

# Book review on photographys impact on the world

[Design](#), [Photography](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Importance of photography](#) \n \t
3. [Challenges experienced by photographers](#) \n \t
4. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
5. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Introduction**

Photography, undoubtedly more than any other medium, is symbolic of the nature of the modern western societies and is widely practiced. Photography is often employed in various fields including manufacturing, business, mass communication, art, science, as well as recreational purposes. Ansel Adams argued “ people do not take a photograph; they make it.” Adams contends that it is important to put much effort while taking an image (Bryant 1996 p 29). Photographs are primarily concerned with appearances and through photos, the past blends well into the present (Bryant 1996 p 24). It is through images captured by the camera that we can gain a glimpse of one’s subconscious mind. Sontag argues that the proliferation of photos into the society has led to the cheapening of real life experiences (Sontag 2001 p 51). Through discussing melancholic objects, Sontag can show a correlation between surrealism and photography, both of which inherently focus on the extremes of nature, society and emotions.

Photography can be viewed as being inherently surreal because the logical

distinction between what is real and what is imaginary tends to disappear (Sontag 2001 p 11). Photography is a representation of the “ real” but it is not the actual real. Therefore, surrealism indeed lies at the heart of any photographic enterprise because it creates a duplicate world. (Bryant 1996 p. 44). In one of her essays, “ In Plato’s cave”, Sontag argues that the photography is a false way of relating to the world. She claims that pictures might be flawed hence falsely interpreted. The surrealism of photographs is evident when Sontag contends that photos are false images. In Plato’s allegory, the prisoners in a cave can view shadows of objects cast on the wall due to a fire whereas such photos may be unreal. Sontag, therefore, condemns photography since the prisoners in the cave can view the shadows that are distinct from the real objects.

Conversely, the images taken might be deceptive hence fail to represent the actual situation on the ground. It is probably due to the technological techniques applied to make them look more appealing to the eyes. In surreal photography, the photographers construct the details of the photo so as to present the impossible. Nonetheless, Sontag claims that the photography has enabled surrealism to take over modern sensibility.

Sontag vividly discusses how reality might be perceived, and knowledge gained. Sontag skillfully views photography as an industry, a tool and also as an activity that “ imposes one's way of seeing” thus altering reality. Sontag asserts that aside from leveling everything, photography also beautifies. For example subjects such as death, war, drought and pollution are usually melancholic subjects in nature; however, photography has a tendency of making it look esthetically pleasing (Sontag 2001 p 124). Therefore, certain

situations might be saddening in reality but when the same situations are viewed in the form of images, the magnitude of damage may be overlooked. According to Sontag, taking a photograph involves “ appropriating the thing photographed”. In this case, appropriation means stealing without necessarily touching. Sontag claims the photography is an aggressive act that makes reality manageable. Additionally, photos are an illusion of knowledge since they provide second- hand experiences.

In her book “ On photography”, Susan explicitly articulates her views on the role of photography in the capitalist societies since 1970s. Her views are based both on history and also in the present day. Sontag establishes “ individuals who seek to record on the whole do not intervene” (Sontag 2001 p 24). Photographers usually take photos the way they appear. For example: While taking pictures of people in drought infested areas, the photographer is usually keen not to make any alterations and tries to present the image the way it is. It is imperative not to make any modifications in order to communicate the right information to the viewers (Bryant 1996 p 164). Consequently, in order to get the perfect shot, must some distance between the subject and the photographer. Hypothetically, photography often implements the surrealist mandate to take on an uncompromisingly egalitarian attitude towards the subject matter (Bryant 1996 p 114). Photographs furnish the necessary evidence that is required for various purposes. People hear certain things but the facts are proven when photographs are presented.

Different photographs can be used to represent surrealism. The paper will however focus on four photographs that were established by the following

photographers. Namely: Diane Arbust, Lewis Carroll, Ghitta Carell and Cecil Beaton. Diane's well-known photograph is that of a child who had a toy hand grenade in a central park. The picture shows the left strap of the child's jumper awkwardly hanging off his shoulder. The child tensely holds a toy grenade in his right hand and then holds his left hand in a claw-like gesture. Lewis Carrol took photographs of young girls who appeared sad whereas this might not be the case in reality. Cecil Beaton incorporated the use of strong shadows in his work while capturing the images of the royal family. Ghitta Carell's pictures appeared flawless since she retouched the double chins and wrinkles hence concealing the reality in the images (Sontag 2001 p 77).

## **Importance of photography**

People from separate parts of the world can view different images through the internet. The above enables them to appreciate photography better since they can access the pictures of events or occurrences that they did not witness. The use of photography also enhances journalism and makes media more exciting, enjoyable and memorable (Bryant 1996 p 36). People are more persuaded to remember a story if they can remember the image that goes with it (Sontag 2001 p 55). Photography also enhances a reading culture among individuals because people are usually more inclined to read if pictures exist in articles that interest them. Therefore, photography plays a major role in entertaining; educating and informing the readers (Bryant 1996 p 86). Also, there are disadvantaged groups of people who receive assistance due to photography. For example, people in war torn areas may get help if their pictures are aired in the media. Photographers incorporate emotion in order to make the images more interesting hence pictures that

contain emotion are far easier to focus on (Bryant 1996 p 63). Photographers are also capable of evoking certain emotions from the viewer if they include techniques such as colors, different lighting and perfect shooting angles. Interestingly, photography also confers importance on the subject and gives them a sense of satisfaction (Bryant 1996 p 115).

### **Challenges experienced by photographers**

The photographers might be faced with different challenges while trying to execute their mandate. One of the challenges is that of costs since the technology that is required to acquire good pictures is expensive. Also, the lenses found on the low-end point of the cameras may be limiting. The photographer is then limited to the capabilities of the lenses in his or her camera. There might also be equipment failures since dust particles might get into the digital camera and lodge themselves into the sensor hence hamper image quality (Bryant 1996 p 164).

### **Conclusion**

Photography indeed plays a role in shaping the society hence improving the quality of life. Susan explicitly articulates her views on the role of photography in the capitalist societies since 1970s. Her views are based both on history and also in the present day. The use of photography enhances journalism and makes media more interesting, enjoyable and memorable. Past discoveries and innovations can be portrayed to the present generation through photography. Also, images of ancient legends and scholars can be seen through photography. Photography, therefore, brings back fond memories. Inasmuch as the image is essential to the cultural impact of the

camera, knowing an experience by just seeing it photographed insufficient. Information concerning the images should also be acquired so as to understand the images better. Nevertheless, photography is an exciting way of exploring the world. Photographers should effectively use their tools in order to acquire photographs that are unique and exude personal expressions. However, people should indulge in photography with an aim of improving other people's lives.

## **Works Cited**

Bryant, Marsha. Photo-textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press [u. a., 1996. Print.

Sontag, Susan. On Photography. New York: Picador USA, 2001. Internet resource.