

Pause, Click: Photography, an Introductory Reading

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The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

John Berger

Abstract: Photographs are one of the most celebrated kinds of images. As a medium of representation, they arrest our attention and constantly confront us at different levels: emotional, cognitive, physical and interpersonal. The article primarily focuses on photographs as visual texts and how readers or viewers negotiate meanings from them. It attempts to analyze a set of photographs by employing the principles of critical hermeneutics. The task of hermeneutics is a continuous process to fundamentally interpret the photographs and give scope for different readings. Photography can be treated as a language, acquiring meaning through the cultural conventions, and conscious and unconscious processes, which cannot be merely reduced to subject matter, visual style and authorial intentions.

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A human being's pursuit to seek and comprehend the world around him is defined by his senses and rationality, which actively contributes to his understanding of the lived and unlived experiences. He is influenced by a wide array of political, historical, socio-economic and cultural assumptions. Apart from these defining influences, there is a sense of "visual-logo-centrism" that sets ground for a better realization of one's selves. People see and they understand. By "visual-logo-centrism", I mean people give primacy to the act of seeing whereby they construct knowledge about individuals, institutions, practices, and events. How a person sees the world around him is instrumental in exploring his relation to one another and his role in the

greater web of life. It may be seen that the sense of sight connects man to the world around him in this manner. Chris Jenks observes, “looking, seeing and knowing have become perilously intertwined” (1). Seeing as channelized through various forms enables the viewer to share knowledge of what is happening in the world.

Either by directly observing what is happening around him or by garnering information from different sources, a person perceives the world. “A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language deemed to repeat itself to us inexorably” (Wittgenstein 115). To a great extent, pictures have satiated man’s hunger for seeing and knowing which is instrumental in his quest. Pictures are images that are the primary manifestation of sight. Images have been in circulation for a long time and they help man to construct an understanding of the reality around him. Images can be any visual code from drawings to mechanical productions which appeal to our sense of sight. The basic visual expressions that an observer can recognize give a sense of transparency to images. Images represent a world to its observer and leave him with a perception of the represented idea. Its resemblance to an idea makes it different from a symbol or a word. Emmanuel Levinas observes, “An image, we can say, is an allegory of being” (121). When an observer studies an image, he grasps it as a picture and analyses it.

Photographs are one of the most celebrated kinds of images. The basic process of creating pictures by recording reflected light patterns has undergone changes with time. This art of photography as it is known helps in addressing the linguistic deficiencies of describing man’s state of existence. It underpins a knowledge foundation to the network of experience at the level of the real and the represented. As Wittgenstein observes, “...deep truths about the nature of reality and representation cannot properly be said but only shown” (qtd. in Craig 933). In due course of time, photographs opened new vistas of understanding.

The art of image writing with light, photo-graphy as it is known has gone through varied stages of growth from its early days of Camera Lucida to the heydays of digital technology. Nicephore Niepce is credited with the first permanent photographic image in 1826. It developed through the ages, but its perfection in printing

was not achieved till the 1900s. It was towards the last decades of 1800s that publication of photographs in exhibitions and other platforms found light among the photographers. Scientific progress led to the development of lasting photographs and science made the technology of photography easier. The use of celluloid films and George Eastman's Kodak revolutionized the production of photographs. The Leica Camera became popular in 1925 as it was smaller and less costlier than the Speed Graphic camera which was a favourite till then. The last decade of the 20th century saw one of the biggest leaps in photography: digitization. Films and rolls gave way to digital photographs, and darkrooms gave way to cozy comfortable workspace. In the one hundred and sixty odd years of its existence, photographs have recorded innumerable shots. Daily on an average, an ordinary person sees over ten thousand images clicked by cameras and the information is cognitively processed as he sees these images.

Photographs as a medium of representation arrest our attention and constantly confront us at different levels: emotional, cognitive, physical and interpersonal. They leave their impact on the personal and the public front through their ability to capture their surroundings and affect the sensibility of the observer. Photographs play a remarkable role in shaping world events and man's understanding of those events. "The political structure of the world would be quite different if photography had not been invented. Indeed, the very social fabric of our lives would be altered if light-sensitive film had never been put to use," observes Alma Davenport (xiii). Though their humble origins can be traced to the early pictographic drawings on the rock caves and later day images in Ancient Greece, the present day approval of photographs can be credited to the popularity of Visual Culture. This popularity stems from man's everyday preoccupation with Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies as an academic discipline developed in the 1960s and '70s in the West. It draws upon theoretical approaches from contemporary political, social and economic forces. Culture operates through a medium which is easily available to people, that is as texts, which consists of literature, other art works and everything that is comprehended under the umbrella of expressions of a way of life. In cultural studies, a tension between theory and practice is evident since both are undergoing transformation with the times. It is a live and expanding area of study. Simon During

observes that “cultural studies is, of course, the study of culture, or, more particularly, the study of contemporary culture” (1). From its early seeds sown in the 1950s in Great Britain, it bloomed through decades of pruning and sprouting. Cultural Studies enriched the understanding of lived experiences by absorbing its nutrients from the ‘whole way of life’ lived and expressed through the different cultural forms. Richard Hoggart’s Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies promoted research in this field and was a landmark institute in the growth of Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies imbibed the changing scenario of the last decades of the twentieth century and moved away from power relations to identity and value systems. Globalization changed the trajectory and with mass production and appeal, Cultural Studies became all encompassing. In contemporary Cultural Studies, the study of Visual Culture adapts an interdisciplinary approach and comprises all media that has the ability to capture our visual potential. According to Nicholas Mirzoeff, Visual Culture contains “visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology” (3). It covers ordinary and digital sources, such as images, signs, pictures, drawings, paintings, photographs, comics, films, artistic media, video games, graphics, advertising, Internet and any other source that has a visual element. Media culture affords different viewpoints, varied audiences and multiplicities. The versatility of this study spans over disciplines like cultural studies, anthropology, critical theory, philosophy etc where the prime focus is on understanding the idea of culture as expressed in the visual medium. The predominance of this phase where the visual gains significance guarantees the development of fresh paradigms for understanding photographs, what they communicate and the information they hold in the 21st century.

The focus of study in academic circles has always been streamlined towards the production, reception and effects of the texts. As Grossberg observes, these studies are “so engaging because they address people, not only intellectuals and academics.”(qtd. in Hammer x) We live in a world where technology is radically changing the way things function. It has also permeated into the nuances of visual culture. Martin Jay observes, “insofar as we live in a culture whose technological advances abet the production and dissemination of such images at hitherto unimagined level, it is necessary to focus on

how they work and what they do, rather than move past them too quickly to the ideas they represent or the reality they purport to depict. In doing so, we necessarily have to ask questions about...technological mediations and extensions of visual experience” (sic) (qtd. in Smith 183). Keeping this in mind, the present day study of visual culture takes into account the codes of cross-mediation and the scope of manipulation. The intervention of media, both print and electronic, and digital has made tremendous advancement in structuring and interpreting the visual content.

The article primarily focuses on photographs as visual texts and how readers or viewers negotiate meanings from them. Photographs help us to form a frame of reference through which one can interpret the world one sees and thereby understand and evaluate ourselves in relation to the world. It attempts to analyze a set of photographs by employing the principles of critical hermeneutics. Critical hermeneutics understood as “the art of interpretation as transformation” (Ferraris 9) affords a space for the observer to understand the text, in this context, photographs in their multiple significations. It requires a retrospective consciousness that offers opportunities for different readings of the photograph. Critical hermeneutics attempts a critiquing of the reading of photographs. “Critique is a form of political responsibility that must precede and follow any form of praxis if such praxis is not to become rigidified into purely ideological categories” (McGee 16). It can be applied to photographs at the philosophical level, drawing inputs from epistemological, aesthetic and ethical angles. In this qualitative research, understanding and interpretation holds the key as opposed to substantiation and elucidation.

Photographs act as discourse and the complexity in interpreting them lies in applying “it to ourselves” (Mc Gee 310). This critical intervention seeks to interpret meanings and the observer naturally experiences responses that range from the emotional to the intellectual, depending on his way of analysis and interpretation as it involves a human dimension. There is no single theoretical position that can explain all the ideas conveyed through a photograph. It prompts one to consider several perspectives to arrive at a better understanding and reach a consensus. With the mass penetration of photographs on various platforms, we come across many photographs, but we see only those photographs we choose to see. More than just ‘seeing’ we try to

analyze them and draw a relation between what we see on the photographs and ourselves. The task of hermeneutics is a continuous process to fundamentally interpret the photographs and give scope for different readings.

Berger writes, “our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are” (Cover page). Thus our interpretation is based on what we understand of the sight seen. A photograph translates an event for its viewers and becomes a proof of how observers have viewed the frame. The concept of provenance has been fundamental to the reading of photographs. It implies that contextual analysis is important to understand the meaning of texts. In Cultural studies, art holds values that transcend all contexts. The universality of art makes it an important resource for understanding ourselves in relation to the world. It is important to place a photograph in a particular context to decipher it, but its frames are never limited by its context. “While art should never be read as it were divorced from the social context, it also should not be reduced to that context as if content were something that determines the work from outside,” notes Patrick McGee (21). The mechanical eye gives a scope for the observer to see beyond his physical field of vision. “The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera,” observes Dorothea Lange (qtd. in Meltzer vii). It becomes essential to go beyond the visible and understand the totality of what is represented and not represented in the frame of reference. This necessitates combining both the theory of critical hermeneutics and practice of reading photographs to understand how it uncovers the unconscious, emotional, logical and strategic relevance of photographs as effective tools of communication. This will facilitate a proper analysis of photographs.

Though hermeneutics as a methodology was primarily used for theological interpretation, textual analysis also became a part of it in later years. A preliminary enquiry in international bibliographic details shows that with time, it was applied to diverse modern day branches like architecture, psychology, archaeology etc. Interpretation of photographs bears similarities and differences with interpretation of texts. Similarities arise from the fact that they “can be interpreted only by relating a particular text to discourse that gives it significance, weight as a symbol and intensity value as language-in other words, meaning” (Miles29). The point of view of the

spectator or reader or interpreter is also of primary concern. Unlike interpretation of theological books, where interpretations tend to be definitive, the visual signs give the viewer a certain level of freedom to interpret.

The universality of image accounts for the different meanings that the photographs acquire. The universality of the image rests on "...the capacity of the viewer to grasp in the concrete particularity of the image a universal affectivity. The image defines a particular constellation of affective energy that is not foreign to the viewer but that has not, until her encounter with this image, been formulated in quite this way. The universality of the image thus depends on an act of recognition by each viewer. The universality of an image lies in its potential affective availability to everyone who contemplates it with generosity and self-reflection." (Miles³⁰) At times depending on the interpreter's bias, the universal approach can be limiting. The image throws possibilities for multiple interpretations, but the spectator unconsciously picks on the interpretation according to his choice.

A photograph always has a dominant function. It acts as a code that is channeled between the sender and receiver in a particular context. The function, as pointed out by Roman Jakobson in another context can be borrowed here and termed as referential, aesthetic, emotive, connotative, phatic or metalingual. In order to understand photographs we need to make an "intergraphic" analysis, meaning, analyzing what is at the intersections of the graphic, semiotic, metaphysical and ethical interpretations. Thus re-phrasing Jakobson, we can say that there is principle of convergence of several axes and a simultaneous dispersal of these axes from the photograph. In developing this notion, we have two operations that work on photographs - condensation and displacement that manifest the contents of the photograph. Every photograph stands for several associations and ideas, thus serving as a condensed text, open to convergence of different readings. There also exists a simultaneous displacement into several axes, separating the emotional, ethical, metaphysical and political significance from its real content.

The life-world of photographs affords a more comprehensive understanding of its dimensions, incorporating the event, its representation and a moral standing. The

representation might be the nearest approximation and the moment captured in the photograph is just a gateway to the event. Broadly classifying, there are two major entry points for reading photographs, at the formal and ethical level. The formal approach includes the new mode of analysis called “intergraphics” that I have arrived at. This can be combined with an ethical reading of the photographs.

This study proposes to analyse the photographs using the methodology of critical hermeneutics by extending the explanatory paradigms of epistemology, aesthetics and ethics: epistemologically, in the choice of its mode of representation; aesthetically, in the choice of a narrative strategy; and ethically, in the choice of ideological implication so as to comprehend the current social problems.

Photographs have been read and re-read based on the insights gained from major theorists of culture and representation. Different angles of analyzing photographs have been dealt by them in different contexts. But a study based on a single theorist would prove to be reductive. Roland Barthes elaborates on the semiotics of visual images which can be used in the analysis of photographs. In *Camera Lucida*, he writes about the essence of the photographic image. He raises an important question, are photographs communicating impressions of reality? Barthes observes, “the photograph’s immobility is somehow the result of a perverse confusion between two concepts: the Real and the Live: by attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value, but by shifting this reality to the past (this-has-been) the photograph suggests that it is already dead (79). Photographs bear testimony to the event when they serve as evidence, familiarizing and defamiliarizing the event at the same time.

Judith Butler takes forward Susan Sontag’s analysis when she brings in the concept of ethical representation and perceptible reality. The question of interpretation in the light of art and politics gain significance from an ‘emancipated’ spectator’s point of view, trying to analyze the aesthetics of photographs, conveying trauma. Moving from Jacques Ranciere, the ‘how’ of seeing becomes equally important as put forward

by John Berger. John Tagg's analysis suits the concept of total view of reality getting substituted and the cultural representation of photographs.

The camera as an ideological construct can be contrasted in a philosophical interpretation of Vilem Flusser and Walter Benjamin. Flusser identifies three players: the Apparatus-the camera, the functionary-the photographer and the technical image-the photographic surface, which work in a complementary way to cultivate the observer's understanding. In Walter Benjamin's writings, he contended that images of public events merit attention because they offer a compact moral guide for future reference. If we fail to recognize the image as one of our own concerns of the present times, "it threatens to disappear irretrievably" (Illuminations 257). The idea of photographic image as a strip frozen in time and space has been abandoned long ago; adopting far more complicated concepts of what the image is, taking into account the many orders of magnitude.

At the level of epistemology, photographs are comprehended in terms of nature and scope of knowledge they afford. There are larger forces at play in the increasingly technical and automated world. We have reached a stage where seeing photographs is not just believing. The spectator must be aware of the different arms at work in production of an image: the photographer, the photograph, the spectator, an overt and covert ideology. Only a detached view will give a clear understanding of the event

In an age before photography, people were resistant "to believing in the past, in History, except in the form of myth." However photography put an end to this resistance; "henceforth the past is as certain as the present, what we see on paper is as certain as what we touch" (*Camera Lucida* 87-8), observes Barthes. This has been the basis of understanding the epistemological point of view of photographs for a long while. What is photographed and saved for eternity reaches out to the observer. As Barthes believes, the power of the photograph rests in the emanation of a referent: "from a real body, which was there, proceeds radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here" (qtd. in Wallach 212). The moment captured into the photographic image becomes a relic of both the presence and absence of the moment.

It follows that ways of seeing are more important than seeing the photograph. Fellow mortals are culturally represented in photographs. John Berger elucidates the ways of seeing these impressions in his *Ways of Seeing*. The representations of men and women in this medium of visual culture entice different “gazes” from the spectator. Beyond this, every photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality. Rather than being a guarantor of realism, the camera is itself a production.

Cameras become an ideal arm of consciousness of the photographer and photographs subsequently produced become knowledge and power. There is always a possibility of resistance created by any system of power and knowledge. It makes the critic ponder if the deconstruction of prevalent assumptions of traumatic photographs helps him to identify those photographs as embodying the possibility of resistance. The myriad availability of images helps us to construct the whole world in our mind. But its mass production makes it available to all those who have means to attain them which familiarizes the victims and removes the shock of such traumatic photographs. At times, over exposure benumbs the audience and slowly move the trajectory from being more real to less real. But at the same time, as Sontag notes, through representation, they “usurp reality”(“The Image World” 80) and hence cut out an important understanding of the event.

Understanding a photograph becomes more important than the photograph itself in the ideological struggle. Where does one pledge their support after seeing politically active photographs? The observer establishes his stand based on his ‘environment’. An analysis of the traumatic photographs for questions like who possessed the means to represent and who has been represented reveal its immense implications in the issues of political, cultural, social and sexual domination. Ranciere argues against the idea that a revolutionary act is located within the artwork itself, instead he argues that revolution exists prior to the work of art. Any photographs from politically turbulent justify this statement. Moreover, at one level, the revolutionary impetus exists with the observer, in his or her chance to view a work of art versus the work as such in itself. The whole point lies in the spectator’s way of interpretation where each and every observer

emerges as an “emancipated spectator.” This insists upon the creativity of the spectator which provides him or her with the capability to interpret.

Nowadays, the creation of photographs refers to the creation of ideas. Previously, ideas were interpreted by written documents. Accepting these photographs and assuming them to be true, and not bothering about its possibility of endless replication, is positive on one side as it accepts its worldwide presence. But at the same time it warns us of a rising case of visual illiteracy as a result of uncritical trust in photographic “reality”. So it is important to ask ourselves where we place ourselves as observers of traumatic photographs.

An alternate point of analysis is the aesthetics of traumatic photographs, where technical aspects of photographs are important. Traumatic photographs become factual photographs with an aura of realism attached to it. As tools of documentation produced by different photographers, they do not vary much in depiction unlike ordinary photographs where the characteristics solely depend on technicalities. The change in camera position, camera angle, focal length of the lens, light and length of exposure which usually adds a signature to photographs may be lacking in traumatic photographs which are clicked under severe conditions of pain and horror. These somewhat identical images (in terms of technical differences) vary slightly only in certain respects like distance, focus, exposure and perspective. The portrayal of trauma depends on compositional practice which is heightened by factors like number, gaze and placement.

An image is directly caused by the light reflected off it and it attains a special value because of the features of personalities or events or the moment it represents. One of the most appealing formulations of the quality of photograph as visual semiotics was elaborated by Roland Barthes. He took off from Charles Sanders Pierce’s identification of the three fundamental types of meaning. Every photograph acts at 3 levels: the index, the icon, and the symbol. The traumatic photographs taken here also have an indexical meaning, iconic status and a symbolic standing.

There is agony in front of the camera and the photograph captures the act at the moment of its execution. But in *The Future of the Image*, Ranciere elaborates that art and politics have always been intrinsically linked. This is very evident in representation

of the agent and agency in photographs of political unrest, conflict zones and war. The passive spectator who observes these traumatic photographs ignore their production and the reality these photographs conceal is supposed to represent the betrayal of art's political efficacy. Were these photographs staged? Thus aesthetics cannot be seen as a Utopian principle that articulates the sensuous with the conceptual, but as a process of 'dis-identification' developed by the photographer and the observer. The aesthetic becomes political in that it allows the individuals a divorce from their prescribed functions. In this light, analyzing traumatic photographs will be different for different people.

Photographs as an experience add another dimension to the interpretation of photography. It is an experience captured where reality is interpreted selectively by the photographer. The perpetrators of the crime might not be seen in a photograph. It will be the victims or the agents or agencies who are covered. It is just one side of the picture. Knowing the other side is also equally important. This understanding is essential in reaching a consensus in reading the photographs.

Another concern is the present day proliferation of these images that has established a "new visual code." It establishes within people, what Sontag calls "chronic voyeuristic relation" to the world around them. It fosters an attitude of "anti-intervention", that is, the individual who records cannot intervene and the one who intervenes cannot then faithfully record (Kennedy 79). Every traumatic photograph needs to address this issue and the way in which they have de-sensitized the audience as well.

In a similar light, one needs to analyze what it means to be ethically responsive to such traumatic photographs. It makes us conceptualize how the frames of representation affect the spectator's responsiveness. The question is not only how effective we are in responding to suffering at a distance but also in formulating a set of percepts that might work to safeguard lives. We can formulate our articulation on these photographs based on a field of 'perceptible reality'. Butler asserts that traumatic photographs are not just visual images awaiting interpretation, but such photographs are actively interpreting themselves. It opens the restrictions on interpreting reality to

critical scrutiny. But are we interpreting these photographs on lines that have been imposed upon us? The ethics of perception is essential in identifying the field of representability, that is what can be represented and what cannot. In a sense, these photographs construct an identity that needs to be studied.

Taking this study to another level makes us analyse the role played by these photographs. In the first place, why are we discussing them? Has it become a part and parcel of the event, calling our attention to it? How do we respond to such traumatic photographs? Can we stay desensitized? We can answer these questions one by one. The role of photographs as historical markers makes their discussion essential. They become points of reference and evidence to which we often focus our attention. Photographs continue to keep discussion forums alive because they generate an interpretation, pave way for memory and become a narrative. Miriam Hansen observes that no historical moment will ever again escape its simultaneous role as an event and image, memory and potential arena for debate. (*With Skin and Hair: Kracauer's Theory of Film* n. pag.). Photographs become a medium for interpreting the events. Joel Snyder in "Picturing Vision" develops the idea about conception of image as an integral and strategic respondent and creator of historical discourses. What we understand of the event is how we interpret the photograph. We make a reading based on our political, social and cultural making. At the same time, we are also viewing the event through the photographer's eye which is working through the camera's eye. The photographer sets the angle for representation and decides what to contain in the frame and what not to. As Butler observes, it is this frame that takes part in the "active interpretation" of the event. But to echo Slavoj Zizek, are photographs inadequate in explaining reality as they become merely the approximate of the 'real'. It is on these grounds that photographs need to be shown as markers of the event.

Generally, ethics is an innate understanding of how things should be done. It is formulated by understanding the lived experience of real people in context. The guiding principles attempt to be coherent and self-explanatory. From Aristotle to the postmodernists, from natural law to virtue theory, there have been separate bodies of ethics, often not encompassing a whole truth but rather a general totality. This ethical grounding is a way of perceiving the response to traumatic photographs.

The response to these photographs becomes more critical than the photograph itself. What is expected is not an observation alone. There is not only a “way of seeing” but also a “way it should affect”. The ethical dimension cannot be ignored in such traumatic photographs. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy is of the opinion that observers gain a mental, physical and real strength from these photographs (qtd. in Burnett 13). The strength lies in our urge to respond to a situation beyond our control and reach. The depiction of horror forces us to react. To Edelman, from a neurobiological perspective, they are ‘never free of affect’ (170). They make the world united in sentiments, but divided in action. The initial rage is often watered by its frequent display in other media sources. One should learn to move beyond a ‘sadistic voyeurism’ and to construct an emotional bonding that calls for action. “As the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas claims, it is the face of the other that demands from us an ethical response...” observes Butler (“The Torture and Ethics of Photography” 77). The question is where the observer places himself/herself in response to the image. If we place ourselves in the victim’s position and try to understand the “suffering body”, each image becomes an instrument of alertness. The nameless and unknown victims make a silent plea through these photographs. It strikes a chord with the observer, calling for action.

Sara Ahmed observes that the sentiment of compassion ‘sticks’ to the individuals and converts them into ‘objects of feeling and sentiment’ (89). Our relationship to the victims has been ‘sentimentalised’ in these photographs. The embodiment of suffering in these photographs establishes its mission when the message is conveyed to the spectator. Pramod K. Nayar suggests that such traumatic events are capable of initiating a response in the observer as it affects them. His concept of ‘Scar Culture’ addresses how the observer responds with specific emotions to such visual inputs of suffering. Our response should not be mis-directed by sheer ‘commodification of suffering’ which is quite marketable. As Bataille suggests, we grasp a point of life in these photographs. To stay de-sensitized and stop responding is to become inhuman. Life moves on. If we fail to act or at least stay alert, we fail as fellow beings. As Sontag puts it, photographs act as an invitation “to pay attention, reflect...examine the rationalizations for mass suffering observed by established powers” (117).

Thus interpretations of a photograph can be examined through different angles in association with critiques of realism. Photography can be treated as a language, acquiring meaning through the cultural conventions, and conscious and unconscious processes, which cannot be merely reduced to subject matter, visual style and authorial intentions. “With photography a new language has been created. Now for the first time it is possible to express reality by reality,” (qtd. in Chapnick 257) comments Ernst Haas in *Truth Needs No Ally*. Photographic meaning is not natural, universal or intrinsic to the image, but socially produced, not only at the point of production, but also of reception. Photographs, which are basically images should not be ‘theorized’ in the abstract, but rather investigated as part of specific material culture. Truly, traumatic photographs will have more to say. Aesthetic, epistemological and ethical approaches to the study of traumatic photographs serve as a foundation for critically interpreting the text in its differences. A critical hermeneutics guarantees the economy of the photographs. The positioning of a stand pertains to the publication of the photograph and its marketing agency. But, there is nothing like an immovable and obstinate point of view. Likewise, each traumatic photograph is open to variegated interpretations.

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