

Relationship between photography and power

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



Relationship Between Photography and Power The word power is used in various ways in today's society. Dictionary.com defines power as, the ability to do or act; capability of doing or accomplishing something. The word power is repeated frequently in Sontag's essay. Most often, power is expressed in multiple ways and in Sontag's view photographs may be the most important. The relationship between photography and power can be weaved together to make a variety of opinions. Sontag's view of photography is not of an ordinary view. In fact, Sontag views photography as an art form. She views photos for its meaning and not its image. In Sontag's point of view photographs explain everything, (Sontag, 1997, p. 780), " Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we are shown a photograph of it. " This is important in Sontag's claim. The claim can be demonstrated in the case of the " lockless monster, " many people throughout the world believed the claim was true because of the photo evidence was provided. Fortunately, the claim was later proven false thanks to improvements of technology. Clearly one can see the kind of influence pictures can hold even though they could be proven bogus. A photograph has a sense of immortality versus a book in which you have to create the visual aspect. Sontag learns a photo and study's it as she can gain experience from it. The average person visualizes a photo for what it is and not what it's for or the story that comes with the photograph. This is important in Sontag's success with her writings and stance she takes on certain issues. Sontag also states that, (Sontag, 1997, 779), " collecting photographs is to collect the world" meaning, photographs are taken throughout the world and these photographs speak words. Sontag makes an

interesting statement mid way through her criticism, (Sontag, 1997, p. 784),

“ The old-fashion camera was clumsier and harder to reload than a brown Bess musket. The modern camera is trying to be a ray gun. Like guns and cars, cameras are fantasy-machines whose use is addictive. ” Her claim is very influential. It expresses two view points of Sontag’s opinions towards photos. While photographs are such valuable tools, they can become over used and even misused. Often people view life with one eye open. Enjoying the use of a camera is good and that’s what it’s there for, to capture moments one will never forget, but when your life is consumed by capturing that special moment, that is where Sontag believes the mistake lies. Sontag believes photographing is an event all to itself, (Sontag, 1997, p. 783), “ A photograph is not just the result of an encounter between an event and a photographer; picture-talking is an event in itself, and one with ever more peremptory rights-to interfere with, to invade, or to ignore whatever is going on. ” Sontag argues that a photograph is not just a result of a photographer and event meeting up. The photograph is the event, it speaks louder than words. Photographs have impacted our economy, (Sontag, 1997, 783), “ In the early 1970s, the fable of the brash American tourist of the 1950s and 1960s, rich with dollars and Babbitry, was replaced by the mystery of the group-minded Japanese tourist, newly released from his land island prison by the miracle of the overvalued yen, who is generally armed with two cameras, one on each hip. ” This shows the power of cameras and what kind of revenue it generated through tourism. Also, the impacted put forth towards a new hobby, traveling the world. Photographs have not only made an impact on our everyday lives, they have power to change them too. Paparazzi have

changed our lives and the way we may view the famous. Many celebrities' lives are destroyed by paparazzi. The invention of the camera was a positive one, but when used in a negative light it can be ever so powerful.

Photographs can be used as tools for war, demonstration, protest, and many other various things. Photographs can also save lives. With technology advancing in security and cameras simultaneously it can be a crooks worst nightmare. With a photograph comes great deal of power, fortune, and fame. Understanding Sontag's view points are very key and have helped me understand the power that photographs posses. References Susan Sontag (1997). Writing Analytically: " In Plato's Cave" from On Photography. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.