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### War Economics: Marginal Benefits > Marginal Costs

The art of sharing personal accounts is what has made humanity develop into a caring and understanding world. Personal accounts of experiences helps people learn, individually and globally. Without knowing the damaging effects that the bombs on Japan had, there would have already been another major atomic bomb dropped somewhere else in the world. All narratives, factual and personal, are vital. War narratives have the potential to be harmful to children and future generations, but because of the humanity and depth of understanding they bring, the leash constraining the telling of narratives should be loosely held.

Records of events can be reported in numerous manifestations; all of which have different effects. The forms of expression and representation variate from music, paintings, photography, verbal story telling, and sole factual first person accounts such as those found in history textbooks. Famous Academy Award song writer and singer, M.I.A., has successfully told her perspective of oppression in countries caused by war with her song, "Borders." Spanish painter, Salvador Dali, represented his view of death in war through his paint, "The Face of War." "The Face of War" is a painting that includes multiple skulls in one enormous skull. Although unlife-like, Dali captures the horror he experienced with one single painting. With this painting, he shows the reality of war - pain and death. Each of the skulls' eyes are weary with sorrow, and one can see the dread in their sloping eyes. The actual skulls, of course, represent the dead. Both,

pain and death, are particularly shunned in social media and educational publications because of the strain it may cause veterans and the ability to disturb children. While the reasons for censoring graphic images such as, “The Face of War,” blanketing the truth from potential soldiers and even civilians is not justifiable.

Other people, such as photographers, have also been able to capture the reality of war. Photographer, Joe Rosenthal, shot the famous image titled, “Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima (1945)”. The photo is an image of five American soldiers who are holding up the United States flag on the Japanese island. The shot perfectly embodies the relief experienced when victory is gained in war as well as the strength and effort put into war. While this photo was praised, winning the highly respected Pulitzer Prize, other photos are not. Sanitized images tend to have more glory versus graphic, unpublished ones due America’s “helicopter mom” need to shelter its children and veterans. Kenneth Jarecke, a photographer, encapsulated the very true and very disturbing aspect of war, agony. In 1991, Jarecke took the photo of a “charred man” (DeGhett 74). The image is graphic enough to see pieces of his skin folding in and the pain this man underwent all through the sole capturing of his burnt face. The reason why America is not fond of not only Jarecke’s image, but other violent accounts, is due to the fact that a clean battle is the misperception and hopeful lie that people tightly hold.

There is death, there is no harm. There is death, there are no lives lost; America’s closely embraced fallacy of a narrative that is strongly pushed upon the public. “The Atlantic’s, Conor Friedersorf argues, (sanitized images) make it “easier to accept bloodless language” such as 1991 references to “surgical strikes” or modern day terminology like “kinetic warfare” (DeGhett 74). The vocabulary used to describe war, as mentioned by DeGhett, removes humanity from the

bloody situation. Images of men holding up a flag, aerial views of war fields, and of military material are preferred to fall under the immaculate warfare terminology (74). But the carefully chosen trimmed reports allows America to believe one thing: “nobody ever died” during drastic times (81).

However, the want for cleansed war chronicles is understandable. Truthful accounts, whether in photography or personal narratives, have the potential to scar small children and cause post traumatic stress to younger generations. Hillman Prize winner, Sarah Stillman, interviewed Hiroshima survivor, Tomiko Shoji in her article, “Hiroshima and the Inheritance of Trauma.” Shoji explains that she was always hesitant and afraid of sharing her identity because many people would reject her due to possible genetic defects she is might carry (Stillman 445). Although her fears were rational, she gained enough courage to share her story with loved ones, especially her granddaughter, Sabath. Sabath recalls that she learned of her grandmothers narrative at the young age of six and was very disturbed by it (445). They took a trip once to a river where her mother described it as “a blood river and people would jump into it and their skin would burn off” (445-46). The trip to the river was then followed by a trip to a local museum where Sabath viewed statues of children her height who had their skin liquefied and clothes charred (446). The vexing tale and statues nonetheless scarred Sabath. Viewing those situations as a young child distressed Sabath. Not only was this little six year old distraught, but she was also left traumatized; therefore the cost of effecting younger generations. For instance, Sabath’s crying occurred more frequent due to her newly obtained knowledge of what Shoji went through. Sabath’s post traumatic stress was evident in her new fear of planes. “Each time she saw a plane in the air, she panicked just as her grandmother continued to do” (446). Shoji’s granddaughter is

only one example of a child effected from true war accounts, but it is critical to realize the numerous other children that have been and can be caused tribulation.

Although precise and multi-faceted explanations of the terror of war can be harmful to young children, the decision to censor them should not be made by corporations or the government, but rather parents themselves. Jarecke, the photographer who captured the photo of a charred man, or rather his photograph, was shunned. United States newspaper editors did not even receive the image on their desks (DeGhett 80). America extracted the very possibility of viewing the reality of war. Removing the ability to share multiple accounts, despite graphics removes empathy and understanding that is necessary in humanity. Instead of displaying an actual man suffering, most news sources chose to present images that focused on “grainy shots and video footage of the roofs of targeted buildings” (76). The decision to eliminate humanity from war eliminates “the empathy that Jarecke says is crucial in photography, particularly photography that is meant to document death and violence” (78). Exposing suffering, during and after wartime, is what ignites understanding of the harsh reality. If suffering is not known, detachment occurs, which is only natural. But if sorrow is demonstrated, people often find themselves seeing a deeper meaning to everything and feeling remorse or respect for the other being.

Stillman references Shoji’s suffering: “Later would some, like Shoji, come to discover that the most devastating aftereffects were like ghosts: coming and going on a whim, wreaking forms of havoc offer incomprehensible to outsiders and, sometimes even to those who suffered it” (Stillman 444). Shoji experienced negative effects as instantly as the bomb dropped. She hid her identity as a hibakusha, “explosion-affected person,” to avoid being disregarded for marriage

(444-45). When her husband found out, he was furious, describing her as “spoiled goods” (445). She endured more effects later down the road. From being afraid of planes, to “crazy episodes,” to her teeth falling out, Shoji suffered greatly (445). Her languish, as well as bomb survivors and soldiers, often goes unnoticed, unattended. Perhaps if more narratives were told such as Shoji’s, or more images were shown like Jarecke’s, the rest of America could comprehend, empathize, and attend these sufferers - healing could be more feasible for them. While they would be on the road to recovery, America would be on the road to acceptance of reality. For all one knows, further wars would be thought through just a tad bit more, possibly defunded, or praised, but there would still be a great sense of understanding.

Depth and humanity is key to grasping reality. When reality is hidden to shield children and further generations, it banishes reality; it banishes depth and humanity. “In the end, of course, a true war story is never about war. It’s about the special way that dawn spreads out on a river when you know you must cross the river and march into the mountains and do things you are afraid to do. It’s about love and memory. It’s about sorrow. It’s about sisters who never write back and people who never listen” (O’Brien 79). Various and authentic narratives of war and suffering should not be in restricted and prohibited, they should be free.

## Works Cited

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