



Picturing American War on Iraq: A Visual Discourse Analysis of Decoding 'Death' in the Photojournalist's Lenses

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Abstract

For me, the strength of photography lies in its ability to evoke humanity. If war is an attempt to negate humanity, then photography can be perceived as the opposite (James Nachtwey)

(<https://www.quotes.net/mquote/102671>)

Death, though certain, is horrible and scary when it comes to the fact that it is due to war and armed conflict for decades in a spot like Iraq. People relate war to history through photography (Topbaş, 2011). The current paper fundamentally is a portal to mirroring the photojournalist's shots in making meaning of death by letting the audience read what is unspeakable in photos. Basically, a collection of (19) photos captured by three World Press Prizes winners, photojournalists – Lynsey Addario, Adam Ferguson, and Ivor Prickett – (among others) – were analysed, focusing on their galleries of photos and the media on the the American war in Iraq. Doing visual discourse analysis in photos, though of different war eras in Iraq, and a semiotic approach is radically adopted in the analytical part to break the code of Death in the selected photos. Icons and symbols are potentially workable clues for thematizing non-physical death in a place of the world which is devastated thoroughly. It is the bombarded questions on which the current study is based: (1) How could the abstract death be approached linguistically in war photography? (2) Is it the shot that nearly kills the photojournalist being in the front line making them feel a momentum death as the casualties? (3) Is the photojournalist's role in war an eyewitness of the casualties' physical bloody death or there could be other hidden deaths that are decoded in the shots?, and (4) Are the camera's shots reliable enough to speak the messages on death in wartime? The study transpired a variety of deaths in the iconic and symbolic shots of the American war in Iraq. Other academic shots for future works on visual discourse, I remain capturing.

1. ON 'DEATH.'

Since long ago, the *theme of death* has been decisive for many authors, especially in literature; death in literature is as old as literature itself, so to speak. I was inspired by many literary books I studied in the undergraduate courses at the Department of English in the College of Arts at the University of Mosul, Iraq, where *death* provokes the audience's emotional response. Among the three great themes of life and literature, love, death, and war, Shakespeare was a pioneer in the field: his plays are packed with death in different ways; every thinkable way of

dying that could occur is (almost!) with Shakespeare. It is clear enough that *death* is integrated with the themes and ideas of the plays. Being never gratuitous, the deaths may be tragic, many are shocking and violent, and others are just creative, but they all move the play along towards the resolution of the play's conflict. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare suggests several main ideas – family, corruption, and revenge. Still, the reader could view *death* in every single line of the text.

The ghost of death is present where people gather on tables every day. We feel that we live in great danger on the planet these days. The horrible number of casualties worldwide due to the Covid 19-pandemic exceeds the number of fatalities in (SARS) and other health and natural crises. However, it is not just the virus which causes diseases and death; the physical realities of insects are inescapable in this context either, and that "... beyond this world there is another world of supernatural lore concerning insects and death" (Cherry, 2011: p.82) It is interesting to refer to Cherry's article where much mythology on different species of insects in relation to death was touched upon. Readers may kindly notice that I am not anti-biodiversity, but I am referring to part of the literature on insects relating to man's death. Here comes Sarah Gillespie's motivational image titled *Fallen Bee* (Figure 1) which is devoted respectfully to the momentous conference titled "**Borrowed Time: on death, dying & change**" (October 31–November 3, 2021) logo image that I am lucky to be part of.

Figure 1
Fallen Bee



Note. By Sarah Gillespie Adopted from *Borrowed Time: On death, dying & change* Conference from https://borrowed-time.info/about/?_ga=2.53194223.65011933.1646021689-385692740.1646021689.

"[L]ooking at nature is part of my DNA", Gillespie says in one of her interviews (<https://www.sarahgillespie.co.uk/about/articles-reviews/groundwork-gallery: p.1>). The bee's death in her image likely connotes how man causes death to the biodiversity sharing them Mother Earth which, in turn, represents one image among other images of death, as a major theme of the conference. Is that all for the story of death on the planet?

As a researcher and Iraqi civilian witnessing wars for decades, I unquestionably reply with a loud "No". The dirty little and heavy weapons and ammunition man manufactures to kill man in the battlefield landscapes speak to the different images of death during traumatic war events. Media reach the audience's perception of different death scenes in wartime.

It is thought provoking to refer to Fishman's book titled *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead*, published in 2017 as I found some clues pertinent to pictures of the dead and the media posting. I could not access to the book; rather, I could access to Perlmutter's book review titled "Jessica M. Fishman, **Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead**, New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017, 281 pp."

(2018: pp. 2550–2555). Based on extensive interviews with picture editors in media and a review of more than 30 years of imagery appearing in the tabloid and broadcast media, Fishman notified that

As noted throughout the book, there are several reasons to expect that dead bodies will frequently appear in the news. However, are such images indeed common? The answer is actually no.... Despite a purported epidemic of “graphic” death spectacles, images of the corpse, also called postmortem pictures, are actually exceedingly rare (Ibid.: p.3 in cited in Perlutter, 2018, p.: 2550).

I may argue in this introductory part of the study against what Fishman concludes. Partly, it is true that displaying dead images in media hurts the public feelings. , posting objectionable harmful sensitive or inconvenient dead body images by the news editors and photojournalists remains the big challenge with the western regime in war time. ‘Fake news’ is the trend of politicians and decision- makers to hide truth about launching military operations in any place in the. As such, censoring images in media is necessary. Let us spell out facts not only words. In a very in-depth article posted on *The Atlantic*, “THE WAR PHOTO NO ONE WOULD PUBLISH” (2014), DeGhett reveals hidden facts about the editorial decision of not publishing an image of an anonymous Iraqi soldier ended to featureless face and body by fire in the Gulf War. “...But the media wouldn’t run the picture” (p.1) is the DeGhett’s wording at the topic of the article, which, on the surface structure, matches Fisherman’s conclusion partly in the foregoing discussion. Keeping sensitive images of deaths from public in warfare is not due to editorial decision to avoid hurting the public feelings; but “... to have a significant impact...to challenge the popular narrative of a clean, uncomplicated war” (p.3), as the American regime and the Pentagon describe the Gulf War, authority imposes logistical roadblocks.

Kenneth Jarecke, the American photojournalist whose photo was refused by the American media but later published in *The Observer* and other journals said: “When you have an image that disproves that myth (referring to the “clean war” in Operation Desert Storm), then you think it’s going to be widely published” (DeGette, 2014, p.3) (Figure11: p.15).

The current album-like study provides a new avenue to the literature to approach the unspoken texts and messages of faces of death in a sample of American and western wartime photojournalists’ images which were pictured in different places and times in Iraq. The brutality of the American military and the coalition forces is not only represented in the dead bodies of the Iraqi civilians and the Iraqi military forces; rather, it goes far beyond the physical death. I hope that I may fill the gap in the literature in the sense that a cluster of fields namely, war photography, visual discourse analysis, and semiotics are served in one dish to answer the question: What sort of death is decoded in a photojournalist’s shot in American war in Iraq? Readers may initially be astonished by the apparent literature in the forthcoming parts since the available studies have been conducted on photography (and /or war photography) including American war in Iraq, in general. There is also bulky literature on visual discourse analysis in different fields but not war photography too. Research on semiotics have been excessively approached in a variety of fields but not war photography. Therefore, the literature I am presenting is selective to serve the goals of the study and to match the analytical part.

2. OPENING REMARKS

I could not avoid recalling Homer's Iliad- epic poem in 24 books written in 762 B.C. As poem's battles, Iliad is full with descriptions of the deaths of soldiers whose role is to pass away. The tragedy of war Homer did wish to magnify is done by providing a small story of the life or family history of the deceased, though there was no pasteurization yet the text is powerful enough to figure out death. In the history of war and conflict, whether old or modern, the deaths and the casualties numbers are mostly mirrored in the headlines news in the mid of the traumatic events; possibly years later to be under the microscope of researchers. In this qualitative research, my choice of war photography to detect faces of death in wartime seems reasonable academically. Therefore, it is not personal appeal to view images of humans in their death throes, which "... seems almost perverse..." (Major, 2013.p. 1) for the readers at the first glance of the title. As war photography is in the central of art field, no one could pass over the scripts and movies about war; I can think of *The Imitation Game* (Tyldum, 2014) by design. It is an American movie about how a British mathematician was able to decrypt German intelligence messages for the British government during the Second World War. My goal behind this movie is one fold: It is all about cracking the enemy's army codes to solve. Likewise, my supposition in this study is to code-breaking the uncoded war messages in war photography; the *Enigma of truth telling*, I would say, in each single photograph which the photographer shots in different parts of Iraq at wartime. I might be different in my supposition compared to other scholars in considering a photograph a message without a code because a code is of a language. In other words, "...photographs do not supply their own language but do indicate a message with meaning that can be determined through a complex understanding of various intersecting relationships" (Naylor, 2018, p.: 18).

2.1. War Photography

Being awarded a World Press Award for one of his shots in Afghanistan, Adam Ferguson voiced, "When I won a World Press award for this photograph, I felt sad. People were congratulating me and there was a celebration over an intense tragedy that I had captured. I reconciled it by deciding that more people see a story when a photographer's work is decorated (<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2011/jun/18/war-photographers-special-report>). I could read this between Ferguson's lines. It is not the awards, which the war photojournalist gets, the humanity they raised, as a global issue, is a way to conceptualize death in the new millennium. What is pertinent to this humanity? This matches what Naylor (2018: p.2) called "...an ethical looking/viewing of war photographs..." Viewing war in the modern history "[t]he twentieth century is unarguably the bloodiest century in human history, with death tolls from politically motivated conflicts between 175 and 200 million worldwide" and war photography are "... innocent guides through suffering" (Francisco, 2005, p.: 1). Surfing the net, I could access to some studies tackling war photography in different parts of the world following different perspectives (see among others, Leeuwen & Jaworski, 2002; Topbaş, 2011; Major, 2013; Njirić & Miloslaović, 2016; and Naylor, 2018).

3. SEMIOTICS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The science of semiotics started with the Father of sign, the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. His definition of the *sign* remains the foundation stone of all semiotic studies after him. Following Peirce, a pioneer in this field as well, believed that semiotics attempts to detect the meaning concealed in sights, pictures, and symbols. Consequently, he classified semiotics

into three categories: icon, index, and symbol. It is worth mentioning that I highly depended on icon and symbol in detecting the variety of non-physical deaths in photos of American war

- (1) How could the abstract death be approached linguistically in war photography?
- (2) Is it the shot that nearly kills the photojournalist being in the front line making them feel a momentum death as the casualties?
- (3) Is the photojournalist's role in war an eyewitness of the casualties' physical bloody death or there could be other hidden deaths that are decoded in the shots? (4) Are the camera's shots reliable enough to speak the messages on death in wartime?

4. Data Collection and Sampling

I selected the (19) photos on American war on Iraq at different eras by design. Three World Press Prizes winners photojournalists – Lynsey Addario, Adam Ferguson, and Ivor Prickett – added to others. I contacted the first three photojournalists personally and under their kind permission, they accepted to choose the photos from their galleries to include in my data shot all of the photos. I did contact other photojournalists to get their permission, yet I got no response. This is why part of the data was selected from a variety of websites on American war on Iraq. The captions given by the photojournalists, or by the website, beneath the photos were a good hand of help for me to determine the setting and decode the meaning of death in each photo. It was not a random choice as I followed a particular categorization of the (19) photos in accordance with the themes of non-physical death and semiotic keys icons and symbols into (4) categories:

1. Iconic Death
2. Ico-symbolic Death
3. Symbo-Iconic Death
4. Symbolic Death

5. DECODING THE UNSPOKEN WAR IMAGES: FINDINGS

Most of the events in war are shrouded in mystery, so to speak. It is likely that digging in war archives even centuries later unveils some facts. This holds true for the photos that photojournalists shot at momentum death during war. The current part of the article is devoted to describe and analyse what is beyond the denotative value of the war images I collected by design to come up with different themes of death at wartime in Iraq. As such, my analysis is an attempt to come up with the unspoken discourse represented by the images themes of death adopting visual semiotic approach.

5.1. Iconic Death

❖ Theme of Death: Death of Iraqi Civilians' Home, Shelter, and Peace in Ninevah during ISIS Occupation of the City till Ending the Military Liberation Operations (2014-2017). "There's no place like home!" this was the slogan for all the Iraqi citizens belonging to the variety of sects who were displaced, especially in Nineveh Governorate, which the ISIS fighters occupied in 2014. On August 6, 2014, ISIS conquered the Christian communities in the suburbs and the neighborhoods north of Mosul. Some 120, 000 Christians had to flee overnight. Lynsey Addario's shot, (Figure 2), magnifies the way she views war and peace and the people's experience being at stick; the American photographer says: "I choose to live in peace and witness war - to experience the worst in people but to remember beauty

(https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/lynsey_addario_715377). Addario's lens captured the displaced Christian families from Karakosh, their homeland, to transfer a message to the global Christian world and to all humankind that the ancient Iraqi community, the Christians, are homeless now, which is a tragicomedy. How are they obliged to leave their homes, farms, and towns, then? I could decode a collection of icons, which are gathered in this photo in the following manner.

Icon (1): A hall in a church

Icon (2) The Virgin Mary in the big painting on the back wall

Icon (3): The two icons of the cross

Icon (4): The home stuff including, mattresses, pillows, blankets, sacks, luggage, two water coolers, and boxes of backing

Icon (5): The faces of the lady cuddling her baby and the one sitting on the coach close the man (right hand of the viewer)

Icon (6): The child laying on the ground

Icons (1), (2), and (3) represent the Holy place for worshipping, the church, as an alternative home and shelter for the Christian families who were displaced from their homes after fighters with ISIS started pushing through Iraq and murdering and terrorizing thousands of civilians; even Moslems. In fact, the church could not be a home for the displaced families; though they rely on the goodwill of the church and Christian community for food and non-food items. It is worth noting that Icon (2) shows Virgin Mary's facial expressions of sorrow and misery for the uncertain future as if looking at the Christian people gathering in the hall representing the minorities in Nineveh and Iraq. In addition, in Icon (3), the two icons of the cross speak to the United States and coalition forces, whose members believe in Christianity: "Look what is happening to the Christian people in Nineveh! You did nothing to save us and stop the ISIS once started displacing people!". As a clear sign of the Christian families displacement and losing homes and peace, Icon (4) decodes the message of leaving homes with some home stuff. As an eyewitness, the neighbour of our next-door neighbor in the quarter where I live, were a Mosuli Christian family who refused to leave their house just like other Mosuli families when the ISIS fighters attacked the city at the beginning. I can feel they have that hope of returning home (Anti Mahroosa, her son and his wife with a kid), were later obliged to leave home; they even left some stuff with our next-door neighbor; yet they are never back. The focal point of the photo image is Icons (4) and (5). The facial expressions of the lady cuddling her baby convey her sorrow of losing homes and peace, as a mother taking care of her kids whose trying to make her arms as her baby's bed to let them sleep. In the given situation, the other lady sitting close to the man on the coach (the right hand of the viewer) shows an eye contact with someone who does not appear in the photo. What is this lady eye coding? In the dictionary of body language, eye contact does not need to take a cryptographer to figure it out. It captures and holds attention of the audience, even if one does not move their head at all; "[t]he direction of gaze towards or away from an observer has immediate effects on attentional processing in the observer (van der Wel et al., 2018, p.: 1). The lady's eye contact speaks a million unspoken words of the trauma of being homeless over a night as Manson (2022., p.: 3) confirms: "We've[sic] all experienced that moment when you look into someone's eyes and see a million unspoken words". The final icon in the photo, Icon (6), enriches the theme of death of a peaceful calm home for a child to sleep deeply. The child appears to lose their bed, pillow, and mattress and has no other alternative but the ground of a hall in a church to rest on. Such photo,

and many others similar to the one at hand, needs to be excessively studied and analyzed being iconic photos documenting a new demography for Nineveh city by displacing its people out of their motherland.

Figure 2

Displaced Christian Families from Karakosh live Inside a Church and on its Grounds in Ankawa, Erbil, Northern Iraq, August 23, 2014 after ISIS Fighters occupied Mosul in June 10, 2014.



Note. by Lynsey Addario/ Getty Images Reportage, 2014, Adopted from <https://www.gettyimages.in/detail/news-photo/iraqi-christian-families-from-karakosh-live-inside-a-church-news-photo/652982484>

Another inspiring shot by the Irish photographer, Ivor Prickett, supports the theme of death of the sweet home; and this time for an old lady called “Nadhira” living in the west bank of Tigris, Mosul. Three icons are prominent in (Figure 3):

Icon (1): The Mosuli old lady, “Nadhira”

Icon (2): The rubbles, straws, and dust

Icon (3): Ruined homes

My view could not fully match Prickett’s description of the photo saying: “[The] image... [is] a glimmer of hope for humanity amid the rubble-strewn aftermath of the battle to defeat ISIS and its aftermath in Iraq and Syria” (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B4eICgTBwtr/>). The Mosuli old lady, “Nadhira” characterizes the old history of the home she dwells in yet she was left homeless sitting in a plastic chair just 15 feet from where an excavator (as quoted from the photo caption yet it does not appear in the photo) was digging through the ruins of her home. Sitting in the mid of rubbles and straws, Icon (2) empowers the theme of death of security, safety, and privacy in what is called home for old people. Some stuff is on the rubbles close to the old lady’s plastic chair; one of which is the prayer rug as if this was only what could she take from her house. It is more revealing to quote Prickett describing the scene:

At times she was engulfed in dust, whipped up as the driver dumped mounds of stone and parts of her house beside her, but she refused to move. Slowly they found the remains of her sister and niece who had been killed when the house was flattened by an airstrike in the final weeks of a battle to defeat ISIS in Mosul in the summer of 2017 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B4eICgTBwtr/>).

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Icon (3) signifies that it is not only Nadhira who lost her house; Mosul citizens in the surrounding neighborhood are homeless; if they are not buried by airstrikes. Who could ignore the ruins of the houses, which are still images of the most brutal war in the modern history? They are there in Mosul until the moment of writing the article.

Figure 3

Homeless Nadhira, The Right Bank of Tigris, Mosul City, During the Military Liberation Operations of Mosul (2017)



Note by Ivor Prickett/The New York Times, 2017, Adopted from, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B4eICgTBwtr/>

In Figure (4) below, Prickett's shot speaks to the world about the savage war, which left innocent child homeless, unsafe; even naked. A member of the Iraqi forces holds the child and the latter is sleeping peacefully putting his head on the former's shoulder as if this shoulder is his mother's lap and the peaceful home. The whole atmosphere in the photo image is a scene of death -the devastated buildings and houses, the water tanks; even the heat of the weather adds touches to the image: How could a child bears this? I would like to end this part of the findings quoting Prickett's brilliant wording addressing the world:

I am also glad that it is my images of civilians who were caught up in the fighting that have been singled out. This always was and still is my focus when covering conflict and its aftermath. By making these kind[sic] of pictures I hope to remind people that it is other human beings just like them who are often caught in the midst of war (<https://www.instagram.com/p/BfaM1GVgvqA/>).

Figure 4

The Homeless Child amid the Rubbles of Mosul City



Note by Ivor Prickett/The New York Times, (n.d.), Adopted from, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BfaMIGVgvqA/>

The Australian photographer, Adam Furgeson, shot two opposing icons in the same photo:

Icon (1): The 18-year-old young man

Icon (2): The 12-year-old boy

The photo, Figure 5, was selected from Furgeson's gallery under the title *Haunted*. The majority of his work is portraits of people as in the photo at hand. Musaab is an Iraqi 12-year-old boy sitting on the ground in a dark tent. His 18-year-old brother has his back turned. Their father is in jail on suspicion of terrorism. 2019, Iraq. (This is Furgeson's description of the photo). Icon (1) and Icon (2) of the two brothers of different ages stand for the opposing two ages – youth and childhood of the Iraqi new generation which are left homeless due to the terrible consequences of American war in Iraq defeating ISIS fighters. The 18-year-old boy is turning his back to the camera and only his shadow appears on a white piece of cloth hanging in the back. As the shadow shows, he looks pessimistic laying his head down feeling sad of his uncertain future of his suspected father. Once there is no father, there is no home, no shelter, and no peace. The young man is mature enough than his younger brother to think about their dark future; this is why his pessimistic feeling is vivid, Figure 5.

Figure 5

The Homeless Iraqi New Generations, 2019, Iraq



Note. By Adam Ferguson/, 2019, Adopted from <https://adamfergusonstudio.com/hb4dx8f04wgre4xoi8xp46th9q63xn>

As a researcher, it is necessary to attract my readers' attention that I am analyzing and decoding the unspoken messages in the photos and I am not in a position to give political judgements on what I view as in the case of Figure 5; giving some details about the suspected father in jail by Furgeson does not suggest that he is innocent or not.

5.2.Ico-symbolic Death

- ❖ Theme of Death: Death of Good Living and Prosperity for Iraqis due to Decades of Devastating Struggle Ending up with American Invasion of Iraq (2003) and ISIS Occupation of Three Iraqi Governorates - Nineveh, Al Anbar, and Saladin.

The two photographers, Carl Court and Lynsey Addario, shot a boy and a woman, respectively in two identical scenes as I can read their messages in semiotically. What is interesting to note is that two icons and one symbol are shared in Figure 6 and Figure 7, respectively:

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Icon (1): A boy riding his bike and stopped passing an oil field on fire

Icon (2): A woman-wearing cloak walking through a plume of smoke rising from a fire at a liquid gas factory

Symbol(1): The field of oil set on fire and the fire at a liquid gas factory

Relying on the two photographers' descriptions of their two shots, I can read a message, which speaks to the lost treasure of Iraq – the oil. Firing oil fields by ISIS retreating fighters in Qayyarah, October 21, 2016, (Figure 6), symbolizes a dark future for the boy and all the Iraqi new generations aftermath war. The boy passed by this smoky scene on his bike; the bike wheel stopped to enforce the idea that there is no more prosperity and goodwill for the children in the future. In a similar scene in Basra, May 26, 2003, a woman wearing a cloak, which is part of the Iraqi folklore, moving in a considerable smoking rising from a liquid gas factory, Figure 7. Looters picking in the factory set the fire. The woman was looking for her husband in this terrifying spot. Nothing of her facial expressions appears in the photo but her back only while moving. Again, the fire in the liquid gas factory is a shared symbol with that in (Figure 6) decoding the loss of Iraqi women living in prosperity. Iraqi citizens dwelling Basra are supposed to live in prosperity as petroleum refinery found in the city secure employment for people. However, people hardly earn their living.

Figure 6

Shoesless Iraqi Boy in a Burning Oil Field, October 21, 2016, Qayyara, Iraq



Note. by Carl Court /Getty, A boy paused on his bike as he passed an oil field that was set on fire by retreating ISIS fighters ahead of a Mosul offensive, on October 21, 2016, in Qayyarah, Iraq, from <https://www.thedailybeast.com/fifteen-iconic-images-from-the-war-in-iraq/15?ref=scroll>.

Figure 7

Husband and the Fortune: The Two Loses, May 26, 2003 Basra, Iraq.



Note. by Lynsey Addario/ The New York Times, National Geographic, and Time Magazine, May, 26, 2003, Adopted from <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/photos/2013/05/iraq-war-photos-michael-kamber>.

- ❖ Theme of Death: Death of Iraqi Civilians' Human Rights during American Invasion on Iraq (2003)

What is in American war on Iraq? This is a question, which should be answered by academics from different fields. However, after decades of war, American war in a place like Iraq does not only end up with devastation of the country's foundations; human rights come to the forefront among the items embraced under the umbrella technical term *devastation*. In his

article titled “Iconic and Unseen War Photos From Vietnam and Iraq” on *Mother Jones* (Posted on October 23, 2013), Mark Murrmann reviewed two stunning books on war photography; one of which is Michael Kamber’s *Photojournalists On War: The Untold Stories from Iraq* published in 2013. It was all about interviewing photojournalists from many leading news organizations to give a visual and oral history account of America’s nine-year conflict in the Middle East via a comprehensive collection of eyewitness’ photos. With regard to some photographers’ interviews, it is noted that soldiers shot the most notorious photographs in American war on Iraq: “A number of photographers Kamber interviews say the conflict’s most indelible images were not shot by photojournalists, but by soldiers. The notorious Abu Ghraib collection includes some of the strongest, most shocking photos to come out of that war” (Murrmann, 2013, p.: 7).

Figure 8 represents one of such collection; this image came to the public attention and cannot be removed being shot by soldiers not photojournalists. The iconic signs in the photo are worth considering:

Icon (1): A hooded Iraqi prisoner (man)

Icon (2): Iraqi prisoner standing on atop a cardboard box

Icon (3): His arms attached to electrical wires

Icon (4): The American Soldier, SSG Frederick, depicting with a Cyber Shot camera in his hands

As given in the narrative beneath the photo, it is taken directly from CID materials, i.e., U.S. Army / Criminal Investigation Command (CID). Two American soldiers, Harman and Frederick placed the Iraqi prisoner this position and shot the position for fun and joy. The prisoner’s pose with the given icons signify a horrible theme of death of the Iraqi civilians’ human rights. The prisoner was instructed if moved would be electrocuted. Making fun of Iraqi prisoners in such a tragicomedy shot, which was taken by American soldiers themselves, is human rights violation case among other cases in Abu Ghraib during American invasion on Iraq. The mixture of icons in this image makes it the indelible symbol of the torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad.

Identically, Figure 9 embraces a mixture of icons, which signify the Iraqi’s human rights violation; this time not in a prison but at home:

Icon (1): An Iraqi arrested man with plastic bag covering his head and folded hands to his back sitting on his knees

Icon (2): Two mats on the lawn

Icon (3): Slippers worn by males spread on the lawn

Icon (4): Home garden

Based on the photo’s narrative quoted from the source, the Bosnian photojournalist, Damir Sagolj/Reuters, shot this scene on October 30, 2003. Tikrit, Iraq. The link between the two men in Figure 8 and Figure 9 is the arrested covered head. Although the setting is different, prison and home, respectively, this procedure of covering the arrested man’s head confirmed Iraqi human rights violation by the U.S. Forces. The scene shows that it was night and the Iraqi citizens usually enjoy sitting in their home gardens in summer and autumn. It is the two mats and the slippers, which denote that there were other people in the scene. However, the U.S. soldiers with the 4th Infantry Division (Task Force Ironhorse) raided several houses at night in the area looking for members of a suspected terrorist cell planning attacks on coalition forces.

The collective icons have the upper hand in Figure 9 to symbolize the American Forces abuse of Iraqis civilians.

Figure 8

The Hooded Man, Nov. 4, 2003, Abu Ghraib Prison, Iraq.



Note. Nov. 4, 2003. Placed in this position by HARMAN and FREDERICK. Both took pictures as a joke. Instructed if moved would be electrocuted. SSG FREDERICK is depicted with a Cyber Shot camera in his hands. SOLDIER(S): SSG FREDERICK. All caption information is taken directly from CID materials. U.S. Army / Criminal Investigation Command (CID). Seized by the U.S. Government. Hooded detainee standing on the box with wires attached to his left and right hand; the detainee was told that he would be electrocuted if he fell off the box. Staff Sgt. Ivan "Chip" Frederick, at right. Photo taken shortly after 11 pm, 4 November 2003. This is one of Sabrina Harman's photographs of the prisoner nicknamed Gilligan, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abu_Ghraib_17a.jpg.

Figure 9

Iraqi Civilian - Head covered with Plastic Bag, October 30, 2003, Tikrit, Iraq



Note. by Damir Sagolj/Reuters, A detained Iraqi man in Tikrit with a plastic bag covering his head on October 30, 2003. U.S. soldiers with the 4th Infantry Division (Task Force Ironhorse) raided several houses in the area looking for members of a suspected terrorist cell planning attacks on coalition forces, from <https://www.thedailybeast.com/fifteen-iconic-images-from-the-war-in-iraq/9?ref=scroll>.

Engaging with war, my selection of documents and records supports my claims in this part of the discussion as far as the photo image in Figure 8 is concerned. In 2003, the image was shot and The U.S. soldiers later leaked a bunch of these images in the infamous Abu Ghraib prison to the press where the hooded prisoner was anonymous for the public. On April 2004, CBS released photographs of soldiers posing with Iraqi prisoners they had tortured and killed. In her article, Robinson (2018) presented the interview with the Iraqi hooded man who has spoken to Middle East Eye about the horrific treatment he experienced. It is (15) years after the U.S. invasion on Iraq in 2003. The hooded man is no more hooded and anonymous; *Mr. Ali Shalal Qaissi, 43, was prisoner 151716 of Cellblock 1A* was interviewed by human rights workers

among other prisoners, and was the first to be profiled on page one of The Times. Mr. Qaissi confirmed that he was “The Hooded Man” or “The Man on the Box” (Morris, 2007, p.: two and 1). Back to Robinson’s article, some lines are worth quoting: “During the war, US Army and CIA personnel committed a series of human rights violations against detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, including physical and sexual abuse, torture, rape, sodomy, and murder”. What makes Mr. Qaissi’s story more shocking is that “... [he] was wrongfully arrested and tortured at the notorious prison” (p.1).

Illustration 1

The No More Hooded Man



Note. Credit: Reuters/Middle East Eye The man under the hood in the infamous Abu Ghraib photograph has spoken out about his ordeal, Adopted from Amanda Jane Robinson’s article, “Man under hood in notorious Abu Ghraib photo speaks out about torture”, on March 30, 2018 from <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/world/2018/03/man-under-hood-in-notorious-abu-ghraib-photo-speaks-out-about-torture.html>.

A collection of icons in Figure 10 is likely to speak to another image of American abuse of Iraqis, see below:

Icon (1): An Iraqi rural man surrounded by his wife and children feeling panic

Icon (2): A U.S. soldier marking the back of man’s neck with numbers denoting his neighborhood and home

It was a shot in Qubah, a village located north- west Mosul. The U.S. soldier’s act of marking the Iraqi rural is neck just like marking sheep’s bodies with colours, numbers, and letters sounds to be so abusive. Glancing at the man surrounded by his panic family, his facial expressions show a mixture of anger and sorrow; *how could a man be treated in this way especially in one of the rural spots in Iraq?* This is definitely an insult. The Russian photojournalist, Yuri Kozyrev/NOOR, took this shot revealing that marking the back of the man’s neck is a system designed to help troops determine if people were moving around the village of Qubah despite a lockdown following a U.S. attack on insurgents. In fact, it is a clear sign, which symbolizes offensive action against Iraqis treating them as animals or cattle. Tracing back the documented year of the current photo (dated 2007) compared to that of the two aforementioned photos (dated 2003), one could come to the conclusion that the U.S. Forces have violated Iraqis human rights via offensive and insulting actions since the 2003 US-led invasion into Iraq began which are visibly included in the entry of death.

Figure 10

Tagged Body, March 24, 2007, Qubah, North of Mosul, Iraq.



Note. by Yuri Kozyrev/NOOR, Qubah. March 24, 2007. A U.S. soldier marks the back of a man's neck with numbers denoting his neighborhood and home, a system designed to help troops determine if people were moving around the village of Qubah despite a lockdown following a U.S. attack on insurgents, from <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/photos/2013/05/iraq-war-photos-michael-kamber>.

5.3. Symbo-iconic Death

- ❖ Theme of Death: Death of American and Coalition Military Forces Military Ethics Against Iraqi Troops in Operation Desert Storm (1991)

A first glance at (Figure 11) may suggest that the man is a metal statue not burned parts of human body as Degett (2014: p.2) describes the man: “[t]he colo[u]rs and textures of his hand and shoulders look like those of the scorched and rusted metal around him”. The multi icons in the image speak to the brutality of the American and Coalition Forces in the Operation Desert Storm, 1991. The victim is an Iraqi burned soldier trying to pull out of his truck. His military uniform and rank are not clear as his shoulders and chest are burned and melted. The upper lip is separated from the lower lip and he grinded his teeth due to the pain of burning. What makes the image more powerful is the icon of the soldier's staring with no eyes but with the two eye orbs. I could read his way of starring as a message to the U.S. Army and the Coalition Forces: “Why do you burn and kill us with the taboo weapons?” The act of burning and the signs of the melting flesh, which are a vivid symbol of nuclear weapons used against Iraqi forces, control all the multi icons of the Iraqi soldier. The symbo-iconic death in the image thermalizes the death of military ethics of the American and Coalition Forces in two ways. First, the American and allied air forces used the taboo weapons – the nuclear weapons in the Operation Desert Storm. Second, the American and allied air forces kept attacking, killing, and burning violently the Iraqi troops via the taboo weapons the same day they planned to stop shooting officially to end Operation Desert Storm. Degett supports this saying: “On February 28, 1991, Kenneth Jarecke stood in front of the charred man, parked amid the carbonized bodies of his fellow soldiers, and photographed him; he “...took the picture just before a cease-fire officially ended Operation Desert Storm” (Ibid.).

This powerful image was absent in the American press at that time, yet this did not let the photo to be fully lost in media:

The *Observer* in the United Kingdom and *Libération* in France both published it after the American media refused. Many months later, the

photo also appeared in *American Photo*, where it stoked some controversy, but came too late to have a significant impact. All of this surprised the photographer, who had assumed the media would be very happy to challenge the popular narrative of a clean, uncomplicated war. “When you have an image that disproves that myth,” he says today, “then you think it’s going to be widely published” (Ibid.: p.3).

These lines implicitly suggest the fact behind unpublishing the image in the U.S. press – challenging the public narrative of a clean, uncomplicated war not for the ethics of not photographing the dead in the battlefield! (I do apologize for any sensitivity the image below causes readers. It is part of the discussion and the corpus).

Figure 11

Iraqi Soldier Seeking Life out of Flamed Truck in the Operation Desert Storm (1991)



1992 © KENNETH JARECKE (CONTACT PRESS IMAGES)

Note. by Kenneth Jarecke, 1992, Adopted from Torie Rose DeGhett’s article, “THE WAR PHOTO NO ONE WOULD PUBLISH”, in *The Atlantic*, published on August 8, 2014 from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/the-war-photo-no-one-would-publish/375762/>.

- ❖ Theme of Death: Death of the American Forces Glory and Triumph in the Invasion of Iraq (2003)

The image in (Figure12) is shocking for the American Pentagon and the public in 2003 – just six months after American invasion of Iraq. There is a chilling story for Americans behind the symbolic-iconic image. The 15 helmets hanging on the 15 M-16 rifles with the 15 pairs of desert boots represent 15 dead members of the American Army who were killed in Al Asad air base in Alanbar province, Iraq. The American flag fixed low behind the row of the 15 rifles symbolizing the White House with the American Dream of Triumph in invading Iraq. All icons are gathered in the context of the image, which is a Memorial Day of the 15 soldiers who were on US Army Chinook helicopter, which was crashed after being shot down. The American flag symbol has the upper hand in decoding the message in the image. The flag is fixed low not high behind the row of the 15 helmets as if the White House is hiding behind the dead bodies of the soldiers. On November 2003, no victory was achieved in such a shocking event. Helegran, the photojournalist who shot the image, says:

“This was the largest single US loss of life to date in the Iraq war, and it really shook America. Three days after the crash I arrived at Al Asad air base to witness a memorial to the fallen. It was quite a sobering event, as troops quite visibly shaken formed up in front of a flatbed truck

on which helmets were perched atop 15 rifles and pairs of desert boots, "he adds (<https://www.rediff.com/news/slide-show/slide-show-1-blood-and-dust-chilling-stories-behind-iconic-iraq-war-photos/20130326.htm>: p.9).

Figure 12

A row of US army helmets are perched on M-16 rifles during a memorial at Al Asad air base in Iraq on November 6, 2003 for the 15 victims of a Chinook helicopter which was shot down by insurgents



Note: by Chris Helgren/Reuters, 2003, Adopted from "Blood and dust: Stories behind iconic Iraq War photos", last updated on: March 26, 2013 10: 29 IST from <https://www.rediff.com/news/slide-show/slide-show-1-blood-and-dust-chilling-stories-behind-iconic-iraq-war-photos/20130326.htm>.

❖ Theme of Death: Death of Heritage and Iconic Monuments by ISIS (July 24, 2014)

From a semiotic perspective, the photo image, Figure13, includes both iconic and symbolic items that Ivor Prickett, the photojournalist, shot. The former items include:

Item (1): 6 young men taking selfies, 3 of them appear close to the photojournalist's lens and the other 3 are away

Item (2): The ruins of Nebi Yunus Mosque (Prophet Jonah)

Item (3): The young men's mobiles

(Though other items appear in the shot as 3 men with unclear facial expressions, cars and buildings in the site, yet they are out of my concern)

The latter items include:

Item (1): The grey sky

Item (2): Nabi Yunus Mosque

Item (3): The 6 young men's facial expressions

The 6 young men in the image represent the new generation in Mosul. They are standing up in one of the historic and religious sites in Mosul, Nabi Yunus mosque, where the mosque ruins surround them. Taking selfies in this particular spot four years after ISIS bombing of the mosque (Ivor Prickett shot the image on October22, 2018) is a matter of recalling memories of the old times in this place with its seemingly endless stairs, zigguratesque terraces, and its palm trees. On the other hand, their mobs sound to be a documentary tool to keep and, possibly, transmit the iconic image of the mosque left as ruins until now.

The grey clouds often represent negative emotions and even depression. A grey sky might be used in film as a sign of the protagonist's sadness. It is there in the image to match the 3 young men's (those close to Prickett's lens) facial expressions; I could read sad faces. The power of

the symbolic items exceeds the iconic ones as the message reads: “Nabi Yunus is a religious symbol for Muslims and Christians alike. It is part of the heritage of Mosul; destroying it signifies the destruction of heritage for both Muslims and Christians cleansing; this is beginning of the systemic cultural cleansing”.

Figure 13

Memory of NabiYunus, Mosul (2018)



Note: By Ivor Prikett, October 22, 2018 from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BpOIOEJhtfp/>

❖ Theme of Death: Death of Education, Literacy and Memory by ISIS and U.S.- led Coalition (2016)

Ivor Prickett’s shot (Figure14) offers a different face of death in one of the reputed historic educational institutions- the University of Mosul. The library, among the finest in the Middle East, is an icon for education, knowledge, memory for all the staff members and all the students who joined the University of Mosul, both Iraqis and Arabs. The library is changed to wrecked standing in the center of the university campus. Blackness and soot cover the indoor and the outdoor with ashes of books, manuscripts, rarities, furniture and shelves. In his wording, Mohammed Jasim (MA in Translation -at the time of calling Robin Wright /The New Yorker, a Ph.D. Candidate, in Spain at present), the library’s director says that

[the library has] a million books, historic maps, and old manuscripts. Some dated back centuries, even a millennium, Among its prize acquisitions was a Quran from the ninth century, although the library also housed thousands of twenty-first-century volumes on science, philosophy, law, world history, literature, and the arts. Six hundred thousand books were in Arabic; many of the rest were in English (Robin’s Wright’s article “Mosul’s Library without Books” in *The New Yorker* (posted on June 12, 2017) (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/mosuls-library-without-books>: p.1).

The library was looted by ISIS since they occupied Mosul which is part of the damage and cultural cleansing in Mosul that the UNESCO refers to as “one of the most devastating acts of destruction of library collections in human history.” Director general Irina Bokova said the destruction involved museums, libraries and universities across Mosul (Fadhil, 2015, p.: 2).

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On December, 2016, the defeated ISIS burned down the library. In Figure 14, the wrecks of the Central Library building speak to the death of education and knowledge and suggests long years for rehabilitation in the university campus. It is worth recalling the way Wright describes the scene the library being in the scene:

On a rainy day this spring, I walked the muddy and eerily deserted university grounds, in eastern Mosul. I turned a corner and saw the library, a block-long building, charred black and its shell strewn, inside and out, with splintered glass, burnt beams, heat-warped furniture, toppled shelves, and mounds of ashes. In December, as the Iraqi Army pushed into Mosul, ISIS fighters had set the library alight. The books had served as kindling (p.2).

In the literature of symbolism, fire symbolizes destructiveness throughout the years due to its characteristics that it can decimate things that meet it. This powerful symbol of fire represented in the blackness and soot covering the library building for years after burning it down (the image was shot one year later) is dominant to hand down a message to Mosuli civilians: "You will not find any room for education and knowledge in the University of Mosul Campus and the new generations will be kept in the intellectual dark ages(not to mention the U.S.-led coalition airstrike which destroyed many colleges and buildings, the University Presidency Building was among which".

Personally, I remember those heartbreaking moments when my eyes captured on Al-Hadath Satellite Channel the news that ISIS set fire into the library while the western part of Mosul, where I live, was not liberated yet.

Figure 14

Wreck of Knowledge – The Flamed Library, The University of Mosul Campus, 2017



Note: By Ivor Prickett, December 13, 2017, Adopted from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bcoo71ngOdm>

5.4.Symbolic Death

- ❖ Theme of Death: Death of the Iraqi Independent Country, Regime, and Order Due to American Invasion (2003)

The multi symbols appear in Figure15, Figure16, Figure17, and Figure18 speak to the historic event in modern Iraqi political regime – An independent country with economic, military, and political influence in the Arab region, the East and the world is simply occupied in an invasion. So, the occupation liberation is no more an oxymoron for the globe in the current given digital manipulation as the photo images report truth supporting the view that “[p]hotography was originally considered a way to objectively represent reality, completely untouched by the photographer’s perspective” (Mullen, 1998, p.: vi). Two opposing groups of symbols are likely to be detected in the four following photo images:

Figure 15

The American Flag Covering-Up President Saddam Hussein’s Statue Face (2003)



Note: by Jerome Delay/Reuters, 2003, Adopted from

<https://www.theguardian.com/pictures/image/0,8543,-10404645413,00.html>

Symbol (1): An American flag covering-Up the face of Hussein’s bronze statue

Symbol (2): A U.S. American Marine placing the American flag on the face of Hussein’s bronze statue

Symbol (3): A second American Marine

Symbol (4): An American armed vehicle

Symbol (5): Saddam Hussein’s statue

Symbols (1), (2), (3), and (4) # Symbol (5)

Shooting the story in this image, the photojournalist, Jerome Delay/Reuters, attempted to attract the attention of the media and global audience that this is the end of the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s era by U.S. military forces. Decoding the symbols in the image, show symbols (1, 2, 3, and 4) stand for the power of the U.S. military forces opposing symbol (5) which stands for the fallen independent political system. President Hussein’s bronze statue, symbol (5), does not only connote the Iraqi president, in person, but Iraq as an independent country. Although this image is relatively considered an easy image to capture since no shooting or air strike was in the atmosphere yet it has a message which reads: “Reaching the Iraqi President’s bronze statue which is situated in Firdos Square in the middle of Baghdad by American troops only signifies American military triumph in toppling Saddam’s regime”. Added to this, Palestine Hotel which housed the international journalists covering the war, and it is in the same area to increasing the chance of photojournalists reporting the story. Cpl. Edward Chin of the US 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines Regiment, covers the face of a statue of Saddam Hussein with the American flag before toppling the statue in downtown Baghdad, Iraq, April 9, 2003. (Jerome Delay/AP).

Figure 16

U.S. Marine Edward Chia Watches President Saddam Hussein's Statue Toppling



Note by Goran Tomasevic /Reuters, 2003, 'Soldier Watches Toppling' Adopted from "The Iconic News Image as Visual Event in Photojournalism and Digital Media" by Samantha Kelly, 2013) from (https://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/6727/02_whole.pdf)

Symbol (1): American Marine, Edward Chia, looking on from the side

Symbol (2): American troops' rope attached to the statue's neck

Symbol (3): President Saddam Hussein's 40-foot toppling statue

Symbols (1) and (2) # Symbol (3)

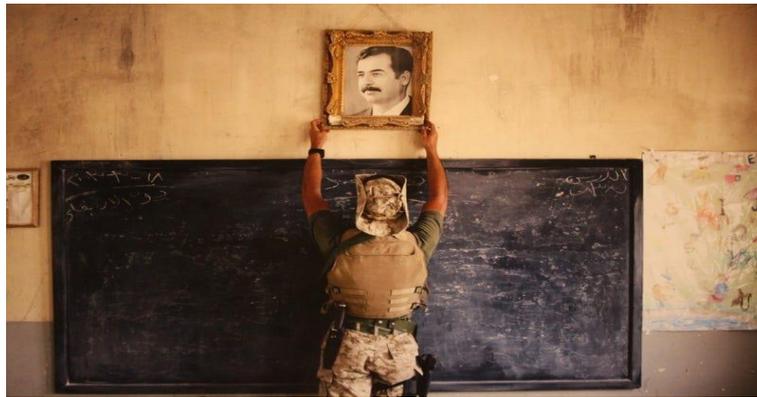
The photo image, "Soldier Watches Toppling", Figure 16, which Goran Tomasevic/Reuters shot in the same area sometime after the action of covering-up the statue in Figure 15 was described as iconic image; and the most published image of Saddam's statue toppling story comparing 72 U.S. front pages and 12 international (Kelly, 2013: pp.103-104). Semiotically, the current image is more powerful than the one given in Figure 15, though they sound alike in some sense. Symbols (1 and 2) indicate the U.S. military strength in toppling Saddam who is said to be the first enemy to the White House and the world according to their political agenda. Symbol (3) connotes the falling regime. Taking the symbols together, I decode the message in the image as follows: "It is only the power of the U.S. military forces, among the coalition forces, which achieved the military successive progression and reached the mid of Baghdad to topple the Iraqi regime and occupy Iraq". It is worth mentioning that there were two instances, possibly more, to the iconic toppling; in the first one, the British military forces started an attack in the mid of Basra and destroyed one of Saddam's statues and in the second one, an American tank blew up Saddam's statue on a horse (Kelly, 2013: p.104). Still both stories were not filmed as their settings, especially the place where the photo was shot, is not as significant as the mid of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. This holds true for the 40-foot bronze statue of Saddam demolition.

In retrospect, the hidden backstage of such iconic image evidently the fake news and disinformation the white House attempted to make genuine and spread among the Americans and the global audience – the Iraqi liberation by the American military forces. Major & Perlmutter (2005) touched upon some reporters and photojournalists' claims who were crowded in the area, which challenged the proposition of *Iraqi liberation* in the "Soldier

Watches Toppling” image including the exact number and the nationalities of the crowd present at that moment. This is given under the heading “Just the Fact?” (p.40). Digital technology was available in 2003, leaving no place to uncertainty if just one would like to scrutinize the image online and test its reliability (Kelly, 2013, p.: 105). As such. The term, *occupation*, I referred to in decoding the aforementioned message comes to be reliable.

Figure 17

A U.S. Marine takes down the President Saddam Hussein’s Portrait at School, Alkut, Iraq (2003)



*Note.*by Chris Hondros/Getty Agency, 2003, *A U.S. Marine takes down the President Saddam Hussein’s Portrait at School, Al-kut, Iraq just a month after the invasion began in March, 2003. The team was looking for weapons and explosives catches adopted from <https://news.yahoo.com/chris-hondros-life-pictures-highlighted-slideshow-wp-100013727.html>*

Symbol (1): A U.S. Marine taking down President Saddam Hussein’s portrait

Symbol (2): President Saddam Hussein’s portrait

Symbol (3): A Date written on the black board

Symbol (4): A black colour (of the board, and of the flecks of soot on the walls painting)

Symbol (5): A classroom in a primary school

Symbol (6): A poster with some drawings fixed on the wall

The major scenario I could read is “No more Saddam regime! We, America, announce the end of his political system which lasted for more than three decades.” The opposing symbols that are decoded are (1) and (2).

Further symbols (3, 4, 5, and 6), not opposing ones, in the context of the late photojournalist Chris Hondros’s /Getty Agency still image, are valuable to be decoded. The date written in Arabic on the top left-hand side of the blackboard (18/3/2003 Wednesday) is an old date, which precedes the American Invasion of Iraq. A teacher usually writes the date on the board in every class at school. This old written date signifies the death of the independent education system in Iraq. The black colours represented on *the black board* and *the flecks of soot on the class walls* suggest the dark future waiting for the Iraqi new generation, symbol (6) getting their education in Iraq. *The poster on the wall* indicates that the setting is primary school in Al-Kut, Iraq as the photo’s caption mentioned the city.

❖ Theme of Death: Death of the Myth of American Liberation of Iraq (2003)

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The American woman photojournalist, Lynsey Addario's shots are distinguished with the symbol of red colour. The setting of both images, Figure18 and Figure19, are alike - the Emergency room of the Balad Hospital at the Balad Air Force base in Iraq, 2004. An U.S. military soldier pushing a stretcher soaked with blood signifies that military operations are marked by much killing and bloodshed on the part of the American forces, Figure 18. A U.S. military surgeon treat carries a stained boot with blood removed from a wounded soldier, Figure19, also decodes the serious injuries and the deaths of the American military forces. Addario's captions given for the two images on her website asserts that "[h]undreds of wounded soldiers have come through the military hospital [i.e., Balad Hospital] since the siege of Falujah began in early November 2004" (<https://www.lynseyaddario.com/iraq-war>). As hundreds of wounded soldiers were brought to the Emergency in this particular hospital from 7 November – 23 December 2004 (1 month, 2 weeks and 2 days), the period of the Second Battle of Falujah in AlAnbar Province, Iraq no one could guarantee the number of the deaths then. The message is unquestionably reads: "There is no place for the White House myth of Iraq liberation launching the invasion in 2003. If it is liberation, no such killing and blood shedding scenes on the part of the American and coalition forces are captured by photojournalists" (cf. the discussion for Figures 4, 5, 6).

Figure 18
Wounded



Note by Lynsey Addario/The New York Times, National Geographic, and Time Magazine, 2004, adopted from <https://www.lynseyaddario.com/iraq-war>

Figure 19
Bloody Boot, Balad Hospital at the Balad Air Force base, Iraq(2004)



Note by Lynsey Addario/The New York Times, National Geographic, and Time Magazine, 2004, Adopted from <https://www.lynseyaddario.com/iraq-wa>

6. CONCLUSION

The selected (19) photos showed significant shots where hidden messages regarding the variety of themes of death in Iraq at wartime are decoded. Death is not the bloody bodies, which photojournalists shot in streets of cities or in the battlefield. Rather, the two semiotic keys viz., icon and symbol decoded the non-physical deaths for both Iraqis and Americans represented in *Death of Iraqi Civilians' Home, Shelter, and Peace, Death of Good Living and Prosperity for Iraqis, Death of Iraqi Civilians' Human Rights during American Invasion on Iraq* (2003),

Death of the American Forces Glory and Triumph in the Invasion of Iraq (2003), etc. The icons and symbols work separately and /or in combination to come up with these results.

“If it bleeds, it leads” is actually false when it comes to picturizing wartime in Iraq.

7. Acknowledgement

*In 1980, the adventure with war launched when I was in the fifth-grade at primary school. Since then, the trauma of war has been there in my inner-side. Moving to the 1990s, it was the Desert Storm which shook me while I was in the climax of my ambition being among the top of my peers in the third-year college. The new millennium left my country devastated in 2003 when I was preparing to join the PhD Program. In this academic work, I would say all my suffering designed the research on war photography. Without the photo journalists' momentum shots, I could not conquer all the problems getting the data. Thank you so much for your shots. Immense gratitude to Mary Major (MS), Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., for providing me with a number of helpful comments and suggestions while proofreading the manuscript. Many thanks to my inspiring friends, Mohammed Mliless (PhD in Applied Linguistics, Research Associate, the University of Mouly Ismail, Morocco) and Diego Forte (Professor / PhD Candidate / BNMM Research department member, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina), for delighting me with the pros in my research. From the bottom of my heart, a big thank you to my dear friend, Richard Povall (PhD Director, art.earth, Visiting Research Professor, Ulsan National Institute of Science & Technology, Korea). Including my research as a chapter in the book titled *Borrowed Time: on death, dying & change* (First published in 2022) truly adds to my arena a lot. I am honored to have you as a friend!*

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