

Peace Journalism and Reporting on the United States

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TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT PEACE journalism, something has to be said about peace. To say something about peace, something has to be said about conflict and its resolution. To say something about conflict resolution, something has to be said about the United States' deep involvement in many global conflicts. Journalism's role is not only to report on the world, but also to make key actors—states, capital, people—transparent to each other. The role of peace journalism is to identify forces and counterforces for and against peace and to make them and their dialectic visible, creating outcomes that could be potential solutions.

While the role of negative peace, also known as security, is to reduce the suffering of humans and nature due to violence of all kinds, the role of positive peace is to increase the fulfillment of humans and nature, beyond simply meeting basic needs. Conflicts, incompatible goals, and contradictions challenge humanity to solve conflicts in order to reduce apathy and aggression due to the frustration of blocked goals. By moving into a new reality and meeting the legitimate objectives of various conflicts and their subjective realities, history may move forward.

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CONFLICT IS A *FORCE MOTRICE*, OR DRIVING FORCE, IN HUMAN HISTORY

What is the role of the United States and its people in the world? A common misreading of democracy stems from the idea that all parties with a stake in a decision shall have a say in the decisionmaking. The United States is sovereign in domestic matters but not in regional or global matters that concern other nations and their peoples who must have a say and be given insight into transparent decision-making process.

Today, however, the whole world is subjected to U.S. foreign policy, with no voting rights in the decision-making process. The only rights available to other countries are writing and speaking rights. To use a clinical metaphor, the United States seems to suffer from a disease; let us call it “domestic and global violence addiction.” There have been close to 250 military interventions from Thomas Jefferson’s era to the intervention in Libya. In June 2015, we witnessed the mass shooting of three male and six female African-Americans in an iconic church in Charleston, South Carolina. Since women are the key carriers of human reproduction, some might even consider this gendered act of direct violence genocidal: against a race, a nation, and their very reproduction.¹

As a peace researcher, I see peace—positive and negative—related to violence the same way as health researchers see health—positive and negative—related to disease. The tools are similar: diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy.² My diagnosis begins here, in the deep U.S. culture of the collective subconscious, which constitutes the basic assumptions that many share.³ Dialogues have identified two syndromes of archetypes DMA & CGT as hypotheses:

1. DMA stands for Deep culture (Dualism-Manicheism-Armageddon): seeing the world in a *Dualist* manner; seeing the positions involved in a conflict formation from a *Manichean* perspective, “for us or against us,” “good or evil”; with an inevitable final battle, hence *Armageddon*.

2. CGT stands for Deep structure (Chosenness-Glory-Trauma): seeing the United States as *Chosen* by higher forces; as an exceptional carrier of a *Glory* from the past; to be recreated when the *Traumas* caused by the envious have been overcome by defeating them.⁴

The United States is not alone in being script-driven in thought and words by a DMA-Syndrome and in concrete action by a CGT outlook on reality: Ideas drive Behavior. But the United States is deeply affected by this mentality. The insight this tool provides can be used in a comparative vein, but more important

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is its explanatory capacity in the effort to make sense of why there have been 250 foreign military interventions in U.S. foreign military policy since Thomas Jefferson. DMA is a world view (*Weltanschauung* or cosmo-vision) that prepares the circumstances for CGT global political action, in which the United States is exceptional and exempt from the rules that apply to others (such as the ICC), with a glory shining but soiled by the traumas and ever-changing basic threats to the United States itself. At the individual level, Chosen and Glory are known as narcissism and Trauma as paranoia; the two together constitute a psychopathology, or a psychosis. At the social level, [DMA + CGT] is a socio-pathology or perhaps a “socosis.”

Wrapping a complex condition into an eight-letter word, although easily communicable, makes it neither observable, verifiable, nor curable. Imagine that U.S. elites have such ideas about the world and the role of the United States and deep down admit these thoughts. So what? When they face the complexity of the real world, they will become realists. Realists: another eight-letter word monopolized by a dominant school studying interstate relations. Could the two stand for the same socio-pathological DMA-CGT approach to perceiving and handling trans-border relations? Again from a peace researcher’s angle, if we want something such as peace in the real world, we have to strengthen positive peace and weaken the sources of violence. Put into a simple formula from a conflict transformation perspective:

$$\text{PEACE} = \frac{\text{EQUITY} \times \text{HARMONY}}{\text{TRAUMA} \times \text{CONFLICT}}$$

Peace is seen as equaling four concrete synchronous tasks: (1) cooperation with equity; (2) harmony through empathy to understand the parties’ legitimate goals; (3) conciliation for traumas to reduce the desire for revenge; and (4) solution for conflicts to reduce aggression. Whether this is real peace, and whether these tasks are necessary or sufficient, is debatable. But doing the opposite will not render peace.⁵ So in light of this formula, how does the United States behave while engaged in conflicts that might stand in the way of its goals?

1. Equity makes no sense: with the United States seeing itself as chosen, seeing the Other as equal erases the moral distinction between good and evil, leading to anarchy, which is seen as the only alternative to hierarchy which is only acceptable when the “good” is on top.
2. Harmony makes no sense: those blocking the “good” are by definition “evil;” their goal or project is more evil, making harmony treach-

erous. As a consequence, historical antagonists such as “communism,” “terrorism,” and “jihadism” were and are to remain exempt of any empathy in political interaction.

3. What about trauma? The United States liberates the good and eliminates evil, but does not traumatize.

4. And conflict transformation? The United States, as a strong actor, uses victory to pave the way for its desired solutions, not dialogically negotiated outcomes. And so, according to these realities, the U.S. formula for pacification reads as:

$$\text{Peace} = (\text{Hierarchy} \cdot \text{Morality}) \times (\text{Freedom} \cdot \text{Victory})^6$$

What can be observed in U.S. foreign policy is not an empathetic search for the legitimate goals in all parties to build equitable projects, nor trauma conciliation or conflict resolution. Thus, deep culture scripts block conflict solutions. This becomes more evident in the below chart that offers 15 examples of conflicts and their constructive solutions in comparison to their destructive victories:

TABLE 1: 15 CONFLICTS: SOLUTION VERSUS VICTORY AS U.S. FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS⁷

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Conflicts	Constructive: Solution Orientation (To Do)	Destructive: Victory Orientation (Avoid)
Financial Economic Crisis	Encourage local savings banks; publish M2; check Fed Reserve Tax speculation; drop bonuses; outlaw speculation on basic human needs (food, health, and housing); increase democratic control of central banks; favor mixed world currency.	Avoid more finance-sector growth and servicing loans instead of people; avoid countries in debt-bondage, subjecting people to austerity and globalization through privatized central banks.
War on Terrorism	Identify all goals in the perpetrators’ discourse aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and both Dec. 16 th 1966 Human Rights covenants.	Stop extrajudicial executions by Special Operations Command (SOC); drones; covert warfare in 135 countries.

United States/Israel vs. Arab-Muslim states	Work on (a) Palestine recognized; (b) a two-state solution; (c) a Middle East Community (MEC) of Israel and five Arab neighbors; (d) 1967 borders adjusted; (e) Create an Organization for Security Cooperation in the Middle East simultaneously.	AIPAC lobbying Congress on Israel's behalf could fan strong rise in anti-semitism inside the United States and positioning Judeo-Christianity above all other cultures instead of advocating cultural pluralism could further fan anti-Islamic sentiments inside the United States.
Libya	Work on self-determination for the multiple tribes; work on federal polity with democratization.	Avoid ongoing chaos and violence; Beware of pursuing the illusion of a unitary state.
Syria	Work on self-determination for the ethnic parts; and consider constructing a federal polity with a bi-cameral democracy.	Avoid an attack and invasion of Syria: beware of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) response; beware of splitting Syria in order to rule parts.
Iraq	Work on self-determination and increasing autonomy for the various identity groups; work on (con)federalism; democratization; compensation and conciliation.	Avoid partial or nominal withdrawal with military bases left behind without rebuilding or compensating Iraqis in order to undo the destruction wrecked by Bush administration.
Iran	Open high level dialogues; pursue conciliation for 1953 CIA & MI5 coup; engage cooperation on green energy.	Avoid attacking Iran; beware of possible SCO response; beware of speculation in oil and bio-fuels.
Pakistan	Work on Pashtun autonomy; drop Durand-line demarcation; allow self-determination in Kashmir with autonomous Indian-Pakistan-Kashmiri parts	Beware of keeping Durand as fence; Stop extra-judicial executions by U.S. SOC, drones, and covert warfare killings.
Afghanistan	Support establishing a Central Asian Community of States with Afghanistan as a member; allow for intra-Afghan federation and a status as a neutral State within Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) & UNSC; compensate and work on conciliation.	Avoid partial or nominal withdrawal with military bases left behind without rebuilding or compensating for the damage inflicted.

Korea	Work towards Peace Treaty with normalization between the United States and North and South Korea; work on U.S., North Korea and the Korean Peninsula as nuclear free zones.	Beware of further polarization against and marginalization of North Korea; beware of United States-South Korea military exercises; stop breaking agreements.
China	Deepen public high level dialogue; mutual learning in economics; further civil and economic rights in China.	Stop encircling China militarily trying to isolate China; stop economic exploitation within and between both states.
Japan	Integrate Japan in northeast Asian Community; foster good relations with the United States & APEC; work on United States pulling out of Okinawa.	Do not impede conciliation towards victims of Japanese imperialism; do not keep Japan as a client state; stop subverting Article 9 of Japanese Constitution.
Africa	Welcome and support African unity; build the East-West highway through Africa together with China and African governments.	Stop AFRICOM & military interventions in Africa.
Latin America	Welcome CELAC integration; foster equity between Latin and Anglo-America.	Stop military interventions and stop supporting coups.
World	Ratify all human rights conventions; support national self-determination; engage in dialogue of civilizations; strengthen United Nations with a world parliament.	Beware of supporting only Civil-Political Human Rights; beware of applying Unitary state models to multi-ethnic settings; beware of continuing Western universalism and American exceptionalism.

The left-hand column looks reasonable to many and might make people love and respect the United States.⁸ The right-hand column, on the other hand, causes many to hate the United States and is representative of current U.S. foreign policy that fails to provide security, even to the country itself. Why? This happens because, as mentioned above, realism is not realistic. DMA as a map of global reality and CGT as a guide to global politics are simply bad theories that ignore the dialectics of a complex world.

DIAGNOSIS: DMA-CGT, PROGNOSIS: THE VICTORY COLUMN, AND THERAPY?

We have brought the United States into a context of conflicts with two types of outcomes: solutions and victories. We have illustrated an image of peace with



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four concrete tasks. These tasks are the essentials for peace journalism, either to be reported about—reporting on ongoing sociopolitical processes of cooperation, harmony, conflict transformation, or trauma conciliation—or to be used as angles to look for further subjects worth reporting about. Solutions, even if not attempted, can be reported by journalists asking what peace by peaceful means might look like.⁹ Where there is violence, there is also underlying trauma or conflict; thus, journalists can ask decisionmakers the following questions: what is underlying the violence we observe? And what are you going to do about the underlying factors? And yet there is much more to peace journalism.¹⁰ Missing so far is the most important part—the therapy; the cure; or what to do about the identified underlying economic, political, or cultural contradictions.

Health journalism should be considered a model. Whenever an epidemic takes place, the diagnosis becomes increasingly clear—The prognosis is always a pandemic, and cautionary measures such as quarantine or inoculation are taken. But, above all, diagnosing the causes allows us to ponder how to remove them, for therapy. Good newspapers occasionally have a health page. Similarly, a “peace page” might be useful as an obvious site for ambitious peace journalists skilled in solution-indicative reporting.

THREE THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES FOR REMOVING THE CAUSES OF THE UNITED STATES’ ADDICTION TO VICTORY

First, the psychoanalytic approach of the Freudian and Jungian tradition could be utilized by focusing on the “talking method,” which involves exploring the subconscious, identifying the scripts for destructive behavior, uprooting them, and identifying alternative guiding ideas.¹¹ This can be likened to a paradigm shift, such as the one from victory for security for peace to conciliation and conflict transformation for peace for security, with the peace formula indicating the four concrete tasks to be accomplished. We need to conduct a significant search in U.S. society not only for alternative policies, but also for deeper alternative guiding ideas and archetypes such as the indefatigable generosity and creativity of the American people and culture so extremely attractive to the world during the past century. Much of what happens in the United States in this sense may not be found in mainstream media, but on the Internet.

Second, the enormity of U.S. violence and the number of weapons needed to perpetuate it are seen as sustained by DMA-CGT; but in turn, what sustains DMA-CGT? Dr. Tony Marsella, former Professor of Psychology and Vice-President of the University of Hawaii, has put together a list of 22 factors that



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contribute to a “culture of violence.”¹² These include computer games, television and movie violence, animal cruelty, violent sports, and capital punishment, among others. While DMA is easily recognized in such examples, with the winner depending on the outcome of an Armageddon, CGT is more elusive.¹³ The Bible, however, is a basic, longer-lasting, and more pervasive source sustaining the two syndromes. Dualism and Manicheism are found in the book of Genesis as well as in the book of Revelation’s personification of God, Satan, and the everlasting fight between them. Within this setting, Jesus Christ is central: He is chosen as the Son of the Father in heaven; he embodies the glory of prophecy, sermons, miracles, as well a greater glory to come (salvation for all who believe in Him); and his crucifixion represents an enormous trauma by the jealous. DMA-CGT is a pale, secularized, social science–type reductionism of a religious narrative that has inspired hopes and doubts in billions. To the religious believers, this view gives much more legitimacy to U.S. foreign policy, since they consider the United States as chosen by the Father for the role of the Son against any incarnation of Satan in the world. Trauma is a large part of it—Pearl Harbor, 9/11—with more to come and with the promise of resurrection at the throne of the world as the uncontested world hegemon, well prepared for Armageddon. The U.S. Bible Belt, from Virginia Beach via Lynchburg to South California, is filled with religious believers, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient for the United States to be DMA-CGT script-driven. When asked how the world works, the Bible rarely provides an explicit answer: the world simply works in DMA-CGT terms.¹⁴

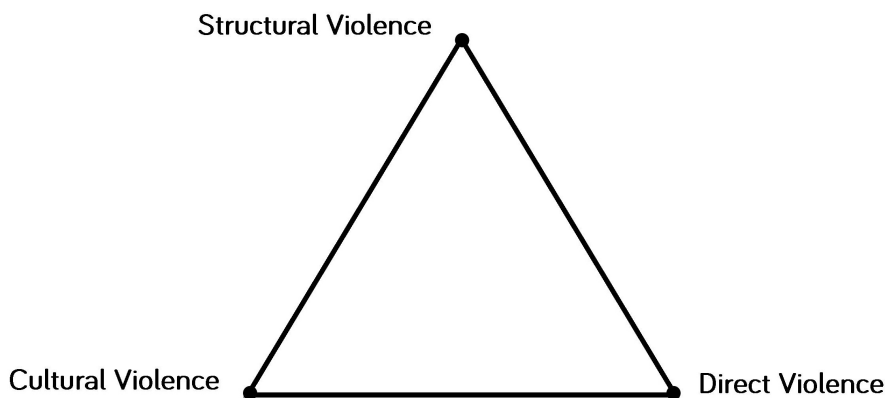
How do we remove these six psycho-social archetypes found in the cosmogony and cosmology of the bible? Not by fighting Christianity, but by producing an alternative interpretation characterized by more love and resurrection and less punishment and crucifixion. In other words, Orthodox Christianity. Is Orthodoxy more peace-productive? Well, take a comparative look at empires carried by both churches through a macrohistory lense:¹⁵ Who pro-acted, invaded most, and who reacted in which way and most importantly why so? Suffice it to indicate that Orthodox Christianity inspires its believers to draw optimism from a longterm temporal perspective spanning centuries with inspiration from the image of a human Christ.

In any case, the positive approach is to not use DMA-CGT against DMA-CGT. Take television violence, for instance: one approach is to completely forbid it, while another is to produce fascinating documentaries and fiction about successful cases of conciliation, solutions, and peacebuilding to counter violent imagery. Another solution could be sports and computer games in which everybody is a winner



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to counter the zero-sum mentality of DMA-GCT. However, theology does hold a crucial key to U.S. foreign policy. So, what mentality enables the United States to, for example, negotiate with Iran to eliminate Iranian nuclear capacity while at the same time testing a new “nuclear gravity bomb” in early July 2015? There is constant talk about double standards, but that is a misreading of the U.S. elite. To a mentality based on American exceptionalism, the very idea of a single standard that is applicable to the chosen and the non-chosen states alike is as unnatural and abnormal as double standards are to others in this context. The way out is not to fight American exceptionalism but instead to show how a single non-nuclear world standard could be obtained by broadening the negotiations. For instance, in the U.S.-Iran conciliation case, a possible solution could be for the U.S.-U.K. coup of 1953 to be forgiven and for further cooperation between the United States and Iran to focus on developing green alternatives to oil. A third approach to remove root causes is one that does not exclude the others.



In the violence triangle, cultural violence legitimizes both structural and direct violence, linking these three types of violence in causal chains with cultural tenements legitimizing exploitation, repression, oppression, alienation, and other forms of structural violence. This in turn may trigger the eruption of direct destructive violence by the economically exploited, politically oppressed, and culturally alienated. These three types of violence—cultural, structural, and direct—reinforce each other.¹⁶ Direct violence breeds itself in victims as a desire for revenge and as part of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and in perpetrators as Post Glory Exuberance Syndrome (PGES). Empirically, direct violence is usually manifested because the Other has something the Self covets: land, fixed capital, information, etc. Stealing those goods is one approach



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achievable by attacking, expanding, defeating, and spying or hacking. In social formations marred by structural violence, these assets will flow upward without the application of direct violence, and, consequently, benefits accrue to those who occupy a hierarchically superior status (e.g., vis-à-vis colonialism, segregation, and imperialism); violence never benefits an underdog. Cultural violence, defined as the justification and legitimization of the two other forms of violence, consolidates the perception of normalcy as values flow upward to the dominant elites, by direct or indirect theft from subalterns who have internalized this form of relation. This gives us three factors that sustain and predict violence:

1. Victorious direct violence in the past, with machinery to continue.
2. Relative position in structural violence—whether a nation is top-dog or underdog in military, economic, political, or cultural status.
3. Cultural violence justifying the use of violence to get on top and to get out of oppression or repression.

The violence triangle is massive, and the United States will not give up any of the three factors: the army to protect U.S. business and U.S. business instigating structural violence, since, in this mentality, what is good for U.S. business is good for the country overall. However, the triangle is only as strong as the weakest form of violence. Just one president refusing to justify direct violence could make a difference. President Obama did the opposite, which is clear in the “necessary war” doctrine of his Nobel Peace Prize speech when he said:

Still, we are at war, and I’m responsible for the deployment of thousands of young Americans to battle in a distant land. Some will kill, and some will be killed...I know there’s nothing weak – nothing passive – nothing naïve – in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King. But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler’s armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda’s leaders to lay down their arms.¹⁷

President Obama’s referral to “evil” as an intellectual-political category and his fundamental dismissal of systematic solution-indicative dialogue with antagonists are telltale statements about his administration’s lack of insight into the functional instruments for professional conflict transformation developed in peace theory and peace practice since the inception of the field. But something else has also happened under his watch: the crumbling of the U.S. empire

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in a continuation of a long story that can be traced from Cuba's Fidel Castro and North Korea's Kim Il-sung not capitulating to U.S. military might, to the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) bypassing the United States economically, to other states refusing to fight for U.S. hegemony. Winning some wars but losing most, the United States must now justify direct violence as preventive and preemptive defense. The more elusive the victory, the more attractive become the solutions.¹⁸

In short, the U.S. violence triangle is deteriorating, but it will take more time. We must now enter a peace triangle era with direct peace through conciliation and solution; structural peace through equity and harmony; and cultural peace legitimizing both. Russia and China—pressured by the United States and the United Kingdom—arrived at all three angles very quickly in the 1990s. China in particular has expanded its “Silk Road” infrastructure program under its “One Belt, One Road” doctrine initially funded to the tune of \$113 billion (set to increase to \$200 billion by 2018) with which it aims to create a modern trade route. Known as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-First Century Maritime Silk Road, this plan calls for “a network of railways, highways, oil and gas pipelines, power grids, Internet networks, maritime and other infrastructure links across central, west, and south Asia to as far as Greece, Russia and Oman, increasing China's connections to Europe and Africa.”¹⁹

Sooner or later, the United States will be less script-driven by DMA-CGT. The three violent approaches will erode and gradually erase these scripts. Increased awareness through discussing these issues may be least effective. Positive changes of sustaining factors, such as reinterpreting Christianity, television and movies on successful conciliation, solution peacebuilding, and peace education will have an impact. Peace journalism must be added to all of these changes. But most important is the crumbling of the violence triangle that accompanies the decline of the U.S. empire. This is not of the United States' own making: the triangle is being beaten down, and other nations are withdrawing their compliance.

The U.S. media depicts countries as monoliths with only one inhabitant—their leader—making it easier for U.S. citizens to feel hatred towards these nations. Leaders such as Hitler, Stalin, Kim Il-sung, Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Khomeini, Ahmadinejad, Saddam, Ghaddafi, Assad, and Putin are all assigned the role of Satan. The media willingly retells this story that comes from Washington, which they perhaps perceive, in a Biblical analogy, to be where God lives. Needless to say, a change is overdue. Meanwhile, others reap the fruits of peace by peaceful means. BRICS nations contain more than half of the world's

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population, but less than half of the world's gross domestic product, and have their own problems—such as the Chinese economic bubble that burst, with enormous bailout reserves—but are doing well nonetheless.²⁰ The United States might even contemplate working with, rather than isolating, China and its economy—a point that brings us back to peace journalism. All of the above may be seen as basic themes for peace journalists to explore with more focus on the constructive and positive, instead of the critical and negative. Reporting violence is by definition a negative act since violence is about inflicted suffering. Reporting peace is by definition positive as it is about human fulfillment. Both should be reported to better understand how the world works: to be more realistic and less “realist.” And so one day, U.S. foreign policy may move from the right to the left column of the table above. 

NOTES

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