive demonstrations against government attempts to relocate Futenma Air Base to Henoko in Okinawa. The Lewchew branch of SEALDs operated between August 2015 and August 2016, coordinating with other branches

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[10]In Okinawan vernacular, "9" for "September" is pronounced "ku," while "1" and "8" for the 18th day are pronounced "tu" and "ba" respectively. Thus "9-18"adds up as "ku-tu-ba" meaning "vernacular." Thus, September 18 was assigned as the "vernacular day." For more information, one may refer to the Okinawa Prefectural homepage (http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/bunka/documents/simakutuba.html).
[11]One may refer to ACSILs homepage (http://www.acsils.org/) for greater details of ACSILs. "Lewchew"–named after the Kingdom of Lewchew (   ) –is a cover term used by the organizing board of this institute to refer to all people with ethnic origin or lineage in the Okinawan archipelago. The quotation comes from a declaration which appears at the outset of ACSILs homepage.
[12]For greater details about this organization, one may refer to its homepage (http://www.sealds.com/).

throughout Japan a series of campaigns to fight against AJ. Such a campaign included the massive protest against security bills in front of the National Diet in August 2015 in which "voices from Okinawa (   )" or "Lewchewan outcries (   )" were put forth and recognized by Japanese sympathizers who participated in the mass-protest.[13]

My interview in August 2015 with Tomoki (male, 23 years old, pseudonym applied), one of the leading members of SEALDs Lewchew, revealed three major visions the group wished to disseminate to all of humanity: 1) "a world in which we the people can decide what is good for ourselves (   )," 2) "the transformation of the public sphere from a 'world full of war' to a 'world full of peace' (   )," and 3) "the establishment of a new society in which the principle of 'reverence for life' is well implemented (   )" (interview citations).

Fueling these actions are recognitions and supports from artists, intellectuals and prominent activists abroad. In January 2014, leading scholars, peace advocates and artists from North America, Europe, and Australia, including linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky, film directors Oliver Stone and Michael Moore, Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire, historian John Dower, former U.S. military officer and diplomat Ann Wright, and United Nations Special Rapporteur for Palestine Richard Falk, released a statement opposing the construction of the US Marine base at Henoko, and, by extension, supporting the people of Okinawa in their struggle for peace, dignity, human rights, and protection of the environment. In Japan, twenty-two scholars, including the Nobel Prize winning novelist Kenzaburo Ōe, Shunichi Teranishi, specially-appointed professor at Hitotsubashi University, Kenichi Miyamoto, emeritus professor at Osaka City University, and Osamu Nishitani, professor at Rikkyo University, released a statement on April 1, 2015 seeking an immediate discontinuation of the new base construction at Henoko. They encouraged other academics to sign the online petition, and aimed to submit collected signatures to the government as well as to send "the Alarm of Peace (   )" from Henoko to the rest of our world. Hayao Miyazaki, animator and one of the most outspoken proponents of anti-war policy in Japan, announced on May 7, 2015 that he will officially join the Henoko Fund (   ), which is a foundation sponsored by a team of Okinawan politicians, CEOs, NGOs, and citizens to prevent the relocation of the Futenma Air Base to Henoko. By the time of Miyazaki's participation, the foundation raised over 100 million yen ($834,064)– part of which was used to support Okinawan Governor Takeshi Onaga to address the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at its 30th session in Geneva, Switzerland (September 14 - October 2, 2015).[14]

Upon his visit to Okinawa on August 15, 2015, Johan Galtung, Norwegian sociologist and the founder of peace studies who introduced to the world the concept of "positive peace" as a way of proclaiming that peace does not only consist of the absence of overt violent conflict but must also incorporate dialogues and mutually collaborative relationships that range from the

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[13]For greater details about SEALDs Lewchew, one may refer to the organization's official website (http://tamutamu2011.kuronowish.com/sealdstyukyu.htm).
[14]For greater details on this matter, see Scott Wilson's article, 'Hayao Miyazaki joins Okinawan anti-military base fund', which appears in the May 10, 2015 issue of Japan Today (www.japantoday.com/category/national/view/hayao-miyazaki-joins-okinawan-anti-military-base-fund on line).

interpersonal level up to the interstate level (Galtung, 1964), criticized the Abe administration for plagiarizing his idea in developing the governmental stance to "proactively contribute to world peace." Galtung professed that Abe is trying to do exactly the opposite, using the idea of "positive peace" to justify Japan's greater participation in the maintenance of global security, and therefore the related implementation of military power as well as Japan's greater involvement in the military industrial complex. The statement, made during his newspaper interview in front of US Marine Corp Camp Schwab in Henoko in support of protestors, casted doubt on the credibility of AJ.

Figure 4. A scene from a mass protest that took place in Henoko on August 23, 2014 [left], and a flyer calling for this rally [right] (photo taken by the author).

In my group interview in August, 2014 with three female members (one Okinawan and two Japanese, all in their 60s) of a regular protest (Figure 4) taking place outside of the main gate of Camp Schwab, the need for Japanese citizens to reclaim positive peace was stressed. As one of these members Kayo (63 years old Japanese, pseudonym applied) said:

Japan's political misbehavior in Asia and elsewhere is becoming truly intolerable from the standpoint of democracy, and even as more Japanese people are starting to realize this, and are raising their voice by coming to Okinawa like myself, it does not seem to be enough. We should cherish our Peace Constitution, act out its principles positively, and recreate our nation-state before it is too late. I am here with a determination of not giving up such an idea – no matter what!

Toshiko (Okinawan local resident, exact age unrevealed, pseudonym applied) nodded as Kayo was speaking, and added her perspective to the above statement:

As an Okinawan I appreciate how much support for Okinawa is developing in and outside of Japan, but all of this support is not enough to move the Japanese government towards listening

to the people's voice, unfortunately. Unless members of the administration admit what they are doing, and side with the people, I think that Japan will never become a truly peaceful nation – no matter how eloquently the idea of "Japan the Beautiful" is politically accentuated.…We all urgently feel that Japan ought to change into a truly democratic- and constitutional nation!

Thus, the need for reimagining Japan on a democratic basis was emphasized.

Summary

I have tried to uncover how Okinawa stands as an oppositional emblem of internal diversity that the state cannot ignore should it wish to uphold its legitimacy as a democratic and constitutional nation. Abe's attempts to make Japan into a virtuous country by replacing the nation's democratic stance with neoconservative leadership, and amending its Peace Constitution in the direction of pro-security militarism in the name of "positive peace" is being heavily criticized by a greater number of Japanese citizens and their overseas sympathizers than ever before. Japan's national image is an ideological veil covering up the administration's attempts to militarize the country at the cost of people's lives – a fact that is becoming all-too-apparent to Okinawans who demand the state to embody a truly peaceful community.

I hope to have shown how Okinawa in such a context indicates how a "post-imagined community" may evolve as a critical alternative to the political fabrication of imagined community by the dominant group of national administrators. The media, ranging anywhere from newspapers, televisions programs, books, and fliers to blogs and social networks (dominant and alternative alike) certainly play an important role in the public configuration of such a community, but the community (and its collective imagination thereof) can be more properly understood as being carved out through concrete actions and collaborative interactions among willed citizens who wish to engage in networking and solidarity building to effectively create social change. Only in such a setting will the goal of a peaceful nation be realized.

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PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Three Short Position Pieces by a Former Combat Marine Who Both Prosecuted and Protested the Vietnam War

Author: Bob Watson
Title: Former Combat Marine, Disabled Vietnam Veteran, and Environmental and Peace Activist
Affiliation: www.civandinc.net
Location: Decorah, IA, United States of America
E-mail: bobandlinda@civandinc.net

Keywords: Peace, War, Veterans, Vietnam

THREE SHORT POSITION PIECES BY A FORMER COMBAT MARINE WHO BOTH PROSECUTED AND PROTESTED THE VIETNAM WAR

Should We Be Thanking Veterans for Their Service?

After a recent program I put together for the Daughter's of the American Revolution, I was told that the positions I hold on war are my opinion, rather than factual history and well thought out positions. So, people are saying that they can thank veterans for their role in Vietnam because they were drafted and didn't have a choice, or like me, if they volunteered, then you signed up for anything. Of course, I don't agree that we should thank veterans for their part in an illegal and immoral war which history has judged the Vietnam War to be.

For the last 60 years the United States has followed a Military/Interventionist foreign policy. Because the military has been an instrument in that foreign policy, veterans have gained an experiential knowledge unique to U.S. citizens. That knowledge takes two different forms and informs us in two different areas. One form is emotive and the message is about war itself. The other form is intellectual and the message is a factual/historical account of the way the U.S. has created its own wars.

We as a society have been indifferent, unable, or loathe to hear those messages. Part of the

problem in hearing the emotive message about modern offensive combat and what it does to people is that those veterans who have gained that knowledge are too young, usually 19 or 20, to be sophisticated enough to articulate that story. Another part of the problem is society's inability to hear what the veterans are saying. We simply have no cultural context, no categories in which the account of modern combat can fit. We, as a society, are not receptive to this life changing information, and even more, may not want to hear it.

What is the evidence that our society refuses to hear this message from combat veterans? A full 100,000 vets, more than actually died fighting in Vietnam, have committed suicide since their return, though they are not officially counted as casualties of that war (Valentine, 2013). We did not, or could not, listen to them. Internalizing these rejections, and the emotive message itself, has resulted in alcohol and drug abuse, violence and homelessness for veterans. We incarcerated so many veterans that Vietnam veterans made up the largest minority population in U.S. prisons in the '70's and '80's ("Defying Stereotypes," 2015). Factor in the half million Vietnam vets still suffering from untreated combat related PTSD, and our responding silence is deafening. This rejection is not unique to Vietnam veterans. It also applies to veterans from our other recent wars in Panama, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Implementing foreign policy has given the combat veteran personal experience in how our country proceeds overseas. The intellectual message the veteran has for us is a fact-based historical account of our actions leading up to and during our last five major military conflicts. In brief, military interventionist foreign policy is often carried out covertly by the CIA/NSA and has poisoned the attitude of much of the world against the U.S. Employing dirty tricks, bribery, intimidation, assassination, and invasion by CIA armies or CIA-controlled armies, this foreign policy has created the conditions which have resulted in our military's last five major conflicts.

Political leaders are once again asking why the CIA didn't know some important body of intelligence like the fall of the Soviet Union, 9/11, or the absence of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. To combat veterans who have been in or worked with CIA armies and assassins, the answer is simple. The CIA was originally, and still is today, a covert military organization. Any intelligence is simply a by-product of those endeavors.

The real questions to be asked of the CIA should be why it has its own armies, assassins, and weapons systems procurement programs? Why was the first soldier killed in Afghanistan in a CIA army (Gibbons-Neff, 2016)? Why, when the Army's weapons are not lethal enough, are they able to bring in much more lethal versions that belong to the CIA? Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Noriega's Panama and Afghanistan are all former CIA covert operations and former U.S. allies. Other countries which have suffered from our military/interventionist foreign policy include, but are not limited to: Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Cuba, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

I would like to expand on this notion with a little history of American combat since 1954.

In the early '40s, after the capitulation of the French to the Japanese in what was then called French Indochina, the Office of Strategic Services, the CIA's original name, chose Ho Chi

Minh's Nationalist Vietminh Party to carry on the fight against the Japanese. The OSS funded, armed and supplied intelligence to the Vietnamese who undertook this war with the understanding that the U.S. would recognize their independence and sovereignty if a successful end was achieved. It was, and the OSS Station Chief, a U.S. Army Major, is shown with Ho during Vietnam's Independence ceremonies (Berube, 2009).

Because DeGaulle's condition for joining NATO was the U.S.'s help in retaking French Indochina, we threw over the Vietnamese and supplied, armed and transported French forces in their campaign to regain their old possessions. Because we were involved throughout this new war supplying arms and material, when the French were finally defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, we were easily able to pick up the struggle, which we did (2009).

After Dien Bien Phu we can, with historical certainty, show the old paradigm of using the military for our country's defense is wholly superseded by the new paradigm of using the military as an instrument to bring about this country's government's political and business ambitions throughout the world.

All American soldiers killed in combat since 1954 have died unnecessarily and unjustly. All those wounded, either physically or psychologically, have been cheated out of great portions of their lives because of the misguided notion of U.S. politicians that all decisions made by other cultures throughout the world, as to how they choose to set up their societies, are subject to U.S. approval. If our government doesn't approve, through the application of force by the CIA or our military, we will attempt to change it. Obviously for us, and for the rest of the world, this has been a catastrophic policy and needs to end.

Panama, along with most of Central America, has been controlled by the U.S. military and the CIA since we first dug the canal. Noriega's mistake was to think that he truly was the leader of Panama, and that he could cash in on some of the lucrative drug trade that was passing through Central America. A former Marine I know says that in his ten-year career in the Marines he went to Panama and put Noriega in power, and then went back down and took him out again.

To understand Afghanistan, we must go back to the early and middle '70s when Henry Kissinger was trying to figure out a way to give Russia their own Vietnam. Contrary to most people's understanding of when we became involved in Afghanistan, (most believe we went in after the Russians invaded), Henry bet that if we armed the anti-modernity warlords in the mountains, they would attack the modern secularists in the cities and the Russians would invade to protect the cities. That is exactly what happened and history has marched on, with U.S. support of the mujahadine fighters and even the Taliban, all the way to 9-11 (Grandin, 2015). We reap what we sow.

Iraq became our ally after the Iranian hostage crisis, although the CIA first hired Saddam as an assassin in 1958 and orchestrated the coup which brought the Baath Party to power in 1972. We funded, armed, sold precursors to WMD, and supplied Iraq with intelligence all through the '80s in their war against the Iranians (Grandin, 2015). It was only when Iraq had views of an expanded empire, and received mixed messages from the State Department about that endeavor,

that they made the mistake of trying to annex Kuwait and we once again had to reign in a monster of our own making. Iraq II follows and is still ongoing.

For obvious reasons, both for political leaders, and for our citizens' sense of who they are in the world, this message from veterans, that we have been fighting our own creations, is very uncomfortable. We can't just protest against each individual war; we must change the underlying structural behavior of our nation which creates war in the first place. And, as long as we have to constantly support the troops and honor veterans for their service, we never get a chance to actually talk about the wars they are, or were, involved in. That conversation needs to happen.

One behavior we should discuss is the history of our country's use of 'just' and 'moral' language when talking about war.

War is death and destruction, mayhem and terror. There is nothing that happens within a war that can have anything to do with 'just' or 'moral' language.

There are many different kinds of war. There are wars of aggression, conquest and revenge. There are wars for material goods, markets, raw materials, energy sources, food, and water. There are genocidal wars, religious wars, racial wars, wars of honor, national interest and national security. There may even be wars that are necessary. A war to defend the land you live on from an invasion might be one, but there can never be a 'just war' or a theory using 'just' or 'moral' language to say it's okay to fight a war, or to talk about actions within a war. Fighting a defensive war has nothing to do with 'just' or 'moral', but fighting a defensive war might sometimes be a 'necessary' action to save your life and those you love. I contend that although war is sometimes 'necessary', it is always outside of what we normally consider human moral action.

There is nothing 'just', either, about war for those people, typically males between the ages of 17 and 35, who must actually fight it. Why they individually of their society must fight a war, or why their generation must fight a war, can never be justified in relation to those who don't have to fight. Even in today's so-called volunteer armies, the volunteers are mostly from the lower socio-economic classes who see the military as an occupation to better themselves and don't typically enlist to be killed. Those fighting will always die unjustly. A war that is necessary to defend one's land doesn't need any jingoism or convincing to get people to fight. Most people will fight to defend their kin and what is theirs. The adoption of Universal Service for all citizens of this country would lay the groundwork for that to happen if the need ever arises. I will have more to say on Universal Service later.

The logical argument against a 'just' or 'moral' aspect to war is this: if we allow rules or conventions for war, we ritualize that behavior. By ritualizing or justifying with rules when a war is okay, or when certain actions in a war are okay, we create an institution of war within society. Because institutions seem to have a life of their own, we would never be able to rid ourselves of war.

By considering war always outside morality, or as amoral, I think we can allow war to be discussed in its reality, with positive steps towards its decline.

By having no conventions (war in reality), all people of a society will be responsible for its prosecution or consequences. This would result in a quantum leap in individual people's concerns and stakes in a war involving their society. In essence, there would be no protections for any individuals. All would risk all.

If actions within all wars, including defensive wars, were considered immoral or amoral, we would create no positive role models, no heroes, to be aspired to. This would, I think, hasten the demise of war. Those people who might have to engage in a defensive war would not be considered immoral, but rather would be amoral/necessary actors.

I still have war but I don't have arguments about who's right. Everyone is always wrong. I believe that is a positive step towards war's demise.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Tax Breaks for Veterans? What Veterans Really Need.

U.S. veterans since 1954, when America took over the war in Vietnam after the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, may be tragic figures but we are not heroes needing tax breaks. It is not heroic to be the instrument of a government which illegally and immorally invades and occupies other countries, decimates its population and its culture, destroys its infrastructure, and leaves genetic destruction in its wake through defoliants and depleted uranium. That is not heroic, but it is tragic for all concerned.

Since 1954, the US has attacked or invaded countries or groups who originally were our allies, who we created or maintained, or who we aided and abetted in their wars against others. Our military excursions have exclusively been choices on our part. The freedom, safety, and sovereignty of this country have never been in question. And if you are going to tell me that 15 Saudi's, 1 Egyptian, 1 Lebanese, and 2 people from the United Arab Emirates flying planes into US buildings was an act of war by Afghanistan and Iraq, then you need some serious remedial education.

Homeless veterans, nearly 40,000 every day, (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, n.d.) do not need tax breaks. Veterans in prisons and jails (Vietnam veterans made up the largest minority federal prison population in the 1970's and 80's – thanks for the help) do not need tax breaks. Veterans with drug, alcohol, and behavioral problems from combat do not need tax breaks. Their broken families and children do not need tax breaks. We need homes. We need help with our lifelong physical and mental health issues from days, months, and years of hunting and being hunted by other human beings. We need the VA hospitals to be abolished and we need to be given medical credit cards so that we can be cared for at home by people we know and trust, and where we can have the support of our families and friends (get a letter lately from your hospital saying you need to come in and be checked for HIV/AIDS because they were not sterilizing their equipment correctly, as hundreds of VA using veterans like me have?). We need education and job skills (killing people and blowing up buildings are not good on a resume). We have a host of needs, many of which will never be resolved for us, we know, because they can't be – we will

always have to live with them, and "just suck it up" (grandpa never talked about the war) helps as little as "just say no."

Veterans certainly do not need mindless politicians falling all over themselves trying to one up each other being the best little fascist they can be by bestowing gifts on veterans. Sometimes I think I am in 1920's Italy where Mussolini and the Pope fashioned a militaristic fascist state – how'd that work out? Does your minister pray for God to be on our side and to protect our invaders? And veterans really don't need holier-than-thou people with their trite "thanks for your service" smugly looking down their noses while lecturing others about how invading soldiers are somehow keeping us safe and free.

What we veterans really need is for you to quit creating us.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Apology

It has been two generations since the loss of the military draft. Two generations since the loss of two of the last vestiges of shared American experience that the draft included which made America what it is/was. Those lost vestiges are the loss of the melting pot, and the loss of working for your country.

The melting pot and the draft forced us to live and work with others who were unfamiliar to us. We overcame initial misgivings and got things done. The unknown "other" turned into the known and familiar.

Working for your country gives a sense of ownership of the country and that sense of ownership promotes a responsibility towards that which is owned. The country, and the government that runs the country, are mine. I own and am responsible for my country and want my country and government to run correctly.

Compare that to the body politic we find today, two generations after the loss of the draft. Segregated communities, and social media platforms, that never have to talk to each other, let alone live or work with each other. The government and others as "other" that should leave me alone, and even more, stay out of my community and even my country. The country is "mine" but I don't want to be responsible for working for it, paying for it, working for society's upkeep, or sharing it with anyone who I do not conceive of as like me.

I have an Advanced Degree in Applied Foreign Policy from the School of Marines, University of South Vietnam, 1969 (school of very hard knocks). I double majored in Death and Destruction, and Real Time Moral and Ethical Decision Making. I graduated with Honors in Lifelong Studies of Living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and P-Falciparum Malaria, the cerebral and most dangerous form of malaria.

On my first day in Vietnam I was told I was going to An Hoa which was considered "rocket city south" by Marines. My second day in Vietnam I took a chopper to An Hoa and landed as a

mortar attack hit the landing zone. My year in the rice paddies and mountains of Vietnam went downhill from there. A year later the chopper that was taking me to Danang to get on a flight to leave Vietnam crashed (luckily, into a landing zone not too far south of Danang). We survived. The chopper didn't.

I mention this short history of my work for my country, and my continued work for my country as a disabled Vietnam veteran, to cite my bona fides as someone who owns my country. As such, I offer my apology to the rest of the world for the unseemly spectacle this current president and administration has presented. This is not who the majority of us are, or how we see the world.

Forgive us. Give us time. This is the death throe of a very insecure and inexperienced "old white guys" demographic that, hopefully, will soon die out. The young multicultural, multiracial American society understands how to be civilized and inclusive.

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PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

I'd Rather Teach Peace: An Autoethnographic Account of the Nonviolent Communication and Peace Course

Author: E. James Baesler
Title: Professor, Communication and Theater Arts
Affiliation: Old Dominion University
Location: Norfolk, VA, United States of America
E-mail: jbaesler@odu.edu

I'D RATHER TEACH PEACE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION AND PEACE COURSE

Abstract

This autoethnography narrates the story of how I taught the *Nonviolent Communication and Peace* course to undergraduate students at an urban university in the midst of a densely populated military region in the U.S. I describe what it feels like to be in the peace class from the student and professor's points of view. I invite readers to consider creative options for teaching and learning about peace, including: insight meditation, cultivating peace attitudes/behavior from readings about inspirational peace people, developing nonviolent communication skills, and connecting students with their local world through a personal and creative peace project. Finally, I include reflection questions for those that want to delve deeper into peace. The *Nonviolent Communication and Peace* course syllabus is available from the author upon request.

I'd Rather Teach Peace

We are surrounded by military forces! Drive 12 minutes north of the campus where I teach and enter the world's largest naval station: *Naval Station Norfolk*. Head north 36 minutes across the James River and you hear the jets of *Langley Air Force Base*. Sixteen minutes west of campus is the *U.S. Joint Forces Command*, and 36 minutes east, near the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, is *Naval Air Station Oceana*. Military culture permeates the region, and the parlance of deployment, tour of duty, ships, subs, fighter jets, and droids is pervasive for students that are serving, and/or who have family/friends serving, in the military. Most students agree that the

growing global crises, such as terrorism, racism, colonialism, economic/religious wars, and environmental degradation, threaten life on the planet. Students also agree that military forces are needed to manage/resolve these issues through violence when necessary. Peace is considered a noble ideal, not a realistic option.

As a professor working in a region surrounded by military forces for over twenty years, I felt a growing need to offer students a realistic alternative to the many forms of violence in society such as personal, group, organizational, and military violence. Reading Coleman McCarthy's (2002) book *I'd Rather Teach Peace* challenged me to make the world a better place by teaching peace. I responded by developing and teaching the *Nonviolent Communication and Peace* class to a small group of undergraduates for the first time in 2010, teaching the course every year since that time. My intention in this essay is to invite readers to consider creative options for teaching/learning about peace by: *autoethnographically narrating* (Wall, 2006) a sense of what it means to be in the peace class from student and professor viewpoints, providing inspiration/advice for peace teachers, and posing questions for deeper reflection.

The Nonviolent Communication and Peace Class

Insight Meditation

On the first day of the semester, I [professor] arrive to class just in time to write the words *Meditation: Peace* on the white board while I hear students taking their seats behind me. I feel a sense of trepidation, asking myself: who am I to teach meditation? I convince myself to carry on because I know that classroom meditation can: reduce stress and turn on learning centers like attention and insight (Waters, Barsky, Ridd, & Allen, 2015), but I still feel a sense of anxiety about how students will respond.

I [student] rushed up the steps, around the corner, and into room 3028. As I sat down in an empty desk in the back of class, I noticed a bearded professor writing on the whiteboard: *Meditation: Peace*. He turned and said, "Peace…I'm Dr. B…I invite you to turn off your digital devices and turn on to your inner world by meditating with me on the word peace." He gave us some instructions on how to meditate, and after a few minutes I heard, "It's time to bring your meditation to a close…take a deep breath…open your eyes…I invite you to share something from your meditation." After meditating I felt relaxed, and in our class discussion that followed, I discovered that peace is more than a relaxed feeling. Peace is also a positive force for doing good.

In the peace class, we meditate at the beginning of every class to provide students with a direct first-person experience about a peace topic. Meditation, and the discussion that follows, assists us in transitioning from our often busy out-of-class lives to our in-class focus on slowing down and learning about peace. After a few class meditations, most students look forward to our meditation time. Informally, some students report that it is the most valuable skill they learned in the class. Further rationale, instruction, and benefits of classroom meditation are discussed in (Baesler, 2015). Meditation can become a path that supports inner and world peace (Tan, 2012).

For reflection: How does the way you begin your class facilitate a relaxed environment conducive to learning? Do you have a personal meditation practice; if so, how might you adapt some part of it for the classroom?

Cultivating Peaceful Attitudes/Behavior from Readings about Inspirational Peace People

I [professor] post an electronic-copy of McCarthy's (2014) peace readings for a *Class of Nonviolence* that he compiled while teaching peace to over 7,000 students in high schools, universities, and prisons since the 1980's. These short readings, adapted from peace people like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Gene Sharp, and Joan Baez, serve as our core class readings.

To connect students with the peace people and ideas from the class readings, they create a *peace card* (a three by five-inch index card) for each reading. On one side of the card, students write a quote to meditate on, and record how to apply the quote to their everyday life. On the reverse side of the card, students pose a question for class discussion, and identify a related internet resource. Students meet in *peace groups* to share something from their peace card in our communal search for truth (Palmer, 1998). Then, we listen to each group share one of their learnings with the class. In the next section, a student describes their experience of preparing and sharing a peace card from one of the course readings.

To prepare for class today, I [student] chose a quote from the Dorothy Day reading: "What we would like to do is change the world to make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves…" I meditated and wondered, "What could I do for people around campus that lack these basic needs?" I went on-line and found the *Norfolk Catholic Worker* three blocks from campus. After sharing this information with my group, one person said that they volunteer on the *Catholic Worker* soup line on Thursday mornings. Our group decided to invite classmates to join us Saturday morning to check out the *Catholic Worker*. Maybe we can do some good for others like Dorothy Day did.

Peace people come alive through meditating on their words and applying their ideas to everyday life. The meaning of *peace* deepens through questioning and connecting peace ideas to other resources. Students experience a sense of satisfaction and comradery when contributing and discovering insights about peace within small groups. We are laying a foundation, building the structural support, for a community of peace (Chappell, 2017).

For reflection: What resources do you use to engage students in learning about peace? What are the core principles of peace and nonviolence that every student should know?

Developing Nonviolent Communication Skills

I [professor] introduce students to Rosenberg's (2005) method of nonviolent communication as a process of making life more wonderful by connecting with others at the heart level to facilitate natural giving. I use readings, video, and role-play to teach students the nonviolent communication skills of: observation, feelings, needs, requests, and empathy. There is some empirical support for the effectiveness of teaching nonviolent communication in the classroom

(Baesler & Lauricella, 2013). While nonviolent communication is challenging to learn because of our culturally conditioning that normalizes verbal violence, communicating nonviolently is a viable path to peace that meets basic human needs (Max-Neef, 1991).

I create two images for meditation and role-play today based on Rosenberg's (2005) animal imagery: a long-necked giraffe that appears to be dancing (the giraffe's large heart is associated with *heart*-felt nonviolent communication), and a gray and black scruffy jackal (the jackal's *scavenger* image is associated with violent communication). Listen as a student describes how I introduce and use these two characters to teach nonviolent communication in class.

Today we meditated on giraffes and jackals. I [student] see the animals on the African savannah, but I don't see a connection to peace. While discussing the images in class, I learned that jackals judge and giraffes observe. After Dr. B. provided some examples of *giraffe observations* and *jackal judgments*, he asked us to create our own observation from a recent conflict. "Who wants to test their observation?" I volunteered: "My roommate plays irritating music." Dr. B. held up an image of a jackal and gave a howl. He said, "The phrase 'irritating music' is a judgment." After some discussion, we identified the *loudness of the music while I'm studying* as an observation, and Dr. B. lifted the image of a dancing giraffe in approval. I now see how easy it is to talk like the violent judging jackal, and how challenging it is talk like the nonviolent giraffe.

For reflection: How often do you inadvertently use jackal talk (e.g., cajole, persuade, coerce) to reach your goals? How can you explore nonviolent communication options to everyday conflicts?

Connecting Students with the Local World through a Personal and Creative Peace Project

The peace project is a chance for students to exercise their creativity. Students discover a peace topic by meditating on peace AND… music, art, dance, economics, education, history, politics, relationships, organizations, religion, spirituality...After choosing a topic, students explore a *bibliography of peace resources*. These resources are intended to arouse curiosity and launch students on a path of discovery. Students write a proposal for their peace project that includes: personal motivation, method, flow chart of activities, and an evaluation rubric. Peace projects and presentations utilize a variety of methods/forms *from traditional* literature reviews, surveys, and case studies, *to creative* scripts, videos, music, comic strips, and poems.

For reflection: Where does your best motivation for undertaking projects come from? What other ways can we facilitate students exploring connections between peace and their everyday life?

Summary

Our peace class of twenty-some students is surrounded by military forces that number in the thousands. In the peace class, *we cultivate an intentional, creative, and discerning approach to engaging the forces of violence*, whether they are military, police, employers, co-workers, teachers, classmates, friends, or family members, by learning to:

(a) Create an epicenter of inner peace through meditation,

(b) Cultivate peaceful values and behaviors through the inspiring lives of peace people in our course readings,

(c) Connect with others at the heart level and meet human needs through nonviolent communication, and

(d) Engage the local world through a personal and creative peace project.

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Woodpecker Dystopia

Author: S. Virginia Gonsalves-Domond
Title: Professor of Psychology
Affiliation: Ramapo College of New Jersey
Location: Mahwah, NJ, United States of America
E-mail: domondg@ptd.net

WOODPECKER DYSTOPIA

Every morn at breakfast, I discern the gnawing peckings of a woodpecker,

Having annihilated the four cardinal corners of my home,

East, west, north, and south by hallowing holes

This dogged, long-beaked bird of collateral destruction

Drills down on pale-painted shingles.

Invaded by a gnarly bird who pilfers my psychic peacefulness,

I resist the homicidal purge.

I yield to the pacifist urge to save it from bird Hades through sling-shooting or poison seeds.

Fear of Daughters Fear of Sons

Author: Emma Cassabaum
Title: Graduate Student in English
Affiliation: George Washington University
Location: Washington, DC United States
E-mail: ecassabaum@gmail.com

FEAR OF DAUGHTERS FEAR OF SONS

i am not scared
of spiders of the dark of clowns of death
okay maybealittlebit on that last
but I have taken a hit and given one
im just not afraid of ghosts so when you ask
whoyagonnacall
i answer me
because I can take care of myself i am not afraid

but lately theres been this fear thats made its way
into my bed and into my clothing
so that i have to carry it around
with me wherever i go and only i
can feel it rattling around in my pockets like loose change
but with sharp edges that arent made dull by the process of time
and id like to say its stupid like fear of peanut butter
sticking to the roof of your mouth
but its not it's a big one and its hard to say

fear of daughters fear of sons

the paralyzing fear of bearing more
into this place with a fixable error and flawed design

because i dont think there will ever be an end to wars over oil and land
but there ought to be an end to this problem here
and for that i have a

fear of daughters fear of sons fear of daughters

to tell them that they will be less in the hands of others
paid as a twothirdsperson
and if there were three of them to say that one would be hurt
according to the numbers that keep me up at night
and worry my hands to wringing
the other day i thought id have to tell her or him or her
when time was slow and my heart in my throat
but only one line thankyougodifyourethere
because this fear was first thought this terrible

fear of daughters fear of sons

i dont wonder that my mother wished
the three of us boys anymore because that option does seem easier
when you yourself were the one of the three
but i fear that too those what ifs
what if they cause that one in three and
what if they can not recognize in themselves
the fear they give to the other half of the world and
what if they dontstopdontlistendontletthemselves feel because
this great error prohibits such
dont cry now you ought to stand up and take up more space when you sit
that's what the misprint says
be like the forefathers bearing arms bearing down owning land and owning women
dont you know how its tradition
america was built on this on women on their backs
and that gives it to me this

fear of daughters fear of sons

i have known nothing but gentle touch
no fathers or uncles or strangers ever laid hands on me
but the clerical error of the universe now writ as law has cut pieces
from those i love my kinmymothermydearones
and that is too close for even mild discomfort which we are subject to
nearly all of the time because imsorry is how we start most questions
and my blood boils in the thought of that monumental error that may someday
touch any children i may bring

fear of daughters fear of sons

how could I tell them there has been such a flaw permitted
that less than a century members of my sex have been able to stand and deliver
the vote the verdict the c level position the truth
that we in this nation that serves up pride and liberty with every meal
cannot yet say
that it has achieved any semblance of equality among half its constituents
should we not be the example and yes others have it worse but if
the flesh of my flesh were fearful themselves in their own land how then
can they ever know how to fight it across our borders where there is the same error
only multiplied to the point of openly drawn blood
how can we ever call ourselves leaders of the free world when
i certainly dont feel that way and know full well i am not alone in my

fear of daughters fear of sons

whatever is is not right
but not many take the time to address it and this apathy frightens me away from
the thought of ever letting my stomach swell even when i have only
the softest hand to hold and the circumstances that otherwise are more than ideal
but i cannot shake my ideals that led me to this fear
so i will continue to speak and fight and worry over the indirect doctrine of
my country my religion my world that
says i am less and i am other and i am subject even if not directly
i will share with others this fear that has grown in my for now empty space
i will carry my fear to term
so that they know this great error is present and that it causes

fear of daughters fear of sons

Grave Weather

Author: Emma Cassabaum
Title: Graduate Student in English
Affiliation: George Washington University
Location: Washington, DC, United States
E-mail: ecassabaum@gmail.com

GRAVE WEATHER*

Pick up a small stone and leave it where the great ones lie.
It's where we start to pay our respects, to pay our dues,
 before we can understand, before we can claim any of
this history in our own minds. We stand under cloudless sky
that beats down silently on our pale shoulders the way pale
shoulders silently beat down this black man's. It seems more
appropriate, more ideal to visit graves in the rain but today
we don't get that privilege, today we get to stand here sweating,
shaking, wondering if we can take the place of men such as this,
wondering if someday people will stand around our bones
and feel beads of sweat roll down their backs until they
can't stand there any longer. Will we ever be a part enough
of any history to merit small stones on our resting places?
Will my silent self ever feel the weight of this eager guilt,
honest fear, profound respect? Will my place be the one among
the rest where worn winding feet lead to, set up or fenced in
or taller than the others? I am young, I may yet earn a chance
to have my stone be marked with a moving phrase such as
 the man who's reads "I have run my course" next to his wife that
continued to run it long after he was buried by his parents.
Perhaps those who come after me will not visit my grave
but some other place entirely, a cold granite memorial
bearing my name among others who never planned to die,
a grave to visit in the rain. These places demand our respect,
but here we do not sweat and shake, here there is only cold,

damp grief for those who were lost, whose deaths could have been
prevented had justice arrived but a little sooner. These babes
 buried in tomato boxes will never grow, their lips and cheeks
and stomachs never permitted to swell like the flesh of that red fruit.
These are not martyrs, these are the ones whom we must visit
in the rain, the ones for whom small stones mean nothing,
the ones for whom we must weep.

* This poem was written on a 2015 trip to South Africa as a part of a course entitled 'Stories of South Africa'. In traveling through the country over the course of four weeks, we visited many burial sites, including that of the apartheid resistance leader and boundless scholar Steve Biko. Our guide explained the custom of placing a small stone on his burial site, a recognition of Biko's greatness. Doing this on a hot, unforgiving day caught me off guard and truly moved me after studying Biko and other anti-apartheid heroes, as well as other horrors of that time. I found myself juxtaposing this reverence for Biko's resting place and the graves of others victim to apartheid violence, particularly those of children and babies who died of starvation and were buried two or three to a grave in tomato crates. The questions that these gravesite visits left me with continue to roll around in my mind, asking me what it means to physically remember those who died yearning for peace in the face of injustice, racism, and colonialism.

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january (all poems are love poems)

Author: ZB Hurst
Title: Student
Affiliation: School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Location: Chicago, IL, United States
E-mail: zhurst1@artic.edu

JANUARY (ALL POEMS ARE LOVE POEMS)

here i am, falling in love with falling in love
here i am, in love and ashamed of it
here i am, hearing love

we were both born perched
atop bones and fire and a
hellmouth that licked our fat
feet but i don't feel so scorched
with his thumb tracing my nape
i'm never this loose never this still

we send each other bits of the news all day
when i'm on the train
when he's teaching
when my back is bare
        and i want to read him poetry instead of headlines

*
he asks if he can hold me before he moves because he's a good man and
he makes me laugh
he makes me think before i speak
he makes me feel 14 and green, soaked in relentless ardor

i am in lust and it spurts sour against my backteeth
i am in lust when we move to the floor of his studio because the bed is so loud the cat is scared
i am in lust with his teeth in my neck and my thighs - my thighs pull him in close
i am in lust fingering purple marks on my chest and devouring cold chinese, feet sticky
on his kitchen floor but something tender swells behind my eyelids
when he asks me if he'd make a good father
when he asks me to explain something again
when he tells me he wishes he could cry more
        when he makes me a promise, his voice taut and dark like a plum

~~every poem is about love~~

all poems are love poems

wrote a 2 year life plan last night and panicked my way into wakefulness
i have not taught my heart how to yield
but i was a little boy full of love and i'll be damned before i deny that again
what does it mean - to fall in love during the early days of a revolution?
how does it taste - the smooth skin behind his right ear, the freckles on his lips
                                                the insides of his thighs?
when his mouth moves against yours you think of violets: shy and soft, damp with dew
will you fight over pamphlet corrections and safehouse passwords and coded everything?
will you eat oatmeal with dates for days one february?
will you quit your jobs and drive west, taking that old jeep to the bottom of the pacific?
will you walk your sister's children to school and pick them up in the afternoon and play
200 games of rummy only to have them sobbing in the middle of the night
                                                calling for her arms?

*

found a zine after the election that claimed
the best way to resist is to fall in love

tall prairie grasses cling to each other
gossiping in hushed tones

that is its own sort of prayer

his breath against my nape
my toes cold against his shins
is another kind altogether

i grew up catching the spirit
falling in aisles
and would you believe i never prayed back then?
as holy as i pretended to be

there was not a word exchanged
between he and i

but i've always struggled with powerful men

*

KALIEF BROWDER LEAPT INTO EVERLASTING STILLNESS BETWEEN THE WALLS
OF HIS MOTHER'S HOUSE AND HE WAS 22 HE HAD SWEET EYES AND FOR 3
YEARS HE COULDN'T FEEL A COOL BREEZE I THINK ABOUT HIS TEARS
AND HOW I USED TO HOLD IN MY STARTLED SHRIEKING SO WHAT MAKES
HOLINESS? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SACRED? TAMIR RICE WAS A BABY
WHO BLED OUT ALONE AND I TOLD MYSELF THAT NEVER AGAIN DID I NEED TO
WATCH SOMETHING HORRIFIC IN ORDER TO BELIEVE THAT HUMAN BEINGS
COULD TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE THIS I THINK ABOUT HOW THE ONLY
TOUCH KALIEF HAD FOR DAYS WAS OFFICERS TAKING HIM IN AND OUT OF
HANDCUFFS TURNS YOU INTO A SCARED BIRD INTO A FALCON TRAPPED IN A
GARAGE SOMETHING WILD AND SAD. WILD AND SAD. WAS THAT HOW THE
AIR FELT BEFORE SHOTS RANG OUT BEFORE FISTS FOUND THE SOFT GIVE OF A
STOMACH? I WONDER IF THOSE 2 BOYS WEREN'T QUIET AND STILL LIKE SNOW
LANDING IN TALL GRASSES I WONDER HOW BRUISED THEIR FEET WERE
HOW THEY DREAMT. HOW CONSECRATED THEY WERE, WRAPPED IN COLD
LIGHT.

jaime + sam

Author: ZB Hurst
Title: Student
Affiliation: School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Location: Chicago, IL, United States
E-mail: zhurst1@artic.edu

JAIME + SAM

A tall, Black, masculine-of-center person is sitting at a hospital cafeteria table, half asleep in front of a breakfast consisting of runny scrambled eggs and an apple danish. A second figure approaches the table with two cups of overly sweet coffee. They sit. Both are quite handsome - one is fresh-faced, JAIME, while the other, SAM, has overgrown stubble and a groggy look about the eyes. It is just past the wee hours of the morning. Aside from their table, and a few lonely night aides enjoying their tea, the place is empty.

 "Yo, what's good?"
 "Not this nasty-ass food, man. This shit *stay* foul." Sam pushes the definitely-from-formula scrambled eggs around his plate. Even doused in Louisiana Hot Sauce. they remain uneaten.
 "How long you been here, Sammy?" The moment stretches between them.
 "Well, what day is it?"
 "You gotta ask me what day it is? Jesus," Jaime begins in a voice that is higher in pitch than most people expect. "You been here too long. It's Thursday the twenty-first. Four-fourteen a.m." Their wristwatch is almost comically small - it had been their favorite grandmother's, and she had the same narrow wrists. The leather of the band is almost as deep in color as Jaime's complexion. "To be more exact, it's the second week of Mercury's retrograde, and the full moon on Friday is about to be in Pisces."

Sam, sweet Sam with his unbuttered toast and his crucifix dangling over the table as if Jesus were spinning en pointe for an eternity, has fallen asleep.

"So, you gonna answer me or nah?" Sam cracks the lid of one bloodshot eye, smirks.

"Nah." The two giggle like the schoolchildren. "Jaime, I been here forty-three hours."

"Damn, you're on call."

"Yeah. My Black ass is on call."

"Fallen asleep standing up yet? Or just in the cafeteria?"

"Homie," Sam talks with his hands when he gets like this, slightly delirious with exhaustion. "I fell asleep trying to piss, like, twenty minutes ago. Got it all down my leg, had to change my scrubs."

"Are you fucking serious?" Jaime's voice cracks as they cackle.

"Yeah, yeah, keep laughing. Next week when you tell Donny from Pediatrics that you hope he has better taste in men than he does pizza --"

"That was *one* time!"

The moment lulls, Sam's face seems to close in on itself."

"Been watching Avery all night over in NICU. Baby's not doing so good."

"You fucked up about it?"

"I'm *always* fucked up about it." And Jaime knows that, knows how Sam's tone in a text changes when one of his babies gets a bad outlook, knows how ugly Sam sobs after they pass, after he tells their families they're gone. "This mama won't leave her side, though. Dad comes in before and after work to read to Avery, and he brings food and clothes for Karis."

"Damn." Jaime wants to hug Sam, but he's got that rigid look like he's numbing out. "I'm sorry, Sammy."

Shredding a paper napkin to pieces, Sam avoids eye contact. "I just want to go home."