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# Media Surrounding Of Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting

## Introduction

It was February 14th 2018 valentine's day, a day of a huge massacre that took place in Parkland, Florida. Students between the ages of 15-18 waking up and getting ready to go to school not knowing what they are about to face that day. Some call him mentally deranged others find it as an act of pure lunatic, but Nikolas Cruz as become one of the most talked about and atrocious 19 year old across the world. This is seemingly the result of a variety of factors coming into play, but the most evident one of them all is the power of media. . It is the most distinguished factor that has brought this interesting controversial character into the spotlight. The discourse being the "paradigms or was of understanding that are communicated through texts and language use, that organize knowledge and social power." that surrounds this controversial figure is simple but at the same time complex. The discourse that goes around concerning his ideologies is simply related to his stance in relevance to parts of his actions and how or why he decide to do what he did. When you think about a 19 year old kid, there would never be a thought of someone that would be willing to shoot up a high school to gain amusement out of that. Question arise to how does one deal with a gun violence and how has media helped in scenarios like this. What has been the after math of this shooting, will it ever end are all questions that need to answered can be expressed through the of media.

## Narrative/Story

Nickolas Cruz's discourse has a story behind it and this story can otherwise be referred to as a narrative. According to the textbook, a narrative is a "sequence of events taking place over a given period of time that are linked, mainly through cause and effect". Cruz's narrative is a complex one, there is a lot of perception that goes behind his shooting, Why did he do it?, What was his motive behind it?. Who were his targets? etc. To gain the answers to this one would have to look at the publicized parts of his life and actually get a grasp of his upbringing. Cruz was orphan whose parents had passed away but he was adopted by Roger and Lynda Cruz. His adoptive mom had passed away 3 months before the shooting and his dad in 2004 and Cruz has been living with family friends. He was an individual that faced behavioral changes and by Washington Post "entrenched in the process for getting students help rather than referring them to law enforcement". This young man was moved school six times in three years to deal with his problems. This narrative in Nikolas Cruz case, he and his use of guns has irrupted the new media and the media are responsible for giving rise to the discourse he adopts

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in his narrative. The narrative is made and brought up around Cruz because he is the reason the media has circle the news globally. As the society wants to figure out why this had happened it is evident in this scenario to get a glimpse of two different perspectives. One side is shown from the shooter himself Nikolas Cruz and his methods behind the shooting. Everything up to the shooting is shown from his perspective. The aftermath is shown form the victim's side. For example news interviews were done with the victims and families side. In the Douglas High narrative, it is safe to say that there are different groups of people that affect the narrative in a variety of ways. We have the shooter himself that creates the narrative. The victims that were faced by this horrifying tragedy, police officers reporting to the scene, families of the students and the news reporters that were at the scene to cover the media.

## New Media

We live in a world were social media evolves one way or another. Talking about new media plenty options come to mind. Snapchat is one the new medias that has taken flight. One of the best ways to let friends and families know what events are taking place in your life quickly and efficiently. Through the effect of digitization being the “universal language that unite different communities around the globe”, student from the shooting has been able to share Cruz's discourse with a wide variety of people and this is easily seen in the creation of media. Relating it back to the Douglas high shooting these high school students tend to rely on snapchat to let everyone know there is an active shooter in school. One horrifying video recovered by the news station showing kids screaming and loud guns fires in the distance. When they upload it on their stories, more people around the world or in their friend circles were aware there is a shooting happening so people who watched their stories could have called the police right away. Social media is changing and so are the young generation's minds. Everybody wants to be famous nowadays, and there is no limit to what some people will do to receive that fame. This new age of media has given people the platform to post whatever they feel like posting without any censors. Being famous matters more than their morals. For example Cruz had his own YouTube channel, this itself was a red flag as the contents he would post would be related to his guns. He had nickname called the “school shooter” surprisingly this wasn't a problem for his viewers. Not only was he active on YouTube but also Instagram. Cruz's friends say that he tends to post pictures with guns and knives, with captions such as “fuck you all” or post a picture with a knife and caption it “Its blue”. While scrolling through the comments you start to realize how much, an individual like Cruz was hated on and why he didn't fit well with his fellow students. Nowadays kids are being brought up in a world where they are exposed to violence one way or another. For example video games such as first person shooters or Grand Theft Auto are all rated PG13 games, yet parents allow their kids to play those games because it's hard for them to say no when they keep asking for it. TV shows influences majority of the young kids, such as 13 reasons why where the plot line is about a girl who commits suicide. In a way Cruz may have decide to kill people for the fame because the cameras would have been on him and he would

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be talked about nationally because of his norms and doings.

## Celebrity

Celebrities aren't just humans nowadays they are known as role models to majority ratio of people. They are capable to influences people in many ways including the negatives. Some celebrities even influence kids' minds to follow them or to be like them, which in other words means be famous. "A well-known, highly visible public figure whose private life and public appearances frequently attract the media spotlight, often for reason other than their professional standing or abilities", if we are talking about the shooting only one person's life has been in the media spotlight. The victims were remembered but will be soon forgotten apart from their families and loved once. The name Douglas high will be remembered has the school in Florida that was shot up by 19 year old teenager named Nikolas Cruz. The spotlight is basically is handed to the shooter, has he is the main topic of discussion. Newspapers, News channels, articles interviews all involve one name and if not his name, people will remember the name Cruz when its related back to the topic of "school shooting." Even after the massacre, the main focus has been on Cruz and news station wanted what is new on Nikolas Cruz. Questions such as why he did what he did, or how long is he serving in jail, what is his verdict for this. There was a follow up according to CNN were they showed Cruz in custody telling the police officer "he wanted to me to do it" while making a gun out of his finger and pointing it to his chest and head. In that same video we also see Nikolas's brother talking to him and Cruz breaking down crying while repeating the same thing "he wanted me to do it" probably referring to the devil.

## Dominant Ideology and Hegemony

When thinking of hegemony it would all fall in with the aftermath of the Douglas High shooting. Students going on protest holding up their posters that have hegemonic meanings behind them. As the MELBETA article states "It feels as if it's been much longer, as we've grown used to news cycles measured in minutes, and hard conversations about American gun culture tend to collapse after the latest victims are buried." While posters are being help with words that say "Prayers and thoughts don't save life, gun reframe will". Showing the power of a hegemonic poster. "A world view that supports the ruling class as dominant, the status quo, yet shared by the majority of people". In this case majority of the society started to protest for gun control, students grieving for their friends life all stepped up to make a change in this modern world. Another perfect example that fits this scenario would be the movement of Emma Gonzales as she has brought up multiple matters and business into the media's eyes so that the government is aware of the main problem. It's not the shooter it's the right of a shooter owning a gun.

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## Ideologies of Gender

When we think of active shooters anywhere in the world the first instinct would be to think of a male rather than a female. Media has convinced us to believe that was as well, due to the fact that majority of the school shooters in the 21st century have been males. In regards to that the school shooting, males tend to be more attracted to guns and violence in general such as fighting rather than majority of the females. This can go way back to the everyone's child hoods, as kids boys tend to like toy guns, action figures and they use their imagination to let them roam free. Whereas girls are more into barbie dolls, mini kitchen sets where their imagination doesn't allow them to cross over with violence. "The physical body-the hormones, inherent instincts, and genetic predispositions etc.-defines the essence of identity and determines personality characteristics behavior and abilities". In relevance to the school shooting police officers right away doubted it was a male shooter in a red hoodie and blue jeans. As one police officers speaks over the radio "I think it's a male in red top and blue jeans". In relations to that, it is evident throughout witness's videos of panic, it is seen from their yelling and screaming "there is a guy shooting our school", when in reality these students are hiding due to protocol not knowing who the shooter is. "Sees identity as constructed by external social forces such as the media family education, religion and expectations of community members". Emma Gonzalez a Parkland survivor activist stand up for her and friends by outbreaking the media. A female with such power and compassion to make a change for gun violence. Has been on propogandas such as Obama's HOPE poster, this young lady has been the aftermath face of the Parkland shooting. In relations to Nikolas Cruz himself, the shooting was not targeted at a specific gender because he didn't have a particular motive behind it. It was just who ever came in his way would have been shoot and in the list of the people killed there were both and female.

## Ethnicity, Ideology and the Media

In terms of ethnicity and media it goes in relation to all the other world problems that has occurred. "A policy or a critical concept that celebrates unity in diversity by bringing together a range of cultural groups within a larger identity or community without privileging one culture over another". Nicolas Cruz is a Caucasian male who decided to shoot up a high school and media and other sources believed it to be as an act of an individual who is mentally challenged and is physically unstable to take care of himself. Media would not have portrayed this story the same way if it was a brown individual who might have been Muslim. Instead this would have been considered an act of terrorism, or one religion resenting another. Media would have blown up thinking this is another terrorist attack. The Oxford Living dictionary definition of terrorism is "The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians." In regards to this high school shooting what differentiates Nickolas Cruz from a terrorist? What differentiate this

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Caucasian male from a brown or black? The answer is regardless everyone in that school was facing terror that day, media will never post it as an act of terrorism due to the ethnicity of the individual constructing the criminal activity. As police officers said to CNN “It was an act of troubled young man fighting with his conscience.” Where as if it was a different ethnicity like a brown male, it would have probably been he was related to Al Keddah in a case of a black individual it would have been, he was part of a gang. According to the NPO article “Black students at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School held a press conference last week to tell the world that the response to the February shooting — increased school policing — does not make them safer and, in fact, harms them”, different ethnic students have come together to bring awareness.

## Postmodernism

As a result of the general discourse surrounding Stoneman Douglas high, one would classify Cruz as a postmodernist type of individual. Postmodernism is an argument that states that “a shift that was driven by economic changes is changing the world and its culture”. As mentioned already the definition stated earlier was used in the past tense, so it normal to assume that with the passage of time, the change of a societies culture is not tied down to economic factors alone, because individuals usually retain with different styles of cultural production that is constantly being evolved. For example Americans have the title to own a licensed gun. The gun control act of 1968 allows anybody over the age of 18 years old to purchase a fire arm. An 18 year can be easily influenced into purchasing a fire arm. Not knowing the consequences of what a fire arm can do, will end up in massive destruction. Gun control is something that needs to be taken very seriously in America. The crisis Americans faces according to Support the Guardian article states “To address the crisis of gun homicide, suicide and injury that leaves about 38,000 Americans dead and 116,000 wounded each year”. School shooting occurs often in America, parents and families are scared to send their children to school not knowing if they will come back. Media as also convinced that due to an events geographical status the seriousness of gun violence matters. For example if this school shooting or someone was to get shoot, it would matter a lot more if it was in neighbourhood that's not use to violence yet. Where as if it was in cities where violence is common the media does not pay much attention to it. This is where the stories go blinded by society due to media not covering the seriousness of every gun violence.

## Culture Jamming and Counter Hegemony

In the Stoneman Douglas high shooting the active followers have made use of certain concepts such as Culture Jamming being “a form of media activism that subverts and reworks the intended meaning of existing media text, or parodies major corporation, public figures, and their media images”. Fake news immersed that Emma Gonzales who ripped up the shooting target

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to make a statement towards the school shootings in regards to asking America when will the shooting stop. This photo was photo shopped into making it look like she was ripping up the US constitution. This goes to show how there is never an end to violence. Photoshopping that creates more conflicts, and the media made it big regardless the fact that is a fake photoshopped image. Gonzales is a very strong independent women who is an activist for her school shooting she went publicly and spoke out the truth about the poster.

## Conclusion

To summarize Stoneman Douglas High shooting and its relation to media, it somewhat puts into play the full power of different aspects of media, this can be seen in terms of broadcast being “a means of media transmission that makes information available to a broad spectrum of the population”. In terms of school shootings it has hit the media and has brought awareness to America in general and the people won’t stop until something has been done to in order to stop gun violence. This school shooting like any other is just a warning for what future holds if serious actions has not be put in place soon. Finally media, “the technological developed communication industries normally making money, that can transmit information and entertainment across time and space to individuals and large groups of people they are literally in the middle of this process, the means for communication” has heavily shined light on the Stoneman Douglas High shooting and Nikolas Cruz in the sense that this stories discourse would not have been recognized if not for media coming into play.

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