

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Peer-Reviewed (Refereed/Scholarly), Indexed and Open Access Journal



Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

Shahnawaz Muntazir

Assistant Professor

Government Degree College Khansahib

M.Phil, NET.

India

shahnawazmuntazir@gmail.com

Is Your Trauma Iconic? Programming Trauma in the Age of Media.

The title of this paper comprises of a question. A question in its essence is the opening of an aporia an undecidability that refuses to settle down. Bearing relevance to the past and the exigency to master it in future. Julian Wolfrey, in his essay "Trauma, Testimony, and Criticism", characterizes trauma as aporia, a wound with unending trail. Thus, question in itself is proportional to trauma it does not let you go unless you find an answer or at least find a way to master it (a way to deal with the question). The question that this paper sets to answer is the question of trauma and its iconography in the times of the invasion of media on our mental and personal scape. When media has become a necessity for the validation of reality as if it is not enough that life is experienced, it must be seen to be experienced. It seeks to understand what makes trauma Iconic in a visual culture where meanings are constructed and contested through visuals. What shapes trauma in the world that appears to be divided on the question of race, ethnicity religion and location more than ever. When the Capital has commodified all aspects of everyday life, including the human body even the process of looking itself. Has the decentralisation of discourse, image, and text through the social media any effect on lending trauma the democracy to represent what it actually constitutes? How is it so that the outrageous instances of violence, traumatised subjects and the images of torture are redacted by media to

avoid evoking any empathy. The paper is an effort to find answers to these questions or at least seeks to engage with these questions. However, to do so I will first of all try to establish a relationship between the trauma and media, its origin and interpretation and then proceed by deliberating on the ways how media programmes trauma in the contemporary times.

This may sound like a cliché as I start with the meaning of trauma. Basic psychoanalytical meaning of the trauma is that, it is an event, defined by first of all its intensity, secondly the incapacity of the subject to respond adequately to it. Thirdly, trauma leaves a long-lasting effect on the psychic life of the subject. In the early stages of the Freuds psychoanalytical theory trauma was seen as excessive influx of excitations and psychoanalysis attempted to understand its relation to the disposition of the subject. What lead him change his theoretical approach is that he reconsidered trauma as a form of neurosis in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). First, he argues that trauma is connected to “repetition compulsion”. He observes the compulsion to repeat in the victims of trauma in two forms. 1) the traumatised subject had the repeated dreams about the traumatic events. Soldiers constantly dream about the war front, wounding, and killing. 2) the recreation of the conditions, scenes of the trauma. This compulsion to recreate the trauma arises out of the subject’s disability to comprehend the event and the impossibility to integrate it with the self. thereby recreation allows a chance to understand it to dominate it, to master it yet in repetition the trauma continues (Freud 26). This turns trauma in a deferred response to an event of past and as such characterised by 1) belatedness 2) excessiveness 3) importunity 4) irremediability.

Theorizing the implications of deferred action, Freud suggests that traumatic excitation is experienced by the ego only after the event, during a similar but subsequent experience. The experience of traumatic excitation, then, is first of all an effect of deferral and delay, always-already folded into a secondary or supplementary experience Freud uses the German term *Nachträglichkeit*, which contains the meaning of both deferral and delay. The deferred action

of traumatic memory means that, though imposed upon the individual, what is experienced as traumatic will be partly informed by an unprocessed previous experience, as well as being too overwhelming, and thus awaits its affective discharge via a subsequent and similar experience (Freud 39). As the mechanism of deferral and delay with which traumatic memory is inscribed, *Nachträglichkeit* also concerns a writing of trauma. Jacques Derrida has often demonstrated the effects of delay and deferral are at work in all writing, and thus the notion of *Nachträglichkeit* also marks a point at which the text can be seen as a structuring dimension of traumatic experience. In his essay “Différance”, Derrida refers to *Nachträglichkeit* when demonstrating how the notion of the trace cannot be thought on the basis of the present. A traumatic event would suggest that the worst remains to come, but the present or the past somehow bears the wound of this worst to come, and thus the worst to come might also be the paradoxical or mechanical return of what has not yet happened and has the form of spectrality (Dawson 12).

Trauma, therefore, can be thought of as divided from the beginning, a ghost effect as the mark of what is never present as such ‘a memory of the future’. Trauma is generated through the abyssal attraction ‘between desire and non-desire, intention and the unforeseeable. That which is wholly undesirable, non-appropriable and wholly incalculable haunts intention and desire as the possibility or might of the traumatic event (Dawson 14). Jacques Lacan contends that trauma is the Real, an experience which the subject fails to assimilate or understand and presents an impossibility to be expressed through the symbolic order. It is through the repetition that trauma can somehow integrate with the symbolic as a narrative which seeks to reflect upon its own nature and gives meaning to the experience. Trauma therefore as a post-traumatic experience opens up a plethora of possibilities for media to use it as a portent for establishing ideologies, identity politics, which remains open to contextualisation. Media makes the use of trauma inducing visuals coupled with discourse to polarise the situation in favour of the vested

interests or pulverise the common enemy. The visuals have become the primary way of understanding the world and has given rise to a visual culture, which according to Nicholas Mirzoeff has the growing tendency to visualise the things that are not themselves visual. Allied to this intellectual move is the technological capacity to make visible things that hitherto were impossible to put visually (Mirzoeff 9). Among the first to call attention to these developments was the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who called it the rise of the world picture. He argued that “a world picture...does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a world.” (Mirzoeff 5). Visual culture introduces new possibilities for the presentation of trauma in media because of its focus on the visual as a place where meanings are created and contested. Image does not replace the discourse but makes it more comprehensible, quicker and more effective. As an epitome of this visual culture media functions by creating visual narratives anchored in discourses which are framed as per profitability and economy of politics. These narratives also determine whether an event/image/news will be considered as iconic or not. Domke, Perlmutter, and Spratt found that images have the ability to “trigger” people’s pre-existing values, cognitions, and feelings. These pre-existing ideas can reflect how an image is interpreted. The photos can also be more or less significant based on the viewer’s learning styles because high visualizers are able to store information about individual news photographs, recognize news photographs to be less complex than the written word, and find photographs more appealing than those who are not visual learners (Domke 142). Historical conditions are also important to the understanding of a photograph. If people have different learning styles, and some individuals are more susceptible to remembering and digesting visual images, how is it that certain “icon images” are claimed to be understood and recognized by everyone? Hariman and Lucaites defined iconic images as those that are recognized by everyone, are understood to be representations

of historically significant events, activate strong emotional responses, and are regularly reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics (Hariman and Lucaites 83).

Iconic photos also can motivate public action on behalf of democratic values. Michael Griffin argues that “great pictures” typically symbolize national valour, human courage, inconceivable inhumanity, or senseless loss. Perlmutter found that iconic images are created and kept in circulation by media elites. Perlmutter also defined many qualities of an icon image, including celebrity, prominence, frequency, profit, instantaneousness, transposability, frame of subjects, importance of event, metonymy, primordially and/or cultural resonance, and striking composition. He contends that an icon provokes a strong negative reaction, or outrage (Lovelace 37).

On the other hand, Charles Sanders Peirce while trying to develop his own concept of sign and its types tries to explain his own views on what is Iconic. Peirce in his analysis of sign classifies three different types defined through their relationship with their object referent. Those classifications are the Iconic (resemblance) indexical (physical trace) and symbolic signs (conventional) of these three signs the iconic sign has the strongest visual resemblance to its referent (Dawson 27). Before the introduction of photography religious icons were the most revered for their similarity to the object of worship, they replicated photographs were revered for their degree of realism. The consideration that they were simply reflections of the image was often accepted with no challenge to their veracity. The implication for iconic images is that the greater the degree of association with the event through media institution the more were they assumed to possess its truth. Iconic images can be assumed to represent the values and beliefs important to the culture that employs them. Iconic 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 iconic images experience the greatest degree of control by the media institutions (Dawson 29).

The presentation of the traumatic event by media is informed by the above perceptions, theories and concepts. The complex relationship between ideology, image and trauma turns the whole affair in an unmanageable mess which is beyond the control and knowledge of the consumer. The media acts as a trauma trigger and prompts recall to a previous traumatic experience. through its representation it does not try to exorcize the ghost on the contrary it tries to conjure it up and to construe the event in a way to trigger the panic, manufacture consent, profess ideologies, stoke identity politics and create an inequality of suffering.

Television as a form of media is the arbiter of trauma narratives. It exposes and embarks on suffering and loss through its preoccupation with narratives of personal trauma for the sake of entertainment, employing idealized modes of confession, absolution, and redemption drawn largely from the discourse and conventions of the “recovery” movement. Traumatized subjects become a site of communality through the representation and restaging of the trauma the viewer projects his own self in the victim and thus tries to draw a relief from what unfolds as the tale of overpowering trauma. In the programmes like Oprah Winfrey Show, Big Brother, Dance and Music Reality Shows the wound is let open only to be sutured by the votes and TRP’s.

But at times, tv reality shows workout strange equations by programming trauma narratives in a way that it first of all heightens the intensity of the suffering and then pushes the discourse way beyond any repair. They follow a set formula in which a Subject is introduced, trauma narrative is built around him/her emphasising his/her struggles and choice thereby involving the audience by invoking the similarity in trauma tropes. The narrative that initially appears to be highlighting the suffering of an individual eventually transforms into grand narratives of national interest, image management and attenuate an abominable act of crime.

In the early 1950's the US TV reality show "This is Your Life" in one of its episodes brought a Japanese priest Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto, to the studio. Kiyoshi had visited US to get plastic surgery done on a group of twenty-five girls, also famous as Hiroshima Maidens, who had suffered facial deformity after the Bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 (Dailymotion). Mr. Tanimoto was also the survivor of the bomb and had himself aided the victims of Hiroshima bombing. After presenting Tanimoto as a Buddhist who against every odd and opposition of his whole family, followed by disowning by his father, had converted to Christianity to answer his call. Also, as a victim had suffered through the worst catastrophe of human history, had witnessed and lived the personal and collective trauma, and as subject withstood the crassness of the atomic force. After weaving the tale of personal and collective trauma the doubly traumatised subject in the next phase of the narrative twist Mr. Tanimoto is introduced to Captain Robert A Lewis, co-pilot of Enola Gay, the man responsible for dropping the first bomb on Hiroshima. In an awkward situation the compere makes them to shake hands and smile for camera. The victim and the perpetrator are made to shake hands the vulgarity of such an event transgresses all limits it is as if the shame of bombing the innocent people was not enough to destroy the self-esteem of an entire nation. On top of that Captain Lewis was the first to offer contribution for the reconstructive procedure to be performed on the ailing girls. The anchor does not mention America even once throughout the programme even the devastation is attributed to the "energy released by the splitting of the atom". The entire narrative woven carefully around trauma and its eventual expunging by the reconciliation of the traumatised and the perpetrator apparently eliminates any possibility of the memory of the future and is supposed to camouflage the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, a blot on the collective conscience of America, and to present generosity as an American way. Such representations take away the authenticity of the traumatic event and reduce the aftermath to a residue that can be extirpated with an act of compassion. It works

to obfuscate the subjects claim to the authenticity of his existence and identity generating out of the traumatic event. The dangerous connotations of this manipulation dismantle the notion of a structured force of destruction and blurs the magnitude of humanitarian crises.

The media does not present trauma as it occurs to the subject but as it wants the subject to think about it and that programming hinges upon the market returns, TRP's and political targets. The images of human suffering are presented as commodities that circulate in competitive media markets. The trauma narratives are circulated as symbolic capital in various legal, political and mediated contexts.

Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman call such a media a propaganda model media. It blasted apart the notion that media acts as a check on political power that media informs the public, serve the public, so that they better engage in the political process, the writers on the contrary propounded that media manufactures our consent. They tell us what those in power want them to tell us so that we fall in line. Democracy is staged with the help of the media that work as propaganda machines. Media operate through five filters:

ownership: mass media firms of big corporation often they are part of even bigger conglomerate they are in profit game so it is in their interest to push for whatever guarantees that profit. Corporate media firms share common interests with other sectors of the economy. They therefore, have a stake in maintaining an economic and political climate conducive to the profitability of all their arms. They are unlikely to be critical of political policies that directly benefit them.

Advertising: The second filter exposes the real role of advertising. Media costs a lot more than consumers will ever pay. So who fills the gap? Advertisers. And what are the advertisers paying for? Audiences. And so it isn't so much that the media are selling you a product — their output. They are also selling advertisers a product — YOU."

The Media Elite: The establishment manages the media through the third filter. Journalism cannot be a check on power because the very system encourages complicity. Governments, corporations, big institutions know how to play the media game. They know how to influence the news narrative. They feed media scoops, official accounts, interviews with the ‘experts’. They make themselves crucial to the process of journalism. So, those in power and those who report on them are in bed with each other.

Flak: If you want to challenge power, you’ll be pushed to the margins. When the media – journalists, whistle-blowers, sources – stray away from the consensus, they get ‘flak’. This is the fourth filter. When the story is inconvenient for the powers that be, you’ll see the flak machine in action discrediting sources, trashing stories and diverting the conversation.

The Common Enemy: To manufacture consent, you need an enemy — a target. That common enemy is the fifth filter. Communism. Terrorists. Immigrants. A common enemy, a bogeyman to fear, helps corral public opinion. (Herman 136)

To a larger extent these five filters do shape the news programming in media and there are many instances of this propaganda model in both western and eastern cultures which had led to war when peace could have been a possibility, had propitiated conflicts where negotiations were the way ahead. However, all these filters are maintained and licensed by the master narrative of trauma. The classic example of such a phenomenon is 9/11 an iconic event which is considered as the bench mark of how an event and trauma evoked by it can be exploited for propitiating identity politics, hyper nationalism, national narratives and war mongering. Any saner voice that tried to speak against the war and pleaded for sense got “flak”. In a similar type of situation recently the establishment in India and the media houses hyped the trauma narrative to the gigantic proportions in the aftermath of a tragedy to start the war with the neighbouring country. Such trauma induced situations create a shield to cover up the security lapses, preposterous policies and also secures the berth for the next elections. Thus,

trauma and media can be a deadly combination in a world managed by Government whims, conglomerates; who own media houses, corporate driven democracies and ideological commitments. the intriguing idea that measured doses of images containing trauma such as those depicting ‘mass death of civilians in concentrated spectacular forms’ – as at Hiroshima and in the aftermath of the liberation of the Nazi death camps – provide crisis narratives that ‘inoculate’ us against ‘the constant threat of catastrophic destruction’. At the level of the nation state, a shocked, disoriented, anxious and hence passive population enters into a ‘collective regression’, which gives those in power the opportunity to reduce freedoms, intensify surveillance and undertake economic restructuring in favour of elites. At the individual level ‘images of death or suffering enhance the lives of those who view them by intensifying feelings of anxiety, numbing, emotional response or allowing voyeuristic pleasure’ (Meek 93)

Another important medium that has played a significant role in programming trauma in recent times is internet. The easy accessibility of internet makes it a vulnerable and potent medium to leverage support for national causes, political ends and war narratives. Propaganda, in forms of a video uploaded to YouTube, a post on Facebook or Twitter, or even a piece of comment, has far-reaching effectiveness to disseminate certain values and beliefs and to mint consensus. Digital media platforms introduce new modalities of propaganda, such as the use of social bots and state-organized ‘troll armies’ (Fuchs 79). Herman and Chomsky argue that the rise of digital media represents a vital new means of communication for political movements across the globe. Yet, the internet should not be seen as a fundamentally democratizing force, destabilizing societal elites and their ability to exercise control through mass orchestrated propaganda. As with all new communication technologies, Herman and Chomsky argue, the internet will first and foremost serve elite and corporate interests. Consequently, the internet functions as means of control to those already in power more than

it represents “an instrument of mass communication for those lacking brand names, an already existing audience, and/or large resources” (Fuchs 81).

Tim O’Reilly coined the term Web 2.0 with one key component being the “wisdom of the crowds” (O’Reilly 3). For social media companies, crowd sourcing became an effective marketing discourse, in which they present their platforms as spaces of participation, decentralization, spontaneous interaction, and lack of hierarchy – ideas hijacked from the radical left (Žižek 121). In the case of fighting disguised propaganda, these ideas about social media shift the responsibility to the users.

In September 2015 the picture of three-year-old Syrian refugee Aylan kurdi lying face down on the Turkish beach appeared on internet.

Fig.1 Aylan Kurdi. “A Young Syrian Boy in his Families Attempt to Reach Greece from Turkey, Lies in the Surf Near Bordum”. Independent 3 September 2015.



www.independent.co.uk/news/world/aylan-kurdi-s-story-how-a-small-syrian-child-came-to-be-washed-up-on-a-beach-in-turkey-10484588.html

The Syrian boy's lifeless body had washed ashore after the rubber boat carrying him and his family — to what they had hoped would be new lives in Greece — capsized (Cole). The picture was taken by an amateur photographer and in certain aspects does not fit into the frame of what Perlmutter calls the iconic image. Yet the photograph took the internet by storm and achieved iconic stature within days of its publication. Prior to the appearance of the photograph in the mass media and social media people did not seem focused on the humanitarian crisis in Syria. But Aylan's photo mobilized empathy and concern, soon bringing in record donations to charitable organizations around the world to aid the victims. Online mentions of Syrian refugees peaked during the period when the image went viral. Google Trends data, which documents the relative popularity of Google searches for the Arabic term for “Syrian Refugees” since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, demonstrated the massive rise in attention to the issue at that time. The large spike that occurred in early September immediately following Aylan Kurdi's death was by far the biggest uptick in relative search volume throughout the five-year period. David Cameron and Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon both announced an increase in assistance. In a speech delivered a month after Kurdi's death, Cameron stated that he found it, “impossible to get the image of that poor Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi out of [his] mind”, suggesting the image played a direct part in his decision-making. What made this image iconic was the traumatic incident which it features that acted as a metonymic reminder of what exactly is going on outside the frame and the trauma that is associated with such an incident. On another level the Aylan kurdi photograph acted as a vehicle to provoke the strong reaction against the Assad regime and Iran. (Cole)

Not only did the Assad regime bear the brunt of blame for the exodus and suffering of Syrians, the refugee crisis was often framed in terms of the anti-Shia and anti-Iranian rhetoric.

For example, one popular image in the data set showed Assad walking with Iran's Khamenei past the drowned body of Aylan Kurdi, implying that both are responsible for his death. Indeed, sectarian framing played a great role to succour the displacement of anti-American or anti-Israeli rhetoric on social media. And somehow legitimised the joint air attacks by America and allies on Syrian civilian areas. The image was transformed by the media to call for arms against the regime that validates such tragedies and engineers an image of western world as saviours of the world in distress. The way western mass media produced and reproduced the photograph of Kurdi within the hours of the photograph getting viral on social media reinstated this master narrative which shows other nations in crisis as chaotic scenes of suffering and violence without meaning, except for their evident need for rescue by the West.

The same egalitarian media on the other hand has shut their eyes on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen where the Saudi Arabia backed by US and other allies have carried out joint air attacks on the civilian population thereby giving rise to much complicated humanitarian issues. The war and embargo have left Yemen with 2.2 million malnourished children. Frequent air attacks led by Saudi war jets target civilian areas and in a recent attack on a school building forty-two children were murdered in cold blood yet these crises weighed less to make it to the iconic list. Geographical location and Economy also play a significant role in making trauma narratives conspicuous. 50% of Yemeni population is poverty stricken and the country



stands at 168th number out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) the country has

Fig. 2 Mass Graves. “Yemenis dig graves for the children who were killed when their bus was hit by a coalition airstrike”. The Daily Star Lebanon. 11 August 2018. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2018/Aug-11/459877-yemen-around-10000-dead-worlds-worst-humanitarian-crisis.ashx>

Limited resources to attract the attention of western countries who are busy exhausting oil rich countries and launching space programmes for finding new resources in extra-terrestrial territories.

The power equation and regional politics therefore becomes an important filter that keeps it from generating any strong reactions and the constructive efforts to resolve the issue. On the contrary western media push backed government narratives of tagging the conflict as sectarian clash and developing a humanitarian image of the perpetrators of violence and catastrophe. *The Wall Street Journal* makes it sound as if the Saudi-led coalition is trying its best to provide assistance to the people that it has been starving for three years:

Saudi Arabia and its allies are giving \$1.5 billion to their war-ravaged neighbour, but their ability to fix the country’s humanitarian crisis is limited by their status as combatants—and because many aid groups are reluctant to take their money. (Daniel)

The situation has been further complicated by the ownership of the media which is held by conglomerates and interlinked corporations. according to Wikipedia in 1993, 90% of media was owned by 50 companies. In 2011, the same 90% was controlled by 6 companies. These 6 companies include Comcast, News-Corp, Disney, Viacom, Time Warner, and CBS. Such an arrangement always works in favour of the governments and plays the music to their pleasure. This also gives rise to an inequality of suffering and considers that some individuals suffering is more appealing than others.

Redaction and sanitization act as concealing technique of media. In a colonial situation the media ensures to downplay the trauma that arises out of the unabated violence and torture of the subjugated people. The images and visuals are usually censored or are completely shunned and even if the trauma makes it to the media the contextualisation works in the favour of those who rule. Since in a colonial setup the media works in tandem with the colonial forces Such a stance is mandatory to legitimise the illicit rule and unrestrained use of force.

The case of Hiba Nisar, a 20-month-old infant, from Shopian Kashmir; hit by the pellets and its reporting by the media calls attention for illustrating the above mentioned filter.



Fig. 3 Hiba Nisar. “Twenty-month-old Hiba Jan sitting on a hospital bed in Srinagar after a Metal Pellet Fired by Security Forces was Lodged in Her Eye while She was at Home”. *Scroll.in*, 19 December 2018. <https://scroll.in/article/905247/inequality-of-suffering-why-images-of-kashmirs-pellet-victims-have-failed-to- evoke-indias-empathy>

While the big media houses refrained from publishing the news which, could have otherwise comfortably made it to the front page the others who carried the news did it by playing down the incident.

18-Month Old Girl Receives Pellet Injury in Eye (Kashmir Times)

The headline emphasises the reporting of the incident as a normal routine affair and describes the event as an accident. She is not a ‘victim’ neither is there any mention of the agency which was the source of the injury the whole weight is lend to the pellet as if it was an act of divine violence without any human hand behind it. The hands that triggered the pellet the policy that perpetrates violence becomes an invisible force that cannot be pinned down or be charged with the crime. Another headline that appeared in Indian Express on 28th November 2018 is given as follows:

SHRC seeks report on infant hit by stray pellet in Shopian.

As per the headline the case has been handed over to the State Human Rights commission but the conclusions can be readily drawn from what the headline reverberates with. The emphasis on the word ‘stray’ just makes it evident that judgement stands delivered in time just in favour of what the establishment would have liked it to be in favour of. The incident was also reported as the retaliatory action by security forces to disperse the pelters thereby making the action a natural response to an obvious threat. Such a programming of trauma sanitises any apparent claim of the victimhood that could have worked against the claim of the establishment on the people and the land. It works by creating a screen to hide the suffering of the traumatised subject and pre-empt any response obvious to such a traumatic incident. On

the social media comment boxes were filled with questions and accusations made by social bots and troll armies to turn an awkward situation in the favour of establishment:

“Why do Kashmiri parents let their children throw stones?” Or “they deserve what’s coming to them.” Others have claimed that the harm caused by non-lethal weapons in the Valley pales in comparison to what the Pakistani military has been doing in the part of Kashmir held by Pakistan (Varma).

Fig.4 Pellet Victims. *Asia News Network*, 3 July 2018.



<https://asianewsnetwork.net/rights-panel-seeks-fresh-list-of-eye-pellet-victims/>

The suffering apparent in these photographs represent a political situation and their situation demands accountability and compensatory action yet through the framing of narratives and counter narratives of trauma and the notion of collateral damage the attention is deflected away from the causes and vectors of harm, suggesting that some bodies belonging to a specific religion and ethnicity deserve brutal violence (Varma). Thus, Hiba’s or any other victims pelleted body in a photograph irrespective of being the representative of a situation and

resonating with cultural conundrum in which an entire generation is wounded, maimed and blinded fails to become iconic because of their otherness. such trauma's do not have any profitability or prominence. Through the demonization of 'other' media creates a hegemony of suffering where the wound of other does not call on any outrage or spark negative sentiment against the torture. modern visual media has been shaping certain kinds of responses and expectations which have gradually been integrated into broader cultural and political processes. Catastrophes, political upheavals, and economic crises attract intense media coverage fostering mass anxiety and leading to demands for the restoration of social order and stability. In such situations, public figures, intellectuals and media commentators construct trauma narratives which seek to make sense of disruptive and disturbing experiences for large groups of people. For this reason, such situations also offer important opportunities for political leadership and new political initiatives.

D G Compton's novel *The Unsleeping Eye* (1974) talks of a future world where humanity has been ridden of all diseases and falling ill is practically unheard of in such a world a person debilitated by disease provides the fodder for the reality shows which, proffers a continuous supply of suffering and trauma to the trauma deprived consumers. Kathrine Mortenhoe the protagonist of the novel is diagnosed with a terminal disease which leaves her with only four weeks to live and a media house pestering her to sign a deal to film her suffering and death for their reality show *Human Destiny*. Kathrine wants to die in privacy away from the public glare but the market demand to behold the suffering of the 'other' and profitability of trauma as a product compels the media house to implant a reporter as a confidante with the camera installed in one of his eyes to film her continuously. The novel engages with the issues of surveillance, Privacy and the monstrosity of the media and has a jarring resemblance to the world we are living in, the only difference being that while the people living in the world of the novel are trauma deprived, we are addicted to it. The addiction to believe and be moved by

trauma alone allows media the unbridled authority to shape our experience and perspectives to understand a situation. Media weaves and programmes its narratives around trauma to deliver maximum for the actors and factors that control it. The trauma is used to help Ideology infiltrate in personal and collective domain through the production and spreading of information, meanings, ideas, belief, systems, artefacts, and institutions that justify or naturalise domination and exploitation. the way we receive and respond to images of suffering has everything to do with our ethical, cultural, political and historical paradigms. It has to do with who we empathize with – due to shared history, culture, or religious affiliation – and who we consider human. Historically, these determinations have been made on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation and economic status. Media establishes a hierarchy of suffering, in which some suffering is considered more urgent and intolerable than another. The programming of trauma and suffering by media exemplifies how deeply embedded the logic of dehumanization and demonization of the “other” has become to run the world as per the dictums of who control it. Media has been one of the most desired sites to project traumatic events. Whether it was during Iraq war, or 9/11 in America, or 7/11 in India, media constantly catered the scenes of trauma. Traumatic historical events and experiences have been re-imagined and re-enacted for us to witness over and over by constantly evolving media to manufacture consent, purport ideologies, establish hegemony, create fear psychosis and all this has been only doubled by the invention of social media. Media representation of trauma through the iconic images constructs a discourse that furthers the interest of xenophobic and nationalist governments globally – it is the same story from refugees who were recently denied entry to European countries by picturing them as contagious through media to civilian protesters in Gaza who are killed in broad daylight after being labeled “dangerous” to the Israeli security state. The media representation of trauma functions to blur the authenticity of a personal experience as trauma happens to be and at times conceals or redacts the trauma to avoid any responsibility or

accountability. Such a situation calls for an ethical enquiry of the presentation of trauma narratives through media particularly in a situation where a news or a traumatic image can go viral in seconds and reach millions it gets difficult to pin responsibility and to act as there appear to be no visible actors.

Works Cited

- Akhzer, Adil. "SHRC seeks report on infant hit by stray pellet in Shopian". *Indian Express*, 28 Nov. 2018, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/shrc-seeks-report-on-20-month-old-girl-hit-by-stray-pellet-in-shopian-5468120/>. Accessed on 25 Jan. 2019
- Cole, Diane. Study: What was the Impact of the Iconic Photo of the Syrian Boy. *National Public Radio Inc [US]*, 13 Jan. 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/01/13/509650251/study-what-was-the-impact-of-the-iconic-photo-of-the-syrian-boy>. Accessed on 12 Jan. 2019.
- Compton, David Guy. *The Unsleeping Eye*. New York: Pocket Books, 1980.
- "Corporate Capitalism". *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 21 Dec. 2018. Web. 31 Jan 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_media. Accessed on 15 Feb. 2019.
- Dawson, Mark. *Suffering and Survival: Considering Trauma, Trauma Studies and Living On*. Leeds: The University of Leeds, 2010.
- Domke, David et al. "The Primes of our Times? An Examination of the 'Power' of Visual Images". *Journalism* 3, 2003, pp. 131-59.
- Edwards, Ralph. This is Your Life. Online Video, *Dailymotion*. Dailymotion, 24 Aug 2011, Web. 7 Feb 2019, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xl3jx5>. Accessed on 17 Feb 2019.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond Pleasure Principal*. California: Create Space, 2010.
- Fuchs, Christian. "Propaganda 2.0 : Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model in the Age of the Internet, Big Data and Social Media". *The Propoganda Model Today: Filtering Perception and Awareness*, ed's. Joan Pedro-Carañana, Daniel Broudy, Jeffery Klaehn. London: University of Westminster Press, 2018, pp. 71-91

- Hariman, Robert and Lucaites, John Louis. *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photos, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Herman Edward S, Chomsky Noam. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. The Bodley Head: London, 1998.
- Herman, Edward S. "The Propaganda Model Revisited". *Monthly Review*, vol. 48, July-August, 1996, pp. 115-164.
- Lovelace, Angie. "Iconic Photos of the Vietnam War Era: A Semiotic Analysis". *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, vol.1, no.1, Winter 2010, pp. 35-45
- K T News Service. 18-Month Old Girl Receives Pellet Injury in Eye. *Kashmir Times: Online Edition*, 26 Nov. 2018, <http://www.kashmirtimes.com/newsdet.aspx?q=85088>. Accessed on 17 Feb 2019.
- Larrison, Daniel. Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis and the Failure of Western Media. *The American Conservative*, 21 Feb. 2018, <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/larrison/yemens-humanitarian-crisis-and-the-failure-of-western-media/>. Accessed on 10 Feb. 2019
- Meek Alan. *Biopolitical Media: Catastrophe Immunity and Bare Life*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- O'Reilly, Tim. What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software. *OREILLY*, 30 Sep. 2005, pp. 1-5. <http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>. Accessed 14 Feb 2019
- Tenove, Chris and Siegel, Alexander. What Social Media Posts Tells us about the Politics of the Refugee Crisis. *OPENCANADA.ORG*. 28 Oct. 2016.

<https://www.opencanada.org/features/what-social-media-posts-tell-us-about-politics-refugee-crisis/>. Accessed on 16 Feb. 2019

Varma, Saiba. Inequality of Suffering: Why Images Of Kashmir's Pellet Victims have Failed to Evoke India's Empathy. *Scroll.in*, 19 Dec. 2018, <https://scroll.in/article/905247/inequality-of-suffering-why-images-of-kashmirs-pellet-victims-have-failed-to-evoke-indias-empathy>. Accessed on 23 Jan. 2019.

Wolfrey, Julian. "Trauma, Testimony, Criticism: Witnessing, Memory and Responsibility". *Introducing Criticism in the 21st Century*, edited by Julian Wolfrey, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 126-34.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. London: Profile Books, 2009.

List of Figures:

Figure 1. Aylan Kurdi. "A Young Syrian Boy in his Families Attempt to Reach Greece from Turkey, Lies in the Surf Near Bordum". Independent 3 September 2015. www.independent.co.uk/news/world/aylan-kurdi-s-story-how-a-small-syrian-child-came-to-be-washed-up-on-a-beach-in-turkey-10484588.html. Accessed 14 Jan 2019

Figure 2. Mass Graves. "Yemenis dig graves for the children who were killed when their bus was hit by a coalition airstrike". The Daily Star Lebanon. 11 August 2018. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2018/Aug-11/459877-yemen-around-10000-dead-worlds-worst-humanitarian-crisis.ashx>. Accessed on 17 Jan. 2019

Figure 3. Hiba Nisar. “Twenty-month-old Hiba Jan sitting on a hospital bed in Srinagar after a Metal Pellet Fired by Security Forces was Lodged in Her Eye while She was at Home”. *Scroll.in*, 19 December 2018. <https://scroll.in/article/905247/inequality-of-suffering-why-images-of-kashmirs-pellet-victims-have-failed-to-evoke-indias-empathy>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2019

Figure 4. Pellet Victims. *Asia News Network*, 3 July 2018. <https://asianewsnetwork.net/rights-panel-seeks-fresh-list-of-eye-pellet-victims/> Accessed 13 Feb. 2019.