

# Mitchell essay summary literature review sample

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W. J. T Mitchell's (1996) essay entitled "What Pictures Really Want" focuses on the rhetorical and interpretative dominance of pictures both in arts history and visual culture. There is an element communication and symbolic representation in every photo and the question of what they mean constitutes an exploration of its connection to human emotions and behavior. In relation to Agee and Evan's work, the essay brings about the thought of scrutinizing pictures for their deeper meaning and not just a material object dowsed with colors and shape markings. Mitchell also assimilated the different traditional attitudes that the society has on pictures, meaning the photos may present itself in totemism, fetishism and idolatry. However, she also emphasized that it is the task of our culture to decipher the underlying mysteries within the images (Mitchell 73).

That cultural demystification can be observed in Agee and Evan's work. For example, the picture showing a close frame of a man in the cover of their book appears to be just a close shot of a dress-down segment of a fashion magazine. However, looking closely and connecting the image to the rest of the pictures in the book would provide a higher thought that would bring the reader what message the image is trying to convey.

## **Works Cited**

Mitchell, W. J T. "What Do Pictures "Really" Want?" October 77 (1996): 71-82. JSTOR. Web. 17 Feb. 2013. .