

LIFE AFTER INJURY
WITNESSING INJURED UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS
COMING HOME

A Project presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to brave men and women, dead and alive, who have stood up for the well-being of Ukraine and its people during the Euromaidan revolution, the annexation of Crimea and the war in East Ukraine. Among them are the heavily injured Ukrainian soldiers that are featured in this project.

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Chapter One: Introduction

A year after covering the Euromaidan revolution, the annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the beginning of war in East Ukraine, I was sitting in my house in Columbia, MO, applying to World Press Photo, POYi and other contests, and I felt I was missing something extremely important. There were no people in my photographs. I saw some compelling single images, but they were somehow deprived of real *human* presence. People were placed in certain places in the frame to create strong photographs or make a point, but in the majority of cases I didn't know who they were, why they were there, and what happened to them afterward. I think it was a certain point of no return.

I have been balancing between news and documentary photography since 2011. I shot some personal stories before the war in Ukraine. Some of them were published nationally, and in several cases I just gave the photographs to people afterward so they could use them however they wanted. But when I found myself amidst an event that was making headlines every day, I couldn't make myself take a step back and tell a personal yet journalistic photo story that would have a *narrative*.

The faculty at Missouri School of Journalism taught me to put the focus on people in the first place. I learned a lot in this regard during classes and such incredible and unforgettable events as the Missouri Photo Workshop and CPOY/POYi judging. I also had the time to look at what was going in Ukraine from a physical and mental distance and search for important narratives that I could tell.

A narrative that has been in photojournalism since its first days is the *aftermath*. In fact, many great photographs depict *aftermath* rather than the unfolding events (eg.

destruction caused by war rather than the act of firing). Moreover, the *aftermath* is an extremely stronger point if we are talking about people rather than material objects. Photograph of an *aftermath* can make a much stronger point than a picture of an event itself. One of such examples is John Moore's photograph from Arlington Cemetery, one of the most striking images I have ever seen. On a Memorial Day, he went to the Section 60 of the cemetery, where Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are buried, and made a picture of a woman lying on the grass whispering to a grave stone. This image is extremely strong in showing how the war affects the life back home.

Limitations of the rules of embedment (Roth et al., 2008) and editorial decisions to block disturbing visual content (Aday, 2005) made photojournalists turn their gaze towards U.S. soldiers coming back from Iraq. It resulted in many award-winning photography projects, some of which are analyzed in this project. The narrative also made it to cinematography. Several movies, including "The Hurt Locker" (Kathryn Bigelow, 2009) and "Hell and Back Again" (Danfung Dennis, 2011) got worldwide recognition.

I realized from these examples there was an important story, a post-war life of the injured Ukrainian men coming home. There was a lot in common between them and the guys who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even more things were different. Many Ukrainian soldiers were construction workers, teachers and others with little military experience who decided to volunteer to protect their land from Russian aggression. Another huge difference was the ill-preparedness of Ukraine as a state to provide these men with enough opportunities after they got medical treatment.

Being a Ukrainian and having gone through violent and dangerous events myself, I felt I could be a good communicator for this story. I made my first pictures in December 2014, during a Winter Break after my first semester at Mizzou. I realized I had to wait until my studies were over, because I couldn't follow my subjects for long enough.

What I could do while still studying at Mizzou was the research. I looked for the existing projects about the heavily injured war veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. I studied the work of Peter van Agtmael, Nina Berman and Eugene Richards. Their photo stories that won the World Press Photo contest are analyzed for visual framing of the subjects later in this work. I went to Kansas City, MO, to listen to the talk by Ashley Gilbertson, the author of a compelling project (and book) called "Bedrooms of the Fallen".

Gilbertson photographed the empty bedrooms of the deceased American soldiers. I came across documentary projects by Craig F. Walker, Ed Kashi, Lori Grinker, touching stories by Tim Hetherington and Suzanne Option, and the therapeutic work of Jennifer Karady. They all contributed to my knowledge on the topic, made me feel it on a much deeper level.

I embarked on this project for several reasons. As a Ukrainian photojournalist, I feel a need to continuously do work about the ongoing war in East Ukraine to raise awareness about what's going on in my country. News photographs from the trenches that were shocking at the beginning, lost their striking power, because they were seen by Ukrainian and international audience for too many times. Just as the sanitized visual coverage of Iraq and Afghanistan, they couldn't anymore communicate the human cost of a war that is mostly fought with artillery these days. Conflict left the first pages of international newspapers and magazines, and in Ukraine, too many people ignore the fact

that there is war and people affected by it. Therefore, my goals are to remind the international audience that there is an ongoing conflict that keeps taking lives and injuring soldiers and civilians, and in Ukraine, to emphasize the contribution of young Ukrainian soldiers that stood up to protect their country, and their families that show continuous support and love for their loved ones.

I think what kept me going is the fact that otherwise this story wouldn't be told. Foreign photojournalists and documentary photographers that come to Ukraine mostly stay for a short period of time. They go straight to the war zone, and they can't afford to work on one story for about a year. Moreover, they don't speak the language, which is crucial to connect to the subjects in this story. Most of Ukrainian photographers rarely work on long-term projects, they prefer covering news and doing short-term stories.

I am extremely happy that *Life after Injury* got recognized by Ukrainian and international awards, and that pictures from it were shown in Kyiv two times in the fall of 2016, during a group and a solo show. To me it means that more people got to see it, and that's what really matters to me and to my subjects.

Chapter Two: Field Notes

February 8, 2016

On Wednesday, February 3, I went to the opening of a photo exhibition called “The Winners”. It is a photo project conducted by 1+1, a nationally famous TV station in Ukraine. The team of the project (the station anchor, who is the leader of the project, the photographer and the crew) photographed heavily injured war veterans in a studio setup. For me this was not only a possibility to look at the pictures (which, speaking honestly, are difficult to derive anything from, as they were made in a very controlled manner), but also, and, most importantly, to meet the veterans, who were invited to come to the opening in Kiev downtown from various cities across the country.

There I met Oleksandr Sarabun, 36, whom I have been in touch with for a couple of days already (and was about to visit the next day), a soldier of “Donbass” volunteer battalion. He lost his right leg in the battle for Ilovaisk (late August 2014), one of the biggest military disasters for the Ukrainian army since the beginning of the war. Ukrainian army and volunteer battalions were granted a corridor to leave their positions, as they were surrendered, but then, during the exit, the column was heavily shelled by Russian artillery. This battle is considered to be the first encounter between the Ukrainian military and the army of the Russian Federation.

After getting treatment and prosthetics in Ukraine and learning to walk in Austria he came back to the war zone early spring 2015. On January 25, 2016, his term officially ended, and he came back home on January 27.

I spent four days with him (February 5 to February 8), and have just got back from the train. I attach several images, and will edit more during this week, as well as I will start working on the research part of my project. On the first day he went to talk to the kids in a school in a village near his town, and you can see the images from it. He is supported by his family, who spends a lot of time with him. His younger sister Nataliia, 33, cooks and supports him a lot, while her husband Sergey helps Oleksandr with the paperwork to get all the compensations. Recently Sergey has applied Oleksandr for a Schengen visa, so he could go to Poland for a rehab. I will try to follow him there. On the second day his daughter Eva, 14, came to visit, and I have pictures from it too. She lives with her mom in a village nearby. Oleksandr was married, but is divorced now. The mayor of the town he lives in gave him a studio, where he lives alone.

P.S. I have met three other war veterans during this exhibition, and will try to develop their stories next week. One lives in Kiev - Alexey, 32 (lost his leg, now is a volunteer and goes to the hospital to help the new injured), the other one in Zhytomyr - Vlad, 23 (lost his right arm, is a military instructor on his military base), and another one from Kryvyi Rih - Andrii, 27 (lost his right leg, lives in an industrial town in East Ukraine, might be a possibility to explore how locals treat Ukrainian soldiers). Alexey might also be a good contact to meet the soldiers who are in hospital now.

February 15, 2016

I spent this week going through the photographs I made in Mohyliv-Podilskyi from February 5 to February 8. On Wednesday, February 10, Oleksandr told me the details of a closed Secret Service of Ukraine exercise he is going to take part in, and I

spent the day working on getting permission to be there, which at first I didn't even believe in, because of the bureaucracy. After a myriad of phone calls, thankfully, it worked out.

The reason I really wanted to be there is because I consider his participation in such an event an important part of the story. Roughly once a month, heavily injured Ukrainian war veterans, including Oleksandr, when he is able to, participate in such exercises for tactical medics. They "reenact" being injured, and can do it better than actors, as they really lack limbs. By doing this they are trying to help tactical medics to be better prepared for treating injuries when in the war zone.

Saturday was the day of the Secret Service exercise.

This week will be finally devoted to starting my research, as well as meeting a new possible subject, whom I mentioned in my previous Field Notes. Alexey, 32, is a war veteran who is now a volunteer. He visits heavily injured soldiers in The Main Military Clinical Hospital every other day. I will join him on one of such visits and try to understand if he is a subject or rather a gatekeeper for other subjects.

Please have a look at the images I have posted from my trip to Mohyliv-Podilskyi and from the Secret Service exercise.

February 22, 2016

I have started the analysis of photo stories about heavily injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, that have won World Press Photo. I have analyzed one of the images from Peter van Agtmael's story and have sent the analysis to Dr. Greenwood.

Currently waiting on the feedback (not sure I did it right, and have thoughts about developing coding sheet to make the analysis more structured).

I have met Alexey, 32, who together with his wife helps in the Military Hospital. We met once last week and I was about to photograph him today, but could not reach him, we'll see what that means.

Meanwhile, I started gathering documents for Polish visa to continue photographing Oleksandr, who is going there for rehabilitation on February 25.

February 29, 2016

This week has been a little bit tumultuous. I have been gathering documents for Polish (Schengen) Visa and went to the Visa Centre on February 26 and today, February 29. Unfortunately, I couldn't open it because of absolutely crazy rules on booking everything in advance, but at least, I know that I did everything possible to make it work.

I have got feedback from Dr. Greenwood on my first steps in the analysis, and now I feel I have a green light to continue. I intend to finish the analysis of Peter van Agtmael's story this week.

One of the veterans I was eager to photograph, Andrey, 27, from Kryvyi Rih, whom I mentioned earlier (I actually met him during the photo exhibition opening), seems to bail on me (he doesn't pick up the phone), but I will call couple more times to ensure he really avoids me.

I will see if I can reach Alexey, who is in Kiev, for another meeting. Next week, when I finish with 1/3 of my research, I will make another trip. This time to Ternopil, where I know one of the volunteers who can introduce me to more veterans.

March 7, 2016

I have finished decoding Peter van Agtmael's story, and currently am putting the information into a table, which Dr. Greenwood suggested making last week. When I am finished with the conclusions section, which would put together my thoughts on framing in this story, I will move to decoding Nina Berman's story, and Eugene Richards' piece will be the last one in line.

I am planning a trip to Western Ukraine (Ternopil and Zhytomyr) to meet more veterans around March 12.

March 14, 2016

I was busy doing some assignments this week (I have to shoot some to sustain myself while working on the project), but, meanwhile, I was trying to understand where my subjects and possible subjects are in their lives.

Oleksandr, a man I already photographed, has returned from Poland. He came to Kiev to get a medal, but he didn't make it to the ceremony, so we just met for couple hours. It turned out his son decided to sign for the army, and he was with him to help. I took a promise from him he would dial me the next day when they would go to the military office, but he didn't. I called him myself, and he told me he didn't call because the cameras were not allowed there. Well, maybe his will visit his son in the military office where he serves later, or his son will come to visit.

Vlad, a possible subject from Zhytomyr, left for a different city to pass some exams and wasn't comfortable with me following him there. He will be in his home town beginning of April, I am hoping for that time to visit him.

Andrey, a very open young man from an Eastern Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, another possible subject, finally answered my text message today and told me he would call when he is done with some paperwork I will try to call him again tomorrow.

I have finally booked my ticket to Ternopil for March 17, so hopefully I can make some contacts and meet new people there.

March 23, 2016

I have come back from Ternopil on Monday. I have met two injured war veterans there (i.e. possible subjects), but they both asked for some time. I am leaving for a conference in Lviv on March 30, and after that I am planning to come back to Ternopil to start photographing them

My friend volunteer Lilia also gave me contacts of volunteers in hospitals all over the country, so I will call them tomorrow and ask if there are heavily injured veterans in hospitals now, or maybe those who are just out of the hospital.

There is also one possible subject in Kiev (he's heavily injured and in hospital now), let's see if this works out as well.

April 3, 2016

On my way from Lviv to Kyiv, I have stopped for a day in Ternopil to meet Oleksandr Seniovskiy for the second time (he was one of the two veterans I mentioned

previously). I did a couple photographs, but I am not sure he could become my third subject. He seems to be the most mentally traumatized of the three subjects I have.

April 5, 2016

I think I have found my second subject. Yevhen, 21, stepped on a land mine on February 2, 2016, two days after turning 21. His legs, as well as his internal organs, were heavily damaged in the explosion. He has survived 12 surgeries, and will have another one in couple weeks. He is in Kiev Military Hospital, so I don't have to travel anywhere to photograph him. He has an older sister, Marta, whom you will see, and 4 brothers

I was introduced to him through a military commander I know (they are from one village). I have been visiting him since March 24 (I have visited him 4 or 5 times by now), and continue visiting him couple times a week. His rehabilitation is going to be long, and I plan to photograph him until he gets out of the hospital.

April 8, 2016

I have photographed Oleksandr Seniovskiyi in the prosthetics company's office. I feel that I am slowly building rapport with him.

April 27, 2016

I have been photographing (and sometimes just coming to see) Yevhen for the whole month. I have been able to witness him slowly getting better, and I think I will be able to show it through my photographs. Tomorrow he is leaving for the hospital in Chernivtsi. I will try to visit him there as soon as I can.

April 30, 2016

As I have a free evening in Mohyliv-Podilskyi after photographing Oleksandr Sarabun, I am applying to a variety of photography grants and contests with my story. These are Stern Grant, Burn Emerging Photo Fund, ISSP Workshop, and Getty Images Grant for Editorial Photography. Here is the edit I have come up with so far. I have also included the Grant Application text to the Appendix section.



Oleksandr Sarabun, 37, lost his leg in Ilovaisk in August of 2014, and in winter of 2015, after getting medical treatment and going through rehabilitation in Austria, came back to the war zone with a prosthetic leg. He came back home in February of 2016. Couple days after coming back home, Oleksandr went to a school in one of the villages near his native city, Mohyliv-Podilskyi. From the first days of war, pupils and teachers of this school gathered help for Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline.



During a meeting with school pupils Oleksandr helps one of the boys wear a camouflage, bulletproof vest and a helmet.



Oleksandr's niece gives him flowers to sniff during an outdoor picnic near Oleksandr's native city of Mohyliv-Podilskyi.



Oleksandr rests at home after a long day.



Oleksandr approaches the house of his sister Nataliia in Mohyliv-Podilskyi.



Oleksandr sits by the two dummy dolls. He takes part in an imitation for paramedics, which is intended to resemble the conditions of real combat. Oleksandr plays a role of a heavily injured man.



Oleksandr is given “medical treatment” during an imitation for paramedics, which is intended to resemble the conditions of real combat. Oleksandr plays a role of a heavily injured man.



Two days after turning twenty one, Yevhen Hrynychuk stepped on an anti-personnel land mine in East Ukraine. He was walking alongside four other soldiers. Two of them were killed by the explosion. Yevhen lived through seventeen surgeries on his legs and internal organs. Yevhen’s elder sister Marta comforts him after one of the surgeries.



Together with his friends, Yevhen spends time outside on the grounds of the Kyiv Military Clinical Hospital. It was one of Yevhen's first "drives" outside.



Together with his mother Hanna, Yevhen looks around from the top of the Kyiv fortress.



Yevhen lifts the dumbbells to get back in shape after the injury.



Ivan's aesthetic prosthetic lies in the sink. It has to be washed regularly to maintain its body color.



Ivan Kushnerev, 27, from Zaporizhia, was taken captive by the regular Russian army in Ilovaisk. He was released during a prisoner exchange. After a short vacation home he came back to the frontline. On November 15, 2014, during a military operation near Luhanskhe lost his left hand, three fingers on the right hand and right eye. Ivan smokes in the Kyiv military hospital shower room.



Iryna, Ivan's mother, puts medication in his eye.



A prosthetics engineer makes a gypsum cast of Ivan's left arm to make him new prosthetics.



Ivan is accompanied by his girlfriend Anna as they walk downtown Kyiv, Ukraine.



Oleksandr Seniovskiy, 34, lost his leg in a shelling near Troitske, on February 5, 2015. After getting medical treatment in the Kyiv military hospital, he went for a rehabilitation to Slovenia and Estonia. Nowadays he lives in Ternopil with his wife Nadiia, ten-year-old daughter Radyslava and two-month-old son Svitozar. Oleksandr is planning to return to the military service.

A prosthetic engineer of a Kyiv-based prosthetic company comforts Oleksandr during his visit to the company's office. Veterans who lost their limbs in the war in Donbas have to regularly pay visits to prosthetic companies for various reasons. Many of them, including Oleksandr, have to travel hundreds of kilometers.

May 5, 2016/Subjects

Dear Keith, Rita and Jackie, good morning! I apologize for not updating my Blog for a while. I have been working on my project a lot this past month.

Yevhen

So at the beginning of April I continued to develop Yevhen's story. Soon he was taken outside by his sister on an ambulance stretcher to listen to Nick Vujicic talking in the hospital courtyard. I was there by accident, and I photographed him with his friends enjoying, I believe, his second or third time outside since the injury.

I kept coming to visit him (there was a gap in mid-April because of my cold), and at the end of April he was moved to a hospital in Chernivtsi, a city close to his village. It is a little unfortunate, as in Kiev I had more control on this story rather than when it is over 300 miles away. He went to his home village for a couple hours on Easter, but he didn't tell me he would (I got to know that the next day), and I was photographing Oleksandr that day (more details below). I am visiting Yevhen tomorrow in Chernivtsi for 2 days, and I would really like to be there when he goes home, but again, that would probably happen unexpectedly. Anyways, I hope I can make it and include that in my story.

Oleksandr

I have been in touch with Oleksandr all this time and went to visit him for 4 days, including Easter (May 1). It wasn't as great as I imagined, but, anyways, I got some family moments with his sister on an important day when everyone is off and just spend time with their family.

He also got a kitten, as he is feeling very lonely in his studio apartment. There are some nice kitten interactions in there too. Another good news is that he is planning on getting married in October, and I think that could be a nice ending for the story of a soldier returning from war to a kind of loneliness awaiting for him at home.

New Oleksandr (possible new subject)

Oleksandr Seniovskiy, 33, is from Ternopil (West Ukraine). He is the only one of my subjects that is married and has an eight-year-old daughter. I interviewed him in March, and photographed him a little in Ternopil and in Kiev at the prosthetics office in April. He seems to have a pretty strong PTSD, and he is a little hard to photograph, as he sometimes drops out of being with me instantaneously (just says “bye” and leaves), but there is an interesting story of him being stuck in the family relationship (his wife will give birth to a second child in the fall), while wanting to go back to the war zone (which is impossible, because he is on prosthetics). Although I find it difficult to pursue stories that are away from me, and it seems I already have two of them, so I am not really sure I can handle the third one that is away.

May 5, 2016/Challenges and Thoughts

Challenges

As I came back from a trip to Oleksandr (and about to leave for another one to Yevhen), I realized this story is not as easy to handle financially as I thought it would be. All trips cost money, and I stay in hotels in the cities where I live while I photograph. To make it a little easier, I started applying for grants, and I would really appreciate if you

could have a look at my application and briefly point out the weak points, so I could apply for more later this month (there are plenty of grant possibilities in May).

Finding things in common proved to be a little difficult. Both Oleksandr and Yevhen are from smaller towns (Yevhen is from a village), and their lifestyle before the war was very different from mine, a lot of physical work involved (Oleksandr was a builder, and Yevhen hunted and fished a lot). I think I have stepped over this barrier, but at the beginning, the silence was a little awkward (doesn't feel like that anymore).

Thoughts

I have shown my edit to a couple of colleagues, and their feedback resembles various points from Rita's extremely insightful Email on April 6 (Rita, thank you so much for it!). It seems I have too many pictures of injured soldiers doing something (in other words, too literal), and not too many quiet shots of them or atmosphere (kind of shots in a story where people relax). I also feel that photographs are not as intimate as they could be, and I can't figure if this is me not making another step, or them not fully accepting me into their life.

June 8, 2016

I have just returned from visiting Yevhen in the village he is from. He is doing pretty good. As I had mentioned, he was moved to a hospital in Chernivtsi (a city in Western Ukraine) at the end of April, and at the end of May, he finally went home to his village in Chernivtsi region. My trip to him in the Chernivtsi hospital on May 7-8 was fruitful, but the village trip on June 4-5 was not too great in terms of visuals... It takes

ages to get there, and, unfortunately, I only had a weekend available, so there weren't many situations I saw. Anyway, I am going again soon.

July 5, 2016

I apologize for disappearing for a while. I got a job at an NGO and it's been a little difficult to keep up with things, but I think I got used to the rhythm by now. Since my last field notes, I have photographed Oleksandr at home (I think I might have mentioned this trip previously) and at another training for special forces that was held in a Western Ukrainian city of Khmelnytskyi. Pictures from both trips are below. Communication is a lot easier now than it was before, and there are always think to talk about when I am around him.

A problem with Oleksandr that I have encountered (and I think I have never encountered it before) is that he keenly wants to get my story out there (exhibitions, publications etc.). At first, I was sure that it was money he wants to get from sponsors, but now it seems that he just wants to help me earn some money with the work that I am doing. Anyway, he introduced me to a lady that has a restaurant in Kyiv, and some kind of cooperation is possible there.

Oleksandr (which you saw with a family in May) was first in Turkey on vacation, and then in Estonia for a rehab. He has recently got back from there. I could finally reach him some time ago, and thinking of visiting him next weekend to see if his story could be continued.

I have finished analyzing Peter van Agtmael's story (finally!). I will send it to Dr. Greenwood in an E-mail today to see what has to be changed. Rita, you were absolutely

right, analyzing existing stories gives a lot to think about. For instance, van Agtmael's story portrays Bobby Henline as absolutely lonely (staying in motels, no friends appearing at least in a couple shots in a story), but he is married with three kids. Omitting such a huge part of his life in a story about him is very interesting, almost a manipulation, I would say. Or is it just a focused story? Definitely things to think about.

July 14, 2016

My project has been awarded a Grand Prize from the IAFOR Documentary Photography Award. Yay! I am extremely happy, and I feel it comes right about time. Furthermore, it gives me a possibility to sustain myself while I continue working on the project.

August 15, 2016

I have just returned from ISSP (International Summer School of Photography), an annual photography workshop near Kuldiga, Latvia. The class I took was with Paolo Woods and Gabriele Galimberti, and it was called "Tell Me a Story". Participants, including myself, came there with the projects they were working on, and had a chance to get some invaluable feedback from Paolo and other participants. I showed over a hundred pictures from "Life after Injury", and got his opinion on a couple things. Pictures from my story also took part in the group show in the city of Kuldiga at the end of the workshop.

September 7, 2016

I apologize for disappearing for a period of time.

I continue working on the project. Yevhen, the young soldier, is feeling a lot better (he is actually riding a bicycle in his village already, and has only one surgery left before he is back to 'normal'), so I am planning to visit him soon and do an interview, which would mean this story is done. I would have to select the pictures, transcribe the interview, and it would be ready to upload to the website. I visited him for 2-3 days in July, and will upload these images (you haven't seen them yet) to blog as soon as I am home (on assignment in East Ukraine now).

I have been in touch with Oleksandr (the first Oleksandr) a lot, and making the long story short, I don't think his wedding is happening, so I will probably do an interview with him as well. I came to visit him on August 19-20, to photograph him taking part in the opening of a memorial to the soldiers killed in Est Ukraine. That is another shoot to be uploaded to the blog.

Oleksandr (the first Oleksandr) was in Kiev on August 21, and he introduced me to Anatoliy, a soldier he served alongside with. Anatoliy was a war prisoner from August 2014 to December 2014, came back home, and went to the army again. On June 16 he lost both his legs in a mine explosion and is in Kiev hospital now. He agreed to participate in the project, and I am trying to get permission to photograph his rehabilitation.

I also visited the second Oleksandr and tried to photograph him with his wife, and she was really uncomfortable with me doing that, so I am a little lost here. She is going to give birth to their second child soon, so I want to come and photograph that.

To be honest, it has been a challenge lately for me to sit myself down and do the writing for the project in Kiev, so I am thinking about coming to Columbia at the beginning of November (I could also watch CPOY judging!), and finalizing the research there under your guidance.

November 8, 2016

I know you haven't heard from me in a long while, and I apologize for it.

After being on assignment for over a month and a half, I am finally back home in Kyiv and continuing the work on my Master's Project. Maybe it is a little too personal, but now I have enough funds to be able to sit at home and concentrate on the Project. I feel that the shooting part is 90% over (Oleksandr with the family is the only thing that lacks depth, and I am planning on going again), so now I am going to sit myself at home and finish the research part, the work on the website will follow.

I would love to come and defend around the beginning of February, that seems to give me plenty of time to finish everything, and, if I remember correctly, it is not a time too busy and/or hectic overall in terms of the Curriculum. I will be able to stay for however required to finish everything and defend.

November 18, 2016

I apologize for disappearing. It has really been a while. It is amazing how the time can fly, if you are busy.

So I would say that Oleksandr's (meaning first Oleksandr) and Yevhen's stories are over, and the only pictures I lack are of Oleksandr Seniovskyi with his newborn son, whom I planning on visiting on November 27 for 3-4 days.

Tomorrow I am going to first Oleksandr to conduct an interview, and at the beginning of January I am going to conduct an interview with Yevhen to finally finish the "field work". I will keep you updated from now on.

November 21, 2016

I have come back from Oleksandr. While there were not that many new scenes to photograph, the interview with him went great (it lasted a little over two hours), and I feel a lot of text editing full of difficult decision lying ahead.

November 29, 2016

I have just come back home from the trip to Oleksandr Seniovskyi in Ternopil. His son Svitozar was born in mid-September, but according to a Ukrainian superstition, kids can only be photographed after they have been baptized, so I had to wait a little. I think these pictures fill a huge gap in the story. Now I have photographs of him at home and doing daily routines. There were also some nice moments outside when he went to pick his daughter from school. Despite his desire to go back to the Army, his life now obviously revolves around his family, and I think the pictures manage to communicate it. I have also conducted the interview that will lead the story.

November 30, 2016

I have been offered to do a personal photography exhibition with “Life after Injury” in America House in Kyiv on December 15! It is a little bit out of the blue and will surely take some time from completing my Master’s Project, but I decided to use the possibility to get my subjects’ story out there. The exhibit is going to accompany a 2-day workshop for psychologists working with the soldiers coming back from the war zone.

December 3, 2016

I have met the director of America House Kyiv and the organizer of the whole event from the Public Affairs section of the U.S. Embassy. We have agreed on the idea that it would be great if one of my subjects came to the opening and stayed to share his experience with the psychologists attended the workshop.

December 8, 2016

I have just come back from photographing Oleksandr Sarabun getting a medal from his battalion commander on the battalion’s military base. These photographs will definitely contribute to his interview full of great detail.

January 4, 2017

I have conducted an interview with Yevhen. He has always been reluctant to share his experience in the war zone, and during the whole interview I felt like I was pulling the answers out of him, but I think I can make it work.

January 26, 2017

I have finished editing, translating into English and putting together Yevhen's story, and I want to share it with you. The interview here was the shortest, others are longer, so it will take me another week to edit and translate them. I just wanted to publish one story to see how it looks and share it with you. The text here is not edited into a final stage, and the photographs might be somewhat swapped too.

<https://lifeafterinjury.exposure.co/yevhen-hrynychuk-21>

If it asks you for password somewhere, it would be 'mizzou'.

February 8, 2017

I have just published Oleksandr Seniovskyy's story on the website. It was a little more challenging than with Yevhen, and I feel like it is somewhat a different piece (text drives the story, rather than the visuals), but I guess there is nothing wrong with that.

March 13, 2017

I have just finished putting together the website with Oleksandr's, Yevhen's, and Oleksandr Seniovskyy's story.

Chapter Three: Evaluation

Life after Injury is the longest photography project I have ever made, and the one where I have lived through every moment that I witnessed and photographed. It is extremely difficult to evaluate yourself, but I would say I am happy with the results.

As it often happens with documentary photography projects, the beginning was one of the most challenging parts. There were two or three injured soldiers that immediately agreed to be photographed but would never pick up their phone afterward. I met Oleksandr Sarabun, my first subject, in February 2016, and Oleksandr Seniovskiy and Yevhen Hrynychuk in the following March.

It has been rather difficult at the beginning with every one of the three subjects, and it took some time for me to get to know them. Most importantly, it took time for them to get to know me, which I think is a key to producing a really in-depth story. As I assumed, the fact that I had been to the war zone helped me gain trust of these people. For them, the world is bipolar and is unequivocally divided into those who had never been to war (in a way, *outsiders*) and those who had (*insiders*). After I shared my experiences, I would immediately join the second.

Danish photojournalist Jan Grarup once said it takes four things to be a successful photojournalist. They are *Time*, *Empathy*, *Closeness* and *Respect*. I would say that time was one of the keys in this case. By spending a lot of time with my subjects, often without a camera, I built rapport with them and those around them. In their eyes, I was not another journalist coming into their life for an hour or two but a person willing to tell a long-term compelling story. Although in some time I realized it was a good idea to

always have a camera with me and take any pictures from time to time, otherwise they would forget that I am a photographer and react too much to the camera that they forgot had existed before.

The burden of physical trauma and the limitations it puts on a person was not the main focus of my story, so I decided not to deal with any legal permissions from the hospitals (I would need it only for one of the three stories, Yevhen's). As a result, I wasn't allowed to photograph in the operation rooms during surgeries. To me, a photograph of Yevhen's sister laughing (or crying?) as she touches his hand to comfort him after a surgery is a lot more telling than a picture from an operation room.

What was challenging to get was the permission to photograph the training for soldiers that Oleksandr Sarabun took part in. They were organized by an NGO that specializes in first-aid education and the Secret Service of Ukraine. I made a dozen phone calls to get both to the NGO and the SSU. In the end, I was lucky, because the training was open for the press, and by the time the second training happened I already knew everyone involved in the organization.

The project was photographed on a digital camera and three prime lenses, 28, 35 and a 50. My wide-angle lens works pretty badly, so I tried to use it in the rare cases I could not fit what I wanted in the frame. Overall, I was pretty lucky with the light. I can't recall a low-light situation when I missed a picture, because I couldn't do it technically.

During the work on this project I met a lot of incredible people. I met soldiers without limbs with an incredible lust for life and their families, who have been showing inexhaustible support to their injured loved ones. I met volunteers, or, in other words, people who are delivering supplies to Ukrainian soldiers on the frontlines. I saw kids

making camouflage nets for soldiers and a ten-year-old girl who knew a lot more about weaponry than an average soldier. This project gave me an opportunity to spend time with people who are *pulling out* this war on their shoulders every single day.

These encounters have not always been easy. I saw parents grieving about their children and wives grieving about their husbands and kids who won't be able to see their father ever again. A couple of trips left me speechless and troubled for days. I saw the *human cost* of war without going to the war zone. In fact, some of the trips I made were harder to handle mentally than assignments in the conflict areas.

Despite the fact that the war has been going on for almost three years, too many Ukrainian citizens distance themselves from what is going on. It almost feels like only a small percentage of people knows that there is war, while others live in peace. The coverage of war veterans that one can see in Ukrainian media outlets is a glorification with little attention to detail. To alter this a little, a writer friend and I started a series of publications about war veterans in a Ukrainian national magazine called *Tyzhden* (The Ukrainian Week). The first story was about Oleksandr Sarabun, one of the subjects of my photography project.

I have been submitting my project to every Ukrainian or international competition or show to raise awareness of the issue and raise funds to continue working on the project. *Life after Injury* got recognized with a Grand Prize from IAFOR Documentary Photography Award and with a Grand Prize from the Ukrainian contest of the newspaper "Day", the biggest Ukrainian photojournalism contest and a gallery show. Parts of the project were published by the British Journal of Photography and Spiegel Online.

In the beginning of November I was approached by a museum in Yevhen Hrynychuk's village of Bila Krynysia with an offer to do a small photography exhibition solely about him. I printed about fifteen A3 photographs, found the frames, and sent them to the museum. I strongly believe that organizing such small shows for local communities is extremely important.

I was also extremely honored to get an invitation from America House Kyiv, the U.S. Embassy's central venue for cultural initiatives in Ukraine, to hold a personal photography exhibition on the topic in mid-December. Despite a huge time constraint, I was able to put together an edit of over 35 photographs featuring all the three stories that I photographed for my Master's Project and some single images.

The photography show was part of a two-day workshop for psychologists that help soldiers with PTSD. One of my subjects, Oleksandr Sarabun, gave a short speech in front of the participants of the workshop the day after the show opening. He emphasized the most and the least helpful psychological advice he got as a soldier. I am very glad that my project contributed to the dialogue between psychologists and the injured soldiers coming home after the war.

I consider the photography exhibitions I already had in Ukraine with this project (two in Kyiv and one in Bila Krynysia) more important than contests or publications abroad. One of the goals of this project was to show Ukrainians the visual stories about their fellow citizens that have made a huge commitment and to try to raise the level of appreciation for war veterans in the Ukrainian society.

After I defend, I plan to continue working on the series for The Ukrainian Week and pitch this project to a couple of international media outlets. I have already pitched the

project to couple of magazines, but this work has been sporadic. After that, I would like to have a short break and continue working on *Life after Injury*, possibly using other mediums (video, multimedia, VR etc.) A big plan that I have with my writer friend is to do a book (in Ukrainian) that would include 7-10 in-depth stories about the soldiers with his text and my photographs. Making such a book in Ukraine would mean getting this story across to a bigger audience, and that is one of my main goals.

Chapter Four: Physical Evidence

Three photo stories about heavily injured Ukrainian soldiers, together with their interviews translated to English, that I have done for this project, can be found online on a dedicated website, also created for this project, following the link below.

<http://www.lifeafterinjury.photography/>

Chapter Five: Analysis

Introduction

Emergence of stories about war veterans

War photography has been able to show the *human cost* of armed conflict since the American Civil War. By the beginning of the new millennium, visual coverage of war had become extremely sanitized and was “reduced to a video game” that shielded viewers from the dead and the wounded. Several studies (Aday, 2005; Roth et al., 2008; Ritchin, 2013) on American newspapers’ and broadcast stations’ coverage of the active phase of the war in Iraq arrived at a conclusion that visual imagery depicting *human cost* of war, especially among American soldiers, was extremely infrequent in print and broadcast respectively.

Roth et al. (2008) in their content analysis of two U.S. major newspapers admit, “Governmental regulation—taking the form of the “embed rules” for journalists with the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan—constitutes one primary *external* constraint on the ability of the press to fulfill its duty to the US public” (p. 269). According to the authors of the study, photographers’ inability to show dead and wounded U.S. soldiers to the public back home through pictures in traditional media leads to the phenomenon that Elaine Scarry calls “disappearance of the body”.

Aday (2005) blames reporters and, more importantly, editors back in the US for such imagery deprived of gruesome scenes. David Shields, an award-winning author, in his book entitled “War Is Beautiful”, collects images from *The New York Times* front page to make an argument that they “capture the irreducible glamour of war” but fail to show the “objective truth”.

Such sanitized imagery deprives the readers and viewers back home of an adequate realization of what war was actually is. Therefore, it is difficult for people back home to grasp what American soldiers go through. Chris Kyle, the famous sniper who served four tours in Iraq, wrote in his autobiographical novel “American Sniper” (2012) that “For some reason, a lot of people back home — not all people—didn’t accept that we were at war. They didn’t accept that war means death, violent death most times. A lot of people, not just politicians, wanted to impose ridiculous fantasies on us, hold us to some standard of behavior that no human being could maintain”.

Portrait photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, commenting on his portrait project on Iraq war veterans, emphasizes the importance of such stories in the time of censorship. “I think we need to see this. We don’t see the dead coming back in coffins. We’re sheltered from the injured. We just don’t see it. It’s all been brilliantly hidden from view” (Applebome, 2007).

In the complete absence of visual imagery depicting human casualties and heavy physical trauma among American soldiers in the war zones (with some rare exceptions), a trend emerged towards producing stories about heavily injured war veterans that had returned home. As Fred Ritchin discusses this matter in his “Bending the Frame” (2013), he notes, “Domestically there is more freedom for a photographer to circulate and, presumably, a sense that their fellow citizens may better grasp certain of the war’s legacies through their impact on U.S. soldiers and their families” (p. 67). Such stories, according to Chouliaraki (2013), “not only recast the battlefield as a space of individual trauma but also re-position photojournalism as itself an intimate practice of witnessing personal pain” (p. 329-330).

The first such photographic projects were published in 2004 as veterans were coming back to the United States. Since then single pictures and projects about injured war veterans have won a number of visual journalism awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography, World Press Photo, Missouri School of Journalism's Pictures of the Year International (POYi), National Press Photographers Association's Best of Photojournalism (NPPA's BOP) and many others.

The purpose of this study is *to analyze how heavily injured war veterans are visually framed in some of the award-winning photography projects*. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), characterization of a certain issue in a news report "can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences" (p. 11), and it is instrumental to know how heavily injured war veterans are perceived by US society.

The study looks at award-winning projects, as they had already gone through a professional review. Such projects stay in a collective memory longer than others, and they are easily accessible by emerging photojournalists or members of the public through websites of the professional photography contests. According to Greenwood and Smith (2007), award-winning images "persist in the minds of readers and shape their views of the world".

Literature Review

Framing

Framing as a concept was developed as early as 1974 by Canadian-born sociologist Erving Goffman. Since then there has been a lot of significant scholarly research on framing, including Entman (1993), who wrote that "To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as

to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Building on the experiments of Kahneman and Tversky (1984), he added, “frames select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described, which logically means that frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” (p. 54).

Greenwood and Smith (2007) point out that “all news organizations frame as part of their work” (p. 84). Although this study looks at award-winning images of war veterans not necessarily produced by photographers affiliated with a news organization as staff members, I think the aforementioned notion can be applied to freelancers as well, as they presently are a big part of media content production.

Greenwood and Smith define framing as “cognitive devices media and audiences use to organize and make sense of issues and events” (p. 84).

Visual Framing

Despite a growing number of analyses on framing in journalistic texts and broadcast pieces, the research on framing social issues by news or documentary photographs, or *visual framing*, has been relatively scarce. According to Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), one of the main reasons for that is the “confusion as to how visual frames are supposed to be identified” (p. 51). The researchers emphasized that analyzing visual frames remains a challenge despite proven fact that “audiences may be more likely to accept the visual frame without question” (p. 50). Vicki Goldberg, photography critic for *The New York Times*, in her widely cited book *The Power of Photography* writes, “The fact that what is represented on paper undeniably existed, if only for a moment, is

the ultimate source of the medium's extraordinary powers of persuasion" (1991, p. 19).

Messaris and Abraham (2001), a milestone study in visual framing, focuses on three distinctive properties of visual images, "their analogical quality, their indexicality, and their lack of an explicit propositional syntax" (p. 215). Researchers emphasize that viewers make sense of certain images based on similarities or analogies they bring to mind. They write, "Analogical quality of images ... can make images appear more natural, more closely linked to reality than words are, it can also inveigle viewers into overlooking the fact that all images are human-made, artificial constructions" (p. 217).

As Messaris and Abraham discuss *indexicality* of images, they argue that because a photograph is an automatic product that bypasses human agency to a certain degree, "the connection between a photograph and reality has a certain authenticity that human-made pictures can never have" (p. 217). As a consequence, using photographs for framing "could diminish the likelihood that viewers would question what they see" (p. 217).

Comparing visual and verbal languages, researchers emphasize, "visual communication does not have an explicit set of syntactic conventions" (p. 219). Propositions in visual images are "more reliant on the viewer's ability to make intuitive sense of implicit meanings on the basis of contextual or other cues" (p. 219). As a result, a set of claims presented by a photograph may be harder to recognize than the one found in a verbal construct.

Geftter (2006) emphasizes, "It is one thing to read about the circumstances of our time; it's another to see them. Even if the subject is unfamiliar, the visual language is immediately recognizable" (p. 26). In subsequent passages he restates a popular notion, "A picture may not be worth a thousand words, but a picture and a good caption are

worth a thousand and 10”.

Perlmutter (1998) in his book *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy* discusses the theory of visual determinism, an idea that photographs can shape public opinion. Beverly Denny, a Missouri School of Journalism alumni, in her master’s project criticizes this notion for being overly simplistic and argues that images do not shape public opinion, “they interact with individuals’ existing values and understandings of the world and influence judgment. Pictures stoke an emotional chord not necessarily strong enough to change our perspectives, but can definitely reinforce existing attitudes” (p. 47). For Khan (2010), another Missouri School of Journalism alumni, “visual framing starts with selection of news and follows steps such as which images to shoot, how to shoot, composition, what to emphasize on, which ones to select for printing and where to place them on the page and in which section” (p. 28).

Coleman (2010) makes a point that viewers’ lack of awareness of the power of images “makes the framing of images even more important to understand” (p. 243). Crucially important, in her point of view, is that journalism graduates in the digital era are expected to not only write texts, but make still images and record video. “Choosing something based on journalistic values or because the image grabs attention, or even simply because the page needs a photo, can have consequences beyond what the journalist envisioned” (p. 243).

Semiotics

A number of studies dealing with the analysis of visual imagery derive their methodology from semiotics, or *semiology*, postulated by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916. As put by Barthes and cited in Berger (1981), “Semiology ... aims to take any system of

signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds ... which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification”. In fact, Roland Barthes was the one to adapt semiotics to analyzing photographs, and it is his studies that much of today’s research relies on.

One such study is van Leeuwen (2001), who sees “the layering of meaning” as the key idea of Barthesian visual semiotics. *Denotation*, the first layer, should answer the questions ‘what, or who, is being depicted here?’. *Connotation*, the second layer, should answer “what ideas and values are expressed through what is represented, and through the way in which it is represented?”.

Denotative signifiers, or ‘object signs’, as put by Barthes, are easy to spot, as “perceiving photographs is closely analogous to perceiving reality” (van Leeuwen, p. 94). Even a lack of knowledge about a specific object is not a problem. However, denotation is not entirely up to the beholder. Despite the fact that in some forms of modern art a multiplicity of readings is allowed or even encouraged, according to van Leeuwen (2001), “There are other contexts where the producers of the text have an interest in trying to get a particular message across to a particular audience, and in such cases there will be signs to point us towards the preferred level of generality” (p. 95).

People in visual images can either be represented as an individual or as a social type. It depends on if and how strongly visual stereotypes are present in a certain photograph. These stereotypes “may either be cultural attributes (objects, dress, hairstyle, etc.) or physiognomic attributes. The more these stereotypes overshadow a person’s individual features ... the more that person ... is represented as a type” (p. 95). Heavily

injured war veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are presented in award-winning photo stories as individuals through “surrounding text”, but with strong conformity to ‘war veteran’ as a type. These photographs are rich with objects (disabled carriage, crutches). Moreover, physiognomic features (burnt skin, scars) unambiguously tell us who we are looking at. Van Leeuwen also notes, “Depicting people in groups rather than as individuals can have a similar effect”, meaning that if there are several people in the frame looking the same or performing the same action, they will be perceived as belonging to a certain type rather than several individuals.

Connotation is the “layer of the broader concepts, ideas and values which the represented people, places and things ‘stand for’, ‘are signs of’ (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 96). It can be communicated either through cultural associations that we experience while looking at the images, or through certain ‘connotators’, or aspects of presentation, which may include, but are not limited to, photographic techniques. According to Coleman (2010), of the three basic camera angles, “eye level or straight on is considered neutral, shot from above is negative, and from below is positive. Camera distance includes close-up or the head and shoulders (positive), a long shot with the full figure (negative), and a medium shot from the waist up (neutral)” (p. 248). Such ‘connotators’ (framing, distance, lighting, focus etc.) were described by Barthes (1977), who called them ‘photogenia’.

Messaris and Abraham (2001) go even further emphasize that the simple and inevitable process of selection has far-reaching implications for the visual framing process. They write, “The practice in question is the simple act of selection – choosing one view instead of another when making the photograph, cropping or editing the resulting image one way instead of another, or simply just choosing to show viewers one

image out of the many others that may have been produced at the same place and time.” (p. 218).

Four-level visual framing analysis

One of the most comprehensive visual framing analyses is the four-level visual framing analysis suggested by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011). It is based on semiotics, discussed above, and derives a little bit from iconography, discussed by van Leeuwen (2001). According to their scholarly research, “Visuals, like text, can operate as framing devices insofar as they make use of various rhetorical tools—metaphors, depictions, symbols—that purport to capture the essence of an issue or event graphically” (p. 51). Visuals help the viewers to make sense of social issues by facilitating “the grounds upon which some interpretations can be favored and others impeded” (p. 51). Rodriguez and Dimitrova suggest analyzing images as denotative systems; stylistic-semiotic systems; connotative systems; ideological representations.

At the first level “frames are identified by enumerating the objects and discrete elements actually shown in the visual ... Visual frames at this level are basically described” (p. 53). This level reflects the aforementioned Barthes’ (1977) notion of denotative signifiers and relies on what Messaris and Abraham (2001) call *analogic* and *indexical* qualities of images. Frames can also be identified at this level by reading “titles, captions, inscriptions, or other textual descriptions that accompany the visual” (p. 53).

At the second level one should analyze “how pictorial conventions and styles gain social meanings, such as when a close-up shot signifies intimacy, a medium shot signifies personal relationship, a full shot signifies social relationship and a long shot signifies context, scope and public distance” (p. 55). In her research on Associated Press photo

service's coverage of Afghan women's life during the Taliban regime and after its fall Fahmy (2004) examined five stylistic variables, "visual subordination, point of view, social distance, imaginary contact, behavior and general contact" (p. 91). The behavior of the subject in the frame, specifically his or her actions or poses, are other signifiers. Barthes' 'photogenia' list, outlined above, is applicable at this level.

At the third level visuals are analyzed as "symbols that are able to combine, compress and communicate social meaning". Signs have to be analyzed for "more complex, often culture-bound interpretations" to dissect a meaning that is "highly personalized and distinct" (p. 56). On this stage a researcher has to be ready to notice and deconstruct abstract and figurative symbols having symbolic values, as well as visual metaphors.

At the fourth level researchers, according to Pieterse (1992), are looking for answers to such questions: "What interests are being served by these representations? Whose voices are being heard? What ideas dominate?" As put by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), "this level tackles how news images are employed as instruments of power in the shaping of public consciousness and historical imagination" (p. 58).

Research Questions

To understand how the heavily injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are visually framed in award-winning photo stories, this study aims to answer the following research questions. First, are they depicted as individuals or as generalized war veterans? To answer this question, the study will analyze if their individual features are visible, and if they appear isolated or in groups. Second, what type of shots and camera angles photographers used to frame injured veterans? Third, what are some of the recurrent

patterns in these stories?

Method

This study relies on a visual analysis of denotative and connotative aspects of photographs. Using a four-level visual analysis suggested by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), and informed by semiotics, photographs from award-winning photojournalism projects were examined to determine how heavily injured veterans are framed for the viewer.

This study looks at all the projects about heavily injured Iraq war veterans that won the World Press Photo contest until 2017. Since 2004, when heavily injured war veterans' coverage emerged, three photo stories have been awarded this prestigious prize. They are "Purple Hearts" by Nina Berman, "War is Personal" by Eugene Richards and "Healing Bobby" by Peter van Agtmael. Every image in these photo stories was analyzed for visual framing using four-level analysis to understand if authors wanted to communicate certain messages. World Press Photo was selected as the only contest to analyze based for the high quality of the work that is awarded and for its agenda-setting qualities. Below (2010) writes, "The World Press Photo Foundation is an agenda-setting entity whose annually prized World Press Photos influence the media coverage and the way in which the pictured events are covered further on. It also determines to what extent and with what bias the recipients think about the incidents shown in the photographs and how they memorise them" (p. 41).

"Healing Bobby" by Peter van Agtmael, "Purple Hearts" by Nina Berman, "War is Personal" by Eugene Richards were analyzed for visual framing of the heavily injured war veterans level by level according to the four-level analysis, described above. At the

first level I looked at an image to see what it denotes, in other words, what can be seen in the picture. Are there any “object signs”? How strongly cultural and physiognomic attributes are present? These are some of the questions I tried to answer at this level of visual analysis. At the *second* level I decoded camera distance (long shot, medium shot or a close up); camera angle (shot from below, above, or eye level); lighting situation etc. At the *third* level I looked deeper and tried to understand if there are metaphors in the frame by looking at signs with possible social meanings. At the *fourth* level I tried to understand what message a picture is trying to communicate, and what goal it is trying to achieve with it.

Every individual picture in a project was analyzed based on the first level, then based on the second level, etc. At each level, notes were taken that can be found in the Appendix D of this Master’s Project. Each photo story was analyzed completely before the study moved to the next one. Notes on every photograph of the three stories were then condensed into three tables (one for each photo story) that can be found in Appendix A of this study. Story summaries for each award-winning story can be found in Appendix B.

Results

RQ1. In “*Healing Bobby*”, in seven out of twelve images Bobby is the only person clearly seen in the frame. He is never in a small group of people, which would communicate family’s and friends’ support (there would also exist a need to define everyone in the caption). He is either with one other person (5, 7, 11), who are not members of his family or friends, or in a big group or crowd (3, 9) where it is impossible to distinguish individuals clearly.

Bobby has extremely strong individual features, in other words, he can hardly be

attributed to a type (a generalized “war veteran”). He never appears in a military uniform or among other war veterans. Notably, he never appears at home with his family.

In “*Purple Hearts*”, in nine of the ten images a war veteran is the only person we see in the frame. In most cases the photographer deprives subjects of social or family context (except for two pictures). In two photographs the subjects can be easily attributed to a “type” through their military uniform (1, 3). Two subjects have burnt faces (1, 2), three are seen with prosthetics (5, 8, 9), two have visible scars (4, 10) and one appears on a wheelchair (7).

In “*War is Personal*”, In four of the images there is one visible subject (1, 2, 6, 7), in five other images there are two subjects (4, 8, 10, 11, 12), and in three there are more than two subjects (3, 5, 9). Notably, in the last three images there are no more than two adults, the rest of the subjects that help make a bigger number are kids. Most subjects appear in the third image, two adults and two kids.

War veterans, alone or accompanied by family members, appear in ten of the twelve images (2-11). A physical trauma is visible in seven images (2-7; 10), and a mental trauma is visible in one image that shows a disturbed war veteran looking into a window (11). The other two photographs depict veterans’ family moments where no trauma is visible.

RQ2. In “*Healing Bobby*”, there are seven long shots and four full shots in this story. There is one shot that could be called a close up, but there are no extreme close-ups. Nine of the twelve images are shot on eye-level, and three are shot from above. The photographer remains a rather neutral observer of the unfolding events.

In “*Purple Hearts*”, there are six medium shots, three full shots and one close up in this story. Five images are shot on eye-level, four from below and one from above. The photographer seems to be making this decision based on what objects she wants to be seen in the background.

In “*War is Personal*”, there are seven medium shots, two full shots, two close-ups and one long shot in the story. In most cases the photographer is very close to his subjects, and in such conditions the medium shot is the best solution. A close up (1, 6) is used to depict the face in detail (so the viewers could feel close to it), and full shots are used when there is a need to show the whole room where subjects are (3, 9). The long shot is the last picture from the Arlington cemetery.

Four images are shot from below, four from eye-level, and four from above. The angle seems to be chosen based on the amount of context the photographer wants in the pictures. Subjects look away in all of the shots.

RQ3. “*Healing Bobby*” deals with a lot of important topics concerning heavily injured soldiers coming back home from Iraq and Afghanistan. One of them is the acceptance and appreciation of war veterans in American society. Four photographs deal with this topic. While three of them (3, 5, 9) clearly show the appreciation through dedicated events, the fourth (10) juxtaposes Bobby to the random crowd on the street.

Six images place Bobby in quite mundane situations as if to show that his life now is not that different from the lives of other people, and war veterans can enjoy life just as they did before the injury. Therefore, one can talk about a certain *therapeutic* goal of this project.

“Purple Hearts” shows a certain number of individuals having the same story or problem. One of the things it connotes is that there is a much bigger number of people struggling with the same issue. So one of the things that this story succeeds to show is the *human cost of war*.

Every photograph depicts a heavily injured war veteran. There are, for one exception, no relationship images in this story, and no pictures of the “bigger world” these people live in. We are looking at images are of individuals and the small worlds each of them lives in.

Many photographs in this story tend to be made having an idea of contrasting elements in the frame.

Fifth and eighth images are this emblematic portrayal of war at home. Home has a very strong visual presence (through a garden and a bedroom respectively), and it is disturbed by war. Veterans return home, but now they are different, they have physical wounds and painful memories. Contrasting elements here are *home* and *prosthetic arms and legs*.

The first and third images feel like they have an anti-war idea. It is communicated through the juxtaposition of the contrasting elements, a dress military uniform and a burnt face in the first images, and a soldier in the contemporary uniform and cowboys in the reflection in the third image.

“War is Personal” discusses such important topics as parents’ feelings and support (1, 3, 8, 10, 11), family relationship (5, 8, 9, 11), veterans’ anxiety (2, 11), acceptance of them by their families with the physical limitations they have (5).

This story is a classic Eugene Richards's piece. Except for a couple of images (9, 12), there is a sense of hopelessness that these photographs communicate. War's consequences are severe (2-5, 10) and often lethal (1, 6, 7). Trauma is a burden forever to be carried by veterans and their families.

Discussion

Despite the fact that Peter van Agtmael, Nina Berman and Eugene Richards are dealing with very similar subject matter, the heavily injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans in their stories are visually framed in very different ways. Peter van Agtmael's "Healing Bobby" tells a story of overcoming physical and mental trauma through social activity; Nina Berman's "Purple Hearts" emphasize the burden of physical and mental trauma on individuals; Eugene Richards's "War is Personal" shows the effect death and trauma have on Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans and their families.

What we see is different on a *denotative* level. Van Agtmael's Bobby is depicted as almost a public figure, and only one of the twelve photographs shows him at home (notably, without his family). His comedy is a tool in overcoming the battle trauma. The US society and the "bigger world" are clearly present in this story, they help the main subject deal with his physical and mental trauma. Berman's war veterans are mostly alone in their indoor or outdoor "small worlds", sometimes real, and sometimes imaginary. They face their trauma on their own. Richards's war veterans are family members that love and are being loved. Most of the photographs take place indoors, in people's apartments or houses, with only the last picture taking place at the cemetery.

The photographs differ a lot on the *stylistic-semiotic* level as well. The documentary photographers analyzed here use "photogenia" (visual means such as

framing, distance, lighting, focus etc.) to convey the exact meanings they want. Peter van Agtmael remains a neutral observer and mostly does long and full shots to provide context. He uses lines created by the environment and natural light to emphasize his main subject. Nina Berman uses a square format that is well fit for portraiture. Most of the pictures are medium shots, but in four cases she makes a step back to show more surrounding. Sometimes she goes for the natural light, but mostly uses one or a couple of strobes to highlight her subjects. Eugene Richards predictably uses a lot of wide-angle and bends the horizon, and remains extremely close, with seven out of twelve images being medium shots. He often uses open aperture to emphasize an element.

In terms of *connotative* systems, both van Agtmael's and Berman's photographs can be divided into certain groups inside one story. In "Healing Bobby", images either communicate loneliness, or society's appreciation. In "Purple Hearts", images either juxtapose contrasting elements or show war veterans lost in between succeeding their rehab and succumbing to depression. Richards's photographs communicate pure human feelings like love, worry about the loved ones and pain of loss.

In terms of *ideological representations*, some of the recurrent topics in the stories are the burden of physical and mental trauma; war veterans' families' love and support; war at home; society's acceptance and appreciation; disturbed ordinariness; veterans' involvement in helping each other and other veterans' families.

Although what makes these stories very different is not their immediate content or form, but the *context* the subjects are placed in, the *roles* subjects appear in, and the *relationships* subjects have with their surrounding or each other in the photographs.

- Bobby Henline is put into social context, his main role is the one of a comedian, and the relationship that is described in this story is the veteran-society relationship;
- Nina Berman deprives her subjects of context, they are war veterans with no other additional roles, and there are no relationships shown;
- Eugene Richards shows his subjects in a family context, war veterans are family members, and the relationships shown are different family relationships affected by war.

Limitations and suggestions for future study

The photographs analyzed in this study can't serve as a complete representation of the visual coverage of the issue. This study is limited in its analysis of the three projects about heavily injured war veterans that won the World Press Photo contest. This photography competition, despite its prestige as a journalistic award, is just one of the many contests awarding documentary photography projects. Stories and essays about heavily injured war veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan had also won such contests as Pictures of the Year International (POYi), National Press Photographers Association's (NPPA's) BOP and PDN Photo Annual, just to name a few. To get a full picture, projects about heavily injured war veterans that had won these contests have to be included in the analysis.

Future research could possibly compare how injured war veterans are visually framed in photography projects published by local and national newspapers, and analyze their portrayal in media over a certain period of time. This analysis doesn't necessarily have to be visual. Analyses of texts that are published in American media outlets are also

crucial for understanding how war veterans are framed and afterwards perceived by the society.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1: Peter van Agtmael, “Healing Bobby”

		Stylistic-semiotic systems						
	Denotative systems	Camera distance	Camera angle	Subjects looks	Depth of field	Other	Connotative systems	Ideological representation
1	Bobby in a motel room; close up of burnt face; plaided shirt; tattoo	Close-up	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Lines; Layering; Clean Shot	Relaxation; Loneliness	Ordinary
2	Bobby in his garden with dogs; well-maintained property	Long shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Lines; Layering; Clean Shot	Relaxation; Loneliness; Social standing and order	Ordinary; War veterans are not homeless
3	Bobby performing comedy in a bar, raises his stump	Long shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Emphasis with light; Layering	Strong character; turning trauma into a joke	Acceptance and appreciation of war vets in US society
4	Bobby in a motel room; lying across bed; casual wear	Full shot	Above	Away	Shallow	Lines; Color	Relaxation; Loneliness	Ordinary
5	Bobby on ice rink during Military Appreciaton Night	Full shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Emphasis with light	Appreciation	Acceptance and appreciation of war vets in US society
6	Bobby in a motel room; bare-chested	Full shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Emphasis with light	Relaxation; Loneliness	Ordinary

7	Bobby supporting deceased soldier's sister	Full shot	Above	Away	Deep	Emphasis with light	Linking the distant war and the peaceful life back home	War at home; Veterans' involvement in helping relatives
8	Bobby walking out of the restaurant; parking lot	Long Shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Emphasis with light	Loneliness	Ordinary
9	Bobby on an ice hockey match; applauds veteran; full stadium	Long shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Camera angle	Camraderie between the soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan	Acceptance and appreciation of war vets in US society
10	Bobby walking along beachfront in the evening wearing a "Got Burns?" T-shirt	Long shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Subject placement in the frame	Linking the distant war and the peaceful life back home	Acceptance and appreciation of war vets in US society
11	Bobby standing on the grave of his fellow soldier	Long shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Clean shot	Linking the distant war and the peaceful life back home	War at home; Veterans' involvement in helping relatives
12	Bobby swimming in a pool	Long shot	Above	Away	Shallow	Clean shot	Relaxation	Ordinary

Table 2. Nina Berman, "Purple Hearts"

		Stylistic-semiotic systems						
	Denotative systems	Camera distance	Camera angle	Subjects looks	Depth of field	Other	Connotative systems	Ideological representation
1	Man with heavily burnt face; dress military uniform; dusk	Medium shot	Below	Away	Shallow	Strobe	Contrast between awards and burnt face	Anti-war
2	Man with heavily burnt face; teary eye; cap; shadows	Close-up	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Dark shadows	Contrast between ordinary outfit and burnt face	Disturbed ordinariness
3	Man in military uniform and beret; reflection of cowboys and Indians; no visible injuries	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Reflection (looks like multiple exposure)	Connection between current wars and preceding armed conflicts	Anti-war
4	Man lying on bed bare-chested; scars on belly; shadows	Medium shot	Above	Away	Shallow	Dark shadows	Physical effect of war on a young body	Young masculinity disturbed; Diversity
5	Man near his house; prosthetic hand; garden looks like Heaven; American flags on the tree	Full shot	Below	Away	Deep	Strobe	Contrast between American dream and a prosthetic arm	Disturbed ordinariness; Emblematic <i>human cost of war</i> (outside)
6	Man through a window covered	Medium	Eye-	Away	Shallow	Strobe,	Poetic image;	Estrangement;

	with rain drops	shot	level			shot through glass	rain lines symbolize tears; lack of mobility	Balance between the Darkness and the Light
7	Man in a wheelchair; his relative's hand on his head; sweatshirt is saying "Navy"	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Strobe	Love, care and support of the family for the injured war veteran	Family support; Absurdity of war (from caption)
8	Man sitting on a bed in his bedroom; prosthetic leg	Full shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Strobe	Contrast between a typical American bedroom and prosthetic leg	Disturbed ordinariness; Emblematic <i>human cost of war</i> (inside)
9	Man standing on a gravel road lighted by car lights; prosthetic leg	Full shot	Below	In the camera	Shallow	Car lights	Poetic image; absence of global vision of the future	Estrangement; Balance between the Darkness and the Light
10	Man hugged by a woman outside; neighborhood; palm tree in the back	Medium shot	Below	Away	Deep	Strobe	Love, care and support of the family for the injured war veteran	Family support

Table 3. Eugene Richards, "War is Personal"

		Stylistic-semiotic systems						
	Denotative systems	Camera distance	Camera angle	Subjects looks	Depth of field	Other	Connotative systems	Ideological representation
1	Man crying; close-up	Close-up	Below	Away	Shallow	-	Pain; Loss	Parents' Feelings
2	Young man in a wheelchair leaning on a table; bare-chested; a cigarette in hand	Medium shot	Below	Away	Shallow	Wide angle; Horizon bent	Intimacy; Pain; Hopelessness	Physical trauma; Young life disturbed; Anxiety
3	Man lying on a bed; his mother and two girls sleeping on a chair bed	Full shot	Above	Away	Deep	Shot from high point; wide angle	Struggle of families; Lov),	Physical trauma; Family Support; Parents' Feelings
4	An injured war veteran holding his daughter; mechanical hand; close-up	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Extremely open aperture	Love; Disturbed mundane situation	Injured veteran as a father
5	An injured war veteran bending towards his daughter (not visible); little girl crying while being held on mother's knees	Medium shot	Below	Away	Shallow	Horizon bent	Horror because of how the man looks like	Veterans not easily being accepted the way they are now
6	Deceased young woman in a coffin; very humane; close-up	Close-up	Above	Away	Shallow	Extremely open aperture	Beauty; Loss	Death of a Human Being; Cycle of life disrupted
7	Deceased young woman in a	Medium	Above	Away	Shallow	Wide	Beauty; Loss	Death of an

	coffin; more official; medium shot with a US flag	shot				angle; Horizon bent		Officer
8	Woman in her fifties; her son passing by	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Extremely open aperture Horizon bent	Worry	Parents' Feelings; Anticipation
9	Man in military uniform bending to kiss his kids; set in bedroom	Full shot	Above	Away	Deep	Wide angle; Horizon bent	Love; Hope	Injured veteran as a father
10	Woman hugging her injured son; a part of his head is gone; hospital	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Shallow	Wide angle; Horizon bent	Love	Physical Trauma; Family Support; Parents' Feelings
11	Young man sitting on a couch in the foreground looking in the window; an elderly woman sitting behind him	Medium shot	Eye-level	Away	Deep	Wide angle;	Lack of understanding; Lost; Worry	Family Relationship; Parents' Feelings; Anxiety
12	Two boys playing on a big tree in the Arlington Cemetery	Long shot	Below	Away	Deep	-	Poetic image; Metaphor	Future; Question

APPENDIX B

Story summaries

Peter van Agtmael, “Healing Bobby”

Denotative systems. This photo story is about an individual. He is present in every single one of the twelve images. Whatever messages the author is trying to get across, he has to communicate them through Bobby Henline, his subject. The story consists of three types of images: Bobby’s social life (3, 5, 9), Bobby visiting Rodney McCandless’s family and grave (7, 11) and quiet moments alone (1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12) in between.

The photographer omits oversaturating his story with too many elements. In seven out of twelve images Bobby is the only person clearly seen in the frame. He is never in a small group of people, which would communicate family’s and friends’ support (there would also exist a need to define everyone in the caption). He is either with one other person (5, 7, 11), who are not members of his family or friends, or in a big group or crowd (3, 9) where it is impossible to distinguish individuals clearly.

Bobby has extremely strong individual features, in other words, he can hardly be attributed to a type (a generalized “war veteran”). He never appears in a military uniform or among other war veterans. Notably, he never appears at home with his family. I will discuss possible reasons for this below.

Stylistic-semiotic systems. There are seven long shots and four full shots in this story. There is one shot that could be called a close up, but there are no extreme close-ups. Nine of the twelve images are shot on eye-level, and three are shot from above. The photographer remains a rather neutral observer of the unfolding events.

Bobby looks away from the camera in all of the shots. Depth of field is shallow in five images, and deep in seven images. The photographer mostly uses shallow depth of field when depicting Bobby alone in a motel room or in other places, and deep when Bobby is in the big group or crowd of people.

Peter van Agtmael uses various visual means of emphasizing his primary subject. He uses lines created by the environment and light to place the accent on Bobby to make sure that the viewer looks at him first, and comes back to him again after looking at the picture overall. Many pictures in this story are also extremely clean, almost deprived of extra detail.

Connotative systems. Six images in this story communicate relaxation and loneliness through showing Bobby alone. There is nobody with him in a motel room, near his house and in the swimming pool. This story emphasizes how he overcomes the physical and mental trauma with the help of comedy. He is obviously a war veteran, but if we think about the role he appears in in the story, it is probably the role of a comedian. The US society that is appreciative of war veterans is an extremely important element here, as it helps the veteran in his rehabilitation. In this story Bobby Henline totally exists in a *social context*, meaning that his only role is being a part of American society. He doesn't appear in a role of a son, or husband, or father. Bobby's own family is left aside. On one hand, it makes the story more focused, on the other hand, a big part of his life is not even mentioned in these twelve images, and one can argue that it is not an objective representation of him.

A number of images unequivocally show the acceptance and support of the general public towards the injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans (3, 5, 9). Three

images connote link the distant war and the peaceful life back home through Bobby (7, 10, 11).

Ideological representation. This story deals with a lot of important topics concerning heavily injured soldiers coming back home from Iraq and Afghanistan. One of them is the acceptance and appreciation of war veterans in American society. Four photographs deal with this topic. While three of them (3, 5, 9) clearly show the appreciation through dedicated events, the fourth (10) juxtaposes Bobby to the random crowd on the street.

Six images place Bobby in quite mundane situations as if to show that his life now is not that different from the lives of other people, and war veterans can enjoy life just as they did before the injury. Therefore, one can talk about a certain *therapeutic* goal of this project.

Two of the images (7, 11) touch on the actual war (and how it affects home). They link the distant battlefields of Iraq and quiet American streets. Rodney McCandless, Bobby's comrade, died in Iraq in same the explosion Bobby himself was injured, but the tragedy is here, at home. Bobby visits his friend's sister and goes to see Rodney's grave. He acts as a kind of link connecting the two very distant worlds. Pictures communicate that the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars are supportive of each other back home, they are also very involved in supporting the relatives of the deceased soldiers.

This story is not so much about the human cost of war, but rather about fighting physical and mental trauma. In this particular case, through comedy.

Nina Berman, "Purple Hearts"

Denotative systems. In Nina Berman's series, every photograph is a portrait of a new subject, and there is no link between the images, unlike in the other two stories. It is the only story out of the three consisting of 10 rather than 12 images.

All the images in this story can be divided into two groups. Those where veterans are put in some kind of context (1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10) and those where they are deprived of context (2, 4, 6, 9). In the first group, they are either put on a kind of typical American background (3, 5, 8) or pictured together with a family member (7, 10). In one photograph a dress military uniform adds a certain context. Concerning the second group, here veterans exist in a kind of imaginary world that lacks context.

In nine of the ten images a war veteran is the only person we see in the frame. In most cases the photographer *deprives subjects of social or family context* (except for two pictures). In two photographs the subjects can be easily attributed to a "type" through their military uniform (1, 3). Two subjects have burnt faces (1, 2), three are seen with prosthetics (5, 8, 9), two have visible scars (4, 10) and one appears on a wheelchair (7).

Stylistic-semiotic systems. There are 6 medium shots, 3 full shots and one close up in this story. Five images are shot on eye-level, four from below and one from above. The photographer seems to be making this decision based on what objects she wants to be seen in the background.

Subjects look away in nine of the ten photographs. Seven photographs are shot with shallow depth of field, as Berman tries to put on emphasis on her subjects rather than their surrounding. The photographer often uses strobe light (1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10). In two of the photographs she prefers harsh natural light (2, 4), and even uses car lights in one of the images (9). One of the photos appear to be shot using some kind of reflection.

Connotative systems. Some of these images emphasize the physical trauma (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9), some of them emphasize the mental trauma (3, 6, 10), but it can be said that all of them in one way or another communicate both.

A recurrent topic in this photo story is the *ordinariness disturbed by war*. Subjects are superimposed to typical American surroundings to show how war looks like back home (2, 5, 8). These are the fifth image, that places a young man inside a heavenly looking garden near his house, and the eighth, where a soldier appears with a prosthetic leg in a typical bedroom. The second image can also be included in this group, even though there is less context in it, compared to the other two. A typical American plaid shirt and a cap that the veteran is wearing and a garage door that he is standing next to make this image a part of this group.

Two of the images connote love, care and support of the family for the injured war veteran (7, 10). Two of the images (6, 9) are deprived of context but show subjects balancing between overcoming and succumbing to the trauma. One image strongly emphasizes the physical trauma through an African American male soldier, and one seems to be making a parallel between the current American soldiers and cowboys.

Finally, the first image is the photograph that best depicts the idea (question) of Berman's series. It is the juxtaposition of the physical and mental trauma and the awards for military service. In the image we see a young man with a heavily burnt face with multiple scars. He wears a dress military uniform with numerous awards and decorations on both sides. "Was this achievement worth it?" is something that the photographer and some of her subjects (in their book interviews) are asking.

Ideological representation. One-subject stories tend to be either universal (they tend to show the problem through an individual) or unique. A portrait story, and it is applicable in this case as well, shows a certain number of individuals having the same story or problem. Therefore, one of the things that any picture story connotes is that there is a much bigger number of people struggling with the same issue. So one of the things that this story succeeds to show is the *human cost of war*.

Every photograph depicts a heavily injured war veteran. There are, for one exception, no relationship images in this story, and no pictures of the “bigger world” these people live in. We are looking at images are of individuals and the small worlds each of them lives in.

Many photographs in this story tend to be made having an idea of contrasting elements in the frame.

Fifth and eighth images are this emblematic portrayal of war at home. Home has a very strong visual presence (through a garden and a bedroom respectively), and it is disturbed by war. Veterans return home, but now they are different, they have physical wounds and painful memories. Contrasting elements here are *home* and *prosthetic arms and legs*.

The first and third images feel like they have an anti-war idea. It is communicated through the juxtaposition of the contrasting elements, a dress military uniform and a burnt face in the first images, and a soldier in the contemporary uniform and cowboys in the reflection in the third image.

Such important topic as family support of the injured war veterans is also briefly touched upon (7, 10), as well as a feeling of being lost and not having a life plan anymore (6, 9).

Eugene Richards, “War is Personal”

Denotative systems. This project is neither a story about one person, nor a portrait story. The most accurate description would be that it is a twelve-picture edit of Eugene Richards’s book of the same name. There are twelve photographs, and eleven of them depict heavily injured war veterans or members of their families (or both). There are two cases when consecutive photographs are about the same subject matter. So one can say that nine stories are presented in this picture collection.

There are no detail shots in this story. Eleven of the twelve photographs are set indoors, either at subjects’ houses (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11) or in hospitals (3, 10). Two photographs depict a deceased female soldier in a coffin (6, 7).

In four of the images there is one visible subject (1, 2, 6, 7), in five other images there are two subjects (4, 8, 10, 11, 12), and in three there are more than two subjects (3, 5, 9). Notably, in the last three images there are no more than two adults, the rest of the subjects that help make a bigger number are kids. Most subjects appear in the third image, two adults and two kids.

War veterans, alone or accompanied by family members, appear in ten of the twelve images (2-11). A physical trauma is visible in seven images (2-7; 10), and a mental trauma is visible in one image that shows a disturbed war veteran looking into a

window (11). The other two photographs depict veterans' family moments where no trauma is visible.

Stylistic-semiotic systems. There are 7 medium shots, two full shots, two close-ups and one long shot in the story. In most cases the photographer is very close to his subjects, and in such conditions the medium shot is the best solution. A close up (1, 6) is used to depict the face in detail (so the viewers could feel close to it), and full shots are used when there is a need to show the whole room where subjects are (3, 9). The long shot is the last picture from the Arlington cemetery.

Four images are shot from below, four from eye-level, and four from above. The angle seems to be chosen based on the amount of context the photographer wants in the pictures. Subjects look away in all of the shots.

Depth of field is shallow in eight of the images, and deep in the remaining four. Two of the latter are the images shot from above where the photographer wanted the whole room to be visible, one is a picture with two people sitting on the same couch on a distance, and the image from the cemetery. In the rest of the images the focus is where the viewer's attention has to be.

The horizon is bent in six of the images (2, 5, 7-10) to make the action in the shot more dynamic. A wide-angle lens (to the extent that the distortion can be seen) is used in six of the images (2, 3, 7, 9-11). Extremely open aperture is used in three images to emphasize the most important element (4, 6, 8).

Connotative systems. Eugene Richards frames the issue of the war veterans returning home through a *family context*. A lot of the images connote pure human

feelings and emotions, such as pain (1, 2), loss (1, 6, 7), worry (8, 11), love and support (3, 4, 9, 10) and many others.

War veterans in this story are sons, husbands and fathers who are taking care and are taken care of (3, 4, 9, 10). This story touches upon individual physical (2, 4, 10) and mental trauma (8, 11), but mainly it shows the burden of war on American families (1, 3-10). Every story is different, and in every case there is a different kind of pain, but in the end *war is personal* anyways.

Ideological representation. The story discusses such important topics as parents' feelings and support (1, 3, 8, 10, 11), family relationship (5, 8, 9, 11), veterans' anxiety (2, 11), acceptance of them by their families with the physical limitations they have (5).

This story is a classic Eugene Richards's piece. Except for a couple of images (9, 12), there is a sense of hopelessness that these photographs communicate. War's consequences are severe (2-5, 10) and often lethal (1, 6, 7). Trauma is a burden forever to be carried by veterans and their families.

The story ends with a very poetic and metaphoric image of the kids standing on a tree looking at the Arlington cemetery. They can choose the future, and no one knows what it's going to be.

APPENDIX C: Project Proposal

Introduction

I am often asked how I decided to become a photographer, more so a photojournalist. I still struggle with a definite answer to that, as there was no moment in life when I told myself, “I am going to become a photojournalist”. My father was a photography enthusiast all his life, and my mom always liked making pictures. A first girl that I happened to fall in love with was an aspiring videographer with a passion for still images, so I asked my mom to buy me a DSLR for my sixteenth birthday. A friend whom I met several months later was making his first steps as a photographer, and I eagerly joined him in his uncertain efforts. Snapping scenes from everyday life of Kiev, my native city, he seemed an aged professional to me back in the day.

We both got into one of the best journalism schools in Ukraine as “Editing and Publishing Business” majors. After a couple of months in the program and a short internship as a text editor it became obvious that it was not something I wanted to do for a living, so I started attending different events having my camera with me. I tried to make good photographs with the limited knowledge that I had and publish them somewhere afterwards. Importantly, one cannot obtain a photojournalism degree anywhere in Ukraine, as it is not offered, so I was learning by looking at good photography and reading pieces by internationally acclaimed photojournalists. More experienced colleagues that I made friends with during shoots were eager to share their experience, and contributed to my empirical knowledge.

I began working as a full-time staff photographer in 2010, while being a sophomore. My career started in a national Ukrainian news agency *PHL*, where I worked

for about nine months before the agency closed. It was an intense and invaluable experience. I lost the luxury of choosing what events to attend and had to produce news agency level pictures no matter if I went to a protest, a press conference or a soccer match. For the first time in my life I had photo editors look at my pictures and comment on them. Their advice helped me in the consequent working environments.

A couple of days before the agency closed I got a job offer from the Kyiv Post, the only English language newspaper in Ukraine. They wanted me to be the website photo editor and an occasional shooter. Working for a newspaper was a dramatic change, as I had to go everywhere with writers and produce visual narratives that would be collaborative rather than individual. Here I got a chance to do longer form photo stories and essays. I teamed up with one of the writers, Kateryna Panova, to explore illegal mining and depressed towns of Donbass (East Ukraine), environmental issues in Khmelnytskyi (West Ukraine) and the Kiev subway. When I look at these photo stories now, I realize that my mistake was making them too heavily reliant on the writer's text. In other words, taken out of context, these photographs do not work as a series, just as single images.

In September 2011 Kyiv Post cut its visual department, and I switched to freelance. The ex-prime minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced to prison, and outlets abroad, especially in Russia, were extremely interested in anything on the topic. The whole country was preparing to host the Euro 2012 soccer championship, and it was preceded by new stadium openings and much unrest.

The opening of the Ukrainian local edition of National Geographic in January 2013 changed a lot in my life. Kateryna, my colleague from Kyiv Post, was a friend of the

editor-in chief Olga Kryzhanovska (who graduated Mizzou, by the way), and pitched us as a team that would travel the country and do various human stories. We were not staffers, and could work on assignments for as long or as short as we wanted.

This time at National Geographic, especially working with Kateryna, truly taught me to see the people as human beings rather than simply as story subjects. When I was a news agency photographer, there was not enough time to get to know every person. I would rush through the event and file pictures as fast as possible. The slower pace is what taught me to talk to people, and, more importantly, listen to what they had to say, very attentively. On these assignments I actually had both time and the possibility of getting to know them better, and produce more ‘intimate’ stories.

During one such trip Kateryna, who was about to leave Ukraine for the Master’s program at NYU on a Fulbright scholarship, convinced me to gather paperwork and apply. She was a great help in writing in-depth essays in English, something I had never done before that. Four months later I was sitting in front of the committee in Fulbright’s office in Kiev answering interview questions. In a couple days I got an E-mail saying I was accepted.

In November 2013 the Euromaidan revolution started in Kiev. I was deeply involved in the coverage and spent days and nights outside photographing and filing pictures to the European news agency EPA. I never planned to be a conflict photographer, but the events were getting increasingly violent and I was there to cover them, so I had to take more precautions and buy more personal protection equipment.

The peak of violence was February 20, 2014, when snipers shot over sixty protesters using live ammunition. I was living in the hotel on the central street, and the

lobby that I left in the morning was a morgue just couple of hours later. The scene was unbelievably horrifying, and it was no surprise that Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych fled the country the very next day.

For a couple of days we thought that everything was over, but it was just the beginning. Russia annexed Crimea and shortly after organized pro-Russian protests. Starting rather peacefully, they led to a violent war taking over 9,000 lives.

When I got a note from Fulbright about my placement in the University of Missouri, I was in the middle of an assignment in Odessa, where clashes between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian protesters led to over 30 people burning alive in a local Trade Union House. It was a crazy period, and I took my time to reply. Quite obviously, I said “Yes”.

Returning to school after being a professional photographer was quite strange. I have always been a huge fan of learning, but it was a difficult transition. I never had to read in English that much, and my first research class, Mass Media Seminar, was extremely challenging.

Professor David Rees, Photojournalism Faculty Chair, greeted me in the program by offering me a free spot at Missouri Photo Workshop, and I eagerly agreed. That week was an amazing learning opportunity, beneficial on every stage. I got to spend four full days with my subject, Ron Pine, 72, a barber at Platte City, MO, and managed to do a small neat story that went a little beyond his professional life. My faculty, MaryAnne Golon and Alan Berner, were extremely helpful, and I received a lot of feedback from them as I was working on my story. I met a lot of emerging photojournalists across the globe, and I keep in touch with some of them, a bond possible to establish solely at such

learning events.

It is hard to underestimate the influence that College Photographer of the Year had on me. Being present in the room during the judging of the best student work from all over the world made me better understand what makes people look at the picture longer, as well as what constitutes a strong photographic story or essay. Watching POYi was a similar experience, extended in time and with even stronger work.

The research classes that I have taken here have boosted my understanding of journalism and its future. Being a self-taught photographer, who had never really dived into theory before, I found reading academic papers, especially the ones concerning visuals, extremely helpful for broadening my horizon.

The Missouri School of Journalism reinforced my strong belief that photojournalism has to be about people, even if it is about events on a more global scale. From the first days of the revolution in Kiev I was thinking about doing a project that would be different from the news coverage, but I was so strongly dragged into it, I could not concentrate and make a step back to produce a narrative of my own. That is why I want to do a Master's project that would be a reflection of the ongoing events in Ukraine, but would put people and their struggles on the forefront.

For my project I want to photograph Ukrainian soldiers who were heavily injured during the recent war with Russia-backed rebels and Russian regular army that started in early May of 2014 in the Donbass region. As of January 2015, according to an official statement from the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, over five thousand Ukrainian soldiers got heavily wounded in the war zone.

Young Ukrainian men, mostly in their twenties or thirties, either got drafted or

signed for the regular army or voluntary military battalions to protect their homeland. Their decision to protect their homeland is perceived by most people in Ukrainian society as an act of courage and self-sacrifice, especially taking into account that one can still avoid military conscription by giving a bribe to a military office.

The Ukrainian Army, especially at the beginning of war, in May 2014, was small in number and ill equipped. This fact sparked a tremendous movement of volunteers, people with various backgrounds from across the country, that started raising money for Ukrainian soldiers to buy night vision goggles, scopes, clothes, boots etc. People from this same movement are the ones who raise money for the war veterans' surgeries in Ukraine and abroad, and come support them in hospitals.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian government is neglecting the contribution of these men. There are cases when war veterans' documents would read that they were wounded during military training. To get regular compensations they have to go through a special medical commission that would prove that they were injured in battle. No rehabilitation facilities that could potentially help soldiers deal with both physical and mental trauma are being built for injured Ukrainian soldiers.

In my photo story I want to concentrate on injured soldiers' adaptation to peaceful life with the limitations their physical or mental trauma imposes on them. My project is less about medical treatment that soldiers get in government or private hospitals, rather about habilitation process they go through when they get home. This stage is where they receive practically no support from the government, and less help from the volunteers, so they have to overcome the new difficulties and seek possibilities themselves or with the support of their relatives and friends.

The Professional Skills Component

From the beginning of February 2016 to the end of May 2016 I want to follow and photograph three to five soldiers and make a photo story about each one of them. I would look for soldiers at different stages of rehabilitation process: the ones that have just been transported to a hospital, the ones about to leave the hospital, the ones that have just got home and the ones having enough energy to start looking for jobs and continuing their education. While producing a story about soldiers' medical treatment is not my intention, hospital is chance to meet them, an obvious beginning to the story of rehabilitation, and a chance to get them accustomed to the camera.

I plan to start looking for subjects in early February and start photographing by the end of the month or the beginning of March at the latest. I will meet them mainly through the volunteer movement (discussed above), where I have a number of contacts, including the ones I have made specifically for this story. I am looking for male subjects (there are no female soldiers in the regular Ukrainian army and only a few in volunteer battalions), eighteen to thirty five, that have lost their limbs, or have other serious injuries. Men in this age range were born and/or raised in Ukraine as an independent country (Ukraine gained independence in 1991). For a lot of them the decision to serve in the military is closely connected to the patriotic feelings they have.

Ukraine is a bipolar country, which is dictated by its geopolitical position. While West Ukraine leans towards Europe, East sees its future in keeping close ties with Russia. Soldiers from the western part of the country that leave for the military are generally supported by their relatives and friends and perceived as 'defenders', but those from the eastern part often face incomprehension and ignorance. People surrounding them might

be supporting the Russia-backed rebel ‘republics’, therefore perceiving young soldiers as those who are fighting their compatriots. Photographing soldiers from different parts of the country will provide an interesting perspective on society’s acceptance or rejection of them.

I would like to wrap up photographing by the beginning of May and devote the last month to editing my stories and creating a website. I intend to work 30 hours per week for seventeen weeks.

On my website the viewers would be able to look at photographs and read soldiers’ stories. I also intend to do audio interviews to go into the text (as short quotes that viewers would be able to listen to). As this is a project I plan to be working on for a couple of years, I will set up an Instagram account where I will publish photographs of the ongoing work.

Concerning professional qualifications, I have covered war myself, and I can relate to what they had gone through in the war zone as an insider, rather than outsider. I have produced a variety of in-depth photo stories about individuals for my classes in Missouri School of Journalism as well as during Missouri Photo Workshop, and before that while working in Ukraine.

During my work on the project I plan to write field notes and post photographs weekly on a password protected blog for the committee members to be able to follow the development of my Master’s Project.

The Analysis Component

Introduction

The research question of my project is *How are injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans framed in award-winning single photographs and photo stories?*

War photography has been able to show the *human cost* of armed conflict since the American Civil War up until the war in Vietnam. By the beginning of the new millennium, visual coverage of war became extremely sanitized and was “reduced to a video game” that shielded viewers from the dead and the wounded. Several content analyses (Aday, 2005; Roth et al., 2008) on American newspapers’ and broadcast stations’ coverage of the active phase of the war in Iraq arrived at a conclusion that visual imagery depicting *human cost* of war, especially among American soldiers, was extremely infrequent in print and broadcast respectively. While Roth et al. (2008) named strict rules of journalists’ embedment as one of the main deterrent factors, Aday (2005) blamed reporters and, more importantly, editors back in the US for such imagery deprived of gruesome scenes. David Shields, an award-winning author, has just released a book entitled “War Is Beautiful”, where he collects images from *The New York Times* front page to make an argument that they “capture the irreducible glamour of war” but fail to show the “objective truth”.

In the complete absence of photographs depicting the human cost of war, a trend emerged towards producing stories about heavily injured war veterans that had returned home. Such stories, according to Chouliaraki (2013), “not only recast the battlefield as a space of individual trauma but also re-position photojournalism as itself an intimate practice of witnessing personal pain” (p. 329-330).

The first photographic projects were published in 2004 as veterans were coming

back to the United States. Since then single pictures and projects about injured war veterans have won a number of visual journalism awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography, World Press Photo, Missouri School of Journalism's POYi, NPPA's Best of Photojournalism and PDN Photo Annual contests.

For my Professional Analysis I will look at all the projects about heavily injured Iraq war veterans that won the World Press Photo contest until today. Since 2004, when heavily injured war veterans' coverage emerged, three photo stories have been awarded this prestigious prize. They are "Purple Hearts" by Nina Berman, "War is Personal" by Eugene Richards and "Healing Bobby" by Peter van Agtmael. I will analyze every image in these photo stories for visual framing using four-level analysis proposed below to understand if authors wanted to communicate certain messages. World Press Photo was selected as the only contest to analyze based for the high quality of the work that is awarded and for its agenda-setting qualities. Below (2010) writes, "The World Press Photo Foundation is an agenda-setting entity whose annually prized World Press Photos influence the media coverage and the way in which the pictured events are covered further on. It also determines to what extent and with what bias the recipients think about the incidents shown in the photographs and how they memorise them" (p. 41).

Framing

Framing as a concept was developed as early as 1974 by Canadian-born sociologist Erving Goffman. Since then there has been a lot of significant scholarly research on framing, including Entman (1993), who wrote that "To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as

to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Building on the experiments of Kahneman and Tversky (1984), he added, “frames select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described, which logically means that frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” (p. 54).

A more recent study by Greenwood and Smith (2007) points out that “all news organizations frame as part of their work” (p. 84). Although I intend to look at award-winning images of war veterans not necessarily produced by photographers affiliated with a news organization as staff members, I think the aforementioned notion can be applied to freelancers as well, as they presently are a big part of media content production.

Greenwood and Smith define framing as “cognitive devices media and audiences use to organize and make sense of issues and events” (p. 84). Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) provide a nice addition to this. According to their work, characterization of a certain issue in a news report “can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences” (p. 11).

Visual Framing

Despite a growing number of analyses on framing in journalistic texts and broadcast pieces, the research on framing social issues by news or documentary photographs, or *visual framing*, has been relatively scarce. According to Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), one of the main reasons for that is the “confusion as to how visual frames are supposed to be identified” (p. 51). The researchers emphasized that analyzing

visual frames remains a challenge despite proven fact that “audiences may be more likely to accept the visual frame without question” (p. 50). Vicki Goldberg, photography critic for *The New York Times*, in her widely cited book *The Power of Photography* writes, “The fact that what is represented on paper undeniably existed, if only for a moment, is the ultimate source of the medium’s extraordinary powers of persuasion” (1991, p. 19).

Messaris and Abraham (2001), a milestone study in visual framing, focuses on three distinctive properties of visual images, “their analogical quality, their indexicality, and their lack of an explicit propositional syntax” (p. 215). Researchers emphasize that viewers make sense of certain images based on similarities or analogies they bring to mind. They write, “Analogical quality of images ... can make images appear more natural, more closely linked to reality than words are, it can also inveigle viewers into overlooking the fact that all images are human-made, artificial constructions” (p. 217).

As Messaris and Abraham discuss *indexicality* of images, they argue that because a photograph is an automatic product that bypasses human agency to a certain degree, “the connection between a photograph and reality has a certain authenticity that human-made pictures can never have” (p. 217). As a consequence, using photographs for framing “could diminish the likelihood that viewers would question what they see” (p. 217).

Comparing visual and verbal languages, researchers emphasize, “visual communication does not have an explicit set of syntactic conventions” (p. 219). Propositions in visual images are “more reliant on the viewer’s ability to make intuitive sense of implicit meanings on the basis of contextual or other cues” (p. 219). As a result, a set of claims presented by a photograph may be harder to recognize than the one found in a verbal construct.

Geftter (2006) emphasizes, “It is one thing to read about the circumstances of our time; it's another to see them. Even if the subject is unfamiliar, the visual language is immediately recognizable” (p. 26). In subsequent passages he restates a popular notion, “A picture may not be worth a thousand words, but a picture and a good caption are worth a thousand and 10”.

Perlmutter (1998) in his book *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy* discusses the theory of visual determinism, an idea that photographs can shape public opinion. Beverly Denny, a Missouri School of Journalism alumni, in her master's project criticizes this notion for being overly simplistic and argues that images do not shape public opinion, “they interact with individuals' existing values and understandings of the world and influence judgment. Pictures stoke an emotional chord not necessarily strong enough to change our perspectives, but can definitely reinforce existing attitudes” (p. 47). For Khan (2010), another Missouri School of Journalism alumni, “visual framing starts with selection of news and follows steps such as which images to shoot, how to shoot, composition, what to emphasize on, which ones to select for printing and where to place them on the page and in which section” (p. 28).

Coleman (2010) makes a point that viewers' lack of awareness of the power of images “makes the framing of images even more important to understand” (p. 243). Crucially important, in her point of view, is that journalism graduates in the digital era are expected to not only write texts, but make still images and record video. “Choosing something based on journalistic values or because the image grabs attention, or even simply because the page needs a photo, can have consequences beyond what the journalist envisioned” (p. 243).

Award winning photographs of the injured Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are especially important to be analyzed for visual frames in them. Easily accessible by emerging photojournalists or members of the public through websites of the professional photography contests, they “are the images that persist in the minds of readers and shape their views of the world” (Greenwood and Smith, p. 82).

Semiotics

A number of studies dealing with the analysis of visual imagery derive their methodology from semiotics, or *semiology*, postulated by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916. As put by Barthes and cited in Berger (1981), “Semiology ... aims to take any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds ... which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification”. In fact, Roland Barthes was the one to adapt semiotics to analyzing photographs, and it is his studies that a lot of today’s research relies on.

One such study is van Leeuwen (2001), who sees “the layering of meaning” as the key idea of Barthian visual semiotics. *Denotation*, the first layer, should answer the questions ‘what, or who, is being depicted here?’. *Connotation*, the second layer, should answer “what ideas and values are expressed through what is represented, and through the way in which it is represented?”.

Denotative signifiers, or ‘object signs’, as put by Barthes, are easy to spot, as “perceiving photographs is closely analogous to perceiving reality” (van Leeuwen, p. 94). Even a lack of knowledge about a specific object is not a problem. Although, denotation

is not entirely up to the beholder. Despite the fact that in some forms of modern art a multiplicity of readings is allowed or even encouraged, according to van Leeuwen (2001), “There are other contexts where the producers of the text have an interest in trying to get a particular message across to a particular audience, and in such cases there will be signs to point us towards the preferred level of generality” (p. 95).

People in visual images can either be represented as an individual or as a social type. It depends on if and how strongly visual stereotypes are present in a certain photograph. These stereotypes “may either be cultural attributes (objects, dress, hairstyle, etc.) or physiognomic attributes. The more these stereotypes overshadow a person’s individual features ... the more that person ... is represented as a type” (p. 95). Heavily injured war veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are presented in award-winning photo stories as individuals through “surrounding text”, but with strong conformity to ‘war veteran’ as a type. These photographs are rich with objects (disabled carriage, crutches). Moreover, physiognomic features (burnt skin, scars) unambiguously tell us who we are looking at.

Connotation is the “later of the broader concepts, ideas and values which the represented people, places and things ‘stand for’, ‘are signs of’ (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 96). It can be communicated either through cultural associations that we experience while looking at the images, or through certain ‘connotators’, or aspects of presentation, which may include, but are not limited to, photographic techniques. According to Coleman (2010), of the three basic camera angles, “eye level or straight on is considered neutral, shot from above is negative, and from below is positive. Camera distance includes close-up or the head and shoulders (positive), a long shot with the full figure (negative), and a

medium shot from the waist up (neutral)” (p. 248). Such ‘connotators’ (framing, distance, lighting, focus etc.) were described by Barthes (1977), who called them ‘photogenia’.

Messaris and Abraham (2001) go even further emphasize that the simple and inevitable process of selection has far-reaching implications for the visual framing process. They write, “The practice in question is the simple act of selection – choosing one view instead of another when making the photograph, cropping or editing the resulting image one way instead of another, or simply just choosing to show viewers one image out of the many others that may have been produced at the same place and time.” (p. 218).

Method

To investigate my research question I will use a four-level visual framing analysis suggested by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011). It is based on semiotics, discussed above, and derives a little bit from iconography, discussed by van Leeuwen (2001). According to their scholarly research, “Visuals, like text, can operate as framing devices insofar as they make use of various rhetorical tools—metaphors, depictions, symbols—that purport to capture the essence of an issue or event graphically” (p. 51). Visuals help the viewers to make sense of social issues by facilitating “the grounds upon which some interpretations can be favored and others impeded” (p. 51). Rodriguez and Dimitrova suggest analyzing images as denotative systems; stylistic-semiotic systems; connotative systems; ideological representations.

At the first level “frames are identified by enumerating the objects and discrete elements actually shown in the visual ... Visual frames at this level are basically

described” (p. 53). This level reflects the aforementioned Barthes’ (1977) notion of denotative signifiers and relies on what Messaris and Abraham (2001) call *analogic* and *indexical* qualities of images. Frames can also be identified at this level by reading “titles, captions, inscriptions, or other textual descriptions that accompany the visual” (p. 53). At this level I will look at an image to see what it denotes, in other words, what can be seen in the picture. Are there any “object signs”? How strongly cultural and physiognomic attributes are present? These are some of the questions I will answer at this level of visual analysis.

At the second level one should analyze “how pictorial conventions and styles gain social meanings, such as when a close-up shot signifies intimacy, a medium shot signifies personal relationship, a full shot signifies social relationship and a long shot signifies context, scope and public distance” (p. 55). In her research on Associated Press photo service’s coverage of Afghan women’s life during the Taliban regime and after its fall Fahmy (2004) examined five stylistic variables, “visual subordination, point of view, social distance, imaginary contact, behavior and general contact” (p. 91). The behavior of the subject in the frame, specifically his or her actions or poses, are other signifiers. Barthes’ ‘photogenia’ list, outlined above, is applicable at this level. At this level I will decode camera distance (long shot, medium shot or a close up); camera angle (shot from below, above, or eye level); lighting situation etc.

At the third level visuals are analyzed as “symbols that are able to combine, compress and communicate social meaning”. Signs have to be analyzed for “more complex, often culture-bound interpretations” to dissect a meaning that is “highly personalized and distinct” (p. 56). On this stage a researcher has to be ready to notice and

deconstruct abstract and figurative symbols having symbolic values, as well as visual metaphors. At this level I will look deeper and try to understand if there are metaphors in the frame by looking at signs with possible social meanings.

At the fourth level researchers, according to Pieterse (1992), are looking for answers to such questions: “What interests are being served by these representations? Whose voices are being heard? What ideas dominate?” As put by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), “this level tackles how news images are employed as instruments of power in the shaping of public consciousness and historical imagination” (p. 58). At this level I will try to understand what message a picture is trying to communicate, and what goal it is trying to achieve with it.

I will decode “Purple Hearts” by Nina Berman, “War is Personal” by Eugene Richards and “Healing Bobby” by Peter van Agtmael level by level. First I will analyze every individual picture in a project based on the first level, then based on the second level, etc., analyzing each project completely before moving to the next one. These stories are in open access on World Press Photo Contest’s website. Every picture in these stories will be coded on a four-level analysis, described above, and conclusions will be presented.

Literature Review

Introduction

Since the invention of photography as a medium, photographers and, later, photojournalists have been drawn to the conflict zone battlefields, to produce what we now often refer to as ‘war photography.’ But if one takes a close look at photographs that

had become iconic in one way or another, he or she would admit that most of the imagery is taken after the battle is over and practically depicts war *aftermath* rather than scenes captured in the midst of a gunfire.

At the dawn of photography as a technical craft image producers didn't have technical means to capture action during a battle. Both British photographer Roger Fenton, who had been sent to Crimea "to provide evidence of the excellent conditions under which the British troops were living and of the successes they were achieving" (Howe, 2002, p. 14) and American Matthew Brady, who produced "photography that would bring the real news home and give grim evidence never before seen by civilians: death on the battlefield" (Goldberg, 1991, p. 25) photographed the *physical aftermath* of war and achieved great success because of the novelty of the medium. Interestingly, photographers today are still fascinated by the physical destruction caused by a conflict. Luc Delahaye, an award-winning photojournalist, participated in the Tate Gallery's 2011 show entitled "New Documentary Forms" with three landscape photographs produced in conflict zones around the world. Sean O'Hagan, The Guardian's photography critic, called them "undeniably powerful, but in a more subtle, questioning way than his previous work. In their epic scale and detail, they evince an almost painterly sense of stillness that is utterly at odds with the devastation they depict" (O'Hagan, 2011).

During World War II, which according to photography critic Vicki Goldberg had been covered by more photographers than any other war before, pictures depicting a soldier's mental state started appearing. These images were still produced in the war zones, but this time photojournalists such as Robert Capa, W. Eugene Smith, David Douglas Duncan and others looked deeper and managed to capture the struggle and stress

soldiers were going through. For instance, W. Eugene Smith's photograph entitled "Frontier Soldiers with Canteen" does not show a unique historical moment but closely captures one man's intense expression.

Vietnam coverage, unarguably, provided viewers with even more sophisticated looks into soldiers' lives, showing their fear of the unknown and grief over the fallen comrades. Larry Burrows's photo stories, such as 'One Ride With Yankee Papa 13' and Don McCullin's single picture of a shellshocked soldier both show young men forever traumatized by what they had experienced.

In *Regarding The Pain of Others* (2003) Susan Sontag points out the "perennial seductiveness of war" and raises a question, "Could one be mobilized actively to oppose war by an image (or group of images)?" The work she mentions shortly after is not an in-depth long-term documentary photo story, but a digitally composited photograph called "Dead Troops Talk", produced by Jeff Wall in 1992 and sold for \$3.6 million at an auction in 2012. This image, reconstructing an imaginary ambush in 1980's Afghanistan, shows seven dead Russian soldiers talking to each other on a blasted hillside. Sontag writes, "These dead are supremely uninterested in the living: in those who took their lives; in witnesses—and in us. Why should they seek our gaze? What would they have to say to us? ... We don't get it. We truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can't understand, can't imagine. That's what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels" (p. 126).

By the mid-1990s visual storytellers, accused by Sontag of producing photographs

that do not “shock” anymore, were seeking new means to tell the Western world about what is doing on in the world. Visual artist Alfredo Jaar was so confident his photographs from Rwanda in 1994 wouldn’t have a large effect on society that when invited to show his work on advertising spaces in Sweden, he decided to feature only one word written in horizontal lines over and over, “Rwanda”. For his exhibition he selected 60 pictures and buried them in black boxes with caption written on the top, so the viewers had to open each of them to see the photograph that was inside.

Everything changed at the beginning of the new century, more precisely, after 9/11. There were no distant battlefields anymore, and, as put by Lilie Chouliaraki’s in her article *The Humanity of war: iconic photojournalism of the battlefield, 1914-2012 (2013)*, “The imagery of the 21st-century landscapes has radically blurred the boundaries between battlefield and civilian sites that we encountered in the Second World War” (p. 332). As pictures of the Twin Towers’ debris flooded wire agencies, physical aftermath, mentioned above, was not something photographed overseas anymore.

The war in Iraq that soon followed marked the beginning for a wide array of in-depth photo stories that “brought some of the horrors of war home” and showed the mental aftermath of war as deeply and thoroughly as probably never before in the history of war photography. These were stories about Iraq, and, later, Afghanistan war veterans who were traumatized, physically and mentally, and now had to adapt to peaceful life in the US again.

Emergence of Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran coverage

Chouliaraki, as she discusses how the soldier’s image has been changing over the

course of the last century, emphasized that “there is today an intense focus on the visualization of his or her [soldier’s] tortured psyche that replaces earlier masculinist conceptions of humanity with a new fascination of agony-in-battle” (p. 329-330).

It is difficult to imagine now a media in the U.S. (especially a newspaper) that has never printed a story about an Iraq or Afghanistan war veteran. Since 2004 photographs depicting struggles that veterans face at home have won numerous prestigious professional photojournalism awards.

But what were the reasons behind the emergence of such a huge amount of American war veteran coverage that started in 2003? Despite it being a huge issue, what else triggered photographers to turn their gaze towards mental aftermath of Iraq war? One of the possible reasons for that is the embedment limitations during the war in Iraq. Roth et al. (2008) in their content analysis of two U.S. major newspapers admit, “Governmental regulation—taking the form of the “embed rules” for journalists with the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan—constitutes one primary *external* constraint on the ability of the press to fulfill its duty to the US public” (p. 269). According to the authors of the study, photographers’ inability to show dead and wounded U.S. soldiers to the public back home through pictures in traditional media leads to the phenomenon that Elaine Scarry calls “disappearance of the body”.

Fred Ritchin in his book “Bending the Frame” (2013) points out a direct link between the rules of embedment and emergence of war veteran coverage, “Unlike the constricted position of the “embed” overseas, domestically there is more freedom for a photographer to circulate and, presumably, a sense that their fellow citizens may better grasp certain of the war’s legacies through their impact on U.S. soldiers and their

families” (p. 67). Portrait photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, commenting on his portrait project on Iraq war veterans, emphasizes the importance of such stories in the time of censorship. “I think we need to see this. We don’t see the dead coming back in coffins. We’re sheltered from the injured. We just don’t see it. It’s all been brilliantly hidden from view” (Applebome, 2007).

Examples of award-winning photographs and projects

One of the first long-term projects done on Iraq war veterans is Nina Berman’s *Purple Hearts: Back from Iraq*, published as a book in 2004. In spring 2005 this project, submitted as a series of ten pictures, won second prize in the “Portraits” category of the prestigious World Press Photo Contest.

Purple Hearts is a series of portraits and interviews with nineteen men and one woman who were severely injured during the conflict and had to leave the military. The book has a very simple and repetitive construction. A story of each veteran is presented by two color portraits made either in a hospital or a living environment, a short block of text about where and when they were wounded, and a transcription of the interview conducted by Nina Berman.

There is also information about when and where the veterans are photographed. Mostly, pictures were taken in three to nine months after the injury, by the end of the active rehabilitation process. There is a feeling that the author gives most of her subjects time to think about what had happened and make their first steps in the adaptation to normal life before photographing and talking to them (even though a couple of veterans are photographed in hospitals). She is not interested in the healing process, but rather in

how these young people plan to build their life from now on. Most photographs are taken in low-light situations, sometimes using a single strobe (in one of the cases photographer even uses car lights). Individuals on her photographs are strongly physically traumatized (and it is emphasized), which seems to affect their mental state.

Photography critic Mary Panzer from *Aperture* magazine—in her article “Picturing the Iraq War Veterans”, writes, “... the relationship between the photographer and sitter is frankly distant, even formal. There is nothing intrusive or especially intimate about these images. Berman does not invite her subjects to let down their guard, but rather offers them the chance to be seen on their own terms. While discreet, the portraits provide very complete information about what these men and women look like, where they live, and how they see themselves today” (Panzer, 2008). And, indeed, as a viewer, you don’t get the sense that Berman followed her subjects around and got to understand their life as an insider. Rather, she is an outsider giving voice to people she is photographing.

However, I would argue that she arrives at this project with a set of preconceived notions. The photographs of severely injured young people, some of them in their 20’s, disabled for the rest of their lives, make a very clear point that what is going on is wrong. Berman’s book starts with a quote by Spc. Jose Martinez, 20, who “was trapped in the explosion and suffered massive burns to his face, head and body.” The quote, in bold, says, “I’m this great picture of the army”, which is a shocking contrast. Combining such pairing decisions with a fact that Berman, accompanied by an injured veteran, showed her book to “American high-school students from the poorer communities that are often targeted by military recruiters” (Panzer, 2008), one can arrive at a conclusion that her

project is aimed to show horrible consequences of war on young people, most of whom, according to their words, thought of being in the army as something completely different. This project aims to show the absurdity of war by showing soldiers as its victims. When veterans make a point that time in Iraq was the best experience of their life, their words, contrasted to their photographs, convey an opposite meaning.

The last quote, featured in the book, also seems to be put there by Berman's conscientious decision. Spc. Robert Acosta, 20, seems to regret his decision more than others. In the last paragraph of his interview, where he express the idea that the Purple Heart is not worth anything, he says, "I mean like all the reasons we went to war, it just seems like they're not legit enough for people to lose their lives for and for me to lose my hand and use of my leg and for my buddies to lose their limbs. ... I feel like we deserve to know". With these words, containing one of the main ideas of the book, Nina Berman concludes her project.

Eugene Richards' 2010 project *War is Personal* is a deeper look into the lives of veterans and their families. Stories from this project won a first place in World Press Photo "Contemporary Issues" category in 2010 as a series.

Richards' book consists of fifteen stories, and, compared to *Purple Hearts*, it doesn't have such a rigorous structure with some stories being significantly longer than the others. Richards spent a day with some of the families, like in the case of Army Sgt. Princess C. Samuels, whose funeral he photographed, or a longer amount of time, like he did with Nelida Bagley who takes care of her son José.

War is Personal is a very different project. It puts war veterans in the context of everyday life, and the struggle shown is not that of an individual but of the family. The

stories differ greatly from one another. As viewers we have a chance to see what a difficult life of a veteran with PTSD looks like and what a mother feels when her son departs for another military tour, as well as how hard it is to take care of an adult child who has lost 40% of his brain or, as a young woman, to keep your family running at home while dealing with harassment of women in the Army.

“When I set out on this project, I didn’t want it to be a polemic. I didn’t want it to be a piece of political theatre. I wanted to see all kinds of people, and I ended seeing all kinds of people, and the pain they are going through is very different. ... I think that the pain that existed to my mind was the pain of loss. Everybody has experienced loss. And that’s the universal, and maybe I was feeling more than the people were at times” (Lodicittà, 2011), said Eugene Richards at the opening of the *War is Personal* show in Western Europe.

Notably, as in many other Eugene Richards’ projects, we have to comprehend photographs together with the text to make full sense of what we are looking at. Sometimes the verbal accounts are the stories told by veterans or their families, who in detail recall what has happened to them, but often they are photographer’s reflections on meeting people we see in the photographs. A picture of Iraq veteran Tomas Young, made in Young’s apartment in Kansas City, MO, is one of the most widely published images from the project. Shot with Richard’s favorite wide-angle lens, it depicts a handsome young man on a wheelchair leaning towards the table while holding a cigarette. It is evident for the viewer that the man in the photograph is in pain. The following close-ups of his face and the scar on his spine from a bullet wound reinforce feelings of stress and despair that this young man experiences and which Richards communicates with his

intimate photographs.

In 2012, The Denver Post staff photographer Craig F. Walker got his second Pulitzer Prize in Feature Photography for a story entitled “Welcome Home”. As put in the Pulitzer citation, he was awarded the prize “for his compassionate chronicle of an honorably discharged veteran, home from Iraq and struggling with a severe case of post-traumatic stress, images that enable viewers to better grasp a national issue”(The 2012 Pulitzer Prize Winners. Feature Photography).

This story is reminiscent of Richard’s style, a very close and intimate coverage of life in a documentary manner. The difference between Walker’s project in this case is that he had concentrated his attention on the life of one individual to show the struggle every war veteran with PTSD is going through. Scott Ostrom, 27, the main character in Walker’s story, doesn’t possess any physical disabilities which are immediately visual, as in Berman’s case, so the photographer tried to show his subject’s mental state with the pictures, which obviously required more time and attention on the details. According to an article on New York Times Lens Blog, Walker followed Scott for nine months.

When talking to American Photographer magazine, Walker admitted that "It was a commitment for him [Scott] to open his doors like that. It meant he had to call me when things were bad. I told him, 'If you're in the middle of a panic attack or have a hard time dealing with PTSD, I need to be there to share it with you. We wanted to show the dark places PTSD takes people. I'm a photographer. I can't show it if I'm not there.'" According to the photographer’s self-reflection, he was so close to his subject he had to be careful not to cross the boundary to become a friend, i.e. someone involved to the extent of not being able to be an observer anymore.

Award-winning photojournalist Ed Kashi has switched to producing multimedia pieces and has been named Multimedia Photographer of the Year at the Pictures of The Year International contest in 2015. This fact wouldn't mean much for my particular research, if one of his entries wasn't a series of short videos about war veterans with PTSD produced for a project called AboutFace.

As put in one of the sections of the website, "AboutFace is a website dedicated to improving the lives of Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Here, Veterans can learn about PTSD, explore treatment options and, most importantly, hear real stories from other Veterans and their family members and get advice from clinicians who have treated thousands of cases of PTSD". This initiative belongs to VA's National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

Kashi has produced ten short videos for the project, mainly consisting of still photographs, about Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans with PTSD. At first glance, they are classic journalistic slideshows, frames changing one after another as the main subject narrates the story. But if one looks at them more closely, despite being, in fact, very different personal experience stories they all end the same way. Laurent Taillifer, who lost his best friend in Iraq, after sharing his recollections of how difficult were the first years back home, says, "Once I separated myself from my friends, I was all alone. And then I needed somebody. And that's when I went into therapy" (Kashi, 2014).

This is the way every video ends. These ten stories were produced by Ed Kashi who was commissioned by the project to do them with a clear goal: to show the benefits of therapy for a person struggling with PTSD. Although for him, as a multimedia director, it is not a personal project, it is an assignment where he is pursuing a goal set by an

organization. This set of ten individuals also looks extremely pre-determined. These are people who sought therapeutic treatment, found it helpful, and then agreed to participate in this project.

On November 15, 2004, Ashley Gilbertson was on assignment in Fallujah, Iraq, embedded with the US military. He asked the company captain for permission to go atop a minaret to photograph a dead insurgent who had been firing from there, to create evidence not previously recorded or documented that mosques were being used for military purposes. Gilbertson was assigned a squad of two people, and one of them, Lance Corporals William Miller, was shot point-blank by an enemy fighter because he went inside the minaret first.

The burden of the event has pushed Gilbertson to photograph the absence of the soldier at home. To understand the grief of soldier's families, he visited Arlington Cemetery for a month to meet them but soon came to a conclusion this was a wrong approach.-Gilbertson's wife Joanna, as she was discussing a spread on fallen soldiers in The New York Times with him, expressed an idea that he should humanize the deceased soldiers by photographing their bedrooms.

This dialogue subsequently resulted in a book entitled "Bedrooms of the Fallen", a series of black and white panoramic photographs of deceased soldiers' bedrooms. The book won PDN's Photo Annual 2015 photo contest in the "Photo Books" category. This deep and emotional work tells a lot about its subjects with pictures that contain an excessive amount of intimate details (posters on walls, bed sheets, toys etc.). As Gilbertson put it during his presentation at Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, "When I look at these pictures, I still have a feeling that the soldier is about to enter the room". In

photographer's own words, he wanted to show the sense of loss families are dealing with every day.

This book is in a way a revolution, maybe not in photography as a broader field, but definitely in conflict aftermath photojournalism that before has mainly been dealing with living human beings. Even if the soldier was dead and, possibly, absent from the photograph, there were his loved ones that were grieving after him, and making pictures of them was photojournalists' way to show loss.

Gilbertson's approach to showing loss is very different, and it shocks in a different, slower way. Instead of showing people crying over a body of a loved one (as, for example, in one of the stories in Richards' *War Is Personal*), the photographer visually shows intimate spaces of the fallen soldiers, but, metaphorically, he shows *absence*, and it is very disturbing. According Gilbertson himself, in each bedroom he felt the presence of war the same way, if not stronger, as he had felt it in Iraq some years before that. And, indeed, there is something terrifying and terribly wrong about these bedrooms of young people, which their owners will never enter again even if there is a hope from their families that some day they will. Not dealing with any concrete individuals, this work shows how war directly affects the world back home.

Conclusion

Limited rules of embedment, as well as personal experiences, among many other reasons, have pushed photojournalists, documentary photographers and visual storytellers at the dawn of the twenty first century to work on photo stories and projects about Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. These projects are very different, both in their goals and

visual means. Some are products of traditional long-term journalism; others pursue anti-war goals, while some serve initiatives of various organizations that help war veterans to adapt to peaceful life at home. Since 2004 many of these projects have received prestigious photojournalism awards, partly because of dealing with such strong and important subject matter. “The history of photography is primarily the history of the subject matter”, emphasizes Hurn and Jay (1997).

Even though, some consider that what is done is not enough. As put by Paul Sullivan, executive director of Veterans For Common Sense, in his interview for the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma, “The biggest piece of the puzzle about returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan wars that is missed by reporters is the fact that it is a national tragedy. ... Most reporters will report one story about a veteran and their problem. ... However, almost all reporters miss the fact that we have sent 2.2 million service members over to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars since 2001. ... So, while the press does a good job covering individual stories, they are missing the forest by looking at one tree”. While this may not necessarily consider that photojournalists can’t point their cameras at every single person that had gone through the horrors of war, I am sure in the next decade we will witness more stories about the new battles of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, the battles with everyday reality so hard to endure after seeing the horrors of war.

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APPENDIX D: Grant Application text

“Do you hear the birds outside, singing? It is beautiful”, I hear him saying. His name is Evhenii, and he looks at me from the hospital bed he is lying on. He is thin, pale, and nothing like the beefy young guy on his social media profile picture. He is a Ukrainian army soldier, and two days after turning twenty-one he stepped on an anti-personnel land mine in East Ukraine. It severely injured his legs and caused damage to his internal organs. He wears a colostomy bag, and will be able to start walking only in three months.

My intent is to create ten to fifteen photo stories about young Ukrainian soldiers who were wounded during the ongoing war with Russia-backed rebels and Russian regular army in the Donbass region. Since May 2014 this conflict has taken over nine thousand lives. More than five thousand Ukrainian soldiers were injured. Just as the Afghanistan war veterans thirty years ago, they face a lack of physical and psychosocial rehabilitation programs.

I want to concentrate on their adaptation to peaceful life when they come home, a story that gets overlooked in media outlets and existing photography projects. With the limitations their physical trauma imposes on them, they have to face an important challenge. They have to resocialize, as now they are different people with painful memories impossible to forget. With no help from the government and less financial support from patrons they have to overcome new difficulties and seek possibilities themselves or with the support from their relatives and friends.

The Ukrainian government often neglects the contribution of these men. There are cases when war veterans' documents would read that they were wounded during a

military training. To get regular compensations they have to go through a special medical commission that would prove that they were injured during battle. No rehabilitation facilities that could potentially help Ukrainian soldiers deal with both physical and psychological trauma are built. Ukrainian war veterans have to reach out to special programs that would send them abroad for either physical or psychosocial rehabilitation.

With this project I would like to raise awareness on a growing number of war veterans in Ukraine. Despite the Minsk agreements that state a ceasefire, dozens of Ukrainian soldiers get injured every week. My goal is to create a website where their stories would be featured, which will also act as a fundraising platform for them. Each story would be presented as a series of visuals and a text interview conducted in person.

APPENDIX E: Photography exhibit description

“Do you hear the birds outside, singing? It is beautiful”, I hear Yevhen saying. He looks at me from the hospital bed he is lying on. Yevhen is thin, pale, and nothing like the beefy young guy on his social media profile picture. He is a Ukrainian army soldier, and two days after turning twenty-one he stepped on an anti-personnel land mine in East Ukraine. It severely injured his legs and caused damage to his internal organs. He wears a colostomy bag, and will be able to start walking only in three months.

Life after Injury is a photography project about young Ukrainian soldiers who were wounded during the ongoing war with Russia-backed rebels and Russian regular army in the Donbass region. Since May 2014 this conflict has taken over nine thousand lives. More than three thousand Ukrainian soldiers were killed, almost eleven thousand were injured. Just as the Afghanistan war veterans thirty years ago, they face a lack of physical and psychosocial rehabilitation programs.

I concentrate on their adaptation to peaceful life when they come home, a story that gets little coverage in media outlets and existing photography projects. At home they have to face an important challenge. They have to resocialize, as now they are different people with painful memories impossible to forget. They have to overcome many difficulties and seek possibilities themselves or with the support from their close relatives, friends, volunteers and psychologists.

The Ukrainian government often neglects the contribution of these men. There are cases when war veterans' documents would read that they were wounded during a military training. To get regular compensations they have to go through a special

medical commission that would prove that they were injured during battle. No rehabilitation facilities that could potentially help Ukrainian soldiers deal with both physical and psychological trauma are built. Ukrainian war veterans have to reach out to special programs that would send them abroad for injury treatment or physical rehabilitation.

Despite the Minsk agreements that state a ceasefire, dozens of Ukrainian soldiers get injured every week. Some of them go back to the war zone, even on prosthetic legs. Some become volunteers and gather supplies for the army unit they served in, or simply find sense in peaceful life again. Stories you see in this exhibition are, without doubt, narratives of overcoming physical and mental trauma. I hope they can serve not only as a piece of visual history, but as a therapy for war veterans on the brink of losing faith in life after injury.

APPENDIX F: Images decoded

Peter van Agtmael

Healing Bobby

1

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a bald man leaning next to a headboard of a bed, his right arm on and slightly behind his head. His face looks as if it was restored after an extremely heavy injury; possibly, it was burnt in an explosion. He does not have a left ear, and his right ear is damaged. He is wearing a plaided shirt and a white T-shirt underneath. There is a tattoo on his right arm, presumably a saying “Save Thy Children” covered in green and yellow flames.

From the image this man could almost definitely be identified as a war veteran. His face looks like one big scar, and there are not that many professions in the world where an employee can be physically traumatized to that extent. The caption says: *“Bobby Henline relaxes at a motel, while touring with his comedy act. Bobby Henline (42) was the sole survivor when the humvee in which he was traveling was blown up, during his fourth tour to Iraq, on 7 April 2007. Bones in his face fractured, burns covered close to 40 percent of his body, and his left hand later had to be amputated. During the recovery process, he kept up the spirits of other wounded soldiers by telling jokes, and his therapist encouraged him to take up stand-up comedy. He now makes a living as a comedian, with a routine that focuses on his own injuries”.*

His individual features are extremely strong, and I would argue that in this and consecutive pictures he is presented as an individual rather than as a type (van Leeuwen, 2001).

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a close up shot, (signifying intimacy), shot on eye level (neutrality), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

A definite “photogenia” here are lines. This picture follows the rule of thirds almost perfectly, with Bobby’s face located in the right vertical third of the image. He is leaning next to a headboard, which divides the image and his face from the orange wall of the motel. The wall, therefore, is not distracting, but rather, adding a warm tone to the image overall.

The image as a connotative system. It is hard to say if a plaided short is a sign or not, but there is something about it being a regular wear in Western countries. If an injured veteran is photographed in a uniform, the viewer is looking at a military (a “type”, according to van Leeuwen, 2001). Instead, Bobby is wearing a plaided shirt, so similar to the one many viewers possibly have. In our perception it makes him look more ordinary. This shirt is a stark contrast to his terribly burnt face, and being in the picture together, these two elements communicate the *human cost of war* at home.

Bobby’s pose signifies relaxation. Despite the difficult times he had obviously gone through, the photograph is hardly trying to victimize him. It seems that it is the pose and the warm tone of the picture that highlight the current stance of things, but do not make a tragedy out of it.

There is something about him being depicted alone in a bare hotel room that lacks detail. It communicates loneliness, absence of a family and support of the loved ones.

The image as an ideological representation. Rather than victimizing or heroizing Bobby, like other projects do, the author is trying to stay a neutral observer opening the door for the viewer to have a look at how this man's life looks like six years after a severe injury in the war zone. We look at a man relaxing in a hotel room after a possibly long day, but the caption provides us with the information that he performed at a "comedy act". Seeing that heavy injuries can be laughed at during stand-up comedy shows performed by men like Bobby may serve therapeutic goals for other war veterans.

2

The image as a denotative system. In this picture we see Bobby in the courtyard of his house playing with one his dogs, while the other one is lying nearby on the right, and another one running towards him from the left side of the picture. He is leaning to his boxer dog that stands near him, and is holding his right hand on it. He does not have a left hand, and it can be clearly seen in the frame. He is wearing a khaki-colored T-shirt and jeans. His tattoo on his right hand is clearly visible.

We see the swimming pool and carefully cut trees on the foreground, the short wooden fence right behind Bobby, and some pipes and forest (park) on the background. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline plays at home with his dog*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot on eye level (neutrality), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The same as with the last picture, lines are a “photogenia” that structure the picture (often referred in the photography world as “layering”). Horizontally the picture is divided into four lines (from top to bottom): forest, fence, grass and swimming pool. The two cut trees and metal pipes behind the fence form a square, and Bobby stands in the middle of it. I think this positioning is purposeful. Placing the subject in the middle of something emphasizes him/her even more.

The picture is shot in bright sunlight, and it seems the photographer doesn't want to hide any details from the image. He wants every layer of it to be seen clearly (another reason for using deep depth of field).

The image as a connotative system. This picture puts Bobby in *social* context. Home often signifies *intimacy*, but here it seems to signify *social standing* and *order*. Bobby is not homeless; he lives in his own house with a courtyard. Everything we see in the picture (swimming pool, carefully cut trees, wooden fence) is pretty well maintained, which also communicates him being able to take care of it (or being able to hire someone to do so).

He has got three dogs, so he is not absolutely lonely. Although the presence of dogs and absence of wife or kids shows that he is alone in terms of family status (at least, this is what's communicated by the image). There is also something here about

the ordinariness of this environment. A lot of Americans have private houses, and own dogs. Bobby is no different from his compatriots.

The image as an ideological representation. There is a huge problem with homeless war veterans in The United States. This topic had been covered by several photojournalists. This image, contrarily, shows a war veteran in the courtyard of his house with his three dogs. We don't know whether this house is really his, or maybe his parents', or his siblings', or maybe he's just renting one. As well as we don't know whether it was bought before or after the injury. Nevertheless, the picture portrays him on a well-maintained property, as if to say that war veterans are not forgotten by the government, and if they handle their life well, everything will be okay.

3

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby Henline performing his comedy routine at a bar. We barely see him here; he is in the bottom of the frame photographed from the back, raising his left arm with no hand. The emphasis here is put on the audience, and we can see them laughing at loud at Bobby's jokes while looking at him. The place is not too big, there are about twenty people in the bar. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline performs his comedy routine at the Up Town 78 Lounge*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot on eye level (neutrality), with

deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera. In fact, we can't even see his face in this picture.

The photographer makes good use of available light. The light is coming from behind Bobby, and he is the best-lit subject in the picture (hence, best emphasized). Less lit is a company of six people sitting closest to the stage, and we can see their reaction to Bobby's jokes. The darkest zone in the picture is the furthest row of people listening to the veteran, but they too are not silhouettes, some details can be seen. As in previous picture, the photographer uses layering.

The image as a connotative system. This image shows Bobby among other people (first one in the story to do so). They are not feeling pity for him, or, at least, it is not their dominant feeling and it is not shown here. They are laughing at his jokes (same moment when he raises his arm with no hand, which is slightly difficult to look at), and it not only shows the *acceptance* of society, but even more, the joy of being entertained by him. They are not scared of a man with a heavily burnt face with no hand; rather, they react absolutely positively and are happy to be around him. At least five people are seen in the photo laughing. Four of them are applauding him.

The image as an ideological representation. A lot of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans struggle from PTSD, and are reluctant to be in public among people they don't know. The more so, they rarely take the stage to be comedians. Contrarily, Bobby is performing his show, and people enjoy it. It is showing a lot of things at the same time: Bobby's strong character (he overcomes his look and is in

the public performing); audience's appreciation of his heroism and the humor that he treats his limitations with.

4

The image as a denotative system. This picture shows Bobby lying on a bed in a motel room. He is lying across it with his elbows on it, wearing dark-red sweater and jeans. The tattoo on his right arm is clearly visible. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline rests in a motel room after performing his comedy routine*".

As in the first two images, there is no social interaction here. He is alone in a motel room that lacks detail, relaxing after his show and probably thinking about something. We see his face clearly, albeit we don't see the lack of left hand, which might be done to focus viewer's attention on his face.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from above (negative), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer makes good use of lines. The background is two-colored, white with red curtains on the left and orange on the right. The vertical line dividing them touches Bobby's head, and this is another means of emphasizing subject in this picture. We come back to Bobby's face, which is certainly a signifier of a war veteran, but, as I said earlier, it is so *unique* that we identify him as an individual rather than as a type.

The color palette of the picture is also extremely consistent. It is warm, with orange, red and dark-red colors dominating, mixed with white sheets and wall.

The image as a connotative system. We see him in regular wear in a hotel room that lacks detail, similar to the first picture. It communicates loneliness and a lack of a partner (who would maybe join him on such trips).

Another element that communicates loneliness here is one pillow. When one enters a hotel, there is always a couple pillows there, but Bobby probably put one away. This one pillow makes it final in showing that this man doesn't have a partner. It might not even be true, but that is the feel one gets from this picture.

The image as an ideological representation. Except for the fact that we are looking at a heavily traumatized individual, this image communicates ordinariness. A man relaxes in a motel room after a busy day, wearing casual clothes.

5

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby Henline during Military Appreciation night with the Dallas Stars ice hockey team. He is standing next to Celena Rae, a singer, in the middle of an ice rink, wearing a familiar plaid shirt, jeans and trainers. They both are in the center of the frame on a slight distance, her left hand raised, as if she is presenting him (she is left-of-center, he is right-of-center). He is clapping his hands, or, to be exact, clapping his left stump with his right hand. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline stands with singer Celena Rae after the national anthem during a Military Appreciation Night with the Dallas Stars ice hockey team, where he was the guest of honor*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of

field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera (he is looking at the singer).

The photographer emphasizes the two subjects in this picture using available light. They are the best lit, a little less lit are the hockey players on the right, then the players on the left (who are on the rink), and the less lit are the audience members on the background. At the same time, he is using closed aperture to keep everything in detail, despite the fact that indoor situations usually “stand for” an open aperture.

As other people in the frame are farther than Bobby and the singer, they look smaller. This is another way of emphasizing the two main personalities here.

The image as a connotative system. This image, as well as the third one, shows people’s appreciation of Bobby. The singer looks at him, smiles and raises her hand. He is clapping his hands in return. What is different here is that Bobby is recognized on even a bigger scale, a whole ice hockey arena is looking at him and probably applauding him.

The image as an ideological representation. Some war veterans returning home might feel forgotten, and start questioning their contribution. This image communicates that war veterans are not forgotten by the American society. Bobby have been invited as a “special guest star” to a big sports event, and people are happy to have him there.

6

The image as a denotative system. This image shows bare chest Bobby Henline putting a T-shirt in a motel room. We see the bed in the foreground (the

photographer is probably standing on the other side of the bed), then Bobby, two chairs and a table behind him. Behind the table and chairs there is a yellow curtain. On the wall on the right there is a lamp that seems to be the only light source. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline gets ready for bed, while on tour with his comedy routine*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer is dealing with a pretty difficult light here. There is only one source, and it is not too bright. Nevertheless, the right side of Bobby's body is highlighted, and, except for the light source itself, Bobby is probably the brightest subject in the frame, nicely divided from the background and the foreground.

The image as a connotative system. This is another image of Bobby alone in a motel relaxing after a hard day. Here he is bare chested, which usually communicates intimacy, but he is a little too far, and he is looking away. The photographer is himself a rather neutral observer, and he communicates the same feeling to the viewers.

The blanket is put away only on one half of the bed, which means there is no one but him in this hotel room. This has a sense of loneliness to it.

The image as an ideological representation. Except for the fact that we are looking at a heavily traumatized individual, this image communicates ordinariness. A man gets ready for bed in a motel room after a busy day, wearing casual clothes.

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby supporting Chastity, the sister of a soldier that served alongside Bobby, and died. He was in the same humvee with Bobby when it exploded.

Bobby is seen in the bottom center of the frame, sitting on a couch. He is holding the hand of Chastity, who is in the left bottom of the frame, crying. Most of the frame is *occupied* by a huge window (a couple of trees and another house can be seen, but, overall, everything outside is overexposed) behind them, and both subjects are back lit. Bobby's stump is lit too. He is wearing a T-shirt saying "Got burns?"

On the left side of the frame, behind the couch, a wall with a painting can be seen. Above the window, there is a small green curtain that covers a little bit of it. The clothes Bobby and Chastity are wearing have a secondary importance here, as it can barely be seen because of the light. The caption says, "*Bobby consoles Chastity, the sister of Rodney McCandless, a comrade killed in the explosion in which Bobby sustained his burns*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from above (negative), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera. He looks at Chastity.

Bobby is placed in the middle of a frame, as if to show that he is the main subject, and the deceased soldier's sister is left-to-center. What overwhelms this picture technically is a huge overexposed window situated behind Bobby and

Chastity. It occupies most of the upper and middle horizontal thirds of the picture, and technically could be easily resolved with the use of flash, but the photographer apparently decided to keep it this way (or had no external flash at his disposal).

The image as a connotative system. This is an image with a new meaning. Bobby is a man with a heavily burnt body, and he will never be able to fully recover, but there were those who didn't make it, and they will never come back. Bobby is a symbol of the distant war, as well as the absence of Chastity's brother. She is happy that Bobby made it, and she is crying. For her he is a link between the peaceful home and the distant world where the war goes on, and, even more important, a link to her deceased brother.

Somehow the overexposed window symbolizes heaven, the other world, where Chastity's brother is now. That world is close, but here, in the world of the living, Bobby sits on a couch and holds Chastity's hand.

The image as an ideological representation. This image in a way shows society's appreciation of veterans, but on a deeper, personal level. For Chastity Bobby is a complete stranger, but he has gone through the same experience her brother had gone through. He is a bridge between the two worlds, the peaceful US and the tumultuous Iraq, as well as the world of the living and the world of the dead.

8

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby walking out of the restaurant after performing his show. He is walking in the shadow next to a tree, so the only thing really visible is his eyes and the forehead. A little below his head is

his left arm with a stump. We see the parking lot on the left, and an enterprise (it is not clear, if that is the restaurant) on the right. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline stands outside the Taste of the Islands restaurant, after performing his comedy act*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image as a connotative system. There is something about this beam of light falling on Bobby's face. It emphasizes it, and we see nothing but it. This might be the case with Bobby's life today in general, people can't help but look at his face, and the way it looks defines his life today.

The image as an ideological representation. The situation we look at here is pretty ordinary. A man walks to his car after a comedy show.

9

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby during an ice hockey match. From what is visible we can say that he is probably standing on the stands of the ice hockey arena. He is applauding a soldier who has recently returned from the war zone. Soldier's picture is shown on a huge screen above the field. The caption says, "*Bobby Henline applauds a soldier who has recently returned from Afghanistan, during a Dallas Stars ice hockey match*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from eye level (neutral), with

deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera. He looks at the picture of a soldier shown on a screen above the ice hockey rink.

This image is a popular in cinematography *over the shoulder shot* that is mostly used to show someone (in this case, a stadium full of people) from the perspective of someone (in this case, Bobby). We don't really see Bobby's shoulder, but what we do see is his damaged face (it is cut by the left edge of the frame), his right hand and his left stump that stick out of the bottom of the photograph. His hands are raised as he is applauding.

The image as a connotative system. This image gives an idea of camaraderie that emerges between American soldiers serving in the war zones abroad. Bobby and the soldier on the screen have similar stories, they both returned home after all the hardships and dangers they have gone through. Bobby can relate to what this man has gone through, and his applause with his left stump looks incredibly touching.

We don't really see other people's reaction to the photo on the screen, but full stadium communicates support, both for the soldier (who in a way acts as a generalized character for every American soldier who has served in Iraq and Afghanistan) and for Bobby.

The image as an ideological representation. This image represents the culture of honoring American war veterans during mass events, such as football matches, ice hockey games etc. It communicates that the contribution of every American soldier is remembered. Bobby had come back home a while ago, and he

was invited as a special guest for a Military Appreciation Night. An unnamed American soldier on the photo has only recently returned, but he is recognized and given applause as well.

10

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby walking along the beachfront in the evening. He is in the center of the frame, with plenty of space above his head. His black T-shirt says, "Got Burns?" His burnt face and left stump are visible, but are not emphasized with light or other elements.

On the left and a little bit behind him there is a group of passers-by, with two boys in the front. One of the two boys is looking at Bobby, and there is a sense of fear in his look. His pose is a little strange, it may seem that he is even leaning to the edge of the walkway to be farther from Bobby.

From what we can see the beach is on the right. Behind Bobby and a group of people we can see a pretty busy street with a building that looks like a motel on the left and a gas station on the right. People are waiting on the traffic light as cars are passing by. The caption says, *"Bobby Henline walks along the beachfront, after visiting a 12-year-old who was burned as a toddler, and who was having surgery the next day"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

By placing Bobby in the middle of the frame the photographer establishes him as the primary subject. He is placed in such a way that the writing on his T-shirt, "Got Burns?" is almost in the exact center of the photograph. It is white, while the rest of the T-shirt is black, so one can't help but stumble upon these words in the first place. The group on the left feels like the secondary subject, while the street in the background feels like context.

As many other pictures in this story, this one is heavily based on the rule of thirds.

The image as a connotative system. A lot of elements in this image speak life. There is a group of ordinary looking people with children on the left, and behind them there is a busy street with pedestrians and cars. Bobby is there, in the middle of it, and, on one hand, he is a part of this life, but on the other hand, he feels separated from everything going around him. Everything in this photograph looks ordinary, except for Bobby. There is a stark contrast between him and other elements in the frame, which is emphasized by the "Got Burns?" question on Bobby's T-shirt.

This image, unlike the third, fifth and ninth pictures that communicate society's acceptance and appreciation, shows that in everyday life there is some kind of inconvenience between ordinary *healthy* people and people with disabilities. The boy looks at Bobby with fear, as he might not yet be aware of the etiquette that exists in society.

The image as an ideological representation. This image puts a heavily injured war veteran into social context by showing him walking along the

beachfront on an ordinary evening. It shows that heavily injured war veterans have become a part of everyday life in the United States. While there are many special events to recognize their contribution, attitude toward them in real life may not always be ideal.

11

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby standing at the grave of Rodney McCandless, a soldier he served with, holding an arm of an unnamed man, possibly a deceased soldier's close relative. A little cross with two U.S. national flags and flowers is almost in the bottom centre of the frame, while Bobby and an unknown man are standing slightly to the right from it. They are standing on green grass, and on the background there is a treeline. Bobby is wearing sunglasses. It is a little unclear, but it seems that the unnamed man is gently pushing Bobby to show him that it is their time to leave.

The captions says, *"Bobby Henline stands at the grave of Rodney McCandless, who was killed in the explosion in which Bobby himself was injured"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera. He looks at the grave of a soldier he served with in Iraq.

The photographer tries to make the shot as clean as possible. The emphasis here is clearly on Bobby, an unknown man next to him, and the grave with two

American Flags. Peter van Agtmael places himself in such a way that the treeline, and not the other graves, is on the background.

The image as a connotative system. This image, similar to the seventh, is an encounter of those who came back alive, although heavily injured, and those who didn't. Far away, in Iraq, Bobby and Rodney were friends serving alongside each other. Back home, after many years, they "meet" again.

The image as an ideological representation. This image shows the "human cost of war" better than many images from the battlefield. It is a sunny day in the United States, the grass is green, and there is a beautiful treeline in the background. As in many other cases, what we see feels like something that should have never happened. One of the two soldiers is dead, and another one, heavily injured, is standing near the white cross on his grave.

12

The image as a denotative system. This image shows Bobby swimming in a pool in black swimming shorts. He is shot from above and slightly aside, swimming on his back, so we see his burnt face and left stump. He is in the middle of a frame. The rest of the shot is just water that looks light blue, as we see the bottom of the pool through it. The caption says, "*Bobby takes a swim in a motel pool, after visiting the father of Rodney McCandless, a comrade killed in the explosion in which Bobby sustained his burns*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from above (negative), with

shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

This is another shot where the photographer cuts off the unnecessary details, leaving Bobby and the environment in the shot. His head sticks out from water, so there is a slight emphasis on it, as well as on his left stump that one stumbles upon in the first place when looking at the shot.

The image as a connotative system. This image seems to show that, despite heavy injury, Bobby continues to enjoy life. He is swimming not as a physical activity, but rather as a way of relaxation after a long day. It is hard to say, but it feels that he is smiling in this shot.

The image as an ideological representation. This image, as well as many others in this series, can act as a therapy for other veterans. And this photograph communicates what the whole story tells us, “This is a heavily injured war veteran, but, despite everything he had been through, and despite all the serious and visible injuries he has, he has made an effort to overcome it and just enjoy life, so you can too”.

Nina Berman

Purple Hearts

1

The image as a denotative system. In the bottom of the image we see a young man with a heavily burnt face with multiple scars. The left side of his face

appears to be more damaged. He wears a dress military uniform with numerous awards and decorations on both sides. It could most definitely be said that he is an American army officer that served in a military campaign abroad. Behind him is the dramatic sky during dusk. On the right side of the frame there are tree branches that are out-of-focus. In the left corner of the frame there is a black circle that is hard to identify (some kind of shield?)

The caption says, "*Sergeant Joseph Mosner (35), of 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded in Baghdad on 16 December 2003. Among other injuries, the blast ripped apart the left side of his face and took off his scalp down to the skull*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from below (positive), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image is quite apparently shot in the dusk with the use of a strobe, which gives it quite a dramatic look. Soldier's face is the best lit object in the frame. Importantly, the "healthy" side of his face is lit better than the damaged one. The light from the strobe merges into shadow on his face where most of his burns are, therefore emphasizing them.

The image as a connotative system. Heavily injured war veteran is depicted in this image without any additional details. There is nobody else in the frame, and there is no identifiable environment (his room, hospital room etc.). What serves as a powerful connotation here is the combination of a dress military uniform

with dozens of merits, with a heavily burnt face. This communicates that we are looking at a man that has been through a lot of danger, got injured, and survived.

The image as an ideological representation. The presence of so many awards and decorations on this sergeant's uniform communicates that his personal contribution (and, if one generalizes, all veterans' contribution) to the USA's security and well being wasn't ignored or forgotten by the state. This falls into the category of images celebrating veterans' contribution. Importantly, it also juxtaposes the amount of awards to his heavily burnt face.

2

The image as a denotative system. In this image we see a profile of a man with a heavily burnt face wearing a red plaided shirt and a white cap. We see his left cheek, lips and left side of nose. We can barely see his left eye. The man and the whole shot is covered by numerous harsh shadows, presumably, from a tree. He is standing next to a garage door.

The caption says, *"Specialist Jose Martinez (20) of the 101st Airborne was injured 5 April in Karbala. When his humvee hit a land mine he was trapped in the explosion and suffered severe burns to his head, face and arms"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a close-up shot (signifying intimacy), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

Natural light emphasizes subject's injured face and provides some dramatic shadows on his back in the lower right and the garage door on the left side of the

frame. Red is the dominant color of the image (soldier's face and his plaided shirt are red), everything else is either light beige (the door of the garage on the back) or white (soldier's cap).

The image as a connotative system. Soldier's heavily wounded face, his teary eye, together with a red plaided shirt somehow communicate pain, and what scholars call *human cost of war*. Everything we see in this image is very ordinary, except for the heavily burnt face. The man wears the same regular outfit he probably used to wear before the war, but now he is a different person. He had changed both physically and mentally, and this is not a life that he used to live before, even though all the variables seem to be the same.

The image as an ideological representation. A heavily injured war veteran in an ordinary setting. Nina Berman's project is anti-war.

3

The image as a denotative system. In the middle of the picture we see a young man wearing a military uniform and a beret. Around him there is a reflection of some kind, the photograph could have been shot in a museum or picture gallery (it could as well be a reflection in a screen). What we see around the soldier is a painting depicting a gunfight between cowboys and indigenous population of The United States. They are riding horses. A spear of one of the indigenous men goes through soldier's head. A train could be clearly seen on the right from him. Importantly, his face does not contain any visible injuries.

The captions says, *“Specialist Adam Zaremba (20), a field artillery man with the 1st Armored Division was injured 16 July 2003. While guarding a bank in Baghdad, a mine exploded, blowing off his left leg, and sending shrapnel into his his rear, leg, arms and hands”*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer uses subject’s surrounding to create a picture that looks as if it was shot using multiple exposure, but I don’t think the technique is allowed by the rules of the World Press Photo competition.

The image as a connotative system. By placing her subject “inside” existing historical pictures the photographer quite obviously creates a parallel between contemporary wars and preceding armed conflicts, the Present and the Past. There might also be a connotation about war being an adventure. This picture of the past creates a dream around the soldier, a dream of an adventure, and that is how war and military experience is viewed by many soldiers in America and abroad.

The image as an ideological representation. Nina Berman is famous for her anti-war position, and it seems here she makes a slight link between this American soldier who fought in Iraq and cowboys skirmishing with indigenous population.

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a young African American man lying on a bed. He is heavily injured. There is one huge scar and couple smaller marks on his abdomen. There is also a patch on his chest. The man occupies most of the shot, with his head being in the center of the image in the upper horizontal third. The whole picture is covered by harsh shadows from the window-blinds, this man's bed is probably standing not far from a window. Upper-left corner of the picture is pitch black, as well as the bottom center. The caption says, *"Tyson Johnson III (22), a corporal with Military Intelligence at Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad, suffered massive internal injuries during a mortar attack"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from above (negative), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer, same as with the second picture, makes great use of available light. The whole picture is covered by harsh shadows, some parts of the picture are not visible at all. Photographer uses light to emphasize the injuries, and shadows to hide the elements which may distract viewer's attention from irrelevant details.

The image as a connotative system. The subject here is barechested, which always makes an image more intimate. We see the physical effect of war on a young human body. A young traumatized man in bed signifies that there is something wrong going on in the world.

The image as an ideological representation. Black masculinity is a topic that has been widely researched and discussed in the media. Here we see it

disturbed by the war. This image also adds to the diversity of war veterans in this particular story and overall.

5

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a young man standing near his house wearing a red T-shirt and jeans. He has a prosthetic right arm, which ends with a hook. His left arm is covered by some unidentifiable tattoos. This image is rich with details. Behind the man there is a small garden with various flowers and a small white column with a small wooden toy house on its top. On the tree behind the soldier there is a green bird feeder with three holes, and three American flags on top of it. There is blue house behind him, and a white chimney of a different house in the left part of the frame.

The caption says, *“Specialist Robert Acosta (20), an ammunitions specialist with the 1st Battalion, 501st Regiment, 1st Armored Division. Acosta was a humvee passenger outside Baghdad on 13 July 2003 when an Iraqi teenager threw a grenade at the vehicle. Acosta tried to pick it up when it exploded, mangling his left leg and ripping off his right arm”.*

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from below (positive), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer combines available light with two strobes that separate the subject from the background. Hence, his face is one of the best lit parts of the frame.

The image as a connotative system. This photograph creates kind of an imaginary world. A heavily injured man is standing in the middle of a heaven-like garden with flowers. There is a good-looking house on the back, with couple American flags on the tree. One could say this is a perfect place.

His prosthetic arm is what puts us back to earth, and shows that there a lot of people inhabiting this beautiful world that were heavily traumatized by a war that is very distant, yet extremely close.

The image as an ideological representation. This photograph is an emblematic portrayal of heavily injured war veterans back home. One could dissect it into two layers, a young soldier with a prosthetic arm and a background, a beautiful, flourishing yet cosy place called *home*.

6

The image as a denotative system. In this image, apparently shot through a window glass on a rainy day, we see a young man's face. He is wearing a blue T-shirt. The left side is his face and most of his T-shirt is lighted by a strobe (or something similar), while the right side of his face is a lot darker. The background behind him is light to left and dark to the right, with his face being in the middle of the transition.

The caption says, "Private Randall Clunen (19), infantryman with the 101st Airborne, was on guard duty in Tal Afar, a town near the Syrian border on December 8, 2003 when a suicide bomber broke through the perimeter fence, blowing himself

up and wounding 58 soldiers. Clunen suffered shrapnel wounds to his face and jaw and required an emergency tracheotomy to enable him to breathe”.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image as a connotative system. The photograph is deprived of detail. Put simply, it is a portrait of a very young war veteran shot through a window glass covered in rain lines (there might be a parallel with tears here). To me, it has several meanings.

First, the war veteran is shot indoors from outdoors. It might have a connotation that he is an observer to life happening outside the window, but not a participant of it. A lot of injured war veterans are disabled and don't have the mobility they had before.

Second, the bipolar black and white background might be a way to show that war veterans are constantly balancing on a fine line between the Light and Darkness. By this I mean not necessarily balancing between Good and Evil, but rather being teetering between keeping well and succumbing to dangerous habits.

The image as an ideological representation. This image also places the subject in an imaginary world. This one is a darker one, a world of nightmares and painful memories. A person living in two worlds at once is surrounded by a kind of mist in the real world that is in the way of living a normal life.

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a young man sitting in a wheelchair, with someone, presumably his close relative, holding her right hand on his head. His face has no big scars or marks. His left hand with a catheter lies on wheelchair's armrest, while his right hand is on his chest. The veteran is wearing a dark cherry color sweatshirt saying "Navy". On his knees there is a blue cap with some writings that are hard to identify. Behind him and his relative there is a grey background, which is most likely a wall.

The caption says, *"Army Specialist Luis Calderon (22), of Bayamon, Puerto Rico, was a tank operator assigned to the Delta Company Fourth Infantry Division Forward Support Battalion. On 5 May 2003, in Saddam Hussein's hometown Tikrit, Calderon was ordered to destroy a mural with the image of Saddam. During the demolition, the wall crashed on the tank's open hatch, breaking Calderon's neck and severing his spinal cord, leaving him quadriplegic. He was photographed at the Veterans' Hospital"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer combines available light with using a single strobe, which beamed from upper-left to bottom-right (easy to say looking at the shadows on soldier's fingers).

The image as a connotative system. To me, the presence of a close relative with her hand on his head is very important. It shows love, and care, and support, and the fact that relatives are always by your side no matter what. This

situation also makes it clear for the viewer this young man, like many other war veterans, can't anymore take care of himself. He has to be taken care of by his relatives.

The image as an ideological representation. I feel in this particular case the caption plays a huge role. This soldier was following an order to destroy Saddam's mural, and was heavily injured by a wall while demolishing it. It is something that could have never happened, as such orders (like destroying murals or putting flags somewhere) have a symbolic, rather than strategic meaning. I think the caption does great to show the absurdity of war.

8

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a man sitting on a bed in the right side of the frame, his head resting on right hand (the gesture reminds the one people wearing glasses do to massage nose bridge). He has a prosthetic left leg, and his right leg is not visible (from the caption we get to now that the explosion blew off both of his legs). He is wearing a blue shirt and white pants.

This room is most likely this man's bedroom. The background of the frame is rich with detail. There is a television set in the center of the image, a speaker, curtains on the window, a couple of flowerpots hanging on the wall. In the left side of the frame we see a pair of crutches. Above them there are three caps.

The caption says, "*Private Alan Jermaine Lewis (23), machine-gunner with the 3rd Infantry Division, was wounded when the Humvee he was driving hit a landmine*

on Highway 8 in Baghdad. The explosion blew off both his legs, injured his face, and broke his left arm in six places”.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of field (putting subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

This photograph has a very consistent color, everything is blue (with shades of this color), black (not that many objects) or white (walls). Therefore, a pair of wooden crutches in the left side of the frame is nicely visible.

The photographer combines available light with a single or double strobe.

The image as a connotative system. I would say it resembles fifth image. It is an ideal bedroom, except for the heavily traumatized man with a prosthetic leg and a pair of crutches. An ideal world broken.

The image as an ideological representation. Another emblematic portrayal of heavily injured war veterans back home, indoor this time. There are again two layers, a young soldier with a prosthetic leg in the foreground and in the background, a very normal bedroom.

9

The image as a denotative system. In the middle of the picture we see a young man standing on a gravel road in the night, lighted by the car lights. He has a prosthetic left leg. The man is wearing a brown sweatshirt with some writings, jeans and sneakers. He has a white-blue cap on his head. Some grass is seen on the right. Other than that, there aren't any details in this frame.

The caption says, *“San Ross (21), an army paratrooper and combat engineer with the 82nd Airborne Division. Ross was injured 18 May 2003 in Baghdad when a bomb blew up during a munitions disposal operation. He is blind, lost his left leg, had a hole in his right leg and lost hearing in his left ear. He has shrapnel throughout his body. With already 15 surgeries behind him and five more planned, he is frequently in pain”*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from below (positive), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks in the camera.

The photographer uses headlights of a car to light her subject in the dark. I would guess this way of depicting him was selected to show his blindness. Car lights specifically light the lower part of the body, where his prosthetic leg is.

The image as a connotative system. This image, as well as sixth image, is deprived of any detail and has rather a metaphorical meaning. This guy is standing in the darkness, looking lost and frozen, almost a visualization of a phrase “rabbit in the headlights”. Darkness connotes absence of global vision, yet the path in front him is lighted. Viewer gets a feeling that despite the fact that today everything is moderately well, the far future of this man and other like him is uncertain.

Photographing blind people in the darkness is a popular way of depicting them, I would even say it is cliché.

The image as an ideological representation. This is sort of an unconventional way of depicting an injured war veteran. I think it communicates

something like an estrangement of these guys from the reality they live in, shows their true loneliness.

10

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a man in his late 30's hugged by a woman, presumably his wife or close relative. There is a moderately small scar on his face. He appears slightly lost, while her look can be described as concerned.

The man is wearing white sweatshirt and jeans, while the woman is wearing a red sweatshirt with grey workout pants. They are wearing what people are usually wearing at home or in neighborhood (very casual).

The couple is probably standing outside their house (not visible) in a neighborhood. Behind them there is a pretty big palm tree (so it is a warm state), and there are more here and there. Three cars are visible on the left and right, they are standing in the parkways of houses. Upper-left, top and upper-right parts of the image are occupied by beautiful blue sky.

The only image in the project depicting two people in the frame.

The caption says, *“Platoon Sergeant John Quincy (37), father of two and a National Guard reservist with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry. Quincy was on a routine patrol through Ramadi on 29 August 2003 when a remote controlled bomb exploded under his vehicle, sending shrapnel into his brain and body. He has metal in the right lower quadrant of the brain, rock and shrapnel to the face and entry and exit wounds in the arm, which damaged nerves and tendons in his hands and*

fingers. Quincy is on medication for seizures and depression. He is not permitted to do any physical activity as a fall could misplace the metal in his brain, leaving him without speech or motor skills. Quincy is photographed at home with his wife Summer”.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from below (positive), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The horizon of the image is considerably bent. It is either to make the image or more dynamic or omit some unwanted shadows on the grass. Photographer combines existing light with a strobe.

The image as a connotative system. As I have said above, it is the only photo in the series that has two people. The presence of this man’s wife who is hugging him connotes support by the family, but it also communicates his inability to take care of himself. He appears very lost in the picture, and we don’t know how exactly his serious injuries affected, for instance, his speech or ability to think. We know from the caption that he can’t do too much physical activity, which makes it clear for us that it is difficult for him to do basic things without someone’s support.

The image as an ideological representation. This image, just like seventh photograph, shows love and support of the family for the young heavily injured war vets. I think it is very meaningful to start a project with a picture from an awards ceremony and end it with such a family shot. The people who experience this trauma on the same scale (sometimes even stronger) are the families of the

veterans. Parents, partners, siblings and children are the ones who always take the hardest hit, and it is hard to imagine a story deprived of them.

Eugene Richards

War is Personal

1

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see an adult man crying. We can only see his face, and it tightly occupies the right side of the frame. He is covering his lips with his left hand. The left side of the frame is deprived of detail, it appears that the man is sitting next to a wall. There is a tear on his cheek. His eyes are closed.

The caption says, *“War is Personal. Carlos Arredondo's son Alexander, a lance-corporal with the US Marines was killed in combat in Najaf, Iraq, on Carlos's birthday. By the end of 2009, over 4,300 men and women from US military forces had been killed and some 30,000 maimed or wounded since the beginning of the conflict in Iraq. The incidence of stress-related illness and military suicides was increasing”*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a close-up shot (signifying intimacy), shot from below (positive), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

There is not much to look at in this photograph. It is a quiet moment of grief of a father for his son.

The image as a connotative system. Closed eyes, tears, and a hand covering lips are elements unequivocally communicating pain and loss.

The image as an ideological representation. This image shows the *human cost* of war in a different way than other pictures. It doesn't show a deceased or an injured soldier, but a father who lost his son to the war in Iraq. Parents grieving about their children is a disrupted cycle of life, and that's one of the worst things that war does.

2

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see a young man leaning on a table as he sits in a wheelchair. He is bare-chested, and there is a small tiger tattoo on his right hand and a writing that says "M Doughty" (possibly referring to singer Mike Doughty). His eyes are closed. He is holding a cigarette in his right hand that he hasn't lighted yet. He is wearing a ring on his left hand. There is a patch on his belly. His T-shirt is lying on his thighs, it seems he has just taken it off. He seems to be in pain. A lighter and a cell phone are seen on the table.

The caption says, "*Tomas Young was paralyzed from the chest down after being shot in the spine during an ambush on his fourth day in Iraq*".

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from below (positive), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The picture, shot with a wide-angle lens, is dramatically bent. The head of the subject almost hits the upper-right corner of the frame. This creates dynamics in a somewhat mundane situation. There is almost a feeling of the subject “falling out” of the frame.

The image as a connotative system. This extremely intimate image doesn't sanitize reality, and doesn't show a unique climactic moment, be it “good” or “bad”. Feeling pain and physical limitations is an everyday reality for this man, and it is not difficult to guess that he is depressed.

The image as an ideological representation. This image represents Eugene Richards classic style. Wide-angle lens, very intimate, and also in a way hopeless.

3

The image as a denotative system. In this photograph set in a hospital we see a heavily injured war veteran lying on a bed wearing gypsum casts on his arms and legs. He is in the right side of the frame. He appears to be paralyzed. His mouth is slightly open. Beside his bed, in the left side of the image, his mother and the two little girls (presumably his sisters or his daughters) are sleeping on a chair bed covered with a big blanket.

The caption says, *“A brain injury following an anti-tank mine explosion left Shurvon Phillip unable to speak and in need of constant care. His mother, Gail Ulerie, sleeps beside him every night”.*

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from above (negative), with deep depth of field (putting subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image was shot from above to combine the heavily injured war veteran on the hospital bed and his family sleeping on a chair bed, in one image.

The image as a connotative system. This photograph communicates the everyday struggle of the families that take care of their sons, brothers, husbands and fathers. Hospital is a strong setting to communicate such a message. Gail is sleeping, which means she constantly takes care of her son (this notion can be proved with the caption).

The image as an ideological representation. This picture shows both soldiers' physical trauma and their families' struggle, but also their faithful love and the willingness to be there for the injured person no matter it takes.

4

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see a heavily injured war veteran holding his little daughter while sitting on a couch. It is a close-up, and we see a part of his face, his chest, but we don't see below his knees. He doesn't have a left hand (there is a stump), and a mechanical hand (prosthetics) is attached to his right arm. He is wearing a plaid shirt and a cap. His daughter's right hand is placed on his mechanical hand, and her right leg rests on his left arm that has no hand. She has a slightly surprised look on her face.

The caption says, “*Dusty Hill, a former sergeant with the Illinois National Guard, lost both hands and an eye and suffered fourth-degree burns on a third of his body during an insurgent attack in Baghdad. He has learned to change his daughter’s diapers and feed her with his mechanical right hand*”.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a close-up shot (signifying intimacy), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photographer uses open aperture to emphasize sergeant’s mechanical hand and his stump. Veteran’s daughter, as well as himself, are slightly out of focus.

The image as a connotative system. This is a photograph of a mundane situation, a father is holding his daughter on his knees. However, we realize that there is something wrong with it from the very beginning – a prosthetic hand is unequivocally emphasized using *photogenia*, and it connotes a special, rather than a general situation.

The image as an ideological representation. Despite the limitations that they have, war veterans try to engage in mundane daily activities that they would engage in otherwise, and I think this photograph communicates that well. Not having hands didn’t stand in the way of this sergeant hugging his daughter and trying to be a good father, and I think there is a hope in this photograph.

5

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph, which is quite possible a development of a previous scene, we see a war veteran standing slightly

bent down almost in the center of the frame, and his wife holding their daughter while sitting on a couch on the right. His daughter is screaming (crying) while looking at him, and his face is not visible (just his damaged ear), so it is difficult to say what he's doing. This time he is wearing a hook on his left hand. We see a little bit of an apartment, a window on the left and a corridor behind the couch.

The caption says, *"Dusty Hill, a former sergeant with the Illinois National Guard, lost both hands and an eye and suffered fourth-degree burns on a third of his body during an insurgent attack in Baghdad. He has learned to change his daughter's diapers and feed her with his mechanical right hand".*

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from below (positive), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The horizon is bent to make this picture more dynamic.

The image as a connotative system. It is unknown if the little girl is crying because of how her father looks, but it is one of the first thoughts that comes to mind when looking at the picture. We don't see his face, but we can guess that there is something wrong with it by looking at the little girl's horrified face. What makes this scene even stronger is his response, his body language. He is leaning towards her, but whether he tries to make a funny face, or jokingly screams in response, is unknown.

The image as an ideological representation. Generally, adults act according to a certain code of conduct, and it would be impolite to scream when you

see someone with a mutilated face, but little kids are not yet familiar with this code. This girl's genuine scream of horror tells us a lot about how the man looks like.

6

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see a deceased young African American woman in a coffin. It is a close-up of her face. Her eyes are closed, and her lips are shut.

The caption says, *"Army Sergeant Princess C. Samuels was killed in indirect fire (gunfire delivered at a target that cannot be seen from the firing position) in Taji, north of Baghdad. She was one of more than 100 female troops killed in action since the war started in 2003"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a close-up shot (signifying intimacy), shot from above (negative), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

It is a telephoto shot with an open aperture.

The image as a connotative system. It is a photograph that connotes beauty, and at the same times connotes death, and the presence of the two in one picture is what's most horrifying.

The image as an ideological representation. War, by taking the life of this young woman, disrupts the cycle of life again (as in the first picture). Somehow life can still be seen in this woman's face, but it is life with a lethal wound of war. This picture quite unequivocally shows the *human cost* of war. The caption saying that

this woman's name was "Princess", together with the number of female troops killed, makes the message even stronger.

7

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see a deceased young African American woman in a coffin. It is the same situation, as the sixth picture, but this time it is a medium shot from the side. An American flag on the coffin occupies a bulk of the shot. She is wearing a dress military uniform with numerous service ribbons on it. There are no other details in the picture, the photographer might have come in and captured this before the actual funeral ceremony.

The captions says, *"Army Sergeant Princess C. Samuels was killed in indirect fire (gunfire delivered at a target that cannot be seen from the firing position) in Taji, north of Baghdad. She was one of more than 100 female troops killed in action since the war started in 2003"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from above (negative), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image as a connotative system. Despite the fact that this is a picture from the same event, we perceive Princess more as an officer in this case. There is a US flag on the coffin, and she is wearing a dress military uniform. These two "visual stereotypes" (van Leeuwen, 2001) makes us associate her with a group a lot stronger.

The image as an ideological representation. It is quite a solitary image with a lot of attributes indicating what exactly we're looking at.

8

The image as a denotative system. In the right-bottom of the picture we see a woman in her fifties, and on the left there's her son passing by (slightly out of focus). The scene is set in the kitchen. The woman is holding her face with her right arm, she looks sad and worried.

The caption says, *"Mona Parsons, 52, is nearly overcome with worry about her son, Jeremy Hagy, who is scheduled to return to his unit in Iraq the next morning"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The emphasis is placed on the woman's face with the use of open aperture. Her son, who is standing nearby, is already out of focus.

The image as a connotative system. This woman's worry about her son dominates this picture.

The image as an ideological representation. Veterans' parents' feelings turns out to be a recurrent plot (scene?) in this photo essay (first, third, and eighth picture). Notably, nothing bad has happened, but in such a photo essay this picture communicates a new meaning, it shows how difficult is the anticipation of something. It somehow reminds of "Stay", a project by Anastasia Taylor-Lind.

The image as a denotative system. In the picture we see a young man in a military uniform bending over a baby crib to touch his child. Another child sleeps on an air mattress on the floor in the bottom-center of the image.

A bed is seen on the left, and in the baby crib there are some plush toys. A baby stroller for kids is seen on the right.

The caption says, *“Jeremy Hagy kisses his sleeping children goodbye, in Mount Vernon, Ohio, before returning for duty in Iraq”*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a full shot (signifying social relationship), shot from above (positive), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The horizon is bent to make the image more dynamic.

The image as a connotative system. This image is a touching moment of a father saying “goodbye” to his kids before leaving to Iraq. It connotes love, and hope. We immediately know what moment it is, even without the caption, because he is wearing a military uniform.

The image as an ideological representation. This image is filled with love and hope. Eugene Richards emphasizes the human (the family?) part of what’s going on. This man we see is not only a soldier, he is more so a loving father.

The image as a denotative system. In this picture we see a woman hugging her heavily injured son. It is set in a hospital. The man is sitting on the bed bare-

ched, we don't see his face, but we see his mother's face (the photographer was standing behind the man). A part of his head is missing, and multiple scars are visible under his hair. His mother's hands are locked behind his back.

The caption says, *"Nelida Bagley helps her son Jose Pequeño from his bed at the West Roxbury Veterans Medical Center in Massachusetts. He lost 40 percent of his brain when a grenade exploded in his vehicle while on patrol in Ramadi, in central Iraq"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with shallow depth of field (emphasizing subject). The subject looks away from the camera.

The image as a connotative system. This photograph quite obviously shows the mother's love and support of her son who's extremely injured. Her hands that are "locked" behind his back is a very strong detail, it is kind of an unbreakable bond between the mother and the son.

The image as an ideological representation. This image in a way resembles the message of the third image. It is an extremely strong photograph about parents' love.

11

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see a young man sitting on a couch on the foreground, and an elderly woman sitting on the same couch on the background. The man has turned sideways to the camera, and is looking outside of the window (which is behind the couch). He looks slightly

stressed and anxious. The old woman in the background (presumably, man's grandmother) is a little bow-backed, she looks down.

The caption says, *"Former US Army medic Michael Harmon, who shares a small apartment in Brooklyn with his mother, grandmother and stepfather, has suffered from severe anxiety attacks since returning from Iraq"*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a medium shot (signifying personal relationship), shot from eye level (neutral), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

The photograph is shot with a closed aperture, so both the man and his grandmother are in focus.

The image as a connotative system. The young man and his grandmother are looking different directions. In a way this communicates a lack of understanding. He looks into the window, as if he's trying to flee the reality that he is in. The woman in the back somehow communicates solitude. She looks tired, but she is there for her grandson. At the same time, she probably realizes there's not much she can help with.

The image as an ideological representation. This photograph touches the topic of family relationships in the veterans', as well as a big number of other images in this photo essay.

12

The image as a denotative system. In the photograph we see two boys playing on a big tree in the Arlington cemetery. One of the boys is clearly visible. He

is standing on one of the branches and is overlooking Section 60. The gravestones and some people are visible in the right bottom of the frame.

The caption says, *“Boys play near Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery, the area designated for those in the military who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan”*.

The image as a stylistic-semiotic system. This picture is a long shot (signifying context, scope and public distance), shot from below (positive), with deep depth of field (placing subject in an environment). The subject looks away from the camera.

It is a long shot intended to include both the kids on the tree and the grave stones of the cemetery.

The image as a connotative system. It is a very poetic image, very different from the others. It reminds of the the famous W. Eugene Smith’s “Walk to Paradise Garden”, but the future here is not as bright.

The image as an ideological representation. We see the new generation looking at the grave stones of the deceased soldiers – what will these kids do when they grow up? I think the photographer ends his edit with a question rather than a statement.