

PALESTINIAN MUSLIMS PRESENTATION IN PHOTOGRAPHY: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHS

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ABSTRACT

War photography presents the hidden meaning and the living experiences which are not shown in routine media streams. The study presents the living experiences presented through pictures. Rose 's model (2001) of semiotics analysis is used to describe the living experiences of the Palestinian people. The study illustrated the different viewpoints as personal perspective, historical perspective, cultural perspective, technical perspective and critical perspective intended to be encompassed in the picture. The study revealed the distress feelings of the war zone people which present that they are far away from the standard life.

Keywords: Palestinian Muslims, War Photographs, Semiotics Analysis,

INTRODUCTION

Language encompasses the complete spectrum of cultural artifacts and media that we use to both generate and communicate meaning. Regarding this, photos are used to communicate ideas without the arbitrary and abstract intermediate of syntactic language. Most people do not consider this to be a part of a learnt process. Additionally, we see images as being lifelike by nature. In this study, the model introduced by Rose will be used to conduct analytical analysis of the battle photos (2001). relating to how meaning is perceived through images According to Davey (1992), it is intrinsically linked to our belief in technology and the unbiased knowledge it generates. By using a systematic approach for analysis, this study will aid in understanding the process of meaning creation through photos.

War is a singular fact of human history that has persisted from the Stone Age to the present. There are numerous, dynamic ideas that draw from different approaches and techniques. The main moral and material truth of the century is that wars result in massive casualties, whether through genocidal conflict, firebombing of cities, the establishment of concentration camps, nuclear explosions, or hedonistic individual bloodbaths (Keane, 1996).

In such cases, it is obvious that images, even when based on captions, do not always represent the truth or the facts. Prior to the invention of photography, wars were depicted on canvas. The heroic artwork was not an accurate representation of what took place because it was created long after the conflict and by an artist who had rarely seen the events. Now, from that vantage point, war photography has aided in highlighting the realism and suffering of war to those who live far from the conflict (Kritin, et, al. 2018). It is crucial to gain foundation knowledge for this topic because it examines combat imagery through the prism of linguistics.

Statement of the Problem:

Occupied nations have to live under the artificial shocks and disasters which lead their lives towards imbalance. As the picture presents more meanings than the words so the living situation can be far better understood and the intended meanings can be more exposed through presentation of the pictures.

Research Objectives:

- To present the life living experiences of Palestinian people presented in the photographs.

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Research Questions:

1. How the Palestinian's life is presented in the war photography?

Significance of the Study:

The study enables us to understand the different perspectives of a picture in the sense of history, personal observation, cultural representation, technical illustration and geographical view. The study makes enable to understood the lives of Palestinian and their meanings of pains through war photography.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is believed that the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure created semiotics (Culler, 1977). The writings of American Pragmatism Charles Pierce and Charles Morris, along with Saussure, laid the theoretical groundwork for semiotics (Cullum-Swan, Manning, 1994). While Berger claims that semiology was discovered by American linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and semiotics by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, both of these fields deal with the interpretation of signs. As the "science of signs," semiotics develops concepts and interpretations that enable a systematic investigation of the symbolic world (Culler, 1977).

According to social semioticians, social relations, social structure, and beliefs are comparable to or akin to the grammatical building blocks of language. This semiotic view contends that all aspects of human communication are actually displays of signs, much like a text that can be "read." There is still debate on the significance of semiotics and its applicability to the use of linguistic analogies in social study. In the human mind, a symbol is something that stands in for another thing. Expression and content are the two components that make up a sign. Expression can take the form of a sound, symbol, or word, while content completes the meaning of expression (Hjemslev & Whitefield, 1961). For example, the lily represents death, Easter, or the Resurrection, while smoke represents smoking or cancer. These numerous connections between expression and content are arbitrary and social in nature. It is said that the entire process of connecting expression and substance is social and relies on the viewpoints of the observers. Because it requires interpretation or context, a symbol is insufficient on its own. The specific event's context gives it both content and expression. As a result, signs would alter their meaning based on interpretation. Always another interpretation can be placed behind a social world characteristic or concept. Since there is no reality behind or underneath a sign, this has given rise to the extreme notion that there is no such thing as the real world. In essence, semiotics is interested in anything that may be analyzed in relation to a sign or taken as a sign itself.

The majority of war images have an overarching emotional theme, both in terms of the feelings that the actors in the images are expressing and the emotions that viewing images evokes in viewers. According to the semiotic analysis, these pictures all have pain, suffering, and death in common. The audience has strong negative emotions to the images, leading to the possibility that they are "icons of indignation," as Perlmutter puts it (Lovelace, 2010). Another recurring topic that emerges from the semiotic analysis is innocence. People began to understand that the slaughter of innocents was the primary theme of the Vietnam War as a result of these photographs being widely disseminated. All of these images show helpless individuals. The victims in each of these photographs were helpless. Additionally, these images gave viewers a sense of helplessness. Despite the media showing them everything, they were powerless to stop it. It wasn't until they intervened that it was too late for the victims who had already passed away. These images, which show the powerful opposing the helpless, have withstood the test of time (Lovelace, 2010).

The vast and rich cultural heritage of Palestine is under numerous and serious challenges. Few of them are caused by self-inflicted wounds and previous colonial history, although illicit mining and the trafficking in antiquities are. While settlement activity, the Israeli Separation Wall, and direct military are the direct dangers. The nation's cultural history is currently being destroyed, and no appropriate channels or actions are being taken to propose a solution to the issue. In the Palestinian Occupied Territories, illegal antiquity excavating and grave robbery have escalated as a result of political unrest and foreign rule. Since Israel's control of the West Bank in 1967, numerous archaeological sites have suffered destruction. According to recent statistics provided by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, there are 12000 small and big archaeological sites covering both prehistoric and historical periods in the West Bank alone.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is taken in perspectives of Palestinian photographs presented on websites to present the war zones situation in the world. To analyze different perspectives as historical, personal, cultural, technical and geographical perspectives, the model of Rose (2001) is used.

Keeping in view the Rose Model (2001) for semiotics, where Rose has brought various discourses into play from the discourses which are completely based on the image to the discourses where the image is used as an object. Rose has used visual methodologies comprising the approaches of semiology and clustering, psychoanalytic and feminist approaches, connoisseurship, content analysis, variety of post structuralist approaches and methods that are audience centered. The basic framework for data analysis would be according to the ordering categories by Rose, site of production, the actual image and the site of consumption. The major focus of this study would be on the actual image rather than the site of production and consumption (Rose, 2001). Taking in consideration Rose's ideas of interpreting images, the audience does not always look for the truth in images but an interpretation that can be justified. Further the study would be carried out in terms of what Rose has already explained that the methodology is used to discipline that passion rather than deadening it so it would not be completely dependent on the method but fascination, thrills, fear, wonder, revulsion and pleasure would be looked out for. The main point of the Rose model is that the process of producing images is not innocent at all. Images cannot be the transparent windows but are the visual interpretation of the world. Rose has provided the complete history of the visuals and of the related terminologies such as, visually, vision, scope, regime and ocular centrism. As Rose has mentioned that for developing a critical approach in the interpretation of visual images, the viewer has to take three things into consideration, each image is to be taken seriously, social conditions and effects of images are to be well thought about and the individual way of looking at images (Lichtman, 2002).

DATA ANALYSIS

Musicians Perform on the Rubble in Palestine



Figure 1

In the debris of Hanadi Tower in Gaza City, a musician based in Palestine is performing on 4 June 2021.

Table 1

Themes	Categories	Codes	Token
Musician Band performance	Gathering in destructed place	Fallen bombed buildings as background of the show	Optimism

Semiotic Analysis

Objects of the Visual

There are around 50 people in this photograph including, men women and children. Audience is mainly sitting on chairs. A kid has brought his cycle. On the stage there is a podium and some performers. Sound system is also set on the side. There is a fallen building right behind the stage. And behind that building, there are other buildings in well condition.

Composition

Photograph is taken from the left direction of the event making an arch. To take the destroyed building and a little of background in the frame, the photographer has taken this from the height then that of people's. No face here is made visible here.

Visual Clues

The sun light on the last building in the background tells us that the sun is about to set. The event is well prepared under the given circumstances as far as the woofers, chairs, banners in the background of stage and podium is concerned. People are out of homes means that they are in that moment in peace. A specific pattern is followed here in the sitting plan. First mainly males, then females and at the end children. The building fallen in a way the its left side was attacked from the bottom that made it fall this way. As apparent, the only this building here was hit.

Gestalt Principles

Similarity; the chairs are only object same in this photo. Proximity; as the sun is still not set so the picture is kept natural with respect to light and captured and the height to cover most of the audience and background. Continuation; as the left middle has the people not fully in the frame that makes the picture extended to them. Closure; Background is mainly covered by the destroyed building but the picture closes to the sky, and two other building in the background. Figure and ground; in the foreground there is audience and stage while the background is about buildings.

Semiotic Signs

The order of the sitting signifies that their men are on the front line as far as they are sitting first, then come their females and at the end children.

The obscured motive behind organizing this event here in this debris signifies that no matter how much broken they are, they will rise and fight again.

Specifically this event is for the Youngers that signifies the importance of youth there. It is to be noted that a number of youth including males and females are martyred or detained in the recent events that makes this event more powerful.

The building in the background signifies that only the fallen building was specifically hit here in this area. In the right bottom corner, the man is standing with the Palestinian flag on the hos shirt to show patriotism.

This gathering also signifies peace in eth current moment because in case of threat they at least could not risk the lives of children

Semiotic Codes

This photo is connected analogically to the gatherings worldwide to boost up youth.

Aesthetic Aspects of the Image

This event was organized specifically for youth so the emotion and sense of faithfulness can be sensed here.

Perspectives

Personal Perspective

This photo was captured by Muhammad Abed. In the recent war events in Palestine he has covered a lot to put forth the damage. This photograph is powerful in terms of its setting. Abed has focused on the point that ashes do not merely create the waste, they can really create the great.

Historical Perspective

Since 1947, Israel has been penetrating forcibly into the Palestine to claim the land illegally. Super powers do not so much other than just to condemn. Death there is revolving over the heads to people all the times. In recent war inflicted upon Palestinians by Israelis has brought unprecedented destruction into the region. This photograph is from the destruction where people are trying to make living again.

Cultural Perspective

Here in this photograph the culture of rising up is portrayed. There, people are aware of the damages, they know how to stand in the face of demolition. Women wearing hijab is also the sign of their culture and religion there.

Technical Perspective

This picture was captured for AL monitor. This photograph was mainly uploaded on a social website; Instagram. Other than this on three websites this picture is available in all sizes.

Critical Perspective

The point to ponder here is that photographer there are trying their best to show the world the mass destruction region is going through but the response of the world is null. Intentionally, they are being ignored. Even though when Abed's subject is the resilience of Palestinians in response to this war but this war cannot be ended without directly confronting with same power.

A Father Holding Birthday Celebration of his Daughter



Figure 2

Raed Sobieh is holding a birthday celebration for daughter of Muhammad. The place is his house destroyed by the Israeli bombardment.

Table 2

Themes	Categories	Codes	Token
Birthday Party	Father celebrating birthday in destroyed home	House bombed after bombing by Israel has party over	Brightness

Semiotic Analysis

Object of the Visual

There are total thirteen individuals in this photograph; mainly children. The floor they standing on is clean and some debris is set to put the cake on. Children are wearing birthday hat and holding balloons. Around them there is destroyed house but in background building are in well condition with sun light on some of them.

Composition

Photographer captured this photo by standing on the left side. This is captured right at the moment of cutting cake when children are clapping and wishing her birthday. This is composed in a way to highlight happiness in times crises and destruction.

Visual Clues

As apparent, the shops have things such as hats and balloons and cake that not all of the places were attacked. This point can also be understood by the building in the background and the home. This is to be noted that only this certain spot was attacked. Children are happy and that is a sign of peace.

Gestalt Principle

Similarity; every one's face setting forth the same happiness. Proximity; the photo is captured from the very close position. Continuation; the picture continues to the other side where the buildings are well.

Closure; picture closes right where it continues. Figure and ground; foreground covers the celebration and background has buildings as the celebration is outside.

Semiotic Signs

All children are standing there for the celebration signify that they had been invited there. This is not just about the child whose birthday it is. This is about every child there for these little celebrations they have to enjoy a little.

The father is clearly happy and looking aside that signifies he is making sure that other children are happy as well and enjoying themselves.

The central floor on the debris of his house is cleared that signifies that he made it clear to make space for throwing this little party. Birthday caps and cake signify that the work is not hindered even in such bad times.

The area is not packed and that but this attack only the house of this man is affected and not the buildings in the background. Additionally, the dress code of the children and man signifies that not in all Islamic countries' image about strict restriction towards dress code is not true especially towards children more precisely females.

Semiotic Codes

This picture connects to all events of celebrating birthdays in well or unwell conditions/circumstances.

Aesthetic Aspect of the Image

Although it seems that things in surrounding have been under attack in past days but a little event of celebration is bringing happiness on very face in the picture or may be a way to be happy in even a little.

Perspectives

Personal Perspectives

This charming moment was captured by Mohammad Zaanoun. In his point of view about this war she said "When I was a kid, my heart ached when I saw other children playing in the streets. I lost that part of childhood". This photograph of children can be near to him for he is may be happy to see them celebrating even in such times where people find life amid destruction.

Historical Perspectives

Photographer in this long going war have founded refugee camps, the markets, daily life and other destructed places. Although there are some other places that could be captured and are in well condition but this is not the need of time.

Cultural Perspective

Celebration is done all over the world to enchant some moments. Celebration of birthday is the part of some cultures. This is done specially for the children to make them feel happy and obscurely realizing them about their growth. Here the dress code of children is not bound to the religious ties as the world has a view about the Islamic countries.

Technical Perspective

This photograph took round on several social media platforms including Facebook/ twitter and Instagram. This photo is available in all sizes.

Critical Perspective

Making resilience one's child is important In such war affected countries. This is their need to keep the lives going in times of war and crises but this is not the option to move on unless it is for the better. Things have been same in past, they are even worse now in present. Celebrating birthday on debris of one's on house can simply be devastating for the child.

A Palestinian Girl Stands Amid the Rubble



Figure 3

This photo of the Palestinian girl was captured on 24 May 2021 where she is standing in her destroyed home looking outside at other destroyed buildings.

Table 3

Themes	Categories	Codes	Token
Little girl with a view	Bomb destroyed the home	Bombed home with three big holes making the girl see outside	Despair

Semiotic Analysis

Objects of the photo

There is only one figure that is of the little girl, standing bare footed as her home. There is carpet on the floor, and floor cushions. The front walls are destroyed and have three big holes in it. Some broken concrete is also on the floor. Outside the room there are other buildings as well.

Composition

The picture is captured to focus the left corner of the room. In the side the little girl is standing. Although there are three holes, she is able to look outside from the last one ending till floor. In its composition not only the interior of the room is focused but also the outside view is covered.

Visual Clues

Mainly it gives the clue of mass destruction. The girl's clothes are not dusted or there is no blood that means destruction happened earlier. The hole in middle is appears to be the window. Building standing just ahead is under construction and not much affected. Attack is done from the direction ahead.

Gestalt Principles

Similarity; The buildings have similar height and construction. Proximity; there is no bright affect added as far as this is day light and is captured from the height of photographer and not the girl. Continuation; only this room is not affected but the whole building, and outside area is also affected where photo continues. Closure; outside the window, there are building in stable condition where photo ends. Figure and ground; in the foreground some floor of the room and girl is visible and in background there is sky mostly brightened because of light affects and other buildings.

Semiotic Signs

The little girl is bare footed signifies that she is living in the house living in the other un-destroyed parts of the house. It is to be noted that she is not dirt that makes it clearer that she did not come upstairs at her home.

The house was well settled as far as the setting covered in destruction can be seen. But this child is aware as it signifies remained unharmed.

The attack was done from ahead overhead the building on the front because that building remained unharmed but the wall of the house where the girl is standing got hit in the result. The little girl, looking outside signifies that she is not afraid of standing this near to debris and looking out as it is something normal for her. This also illustrates the living conditions there.

Semiotic Codes

This is connected to all the children in developed countries looking outside to enjoy their moments but here girl is seeking way to hope that is nowhere to be seen.

Aesthetic Aspects of the Image

Looking at one's home destroyed never brings happiness. This makes them unsafe and brings hopelessness and gloom into their lives.

Perspectives

Personal Perspective

This picture was captured by Fatima Shabir based in Gaza has covered major war events there. She also has highlighted the trait of Palestinians in moving on in life amid damages that are now deeply dug into their lives/histories.

Historical Perspective

As far as the history and current events of war have been mentioned in the prior two photos this home was destroyed in Beit Hanoun, Gaza. Residents there are working on the cleanup operations to move on in lives. It is to be noted that on May 10th the conflict began after the tension raised in east Jerusalem and clashes at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound.

Cultural perspective

The setting of the room here shows their cultural way of living. In the floor is culture there of sitting in their living rooms this way in all Arabic countries. Carpets are also significant there in this room which is also portrayed here.

Technical Perspective

This picture was captured for the Getty images and is present on three websites on internet. This is also present in all sizes.

Critical Perspective

Whether the Palestinians have this trait of moving on in lives being in the hardest condition one could imagine of. It is significant to consider that this can be used to justify what is happening there. Photographers show these children surrounded by destruction and fallen houses/buildings does not always show the strength but hopelessness, the sense of nothingness. There must be many children who now are grown-ups and have been facing this since childhood. So, if this picture is about fearlessness it is also about hopelessness.

CONCLUSION

Photographers' personal viewpoint was displayed which demonstrated a covert hostility to the idea of war in one way or another. Their photos were free of prejudicial framing and mostly composed to show the real them. Being a human, you run the risk of becoming prejudiced, especially if you are not a native of the area

The photos' cultural viewpoints differed with each image. Each region has its unique culture, which is represented by the standards of dress, gender roles, traditions, and living arrangements. The structure of the society and the laws and regulations upheld there are made clear through this cultural analysis.

These images also illustrate how culture and morals have changed. Despite the war, the western influence is more pronounced in Palestine. The images' technical perspectives also differed because they were taken for various projects.

Because the photos were taken for a variety of reasons, their technical aspects were dynamic. Depending on the goal, their accessibility and availability on the internet also varies.

Historical perspective has provided us with information on the context for the image projections. This analysis has made it easier for us to understand the earlier circumstances that led to the image's depicted incident. These occasions ranged from oppression to hope, from peace to

devastation, from hope to gloom, and vice versa. Historical viewpoints helped us understand the causes of the war's start there. These explanations also differed regionally.

The criticism that brought conflict to the region and the pertinent ongoing events formed the basis for the images' critical perspectives. This section of the examination of each image also provided guidance for the future.

In many ways, photographs provide the form of an event without any actual content. In this way, the study of images is a form of broadcast social research. It increases people's effective cognitive awareness within the appropriate culture. Beyond simple description, the photographers offered two main ways to infer meanings: by constructing an aesthetic distance mechanism and by keeping a particular record of the nuances, trappings, surrounds, mannerisms, and physical postures taken by various people to anchor the image.

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