Using three examples, consider how have image makers utilised digital technology to explore conflict.

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Figures list-

Figure 1-.Institute, A. (2012). *The Valley of the Shadow of Death | The Art Institute of Chicago*. [online] The Art Institute of Chicago. Available at: https://www.artic.edu/artworks/123407/the-valley-of-the-shadow-of-death.

Figure 2- Institute, A. (2019). *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, Gettysburg | The Art Institute of Chicago*. [online] The Art Institute of Chicago. Available at: https://www.artic.edu/artworks/196395/home-of-a-rebel-sharpshooter-gettysburg.

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Figure 4- Kaninsky, M. (2019). *Story Behind The The Terror of War: Nick Ut's 'Napalm Girl' (1972)*. [online] about photography blog. Available at: https://aboutphotography.blog/blog/the-terror-of-war-nick-uts-napalm-girl-1972.

Figure 5-The Guardian (2017). *That's me in the picture: Jan Rose Kasmir at an anti-Vietnam war rally at the Pentagon, in 1967*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/nov/07/jan-rose-kasmir-anti-vietnam-rally-pentagon.

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Using three examples, consider how have image makers utilised digital technology to explore conflict.

"…But it is photographs, I believe, that bring us closer to those experiences of suffering in ways that no other form of art or journalism can. Yet in bringing us close, photographs also illuminate the unbridgeable chasm that separates ordinary life from extraordinary experiences of political trauma…" Susie Linfield- The cruel radiance (Linfield, 2012)

In this highly visual era, many claim that a picture is worth a thousand words. Maybe not always , but there are occasions when a picture can be, in Umberto Eco's terms, "epoch-making"(Umberto Eco and Weaver, 2002). I believe that from its early depictions of the Crimean War, the American Civil War, and the Gulf War, photography has greatly influenced the public's perception of issues like conflict. In stark contrast to our great-grandparents' generation, we have grown accustomed to a depth of visual coverage that civilian consumers had never experienced before, when it comes to modern conflicts however, We have seen images of mass graves, the faces of solider the instant they are shot and soldiers carrying their dead comrades and returning to their families, just to name a few. (O'Hearn, 2016)

Every photograph has a story to tell, whether it depicts a sunny day landscape or a battlefield strewn with dead soldiers after a battle. Pictures are well known for their ability to evoke strong emotions. There are some photos that cause you to feel empathy, like the one of the naked child running toward the photographer after a napalm attack in Vietnam in 1972 (Deutsche Welle, 2021), or the harrowing photo of an Iraqi soldier who died in 1991 by Kenneth Jarecke. These photos sparked protests and changed people's perspectives. The numerous ways that war has

been examined through photography will be covered in this essay. From the very first war photographs to the conflicts that have occurred in my lifetime, the images I saw in the media as a child, to the polarising opinions of photography critics like Susan Sontag and Susie Linfield,

Paintings and the Crimean war

Before photography, wars were rewritten on the canvas by artists who weren't there; they produced heroic paintings that were frequently finished a long time after the battles had ended. Prints, drawings, and paintings, which typically depict such events as action-oriented, pristine endeavours, and heroism. The realities of death and the experiences of soldiers in between clashes received little attention. (O'Hearn, 2016).However, as war was documented through photography, people were able to show the world and those who were not directly involved in the conflict the reality and horror of the conflict. Our perception of war was immediately impacted by these images. (Kliever, 2015)

Unlike paintings or any other artistic depictions of war, photographs are taken instantly and are intended to give a precise impression of what is taking place on the ground. Since its beginnings, photography has been regarded as a form of documentation that is much less susceptible to misrepresentations than any other type of journalism. This is because it presumably provides a much more accurate and objective picture of the conflict than what any artist could depict with a drawing or any writer could describe with words (Speyerl, 2017)

The first time a British photographer, Roger Fenton, was hired to shoot images for a newspaper was likely during the Crimean War, which lasted from 1853 to 1856. It was a bloody and confusing three-year conflict between Russia and an alliance of the Ottoman Empire of, the

UK, France and Sardinia(Lowndes, 2020). Fenton was directly involved in many of the atrocities of that conflict, which claimed the lives of a number of his friends and acquaintances, but, he refrained to record them. Instead, he tended to take pictures of the surrounding scenery,

Figure 1. - Roger Fenton, Valley of the Shadow of Death, April 23, 1855. (Institute, 2012)

the soldiers interacting with one another, or the military leaders in portrait mode. There was an understanding between Fenton and his commissioners, the publishing house Thomas Agnew & Sons (supported by several government ministers), that his task was primarily to present a positive image of the Crimean war in order to give the British population at home a more positive impression of a war they had started to become critical of. Although technological limitations may have played a role in this, there was also an understanding that Fenton's task was to portray the war in a favourable light. (O'Hearn, 2016)

The Valley of the Shadow of Death, one of Fenton's best-known images from the conflict, this photo out of the hundreds of others he managed to take stood out, it indirectly portrays the horrors experienced by troops undergoing heavy fire via a road covered heavily with cannonballs. It is widely accepted that Fenton staged this photograph, moving additional cannonballs into the road to emphasise the horrific bombardment experienced by troops marching the road days earlier, rather than documenting casualties of the attack.

I think this photo stood out the most as there were two almost identical shots of the place from the same tripod positioning. The first shot where the cannonballs were all lying in the ditch, they were not scattered around .Errol Morris and Oscar-winning documentary director researched every way possible and even went to the place to find out which of these two photographs came first he read in an essay by Susan Sontag where she argued that Fenton had scattered the cannonballs himself, in "regarding the pain of others 2003. So after much research Morris came to the conclusion that the photograph with the cannonballs are not scattered was the first one as some rocks had been moved in the frame between the first of the second photos and gravity pull them downwards. someone walked through the scene. when it was exhibited in 1855 press reviews celebrated and praised photography and they singled out the valley of death. One reviewer said that "it's literally covered in projectiles" "showed With terrible distinction" what brave British soldiers had "dared and encountered" (Lowndes, 2020), and I think it is these type of early images that influenced Sontag's tone. Susie Linfield, in her book " the cruel radiance" highlights the concerns of critics like Sontag, in Sontag's book, "on photography", she describes photos as "treacherous", " Imperial", "voyeuristic", "predatory", "reductive" etc .she also goes on to call photographs a "sublimated murder – a soft murder". Susie Lindfield goes on to say that typical Sontag sentence reads "the camera doesn't rape, or even possess, so it may presume, intrude, trespass, distort, exploit, and, at the farthest reach of

metaphor assassinate all activities that and like the sexual push and shove can be conducted from a distance and with some detachment" (Linfield, 2012).

American civil war and world wars

Despite the fact that numerous battles have been documented over the years, some of them were more significantly affected by photography than others. The American Civil War is the first of these. This war is widely regarded as the origin of the genre of war photography because it was the first significant conflict to be consistently and extensively documented through photography. in contrast to the Crimean War's limited recording and lack of surviving photos. This war's coverage was very different from past efforts in terms of both the information it provided and how it did so. Due to the public's unquenchable hunger for images, the Civil War was the first attempt to comprehensively and methodically capture a war. (O'Hearn, 2016) Of course, in the early 1860s, things were carried out somewhat differently. Before entering battle, soldiers were photographed in full uniform. As a memento for the families to keep while their sons were away, these pictures were sent home. This somewhat formal type of imagery contributed to the idea that these young soldiers were heroes. (Mulvaney, 2022)These images captured soldiers in one of history's most brutal wars, both alive and dead. The cameras available at the time could not record action—no soldiers firing or fleeing—but they could depict the effects and repercussions of war. (Kliever,2015)

While the general public may not have had access to mass-produced war imagery during the Crimean War, during the American Civil War, businessmen and photographers like Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner, together with many people on both sides of the conflict, collectively documented many of the same types of scenes created by earlier war photographers but they added two crucial additions to the glossary of war photography, Images of the dead in

the aftermath of battle and the first images of active battle taken from a distance. Alexander Gardener's Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter in Gettysburg, where he posed a fallen body with his own rival to create a narrative around the death of a Confederate soldier, is one of the most famous examples of how photographers of the American Civil War enhanced their images in the same way that many of Fenton's photographs were enhanced by moving bodies and adding props. (O'Hearn, 2016)

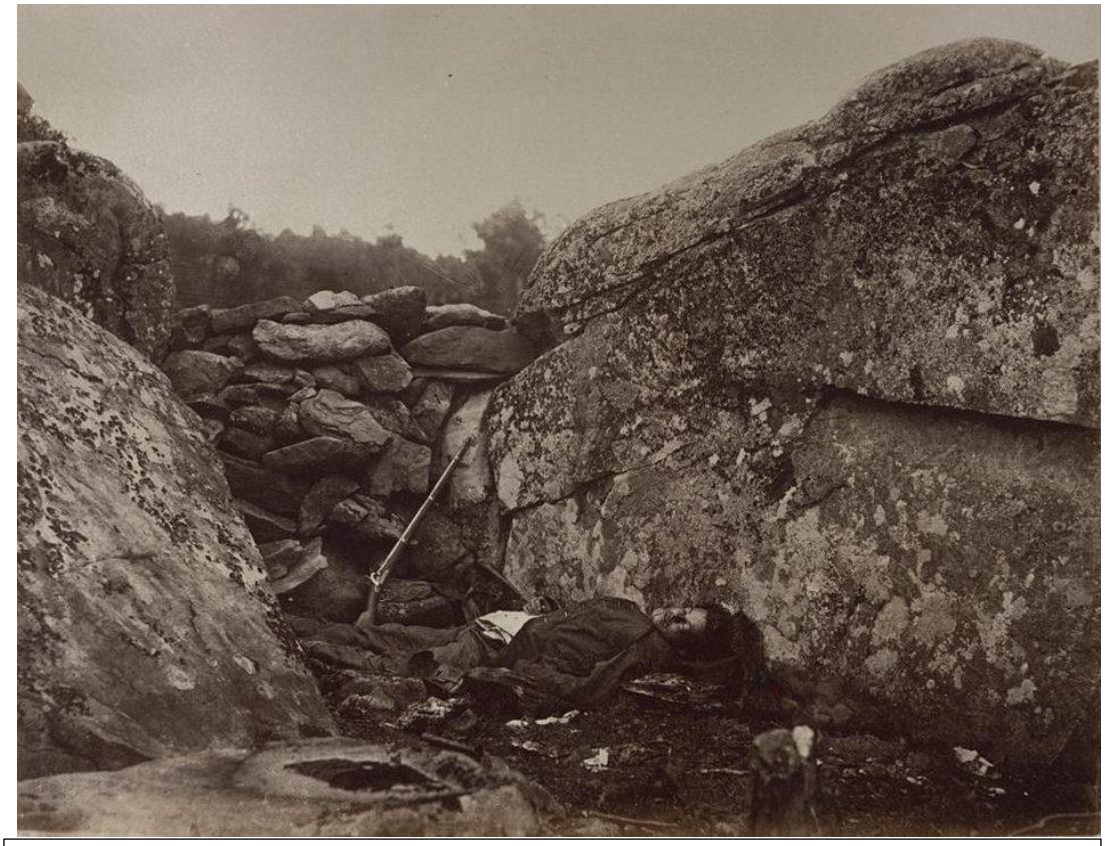

Figure 2.-Alexander Gardner, Home of a rebel sharpshooter, Gettysburg, 1863.

When "society needed photographs and proof and was prepared to think that the two were the same," according to American photography critic Vicky Goldberg, "photojournalism developed." We may observe how this concept was used repeatedly, from the wars in the Crimea to the ones in Iraq, by briefly exploring the history of war photography. (Speyerl, 2017)

So, during the first and second world wars, photography became a much more widely used form of documentation, though it was still greatly influenced by earlier painters in terms of aesthetics. The Franco-Prussian War, which raged from 1870 to 1871, and the painting style that emerged from it provide an intriguing example. France realised they might not win this war against the Germans, so instead of showing the citizenry pictures of upbeat generals and joyous soldiers as had been customary, as in the Crimean War, the illustrations now focus on the struggles and hardships of single soldiers and small groups of soldiers.

In contrast to traditional depictions of war, the army's bravery and toughness were emphasised, which made the eventual defeat easier to justify. The struggles of the soldiers remained the photographers' primary subject during the world wars, and photography established itself as a reliable medium for conveying the conflict. The emergence of the 35mm handheld camera coincides with the start of images of war becoming more widespread in magazines and newspapers. (Speyerl, 2017)

Figure 3.-Dressing Wounded in Trench During the Battle of Courcelette. September 1916 by Ivor Castle

Vietnam and the gulf war

Our perceptions of war, as well as the kinds of images we anticipate photographers to produce when covering a war, have been significantly altered by this shift in perspective, from the confident generals to the small groups of soldiers and their hardships . It has also contributed to the development of photography, particularly freelance photography, as a trusted method of providing evidence that contradicts the official (favourable) accounts of war offered by governments. (Speyerl, 2017) The influence and popularity of war photography peaked during World War II. This marked a turning point in the use of images to spread both propaganda and the truth throughout history. For the good of society, photojournalist war photographers try to portray the conflict as truthfully as they can. In democracies, raising public awareness and educating the general public helps hold elected officials accountable. Instead of capturing the reality of war, a propagandist war photographer seeks to use their images to support an official narrative (although occasionally, propagandist goals and the truth may overlap). Both sides use propaganda to win over supporters. (Mulvaney, 2022)

Figure 4.-The Terror of War: Nick Ut's "Napalm Girl" (1972)

The Vietnam War, which lasted from 1964 to 1975, is unquestionably the most well-known illustration of this difference. Images of the execution of a Vietcong prisoner and Nick Ut's horrifying, Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of a naked girl and other children fleeing a napalm attack are credited with being key factors in changing public opinion about the Vietnam War. The brutal portrayal of the children who were bombing victims brought home the horror and injustice of war. It fueled a strong anti-war sentiment among Western populations, particularly in the US, which ultimately compelled the US government to end the war. (Mulvaney, 2022)

The public's perception of the war was significantly impacted by these and other photographs of the Vietnamese front line. A perception that would fundamentally alter both history's course and society's perception of war. Even less technical expertise was required than during the world wars for photojournalists to access and record battle images thanks to successive technological advancements, such as portable colour video recorders. The growing anti-war movement was energised by images from the Vietnam War. Many well-known and stirring images from this time weren't even of the battlefield. They were instead apprehended on

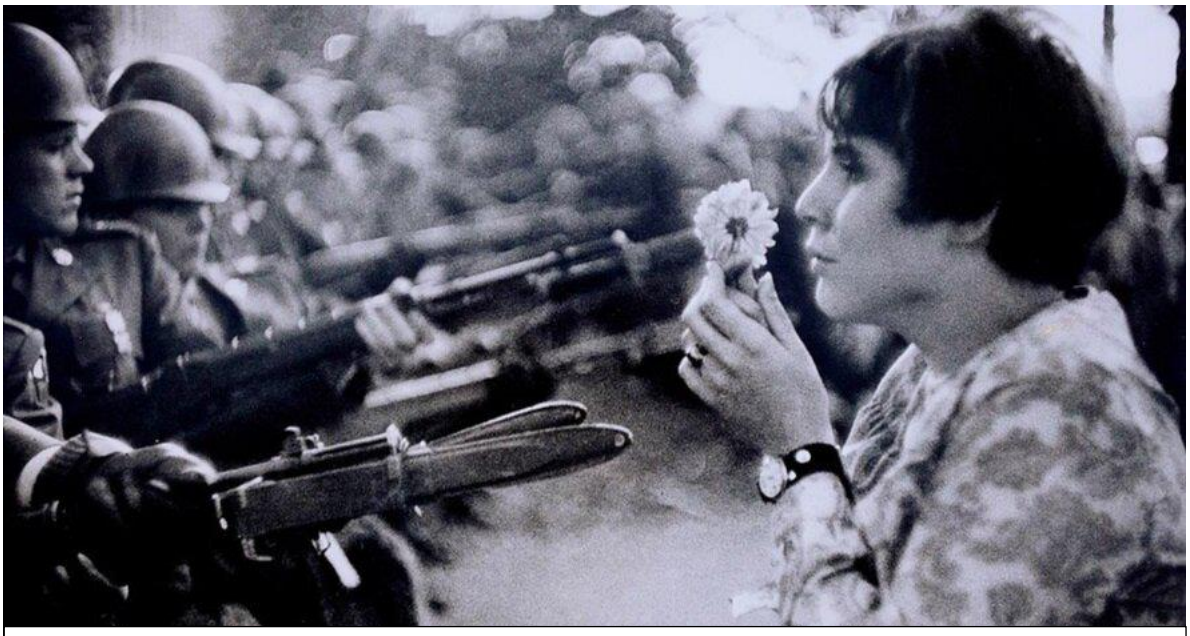

Figure 5.-Janrose Kasmir's anti-war protest, Vietnam War.1967

American soil. The Marc Riboud portrait The Flower Child became a symbol of the anti-war movement. In fact, the overall message of many war photographers' images is inherently anti-war. (Speyerl, 2017)

Ironically, the Vietnam situation has made many Western governments aware of the value of public support when waging wars, as well as the potential of photography to obtain this crucial support. The government has severely restricted access for independent photographers, particularly since Operation Desert Storm during the 1990–1991 Gulf War, but also during the war in Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Accreditations were allocated only to official military photographers who had to comply with strict rules that provided a rather "clean" image of the war. This meant, for example, that no pictures could be taken of US casualties. Official photographs were also supposed to portray the missions in a "surgical" way: as effective, precise, and hitting the right targets without causing many civilian victims. While this provided a distorted vision of the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, it also allowed the US government to justify its military engagements at home much more effectively.

When they came across a burned-out truck in the middle of the road while travelling along Highway 8 toward Kuwait, Kenneth Jarecke was embedded with the US Army. Due to the experience with the media and photography during the Vietnam War, the Pentagon subjected journalists and photographers as well as new outlets to much stricter guidelines, requiring that they all be embedded with the military and every press resource was ran though the defence pool system . Jarecke persuaded his military escort to stop, and halfway out the window the charred remains of an Iraqi soldier emerged from the Ruin.

Figure 6.-Death of an Iraqi Soldier, Ken Jarecke. Taken during the Gulf War, 1991.

The image was not seen in the US due to editorial decisions made by newspapers across the nation, but it was published in the UK by the London Observer and generated significant controversy, prompting readers to consider whether they wanted to participate in this kind of conflict. If we are big enough to fight a war, we should be big enough to look at it, Jarecke said in response to criticism of the images' graphic nature.

I find this a bit hypocritical of the editors across the magazines and news papers in the US as when Qaddafi was shot dead, his face appeared on multiple front pages, and I think that was also quiet graphic and disturbing. The editorial choices in this picture, in my opinion, are what give it its significance. Editors, news organisations, and journalists must decide whether to present war as it is—in all of its disturbing and unappealing aspects. However, it is evident from this picture that governments frequently exert varying degrees of influence over the media in order to manage or at least temper public perceptions of war. However, Ken Jarecke's choice to capture the image and demonstrate to the world that even the "cleanest, well-planned and

executed" of wars can have disastrous results. His image serves as a reminder that even in times of victory, wars always cause harm to someone, somewhere.

Over the history of photography it has been bearing witness to the horrible things humans do to other humans, it has changed mindsets, started and ended wars, I think Desensitisation To the war Is potentially going to become a real problem in the future while these images seem to cause more questions about whether war is a right choice there anything I can also see how being fronted with images like the regularly could cause somewhat of a numbing of public perception remarks Bowden (Bowden, 2013) and I agree but until we are numb, we must bear witness. Susie Linfield says it is awfully hard to photograph a human right because what in the world would that look like in fact rights don't look like anything at all. what date does a person with human rights look like? well like a person that's I,t but what photographers can do peculiarly well is to show how those without such rights look like and what the absence of such rights does to a person and they can, and they have, shown as were people struggling for Right look like, in victory and defeat.

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