

# WITNESSING DISASTER <sup>1</sup>

*This war is like an actress who is getting old.  
It is less and less photogenic and more and more dangerous.  
R. Capa*

Objective: To debate the use of powerful images as a means of making people feel moved, aggravated or socially aware.  
To evaluate their possible influence on oneself and on social change.

## Activity 1:

Think of an image that has moved you/had an impact on you. How did it make you think and feel?

### WHAT DOES THE IMAGE TELLS US?

- It gives unnecessary information
- It provides inappropriate details
- The camera is too close
- It presents the enemy as a barbarian
- It is critical of the violence
- It presents the event as inevitable and as always occurring far away
- This photograph would not be shown if it had been taken somewhere nearby
- It expresses both suffering and privilege in the same image
- It draws attention to the horrors of war
- It helps in questioning government decisions

.....  
.....

### WHAT DOES THE IMAGE MAKES US FEEL?

- It seeks to provoke us
- It appeals to our conscience
- It is distressing
- It is an assault on human dignity
- It fails to respect the rights of...(family members, etc.)
- It proclaims our inefficiency

---

<sup>1</sup> Written by GASCON BAQUERO, M. C.  
GASCON BAQUERO, M.C.( 2008): *Comunicando Paz. Otros Medios de Comunicación desde el mismo laberinto*. Ed. Popular. Zaragoza. Pps.135-137. - Translated by Irene Milsom

It expresses resentment  
 It provokes indignation  
 It makes you feel that this suffering should be alleviated  
 It seems like an irremediable situation  
 It doesn't make a very big impression because...  
 It diminishes the reasons for...  
 It paints the event tragically as a part of... (life, the future)  
 It shows no sympathy for....  
 It is heartbreaking/gets at you  
 It incites curiosity  
 It scandalizes  
 It makes you feel remorse  
 .....  
 .....

## Activity 2:

### Debate Proposal:

SHOCKING IMAGES: What purpose do they serve? To what extent are they successful? How long do their effects last?

Some points for the debate:

- Witnessing the disasters that take place in other countries is part and parcel of modern life .
- The destructive nature of war is not in itself an argument against acts of war unless one believes (and few people truly believe it) that violence is always unjustifiable, that the use of force is bad in every circumstance
- The most shocking images serve to incite hate against the enemy... and people sometimes create a scene just so that journalists will capture the image and thus reap more international support
- Do shock tactics of this sort images have a limited role?
- Shocking images can become commonplace and later lose their effect...They can go unviewed...We gradually adapt and become accustomed to certain types of images...There are images whose power does not diminish, in part because they are not frequently viewed.
- The media often shows images again and again without reminding the viewer that they depict real people and real events
- There are journalists who show us clean, aseptic wars, without unpleasant images that might affect public opinion. They make no effort to strike an intimate chord or provoke disgust or repudiation.
- The “war of information” can be defined as the emotional impact caused by the information on public opinion.
- We denounce the fact that wars paralyse not only the life of a country (factories, energy sources, supply lines) but also the lives of the people, immobilised by fear, terrorism and violent coercion.

```
graph LR; A[Reality tourism is a new area for business and recreation: tours of poverty-stricken neighborhoods, visits to Chernobyl, walks through key parts of the Pol Pot regime.....] --> B[Fragments of movies like MUNICH, RESERVOIR DOGS, HOTEL RWANDA, PARADISE NOW, and BLOOD DIAMOND could also be incorporated into the debate...as well as the contributions of musical artists like Jay-Z (his documentary "WATER FOR LIFE" and other independent productions)]; B --> C[ ]
```

Reality tourism is a new area for business and recreation: tours of poverty-stricken neighborhoods, visits to Chernobyl, walks through key parts of the Pol Pot regime.....

Fragments of movies like MUNICH, RESERVOIR DOGS, HOTEL RWANDA, PARADISE NOW, and BLOOD DIAMOND could also be incorporated into the debate...as well as the contributions of musical artists like Jay-Z (his documentary "WATER FOR LIFE" and other independent productions)