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The Iconic News Image as Visual Event in Photojournalism and Digital Media

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Abstract

This thesis shows how the uses and meanings of the iconic news image have changed with the emergence of digital media. Most of the iconic photographs of the twentieth century were produced by photojournalists and published in mass circulation newspapers and magazines. In the twenty-first century, amateurs have greater access to image producing technologies and greater capacity to disseminate their images through the Internet. This situation has made possible the use of iconic news images to support political agendas other than those promoted in the media institutions and beyond the range of censorship imposed by those media.

In order to demonstrate the functions and understand this unprecedented situation, this thesis explores how iconic news images produce meaning. I consider formal definitions of iconic news images but adopt Nicholas Mirzoeff's theory of the visual event to explain how the meanings of iconic news images are impacted by historical context, media institutions and viewer responses. This dynamic model of visual communication allows us to see that iconic news images indeed function as events and that there is a political struggle over the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of those events.

The thesis develops this argument by analysing a series of historical examples. The images range from the iconic news images of World War II used in the official propaganda for the war effort, through the combination of amateur and professional images used in the 9/11 visual canon, to the activist images of the ongoing Syrian Civil War. The significance of 9/11 is that although some images produced by amateurs did

become iconic (for example Holocaust photographs or from the Kennedy assassination) it was not until the 9/11 attacks that the amateur production of the image began to be directly assimilated into mass media.

What this means is that the media institutions are no longer the sole arbitrators of the images that represent world events. Instead, using digital media, anyone including the media institutions, activists, military and terrorists create events that are so powerful in their traumatic impact, that they have to be published. Protest and terrorist movements have long understood that their impact depends on media coverage. Now images themselves can be more directly mobilised through digital media to reach viewers. They no longer require the media institutions or their resources.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The thesis shows what the societal uses of the iconic news image are and how they and their users have changed with the emergence of digital media. The relevance of this research is that the iconic news image is a condensed form of communication that represents a specific political point of view. Think about a crisis like World War II, 9/11 or the Iraqi War. What is the enduring way that you remember that crisis? For most people it will be an iconic news image, one that is probably also recalled by other people when they think about the same crisis. Iconic news images are important because they provide information about the crises that they represent. They become the way that those crises are remembered long past their time of occurrence and they can exert influence on people's behaviour, then and in the future. They show what is culturally and societally important because it is embodied in their content or in how the meanings derived in that content are framed.

In order to demonstrate the functions and understand changes to the iconic news image I explore how they produce meaning. I utilise the iconic news image definition of Robert Hariman & John Louis Lucaites throughout the thesis but the primary analysis is through adoption of Nicholas Mirzoeff's theory of the visual event. This theory explains how the meanings of iconic news images are impacted by historical context, media institutions and viewer responses. A key aspect of this theory is that it allows us to understand that iconic news images function as events and that there is a political struggle over the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of those events.

Chapter Two: *Setting the Frame*, explores the origins of the theory of the visual event in semiotic theory. Mirzeoff found flaws in semiotic analysis that he conceived the theory of the visual event to address. Section one briefly introduces semiotic theory through the contributions of the founders, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce and explains how it continues to contribute to the analysis of iconic news images. In Section two I introduce the five components that form the visual event theory. Those components are the image itself, its historical context, the media institutions, the role of the viewer and the facilitating technology. Each component is defined and their initial interactions are outlined, with examples from the iconic news images of print photojournalism that they created.

Chapter Three: *Demystifying the Iconic News Image*, introduces the central definition of this thesis. Hariman & Lucaites' define an iconic image as "an aesthetically familiar form of civic performance coordinating an array of semiotic transcriptions that project an emotional scenario to manage a basic contradiction or recurrent crisis" (29).

Hariman & Lucaites' divide their definition into five rhetorical elements that correspond to societal roles that the iconic news image can perform. These roles are defined in section one, with additional information provided from Martin Kemp's explanation of iconic news images and David Perlmutter's exploration of characteristics that are shared by established iconic news images.

Section two discusses the role of myths, and how the theories of perspective and positivism contribute to the privileged status that an iconic news image receives. Myths contribute to the perceived importance of an iconic news image through connection to a previous important historical event or story and the more myths related to the image and

its creation the more likely it is to receive iconic status. Nelson Goodman's theory of perspective explains the change in 'seeing' when it occurs through the lens of a camera, rather than the naked eye. I also explore the positional perspective of where the photographer is standing when taking the photograph and the influence of cultural and societal membership on what the photographer looks for when taking photographs.

The key points of this thesis develop through analysis of a series of historical examples that are referred to throughout the thesis. The primary iconic news images from the twentieth century are representative of print photojournalism and used as examples in Chapters Two and Three. Those images are the 1945 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image from World War II used in the official propaganda for the war effort, the 1972 'Napalm Girl' image, from the Vietnam War that revealed the atrocities perpetrated by the American forces and the 1989 'Tank Man' image that captures the political events of the Tiananmen Square protests in China. One key theme of the thesis is exploring the visual representation of war.

In the twentieth century iconic photographs were created by photojournalists and published in mass circulation newspapers and magazines. Photojournalists and newspaper editors selected and presented images that defined the events in the public imagination. In the twenty-first century amateurs have greater access to image producing technologies and greater capacity to disseminate these images by using the Internet. This situation has made possible the use of iconic images to support political agendas other than those promoted in media institutions and beyond the range of censorship imposed by those media. Although some images produced by amateurs did become iconic (for example Holocaust photographs or the Kennedy assassination) it

was not until the 9/11 attacks that the amateur production of the image began to be directly assimilated into mass media. This is a crucial rationale for the fourth chapter concentrating on the iconic news images of 9/11.

Chapter Four: The 9/11 Spectacle begins in section one with a discussion of Guy Debord's society of the spectacle. Debord's theory argues that "all that once was directly lived has become mere representation" (5). He proposed that "the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images" (5). The power of the spectacle is that it is a "world view transformed into an objective force" (5). The society of the spectacle acknowledges the significance of iconic news images and their role in society.

Miroslav Kosović argues that the society of the spectacle is not designed to define the 9/11 iconic news image of the destruction of the twin towers. Consequently, Kosović conceived the spectacle of fear to account for the three differences in these images that make them unable to be explained through the society of the spectacle. Those three differences are the emotions aroused in viewing the twin towers images, the loss of control over the icons created in 9/11 and therefore the meaning inferred from them, and the need to continue to create terrorist acts that increase the trauma experienced from viewing the images they generate.

Section two explores the iconic news images of John Labriola's 'Fireman in the Stairwell' representing the amateur images of 9/11, Richard Drew's 'Falling Man', which focusses on the ethical dilemma of publishing an image that has negative connotations for the society expected to accept it, and the final image of Thomas E.

Franklin's 'Flag Photo' evidencing the resilience of the codes and conventions from print photojournalism with their inclusion in the images created in digital media. In addition to the identified representations, these 9/11 images demonstrate changes in the relationship dynamics of the media institutions and the viewer. The media institutions are no longer the sole arbitrators in the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of iconic news images. The political struggle has intensified with new competitors that the media institutions had previously used as sources, dismissed because their viewpoints contradicted theirs or the interests they represent, or were considered recipients for their images

What this means is that the media institutions are no longer seen to simply "capture" or even "represent" world events. Instead, using digital media, groups that include protest and terrorist movements and military create events to coerce image creation then seize the political initiative in defining what they mean. Protest and terrorist movements have long understood that their impact depends on media coverage. Access to the Internet has created a situation where they can publish images of violence and atrocity, without mediation of the media institutions, which attract the attention of a mass public. Now images themselves can be more directly mobilised through digital media to reach viewers.

Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis explores the changes wrought in the digital media now available for all aspects of iconic news image creation. In section one I apply Hariman & Lucaites' definition to the 2009 'Voice of Iran' image, representing the events of the Iranian post-election protests. The objective is to determine if the societal functions remain relevant in the opportunities offered in digital media. Section two

explains the changes to the form of the image in digital media and the resulting challenges to the theories that previously assisted in defining it. Semiotic indexicality which requires a physical trace to its referent is challenged in the absence of that trace (Rosen 301).

The theory of realism defines the photograph as a “direct unmediated reflection of real life” (Abercrombie & Longhurst 300). This is challenged in the image creation capabilities of digital media that may not even reference real life. The theory of positivism argued that the camera offered an objective image, now that same technology challenges if images are even based in reality and how real are they in the manipulation possible with digital media (Ritchin 55). The second discussion explores historical context and I continue to explore the theme of the visual representation of war. In this Section, I explain the further changes to how and who defines the meaning of war, including changes in the roles of photojournalism capturing it.

Iconic news images are fascinating. As much as they share knowledge of their associated crisis they evidence the cultural and societal influences at that time. They are a single, still image that provides a condensed form of communication that represents a specific political agenda. The thesis shows that over time, with the facilitation of digital media and the acceptance of culture and society, whose political agenda is represented.

Chapter Two: Setting the Frame

Section 2.0: Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces Mirzoeff's theory of the visual event. I begin with its origins in semiotic theory, explaining how the basic components of the sign proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure and the three sign classifications defined by Charles Sanders Peirce impact the meanings interpreted in the iconic news image. Mirzoeff incorporated the strengths of semiotic theory within his conception of the visual event and expanded on it by addressing its weaknesses when applied to image analysis. A key theme of this chapter is how war is depicted. I compare the World War II 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image to the Vietnam War 'Napalm Girl' image. This illustrates the impact of the passage of time and changes in the relationship between the media institutions and the military. Knowing whose perspective of war is predominantly being visually represented indicates the power structures at work in society at that time.

The influence of convention is a recurrent feature of this thesis. In this section, convention is evident in how the signifier ("the sign's image as we perceive it") and signified ("the mental concept that it refers to") are connected (Fiske 41). Convention also establishes the relationship between signifiers and the abstract concepts that convey the information that the media institutions share with the viewer about aspects of the crisis event. Understanding what is effectively a form of visual shorthand requires membership in the same culture and society that defines it. The meaning of the signifier is a shared one between the media institution and the viewer.

Section two introduces the five components of the visual event, the image, historical context, media institutions, viewer response and facilitating technology. Each is explored individually to explain how they impact the meanings of iconic news images. The image is discussed in relation to its aesthetic composition but it is considered one of a group of determinants. Considering historical context is one of the ways that Mirzeoff addresses the weakness of semiotic theory and its synchronistic nature. As cultures and societies change over time, Mirzeoff argues that so do the signs that signify their dominant beliefs and values.

In these initial chapters, the media institutions have the most control over the iconic news images that represent crisis events. I discuss the role of the photojournalists in their employment including the benefits derived in the amalgamation of media institutions demonstrated through the Associated Press. I explore the role of magazines like *Life* and their impact on the value that is attributed to visual information. The viewer's emotional response is at their individual discretion and they can appropriate and repurpose iconic news images but otherwise, in these initial images, the viewer is the recipient of what the media institutions decide to provide them. Technology in this period is predominantly accessible to the media institutions and this is one mechanism of control they employ to continue censoring the images publically released and therefore the meaning that is provided about a crisis event.

Section 2.1: The limitations of semiotics

Semiotic theory is a familiar method of analysis within media studies. This is despite it originally being created to analyse written and oral communication, not images. Simply put, semiotics is the science of signs with Saussure considered the original founder (Mirzeoff, *An Introduction* 13; Wells 31). Saussure's sign is composed of two parts, those of the signifier and the signified. According to Saussure, the signifier is, "the sign's image as we perceive it", and the signified is, "the mental concept that it refers to" (Fiske 41). To demonstrate what their role is in the analysis of iconic news images, I utilise the example of Joe Rosenthal's 1945 'Two Jima Flag Raising'¹ image.

The 'Two Jima Flag Raising' image features six soldiers raising an American flag on land that represented the furthest incursion into Japanese territory to date (Thomey xv). One signifier is the activity that those six anonymous, uniformed men are jointly engaged in. The shared act of raising the American flag is signified as demonstrating an act of egalitarianism (Fiske 41; Hariman & Lucaites 97–98). Egalitarianism is defined as asserting "the equality of mankind" ("egalitarian, adj. and n."). This mental concept is abstractly found in the unified work of the men whose individual rank is indistinguishable. It is further reinforced in the visual analogies of manual labour and comparison to barn raising "or putting one's shoulder to the wheel" that the content of this image is frequently compared to (Hariman & Lucaites 95–96). The war context that might reduce the effectiveness of the egalitarian conceptualisation is downplayed. The inference that any man could assume a similar role to those men is emphasised. In any image, including this one, there are of course additional abstract concepts that can

¹ To view image see Appendix One, page 129

be coded on the signifiers within the image. For example, in the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image the military uniforms, the gender and race of the soldiers and the American flag, could all be featured for signification.

A key component of Saussure's sign is that it is arbitrary; i.e. the signifier and signified have no natural reason to be linked but are because of convention. This is an important distinction because convention is defined as "a rule or practice based upon general consent, or accepted and upheld by society at large" ("convention, n."). This evidences that for a sign to be accepted requires a societal process. The rationale behind the origins of that convention can be forgotten, replaced by habitual repetition rather than considering if it remains relevant. In images, convention can include the development of a prescribed method that predicates how an event like a war will be covered by the media institutions (Wells 29). If the strategy of depiction is effective and accepted by society it will be implemented again. For example, each new war is then covered in the same manner as those before it, at least, until something breaches the norm, making it unable to be portrayed in that manner.

The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image is typical of that period's convention of publishing images that depicted victory and portrayed the military in a positive light (Andersen 20 & 58). This evidenced that the images from World War II were predominantly representative of the official propaganda on behalf of the war effort. The military significance is that the American flag was raised for the first time in World War II on land that was previously controlled by the Japanese (Thomey xv). The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image has been described as the "blueprint for those war photographers who have covered subsequent wars" (Langton 30). This representation of victory then

became symbolic of the potential outcome for total victory in this war. The story that this iconic news image depicted did not necessarily represent the battle from the perspective of the men that fought it or those that lost their lives. It is the military's icon and the story they wanted visualised, told through the media institutions. Knowing the background to this image provides insight into the kinds of stories and images that the viewer would accept about war at this time.

In contrast, the Vietnam War depicted the consequences of military action on the civilian population. Nick Ut's 1972 'Napalm Girl'² image is one of several enduring iconic news images originating in this war. It depicts a group of five children fleeing their recently napalmed village, running along a road with soldiers and photojournalists observing (Kemp 198). It is most famous for containing the central child, Kim Phuc who was naked, as public nudity in children was not normally part of media institution depictions (204). Where the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image was heralded as the blueprint for future war photographs, the 'Napalm Girl' image was considered a testimony to the photographer and the power of the media institutions (Langton 33). In this image, the media institutions broke with the conventions of their coverage of war that promoted the military interests and with their own rules regarding child nudity, to achieve the objective of informing the public of the reality of the war in Vietnam for the civilians.

Iconic news images of war provide insight into the power structures of the societies at that time. Perlmutter proposes that, "images of war reflect and refract the way we think about war; their study is a means to understand the place of the institution of war in

² To view image, see Appendix Two, page 132

human history and the human mind” (qtd. in Roger 38). Rosenthal and Ut’s images showed two different visual representations of war. They each reflect the way that war was conceptualised in society in their time. In the ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image war is seen as necessary and a successful endeavour. In contrast, the ‘Napalm Girl’ image demonstrated the awareness that some wars cost more than society was prepared to pay, especially with the iconic news images from that war. The two images show the changes in what society would accept as a depiction of war: victory versus civilian consequences. The depiction of war often generates iconic news images and an exploration of each can visually evidence what society thought about war in their individual historical contexts.

The Vietnam War, and images like the ‘Napalm Girl’, disrupted the conventional media institution depiction of military action by America that rationalised their decisions as righteous and humanitarian (Andersen 60–64). The images did not depict a war that showed military action in a positive light and, rather than increasing morale or boosting recruitment, they assisted in turning the viewers against the war itself, challenging the rationale for it (Sontag, *On Photography* 18). This disruption, had consequences for how later wars would be depicted. New journalistic conventions would not lead changes in the visual representation of war. Instead, it would be the military imposing their restrictions to ensure that they retained control in how the war was visually represented to the public (Andersen 59).

Saussure’s semiotic theory is essentially synchronistic in nature. This is because he was primarily concerned with a static analysis that remained focussed on the given point of time in which the image was captured. This failed to acknowledge any influence of

historical context, which ignores the potential changes in the meaning and representation of a sign over time, including how it first came to be recognised as a signifier for the associated mental concept (Mirzeoff, *An Introduction* 14). Consider the previous discussion on the visual representation of war. As an abstract concept, war is initially visually represented in 1945 by symbols of victory and a positive depiction of military action. Fast forward to 1972, where a new war is visualised through the consequences of military actions for the civilians, there is no victory and the actions of the military are challenged. This evidences that the requirements of an image for selection to represent war and be societally accepted changed from 1945 to 1972. Knowing why specific signifiers should be restricted to the context they were used in is an important means of analysing the iconic news image. Applying that rationale to additional images not sited in the same period can lead to incorrect assumptions about the crisis, the culture and society it is embedded in.

Building on Saussure's definition of the components of the sign, Pierce extended semiotics to consider how researching beyond the system of signs provided insight into the external world they were part of. Pierce classified three different types of signs defined through their relationship with their object (referent). Those classifications are the iconic (resemblance), indexical (physical trace) and symbolic signs (convention) (Fiske 41 & 45). Of the three signs, the iconic sign has the strongest visual resemblance to its referent (Mitchell, *Iconology* 56). Before the introduction of photography, religious icons were the most revered for their similarity to the object of worship they replicated (Kemp 17).

Photographs were revered for their degree of realism; the consideration that they were simply reflections of reality (Abercrombie & Longhurst 300.). This meant that the associated interpretation of the image was often accepted with no challenge to their veracity. Why would anyone challenge what they understood to be reality? The implication for iconic news images is that the greater the degree of association with the event, through media institution promotion, the more they were assumed to possess its truth. These images, like 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' came to represent an event like World War II in its entirety. People requested reprints from the publishers and hung them on their walls like privileged pieces of art (Hariman & Lucaites 93). As iconic news images they developed an aura similar to a sacred object.

In iconic news images the iconic sign does not have to visually resemble the associated referent (Lacey 73). It is instead the ability to ascribe a sign as signifying an abstract concept, like the lack of observable rank meant the activities of the men in the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image came to signify egalitarianism (Hariman & Lucaites 43). When images of similar activities are repeatedly associated with the same abstract concept, the association of signifier and signified becomes conventional. This occurs in much the way that a sign with a silhouette of a woman on a bathroom door signifies that this is the ladies toilet. It is the societally accepted way of visually portraying information that eventually requires no verbal explanation. However, it must be noted that culture can each have their own specific signifiers that may not translate to people outside of that culture.

Pierce's second sign is indexical, which refers to a sign that has "a direct existential connection with its object" (Fiske 41). Unlike the iconic sign, the indexical one relies

on a physical connection. A simple example is that smoke is an index of fire (41).

Indexicality states that if there is smoke there must be fire. For iconic news images, this means that there is acceptance that the image was a replication of some aspect of the crisis in reality. It is an important rationale for an image achieving iconic status, the claim that this image is the most representative of the reality of what happened.

Consider the iconic news image of the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image. While it is contestable that it represents the reality of all aspects of that war or all participant perspectives it is indisputable that the image was taken in that war and was therefore is part of the whole.

For iconic news images, indexicality is similar to the concept of metonymy. Metonymy occurs where "pictures of single events are used to exemplify general conditions" (Perlmutter 17). They are said to "say it all" (17). This is a convenient strategy of the media institutions where they can utilise one iconic news image to represent the event in its entirety. It saves having to produce multiple images that reflect different aspects. Over time that repeated use, means the inclusion of that image no longer requires textual explanation. This use of an iconic news image as one aspect of a crisis to represent that event as a whole is used in television programmes like NCIS (Naval Criminal Investigative Service) as a form of visual shorthand to provide context without requiring additional script. In Season 2, episode 7 "Call of Silence", the NCIS team investigate an incident from a famous World War II battle during which a recipient of the Medal of Honour claims to have murdered his best friend in ("NCIS: Season 2, Episode 7 Call of Silence" para 1). The War is contextualised by a framed copy of the photograph of the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image sitting alone on the marine's coffee table in the centre of the room ("NCIS: Season 2, Episode 7 Call of Silence."). Rather

than lengthy explanation, the programme utilises the familiarity of the image to support the viewer recognising the war context.

Pierce's third sign classification is the symbol. Symbolism is linked to the conventional cultural meaning. Iconic news images can be assumed to represent the values and beliefs important to the culture that employs them (Fiske 41). However, symbolism is situated within one culture and the meanings may not necessarily be transferable to others. For example, the 'Napalm Girl' image has been described as "a defining photographic icon; it remains a symbol of the horror of war in general, and of the war in Vietnam in particular" (Hariman & Lucaites 173). It would be more accurate if the quote had referenced which cultures would accept this as their symbol, rather than the implication that it was universal.

For example, in the West, at the time of the 'Napalm Girl' image it was culturally accepted that the image of a child being injured through military action demonstrates the horror of war more graphically than the expected casualties of soldiers. The fact that the girl was naked reinforced the impact of that photograph since it was societally unacceptable for children to be photographed naked in public. However, for the Vietnamese the images of children hurt in this War might have been commonplace, just as the napalm strikes were. Nakedness in children might not have been considered societally unacceptable, as different cultures have different views on what constitutes inappropriate nudity. Effective reference to symbolism requires a shared historical and cultural context to be completely accurate. Often iconic news images are described as the symbols of their crisis but they also become symbols of abstract concepts that are defined through them, like the horror of war.

Section 2.2: The Visual Event

Mirzeoff defines the visual event as the, “interaction of the visual sign, technology that enables and sustains that sign, and the viewer” (*An Introduction* 13). The visual sign is the iconic news image and the technology of this chapter is the analogue camera and required equipment to function. Mirzeoff describes experiencing a visual event when engaging, “with visual apparatuses, media and technology” (13). The emphasis is not simply on the viewer engaging with the image, but the recognition of the mediation by the media institutions and technology influencing that engagement. I discuss the components of the visual event individually because this allows analysis of changes within and between these components that potentially affect the iconic news images form and function.

The image remains a component of the visual event, but is no longer the sole focus for analysis. There is no presumption of any inherent meaning in the image. Instead there is awareness of the constructed nature of the meaning attributed to it. The visual event seeks to uncover that means of construction. The aesthetics of an image remain a determinant for achieving iconic status. Perlmutter summarises this as the characteristic of “striking composition” (18). Composition is affected by the circumstances during photographing like the “lighting, angle and subject position, action and expression”, choices that are made by the photographer (18). For instance, Ut chose to photograph the ‘Napalm Girl’ image utilising black and white film even though colour was available perhaps to limit the distraction of the newer coloured film (Kemp 214). Decisions like this make a difference in the composition as much as any of the actual elements within it.

One of the contributors to striking composition is sparseness (Perlmutter 18). Iconic news images tend to have “very few distinct visual elements” because the presence of too many could detract from the main point (18). Increasingly, striking composition is artificially created through the editing capabilities of digital technology. However, editing did occur with print photographs but it tended to be confined to cropping and tonal decisions as a consequence of technological limitations at the time (18). For example, the ‘Napalm Girl’³ image was cropped, with the removal of additional figures (Lovelace 42). This cropping served two purposes. The first is that it concentrates the viewer eye on Kim by making her the central figure. This can reduce any distraction through focus on the experiences of the other children in the frame. Compositionally, it helps that Kim is naked making her figure strikingly different from the other children. Secondly, it eliminated the inferences that could be made about what the eliminated figures were doing (Kemp 210). The activities of the photographers and soldiers in the ‘Napalm Girl’ are not all looking toward the fleeing children; some appear more preoccupied with their equipment. This can give the impression that this kind of occurrence was commonplace, therefore reducing the impact of the photograph.

Possessing striking composition is not a guarantee that an image will achieve iconic status. For example, the eventually acknowledged iconic news image of Richard Drew’s ‘Falling Man’⁴ from 9/11, depicting a victim in the midst of falling to their death was not immediately universally accepted as iconic. In his *Esquire* article, ‘The Falling Man’, Tom Junod describes the image, with the man “perfectly vertical, and so is in accord with the lines of the buildings behind him. He splits them, bisects them: Everything to the left of him in the picture is the North Tower; everything to the right,

³ To view image, see Appendix Two, page 132

⁴ To view image, see Appendix Four, page 135

the South” (para 1). It is undoubtedly a striking image but it brought to mind the act of suicide and that connotation was at odds with the more popular depiction of 9/11 victims as innocents in their deaths (Junod para 7). The example of the ‘Falling Man’ image demonstrates that achieving iconic status required multiple component interactions. The media institutions initially utilised it because of the striking composition and that it was one of the few images of victims of 9/11. However, not all editors were comfortable with publishing this image believing it might offend advertisers and/or their subscribers. Viewers had a role in the cessation of using this image in America, publically voicing their dislike of this image as a representation of the victims of 9/11 (Junod para 8). Iconic status was regained after the passage of time reduced the immediate trauma. The image regained its iconic recognition through accessibility online and the ongoing discussion by media elites that perpetuated the images’ visibility and connection to 9/11.

The second component of the visual event is historical context. Mirzeoff explains that the meaning of signs changed over time becoming “subject to new meanings and ways of creating meaning” (*An Introduction* 14). Therefore any sign is “highly contingent and can only be understood in its historical context” (14). The signification of war is one example. Without the awareness of that context, incorrect assumptions can be made as to what insights the iconic news image provides about the culture and society it is embedded within. It appears to be a natural conclusion that signs would change over time, reflecting changes in culture and society.

Iconic news images can represent and influence society through the adoption of a specific ideological interpretation, which is then promoted to the viewer as the relevant

or sole perspective. The term ideology is defined as “a set of beliefs that represents a social order as if it were a natural order” (Hariman & Lucaites 9). Karl Marx further refined that definition calling ideology a social practice rather than simply a belief (Fiske 164). Any idea that becomes accepted by society as ‘natural and normal’ is difficult to challenge. If it is challenged, the challenger can become subject to social isolation because they are arguing against the dominant ideology which has the support of the majority.

Continuing the example of the signification of war, I compare the media institution coverage of the Korean War to that of the Vietnam War. The 1950 Korean War was understood “as part of the just struggle of the Free World against the Soviet Union and China” (Sontag, *On Photography* 18). The war was justified as a fight for freedom versus the oppression of communism. To oppose it, even via images from the actual conflict, could bring accusations of pro-communist sympathies or support for the enemies of freedom. In contrast, in the Vietnam War photojournalists felt “backed in their efforts to obtain those photographs, the event having being defined by a significant number of people as a savage colonialist war” (18). Publishing the ‘Napalm Girl’ image was an indictment of the war, a war whose cessation, win or lose was not a direct threat to the freedom of the viewer and therefore images opposing it could be accepted by society.

The degree to which historical context is discussed and influential is variable. It can be dependent on the time between occurrence and examination. The more time that has passed brings with it the increased likelihood of a different ideological underpinning. The research in that instance would require separating current cultural and societal

values and beliefs from differentiating those at the time of publication. Absence of any consideration of historical context can reduce the knowledge gained from exploring an iconic news image, and the information it can hold about cultural and societal values and beliefs that influenced which images become iconic in their time period.

The next component is that of the media institutions. I employ this as an umbrella term that could be summarised as the professionals whose interactions influence an images achievement of iconic status. This can include the creators (photojournalists), producers (the photo editors), and/or image disseminators (the publishers). However, the media institutions are not independent in their decisions about which iconic news images they select and therefore which story interprets them. Those decisions can reflect the interests of the military, that the media institutions require a relationship with for access and protection in conflict zones. Access to official information requires a relationship with the state or business. The gate keeping function of the media institutions has them considering the best interests of their viewers. The ability to keep publishing relies on revenue, sourced through advertiser money and viewer subscriptions, meaning that their expectations need to be appeased (Herman & Chomsky qtd. in Hackett 4).

The initial iconic news images experience the greatest degree of control by the media institutions. The photojournalists and newspaper editors selected and presented images that defined the events in the public imagination. The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' and 'Napalm Girl' images were both created by professional photojournalists employed by the Associated Press. Photojournalists focus on imagery, rather than text, to represent the events they are covering (Abercrombie & Longhurst 269). They seek to "depict our societies and account for the history of the world in pictures" (Panzer & Caujolle 7). In

this period a photojournalist was, “someone who provides a multiplicity of imagery for publication’s personnel to select from” (Ritchin 98). The photojournalists were considered subservient to the media institutions that employed them. Without that employment and access to their resources there were very few alternatives through which to obtain and publish images.

Photojournalists employed by amalgamations of individual media institutions had a crucial advantage: these organisations had the capacity to pursue advances in technology that suited their needs. To demonstrate those advantages I use the example of the Associated Press, formed in 1846 by five New York City newspapers (Associated Press para 1). The Associated Press has always been connected to the rapid uptake of technology, including the initial funding of a “pony express route through Alabama in order to bring news of the Mexican War north more quickly than the U.S. Post Office could deliver it” (para 1). Photojournalists in their employ have access to that technology, giving them an advantage over those that did not. The five newspapers now pooled the images as well as the funds and that reduced the diversity of images that might be produced about a crisis. The pooling of resources assists the preferred images achievement of iconic status, with minimal images to compete against it. Furthermore, the use of that same image over different publications increases its perceived importance to the viewer.

The Associated Press is acknowledged for developing technological applications like their newswire service, WirePhoto that decreased the time from capture to publishing (Kemp 200). WirePhoto also facilitated easier sharing of photographs between the associated members organisations, which meant that Associated Press selected images

had greater potential for extensive use and increased visibility across a variety of media institutions enhancing their prospect for becoming iconic (Hariman & Lucaites 211). Rosenthal made use of their technology to transmit four photographs that were slowly scanned and send via radiophone to the Tokyo bureau of the Associated Press (Kemp 204). He took eight films in total but only printed those images most likely to be utilised by his employer (204). Those four images have the potential to be published before any other. The first images published can often become the ones that the crisis becomes known by.

It was not only the media institution investment in technology that assisted images to achieve iconic status. Photography magazines increased the perceived value of the information that images provided, by privileging what they depicted with minimal textual explanation. This was the reversal of the normal layout where images were included to meet the needs of the text. From the mid-1920s, editors and photographers collaborated on stories that were told in both text and images (Collins para 2). This changed the ‘photo album’ approach of random photos, to a larger photograph reinforced by similarly themed smaller photographs and minimal accompanying text (para 2). The value of the photograph was enhanced by the more professional management of its use in magazines, separating it from the way that the everyday consumer displayed their photographs. That larger photograph had the greatest potential of being acknowledged as the iconic news image for that crisis.

One of the most influential photography magazines was *Life* (para 6). Henry Luce started *Life* in 1936 with the stated purpose that included, “to see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events” (Whitman para 38). Print photojournalism was deemed to

be at the height of its success when magazines like *Life* were promoting the informational value of images. Many iconic news images featured in magazines like *Life* further enhancing their visibility and association as visual representations of the crises they depicted. The 'Napalm Girl' featured in *Life* as did the 'Tank Man' image, introduced in the next chapter.

The final designation of media institution professionals is the media elites. I separate them because their involvement often comes after the initial media institution coverage. Included in this designation are the media critics, commentators, lecturers and authors of texts about crisis situations or the iconic news image genre. Their activities create a historical form of prominence that continues the visibility of specific images in relation to their events, demarcating them as important and therefore increasing the likelihood that they are or will become iconic (Perlmutter 13). The newspaper editor's rationale behind the initial use of images is likely to be the reasons that the media elites will incorporate them within their work. This includes that the familiarity of the iconic news image can shorten the length of text required to summarise it or the associated crisis (13). A simply famous image is likely to remain situated within the generation it was photographed in and then forgotten (Kemp 3). If it was used in historic texts it would require more context than the more familiar iconic news image. The continued visibility an image receives through media elite commentary or inclusion in their texts or lectures helps the iconic news image to transcend generations.

Viewers of the initial iconic news images did not have the means to generate these images themselves. They were reliant on the media institutions selections to 'see' the crisis events that were chosen to be published. The viewer can be the person sitting in

their home reading the newspaper and looking at the images that depict a crisis. However, their response to those images, may contradict the media institutions prescribed one (Perlmutter 20). For example, in *Life* magazine, the ‘Napalm Girl’ image was described as a, “gut–wrenching photo which seemed to encapsulate the moral horror and military futility of this war” (22). The wording suggests how the magazine editors would prefer the viewer to emotionally experience the image. However, if the primary response was disgust at an image depicting a naked female child, the image might have had a limited public life span with the disgust detracting from the effectiveness of any intended message.

In addition to the unpredictable individual viewer responses, the viewer could appropriate the iconic news images and repurpose them for their own artistic expressions and purposes (Hariman & Lucaites 37–38). For example, the ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image continues to be appropriated for private artistic expression as well as for commercial purposes⁵ (U.S. Naval Institute para 2). The image in its entirety is not replicated in every appropriation but instead the familiar pose that became known as the ‘Iwo Jima Pose’ is incorporated. Each new use echoes the original ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image increasing its visibility long beyond its period of initial publication. An image like this one, with a distinctive and easily replicated shape increases the chance of it achieving iconic status through prolonging its recognition across generations. Appropriation is one activity that cannot be controlled by the original users of the images. Their original purpose and narrative is not necessarily retained post publication.

⁵ To view examples, see Appendix One, page 130

A second example of appropriation is Banksy's 'Napalm'⁶ screen-print that depicts the familiar icons of Ronald McDonald and Mickey Mouse holding the hands of Kim from the 'Napalm Girl' image (Stencil Revolution para 1). Banksy's screen-print is described as a "satirical work [that] is an attack on the consumerism that occupies the attention of the American people and keeps them blind to the way their foreign policy is conducted" (para 1). He appears to question the level of fame that each of the figures has, comparing two fictional characters that serve commercial purposes to the fame of the real life figure of Kim, a victim of the Vietnam War. His secondary objective is to invite "the observer to ponder the commercialization of war itself, which is now a multi-billion dollar industry with very powerful corporate lobbies" (para 2). Banksy purposefully utilised Kim, because the context of her association with the Vietnam War. This enabled him to create his new cultural product to provide the viewer with the opportunity to consider more than the image's original anti-Vietnam War sentiment. That interpretation is now extended to question the commercialisation of war and the awareness of the American people about foreign policy that is carried out in their name and that might have consequences for them.

The ongoing relationship and interactions between the viewers and media institutions is marked with conflict, even in this initial stage where the power resides firmly with the media institutions. The viewer offers limited challenge to the media institution role in society as interpreters of the crisis events that they depict in their publications. Bolt perceives the viewer as "locked into journalistic frameworks, especially the iconic image" which he deems detrimental to their ability to fully engage in the democratic process (146). The focus on the iconic news image can limit the information available

⁶ To view image, see Appendix Two, page 133

to the public and what they do know is influenced by established journalistic frameworks rather than being derived spontaneously in each individual crisis. The limited information is created through the media institution strategy of repetitively recycling the same images about a crisis, reinforcing their perceived value (146). The perpetuation of the iconic news image as a cultural form could simply be a habit developed from an initial visual strategy that proved effective, is perpetuated by its continued use and is eventually accepted as the normal way of sharing information. If society no longer found the iconic news image useful, that could provide the impetus to replace it.

The final component is the facilitating technology. Mirzeoff defines the visual event as reliant on technology to enable and sustain it (*An Introduction* 11). Technological advances can predicate many of the other changes impacting the associated components and their interactions. The available technology for early photojournalists was, “comparatively large and clumsy cameras, weak lenses, and glass negatives that debarred quick reactions or sequences” (“The Story Behind the Pictures 1827–1991”). How these cameras functioned could explain the origins of the “news photography dictum that a single shot should tell the whole story” (Friend 9). In general, the initial equipment was bulky and required the photojournalist to carry lights, tripod and extra film reels (Collins para 1). Processing necessitated the use of a dark room and specialised equipment. The images tended to be primarily posed because the slow shutter speed required the subject to remain still during the process. The technology of this time was not conducive to the everyday consumer, who would have had to learn how to use the camera, carry its required equipment and have access to a darkroom (Langton 13). The initial costs were prohibitive as well. Furthermore, the access to the

crises required the means to fund the travel and in the case of wars, the protection that the military provided official photojournalists would not have extended to civilians.

Section 2.3: Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced two means of analysis that are utilised throughout the thesis: semiotic theory and Nicholas Mirzeoff's theory of the visual event. The primary example of signification throughout this thesis is the depiction of war. In this chapter the meanings of World War II and the Vietnam War are explored. Each war is defined in the images that represent it. However, the selected representation while utilised by the media institutions are influenced in how society has defined that war. The consideration of dominant cultural and societal values and beliefs guide the media institutions in how they can publish societally acceptable images.

Mirzeoff's theory of the visual event explains how the meanings of iconic news images are impacted by historical context, media institutions, viewer responses and the facilitating technology. The aesthetics of the images are explored but only as one of five components whose interactions contribute to the meanings of iconic news images. Most of the iconic photographs of the twentieth century were produced by photojournalists and published in mass circulation newspapers and magazines. The power of the media institutions is that they had the ability to provide a news image with the visibility required for it to become iconic, in this period there was limited alternatives to achieve this. Comparing the interactions of each of the five visual event components ascertained their role in the creation of these iconic news images.

Chapter Three: Demystifying the iconic news image

Section 3.0: Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces three more methods of analysing the iconic news image. In section one I discuss the definition of an iconic news image from the perspective of the roles they hold for society that is referred to throughout the thesis. Hariman & Lucaites' propose that an iconic news image is "an aesthetically familiar form of civic performance coordinating an array of semiotic transcriptions that project an emotional scenario to manage a basic contradiction or recurrent crisis" (29). After a brief explanation of the history of rhetorical theory this definition sits in, I discuss each of the five rhetorical elements that the definition is divided into. These correspond to the societal roles of information sharing about the crisis and recovery in the aftermath, providing visual role models for societally accepted behaviour and emotional responses, and the management of contradicting signifiers that might otherwise confuse the already traumatised public. Furthermore, the repetition of particular aesthetic art conventions creates familiarity which can perpetuate traditional art conventions into photography. The iconic image preserves the history of the past by continuing to reference it.

In section two, I explore three theories related to the camera and photography that contribute to the status of the iconic news image. Myths are a culture's strategy employed to support understanding of changes in the world around them (Roland Barthes qtd. in Fiske 82). They can be used by the state and media institutions to increase the prestige of the new incidence of war by the reference to a previous important moment of history. Iconic news images serve a similar purpose in culture.

They can be part of a constructed visual narrative that supports the normal functioning of society in the aftermath of a crisis. The iconic news images represent the dominant cultural and societal beliefs and values at their time of conception. Being aware that these can change is the role of understanding the historical context of each iconic news image and therefore what influences them before affixing meaning.

The second theory is Nelson Goodman's proposition that the camera offers new insight into perspective that reinforces the belief that photographs reflect reality. Goodman explains how looking through the lens of a camera is different to any previous means of viewing (Berger 10 & 16). Perspective becomes understood as based on where the photographer is standing when taking the photograph and how their own culture and society influences them. Auguste Comte's theory of positivism is the final one discussed. Positivism is the belief that the camera, as a mechanical device, offers objective evidence of whatever is in front of the camera ("positivism, n"). This reinforces the initial belief that a photograph was an "unmediated reflection of reality" (Abercrombie & Longhurst 300). The photograph was considered unmediated because the mechanical working of the camera was believed to replace the need for any decision making by the photographer. Compare this form of artistic creation to sketching or painting which was entirely dependent on the skill of the artist. Initially, the camera appeared to diminish if not remove the need for photographer skill.

The third method is the shared characteristics that can be found in comparing established iconic news images. These characteristics are not uniformly present in every iconic news image but their presence can be indicative of the likelihood of a news image achieving iconic status. The characteristic that is uniformly necessary is that of

visibility. In these initial images visibility is predicated on their use in media institution publications. The more an image is associated with its crisis, the more likely that it will continue to be represented by it.

Section 3.1: Defining the iconic news image

Hariman & Lucaites' definition sits within the theory of visual rhetoric. In 1970, theoreticians like Douglas Ehninger "proposed a definition of rhetoric that did not privilege verbal symbols and was sufficiently broad to include the visual" (Foss 141). Visual data was considered a relevant form of rhetoric, when the Speech Communication Association suggested that a rhetorical perspective be broadened "to any human act, process, product, or artefact that may formulate, sustain or modify attention, perceptions, attitudes or behaviour" (141). As will be evidenced, Hariman & Lucaites' definition demonstrates how iconic news images of crises are a manmade product or artefact created to assist in the processing of that crisis, with the objective of modifying the viewer's perception of, and behaviour in the aftermath. The analysis of images is often derived in the adaptation of analytical theories that were previously designed for other forms of communication. This reflects the initial belief that images were not consumed with the same degree of conscious and critical appraisal that text was and therefore did not require their own analytical tools (142).

Not every image qualifies as a form of rhetoric. Those that do are considered to be symbolic, are the result of human intervention whose purpose is to communicate with an audience (Foss 144). In her chapter, "The Theory of Visual Rhetoric", Sonia Foss proposes that a symbolic image is one that not only serves as a sign but is also indirectly connected to its referent (144). Iconic news images become the symbols of the crisis that they represent. Pierce identified that the symbolic sign was created through convention, the connection of the sign to an abstract concept established over time with repeated connection to the same meaning (Fiske 41). This supports Foss's proposition

that images qualifying as rhetoric are ‘indirectly connected to its referent’ (144). An iconic news image has more potential to be considered a form of rhetoric than an image that lacks the potential to be considered symbolic of the crisis as a whole. For example, the ‘Napalm Girl’ image is described as symbolising the “Vietnam War and the horror of wars in general” (Sontag, *On Photography* 20). The image of children, in particular a naked female child, running down a road was not one that would normally be associated with war. Instead images that showed the military in a positive light were more commonly connected to the referent of war in this time (Giroux 6).

The second qualifier of human intervention is explained as the conscious decision to communicate through the act of taking a photograph (Foss 144). This includes the editorial decisions but is also the interpretative process to determine meaning (144). Influencing the audience is a consideration of what content is photographed and published. The theory of visual rhetoric can explain how media institution images are never simply decoration. Their role has always represented a form of constructed communication with a message that supports a specific political agenda.

Hariman & Lucaites’ definition is analysed through its division into five elements of visual rhetoric. The first element is that an iconic news image is an “aesthetically familiar form” (29). Iconic news images have come to be accepted as a cultural artefact that can be employed to assist society to return to normal functioning during and after a crisis. The initial acceptance of photographs, created by an unfamiliar technology was supported by the incorporation of already familiar and accepted conventions from existing artistic expression like landscape and portrait painting (29). Additionally, familiarity in composition can help absorb disturbing content, reducing the shock. The

shocking images packaged in familiar conventions can be less traumatic than disturbing imagery and unconventional representation that might further unsettle the viewer.

One example of how a photograph references the conventions from painting is found in the comparison of the ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image to Theodore Géricault’s 1819 *The Raft of the Medusa*⁷ (Kemp 241). This painting depicts the wreck of the frigate Meduse, travelling with a French fleet to Senegal in July 1816 (Kren & Marx para 2). Géricault chose the sighting of the rescue ship, the Argus, by the five survivors to base his painting on (para 5). Despite the disparity in content, an ocean versus a battleground, there are visual similarities between Géricault’s painting and Rosenthal’s image. Predominantly, that familiarity is based in the shared triangular shape formed with some of the components.

In Géricault’s painting, the now familiarly labelled ‘Iwo Jima Pose’, is present in the position of the sail mast guide line, that is anchored to the raft by the pile of people that are similar to the slightly separate marine in the photograph. The final point of the triangle is formed by the group of three survivors standing beneath the sail guide line. The comparisons are not exact but there is enough similarity present for the ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image to remind a viewer of that painting and vice versa. However, to be able to make these comparisons requires a common cultural history to draw upon.

Familiarity is further created with the inclusion of existing popular iconography, like military uniforms being associated with war and adherence to the tenets of representational realism, never including anything that was not observable in real life

⁷ To view the image, see Appendix One, page 131

that might jar the viewer and remind them of the mechanical production or make them question the images authenticity (Hariman & Lucaites 29–30). The media institutions use of shared themes establishes journalistic conventions that over time become accepted as the normal method of visual representation (30). Familiarity was initially garnered from repetition of previous, accepted forms of art but eventually the media institutions supplemented those with their own formulaic strategies.

The “aesthetically familiar form” is further reinforced by the repeated and consistent manner in which the media institutions employ iconic news images. It is not simply that the iconic news image is used but how often that same image is employed in association with reports about the crisis event. Even when there are additional images illustrating new information, the preferred image is often still present in the coverage. Iconic news images are more likely to have had an initial prominent profile through featuring on the front pages of newspapers (Perlmutter 12). Prominence is the least ambiguous characteristic of an iconic news image, because it can be quantified by reviewing the number of publications that used this image on their front pages (13).

For example, in 1989, the year the ‘Tank Man’⁸ image was created; the image featured on the front page of the *New York Times*, appeared four times in *Time* and was the lead image for the ABC *Nightline* programme (Perlmutter 70). The ‘Tank Man’ image depicts a lone man holding shopping bags, confronting a column of tanks rolling toward the student protestors in Tiananmen Square, China (61). In effect, the ‘Tank Man’ image became the “framing device for both journalistic and political representation of

⁸ To view the image, see Appendix Three, page 134

the Tiananmen protest” (Hariman & Lucaites 213). It was the Western media institution choice for their illustration of the meaning of the Tiananmen Square protests.

Kemp would substitute “aesthetically familiar form” with that of “wholly exceptional levels of widespread recognisability” (3). For Kemp, it is the fame of the iconic news image that transcends generations and this differentiates them from a simply famous one (3). Both iconic and famous images can utilise aesthetically familiar compositions. This challenges the rationale that familiarity is a primary reason for why one image achieves iconic status and another does not. Exploring the interactions of each of the visual event components can reveal the additional interactions that give one image an edge over another. This would supplement the proposition that an iconic news image is differentiated from a simply famous one because the iconic news image is the most effective in incorporating aesthetically familiar conventions.

The second rhetorical element of Hariman & Lucaites’ definition is that iconic news images can illustrate accepted civic performance. Essentially, the iconic news image is composed of elements that embody “social codes in the public media” which provides a “community with both models for civic action and a sense of collective agency” (34). Being part of that society means understanding what those codes are and how they can be applied. For example, the ‘Tank Man’ image can be used as a model for civic action because it shows one individual standing up to a greater force, which could then incite others to do the same. In this example civic action is the depiction of an act that has political consequences. As Hariman & Lucaites’ state, a political act, “is grounded in society and articulated through culture” (33). The ‘Tank Man’ image evokes the Western cultural theme of man versus the machine. The theme was popularised through

Charlie Chaplin's struggles with the great machine of industrial capitalism and perpetuated as a popular plot within science fiction (Perlmutter 74). However, without shared cultural understandings and familiarity of the themes within popular culture, the intended connotations of the image may not be understood by a viewer of a different culture.

Hariman & Lucaites propose that within any image there is the potential for more than one sign to be signified (34). The iconic news image is ascribed the ability to manage the presence of different signs, which allow for the opportunity of selecting which sign is emphasised. This would allow multiple signs to be retained within a single image, if they can be managed as a coherent whole, rather than disruptive individuals. For example, the iconic 'Napalm Girl' image could be interpreted through competing interpretations. The meaning of the image can be immoral state action versus one woman's private life (Tulloch & Blood 50–51). This is evidenced by the fact that despite the immoral state action that put these children at risk, it is not the primary source of discussion. Instead, dialogue is concentrated on the experience and recovery of Kim alone. Secondly, meaning can be the collective responsibility of American society for the consequences of the Vietnam War versus America as the hero that used its resources to facilitate Kim's recovery. The hero narrative is collaborated with images of Kim and Ut, and her recovery images versus those of the 'Napalm Girl'. In this interpretation there is a conflict between holding American military accountable for what happened in Vietnam and being grateful for American aid facilitating Kim's recovery.

Hariman & Lucaites' identify the organisation of multiple semiotic transcriptions as a quality of iconic news images (29). This is attributable to the ability of the media institutions to define the signs within the image that they wish to privilege and being able to sustain those signs against the others present which might provide an alternative meaning. That signifier is reinforced by editing choices that never disclose the possibility of a different interpretation. Images that might reinforce the dismissed signifiers are not published, in case that might influence the reception of the privileged image, primarily carrying the preferred information about the event it represents. However, it is not just the media institutions that will act to protect their crisis meaning, so will the military. The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image, as the military's preferred image to represent the associated battle, was protected by their denying official recognition or publication of any similar image (Thomey 117).

Perlmutter's characteristic of sparseness appears to contradict Hariman & Lucaites' management of the potential for multiple meanings. Sparseness would privilege an image that had minimal contradicting signs whose presence could detract from their meaning. This contrasts with Hariman & Lucaites' argument that any image, no matter the number of signs it contained, has the potential to achieve iconic status if the potential contradictions can be managed effectively. It is possible that an iconic news image can exhibit both positions and the true determinant is the skill of the writers/editors to implement and sustain their meaning of the crisis through it.

The fourth element is the emotional scenarios that the iconic news images provide as a role model for the viewer (Hariman & Lucaites 36). The choice of an image for iconic status can be predicated on its potential to achieve the desired audience response. Kemp

proposed that iconic news images should “evoke personal reactions” asserting that if they did not then they are unlikely to achieve iconic status (10). For example, the ‘Napalm Girl’ image showing the distraught, injured and naked Kim was likely to create a strong emotional response. The editors justified publishing it by stating that the public needed to know the real consequences of the military action in Vietnam (204). They had to be aware of the growing discontent of the public with the continued military presence in Vietnam: a discontent that the ‘Napalm Girl’ image connected with. In this instance the editors chose public interest over that of the military. However, while the iconic news image may be intended to create a prescribed emotion, the viewer response is never guaranteed. The ‘Napalm Girl’ image could evoke disgust at the consequences of the war on children but it could equally have generated disgust with the media institutions for publishing it, as happened with the ‘Falling Man’ iconic news image.

The final element is that the iconic news image manages contradiction or recurrent crisis (Hariman & Lucaites 29 & 36). Hariman & Lucaites propose that iconic news images are an “aesthetic resource for performative mediation of conflicts” (37).

Firstly, the iconic news image shows the viewer how to behave in the same situation. Secondly, the iconic news images can be the source for the viewer repurposing them in order to create their own meaning from the crisis. Acceptance of the iconic news image representation can mean that they are displayed like works of art (38). But if the depiction is not acceptable then the viewer can create their own interpretations and fashion meaning from those.

Compared to Hariman & Lucaites, Kemp places more emphasis on the role of appropriation. He proposes that appropriation is the mechanism that perpetuates the fame of an iconic news image across diverse cultures and generations. The successful iconic news image has “transgressed the parameters of its initial making, function, context, and meaning” (Kemp 3). This occurs through the processes of copying, imitating, and/or satirising which incorporate aspects of the initial image within the appropriations (Hariman & Lucaites 37). Kemp argues that what makes iconic news images special is that even when they are appropriated they will retain their connection to that image no matter its new purpose for appropriation (346). When an appropriation is discussed, the iconic news image it originates in is usually displayed alongside, if not at least mentioned. This provides additional visibility. Being incorporated in appropriations assists an iconic news image to transcend generational boundaries, with a contemporary appropriation referencing a crisis that may have occurred before its creators were born providing significance and recognition to a new generation.

Section 3.2: Theorising the Iconic News Image

Iconic news images benefit from the theories that explained their introduction to society. The camera and photograph were so different from the previous image making tools of, for example the pencil and paint brushes, that its acceptance in society required some form of explanation. I chose the theories of myth, perspective and positivism because they directly relate to either the image technology or some aspect of the prestige that iconic news images can receive.

Iconic news images are similar to myths in that they are the visual stories or constructions about the crisis that help people assimilate it and its implications in their lives (Barthes qtd. in Fiske 82). In his chapter “From Virgin Land to Ground Zero” Donald E. Pease proposes that “in times of national emergency, the state exploits the public’s reluctance to surrender its beliefs to critical scrutiny and elevates mythology into a ruling imperative” (208). Pease cites American President George Bush’s September 20th, 2001 post 9/11 address to the nation to evidence this point. In this speech, Bush linked the public’s belief in the innocence of their country, or in his words “a virgin land” to existing historical record (207–208). People cling to their beliefs in times of crisis and want to see them represented in iconic news images. They provide a comforting familiarity. The historical record referenced were the events of Pearl Harbour in 1941, the first time that war was fought on American soil (208). The media institutions adopted this association: often discussing 9/11 in reference to Pearl Harbour.

Every myth contains some element of truth within it. The truth of the constructed 9/11 innocent victim was in part because they died engaged in everyday activities. However, when explored as individuals rather than a cohesive group some of the innocence claim can be seen as mythical rather than being completely accurate. They did not cause the crisis but not all of them were passive victims to it. Innocence was also inferred through America having only been previously attacked once on home soil prior to 9/11 (Pease 208). The inference being, that if they had been guilty other incursions would have occurred. The media institutions then used the myth of the innocent victim as the basis for creating the iconic victim who represented the innocence of all American people, as much as they did the 9/11 victim.

The challenge to the media institution constructed innocent victim came from the 9/11 iconic news image of the 'Falling Man' image. The man falling in this image is compared to one captured in the act of suicide. It was an image that ran counter to the preferred media institution iconic victim construction that defined the 9/11 victims as innocent in the cause of their deaths (Junod para 8–10). The reality is that some people did die as the result of falling or jumping but it was a reality that the American public did not want to accept and that opposed the accepted construction of the innocent American victim. While suicide might be accepted as a personal choice, it was not acceptable as the potential way that 9/11 victims would be represented or the American people as a whole. The media institutions sought to represent the 9/11 victim through a construction that allowed them to seize the political initiative of defining meaning in their deaths but it required iconic images that evidenced their construction not contradicted it.

Images benefit from the discussion about them, even when it challenges their veracity. Kemp proposes that an iconic news image can be differentiated because it will have accumulated the most myths about some aspect of it (3). They don't have to be positive in nature just generate ongoing debate that perpetuates the visibility of the image. For example, there is still debate on whether Rosenthal's 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image was staged. This myth was substantiated by awareness of an initial flag raising that Rosenthal was not present for and that the images of this were suppressed to enhance the reception of his (Thomey 7 & 117). Therefore the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image captured the second time an American flag had been raised on that land. The myth of staging was supported by Rosenthal's responding in the affirmative to a question about whether the iconic news image was staged. Rosenthal later clarified that he had thought the questioner was referring to the staged group shot of the soldiers and not the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image (Laurie para 19). All these myths add to the ongoing visibility of that image because their discussion often includes reference or pictures of it.

A second example of myths attached to iconic news images is from the 'Tank Man' image. In *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy: Icons of Outrage in International Crises*, Perlmutter researched the story of student leader Chai Ling, who in a press conference spoke of knowing of a young woman that confronted the tanks in the same manner as the single male did. This woman was supposedly killed by the oncoming tanks. Ling states that the reason this woman's bravery is not known is that "she didn't have the opportunity to be recorded by film or by photograph" (64). There is no independent collaboration of Ling's information which leaves this woman's story as a myth increasing the prestige of the 'Tank Man' image (65). In both examples, the

impact of myths related to the iconic news image prolonged their visibility. Both images achieved iconic status. In fact, the 'Tank Man' image is currently in the news in the lead up to the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests.

Unique to European art, perspective originally asserted that the "visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged for God" (Berger 10). This perspective centred on the eye of the beholder, a single spectator, who could only be standing in one place. The camera introduced the new perspective where understanding of what was seen was dependent on where you were and when, no longer fixed to a single spectator, time or place (16). Simply put, the camera could demonstrate the visible and therefore reality in a manner of continual change. For example, what the camera captured at 6am would be different from 6pm with changes, for example, in the light even if the camera did not move in that time.

To show this new perspective I refer to the 'Tank Man' image. This example demonstrates perspective as created from the photographer's position and the influence of culture. Jeff Widener's image is considered the iconic news image of this protest. This is in part a consequence of the promotion his image received through the American media institutions repeated use of it to represent the protest (Bolt 146; Hariman & Lucaites 211). However, Widener's "middle-distance shot of four tanks that includes a lamppost on the foreground and a city bus in the upper part of the frame" was not the only photograph taken at that time (211). Photographs were also taken by at least three other photojournalists. Charles Cole (United Press International) captured a photograph with a "close up that fills the frame fully across the diagonal with three tanks and the front bumper of the fourth" (211). Stuart Franklin (Magnum) took a "long distance shot

of four tanks that includes more of the street and the city bus” (211). Arthur Tsang Hin Wah (Reuters) whose photograph is “divided into thirds by two light poles, was taken seconds before the others, as the tanks jostled for position behind the lone man” and features the burned bus⁹ (Witty para 38).

Each of the four potential iconic news images can be seen to show a different perspective of reality, rather than any one being the absolute truth. Each photojournalist had their perspective influenced by the position from which they took their photograph. Widener was located on the lower floor of the hotel, while Cole and Stuart were both on the hotel rooftop, and Tsang was on the 11th floor (Witty para 6, 17 & 22). Widener’s position offered the best opportunity from which to capture “a face-to-face meeting between the lone man and the driver of the first tank” being at nearly eye level. The higher position of Cole, Franklin and Tsang’s was more conducive to a wider shot that included more of the background, which might be considered extraneous elements that distracted from the tension created in the man versus the tank focus.

As well as the photographer’s position, the meaning of the ‘Tank Man’ image demonstrates the influence of cultural perspective. This is discernible in how members of the Western and Chinese cultures interpreted the realism of the image by two very different meanings (Perlmutter 74). The Western perspective was in line with that culture’s perception of communism, focussing on the assumption about Chinese culture that the Chinese would send tanks in to manage civil disobedience (Dutton qtd. in Hariman & Lucaites 374). M. Kauffman proposed that “too often photographers go into a culture that they’re not familiar with, and they look for photographs that fit their

⁹ To view the four images, see Appendix Three, page 134

preconceptions, and they always find such a photograph, but that may actually be the cultural exception” (qtd. in Langton 6). Those preconceptions are informed by the culture and society that they are members of. The Chinese protests potentially offered the opportunity to capture groups of student protestors engaging the government forces and yet this single man versus the tank column became the enduring symbol of the protest and of Chinese oppression as a whole.

In contrast, the Chinese truth, likewise informed by their membership in a culture that would send tanks in against their own civilians, was focussed on the actions of the tank commander. The tank commander’s decision to not proceed contravened his training and was counter to his orders to proceed to the site of the protest. His actions were deemed to represent that the Chinese military was therefore composed of men capable of independent thought rather than simply an unthinking cog in the military machine (Perlmutter 75). Chinese politicians cited the tank commander’s actions as the important focus for this image, not those of the lone man.

The reality or truth of the ‘Tank Man’ image was interpreted through two perspectives. The Western one privileging the actions of the lone man compared to the Chinese one highlighting the actions of the tank commander. These perspectives signify more than two opposing views of the same image; they represent opposing viewpoints of how the Chinese people are represented. The Chinese officials were reluctant to have the Western media institutions define their response to the civil unrest. Their only recourse was to attempt to mediate the impact of this image by supplying their own meaning of it. Ultimately, the cultural and societal background of the viewer would dominate

which version of truth and therefore how this protest, and by extension the Chinese people, would be judged.

Positivism is a philosophical system originating in the 1830s posited by the French thinker Auguste Comte, that proposes that “only observable phenomena and empirically verifiable scientific facts and laws” are real (“positivism, n”). The relationship between photography and positivism is that they both limit “the real and knowable to the visible, to facts that can be observed, measured, and quantified” (Saltz 73). The camera was accepted as providing “mechanical and thus scientifically, objective evidence or data” because it was assumed that the machine mediated any subjective influence by the photographer (Evans & Hall 187). Therefore what a photograph shows was evidenced as truth or reality because it was produced by a camera.

In her article, “The Art of Fixing A Shadow: Talbot’s Polar Epistemology of Early Photography” Laura Saltz explained that historical context contributes to the link between positivism and photography as much as any inherent qualities ascribed to the camera. She proposes that photography simply “crystallised a set of ideas that were already important to the culture” (73). The culture at that time was committed to empirical methods. This led to the belief that photography was the “carrier of facts”, in the assumption of “photography’s inability to choose and select the objects within the frame that locates it in a factual world and prevents it becoming art” (Wells 16).

However, this negates the choices of the photographer that can include what objects they frame in where they point the camera. Secondly, it ignores the increasing ability to edit out inconvenient objects. Human intervention always requires consideration as they are involved in all parts of the camera functioning.

The evidential nature of the photograph was reinforced in the concept that it was a “document or record” (Wells 17). The assumption was that what a photograph showed was positive, factual, and scientific (Evans & Hall 187). The existence of a photograph evidences that an event had happened. The ‘Napalm Girl’ image exemplifies this understanding of the role of photographic evidence. If Ut had not photographed the children running down the road to escape the napalm or the editors had not chosen to publish it, then the normal images of war might have prevailed. The public may never have realised that napalm was being used or what the civilian consequences of that use looked like.

Section 3.3: Chapter Summary

This chapter provides three more means of comparing print photojournalist iconic news images with those created in digital media. The comparisons show what and who has influenced the meanings produced in them. Hariman & Lucaites' definition of the iconic news image highlights the societal functions that the iconic news image performs. There is no single function and iconic news images can be utilised for different roles in different crisis situations. They are the established means of creating meaning of the crises they represent. The second method is analysis of how the theories of myth, perspective and positivism will continue to influence iconic news images created by digital media. Referencing myths is an established way to contextualise a crisis to either aid its explanation and highlight the intended connotations or enhance its prestige through the comparison, as happened with comparing 9/11 to Pearl Harbour.

Perspective changed the focus from the eye of the beholder to the mechanical eye of the creator and how their position when taking the photograph and their own underpinning cultural and societal memberships influence what photographs contain and the meaning that can be produced in them. The fact that there were at least four very similar images of the man versus the tank indicates the relevance of where the photographer stood as Widener's position on the ground floor provided the more tense eye to eye confrontation than the photographers above. The media institutions are not all equal in the influence they can exert: in this instance Widener's Associated Press employment benefitted his work, increasing the chance of his image becoming the predominant means of visualising the Tiananmen Square protests. Positivism believes that the mechanical functioning of the camera will produce an objective photograph. The reality

is that there will always be human intervention throughout the process of image creation. How digital media will influence this theory is through the increasing ability provided by technology to manipulate the content of images.

The presence of shared characteristics can indicate which news image has the potential to achieve iconic status. The media institutions can privilege the image that is most likely to serve their interests or the interests they represent by utilising them strategically within their publications. This gives them the power to define the meaning of the associated crisis by only using images that show that meaning. These initial images represent the period that the media institutions had the most power to define meaning. In the subsequent chapters the erosion of that monopoly is created by those with access to digital media being able to use alternative means of securing visibility for their images and thus the potential to define meanings from their images. They contest the media institutions in the political struggle over the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of the iconic news images.

Chapter Four: The Spectacle of Fear

Section 4.0: Chapter Introduction

This chapter explores the iconic visual canon of 9/11. It is a crucial case study because although some images produced by amateurs did become iconic (for example Holocaust photographs or the Kennedy assassination) it was not until the 9/11 attacks that the amateur production of the image began to be directly assimilated into mass media. In section one I discuss Guy Debord's society of the spectacle. This theory emphasises the degree to which society is mediated by images in the control of the media institutions. It is without doubt that 9/11 was a visual spectacle. However, Miroslav Kosović identifies three differences in the visual representation of the destruction of the twin towers that demonstrate the inadequacy of Debord's theory to explain it. Those differences are the emotional response in viewing these images, the loss of control by the media institutions to define the meaning of the visual representation of 9/11 and the need to increase the spectacle to continue to traumatise the viewer (Kosović 18). Kosović named his theory the spectacle of fear.

In section two, I explore three specific iconic news images of 9/11. The first is amateur John Labriola's 'Fireman in the stairwell'¹⁰ image. This image evidences the expansion of additional roles for the viewer, to include those of the amateur, bystander and user. These changes are facilitated by advances in digital technology now accessible to the non-professional. The transition from private to public display of amateur work was not seamless with the amateur image being challenged for veracity that rarely happened

¹⁰ To view image, see Appendix Seven, page 138

to photojournalist work. This discussion also acknowledges the potential of the Internet and how societally integrated it was at the time of 9/11. The 'Falling Man' image is discussed in relation to the ethical dilemma of publishing it or not. The viewer had a greater voice in determining which images and meanings would be accepted for the 9/11 victim. In the past it would have been a dilemma where the media institutions considered the viewer response but did not necessarily have direct input from them that strongly challenged their decision. The third iconic news image is Thomas E. Franklin's 'Flag Photo'¹¹ which illustrates that advances in digital technology does not necessarily mean a change in the form of how crises like 9/11 are represented. This image also evidences the set of codes that guide media institution visual representation, which can become restrictive for the photojournalist who wants to take the best images but in order to have the chance of their images achieving iconic status can require conforming to the images of the past.

¹¹ To view image, see Appendix Eight, page 139

Section 4.1: The Spectacle of Fear

In 1967 Debord created his theory of the society of the spectacle to demonstrate the influence of images in society. Debord argues that “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation” (5). ‘Seeing’ has become as much about the media institutions’ visual representation as it is about observing the crisis itself. Often in the crisis aftermath, people comment that they that to check their television to ‘see’ for themselves what was happening, even those who were personally involved in the unfolding crisis. Debord’s theory posits that “the spectacle sets the dominant patterns of behaviour in a given society” (qtd. in Kosović 19). This connects with Hariman & Lucaites’ definition that outlines the roles of the iconic news image to include providing a visual role model for the public through which to moderate their own behaviour and emotional responses in the crisis aftermath. Debord defined the spectacle “as images detached from every aspect of life and merged into a common stream, that unfold as a pseudo–world apart” (qtd. in Kosović 19). That pseudo–world is the media institution construction of a dominant visual representation that while signifying the associated crisis is not identified as being one perspective of it. It is often accepted as the truth of the crisis.

The constructed and visually supported media institution’s innocent victim characterisation of 9/11 is an example of that pseudo–world. Debord proposes that it is “a substitute for reality and always manifests itself as an enormous positivity for it must compensate for the reality’s inadequacies” (qtd. in Kosović 19). It is unassailable that there were victims of 9/11. The characterisation that the media institutions implemented attempted to mitigate that trauma by depicting the victim’s innocence as

representative of the innocence of the country as a whole in any responsibility for the attacks of 9/11. This gave the victims death purpose beyond simply being losses.

The iconic victim characterisation is only a partial representation of the 9/11 victim reality and did not represent the victims depicted in the 'Falling Man' image or those on-board United Airlines Flight 93. The censure of the 'Falling Man' image because of its connotation of suicide has already been discussed. The second innocent victim deviation is the passengers of Flight 93 who influenced the circumstances of their death by choosing to charge the terrorists in an attempt to derail their objective. This still resulted in the total loss of all those on-board. However, their actions demonstrated that some Americans were able to fight back when their country and values were under attack. However, there are no images of their actions to make this a credible media institution strategy through which to combat the intentions of the terrorists. An effective visual representation is dependent on images to reinforce the text and vice versa (Faulkner 67). Defining meaning is strengthened through visual evidence of it. Writing about the passenger heroics, as an example of American bravery, would not be enough to combat the images that illustrated America's vulnerability. The only images from Flight 93, taken after the crash, were of pieces of wreckage scattered over the field, which did not demonstrate an invulnerable America. They also did not produce an iconic news image to prolong any associated visual narrative and like the 'Falling Man' victims, these were subsumed into the preferred characterisation of the innocent victim.

In her text, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag discussed that the victims of war "are a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the

illusion of consensus” (6). The ‘Falling Man’ image and the passengers on-board Flight 93 did not simplify the understanding of the experience of the victims of 9/11, they did not fit the consensus, instead they created complications (Faulkner 80; Quay & Damico para 7). It is true that no group victim profile is ever going to represent the experiences of every individual victim. However, the media institution innocent victim visual representation condensed the three thousand individual victims of 9/11 into a cohesive representation, as if they were a single entity. That single entity is formed and perpetuated in the creation of “substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings” (Sontag, *Regarding* 86). The meaning of a 9/11 victim was a characterisation constructed by the media institutions because it was the most effective strategy to guide the public response. To establish this characterisation required any image published of 9/11 victims reinforced the preferred meaning and triggered the desired responses.

The media institution’s innocent victim of 9/11 was embodied in Stapleton’s ‘American Pieta’¹² image. This image depicts the deceased Father Mychal Judge being carried away from the site of his death by rescue workers. It is considered to show the “first and most famous victim of the World Trade Centre attack” (para 1). Part of the effectiveness of this image is that Father Judge died in the performance of his duties. His innocence was conveyed through his actions at the time of his death, amplified in the societal view of the selfless nature of his profession. The association of routine work days interrupted by the terrorist attacks formed part of the construction of innocence. It was consistently reinforced with supporting images of people fleeing the scene dressed in their work attire. As the predominant images depicting the victims of

¹² To view image, see Appendix Six, page 137

9/11 published with minimal contradictory images, any challenge to their veracity is muted, simply because there is no image to evidence a contrasting point of view. At the time of 9/11, the 'Falling Man' image had the potential to create a contradiction. The fact that it did not indicates how closely the media institutions' victim construction fits the prevalent values and beliefs of society and what that society wanted known about the victims of 9/11.

While agreeing that 9/11 fits many of the tenets of Debord's society of the spectacle, Kosović proposed that this theory did not fully explain the images of the destruction of the World Trade Centre. In his article "Revisiting the Society of the Spectacle in the post-9/11 World", Kosović posits that the images of the twin towers¹³, issued in a "new social relationship, one characterised by the global culture of fear and paranoia, in which societal discourses are dominated by violence" (22). Paul Virilio concurs with the twin tower images' significance, stating that the "attack on the Pentagon in Washington, DC was of little consequence compared to what exploded in people's minds in seeing the destruction of the World Trade Centre" (qtd. in Tulloch & Blood 98). Kosović defines the spectacle of fear as "all image-mediated events that are used to spread the doctrine of fear either as a means of economic gain or a political tool" (22). That the spectacle of fear foreshadows the end of the state and media institution monopoly on controlling the meaning of images is evident in the creation of images to spread fear. The function of the state and media institution iconic news images is usually to promote the normal functioning of society not threaten it.

¹³ To view image, see Appendix Five, page 136

Kosović posits that the spectacle of fear differs from the original society of the spectacle in three ways. The first concerns Debord's thesis number 12 that states that "the spectacle manifests itself as an enormous positivity..." (qtd. in Kosović 23). It is the assumption of receiving that positive experience, expected because that was the outcome of previous experiences, which drives the continued consumption of images. However, when viewers consumed the images of 9/11 in their familiar manner, instead of them triggering the usual emotions, they found fear and chaos (23). The spectacle of fear evidenced the objective of the generation of trauma (Kosović 18). The objectives of the terrorists were to use "dramatic images and montage to catch attention, hoping thereby to catalyse unanticipated events that will spread further terror through domestic populations" (Kellner 3). 9/11 marked the beginning of a new form of psychological warfare. It can be argued that the greatest success of the 9/11 spectacle was that it showed the vulnerability of America, which in turn made other nations question their own safety (Kosović 21–22).

The second difference is that under the society of the spectacle, the state and the media institutions held a monopoly over displaying "the spectacle". The spectacle of fear cites the consequences of globalisation and the development of digital technology as the cause of the end of this monopoly. Now the individual, including the terrorist, has the ability to "produce and disseminate streams of spectacles at unprecedented speeds" (Kosović 18). Digital technology developments like the cell phone, with the capacity to take photographs and send them from the same device at the site of capture, has meant that anyone can bypass the control of gatekeeping media institution professionals enabling direct political access to viewers.

The twin tower images evidence the loss of control by the media institutions in two ways. This seems to be contrasted in the fact that the media institutions utilised these images repeatedly in their publications. This is evidenced in the research conducted by Gerome Truc who surveyed 400 American newspapers published between September 11 and 12, 2001. Truc's research showed that 41% were of the South Tower exploding, 17% included the smoke cloud rising over Manhattan, 14% focussed on the ruins of the World Trade Centre, 13.5% were the planes approaching the Towers, 6% were of people panicking in the streets and 3.5% featured the American flag (2–3). In total 85% of the initial images in the immediate aftermath of the attacks focussed on some aspect of the destruction of the twin towers. Despite 9/11 being described as the most photographed crisis in world history, its representation was limited to a repeated circulation of the same iconic news images (3).

The repeated use of the twin tower images, and the other iconic images, was a strategy of the media institutions. In his essay, "9/11, Spectacles of Terror, and Media Manipulation: A Critique of Jihadist and Bush Media Politics", Douglas Kellner proposes that there was an assumption by the media institutions that "repetition was necessary to master a highly traumatic event" (4). The belief, that in some way, replaying the same images repeatedly would help numb the shock in understanding what their destruction constituted to the American people. The spectacle of fear would propose that this repetitious use equally benefitted the terrorist objective to generate trauma and fear, by the continual showing of evidence of America's vulnerability.

The first way that the twin tower images embody the spectacle of fear, is that no matter how the media institution 'spun' their use these images still show the vulnerability of

America. This saw the end of the media institution monopoly in defining the meaning of iconic news images. In her article, “The innocence of victimhood versus the innocence of becoming Nietzsche: 9/11 and the Falling Man”, Joanne Faulkner describes those images as “planes perforating the clear, tranquil surface of those seemingly impenetrable buildings and thus opening a rupture in Western consciousness” (67). The American people experienced the loss of belief that their home soil was impenetrable. This also affected the international belief in the invincibility of America. If America was vulnerable, then how safe could were their countries? Kellner also wrote of the psychological impact, identifying that “people who witnessed the event suffered nightmares and psychological trauma” (4). The knowledge and damage of the attack was the initial wound but it was perpetuated through the media institution’s usual visual representation causing the continued distress of the public. A strategy that had previously been effective was now detrimental. Its continuing use would require different considerations than previously applied, in the attempt to guarantee that the iconic news image remained an effective strategy under the control of the media institutions.

The second example that evidences the end of the media institutions absolute control over the creation and meaning of iconic news images is that the twin towers were an instantaneous icon. These initial images were televised as they were received, a consequence of the increased speed through which people want their news delivered. These images were widely utilised across media institution publications (globally and in America). The instantaneous nature of the unfolding events of 9/11 meant minimal time for the media institutions to consider what specific images would be required for their preferred narrative. Consideration would include analysing potential alternative

meanings that might conflict with the intended meaning. It is normal for the terrorist to set the agenda by their actions. How the media institutions respond usually includes a period of delay, for planning the visual strategy. The instantaneous transmitting of the twin tower images in the midst of the unfolding crisis meant the media institutions had to continue to use them. Once those images were seen, it would become impossible for the media institutions to stop using them, even if another image better served their interests.

If the media institutions had had the time to select their iconic news image for 9/11, I believe it would be Sarah K. Schwittek's¹⁴ image. Yahoo news describes this image as:

The South Tower of the World Trade Center explodes in flames after being hit by the hijacked airliner now universally known as "the second plane," United Airlines Flight 175, September 11, 2001. This photo--with its black smoke; the shocking, brilliant, colossal flames; the cloudless sky; the beautiful Brooklyn Bridge flying the American flag--captures so much of the story of the day that, if one were to create a composite picture to illustrate the idea of "9/11," the result might look very much like this astonishing shot. (para 1)

I base my choice on the presence of the American flag and the Brooklyn Bridge, two familiar signifiers that could be focussed on, reducing the focus of the damaged twin towers in the background. What is interesting about this quote is that it defines that this image "captures so much of the story of the day that, if one were to create a composite picture to illustrate the idea of '9/11,' the result might look very much like this

¹⁴ To view images, see Appendix Five, page 136

astonishing shot” (Yahoo news para 1). I do not believe that it symbolises all of the events of 9/11. I would suggest that the author is as accustomed to ‘seeing’ crises through single, still images that they looked for in the visual canon of 9/11. The process of selecting an iconic image is one of continuing the application of existing selection strategies rather than an independent assessment of each event. The twin tower images are the familiar way of referring to and remembering 9/11.

The final difference between Kosović’s spectacle of fear, from Debord’s concept of the society of the spectacle is “the audiovisual magnitude and the intensity of the trauma inflicted to the spectator as the sole determinants of the effectiveness of the spectacle of fear” (Kosović 18). Firstly, this changes the focus from the number of people killed in the terrorist act and prioritises the resultant trauma that is no longer just physical but specifically includes psychological trauma. The second change is that in order to continue getting the required responses from the target audience requires increasing “the audiovisual magnitude and the intensity of the trauma inflicted by the act”. 9/11 is called the “a sui generis event, maybe the most spectacular visual event, arguably of all times” (qtd. in Kosović 22). This does not reflect the destruction of the buildings or the number of casualties. Instead it references the psychological damage to the American people, and internationally, in the realisation that they were vulnerable to attack (22).

This trauma was unexpected and had very few precedents by which the American public might have developed some degree of immunity. Susan D. Moeller posits that immunity of this nature occurs through the repeated use of similar images, that is part of the media institutions visual strategy (qtd. in Kosović 26). The viewer becomes accustomed to small doses of fear experienced each time they view images of a crisis

like war. Over time, that sense of fear is diminished and compassion fatigue sets in mitigating the response to subsequent similar images. This means that future spectacles have to increase their intensity in order to cause significant psychological distress.

Section 4.2: The Iconic News Images of 9/11

The visual canon of 9/11 is extensive. It has been described as the “most widely observed and photographed breaking news event in human history” (Friend 35). Those images are a crucial resource for viewers, because “the picture was all we had and ever will have to signify it” (35). In the first eighteen hours the Associated Press transmitted seven times the number of images normally accompanying an average breaking story (57). The importance of images was evidenced by newspapers like *The New York Times*, who changed their printing policy to facilitate the inclusion of more images (Strauss 184). ‘Seeing’ 9/11 was important for understanding and accepting what happened. It invoked the “active, performed and embodied” deed of witnessing, even if it is second-hand, mediated through the media institution representation, rather than in direct observation (Howie 1).

Regarding 9/11, the images became sources of information as important as any offered through text or audio sources. Walter Lippmann proposes that this is a natural progression, where “photographs have the kind of authority over information today, which the printed word had yesterday, and the spoken word before that, they seem utterly real” (qtd. in Sontag, *Regarding* 25). Lippmann’s progression appears to fit the viewers’ demand for visual evidence through which to witness 9/11 themselves.

There are opponents to the proposition that an image can provide information equivalent to, or instead of, text. Georgia O’Keefe argues that, “real understanding unfolds over time ... whereas the camera offers knowledge at basement prices—a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation (qtd.

in Jackson 141). 9/11 was a breaking news story. There was very little time between the plane hitting the North Tower at approximately 8.46am and the first television broadcasts beginning from 8.48 am (“Timeline for the day of the September 11 attacks”). People caught in the unfolding crisis were capturing images as they fled the site. The media institutions can no longer afford to wait for confirmation of information, viewers are accustomed to receiving news swiftly and it has become a competition for who publishes first and thus attracts the viewers (Barrett para 4). The need to publish swiftly impacts on both textual explanation and images.

The first image is Labriola’s image of the ‘Fireman in the Stairwell’ features fireman Mike Kehoe, of Engine Company 28, walking up the North tower stairs, while other people are walking down to escape the damaged buildings (Willis para 12 & 13). Kehoe became the symbol of all the firemen that responded in 9/11 (Friend 196 & 19). The selected image is one of 110 that Labriola took that day with his digital camera (Delaney para 4). His previous photography experience included making a documentary about his daily working life (Friend 195).

Labriola is an amateur photographer. In the production of images of 9/11 there was a blurring in the roles of the professional and non-professional. Where previously viewing was the main role of the non-professional, in 9/11 amateurs and bystanders created images that were incorporated by the media institutions’ into their publications. The amateur is someone who practices photography and buys equipment to improve their skills. The amateur not only had images published but 9/11 was the first time that *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* utilised non-professional images on their front pages (Friend 217). In contrast, the bystander carries technology that has the

capacity to take photographs but that is not its primary purpose. They take photographs to document their experience but it is coincidental to their involvement, rather than a deliberate choice to capture the unfolding crisis. Associated Press Executive Photo Editor Vin Alabiso stated that:

Almost overnight, the power of spot news photography [had] slipped from the hands of the skilled, passionate photojournalist and into the handbags and pockets of consumers everywhere ... The amateur who is on the scene becomes the first eye on history (qtd. in Friend 95).

If the “power of spot news photography” is not just creating images but also determining their meaning, then 9/11 demonstrates the changing power relationship between media institutions and their viewers. Those viewers, in the new roles of non-professional amateur and bystanders, captured their perspective of the crisis. In using their images the media institutions created the opportunity for the non-professional to want more than just inclusion in media institution publications, where their image meanings were defined by someone other than the creator. They would soon want to frame their images with the meaning that explained why they took that particular photograph and what the crisis meant to them.

The circumstances of 9/11 created a place in its visual representation that the professionals could not fill. In the time it took the media institutions to reassign nearby photojournalists to cover the breaking story, non-professionals like Labriola already onsite, had begun recording their experiences (Berg para 1). That the non-professional had the digital media to record those experiences meant that images were published that

would not have existed previously. French journalist Regis Le Sommier commented that, “the new technology had an even more significant impact on our concept of what we can see, and therefore know, in these voyeuristic times” (qtd. in Friend 95). Le Sommier’s comment recognises the threat to the monopoly of the media institutions to define the meaning of a crisis event, created in the circumstances of their losing sole control over the images that are required to visualise it.

A further loss of control for the media institutions was that Labriola did not have to rely on them for the dissemination of his images. Labriola released his photographs to the Associated Press but also the New York Police Department (NYPD), Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and in JPEG format (199). Sharing the images online bypassed any control that the media institutions can normally exert on determining what images, and therefore what perspective, the viewer is exposed to. Rather than the few images that the media institutions chose to utilise and through their framing, all of Labriola’s images could be published online uncensored by the media institutions. The viewer could go online and chose the images that interested them, follow those to the associated information that was written by the creator rather than only having the official information provided by the media institutions.

There were social consequences for the inclusion of non-professional photographs in the media institution coverage. Marita Sturken described this as mirroring the “increased fluidity between public and private media” (168–169). Previously there was a strict boundary between the photographs of professionals and those of non-professionals, including how they were disseminated. Professional work was distributed through the media institutions, while non-professional work was shared with

family and friends, not for public consumption. During 9/11 what might previously have been considered private snapshots became resources for the media institutions and made available for public consumption. This was an adjustment that was evidenced as taking some time before becoming fully accepted. Furthermore, the inclusion of non-professional images by the media institutions made it harder for the professional to justify that their work was superior and clearly articulate how it differed from non-professional work. This could lead to questions about whether the media institutions are the only ones capable of defining the meaning of iconic news images and if, in fact, they ever were?

The slow social adjustment was experienced by Labriola, with his image being subjected to a level of scrutiny that did not occur for professionally created images. It was not led by the professionals. Instead, the scrutiny was led by non-professional users of the Internet. This is another addition to the role of the viewer, that of the user, a person that uses the Internet for their own purposes. This can include researching, commenting on the posts of others or contributing their own posts for comment. In the case of 'Fireman in the Stairwell' the users scrutinised its authenticity, documenting their research and findings online and creating forums to generate more information. For example, the online forum "911 For the Tired, Weary, Hustled Masses" contained a thread initiated by contributor loopDloop titled: "Labriola Part Two: The Only Photos Taken inside the Towers on 9/11 were RE-ARRANGED" (loopDloop para 8). This thread refers to a previous one from 2011, written by 2doread that explored the questions about the authenticity of the 'Fireman in the Stairwell' (para 8). The original thread was over 70 pages long and received in excess of 100,000 hits (para 8). A hit is a

numerical method of judging popularity online, the number indicating how many people viewed this forum.

In this forum every aspect of Labriola's image was scrutinised. For example, in the first forum post, the timing of Kehoe and Labriola passing on the stairs is questioned (loopDloop para 7). Kehoe states it was approximately 9:20 am, while Labriola's timeline put it around 9:40 am (para 7). Logic suggests that since one man is ascending, passing the other descending the time should be the same (para 7). In the second post, discussion focussed on the fact that "the photographs themselves do not retain their original time and date stamp" (para, 4). This means the technical data embedded in the photograph does not support the authenticity of the images, its absence is instead used as evidence of inauthenticity (para 4). This suspicion evidenced that while society wanted more images of 9/11, even those of amateurs, there was less acceptance of the non-professional creations. At this time, it could be a consequence of habit, the previous experience of having to rely on what the media institutions provided.

The digital technology available to the non-professionals in 9/11 enabled them to have a greater presence in its visual representation. However, the novelty of digital media was evident in descriptive statements including that, "Labriola's digital memory card, like some spirit medium with access to the shadows of another world, was there to catch mortals going up and down to meet their fates" (Friend 196). Ongoing experience of the non-professionals with their own digital technology reduced the novelty and educated them on the potential capabilities of similar technology in the hands of the professional (Strauss 168). For instance, amateur photographers choose between images of them and/or their family to find the best representations. They can edit out

the elements that they didn't want with basic cropping. This education increased the amateur photographers awareness of what the professional editor could be capable of, which could impact on the belief in their veracity or that their images really could be "unmediated reflections of reality" (Abercrombie & Longhurst 300).

David Friend describes it as the "watershed day", after which "almost all photographers went digital" (19). Digital technology meant that many more photographs could be taken because they were stored as data rather than occupying physical space. Labriola took 110 images, without his digital camera he would have struggled to carry the film required for that volume. The processing needs completely changed from requiring a dark room to the photographer being able to transmit the images and the processing to occur on any computer with the appropriate software (92). Labriola converted his images to JPEG format to enable easier sharing. The migration to digital photography is traced back to the 1990s, gaining momentum from 2000, just in time for use in 9/11 (91–92). At the time of 9/11, using the Internet was not fully embedded in society but how it was used foretold the changes that were beginning for the media institutions and their viewers.

In 9/11 the Internet was available but it was not as widely used, compared to today or with the same degree of ease of access. For instance, social networking sites like Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) were not available. There was reluctance to utilise the Internet, in part attributable to its relative unfamiliarity. This was evident in the data available from September 11–16, 2001 that found 81% of people accessed television for the breaking news, with only 3% accessing the Internet (Friend 40 & 285). The media institution publications were still a dominant source of information. When the Internet

was utilised it was done so in ways that mirrored offline activities. For example, the creation of online survivor registries was equivalent to the handwritten and photocopied missing person posters. The registries were modified to enable the public to add their comments or to respond to requests for help with email addresses or telephone numbers attached (Allan 172).

Although discussed previously in relation to its composition and its trajectory to established iconic news status, the 'Falling Man' image offers further insight into the changing dynamics in the relationship between the media institutions and the viewer. The publishing of the 'Falling Man' image created an ethical dilemma, both for the media institutions and the viewers. The editors had to consider whether publishing the image of a person falling to their death was an invasion of privacy? (Quay & Damico para 3) This was countered through the argument that withholding those images would also eliminate "a grim but real aspect of September 11th from the public narrative of the event" (para 3). It would change the meaning of 9/11.

In the past this would have remained a debate within the media institutions, decided through application of industry standards, formal or informal, reflection of the previous response to images of similar graphic nature and weighing the public right to know against the graphic nature of what the image suggests (Reinacher 15). In this instance, the viewer challenged the media institution decision to publish the 'Falling Man' image through written complaints citing the invasion of privacy and judgement of the pornographic nature of the 'Falling Man' image (Faulkner 71). The viewer did not challenge the innocent victim characterisation. They challenged the publishing of an image that didn't fit their belief of what a 9/11 victim should look like or the

connotation of suicide as a cause of death for their victims. The media institution characterisation of the innocent victim aligned with how the viewer believed that their victims should be portrayed including the reference to a greater purpose. Subsequently, the reality for approximately seven percent of the 9/11 victims was ignored, in preference to a victim represented by an image that created a “strong and coherent picture of innocence” (Faulkner 67; Quay & Damico para 2). Rather than defining the meaning of the ‘Falling Man’ image, cultural and societal views on suicide and how America viewed itself influenced its reception.

The ethical dilemma of whether to publish the ‘Falling Man’ image parallels a similar ethical dilemma in the decision to publish the ‘Napalm Girl’ image. In the ‘Napalm Girl’ image the decision was between publically showing a young naked female child to evidence civilian consequences of the Vietnam War versus the protection of the girl’s privacy over what her image showed. The difference in viewer response demonstrates the importance of considering historical context. The American people could accept the ‘Napalm Girl’ image because it was published in a time of growing anti-war sentiment and Kim was not an American. In contrast, the ‘Falling Man’ image was published in a national crisis, where the media institutions had chosen to characterise the victims as innocent, conforming to the dominant cultural notion that America was equally innocent (Faulkner 67–68).

The second difference in the resolution of these two dilemmas is that neither the media institutions nor the viewers could prevent the continued visibility of the ‘Falling Man’ image online. Even negative comments simply perpetuated its continued association with 9/11. This was because the Internet offered a new way of disseminating images

that did not require the consent of the media institutions or their resources for access. The viewer could formulate their own research streams on the Internet through images that might never have made media institution publication. At the time of creation the 'Napalm Girl' image primarily had to be published via the media institutions to receive the visibility required to achieve iconic status. This was a pivotal reason for why the media institutions had their initial monopoly, it was created in their possessing the means to disseminate and promote images. The Internet removed that monopoly.

The final image to be discussed is Thomas E Franklin's 'Flag Photo' image which shows three firemen raising the American flag on the rubble of the World Trade Centre. This image "quickly became an iconic photo for Americans, a symbol that our country, and our city, may have been devastated but could not be destroyed" (Rohan para 2). The 'Flag Photo' image combines the heroism of the firefighters with all the connotations of the American flag but also draws on the fame associated with the aesthetically similar previous iconic news image of the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising'. Franklin's image has been described as a re-enactment of the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image (Sturken 189). The 'Flag Photo' evidences that iconic news images are created through a set of codes that subsequent images can then emulate (188–190). Sturken describes this as the creation of "an iconography for depicting certain kinds of events" (190). In her article, "9/11 firefighter photo taken by *Record* photographer is star of 'The Flag' on CNN" Virginia Rohan proposed that "what matters is how that American flag—and all American flags—offered comfort to us during a painful and desperate time. And how, out of the thousands of images taken that day, one special photo offered hope to a battered nation" (para 11).

There is a tradition in creating iconic news images that photojournalists seeking the same success for their images try to emulate. This includes the inclusion of elements that have particular significance in culture and society. Bolt discussed how the viewer was “locked into journalistic frameworks, especially the iconic image” (146). The photojournalist could equally be locked into the set of codes that form the media institution visual representation strategy and in specific aesthetics that were more likely to achieve iconic status. The selection of images for iconic status is reliant on comparison with and emulation of past iconic images, rather than derived from the specific circumstances of the each new crisis. 9/11 defied a rote visual representation because it was an unfamiliar manifestation of crisis for the American people.

Section 4.3: Chapter Summary

In the main, the iconic images of 9/11 evidenced Debord's theory of the society of the spectacle. The media institution objective was to reassure the public, to show them how to respond and to minimise the trauma of the reality of 9/11 through a constructed visual representation for that purpose. Debord's theory explained the power relationship between the media institutions and the viewer. The media institutions upheld the status quo through employing their usual visual representation strategy to return normal functioning of society as fast as possible. The viewer, indoctrinated to accept that the provided images would produce a pseudo-world more positive than their lived reality consumed the media institution images. The familiar strategy was expected to fulfil its associated learned need. Kosović explained why the images of the damaged twin towers would not fit the normal media institution-viewer relationship.

Kosović's theory of the spectacle of fear is conceived in the belief that the society of the spectacle was insufficient to explain the traumatic impact of the images of the twin towers destruction. Kosović argued that viewing these images did not bring the expected improvement of lived reality, that they were never completely under the control of the media institutions for their meaning and that the psychological trauma that these images created was beyond what Debord could have imagined. His theory foretold of a time when fear would be the determinant of an effective visual strategy, not casualty numbers or structural damage. Kosović's spectacle of fear indicated that in the future how society functioned would be as threatened by the visual representation of crises as they had previously been the source of restoring function. The media

institutions would no longer solely set the agenda of the meaning of iconic news images.

The 9/11 iconic news images further evidenced the changing dynamics of the media institutions and the viewer. Labriola's 'Fireman in the Stairwell', image was published alongside those of the professional photojournalists. It ended their monopoly as the creators of the images publically available. The 'Falling Man' image was discussed in reference to the ethical dilemma of whether to publish or not. In the past this dilemma would have been at the discretion of the media institutions. In 9/11 the viewer actively engaged the media institution, challenging and successfully gaining the initial censoring of this image. The 'Flag Photo' image closely resembles the 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image. It provided evidence of the underlying media institutions formulaic approach to visual representation and the creation of meaning in iconic news images. This reliance would be critical to the images in the following chapters and who or what determined their meaning.

The Internet was a key technological advancement that contributed to the changing interactions between the media institutions and the viewer. In 9/11 it was not completely embedded within society and much of the online use was emulating offline activities. The viewer extended roles into the amateur, bystander and user, all of which entered into areas that were previously the purview of the media institutions. This was facilitated by the availability of digital media that meant the viewer could be more active in the creation and meaning of a crisis that directly impacted some aspect of their lives or that of their nation.

Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis

Section 5.0: Chapter Introduction

It is without doubt that the components of the visual event and how they interact is changed by digital media. This directly impacts on who has the power to control the visual representation and therefore meaning of a crisis. The images of this and the subsequent chapters are considered potentially iconic because sufficient time has not passed to know which image will become the iconic representation of the associated crisis. The media institutions labelling of an image as iconic on publication is a strategy rather than a certainty. These images currently lack the established iconic status of those from print photojournalism that are “secure and universal in their iconic status as any cultural products can ever claim to be” (3). The images of this chapter cannot yet claim that level of acceptance, but they are widely recognised.

In section one, I explore the 2009 ‘Voice of Iran’¹⁵ image, depicting Iranian post-election civil unrest, through Hariman & Lucaites’ definition. I determine if the rhetorical elements demonstrated through the iconic news images of print photojournalism remain relevant. There is no doubt that the Internet, digital media and social networking sites have impacted all aspects of the political struggle over the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of the iconic news image. How that impact occurred and what the consequences are, is included in this discussion.

¹⁵ To view image, see Appendix Nine, page 140

In section two, I return to exploration of the visual event components to determine their new manifestations in digital media. The discussion of the image explores the semiotic sign of indexicality which is now challenged in the absence of a physical medium. The theory of realism is challenged by the degree of manipulation capabilities of digital media, including the creation of images that depict scenes that were never found in reality. The theory of positivism is challenged in that where once the mechanical operation of the camera was the reason a photograph was considered objective, is now the rationale for why its objectivity is challenged.

The role of historical context and the role of the photojournalist are discussed through the recurrent theme of the visual representation of war. Historical context concentrates on the timing of war coverage and the decreasing gap between those in the images and those creating them, with discussion on the implications for how war is defined. The role of the photojournalist has changed in association with changes to the relationship between the military and the media institutions. The consequences of the title changes from pool journalists to embedded journalists and unilaterals are explored primarily because it is predominantly their images that iconic news images of war are selected from. However, there are an increasing number of images sourced from the soldiers and civilians within the war zones that are taking the lead in visual representation of the crises that they are involved in.

Section 5.1: Defining Digital Iconic News Images

In analysing the 2009 ‘Voice of Iran’ image through the rhetorical elements of Hariman & Lucaites’ definition of an iconic news image I explore if the societal roles are still relevant. Their definition is that an iconic news image is “an aesthetically familiar form of civic performance coordinating an array of semiotic transcriptions that project an emotional scenario to manage a basic contradiction or recurrent crisis” (29). The context of the ‘Voice of Iran’ image is that on June 12th, the Iranians held their presidential elections, with incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad re-elected by a 62% margin. Amid allegations of vote rigging and electoral fraud, supporters of opposition leader Mir Hussein Musavi held “public demonstrations in several major cities of a size and intensity unprecedented since the Iranian Revolution of 1979” (Addis 2). On June 23rd, student Neda Agha Soltan was killed when present at a protest demonstration. Her level of political activity is unconfirmed, she is identified as either uninvolved in politics or as a regular attendee at postelection demonstrations. The ‘Voice of Iran’ iconic news image is a screen grab from bystander cell phone video footage of Neda’s death. The video was initially posted on Facebook and YouTube before dissemination by media institutions, primarily through the aesthetically familiar form of the iconic news image (Naghibi 60; Tait & Weaver para 3).

The first rhetorical element of Hariman & Lucaites’ definition is aesthetic familiarity (29). This is established in the ‘Voice of Iran’ image through association with two familiar visual iconographies. Creating familiarity for the Western audience for the ‘Voice of Iran’ image was critical in order to bridge the differences in culture that might impede understanding by Western viewers of the Iranian issues and the intended

interpretation of the image. The first iconography relates to Neda's gender and age. The 'Voice of Iran' is typical of the mainstream Western media institution visual representation of Iranian protests with focus on "images of the human women of different age groups and social strata pouring into the streets to force Ahmadinejad to step down" (Khan, "The Western" 12). Strengthening that visual association, Neda's image was compared to iconic news images from 30 years ago of Iranian women struggling against the rule of Reza Shah. This made the 'Voice of Iran' image more familiar to Western viewers because Neda was photographed engaging in an activity that was expected of Iranian women. Neda's death was defined by foreign photojournalists who created meaning from their understanding of the Iranian culture that was formed in the previous media institution coverage of it. This perspective confirmed Western beliefs about the culture and how its society functioned.

The second iconography relates to Neda being a student. Neda's image is connected to the famous photographs of student protestors who had risked their lives during anti-government demonstrations. The single person representing a student revolt begins in the late 1960's in revolts across Europe and remains "a powerful visual frame of reference for student rebellion" (Mortensen 13). Neda's image was compared to that of German student leader Benno Ohnesorg shot in a 1967 rebellion in West Berlin, Czech student Jan Palach who set himself on fire in 1969 to protest Soviet repression and the single man who stood in front of the column of tanks in Tiananmen Square in 1989 (13). The 'Voice of Iran' image conformed to what Western viewers expected to see in relation to protests of this nature. This allowed the image to serve international interest in the protests as opposed to remaining locally sited and understood. In reality, the meaning of the 'Voice of Iran' image is more composed of traditional media institution

visual strategies than a true exploration of the issues that Neda faced. That she was a student was the rationale for her becoming the symbol of the students that were protesting. This was despite her level of political activism being unconfirmed.

The second rhetorical element relates to the civic performance role of iconic news images. Viewers reference these images to determine how to react to a crisis, as well as to access the relevant information that they require to understand it (Hariman & Lucaites 34). The 'Voice of Iran' demonstrated similarities to the previous iconic news images. Neda's image served a similar function to that of the 'Tank Man' image. Viewers could emulate the assigned protest actions of Neda and protest their own political situation. In death, Neda became the "instant symbol of the antigovernment movement", the "public face of an unknown number of Iranians who have died in the protests" in much the way that Kim was for the anti-Vietnam protest and Father Mychal Judge became the iconic victim representing all the victims of 9/11 (Fathi para 2 & 24). As with the 'Two Jima Flag Raising' image, Neda's image was used to raise the morale of protestors and increased their numbers.

The potential of the 'Voice of Iran' image to influence people's behaviour was immediately recognised. The image was described as "one of the most potent threats faced by the Iranian regime in 30 years" (Tait & Weaver para 4). The 'Voice of Iran' image fulfils the same role as the iconic news images previously. It provides a condensed form of communication that privileges a specific political agenda, positioning the represented crisis through that. The 'Voice of Iran' image represented the interests of the protestors against the recent elections, with Neda being ascribed "the iconic status of a hero-martyr" (Naghibi 60). As the rallying symbol for the protestors,

Neda's face adorned thousands of placards and posters, "galvanising the uprising as the Iranian authorities were desperately trying to contain it" (McVeigh para 5).

The Iranian authority's attempts at containment did not include the creation and promotion of iconic news images that represented their perspective. Instead containment was attempted through mitigation of the threat, by attempting to prevent the creation of any images from the civil unrest. They "restricted access to foreign and domestic journalists and interrupted the availability of mobile phone service and various Internet sites and services, limiting access to reliable information on the situation in Iran" (Addis 2). The authorities' intention was to prevent the media institutions utilising their habitual visual strategy of iconic news images but equally to prevent Iranian citizens as potential sources of such iconic news images. The Iranian Authority initial objective was not to control how the Iranian protests were visually represented but to prevent any visual representation at all.

The attempts by the Iranian authority to block the creation of iconic news images failed. After the release of Neda's image via the Internet and its subsequent uptake by international media institutions, the Iranian authorities then attempted to control any further visual representation. To achieve this objective, they privately buried Neda without even her family present and banned any public expression of mourning, because both had the potential to create further iconic news images (Dehghan & Taylor para 2, 6 & 8; Fathi para 13).

The Iranian Secret Service sought to discredit the international media institutions utilising the 'Voice of Iran' image by creating suspicion about the authenticity of their

information (McVeigh para 6). The media institutions had created the opportunity to be discredited. In their rush to catch up with online dissemination and without their normal direct access to sources, the media institutions had “lifted a photograph of a woman called Neda Soltani from her Facebook page and published it misidentifying Soltani’s picture as being that of the deceased Neda¹⁶ (para 3). Rather than expose the error, the Iranian Secret Service sought to capitalise on it, attempting to force Soltani to state that she was the Neda in the ‘Voice of Iran’ image and that the stories of her death were faked by the Western media institutions to discredit the Iranian Authority (para 6). This image demonstrates the influence that an iconic news image can exert on people. The Iranian authorities appeared to fear the potential of an iconic news image rather than the actual civil unrest.

Digital technology has meant that “we consume, and demand, stories and photographs faster than ever before, [which] means news organisations will dig for those pictures on social media sites” rather than direct sourcing them (Barrett para 4). The popularity of narratives and images on social media networking sites can become the sources for coverage by the media institution because of the established level of interest in them. In the past, that decision was made by the media institutions, influenced by the relationships they needed to operate. The media institutions need information and revenue to keep operating, which requires negotiated relationships with the military, state, advertisers and subscribers. Now the media institutions can be motivated to cover stories that they would normally avoid for contradictions to any of these relationships, because in not doing so they risk losing their subscribers to online providers that have covered them.

¹⁶ To view image, see Appendix Nine, page 140

The use of digital technology played a major role in the ‘Voice of Iran’ image and in the context of the protests. The Iranian activists utilised “blogs, email, Facebook and Twitter—to articulate political claims, co–ordinate the actions of different groups and organise demonstrations” (AlSayyad & Guvenc 8). This demonstrates the bridging of civil and political society “to shape and cultivate a new type of urban citizenship” (8). Social media networking sites were used to organise political activities and share the images and information derived from them. Providing images to show the preferred behaviour online occurred through the posting and reposting of YouTube videos showing Neda’s death, the creation of Facebook pages like “We are Neda” and “I am Neda” and joining websites like “weareallneda.com” to post comments, to mourn her death and demonstrate solidarity with the Iranian protestors. Neda became the “martyr for freedom of the opposition movement in Iran” and Western supporters of the Green Movement (Naghibi 61–65). The ability to provide images that represent the socially desired behaviour in the Internet age is very similar to that of print photojournalism, it just utilised online avenues, not previously available.

Hariman & Lucaites propose that iconic news images guide viewers to the preferred emotional response to the represented crisis. The emotional response to the ‘Voice of Iran’ image was steered through the warnings attached to it that stated that the viewer needed to “prepare themselves for the emotionally raw footage that they might find disturbing” and referenced the “unmediated emotional content of the data coming out of cell phones, YouTube uploads and tweets” (Naghibi 56). This is similar to *Life* magazine’s framing of the ‘Napalm Girl’ image to direct the public away from challenging Kim’s nudity and to keep focus on the military action that caused it and her

injuries. Although new media formats were being employed, their framing was recognisable from print photojournalism.

Hariman & Lucaites' final rhetorical element is the management of an array of semiotic transcriptions (34). Rather than managing an array of semiotic transcriptions I believe that the 'Voice of Iran' image is more representative of Perlmutter's characterisation of sparseness (18). The image contains Neda and the arms and/or legs of bystanders that had been trying to help her. Neda appears to be looking at the viewer of the image, in much the way that the positioning of Kim in the 'Napalm Girl' made her appear to. This can enhance the viewer's response to the image, because they feel personally addressed by Neda.

The major difference between the initial images and the 'Voice of Iran' image is their means of production and dissemination. Mitchell defines the two key features of digital technology as "instantaneous reproduction and viral circulation" (Mitchell, *Cloning* 99). On the Internet there is no defined direction in how information continues to be shared. Anyone can initiate an information release and there is no control on the nature of what is posted but equally there is no guarantee of where it will spread (Grundberg 5). On the Internet, information that appeals to enough people is shared through personal and network recommendations, without media institutions censorship or resources (Moreau 3).

Online posting bypasses the traditional gatekeeper roles of the media institutions. However, those roles are not completely redundant online. Instead, users can determine for themselves what they will follow and if they consider it worth sharing with the

people on their friends list. An example of how that sharing can grow through viral circulation is the Internet meme. This is defined as “a cultural phenomenon that spreads from one person to another online” (Rouse para 1). The content can be “about anything that is voluntarily shared, including phrases, images, rumours and audio or video files” (para 2). The Internet provides a new means of circulation that brings with it user determination of what is important and should be seen as well as how it is defined.

Images created by digital technology are no longer in a hardcopy format, “they are born digital, stored as digital files, and viewed on high-emitting screens” (Wells 335). That memory capacity means that there is no restriction on the number of images photographed or in how many of those are subsequently released to the Internet. This can impact on the ability of the media institutions to narrate a story from a specific perspective, with the availability of more images that potentially illustrate contrasting perspectives. The ability to sustain an iconic news image is more difficult in the sheer number of images that can represent different perspectives than it was when the media institution controlled the images that were published. Digital files are easy to access and duplicate.

Social networking sites facilitate online distribution through the ability to post images, for example, from a cell phone to the Internet via social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube, possible from anywhere with an Internet connection (Bolt 178–179).

2014 Pew Research into Facebook users found that it is the dominant social networking platform, with 57% of all American adults accessing it and 64% of users visiting the site daily (Smith para 1). Half the Facebook users worldwide have 200 plus friends (para 7). The influence of Facebook and other social networking sites is that they challenge

the media institutions previous monopoly on “determining which stories and points of view are worthy of attention” (Mortensen 6).

Section 5.2: The Visual Event in Digital Media

The greatest change to the form of the iconic news image created through advances in digital technology facilitated the removal of the requirement of “concrete reference and the physical characteristics of a medium” (Rosen 319). ‘Concrete reference’ refers to the semiotic sign of indexicality that requires a “direct existential connection with its object” (Fiske 41). Indexicality assured that the photographs were deemed authentic because “sign production involves dependence on some minimum of the presence of the real objects they represent” (Rosen 301). Multidisciplinary, interactive media artist George Legrady defines a digital photograph as “a simulated photographic representation, no matter how much it may look like the product of a traditional indexical camera” (qtd. in Rosen 308). Indexicality is therefore challenged by the advances of digital technology and is often the basis for challenging an iconic news image’s veracity. No longer is an image automatically assumed to be a “direct, unmediated reflection of real life” there is now consideration of how much pre-publication editing occurred and what that might mean to the potential meanings found in the iconic news image (Abercrombie & Longhurst 300).

The theory of realism is challenged by the capabilities of digital technology. Realism initially provided iconic news images with increased reverence. People wanted them as art works for their walls because in doing so they believed they held some aspect of that crisis in their possession. The proposition that a photograph produced a duplication of the real world in front of it, is increasingly questionable with the evidence of the “extraordinary compositional malleability, which makes the picture seen infinitely manipulable and the possibilities of picture making limitless” (307). Content

manipulation has always been a part of photography, it was utilised in the ‘Napalm Girl’ image through cropping. Additionally, intentional positioning of elements within a photograph can occur at any time prior to an image being taken. What is different for digital images is that they don’t need reality to create their content. They can be made from narration or imagination (Ritchin 29). Now editing can occur at any time in the process. In his text, *After Photography*, Fred Ritchin proposes that ‘digital media translate everything into data, waiting for an author or an audience (or a machine) to reconstitute it’ (17). The iconic news image is no longer assumed to be solely defined in reality and who authored the image is no longer certain.

The theory of positivism was equally challenged by advances in digital technology.

The premise of positivism is that the photograph provided “observable phenomena and empirically verifiable scientific facts and laws” because of the assumed neutrality of the camera (“positivism, n”). This proposition is problematic with the increased ability to create an image that has never previously been observed in reality (Ritchin 55).

However, positivism as a guiding explanation of photographs was always problematic, since the camera cannot take a photograph without a human operator. With digital technology the question is not if an image is manipulated but how much manipulation will be acceptable.

One example of editing is from the April 15th, 2013 Boston Marathon, where twin bombs in pressure cookers exploded on the finishing line (“Boston Marathon Timeline” para 1). The *New York Daily News* published an image from the site of the bombing that was doctored through the removal of the wound on the injured woman’s leg¹⁷

¹⁷ To view image, see Appendix Twelve, page 147

(Beaujon para 1). Blogger Charles Apple publicised the discrepancy, evidencing the doctoring by showing the published image alongside the original one¹⁸ (Wilstein para 1). Apple wrote that it ‘looks to me like somebody did a little doctoring of that photo to remove a bit of gore. If you can't stomach the gore, don't run the photo. Period’

(Greenslade para 5) The *New York Daily News* responded to the criticism by stating that “the paper manipulated the image in order to spare readers the sight of gore” (para 6). This rationale for the manipulation was challenged. The unedited image received as much visibility as the doctored version. The ability of any doctored image to pass professional or non-professional scrutiny is questionable with the capabilities of the digital technology available, as the editor of the Boston Marathon image discovered.

The second way that digital technology changed the medium of the iconic news image is that it no longer required “the physical characteristics of a medium” (Rosen 319). Iconic news images are now created through a process of digital inscription that “depends on a seemingly arbitrary code of discrete, rational elements (numbers)” (302). Digital creation is defined as a conceptual structure, rather than by a physical medium. This can mean that the end product might appear like a print photograph, but “it visually ‘depicts’ the numeral contents of a frame buffer, not necessarily the state of any real place at any particular time” (Barthes qtd. in Rosen 306). The iconic news image initially had little option but to be a print photograph with limited means of dissemination beyond print formats like newspapers, magazines or books. The fact that even when posted online via social media networks or cell phone tweets include single, still images proves that this form is still relevant and utilised. Additionally, despite not

¹⁸ To view image, see Appendix Twelve, page 147

requiring the characteristics of a physical medium, they can still be printed in a physical medium.

Mirzeoff emphasised the importance of historical context, specifically as how it pertained to the meaning of signs interpreted within an iconic news image (*An Introduction* 14). He believed that signs could only be interpreted effectively with consideration of the period they were created in (*An Introduction* 14). A primary example for this thesis is how cultural and societal beliefs about war impacted the iconic news images selected to represent it. One difference is the decreasing gap between those fighting and those photographing the war. For example, the Abu Ghraib Archive from 2003–2004 was created by the soldiers that perpetrated the acts of torture on their charges. In this context, the soldiers took photographs of their activities, sharing them with other soldiers, family and friends as if they were snapshots of a holiday.

The changing view of war is impacted by the culture and society of the period it is waged in. In the 2003 ‘Statue Watches Toppling’ image from the Iraqi War, the US military treated the war as an opportunity to create a photo promoting their activities (Mirzeoff, *The Right* 287). This image depicts a toppling of a Saddam statue in Firdos Square, Iraq¹⁹. They utilised awareness of what would interest the media institutions and where they were housed to ensure their coverage. The relationship between the media institutions and the military has undergone change. Initially, the media institutions were subservient to the interests of the military, in part necessitated by their requiring military protection and access to the battlefields. Now the media institutions

¹⁹ To view image, see Appendix Ten, page 141

and the military negotiate their relationship, their mutual dependence to access the information required to create meaning. Questions about which of these institutions retains the power to determine the meaning of war, if it is either of them at all, are ongoing.

Professional photojournalists have undergone changes within their role that has manifested in producing specific iconic news images that represent their experience rather than the war situation. In her article, “The ‘Grunt Truth’ of Embedded Journalism: The New Media/Military Relationship”, Kylie Tuosto argued that war correspondence has always required balancing censorship against the freedom of the press (20). This is summarised in the words of *L.A. Times* editor, Marjorie Miller who stated that “we didn’t want to get into bed with the military but we certainly wanted to get there” (30).

The military exerted influence over the media institution publications by restricting access to media pools. Pools were created by the media institutions agreeing to nominate “a small number of journalists [who] are deputized by their peers to cover the event on behalf of a large number of news organizations” (Althaus para 1). Operating during The Gulf War in 1991, journalists could only travel in a “pool” and were taken to the locations that the military had cleared to be filmed and reported on (Bean–Mellinger para 4). The military controlled what was seen and therefore published. Journalists felt too confined in this “staged environment” and attempted to access unauthorised areas without their military escorts (para 4). Pool journalism meant the same images were shared between the media institutions limiting the potential diversity of images that could be considered for iconic status and therefore the meanings of that war.

The creation of the embedded journalist was a direct result of the media institutions' objections to having to use pool journalists as their sources. They represent the next stage in the media–military relationship. An embedded journalist is “a media representative remaining with a unit on an extended basis—perhaps a period of weeks or even months” (Tuosto 21). Their official purpose is “to facilitate maximum, in–depth coverage of US forces in combat and related operations” (21). Unofficially the purpose was defined to “tell the factual story—good or bad—before others seed the media with disinformation and distortions, as they most certainly will continue to do” (21). That seeding could occur through the efforts of ‘unilaterals’ (21). These were war correspondents that were not embedded with a military unit and therefore considered ‘independent’ (21). No perspective is going to be bias free. Unilaterals are just as likely to have their stories influenced through the help and experiences that they have in their pursuit of stories, as the embedded journalists were.

The concept of the embedded journalist is not a new one; however its official recognition is a recent development. In both World Wars, photojournalists like Rosenthal were attached to units that provided access and protection in conflict zones (Tuosto 29). This influenced the images that would be eligible for iconic status. In World War II, Rosenthal’s image was supportive of the military objectives. In the Vietnam War, the fact that the photojournalists could find their own way to and around the battlefield and that it was an unofficial war, meant that they could produce an image like the ‘Napalm Girl’ even though it worked against the objectives of the military (Brandenburg 948; Tuosto 21). Embedded journalism does impact the images available to iconically represent these wars and therefore the information publically known about

them. It can be seen as a new means of controlling what the media institutions have the potential to reveal about the ‘reality’ of war.

Tuosto argues that the resultant coverage influenced by decisions being made by both the media institutions and the military are creating “apathy for war and a subconscious desire for soldier–human–interest pieces” (31). The coverage of war does not focus on “important and objective issues of war”, instead they often just become a “self–affirmation of American principle” (31). However, this does make the images that the soldiers share, or that the unilaterals source more unique, with the greater chance of being privileged by viewers over the ongoing mass of similar theme and stage images generated by the military and the media institutions.

An interesting side effect of the embedded journalist is the new iconic figure of the photojournalist, whose experience is visualised over those of the soldiers. Whether deliberate or not, the images and narratives of the photojournalists are beginning “to replace the heroic soldier by becoming the icon idolized by Americans” (Tuosto 31). American journalism has always been impacted by market–driven determinants that can “strongly affect” what is reported in printed news (21). It is arguable that the embedded journalist will be equally impacted by their indoctrination to military culture through such requirements as attending a boot camp prior to their assignment with a unit (Brandenburg 953). Embedded war correspondent Gordon Dillow stated that “I wasn’t reporting the truth; the point was that I was reporting the marine grunt truth—which had also become my truth” (Tuosto 22–23).

Section 5.3: Chapter Summary

The explorations of this chapter demonstrated how the iconic news image can evidence as much about the dominant institutions within society, like the military or the media institutions, as it does the crisis it represents. Applying the rhetorical elements of Hariman & Lucaites' definition to the 2009 'Voice of Iran' demonstrated that the societal roles remained relevant despite the modified functioning of them through digital media. Organisers use the Internet to reach a global audience for their message, organising protests and for support. The ongoing power of the information that the iconic news message can contain was evidenced in the attempts of the Iranian Authority's to prevent any visual representation of their civil unrest. The 'Voice of Iran' shares the characteristics of the iconic news images from print photojournalism, however the primary mechanism of visibility was not the media institutions instead it was the Internet with its global reach.

In digital technology, the image is no longer restricted to a physical form or the replication of reality. Indexicality is challenged by the lack of a physical trace. Realism is challenged by reality no longer being the only referent or even required in image creation. Positivism, the theory that once argued for the objectivity of the photograph in the mechanical nature of the camera is now challenged in the capacity of the camera to manipulate the image. It is no longer a question of whether the reality of an image is staged but the degree of alteration that it has experienced. Discussing historical context showed the changes in the visual representation of war that evidenced change in the culture of the military, media institutions, society and the capability of the available technology. The discussion of photojournalism demonstrated what changes in who

controlled the performance of their job, directly impacted the images that were available for selection as the iconic representation. The meanings of each crisis is still created and supported through the images known about it. Who produces those images and when the media institutions become involved has changed significantly. This directly impacts who has the greatest opportunity to define the meaning in their images and thus the meaning that the crisis becomes known by.

Chapter Six: Propaganda of the Iconic news image

Section 6.0: Chapter Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to determine if the images of the 21st century are iconic in the same way as those of the 20th century. Section one introduces Neville Bolt's reconceptualisation of the late 1800s theory of the propaganda of the deed. Bolt defines his version as "an act of political violence with the objective of creating a media event capable of energising populations to bring about state revolution or social transformation" (2). Bolt's theory hinges on the terrorist's/activist's manipulation of the way the media institutions work to give them no choice but to use their images. Digital technology has offered the second option of utilising the visual representation formulas of the media institutions but doing so through their own resources in direct competition with the media institutions' interpretation.

In section two, I explore specific potential iconic news images created in digital media. The 'Soldier Watches Toppling' image evidences the American military using their knowledge of how the media institutions work to create a situation they would be unable to resist. The 'Hooded Man'²⁰ image shows the American perpetrators of atrocity against alleged terrorists in their charge in Abu Ghraib prison recording their actions. The subsequent public release shows the media institutions attempt to reverse the familiarity of their visual representation to prevent them being used against them and the American military in the analysis of these images. The Yarmouk Refugee

²⁰ To view image, see Appendix Eleven, page 144

Camp image²¹ demonstrates the blending of the iconic news image with digital media in an example of the new form of activism, that of #hashtag activism. Each image demonstrates how the strategies that the media institutions formerly employed to visualise crisis and create meaning are now being used against them. Digital technology has provided the means for competition in every aspect of the creation, staging, publication and interpretation of the iconic news image as events. Who the competitors are is no longer stable. It has become whoever has the ability to secure the visibility their image requires and get the public support to sustain it.

²¹ To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 148

Section 6.1: Propaganda of the deed

In 1878, the original theory of the propaganda of the deed was a strategy that aimed to implement the weight of the state against itself (Bolt 24). The protest and terrorist movement objective was to goad the state to over react to their acts of terror. The images taken in the consequences of those overreactions provided visual evidence that would then threaten the state claim to legitimacy for their response in the eyes of those watching (1). Bolt's revision of the propaganda of the deed is defined as "an act of political violence with the objective of creating a media event capable of energising populations to bring about state revolution or social transformation" (Bolt 2). Bolt's revision pits the weight of the media institutions against itself.

This new implementation of the propaganda of the deed is achieved by the protest and terrorist movements "planning and executing their strategic acts meticulously and efficiently such that media is left with no but Hobson's choice of giving those acts coverage" (Khan, Naeem & Ahmed 40). It is a strategy supported by the media institutions being "driven by the desires of Going Live and the Breaking News Syndrome" with the 24/7 search for news, which was not always in the viewer's best interests (40). This creates the opportunity for images to be released, that given time and research might not have been. Subsequently, terrorists no longer treat the images of their violence as a side effect; instead they understand them as the new strategic operating concept: they are the effect.

The application of the propaganda of the deed is most effective when the creator can circumvent any media institution censorship. This has the greatest chance of leaving

their intended message intact. Digital technology like cell phones, terrorist run websites and the Internet enables protest and terrorist movements to post their own images and completely bypass any control by the media institutions. The ‘Voice of Iran’ demonstrated the bypassing of state control. For example, Hezbollah have their own communication strategy that includes operating their own television and radio stations, as well as their own websites promoting their perspective and featuring their images (Bolt 241). Rather than understanding the Hezbollah and their actions solely from the interpretation of the media institutions, the viewer can now compare that to the organisations’ own perspective and formulate their own understanding.

In *The Violent Image: Insurgent Propaganda and the New Revolutionaries*, Bolt identifies that one rationale for his revisions is to “update a late nineteenth-century theory of insurgent violence and place it in the heart of the contemporary Information Age” (1). He identifies the advances in digital technology as a primary rationale for the propaganda of the deed requiring updating and the target changing to the media institutions rather than the state. Besides digital technology being available to the non-professional, it also has the capacity to simultaneously connect globally with mass audiences (24). Technology that was not available in 1878 with information sharing often reaching local audiences but global reach was unattainable (24). The global digital space is no longer geographically limited instead it combines local, regional, and international space as one (241). This makes information dissemination much simpler.

The iconic news image is perfect for the purposes of protest and terrorist movements because for the propaganda of the deed, spectacle is the ultimate objective (Bolt 7). Spectacle is considered the lightning rod for collective memory, in much the same way

the iconic news image forms the connection for many people to events that they were not present for (Khan, “The Western” 13). The propaganda of the deed can be seen to reinforce the primacy of the image to disseminate an effective message (Bolt 18). Creating and sustaining an iconic news image is a major objective because of the acknowledgement that “violent deeds trigger latent rhetorical messages using iconic news images” (32). This is an important point because, as discussed previously, iconic news images often draw on those of the past, perpetuating the messages defined within them. The violent deeds are specifically chosen to generate similar images and connect with those same emotions and meaning, subverting the media institution interpretation of them and applying the message of the insurgent.

In The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence Susie Linfield concurs with the underlying principles of the propaganda of the deed. She states that since 9/11 there has been an increase in violent acts that have been performed for the camera as much as for the violence itself. This connects to Kosović’s spectacle of fear theory that foreshadowed the need for ever greater visual and trauma-generating acts of violence. The rationales for these deliberately staged performances include intimidating the locals that might work against them, scaring Western viewers, providing the potential for psychological damage and inspiring believers to greater efforts on their behalf. Even more so, they are choreographed specifically for distribution over the Internet, which bypasses potential censorship by the media institutions who previously dominated the control of what was seen and therefore known (163–164). The advances in digital technology have enabled more and more of these spectacles to be seen by greater numbers and more geographically dispersed audiences. It has also meant that images that might never have been seen have a new means of visibility.

The iconic news images of 9/11 provide an example of both the original and revised propaganda of the deed. When the images from the Abu Ghraib prison were released in 2004, they were discussed as evidencing that the American state and military response to 9/11 had gone too far. These images evidence American soldiers engaging in some of the same activities that the War on Terror was supposed to be stopping. Americans were no longer considered as the model of human rights (Kahn, "Valuing" 67). Furthermore, these images challenged the legitimacy of continuing the War on Terror. The Abu Ghraib Archive is discussed further in the following section.

A consequence of the propaganda of the deed is the knowledge that the information contained in an iconic news image is no longer solely manageable by the media institutions. This includes any certainty that the intended interpretation promoted by the media institutions will remain how the viewer interprets it. The availability of images online from the same crisis event, can contradict the official interpretation. The dialogue that the images generate about the crisis deviates from the official interpretation and require the media institutions to respond. That response can either be in defence of their interpretation or in the inclusion of the contradictory images, which effects a change in perspective for the media institutions.

Section 6.2: The Iconic News Images of Digital Media

The ‘Soldier Watches Toppling’ image was taken on April 9th, 2003, the 21st day of America’s war in Iraq (Maass para 1). It shows the 40-foot statue of Saddam Hussein, situated in Firdos Square, being toppled by American troops and Iraqi civilians (Major & Perlmutter 40; Mirzeoff, *Watching* 87). The significance of Firdos Square increased the potential for the creation of an iconic news image. The Square is in the middle of Bagdad, an area previously not reached by American troops signifying successive military progression. It contains the Palestine Hotel which housed the international journalists covering the war, increasing the chance of photojournalists recording the toppling (Maass para 1 & 4). These circumstances are similar to those of the ‘Iwo Jima Flag Raising’ image representing the reaching of Mount Suribachi previously Japanese territory and the ‘Tank Man’ image that likewise benefitted from a concentration of international journalists in the nearby Beijing Hotel. Further supporting the chance of an iconic representation is that this image fit with the familiar visual representation of showing the military in a positive light and foretelling an overall victory (Giroux 5).

The image considered to be iconic is Goran Tomasevic’s (Reuters), which has been described as the “most published photograph of the Saddam Hussein statue toppling as an icon” (Major & Perlmutter 38–41). This references the fact that there were additional photojournalists that captured similar images to Tomasevic, including Laurent Rebours (Associated Press), Jerome Delay (Associated Press) and Sean Smith (The Guardian) (guardian.co.uk)²². Lesa Major and Perlmutter evidenced the prevalence of this specific image by comparing 72 US newspaper front pages and 12

²² To view images, see Appendix Ten pages 142 & 143

international. Their findings were that Tomasevic's image was "prominently featured and replicated more" than any other image (44). Tomasevic's image is framed with marine Edward Chia looking on from the side, with the backdrop of the 14th of Ramadan mosque, the crowd and the statue at 90 degrees to its plinth (38–41).

The 'Soldier Watches Toppling' image evidences Bolt's propaganda of the deed through the American military staging the circumstances leading to the creation of this iconic news image. The demolition of the statue was a deliberate operation within the Iraqi information war (Mirzeoff, *The Right* 287). This is asserted with knowledge that there were at least two precedents to the iconic toppling. In the first, the British mounted a raid into the heart of Basra and destroyed a statue of Saddam, however the destruction wasn't filmed and drew little attention from the media institutions (Maass para 31). In the second attempt, an American tank crew blew up a statue of Saddam on a horse, this was equally unsuccessful due to its minimal drama failing to attract the media institution coverage (para 31). The destruction of the Saddam statues can be rationalised as a strategy to demoralise the enemy but equally their objective was to attract media attention and gain a positive iconic news image to represent the war effort.

Demoralising the enemy through images like the 'Statue Watches Toppling' has always been a strategy of warfare. The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' image is the obvious comparison, utilised for the similar reasons of boosting troop morale, while at the same time demoralising the enemy. What is new is "the notion of creating events on the battlefield, as opposed to repackaging real ones after the fact" (Maass para 8). This indicates the value placed on images that show the war in a positive, supportive manner. At this time the military obviously believed that it still required the media institutions to

disseminate an image like this and provide it with the additional prestige of labelling it an important, historical event. That label was reinforced with the publishing of comments like those of US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld who stated that

the scenes of free Iraqis celebrating in the streets, riding American tanks, tearing down the statues of Saddam Hussein in the centre of Baghdad are breath-taking. Watching them, one cannot help but think of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain” (Maass para 7).

Staged events like this one may have little impact on the outcome of the war it depicts or provide limited useful information about the conflict but are still considered to be news because that is how they are portrayed by the media institutions.

Digital technology available in 2003 provided the tools for anyone to scrutinise an image online and test its veracity. This supported the expansion of the role of the viewer into undertaking fourth estate activities previously the domain of the media institutions (Hoffman para 2). Online viewers challenged the proposition that the ‘Soldier Watches Toppling’ image was the “real image of Iraqi liberation” (Major & Perlmutter 42). This claim required the presence of Iraqi citizens for justification. Print and television images were at close range or tightly cropped making it harder to determine the exact number of Iraqis present. When the images were available online, it became possible to determine the exact number and nationalities of the crowd present and the rationale for the cropping was challenged.

The presence of the American flag often bolsters an image's potential to receive the visibility within American media institutions to support it achieving iconic status. Prior to the 'Soldier Watches Toppling', one was taken of the American flag being placed over Saddam's head.²³ However, the marine that did this quickly replaced it with an Iraqi flag (Staff Reporter para 8). His action can originate from the connotation of that flag representing Americans conquering the Iraqi people as opposed to assisting them to get free of their oppressor. Furthermore, it had connotations of representing revenge for 9/11, with the 'Statue Watches Toppling' image appearing "to make good on the promise that President George W. Bush made standing atop the still-smoldering rubble of the World Trade Center" demonstrated by the United States planting its flag "in the heart of the Middle East, from whence, roughly, the hijackers came" (Heller para 1 & 2).

The owner of the flag, Tim McLaughlin has come to see its presence in the 'Statue Watches Toppling' image as "a symbol of the sanitized idea of war, of the lies and myths that nations spin to burnish their aggression" (Heller para 4). McLaughlin stated that he concluded this when he became "aware of the symbolism that attached to the flag" (Weinstein para 3). Kemp identifies that "the flag puts the iconic seal on their American values" (226). In the 'Statue Watches Toppling' image the established meaning of the American flag, created through repeated use with it representing that meaning, was not conducive to supporting the narrative that the American military intended with this image. The American flag is a sign that's signification has not changed over time. Iconic news images that replicate the same signs, like the American

²³ To view image, see Appendix 10, page 143

flag can produce exceptions to Mirzeoff's proposal that signs require historical context to establish their meaning in each individual depiction.

The second image of the 'Hooded Man' is part of the late 2003–2004 Abu Ghraib Archive. The original intention of the Archive was defined by its creators, the civilians, soldiers and mercenaries working within the Abu Ghraib Prison, as a private collection of images or trophy shots (Giroux 6). They were intended for sharing with family and friends, not for public dissemination. The 'Hooded Man' image is described as depicting, "a hooded man standing on a box, with his arms outstretched in Christ-like fashion, electric wires attached to his hands and penis" (5). The identity of the photographer is assumed to be Sabrina Harman, a United States Army reservist (Morris para 2).

This image was predicted to become "the iconic photograph of the Iraqi War" (para 3). This prediction evidences Mitchell's proposition that the 'Hooded Man' was "more dangerous to American interests than any weapons of mass destruction" (Mitchell, *Cloning* xvii). This is because it is not the image that the American military or politicians would want this war and their actions known by. It evidences America's reproduction of the very crimes that the War on Terror was supposed to eliminate (Giroux 5–6). The threat in the information that this image possesses is similar to the threat that the 'Voice of Iran' image posed to the Iranian Authority.

This image challenged the primary visual depiction of the Iraqi invasion which included the 'Soldier Watches Toppling' image. Until the Abu Ghraib Archive, the dominant media institution narrative "reinforced the presupposition that the invasion was a

justified response” to the events of 9/11 (Giroux 5). In his article, “What Might Education Mean after Abu Ghraib: Revisiting Adorno’s Politics of Education”, Henry A. Giroux described the media institutions as being, “on the payroll at the Pentagon” citing that they rarely provided critical reports and demonstrated “an indifference to fulfilling its traditional role as a fourth estate, as guardians of democracy and defenders of public interest” (5). The public awareness of the Abu Ghraib Archive forced the media institutions into publishing images that could become iconic for the Iraqi War and present a judgement and remembrance of it that contradicted their preferred images in that role. Bolt’s theory is appropriate for the Abu Ghraib Archive because it is not simply the creator of the photographs, or their worldview that is solely relevant. It is equally important how the selected images challenge the existing values of the media institutions and those interests that they represent.

The media institution did attempt to mitigate the potential damage these images represented and their having to use them. The first strategy was that in the *60 Minutes II* broadcast they cropped the ‘Hooded Man’²⁴ image, editing out the uniformed male standing at the side, looking at his camera (Leung 2). This type of cropping was seen with the ‘Napalm Girl’ image and for a potentially similar rationale. It removed the potential harm from the inclusion of those figure/s and the possible negative connotations inferred from their pose. The cropping served to separate the image of an American soldier from being immediately visually associated with the act of torture that this image depicts. The second strategy is one of misdirection. It is similar to that of the ‘Falling Man’ image where the enquiry into the falling man’s identity functions as investigative reporting and ignores any negative connotations. In the ‘Hooded Man’

²⁴ To view image, see Appendix Eleven, page 145.

image the distraction was to avoid the controversial story of the man's torture and by whom.

The *New York Times* published an article where Shalal Qaissi identified himself as the 'Hooded Man' (Morris para 2). Their publication of that fact then endorsed his self-identification. The consequence of this article was that Qaissi "became a national news story—not because he was a victim of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib but because he was in a famous photograph—a photograph which in all likelihood will become the iconic photograph of the Iraq war" (para 3). Somehow the story of torture became less important than the one seeking the identity of the person being tortured. It is an effective strategy with the replacement of an image that potentially damaged America's war effort through a new image that was less destructive but appeared to evidence the investigation of the Archive by the American media institutions.

In his article "Will the Real Hooded Man Please Stand Up", Errol Morris highlighted the importance of the iconic news image to the media institutions. He states that "without the iconic photograph, it's likely there would have been little or no interest in Qaissi or his story" (para 4). Considering the explosive nature of what Qaissi's information about his time in captivity could reveal about the American treatment of him, this story would not have been covered by the American media institutions if there was not visual evidence, including a potential iconic news image that effectively forced them too. This is evidenced in the fact that Qaissi was the first ex-prisoner at Abu Ghraib to be profiled on page one of *The New York Times* (para 4). Consider the likelihood of this if Qaissi had been an American prisoner and the visibility that his torture would have received (para 4).

The self-identification of Qaissi was later retracted with Abdou Hussain Saad Faleh, nicknamed Gilligan subsequently identified as the 'Hooded Man' (para 9). The retraction included this editorial note identifying that:

The Times did not adequately research Mr. Qaissi's insistence that he was the man in the photograph. Mr. Qaissi's account had already been broadcast and printed by other outlets, including PBS and Vanity Fair, without challenge. Lawyers for former prisoners at Abu Ghraib vouched for him. Human rights workers seemed to support his account. The Pentagon, asked for verification, declined to confirm or deny it. (para 10)

This retraction evidences the nature of media institutions that share information and images assuming that someone else had checked the authenticity. Additionally, for the media institution and the viewer the fact it was published means that the facts and images can become accepted as verified simply by virtue of their repeated use across different publications.

The wrongful identification of the 'Hooded Man' occurred in part as the result of the power that the photograph retains as a form of evidence. This is despite growing awareness of the ease with which digital images can be manipulated. The sequence of events is that Qaissi made the claim that he was the man under the hood, generating journalistic interest in him because of the iconic photograph he was claiming to be in (Morris para 13). Subjects of iconic news images like those of the 'Napalm Girl', 'Tank Man', 'Falling Man' and, 'Hooded Man' evidence that their identity and story can eclipse the original intention of the iconic news image itself.

The next step was that the photograph became partial proof of Qaissi's claim even though in it, he was wearing a hood and was unidentifiable. Verification was further provided through *The New York Times* publishing Qaissi holding the iconic news image²⁵. This created an "associative link much stronger than mere words might have" (para 13). When the viewer saw this image, through their familiar viewing habits, they accepted that the image of Qaissi holding the iconic news image of the 'Hooded Man' was visual confirmation that Qaissi was the 'Hooded Man'. This evidences the power of an image published within the media institutions, where what is published and thus seen, is then believed.

The third strategy is the most interesting because it involved an attempt to contradict the formulaic approach that the media institutions routinely applied to construct an iconic figure that represented that group as a whole. Previous examples of this included Kim ('Napalm Girl') becoming the representation for all the civilian casualties of Vietnam, the iconic victim, Father Mychal ('American Pieta') and the iconic hero of Mike Kehoe ('Fireman in the Stairwell') from 9/11. It was a standard practice for iconic news images to generate iconic figures. However, in the 'Hooded Man' image the media institution had hard choices. Although they had a victim and a perpetrator, the potential iconic victim was an alleged terrorist, while the potential iconic perpetrator was an American soldier.

This did not fit with the desired depiction of the American military response in the aftermath of 9/11 and the justification of that response. This was a reversal in characterisation that was unacceptable and a direct contrast to the proposition that

²⁵ To view the image, see Appendix Eleven, page 145

America was acting as a “beneficent empire” (Giroux 5). The soldier and his actions in the ‘Hooded Man’ image was not one the American media institutions wanted adopted as symbolic of the invasion of Iraq or the American military. Likewise, the American military did not want this soldier to become their iconic representation. This was evident in statements made by military spokespeople like, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, Deputy Director of Coalition Operations. Kimmitt stated that the soldiers involved in the Abu Ghraib Archive were “not representative of the 150,000 soldiers that are over there” and that the American army should not be judged “based on the actions of a few” (Leung 1). This position was reinforced in the media institution reporting that the actions were “the result of a few isolated individuals who strayed from protocol” (Giroux 6). The objective of this strategy was to attribute responsibility for this atrocity onto its perpetrators. This contradicts an established practice within iconic news images of creating iconic figures representing everyone in that category, like the iconic victim and was problematic to employ effectively. If it were accepted, it could disrupt later depictions of an iconic figure.

Images are often compared to established iconic news images in order to bolster their chances of achieving the same status. In the instance of the ‘Hooded Man’ image no succeeding image creator would want theirs associated with it. Although the ‘Statue Watches Toppling’ was published first, there are similarities to elements of the ‘Hooded Man’ image with the Saddam statue being hooded by the American flag. Any shared connotation was not one that the ‘Soldier Watches Toppling’ image creators would want. It could further reduce the intended message behind creating that photo opportunity in the first place. Additionally, the only benefit from a positive comparison with the ‘Statue Watches Toppling’ image for the ‘Hooded Man’ image was a claim that

like the context of the ‘Hooded Man’ image this was also a staged event. However, that would further evidence that the ‘Statue Watches Toppling’ image was staged and fakery was one allegation not directed at the creators of the ‘Hooded Man’ image.

There was another comparison created in Dennis Draughon’s Abu Ghraib ‘Nam’ cartoon ²⁶(2004) which featured the hooded man running behind Kim in the ‘Napalm Girl’ image setting (Neer para 1). This cartoon could be seen to indicate the potential consequences of the ‘Hooded Man’ image for the American military as similar to that of resulting from the ‘Napalm Girl’ image. This did not occur. In his text, *The Abu Ghraib Effect* Stephen Eisenman offers a rationale for the lacklustre viewer response. He argues that the failure of the Abu Ghraib Archive to influence opinions against the war and to condemn the behaviour of the American’s involved is the product of “moral blindness” (Eisenman 9). Eisenman proposes that this blindness is the result of the familiarity of visual representations of torture and suffering effectively creating a kind of numbing effect on the viewer to the horror they represent (9). The Abu Ghraib images have been compared to earlier images in Western Art, like the “defeated warriors from Hellenistic Greek sculptures” and photographs from Ancient, Renaissance and Baroque Art (9 & 11). In particular, Eisenman compared the ‘Hooded Man’ image to Francisco Goya’s Inquisition Album, specifically the sketch, titled the “Victim of Inquisition” ²⁷(12). He identifies similarities in how both figures have similar dress styles and pointed headwear, as well as the close positioning of their feet (12).

²⁶ To view image, see Appendix Eleven, page 146

²⁷ To view image, see Appendix Eleven, page 146

According to the Abu Ghraib effect, familiarity further reduces the response because it is visually representing torture in a familiar manner. In the 'Voice of Iran' the use of familiar iconographies supported a Western viewer being able to more easily understand an image from a culture vastly different from their own. It is a common media institution strategy. However, Eisenman proposes that there was "something about the pictures themselves, and past images of torture in different media, that has blunted the natural human response of outrage" (9). He attributes the blunting to the media institution strategy of consistently using the same conventions and codes to illustrate similar atrocities reducing the potential of shock at what is being seen.

In *On Photography* Susan Sontag concurs with the loss of shock value. Sontag explains this by proposing that the first exposure to a shocking image is the consequence of it being novel, but subsequent, similar images would have less impact as familiarity with them increased (*On Photography* 19). This was a similar argument to Moeller regarding the traumatic shocks of the 9/11 attacks, no previous images to reduce their impact. Sontag identifies a second negative impact of the repeated use of the same image that while it is true that the photographs of a crisis can make it more 'real'. Sontag proposes that the repeated exposure to the same visual representation in the same frame means that the associated crisis can seem less real. She considers that the images can additionally lose their emotional charge over time, what provokes action in 1972 may not in 2003 (20–21). This can explain why an image like the 'Napalm Girl', for example, might have less impact for viewers of it after its subsequent publication. Over time the media institution practice of showing children naked in public or being traumatised could become standard practice and therefore incapable of creating the same response.

In *The Right to Look: A Counter History of Visuality*, Mirzeoff argued that the Abu Ghraib Archive is counter to the traditions of photojournalism and other modes of visual revelation (xiv). This argument could be predicated on the belief that an iconic news image is one that is created by a professional. However, this is more reflective of the earlier iconic news images than the more recent examples. It also reduces visual representation to being a fixed form of revelation, negating the potential for images to be predicated on the crisis, rather than the preferred interpretation. The raw footage of the bystander can provide for a visual representation that is more innovative and indicative of an individual responsive to something they are caught up in. Taking images to capture personal experience can be very different from creating images for commercial viability. However, this will only continue if the non-professional does not emulate the normal visual representation strategies of the media institutions.

Mirzeoff's rationale focussed on the argument that the Abu Ghraib Archive images are counter to the traditions of photojournalism (*The Right* xiv). His argument being that the Abu Ghraib images are anti-authority rather than reinforcing it (xiv). I believe this argument evidences Mirzeoff's principle of historical context. In 2004 there had already been precedents of images being utilised that were not pro-authority positions, like the 'Falling Man' image contradicting the official narrative of an innocent victim. Rather than an argument that the Abu Ghraib Archive is counter to the traditions of photojournalism, Mirzeoff's argument could instead be seen as a preference for a return to the pre-Vietnam War relationship between the media institutions and the military, when their position on the war was the same (Giroux 5). To argue that the Abu Ghraib Archive is counter to the traditions of photojournalism and other modes of visual revelation is to restrict photojournalism to a role of subservience to the media

institutions and the interests they serve. While this may have been an initially accurate portrayal of the dynamics of their relationship, it no longer is. Now photojournalists like the amateur can use online publication and are no longer solely reliant on employment by the media institutions to sell and have their images seen.

When researching the Abu Ghraib Archive, I found that the images were often contrasted to that of the iconic news images of 9/11. In such a comparison the American media institutions and viewers would certainly side with the 9/11 images. They continue to be the justification of the subsequent military response, of which, the Abu Ghraib Archive is included. However, the potential for debate about these two groups of images and their meanings would evidence the role of the iconic news images to generate understanding about both crises independent of a preference of what one or the other shows and therefore means. This debate is often undertaken through the process of appropriation to try and form an independent understanding of the crisis that the visual representation depicts. The privileging of the evidence of the 9/11 iconic news images can be seen as their performing their role in managing a basic contradiction, that of the American innocent versus the American perpetrator, the simple definition of what each image symbolises.

The final image is taken from the ongoing Syrian Civil War that began in 2011 (Sharwood para 10). The catalyst for this war is complex but includes the jailing of children that had painted anti-regime graffiti, some of whom died during their subsequent incarceration (para 10). The belief that the government failed to adequately address the perpetrators of those deaths fuelled the public protests (para 10). A second catalyst was the Syrian Army firing on demonstrators and what began as protests

became a full scale armed rebellion (para 11). The iconic news image is described as showing, “thousands of desperate people waiting in a gray canyon of rubble framed by shattered buildings to receive food aid in Yarmouk camp, near Damascus”²⁸(Amos para 1). The photographer is a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees in the near east, employee Smita Sharma (Women News Network, photo caption). This photo has been published by nearly 1,000 newspapers, with Britain’s *Daily Mail* labelling it a “biblical picture of suffering” (Gladstone para 6). The connection made to the Bible can increase the perceived value of this image for the viewer.

Within minutes of this image being posted on the Internet in February, it went viral, its visibility was increased by the involvement of 130 international aid organisations that supported the social media campaign (Amos para 5). The #LetUsThrough Thunderclap campaign “generated over 38.5 million social media impressions and reached over 26 million people” with the focus of getting humanitarian access through to the Syrians in desperate need (Women News Network para 7). Thunderclap is “is a tool that lets a message be heard when you and your friends say it together” (Orcutt para 1). How it works is that you “share the link to your campaign page with your friends on social media and email as often as possible leading up to your campaign’s launch date” (para 9).

The campaign aimed to generate at least 23 million tweets, the population of Syria pre-war, with the #LetUsThrough hashtag (thunderclap para 2). On achievement of that campaign objective the iconic news image of the Yarmouk refugee camp, was to be

²⁸ To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 148

simultaneously broadcast on the electronic billboard in “New York’s Times Square”²⁹, not far from United Nations Headquarters, and the billboards of the Tokyo’s Shibuya Crossing³⁰ sending a powerful message to the global diplomatic community that we demand they unite and LetUsThrough” (para 2; Women News Network para 1). This was achieved on March 20, 2014 (photo caption). Thunderclap organisers then photographed the images of their image on the billboards to “tweet it out to the millions who followed us in the campaign” (Amos para 2). UNRWA Spokesperson, Christopher Guinness stated that the campaign ended in:

a moving act of symbolism that the image went up at the two corners of the earth and close to the UN in New York, sending a powerful message from the ordinary people of the world to the diplomatic community that we have had enough of the immense suffering resulting from a conflict that is moving into its fourth tragic year (para 9).

Guinness also stated that, “when an image embodies the collective conscience of its time in a manner that is at once universally epic and deeply personal, it takes on a transformative power of its own” (para 5). Despite the extensive social media involvement, the focus of this campaign was an iconic news image. That iconic news image remained a single still image that was now able to be broadcast to millions of people because of the improved capabilities of digital technology. It was not a video or a montage which could equally have been possible with the available digital technology. It was also created by an amateur and then utilised in media institution publications.

²⁹ To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 150

³⁰ To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 150

There was a suggestion that the image was digitally faked, demonstrating the growing awareness of how simple it is to manipulate a digital image. United Nations Relief and Works Agency official, Chris Guinness stated that “the photo is an exact replica of reality” but that he could “understand why that reality would beggar belief. But in the 21st century such a scene exists. People are incredulous because it’s hard to believe” (Gladstone para 3). To support the proposition of credibility the image has been examined by digital photography experts who applied a clone test that examines the individuals in the crowd to ascertain if there are any duplicated faces. Additionally, Hany Farid, an image forensics specialist explained that the consistency of the light and shadow would also be difficult to fabricate. This was further corroborated in the video of the camp taken at the same time as the photograph (para 12–13).

#Hashtag activism is becoming a popular form of activism, the current one is #BringBackOurGirls which seeks the return of nearly 200 Nigerian girls kidnapped to be sold into slavery (Olin para 1 & 7). The hashtag #BringBackOurGirls encapsulates the basic story and the cause it represents (para 8). Despite the online initiation and major means of dissemination for the campaign, tweeters are still motivated by iconic news images as much as any textual explanation. For this campaign the associated images can include famous people, like Michelle Obama holding up a sign with the hashtag written on it³¹, movie stars are also getting behind the campaign being photographed protesting on its behalf³² (para 10 & 12).

In the example of the First Lady’s photo this created another image and “even more widespread round of media coverage: the *New York Post*, for example, ran the tweet as

³¹ To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 149

³² To view image, see Appendix Thirteen, page 149

the full cover of their front page with the headline, “YES, MICHELLE!” (para 14). These and other celebrity, politician images have the potential to become the iconic news image of this crisis event, their fame increasing the interest in what they represent. Furthermore, their involvement is more likely to garner widespread media institution coverage because they of their well-known recognition and their activities are of interest to viewers, with coverage of them providing a strong income revenue source for the media institutions. They may be how this incident is remembered rather than images of the actual girls who were kidnapped. Iconic news images remain a motivating force for civic behaviour. These images are creating a backlash against the kidnappers and generating international response to return to girls home.

Section 6.3: Chapter Summary

Bolt's theory of the propaganda of the deed explains how the visual representation strategies of the media institutions were previously implemented to visualise crises.

They maintained the status quo that had the media institutions controlling all aspects of image creation and their meanings. Those same strategies are now being employed against them. The formula of how they represent and their processes prior to publishing have become so rote that the protest and terrorist movements know the precise moment to stage their act of violence so that it has the greatest opportunity to be published.

However, this still meant that the media institutions might dilute or absent the intended message of the protest and terrorist movements in their use of the images created in their act. Protest and terrorist movements have always known that they required visibility to achieve impact. Digital media mean that protest and terrorist movements have a second option, to undertake all the roles previously the purview of the media institutions without their censorship.

The images of this chapter evidenced different applications of Bolt's theory of the propaganda of the deed. Tomasevic's 'Soldier Watches Toppling' image demonstrated the changed relationship of the military and the media institutions, which meant the military staged events within the conflict that were designed to obtain positive iconic news images. The 'Hooded Man' image illustrated the embedded nature of the media institutions' visual representation strategies. This image was not the preferred one for the Iraqi War or to represent the US military. To mitigate the threat the 'Hooded Man' posed the media institutions attempted to undermine the same strategies they normally employed. The Yarmouk Refugee Camp image evidenced the new political mechanism

of #hashtag activism. Initially, they did not utilise the media institutions in their campaign, instead employing social media and twitter. Media institution coverage was attracted when the increasing popularity of this cause and the number of people involved in it tweeting their support. It is no longer the priority to get an image and its message published in the media institution publication, it is simply one way, that often comes as a consequence of the level of visibility the image already has.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis proposed analysis of the iconic news image as a visual event. The objective was to broaden the examination from primarily concentrating on the image or the facilitating technology. Investigation would then include the influence of historical context, the role of the media institutions and the response of the viewer. The broader analysis would support greater understanding of the circumstances that led to one image achieving iconic status, while others that could be remarkably similar did not. Who influences the information disseminated about a crisis can explain why particular images are utilised in that construction. It is not a simple selection of the best images to illustrate the crisis. Instead it is the best images that illustrate the preferred representation of it. Debord argued that “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation” (Thesis 1). In effect, despite their status, that is all an iconic news image is, someone’s representation of the lived experience of someone else, whose image of that has the visibility and patronage to become the primary way in which that lived experience is remembered. The meaning of the crisis is contested in the differing perspectives, where normally one image and thus one meaning dominates.

I concentrated on the cultural and societal iconic news image function as a condensed form of communication that shares information representing a particular political agenda. This was the rationale behind selecting Hariman & Lucaites’ definition of an iconic news image as “an aesthetically familiar form of civic performance coordinating an array of semiotic transcriptions that project an emotional scenario to manage a basic contradiction or recurrent crisis” (29). The perpetuation of the iconic news image is supported by the ability of anyone with the technology to create images that convey

their own political agenda and have the capacity to obtain for them the necessary visibility. Despite originating with the media institutions the visual strategy of the iconic news image can be effectively deployed by other users with the technology to do so.

The primary change wrought through advances in digital technology is that the iconic news images are no longer solely controlled by the media institutions and the interests that they represent. The relevance of this change is that the loss of control over the icon represents the loss of the power to determine how the crisis is interpreted, and over time, remembered. Kosović argued that the media institution creation of iconic representation is not a discourse but a form of communication that is an “uninterrupted monologue of self-praise and the only type of communication permitted by the ruling order of a given society” (19). The advances in digital technology ended that uninterrupted monologue. Anyone with access to digital media has the means of producing and publishing images that can now challenge the media institutions images and their meanings for the crisis. Considering the media institution interpretations as one of a range of visualised meanings, dialogue could involve all of the interpretations with meaning becoming an individual or group conclusion rather than automatic acceptance of a created ‘truth’.

The form of the iconic news image has essentially endured. It remains a single still image. This was evidenced by Legrady who defined digital images as “a simulated photographic representation” (qtd. in Rosen 308). They can appear the same despite digital images having the potential to create alternatives like montage and video footage. Digital media has altered the ways images are created. It is no longer a

chemical process but one of digital imaging. The methods of dissemination no longer require a physical form. They can include displays on via cell phones and billboards. Despite this they continue to include single still images.

The form is also retained through the repeated use of the same characteristics as the established iconic news images possess. Their presence provides the image with the greatest potential to become iconic. The primary characteristic is visibility, which was originally only accessible through the media institutions. What images and political agendas the media institutions chose to visualise was influenced by the relationships they had with other societal institutions. This included the state and military for information and access, the viewer and commercial interests to generate revenue. Digital technology allowed for dissemination that bypassed the media institutions censorship and resources.

Bolt's reconceptualisation of the propaganda of the deed evidenced that the media institution's visual strategy was now being used against them. The media institutions are manipulated by the protest and terrorist movements through knowledge of how the media institutions operate or through the process to create images that convey their message and independently utilising digital media to disseminate them, bypassing the media institutions. Through digital media images not utilised by the media institutions could now receive visibility through the more informal online processes of dissemination. The level of popularity they received online could trigger the media institutions utilising them but it was no longer essential.

Key themes throughout this thesis were that of the visual representation of war and convention. The 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising', 'Napalm Girl', 'Statue Watches Toppling', 'Hooded Man' and the Yarmouk Refugee Camp images all showed the changes in how war was visually represented and its meaning defined. Primary mechanisms for these changes included the advances in digital technology that made it easier to reach sites of conflict and to carry the necessary equipment. But it was also changing relationship dynamics between the media institutions, the military and the viewer. How each interacted could determine, for example, if an image was pro or anti the war effort. The depiction of war and what it means reflects what society believed the meaning of war was and cultural changes in the professions that influenced its representation. Without exploring all the possible contributions the learning possible in the case study of war visual representation is flawed.

Convention became an underlying cause of the loss of control of the meaning of crises defined in iconic news images by the media institutions. They created the conventional strategies to manage the visual representation of wars and protests. The initial rationale included ease of information sharing, financial viability and to support the viewer to assimilate what was happening by packaging the crisis in the familiar way of presenting it. It's like when you watch NCIS. You unconsciously know that what you are watching is not a soap opera or a horror show. Likewise, when images depicting crises are shown, the viewer is likely to recognise in them signifiers that tell them that it is a natural disaster or a war or a protest. The problem is that over time, other groups learnt those strategies and how the media institution operated and were able to manipulate them for their own political agenda or through digital media independently compete with the media institutions. The important power of assigning meaning and thus

representing a specific political agenda is now open for contest, thanks to digital media and the formulaic nature of media institution coverage. The competitors don't have to create new ways to push their agenda that might confuse the viewer, they can simply utilise the familiar ones from the media institutions and start at near equal footing in the contest for viewer access and potential support for their political agenda.

This thesis evidences that as long as the iconic news image has a function in society that is universally effective for any user it will be employed. As a condensed form of communication the single, still image will likewise be utilised. The major change between the images of print photojournalism and those of digital media is in the users of iconic news images. Digital media provides for the opportunity of anyone to contest the right to create, stage, publish and interpret the meanings of crises.

In researching this thesis, I found gaps in current research that provide ideas for future research, including exploring the agency of the non-professional. Does the ability to compete alongside the professionals in producing iconic news images demonstrate agency? Or is it merely a new version of accepting the traditional means of visual representation rather than initiating an alternative one? Would society accept an alternative? Further research could explore what it would require for the single, still image to be replaced. As the thesis showed, the answer is not in technological capability alone, current digital media can already create alternatives; they are just not as dominant as the iconic news image. Replacement will require changes in all visual event components.

Appendices

Appendix One: 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising'



Image one: Joe Rosenthal, 'Iwo Jima Flag Raising' retrieved on August 01, 2013 from: <http://www.montney.com/marine/iwo.htm>



Image two: Julie Jacobson “Mask of New York Islanders goalie Rick DiPietro” retrieved on May 01, 2014 from: <http://sports.ca.msn.com/nhl/photos/gallery.aspx?cp-documentid=27867065&page=8>



Image three: U.S. Naval Institute “Sri Lanka’s Central Bank 1000 Rupee note circulated in 2009’ retrieved on August 01, 2009 from: <http://www.usni.org/iwo-jima-parody-photos>



Image Four: Erich Lessing 'The Raft of the Medusa' retrieved on August 01, 2013 from:

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970204119704574236393080650258>

Appendix Two: ‘Napalm Girl’



Image five: Nick Ut ‘Napalm Attack’ retrieved on August 01, 2013 from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/moslive/article-1283088/Ten-greatest-Epoch-defining-photographs.html>



Image Six: Nick Ut ‘The Original Napalm Girl’ retrieved on August 01, 2013 from: <http://www.the.me/should-a-photographer-in-conflict-zones-help-the-true-story-of-the-napalm-girl-image/>

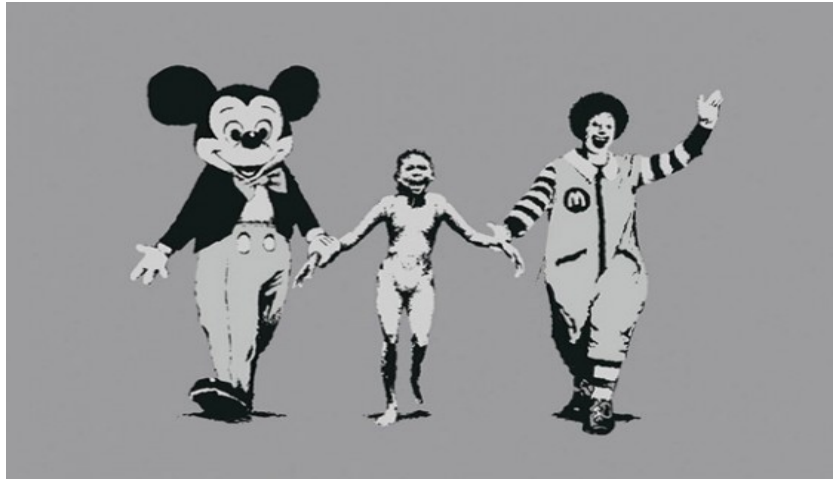


Image Seven: Banksy 'Ronald McDonald and Mickey Mouse'
retrieved on May 20, 2014 from:
<http://www.stencilrevolution.com/banksy-art-prints/ronald-mcdonald-and-mickey-mouse/>

Appendix Three: ‘Tank Man’



Image Eight: Jeff Widener ‘Tank Man’ retrieved on March 15, 2013
from: <http://brainz.org/10-color-photographs-changed-world/>



Key: Left to right, top to bottom: Charlie Cole, Jeff Widener/Associated Press, Stuart Franklin/Magnum Photos, Arthur Tsang Hin Wah/Reuters

Image Nine: Eric Demay ‘The four photographs of the man and the tanks’ on Changan Avenue, all taken from the Beijing Hotel retrieved March 15, 2013
from: <http://www.ericdemay.com/articles/tiananmen-tank-man-photographs-then-and-now/>

Appendix Four: 'Falling Man'



Image Ten: Richard Drew 'Falling Man' retrieved on March 15, 2013 from: <http://brainz.org/10-color-photographs-changed-world/>

Appendix Five: ‘Twin Towers’



Image Eleven: Uncredited ‘War on America’ retrieved on May 22, 2014 from: <http://bkeulitt.wordpress.com/>



Image Twelve: Sara K. Schwittek ‘Twin Towers New York City’ retrieved on March 01, 2013 from: <http://www.foureyes.com/towers/>

Appendix Six: ‘American Pieta’



Image Thirteen: Shannon Stapleton ‘America Pieta’ retrieved on September 15, 2013 from: <http://shannonstapleton.com/#/911/sept4>

Appendix Seven: 'Fireman in the Stairwell'



Image Fourteen: John Labriola 'Fireman in the Stairwell' retrieved September 13, 2013 from: http://media.cleveland.com/science_impact/photo/firefighter-mike-kehoe-in-wtc1-stairwelljpg-581a956b1ab99dbd.jpg

Appendix Eight: 'Flag Photo'



Image Fifteen: Thomas E. Franklin 'Flag Photo' retrieved September 15, 2013 from: <http://respondingthroughart.blogspot.co.nz/2012/04/flag-mania-reading-assignment.html>

Appendix Nine: ‘Voice of Iran’



Image Sixteen: Anonymous bystander ‘Voice of Iran’ retrieved on September 13, 2013 from: <http://www.ruhrbarone.de/the-story-of-neda-soltani-a-story-of-what-media-can-do-to-a-person/5663>



Image Seventeen: Von David Schraven ‘The Two Neda’s’ retrieved on September 13, 2013 from: <http://www.ruhrbarone.de/the-story-of-neda-soltani-a-story-of-what-media-can-do-to-a-person/5663>

Appendix Ten: 'Soldier Watches Toppling'



Image Eighteen: Goran Tomasevic 'Soldier Watches Toppling' retrieved on September 15, 2013 from: <http://news.ca.msn.com/iconic-images-of-war-and-peace?page=11>



Image Nineteen: Laurent Rebour's 'Decline and fall' retrieved on May 10, 2014 from:
<http://www.theguardian.com/pictures/image/0,8543,-11104645413,00.html>

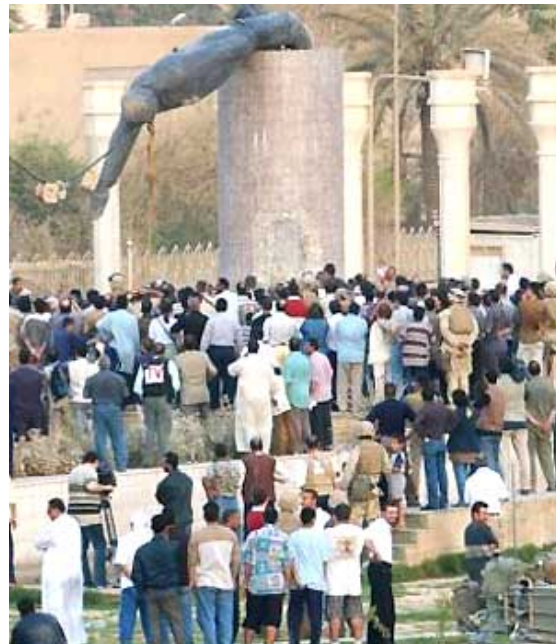


Image Twenty: Koji Harada's 'Last moments' retrieved on May 10, 2014 from:
<http://www.theguardian.com/pictures/image/0,8543,-1204645413,00.html>



Image Twenty - One: Jerome Delay 'Saddam's finale' retrieved on May 10, 2014 from:

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/nov/13/jeremy-paxman-photograph-decade>



Image Twenty - Two: Jerome Delay 'Cover Up' retrieved on May 10, 2014 from: <http://news.xin.msn.com/en/silverlight-gallery.aspx?cp-documentid=5225258&page=17>

Appendix Eleven: ‘Hooded Man’



Image Twenty - Three: Unconfirmed Photographer. “Hooded Man’ retrieved on August 14, 2013 from: <http://www.mintpressnews.com/tomgram-karen-greenberg-abu-ghraib-never-left-us/189728/>



Image Twenty - Four: Unconfirmed photographer 'Unedited Hooded Man' retrieved on August 13, 2013 from: <http://ushypocrisy.com/2013/04/28/lest-we-forget-the-horrifying-images-from-abu-ghraib-prison-in-iraq-graphic-imagery/>



Image Twenty - Five: Shawn Baldwin 'Ali Shalal Qaisi' retrieved on August 13, 2013 from: <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/15/will-the-real-hooded-man-please-stand-up/>



Image Twenty - Six: Dennis Draughton 'Abu Ghraib Nam' retrieved on May 01, 2014 from: http://napalmbiography.com/?attachment_id=102



Image Twenty - Seven: Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes 'Goya's Inquisition: from Black Legend to Liberal Legend' retrieved on November 15, 2013 from: <http://journals.all-languages.org.uk/2012/08/goyas-inquisition-from-black-legend-to-liberal-legend/>

Appendix Twelve: Boston Marathon Bombing



Image Twenty - Eight: John Tlumacki 'Marathon Massacre' retrieved on May 04, 2014 from:

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2013/apr/18/colin-myler-boston-marathon-explosions>



Image Twenty Nine: John Tlumacki 'Doctored Image' retrieved on May 04, 2014 from: <http://www.mediaite.com/online/did-the-daily-news-touch-up-a-boston-marathon-bombing-photo-to-make-it-less-gory/>

Appendix Thirteen: Yarmouk Refugee Camp



Image Thirty: Smita Sharma 'Hour of need' retrieved on May 04, 2014 from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2568251/UN-calls-Syrian-warring-sides-allow-aid-flow.html>



Image Thirty - One: Michelle Obama 'Twitter Motivation' retrieved on May 12, 2014 from: <http://au.eonline.com/news/540004/bringbackourgirls-michelle-obama-kim-kardashian-and-more-join-campaign-for-kidnapped-nigerian-schoolgirls>



Image Thirty - Two: KVS/Pedro Andrade, Pacific Coast News 'Hathaway Protest' retrieved on May 12, 2014 from: <http://au.eonline.com/news/540004/bringbackourgirls-michelle-obama-kim-kardashian-and-more-join-campaign-for-kidnapped-nigerian-schoolgirls>



Image Thirty -Three: URNWA ‘Times Square’ retrieved on May 01, 2014 from: <http://www.iloubnan.info/social/80008/The-people-of-Yarmouk-in-New-York-and-Tokyo>



Image Thirty Four: UNWRA ‘Tokyo’ retrieved on May 04, 2014 from: <http://www.iloubnan.info/social/80008/The-people-of-Yarmouk-in-New-York-and-Tokyo>

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