

Mediating Peace

Mediating Peace:

Reconciliation through Visual Art, Music and Film

Edited by

Sebastian Kim, Pauline Kollontai
and Sue Yore

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INTRODUCTION

*SEBASTIAN KIM, PAULINE KOLLONTAI
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The use of art, music and film is a growing area of interest to academics, practitioners and professionals working in the area of conflict resolution and peace-building. There is a recognition that using these media can provide a creative and spiritual space for the individual to express what they have experienced or witnessed which otherwise they cannot articulate through the spoken word. Continuing to keep memories of hatred, anger, fear and suspicion 'unspoken' is not only unhealthy for the individuals concerned but militates against any attempt at a dialogue of reconciliation with the perpetrators and bystanders. Art, music and film can help victims regain their own sense of worth, dignity, identity and purpose as well as repairing the breakdown of social trust within and between people. Theoretically it seems plausible that using various forms of artistic expression can assist in the transformation of attitudes and actions to promote and build more just and peaceful societies, but empirically it appears more difficult to assess this. The numerous projects throughout the world where art, music and film are used as components of peace-building demonstrate that there is a growing need to develop interdisciplinary research in this area.

The aim of this volume is to examine the role and contributions of art, music and film in peace-building and reconciliation. The distinctive approach of the volume is that it discusses various forms of these in peace-building in a wide range of conflict situations, particularly in religiously plural contexts; hence it provides readers with a comprehensive perspective. In addition, the contributors of this volume were selected from among prominent scholars and artists who examine theoretical, professional and practical perspectives and debates. There are three main areas of the arts addressed in these investigations: (1) visual art: utilising visual arts in peace-building, expressing conflict situations, and demonstrating community life in conflicts; (2) music: facilitating of music or musical activities in order to bring about peace and reconciliation; and (3) film and performing arts: making films and performances to convey

the realities of conflicts and find new approaches to peace and reconciliation. The contributors to the volume have addressed the following research questions, which form the theoretical basis of this project: 'In what way has the particular form of art enhanced peace-building in a conflict situation?'; 'How do artistic forms become a public demonstration and expression of a particular socio-political context?'; and 'In what way have the arts played the role of catalyst for peace-building; if not, why not?' In this introduction to the role of different forms of art in peace-building, we will discuss three threads that are common across the stands of visual art, music, film and performing arts: the role of art in transformation at an individual level; the role of art in peace-building between communities; and the role of art for bridging justice and peace in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The first strand acknowledges that, although for peace to be sustainable, both structural and relational transformations are required as well as a long-term commitment to a process that improves the material and financial infrastructure of war-torn societies (Lederach 1997: 83), there is also the personal dimension of peace-building which centres on changes to attitudes and behaviours on the individual level. Hendrick van der Merwe and Tracy Vienings argue this point by drawing attention to the psychological and emotional layers of conflict which must be dealt with on the national, community and individual levels. Ignoring or providing an inadequate response at the individual level can mean that some victims of past violence may become the perpetrators of future tensions, unrest or violence (van der Merwe & Vienings 2001: 343-45). It is in the transformation at the individual level that the arts are seen as a beneficial tool in peace-building. The arts provide opportunities for individuals to help re-create and re-build the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of their own life and the lives of others. Art projects and art therapies are provided for both adults and children but there appear to be a predominant number of projects world-wide that work with children and young people.

Although evidence that art can contribute to peace-building by working at the individual level is not easily available, there is a growing body of writings looking at how arts are being used in conflict resolution and peace-building. The most comprehensive examination of the arts-based approach is given in the work of Michelle LeBaron and Danyta Welch (2005). Many projects throughout the world where art is being used in the context of conflict-resolution and peace-building show that people who have been on either side of conflict, seem to relate to each other in a positive and honest way, at least for the period of time in which they are

involved in doing or sharing art. Involvement in art activities during a conflict can help people 'to maintain their humanity in working and sharing their ideas with others across community and ethnic lines' (Senehi 2002: 78). In post-conflict peace-building,

art can in the aftermath of destruction provide a safe space where people can come together to explore their experiences and emotions, can be used as a tool in conflict resolving, help those badly traumatised to have a mechanism through which to express and confront their experiences and fears; and help build empathy and understanding amongst outsiders' (Zelizer 2003: 68).

According to Marian Libemann, art used in group work particularly can help develop many of the skills needed for healing and understanding between individuals and communities, but the key issue is that 'Involvement in the arts engages the whole person speaking from the heart and uses their creativity and emotions' (Liebmann 1996: 2). The importance of being able to "speak" honestly from the heart is perhaps the key to being able to return to some form of normality after experiencing traumatic events of the kind experienced in war. It can be a sign that the individual has begun to heal and that the dynamic and creative aspect of the human sense of being as represented and expressed through spirituality has been restored.

The second strand of the role of art in peace-building in communities and wider societies, it could be argued, is that art is an important catalyst for peace-building through social transformation and providing 'prophetic' insights to a community. According to Herbert Marcuse (1978), art provides a space where people can imagine something different to their daily circumstances. Marcuse believes that art can create a new consciousness on the part of the viewer, which addresses the reality and complexity of a given situation and where the established reality and the potential future engage in a dialogical clash that has the potential to transform the established reality. The monopoly of established reality can be challenged by art as 'it presents the possibility of a fulfilment, which only a transformed society could offer. Art can embody a tension which keeps hope alive – a memory of the happiness that once was, and that seeks its return' (Marcuse 1978: 68). The act of doing art and/or observing art may transform human attitudes, ideas and actions. For Marcuse it is not just about the intellectual role of art in raising awareness and understanding of injustice that is key, but that art can move the human spirit towards effecting social change. So art that only portrays a situation which recreates 'the miserable reality' of those events is not sufficient to

provoke change in a person's thought and action (Marcuse 1978: 70). Of course, Marcuse is not speaking specifically about sacred or religious art but his important observation is that art can assist people to imagine a different way of living with or without a spiritual dimension coming into play. The work of Marcuse suggests that our views, opinions and ignorance can be challenged through art, which in turn can give new understanding or new meaning to the reality we observe and/or experience. Marcuse's idea that art can assist in creating a new consciousness or enhance our awareness of ourselves and others is, according to Karen Stone, because art is prophetic; it stands 'against rootlessness, self-absorption, stagnation and ease, oppression and institutionalized cruelty and despair' (Stone 2003: 118). Engaging with these feelings the viewer can be challenged to review their understanding of a situation or issue, it can sensitize us, produce an emotional response, and it can mobilise us to some form of action which reaches out to others.

Art can have a prophetic dimension as it warns and challenges the viewer. The power of art as language is taken up by Stone as she speaks of art as 'a visual word' because it provides 'an antidote to numbness and broken images by embodying and re-enacting the mystery' (Stone 2003: 114). The prophetic dimension lays the possibility for art to sensitise and challenge the viewer through engaging with a personal narrative or memory. However, this does not always happen as another writer on the impact and power of images, Susan Sontag, points out. Sontag makes an extremely important point about images of suffering portrayed through various forms of art which she says does not always effect some level of change in the viewer because 'we can turn away' for a variety of reasons (Sontag 2003: 101). Sontag suggests that art does have the potential to transform attitudes by provoking questions that perhaps some people would not ask if the image of human suffering was not there to be seen (Sontag 2003: 104). Liebmann takes up this aspect of art more generally when she argues that works of art 'seem to add a dimension that was not easily available through words, and for some people, provided real insights and ways forward in conflicts' (Liebmann 1996: 1).

The third strand focuses on the role of art in seeking justice in the process of peace-making. The connection between justice and peace is of much concern for scholars of peace studies and yet they are quite divided on this issue. In the case of protracted war, Todd D. Whitmore, in his discussion of the priority of justice or peace, questions what he sees as the priority of justice over peace in Catholic social teaching and argues that negative peace could be a precondition for justice. He points out that starting with justice is a problem since the various parties are all

accountable and it is almost impossible to achieve positive peace until hostility is brought to a halt (Whitmore 2010: 160-61). He concludes that, on balance, the practical priority must be negative peace, as was expressed in the Refugee Law Project as 'Peace First, Justice Later'.¹ On the other hand, Pauline H. Baker argues the importance of seeking justice in the peace-building process. She identifies the tension between peace-building, which involves conflict resolution, and justice seeking, through establishing democracy and human rights. She regards those working for peace-building as 'conflict managers' and those seeking justice as 'democratizers'. However, she argues that 'peace is no longer acceptable on any terms; it is intimately linked with the notion of justice. Conflict resolution is not measured simply by the absence of bloodshed; it is assessed by the moral quality of the outcome' (Baker 1996: 563-71). She further emphasises the importance of public accountability and basic human and political rights and criticises the 'conflict managers' as seeking short-term solutions and insists that a solid democratic foundation provides a better chance of sustainable security and peace (Baker 1996: 566). Some scholars have tried to search for ways to overcome this dilemma of a dichotomy between justice and peace. Daniel Philpott for example, argues for reconciliation as restorative justice, a concept which can be utilised in a situation of political conflict. He argues that the best example for restorative justice is South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and he draws his insights from ethical teachings from the three Abrahamic religions. He supports the suggestions that reconciliation complements justice, calling the result 'justice of positive peace' and justice that entails a comprehensive restoration of relationship (Philpott 2012: 50-53). His argument is valuable as he brings wisdom from religious traditions and applies it to political peace-making, by focusing on justice as dealing with justice in two dimensions of 'right conduct' and 'right response to wrong conduct', and on 'comprehensive right relationship' (Philpott 2012: 53).

The above discussions are focused on approaches which balance justice and peace. One can say that, in a conflict situation, justice without peace leads to a fragmented and fragile situation which will continue to perpetuate injustice, and that peace without justice is often used by those in power to continue to exercise their oppression over victims of the conflict. Justice and peace have to kiss each other (Psalm 85:10) and those who are working on peace-building and conflict resolution agree on the

¹ Refugee Law Project, 'Peace First, Justice Later: Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda'. http://www.refugeelawproject.org/working_papers/RLP.WP17.pdf [accessed 1 June 2013].

integral nature of these two aspects of peace-building. However, a number of contributors of this volume emphasise the importance of justice-seeking for the sake of sustainable peace-building and that art makes significant contributions which have been effective both in individual and community levels by providing aspirations and visual and tangible realities of conflict and injustice and also by envisaging future hope and sustainable peace.

In the section on visual art, Lucien van Liere, who like other contributors to this book is interested in the role of empathy, tackles a troubling dilemma. He recognises that visual images from conflict areas may usefully contribute towards the peace-building process due to the shock factor, but they can equally serve as the catalyst for even more violence. Painters like Calot, Goya and Chapman, and photographers like Friedrich are given as examples of people who have tried to evoke compassion by visual portrayals of violence. Alternately, he points to the example of Iman Samudra, whose response to images of headless children in Afghanistan in 2001 was influential in his involvement in the 2002 Bali bombing. Van Liere, utilizes theories on art, image, representation and responsibility and concludes that the complex links between visual shock, compassion and action are difficult to fully understand. Images showing violence should not be automatically assumed to lead to peace because varied religious, cultural or political frameworks are used to interpret them. David Jasper's chapter makes a thoughtful connection between Kandinsky's theory of non-objective art and the non-material spaces of the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. Jasper suggests an abstract approach to art and the spiritual detracts from the divisions and violence that haunt and disfigure the history of religions. It also provides a meditation within and across spiritual traditions by offering common ground in the spaces of the visual and non-material places for dialogue. The paper concludes in the contemporary art of China in the work of Jasper's friend, Ding Fang, who is a prominent Beijing artist who takes his inspiration from the ancient classic the *Chang Tzu* and traditional landscape painting to express the sufferings of the present age. These artists, Jasper argues, challenge our reliance on theories to explain reality by offering ways out of settled positions that lead to prejudice. Jasper ends by reflecting that Rothko's Chapel today has become a place of reconciliation and a spiritual haven that promotes peace and human rights. The chapter by Victoria Nesfield argues that the sculpture *Freddie Gilroy and Belsen Stragglers* (2011) by Ray Lonsdale, represents a type of Holocaust memorial uncharacteristic of statues and memorials typically found at museums and sites of murder. The statue, which is situated on a seafront bench in Scarborough, commemorates the British miner from Lonsdale's native County Durham

who was involved in the liberation of Bergen Belsen, leading the remaining survivors, the 'Belsen stragglers', out of the camp. Nesfield carefully argues that this artefact provides an alternative way of utilising art to engage a community with a conflict situation. A general overview of some of the key motifs in Holocaust commemoration in art and sculpture is drawn on to suggest that, although the Holocaust is physically absent, the fact that it is referred to in the title and its non-confrontational style, means that it can be an effective tool in reconciling a public audience with the memory and legacy of a conflict.

Pauline Kollontai draws on an arts-based approach to peace building to consider how the use of paintings and drawings done by the victims or witnesses of conflict such as war, genocide and ethnic cleansing, might contribute to the learning experience of students undertaking a module on the Philosophy of Religion which addressed the issues of God, evil and suffering. Herbert Marcuse, Karen Stone and Susan Sontag, are used to discuss the findings of this research to support the idea that pre-existing perceptions can be challenged. The data collected from three groups of students suggests that art may indeed provide a space in which the reconfiguration of personal views about human suffering caused by moral evil is enabled through student's in emotional responses. Sue Yore, reflects on student art projects and how they might contribute to a broader process of peace and transformation. Related themes are reflected on as they are expressed in visual art produced by students depicting tragic events like the Holocaust, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and 9/11. There are three main themes that emerge in relation to the topic of peace and reconciliation: the first points towards a utopian vision of universal love and harmony; the second envisages peace and reconciliation, or hope, evolving through and within the context of war and genocide; the third suggests that any resolution for preventing these in the future and building a peaceful and life affirming society must come through the toil of human hands. The ideas of students as artists, popular writers like Levertov, and Annie Dillard are discussed in conjunction with Karen Stone's perception of prophetic art, Grace Jantzen's notion of natality and the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* to examine the role of visual art for imagining peace and reconciliation.

The dialectical relationship between theology and aesthetics is a central theme within Voker Küster's discussion where he explores secular art as an interstitial space for theological reflection. The generative themes of human life like birth, illness, suffering and death, hatred, violence and horror but also happiness, friendship and love are dealt with by artists and theologians alike. This assertion is modelled by placing German artists

Gerhard Richter and South Korean artist Hong Song-Dam who both deal with questions of guilt, reconciliation, and grace in societal transformation processes of their countries into dialogue with writers Uwe Timm and Hwang Sok-Yong as recent chroniclers of history. Sebastian Kim provides an inspiring account of how art played a key role in the lives of ordinary people during the period of struggle and protest against the military backed government in Korea from 1961- 1988 in his discussion on *minjung* art. He outlines three key areas of concerns among *minjung* artists during this period: political oppression and human rights; abuse by the military-backed governments; and the peaceful unification of the two Koreas. To facilitate the discussion Kim identifies three key historic events which became a focus for the concerns of the *minjung* artists: the Chun Tae-il incident (1970); the Gwangju uprising (1980); and the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCCK) Declaration (1988) to discuss *minjung* artist responses. What is important to note here is how *minjung* theologians and artists did theology together in the service of a common goal of peace and justice.

As a Christian artist Jyoti Sahi draws on Biblical, Puranic and Advaitic myths and cultures to explore the relationship between ethics and aesthetics through the medium of the visual arts. He is particularly inspired by metaphors of light as illustrated on the front cover of this book in his painting *Vision of Abraham*. Sahi is comfortable to draw on both Christian and Hindu perspectives of 'the Primal Vision' of the Divine presence to invoke a spirit of dialogue. Art, for him is ultimately a way of bridging the gap between subjective experience and that of the 'Other,' between theory and experience, and between different religious perspectives so he positions artists as co-creators on the path towards peace and reconciliation. The chapter by Huibing He provides a moving personal account of her own experiences of conflict and the role that art has played in helping her to reflect on the context of her Christian faith and ministry. Her recollections of her childhood in China under Chairman Mao and later interest and developing involvement in art as a way to survive spiritually, provides the reader with an account of a personal experience to understand the more theoretically informed discussions in this book. As an artist, and pastor, she affirms the value of art to express feelings and thoughts about violence and conflict but also its power to strengthen faith and hope for peace. She also sees everything in the world as reflective of God's creative and redemptive grace which she depicts sometimes explicitly in pictures of Biblical stories but largely in what she sees in nature and the ordinary people she encounters in her ministry and daily life. Jenny Baker reflects on the use of art in communities but unlike the previous chapter, her

context is not marked by conflict and oppression. Instead, Baker is concerned here with the processes of producing art in a community and how communal perspectives can be facilitated and reflected on. Describing herself as an artistic-mediator, she analyses three communal painting projects carried out in an area of rural England, with its numerous village sub-groups. She found that the diverse subjects incorporated in the paintings were not only local but pointed to wider concerns about good and evil, war and peace, reconciliation, and international harmony. Particular attention is paid to theological insights arising from the painting processes, both as expressed by the contributors themselves and her subsequent theological interpretation of their comments. To provide a broader understanding she reflects on descriptions of community paintings elsewhere in the world, especially from conflict areas to offer suggestions about fitting methodologies to situations in order to maximise the reconciliatory benefits of community painting.

In the music section of this volume the contributors come from a diversity of subject disciplines and backgrounds (academic, professional and field based-practitioners). Their writings provide theoretical and case study approaches to exploring how music is being used in peace-building across the world. Contributors here, as in other sections in the book, use a variety of theoretical frameworks (theological, sociological and political) to discuss music as a peace-building tool. The chapter by Jeremy Begbie refers to music as having a mixed potential in the sense that it can help overcome aggression, hatred and division by fostering new understanding between people but also recognising that music can also be used to foster and perpetuate these negative attitudes and behaviour. Begbie discusses the mixed potential of music with particular reference to Christian conceptions of reconciliation. Michael Minch's chapter initially examines art by examining its relationship to human rights, democratisation and justice movements and its power in Christian and spiritual formation. He argues the practice of music is deeply democratic and actually models democracy. Minch speaks about music containing two energies which can contribute to conflict transformation, peace-building and reconciliation. James Amanze's discussion focuses on Rwanda after the 1995 Genocide. He investigates the role that music and dance play in establishing, promoting and nurturing harmonious relations and argues that these artistic expressions are unique forms of communication which transcend cultural boundaries which can help people to reach out to each other. Overall Amanze presents the case that music and dance can promote emotional and spiritual healing which are essential to the process of reconciliation.

Chijioko John Ojukwu discusses the issue of empathy and lament through an examination of the music and poetry of Black Americans. His discourse presents the power of song and poetry in the cultivation of empathetic dialogue and listening which he argues creates a deeper and much more meaningful engagement with the 'other'. The key issue in all of this is that lament can unmask violence, nurture empathy and also promote forgiveness, all of which are essential elements in conflict transformation. The chapter by Fabienne van Eck is set against the backdrop of musicians across the globe who work in potential or post conflict contexts alongside local people to teach music. Through reflection and analysis of her own work with women and children in the Middle East and Central East Africa she considers two key issues. First, the appropriateness of musical activities in a society whose musical culture may be radically different from that of the workshop leader and second, the types of activities that can help children in conflict areas to express themselves and to listen to the others in order to increase their self-esteem and empathy for each other while respecting their own (music) culture. The examples which van Eck discusses gives insights into how music can promote and help participants develop their teamwork, listening skills, and social skills.

In the section on film and performing art, Peter Malone discusses the significance of cinema, especially during the twentieth century, and argues for more education, both for adults and children, in learning how to watch a film, reflect on it and share reflections. He advocates a greater involvement in cinema and its power to affect imagination, heart and mind. He suggests that a way of developing this is through reflection on storytelling through film as he has demonstrated in his case studies in this chapter. Duncan Fisher and Jolyon Mitchell analyse two documentary films, *Rwanda: Living Forgiveness* (2005) and *Uganda: Ready to Forgive* (2008), both of which focus on the practice of forgiveness. They examine the distinctive characteristics of these two films in their use of Rwandan and northern Ugandan traditions, or folk-mechanisms, for healing the wounds in society after the much conflict and suffering. Josepha Ivanka Wessels argues that social documentaries are aimed to enlighten and inform on the nexus between environment, democracy and peace and he examines the relationship between armed conflicts, the environmental roots to these conflicts and theories of ecological peace-building, through the use of film in the context of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Marina Dahlquist discusses the international campaign strategies aimed to eliminate inequalities in sanitary and social conditions worldwide by examining the work of the International Health Bard and

Rockefeller-film *Unhooking the Hookworm* (1920), which was the key educational tool in British Guiana, Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

On the topic of performing arts, Theodora Hawksley explores the two recent works of Fearghus Ó'Conchúir who is one of Ireland's leading independent choreographers and dancers: *Mo Mhórchoir Féin* (2010) and *Tabernacle* (2011), in which he explores the relationship between the Church and the Irish people. She argues that Ó'Conchúir's work reveals 'body' as a helpful metaphor for peace-building in the church in Ireland since we can express the task in theological terms as learning to live as a wounded risen body. Geoffrey Stevenson examines some of the ways in which physical theatre or 'mime' may be a form of affective, non-verbal rhetoric useful in peace-building. He argues that physical theatre, when interrogated through rhetorical analyses, remains a significant means of embodying narratives, symbols and values that can be formative for a 'virtuous' community and inspirational for the empathetic individual. Linden Bicket discusses the life and work of George Mackay Brown, a well known Scottish poet. She examines ways in which acts of non-violence and sacrifice for the sake of peace are dramatized by Brown, who demonstrates his moral and sacramental imagination through his shaping of the life of St Magnus into fiction and suggests a number of ways in which Brown's novel can be opened up, used, adapted and put in place for practical arts-based peace-building strategies. Simon Feta explores the liturgical theology of walking as a means for mediating between people in post-conflict Uganda. He argues, using the image of walking in the Bible, for the centrality of the body in worship. In emergence from war, a fusion of embodied demands echoing reconciliation frames sporadic opportunities for reviewing enacted liturgies to foster peace initiatives between individuals, communities and state.

The chapters in this volume were originally presented at the fourth International Conference on Peace and Reconciliation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2012. During the opening session, David Maughan Brown welcomed the participants by using the greetings of Zulu speaking South Africans. '*Sawu bona*' literally means, 'I see you' and the response is '*sikhona*', which means 'I am here'. He explained the importance of these greetings: until you 'see' me, I do not exist, and when you 'see' me, you bring me into existence. This was reiterated by Richard Andrew at the last session of the conference, who suggested that these greetings express 'something fundamental about the significance of recognition in human encounter: I recognise you; I comprehend you; I make space for you; I embrace you; I see you'. He further expanded:

How do we develop a wisdom of seeing when our viewpoints both overlap and diverge? One theme that has emerged [from the contributions of this volume] is the ability of the arts and religious and political traditions both to create conditions for human flourishing and to destroy them. As we were reminded in a number of ways, the arts and other forms of expression do not exist in the abstract but in embodied practices.

So what practices might serve human flourishing, however we might interpret it? ... I would suggest that practices which serve human flourishing will be of at least three kinds: celebratory (doxological), revelatory, and redemptive. They are celebratory because they create a capacity to see the diversity of human life and expression as a gift, as something to be celebrated; revelatory because they have a capacity to expose the truth about ourselves, to 'unhide' the truth, to 'see the suffering of my people', (a theme picked up in Jyoti Sahi's use of the image of the eye in his paintings in the cover page); and redemptive because they have a capacity to re-humanise, to help us share together in the task of becoming what we might be.

In spite of limitations and shortcomings, various forms of art have contributed to bringing peace and justice. They help us to 'see the suffering of my people', to work for sustainable peace-building. Religious individuals and communities are part and parcel of this endeavour.

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PART I:
VISUAL ART

WEEPING PICTURES: LINKING VIOLENCE AND EMPATHY IN VISUAL ARTS

LUCIEN VAN LIERE

Samudra's conjunctive

One day, Imam Samudra was looking at pictures of headless infants from Afghanistan on the internet. It was 2001. The US was bombing the Taliban. Reports about civilian casualties ('body counts') were published on the internet by different NGOs and anti-war groups. On some of these websites pictures of dead or severely injured people were uploaded. Imam Samudra came across these war-pictures and was shocked by what he saw there and made a decision: he would avenge the children. In his notebook he showed a deep awareness of the grisly reality of the pictures and wrote:

Those images are photos of what really happened, that are scanned, put into a computer, and then uploaded onto the internet. They are immovable, without sound, numb. *But* the souls cried out in agony and their suffering filled my heart, taking on the suffering of their parents... (Editors *Tempo*, 2003; my italics).

In another diary-phrase Samudra wrote: 'Your weeping, oh headless infants, slammed against the walls of Palestine, Your cries, oh Afghani infants, all called to me; all you, who, now armless, executed by the vile bombs of hell' (*Tempo* 2003: 15-16). Imam Samudra became one of the architects of the Bali-bomb that killed 202 people in October 2002.

What do pictures of violence do? How to understand the interaction between a picture of headless children and Imam Samudra as an observing, understanding, acting agent? Samudra's diary-notes, partly published by the Indonesian magazine *Tempo*, show at least three levels of interaction between the agent and the picture. First, Samudra 'saw' pictures that were 'immovable', 'soundless' and 'numb'. Secondly, these

pictures, or better: the ‘souls’ of what was soundless, suddenly start to ‘cry out in agony’. Thirdly, Samudra acknowledges the reality of what he sees, taking up the grief of the parents. By acknowledging this, imagining the grief of broken ties, he draws the picture out of its two-dimensional physical frame and extends the cry he heard and felt in such a way that it also includes Palestinian infants. Their cries become personal; they all cried ‘to me’, Samudra claims. In the end, the personal appeal is framed within theological language: the bombs are from hell. Samudra decides that the ‘cry out of agony’ that he hears from these soundless pictures are a strong appeal for revenge. Are they?

The pictures Samudra saw were not ‘crying’, neither were they ‘calling’. He didn’t know about the grief of their parents. Nevertheless, he ‘heard’ something that became a moral imperative and a strong motivation behind the terror-attack on Bali. Samudra’s story raises the question of the impact of pictures of violence that are shown on the internet, in newspapers, magazines, used by fund-raising campaigns of NGOs etc. For Samudra however, the shocking pictures of violence did not encourage peace but instigated more violence. What do pictures of violence do? How does visual arts or, more specifically, paintings, drawings, photographs lead us to ‘empathy’ (both violent and irenic) and how can we understand the link between the agent and the picture? In this article I am exploring a possible answer to this question by focusing on the interaction between pictures and the observing agents.

Samudra uses the word ‘but’ as if he is aware of a gap between what he saw and heard and what was pictured. This ‘but’ is exactly the moment the observing agent and the picture seems to fuse into one, or, when the pictures become alive in the biography of the agent. When Samudra became responsible for the bombing of two pubs on Bali one year later, he almost literally re-created what he observed, becoming an ‘actor’ in the atrocity he initially observed. I will use W. J. Thomas Mitchell’s theory on picture and image and Judith Butler’s theory on human grief and social relationality to examine this capricious ‘but’ that forms the link between agency and picture. I will understand this ‘link’ as a physical link, connecting the violated bodies in a picture with the physical constitution of the observing agent. But before I will explore Mitchell’s and Butler’s theories, I will underline the importance of my question by exploring the problematic way visual arts is used in modern European history to make an argument for peace through pictures of violence.

Efforts to make arguments for peace through visual arts

In modern European history (I will confine myself to this part of the world), different efforts have been made to demand attention for the disasters of violent conflicts. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mainly due to the European wars that had a strong religious colour, violence became more down-to-earth for the first time in European history. Unlike arts showing the sacred history of suffering saints and a suffering Christ or unlike arts that somehow seem to rejoice in the punishment of heretics, a growing sensibility appeared about the gruesome effects of war, whether justified or not. One of the first painters who showed the abominable effects of warfare through arts was Jaques Calot (1592-1635). In his *Les Grande Misere de la Guerre*, a series of eighteen prints made in 1633, he did not glorify The Thirty Years European war, but showed how this war had produced anger, grief, death and revenge.

Later painters, like Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) at the start of the nineteenth century, followed Calot's example. But unlike Calot, whose scenes show violence from a distance, Goya portrayed close-up broken bodies and scenes of extreme suffering. This was until then predominantly known only from Medieval portrayals of the suffering Christ, suffering saints or from paintings about punishments in hell or public executions of heretics, in which the 'why' of suffering was not asked. Goya's paintings and etchings showed the cruelties of the Dos de Mayo Uprising, the Peninsular War in 1808, the famine in Madrid and the disappointing restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. *Los desastres de la Guerra*, the series title was a literal translation of Calot's printed series, was painted between 1810 and 1814 and not published until 1863, due to its anti-clerical and politically critical content. The etchings propose an intense relationship between the observing agent on the one, and the inner construction in the etching between perpetrator and victim on the other 'side'. The fractured bodies in *i Grande nazaña! i Con muertos!* for instance, link directly with the body of the agent and create a feeling of disgust and nausea. The series made by Calot and Goya during different times made the same argument: violence creates violence and is, in the end, extenuated by the lawful authorities. There is no justice for the victims. This way, feelings of disgust, repulsion and injustice remain and are not reconciled.

Later portrayals of war were and still are often modeled after Calot's and Goya's 'disaster of war' series, like for instance Otto Dix' drawings of the First World War, Salvador Dali's premonition of the Spanish Civil War or Jake and Dino Chapman's paintings of the First Gulf War. What

these paintings continually show is the violent dissection of human bodies. You see human limbs, scattered across the two-dimensional surface of the painting. It is like the painter cuts into the flesh of the observing agent. You feel the misery the painters show, especially because their paintings show artificial, sometimes sadistic reshufflings of human limbs. What is interesting about these paintings is that the artists make their argument by showing violated bodies. The argument about violence and warfare is made by nameless bodies that somehow link with 'my' body as observer. It is like the distance between 'my' body and 'their' bodies is brushed away and I am pulled into the painting through somatic responses like disgust and nausea. I think this somatic moment is precisely what Samudra explains with the conjunction 'but', that marks the transition between seeing a picture and feeling a picture; between seeing scattered bodies and hearing them cry.

The appearance of photography, mid-nineteenth century, seemed to be an interesting opportunity to 'show' the 'real' disasters of war. The 'magic' of photography, to show something shocking 'real', did not immediately have the same result as had paintings and etchings of artists making an impartial argument against the violence of warfare. The first war-photography appeared during the American Civil War in the 1860s. Matthew Brady photographed a whipped black man, his half-naked body showing clearly the signs of horrific torture. The photo was disseminated across the Union-states of the American North, showing the evil that Union-troops were battling. This picture was not meant to erase compassion alone; it was also an argument justifying the Union-actions against the South. The naked body is not only to show what the practice of whipping does; it is also part of the argument, as if its nakedness shows its vulnerability and links with the body of the viewer. The photo did not change public opinion, but rather confirmed a conviction that was already there. After the American Civil War, Brady tried to sell his photographs, but it seems people were not interested in war-pictures and could not see the value of it. In the same way, pictures were made during the Boer Wars in South Africa (1880-1881; 1899-1902). These pictures were predominantly made to 'inform' the homeland England about the proceedings of the troops at the battlefield.

During the First World War something changed. Close-ups of wounded and dead soldiers were taken for the first time in history. After this war, in 1924, German photographer Ernst Friedrich published an uncanny book entitled *Krieg dem Kriege!* (War Against War!). In this book, Friedrich published twenty four close-up photos of badly wounded combatants along many grisly pictures of badly wounded or dead soldiers

from both sides (Friedrich 2004). Friedrich wanted to send a clear message to the post-World War I world: this is what war does; this is the result of violence. He presumed that these pictures of war and violence would work as a shock-therapy for Europe. Doing so, he presumed that picturing violence and suffering erases compassion or at least a fear for violence. Friedrich, still strongly based within a tradition of European pacifism, presumed that the anger raised by seeing these pictures has the power to transform violence, through abhorrence of violence, into non-violence. In other words: he presumed that abhorrence of violence would not transform into anger and feelings of revenge towards the perpetrators. Responses to his book were very hostile and his center for peace that he established was burned down. However, war-photographer Hermann Rex felt encouraged by Ernst's attempt and published in 1926 about 600 photographs in three volumes entitled *Der Weltkrieg in Seiner Rauhen Wirklichkeit* (The Brutal Reality of the World War). Again, broken, violated, torn apart bodies were used as argument. Friedrich and Rex clearly wanted to show the harsh reality of war, to make the dead bodies weep and scream, like a Medieval Christ, who looks down from the cross at 'me' and makes 'me' responsible for his suffering.

After World War II, pictures and movies of concentration camps, made by the Allied forces were published. In German cinemas, people were confronted with the Shoah and some were hoping it would shock and make people think about their responsibilities, expecting these movies would create an opportunity to link with recent history. This however did not happen. The shock was there, but the link with any form of responsibility was lacking. Responses were rather defensive, excluding what happened from the direct context of the observing agent. It took a while before the Auschwitz-pictures made by Wilhelm Brasse were published showing extreme suffering of vulnerable, often naked bodies. Brasse had been a Polish photographer and prisoner in Auschwitz, assigned with the task to take pictures of prisoners. During his life after the war, Brasse always kept close a specific picture he made of naked boys who were close to death due to starvation. They are smiling. This contradiction produces an extreme shock, knowing these children were about to die. These boys with their smiles accuse the observing agents. For a photograph to accuse, it must shock, Susan Sontag writes (Sontag 2003: 72). Brasse photographed about 35,000 people before they were killed. These pictures became a haunting image for all other faces he saw through the lens after the war: 'When I tried to photograph young girls, for example, dressed normally,' he told Agence France-Presse, 'all I'd see would be these Jewish children' (Hevesi 2012). After Brasse's death in