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The Real Face of War

Photographs of war show us the real face of war. War is gruesome, sad, and very hard to look at; but if we do not see these war images we will never know the reality of what war really is. War is often times censored to prevent the people from knowing the truth, but hiding the reality regarding the pain and suffering people go through of not only the soldiers, but also the innocent people and everyday civilians who live in these war zones is not a solution to help end war. Being aware of what is going on in war zones and those being affected by war gives us inspiration and motivation to possibly try and stop war, due to its negative affects on so many innocent people. A way to educate others and ourselves about the topic of war is through the knowing of war narratives. War Narratives are real life accounts or images of real situations going on in war that are affecting soldiers or simply bystanders. Through war narratives we get a deeper connection to those affected by war because it gives us a deeper look into the suffering associated with war, rather than just the prideful face war can have. The only way to stop war is to know the facts and truths, which is why war narratives should not be censored due to the fact that the narratives allow us to see the reality of what war really is.

The images the media releases are some of the best sources we have at knowing the reality of war. Freelance magazine writer, Torie Rose DeGhett explains, “Sometimes though, omitting an image means shielding the public from the messy, imprecise consequences of a war – making the coverage incomplete, and even deceptive”(75). Not knowing certain facts about war allows us to be unaware of the fact that people are dying,

people are suffering, and more than anything we are doing nothing to stop it. When looking at war photos we get this sense of pride for our country and think that during war we are eliminating the enemy, but never do we stop to think about the innocent people and bystanders who get caught in the crossfire and lose their life.

When it comes to innocent children being affected by war and seeing them suffer many of times is what hits home for a lot of people. An example of innocent children getting caught in the crossfire and suffering would be the photo of the dead child soldier lying on the ground. This child appears to be dead with a gunshot wound to the eye lying probably near a battlefield. Looking at this child, a sense of pure innocence comes across and it is sad to know that his life was taken due to the effects of war. Looking at war images involving children makes us feel very accountable for that child's life. Just thinking what if it was our son/daughter or brother/sister would be very traumatic. Children being hurt in battle is extremely devastating to think about and is unfair that their life had to end that way; therefore, trying to shield the public from war images, will just make society more naive to the thought of war. Often times when we think of war, images like the one of the dead child soldier don't come to mind but rather only the suffering our American soldiers go through. Showing only one side of war is a way of sugar coating war. We should be exposed to all aspects of war, so that we know the many people affected not only the side our media portrays. Looking at reality allows for a better understanding of what really happens because just like the DeGhett says, "And so be it. I mean, war is ugly. Its hideous"(82). Sugarcoating something as awful as war, if unwise to do because the truth gives us power to try and make a difference.

Looking at war images gives us some kind of accountability for what we just seen and it's what we do with that responsibility that counts. Behind these images being viewed are real people who have been affected or lost their lives to the affects of war. When looking at these photos we need to remember that the soldiers behind these photos are someone's son, brother, father, husband, or friend. We need to put ourselves in the family's shoes and think how would we feel to see our family member dead on the dashboard of a truck in the middle of a war zone. One of Jarecke's photographs shows a dead, burned soldier on the dashboard of a truck. This soldier fought until the very end to try and save his life; even until the point of being burned he was still trying to pull himself out of the truck in order to survive. Looking through the war photos there is a sense that many of these soldiers are just trying to survive the violence of war on a daily basis to try and go back to their families one day. Seeing a family member's life ended this way for war is extremely devastating; therefore, DeGhett states, "Photos like Jarecke's not only show that bombs drop on real people; they also make the public feel accountable"(82). Lives are taken on a regular basis in the name of war, but never do we take any action to putting an end to war. Knowing that people are loosing their lives, but never doing anything to change that is the part that makes society as a whole feel the most accountable. Going against those who support war and feel that is the only way to resolve issues our country may have is a start to saving so many soldiers and innocent people lives. Some may think the soldiers signed up to fight in war, but not the bystanders caught in the crossfire.

At times when the thought of war comes about we tend to think the bombs and shootings only occur within a premise that only affects soldiers, but it's far from the

truth. War can occur anywhere and affect anybody and knowing that can influence us to try and put a stop to the war. These uncensored war images can be very graphic at times and some may think it's too much, but it doesn't nearly compare to living through war. DeGhett states, "an ability not just to offend the viewer, but to implicate him or her as well"(82), causing the viewers of these war photos to feel a bit uncomfortable and find a connection must happen in order to feel a sense of responsibility to try and help change the situation of war. Getting people to feel a sense of accountability will allow them to voice their opinion about war and hopefully together we can put a stop to this situation that killing so many people because in all reality, "If we're big enough to fight a war, we should be big enough to look at it"(82). Looking at the victims of war a certain way can affect them more than the war damage itself.

The aftermath of war is often more damaging to the victims than war itself, due to the fact of how society views them as survivors. According to the reading, "Hiroshima and the Inheritance of Trauma" if you were a survivor of war you were seen as an outcast in society due to the after effects that the radiation in the bomb carried. Genetics were damaged for those affected by the bombing and the outspread to future generations was something not accepted by others. In the reading Stillman says, "to be a hibakusha, they explained, was not an honorific but a source of shame, a secret to be closely held"(444) because they were, "worried that their genetic material would be perceived as spoiled goods"(445). The reading explains how in World War II the first atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, Japan. This bomb killed so many, destroyed lives, and left some scared forever. Although, survivors were not given the same recognition as those who unfortunately died because they were believed to infect the rest of the population after the

bombing and it should not have been that way. Being an innocent bystander and being affected by war is not their fault, but those who decided to engage in war. Looking back and hearing these stories only shows that we are still living this today due to the ongoing wars. We need to feel accountable when it comes to hearing stories of how much war has affected people knowing that war still continues to separate families and take so many lives. Those people who survived traumatic events like war need to stop feeling accountable for something they were victims of and all of the rest of the people in society need to respect them for everything they have been through. Feeling the sense of accountability will allow us to better understand the victims true feelings and prevent other victims from feeling the same way or going through the same experience. War affects more innocent people than anything, and not only in the present time of war; but also in the aftermath of war.

War is not only affecting people in the present, or those who loose their lives, but it is more for those who survive and have to live with the traumatic memories. As a community we should feel accountability and guilt for those who have to live with different disabilities due to war, which they didn't ask to be involved in. Listening to stories such as Shojis should give us inspiration to feel more accountability towards the topic of war. Although the decision to end war is a big demand, a person feeling accountable is the beginning stages to make a change in order to end the devastating results of war. Besides the physical effects the psychological effects were even worse. According to Stillman, "But perhaps most debilitating were the psychological symptoms that she didn't think she could attribute to the radiation. For thirty or forty years, I was so afraid of thunder and lightning,"(445). The loud sounds or flashy lights would

automatically bring Shoji back to the moment she was in when the bombing occurred and would make her relive the moment over and over causing the extreme psychological damage. After having suffered through physical effects of war and still living with after effects can do a lot of damage to the person, but that can help educate the rest of the population on why war should come to an end. Hearing real life stories of the war effects on a person allows us to better connect to the person and other people possibly affected by the same situation. Being aware is the first step to making a change towards not only ending war, but also helping those who have already been traumatically affected by war. Certain situation during war can affect the rest of your life; whether they be physical or psychological, they can damage you greatly.

War is damaging in every aspect possible and ending war is the only way to prevent stories like these from repeating themselves. War affecting so many innocent people is not a good cycle to continue and therefore becoming more aware of what war really consists of is the only way to stop this horrible situation. Looking at published photos is a great way to know the real war story and feel some sort of empathy to try and stop these innocent children, men, and women from dying. Voicing our opinions towards our government and those in charge of war is a great way to start and fight for a change. Accepting reality and doing something about it is the only option we have now.