

The Emotion Of A Pulitzer Press Picture

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Abstract: Affectivity is an essential, dynamic and energetic component of the human psyche. It reflects either as subjective, internal feelings or as social behaviors, how man can adapt to the objective reality he lives in. And since man lives nowadays in a dense media environment, his adaptation to the objective reality is decisively influenced by the media system, which is sometimes masterfully represented by a photo release. The print of the media reality man is exposed to can be found both in the cognitive system as well as in the emotional, volitional, motivational one, etc. Each of emotions and feelings can mark fundamentally both the individual and common existence of a bigger or smaller social group. Media plays an essential role in causing social emotions, including press photography which occupies a priority position.

Index Terms: emotion, press photography, Pulitzer Press Picture, adaptation, social behaviors, objective reality, human psyche.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every day in a person's life is marked by at least one intensive state of affection. Whether they are positive or negative emotions, man could not survive without relating himself emotionally and affectively to reality. Affectivity is an essential, dynamic and energetic component of the human psyche. It reflects either as subjective, internal feelings or as social behaviors, how man can adapt to the objective reality he lives in. And since man lives nowadays in a dense media environment, his adaptation to the objective reality is decisively influenced by the media system, which is sometimes masterfully represented by a photo release. The print of the media reality man is exposed to can be found both in the cognitive system as well as in the emotional, volitional, motivational one, etc. Throughout time, there have been issued various hypotheses about the functioning of the human psyche from the affective perspective. Explanations have been formulated since Antiquity. Some researchers have given priority to the emotional aspect, others to the cognitive one, each bringing the most relevant arguments for the time of the research. Emotions may be preparatory, accompanying, operative and final. They can be positive or negative, mobilizing or demoralizing. Although we feel emotions individually and we have the impression no one else can feel the way we do, it seems that our feelings are processed by the brain in a way that is remarkably similar to that of the other people as well. The informational processing of the emotional stimuli can be done in two ways. A short path that leads information from the stimulus to the thalamus, amygdala and effector organ. It's like when we encounter a snake on the path. Our reaction is either to fight or to run away. It is instant and unconscious. The processing is immediate and direct. The longer path of access to the affective information goes through the cortex and returns to the effector after a previous processing. Emotions work in groups under the principle of bipolarity: positive (positive / pleasant emotions) or negative (negative / unpleasant emotions), the situations of indifference being transitory.

Overall, the pairs are opposite, contrary: joy-sadness, sympathy-antipathy, enthusiasm-resignation, love-hatred, etc. They have a variable intensity, graduated from weak to deep. Duration is very important in characterizing emotions. One persistent emotion transforms into a feeling. The transition from one state to another is translated by the mobility of the affective processes. In order to observe and communicate an emotion, it must be an expressive one. Human existence cannot be functional at the optimal mode in the absence of emotions. The utility of emotions is checked in the process of adaption of the human being to the environmental challenges. Man experiences several types of emotions: biologically mediated/ basal emotions (fear, anger, sadness, disgust and happiness) and an unlimited number of culturally mediated emotions and nuances. Each of these emotions and feelings can mark fundamentally both the individual and common existence of a bigger or smaller social group. Media plays an essential role in causing social emotions, including press photography which occupies a priority position.

2. HOW DO THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND THEIR PHOTOGRAPH PRODUCE EMOTION?

A camera doesn't get activated by itself. It only catches into the frame what is "allowed" to be seen by the one taking the picture. It becomes art when the photographer captures an idea, a theme, a feeling, and a story. What actually impresses at a picture is the story behind it, the photographer's passion, emotions and messages. Whether we talk about close or faraway places, a picture reveals the world as we are not sometimes careful to see. Photography connects people. Known or unknown people get to meet as subjects of a picture or as picture viewers. It connects two universes. The present, the ephemeral and the past are immortalized in a picture. It's a way of knowing. A picture is a visual journey. If the image produces emotion, it reaches its purpose. As previously mentioned, a picture does not produce reality. It only breaks reality into fragments, but sometimes such fragments of reality can lead to changes in society.

3. THE QUALITIES OF A PRESS PICTURE

In any publications, photography represents an attraction. Research has shown that, in a publication, first our eyes stop on an image and then on the writing. Since they are known from birth, the brain recognizes and decrypts images more easily. The writing, which was learned subsequently, is decrypted with more effort. The fundamental feature of a

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press picture should be the absence of any entrapment, of any organizational interventions of the photographer/ photo reporter. The photo reporter is forced to record the unfolding event. He does not have time to analyze and compare the frames in order to select the most representative. In the quickly developing sequences of an event, he must take the appropriate decisions so as to convey the information as faithfully, honestly and fairly as possible. A judicious selection of the material and of the most representative timing of the story, along with the photo reporter's technical skills are the ingredients of an impressive, memorable press picture. Such a picture triggers a significant, emotional impact and proportionate responses to the event. Therefore, in capturing an image or a news picture, the following factors need to be taken into account: the ability to choose quickly and objectively the station point from which the subject is revealed in a complete, complex and expressive way. It is very important how to distribute correctly the various elements of the composition frame, their interaction, how to use appropriately various forms of lighting, and how to obtain the required visual accents. All these elements contribute to achieving the spectacular, the impressive, and the emotional in a press photo. Gustav Fechner's studies are relevant, as he is one of the pioneers of Experimental Psychology and the founder of Psychophysics regarding the role of the golden section in perceiving an image and the role of the optimum format and size of various types of paintings. He is the one who suggested the study of the subjective impact of form: line, color, and shape in order to discover how the laws of Aesthetics or the laws of beauty work in visual art. His studies were used in designing and interpreting the actual photo in order to maximize the impact on the viewer. The emotions transmitted by the press photography are common with those we usually experience: joy, sadness, pity, fear, anger, etc. The only difference is that they are caused by another type of stimulus: the social, political, economic, cultural, spiritual reality. They are experienced both by the informed and uninformed public. However, the difference of perception comes from the experience of life and culture of each person as a consumer of a visual, aesthetic or lifestyle act. There is a story that shows the difference in emotional impact the same phenomenon can have on different people. Opposed to the text, the pictures which aren't faked or processed bear in them the undisputable evidence of the course of an event. This property conveys a real power in influencing and mobilizing public opinion. If it complies with several conditions, the content of a picture is one of the most powerful tools which can arouse public opinion. One of the most important features of a press picture is authenticity. It is a unique quality of the press picture, which was born from the role of witness the photographer claims for himself. One single photo of the young people from the Colectiv Club in Bucharest burning in flames or already being burned, seated on the pavement or lying in the arms of their torn-by-grief parents, is more relevant than all the declarations made on this subject. Although it is said that the device does not lie, the photographer can rate or emphasize the significance of an event based on his talent of capturing the essence of a frame. In the era of digital cameras, pictures can be modified a lot after being taken. The programs and technical devices we use can do

whatever we want. The only tricky issue that arises is that of truly knowing what we want and why we need to bring the photo to the desired state. The strong shock and the deep emotion are indispensable elements of a press picture with media impact. Because of the strong shock, the viewer keeps in mind only the picture that impressed him the most. In order to obtain the shock, the photo must be at least unusual. And to impress, it has to respond to the viewer's sensitivities. It has to reach those unseen sides of the ego that not even the viewer knows of or has yet discovered. The strong impact cannot be realized without a strong, adequate, representative, clearly expressed and easily understandable content. The pictures with exciting topics presented in a clear, unique way may restructure consciousness. A few features like these can turn a common picture into a Pulitzer Prize picture.

4. PULITZER PRIZE PICTURES

The most prestigious awards in American journalism have been introduced in 1917 by the publisher Joseph Pulitzer and are now awarded by Columbia University in New York. Pulitzer Prizes bring that visibility so much desired by any media publications and websites. There were designed 21 categories of awards. Pulitzer Prize for Photography started being awarded in 1942, when there was only one category, "Pulitzer Prize for Photography". In 1968, the category was divided into two sub-categories: "Breaking News Photography" and "Feature Photography".

5. HOW IS THE PULITZER PRIZE AWARDED?

A Pulitzer Prize is awarded for the meritorious service brought to the public of a newspaper, news website or publication, by using journalistic resources, including stories, editorials, cartoons, photographs, graphics, videos, databases, multimedia or interactive presentations or other visual materials. It is granted to a black-and-white or colorful photographic representation of some press articles for the quality of the photo, for its originality of perspective, for its relevance. The topic of the picture must be important and complex, accompanying both the local news, the breaking news, the national and international affairs, as well as comments, criticism, editorials, etc. One or more photos can be displayed. Prizes were worth \$10,000 in 2002 and \$7,500 in 2015. Five Pulitzer scholarships of \$7,500 are awarded annually on the recommendation of the School of Journalism at Columbia University. Initially, funding was made from its own funds obtained through investments. But since the 70s, the budget for the awarded prize has become smaller and smaller. In 1978 the Advisory Board established an additional fund. The program is now comfortably funded with revenues from investments, supplemented with \$50 – the fee for entering the competition. The investment projects are administrated by Columbia University. Pulitzer Prize Board members and judges do not receive any compensation. Opposed to the elaborate ceremonies and royal banquets of the Nobel Prizes (Stockholm and Oslo) or of the Oscars, Pulitzer Prize winners receive prizes from the President of Columbia University. Everything takes place within a modest breakfast every May, in the Low Library rotunda, in the presence of the family members, of the professional associations, of the board members and of the

representatives of the School of Journalism. The Council declined to transform the event into a TV extravaganza.

6. THE EFFECTS OF A PULITZER PRIZE PHOTO ON THE AUDIENCE

6.1. The Pulitzer Prize

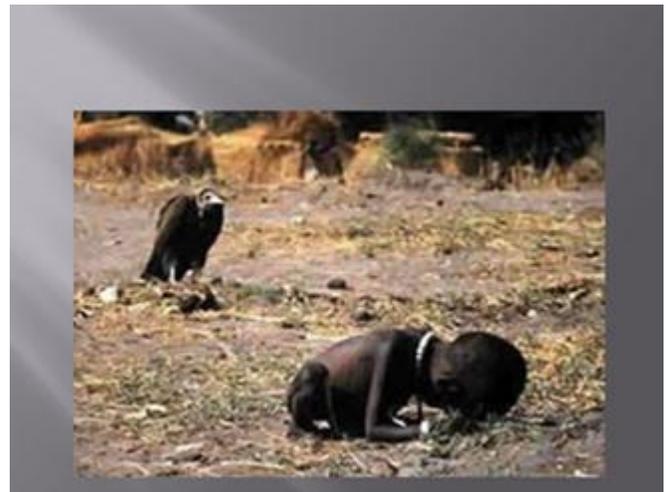


The Pulitzer Prize for News Photography (breaking news) was awarded in 2013 to a series of 20 photographs taken by Rodrigo Abd, Manu Brabo, Narciso Contreras Khalil Hamra and Muhammed Muheisen, all from the Associated Press. The prize for Artistic Photography (feature-photography) was awarded to Javier Manzano, a freelance photographer working for the France-Presse Agency, reports Wall Street Journal. This picture taken by Rodrigo Abd from Associated Press portrays little Ahmed mourning for his father, who died in the war in Syria. This was carried out in Idlib, Northern Syria, on March 8, 2012. The pictures taken in 2012 by reporters Rodrigo Abed, Manu Brabo, Narciso Contreras, Khalil Hamra and Muhammed Muheisen were made during several visits to Syria, to capture images of the disasters of the civil war in the conflict area without the permission or protection of the government and with the risk of being kidnapped or taken hostage. The entire world made use of these pictures in order to find out what was happening in this space of war.

6.2. The Image Effects on the Viewer

One direct, affective reaction is sadness (despair). The feeling of loss is transmitted almost physically, immediately and directly. The suffering of the child who lost his father is transferred to the viewer. In the common perception, any loss is interpreted as divine punishment. From a rational perspective, the loss is contextualized in terms of cause. But the sadness from this photo has had a high impact and a positive result, since now the international community knows the realities of war in the area and has taken action. At the social level, sadness can be a means of generating altruistic events. It can cause others see reality with empathy or mercy. (Beggars know this mechanism). Sadness can lead to a deep discovery of the self. Sadness can cause a restructuring of priorities. The picture of the orphan weeping for his father can have a similar interpretation for each of us: anyone in the world can sometimes lose a beloved person or we can also die. The drama caused by war is our drama. And so is the blame.

7. THE EFFECTS OF A PULITZER PICTURE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHER



Feature Photography, "The baby watched by an eagle", published in The New York Times. Its author is Kevin Carter, a freelance photographer. It is one of the most famous photos in the world. It was taken in 1993 in Sudan. At that time, it aroused a huge controversy. Why didn't the photographer help the baby who was watched by the eagle? Why did the photographer only choose to photograph the scene? A year later, in 1994, Kevin Carter committed suicide. The episode has since become a legend. The child in the photo was found dead, and Carter's suicide was attributed to remorse. An investigation of the Spanish daily newspaper El Mundo revealed last year that things are much more different than in the story created around the photo. The investigation started from the fact that nobody saw the dead child. There is, however, a detail that could lead to his identification. He was wearing a bracelet with the mark of "T3". Taking chance of this information, the journalists from El Mundo found that these bracelets were made by a French NGO. In 1993 this organization was dealing with saving the malnourished children in Sudan. Letter "T" referred to a severe malnutrition. Letter "S" was for children who needed additional food. "T3" meant that the child was suffering from severe malnutrition and was the third child placed in the rescue program of the French NGO. After several interviews with the NGO representatives and the people from that area of Sudan, journalists discovered the child's identity. If in 1993 everyone thought this was a little girl, the investigation showed that it was actually a boy named Nyong Kong. Moreover, he survived the 1993 famine. Unfortunately, Kong Nyong died in 2008 of yellow fever. The Spanish journalists wrote about Kevin Carter and the circumstances in which he took that picture. Nyong Kong was not in any immediate danger of death at that moment, being already in the care of the doctors from the French NGO. Also, experts estimated that the eagle was at a distance of 20 meters from the child. The distance seems smaller because of the lens Carter used. Regarding his suicide, we cannot know for sure whether it was or not caused by remorse. The journalist had suffered from depression for a long time. It's also true that he didn't

intervene in that child's destiny and that he didn't know about his salvation.

7.1 The effects of a Photo on the Viewer

In this case, sadness is associated with the state of tension, pressure, depression, insecurity, mental suffering. The child's drama marks the viewer with its symbolism and compositional architecture (overlapping plans). Here, helplessness gets the image of the collapsed child. The rapacity of the eagle seems to await the human fall.

8. THE EFFECTS OF A PHOTO ON THE SUBJECT



Kim Phuc is the subject of this photo. At 9 years old, she suffered severe burns after a napalm attack on civilians accidentally released from Trang Bang, a village situated near Saigon, in June 1972. Huynh Cong Ut, a Vietnamese journalist, employed by the Associated Press, took this picture which became one of the symbols of the tragedy caused by war. The image of the children running away and screaming in terror, around a completely naked, crying girl brought the photographer The Pulitzer Prize. Kim Phuc has lived in Canada since 1990, and now, at 52, she will undergo a laser treatment of the burns from the war, reports *The Independent*. Jill Waibel, doctor at Miami Dermatology and Laser Institute, hopes the treatment will help Kim get rid of the pain she can still feel in her left arm, neck and back. "For years, I thought I would get rid of the scars and pain only when I go to heaven," said the woman. "Now it's heaven on earth for me," she added. At the clinic in the United States, Kim Phuc was accompanied by her husband, but also by Huynh Cong Ut, the photographer from Associated Press. He is the man who saved and changed her life. In June 8, 1972, shortly after the photo was taken, the 9-year-old girl who was running to get saved with her brothers and sisters lost consciousness because of the terrible pain. She had burns on three-quarters of her body. The photographer took her to the hospital and insisted to receive care when doctors told him she had no chances of survival. "I cried when I saw the girl running. I thought that if she dies, I'll kill myself", said Huynh Cong Ut. At that time, the little girl was shouting: "I'm dying, it's burning me. It's too hot. I'm dying." In an interview for CNN, Kim Phuc confessed that at first she was embarrassed about the photo that became famous around the world. She did not like the advertising, but she managed to gradually move on. Moreover, she decided to put this picture of her in the service of peace. "I constantly remember that horrible

day in which I was running from death to life," she said. The photo reporter is for her "Uncle Ut". "He is the beginning and the end. He took the picture and now he is here with me on this new path. It is a new chapter," said Kim Phuc, referring to the treatment of her burns.

8.1 The Effects of a Photo on the Viewer

We could talk about pain, sadness, but also anger. Anger is a strong feeling which emerges when someone insults us when we are wrong. They say that expressing anger helps us unload tensions. Psychologically, anger can play the role of a warning or punishment for an inadequate behavior. This way, anger becomes a means of social correction. The suffering caused by the uselessness of the war in which innocent children are accidentally involved is transformed into revolt and anger.

9. CONCLUSION

The emotional experience, divided into positive and negative, can imprint in the long term memory a certain picture or photo and can generate a behavioral reaction. In general, positive emotions are associated with the wellbeing of the mind, with relaxation, vital élan, optimism, satisfaction. The analysis of studies often prefer the positive emotions simply because it is much more pleasant, invigorating and refreshing to talk about them. The examples above demonstrate that the emotions transmitted by the Pulitzer photos are predominantly negative. If in music and pictorial art, negative emotions cannot be considered a landmark, in press photography, the negative is often the essence of the media message. The negative emotions which have been frequently analyzed are: anger, disgust, sadness (despair). Every time we experience an emotion and our brain records a new neural pathway, the repetition of a behavior reinforces the associated neural pathway. The intense emotions associated with certain gestures or with people, words, and sounds, are perceived in the context or suggested by the significance of an image. In time it is enough to meet only one of these symbols to suddenly trigger the same brain conditions. Therefore, the impact of the Pulitzer photos on the cognitive, affective or behavioral level is strong, with long-lasting repercussions in the formation of our personality. We often ask ourselves why we adopt a certain behavior or another, why we react violently to a single touch of our sensitivity or why we are complacent to the suffering of others. One of the credible explanations would be a permanent exposure to this kind of emotional stimuli. Confronted with the images of the media which present the disasters of humanity, the individual either creates a mental depressing representation of the space we were punished to live in or lives the phenomenon of the affective atrophy, of the insensibility, and of the lack of natural manifestation in front of suffering, disaster and crime. The photo – be it a Pulitzer – can reproduce only a speck of the Universe. But people can turn this speck with their mind and feelings into the Universe itself. And into more than that.

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