



Citation: M. Jerrentrup (2020) Dissonances of a Modern Medium. Alienating and Integrating Aspects of Photography. *Aisthesis* 13(2): 155-168. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-11864

Copyright: © 2020 M. Jerrentrup. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<http://www.fupress.com/aisthesis>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Dissonances of a Modern Medium. Alienating and Integrating Aspects of Photography

MAJA JERRENTRUP

Ajeenkya D Y Patil University (India)
maja.jerrentrup@adypu.edu.in

Abstract. Does photography in its various facets lead to alienation or integration? This article is based on a Eurasian survey among photography students from India and Europe. After working definitions of the central terms, it looks at aspects that students have mentioned in connection with alienation – including the view of photography as a barrier or intruder and the adoption of an external perspective on the own culture through photography, up to an individual escape through photography. With regard to integration, photography can open the gates to new experiences and allow growth and identity work, offer a common form of expression and go hand in hand with empathy and knowledge, which matches some aspects of Indian art theory. All in all, the answers of the Indian and European students were quite similar. It turns out that the more reflected people are about photography, the more they can benefit from it.

Keywords. Photography, alienation, integration, mindfulness, experience, empathy, memory, identity.

If you have ever ambitiously taken pictures of an event, for example, a wedding ceremony, a sports competition, or a carnival procession, you will probably be familiar with a feeling of not fitting in. The camera prevents actual participation, it makes you an outsider. On the other hand, photography can help in various ways to involve the photographer in what is happening in front of his lens. In the following, I explore the role of photography as an alienating and integrating medium and thus show some of photography's individual and social risks and opportunities. Photography itself is a relatively misleading term, as it can both imply an action, as well as the product of an action, a job or a hobby. «I like photography» may mean that someone enjoys taking pictures, is into photo modelling, likes looking at photographs or appreciates photography as an artistic expression. In the following I am mostly referring to the action, the “doing photography”, both as a photographer or photographed. However, occasionally the focus is more on the product. The various sides are even more difficult to distinguish as nowadays the roles

of photographer, model, and recipient are often mixed, especially in the case of social media.

1. THE BASIC CONCEPTS

Even though it is impossible to give a comprehensive assessment of these terms in an article, a few aspects should be examined here. It is striking that in psychological and sociological literature the terms are often used without any previous definition. Apparently, it is often assumed that they are so commonly used in everyday language that they require no further explanation.

Alienation

Alienation comes etymologically from the Latin verb “alienare” which means “to make something another’s, to take away, to remove”. It shares the root with “alius” which can be translated as “other”.

An original association of “alienare” refers to the sale of objects. A second traditional use, which also has its roots in Latin, refers to mental disorders, «in connection with the state of unconsciousness, and the paralysis or loss of one’s mental powers or senses» (Schacht [2015]: 2). The third original use sees the term in the context of interpersonal estrangement. At this point, a process component comes into play. The second and third use were taken up by the humanistic psychologist Erich Fromm, who has worked on the phenomenon. To him, alienation is a type of experience in which the person concerned experiences him/herself as a stranger: he/she has lost contact with him/herself and is isolated from other people (Fromm [1955]: 88). In philosophy, there are innumerable evaluations of the term, which are often connected with the fact that man is no longer “himself”. The term is particularly present in relation to the theory of Karl Marx, who used the German equivalent “Entfremdung”, which literally means “to make something strange” or “foreign”. Marx’s theory assumes that capitalism leads to dehumanizing conditions in connection with

the extreme division of labour typical for this economic system (see Lévy [2002]: 110). Even though Marx is not thought of as a romanticist (for connections see Mah [1986]), there is a similarity to romanticism and “Sturm und Drang”, which stress the aspect of a former wholeness that has been lost due to the industrialization and its mindset which stresses rationality. Romanticism did not only envision that human reason and emotions should be reconciled, but also that people should be comprehensively educated (see Jaeggi [2013]: 14), thus, be able to see connections between various aspects of life and thus experiences it in a holistic way. Looking at today’s differentiated educational system and the amount of knowledge gathered, holistic education is increasingly difficult. Following this line of thought, we may be all alienated: we cannot achieve a holistic perspective on the world.

Besides labour and education, we are constantly confronted with one more fundamental source of alienation: our language needs a transformation of “inner” thoughts into “outer” words. The characteristic that defines us as human beings therefore already contains alienation. However, one has to be aware of the danger of the spoken word, the threat that it puts itself in the place of living experience (see Lévy [2002]: 109). The example of language as an alienation already shows proximity to photography which occasionally has been described as a language: «Ultimately, photography is a language, and the craft is comparable to the grammar on which a language is based» (Schuchard [2005]: 7).

Another area, in which alienation plays a role and that is associated with photography is art. Here, alienation is often assumed to be a fundamental characteristic, «“alienation” looms large in book reviews and literary criticism» (Kaufmann [2015]: xxxii f.) The artist is understood as someone who is unconsciously or intentionally distancing him/herself from society and eventually prevents him/her from feeling consistent. Kaufman mentions Goethe as a famous example who rebelled against the establishment and had his Faust proclaim «two souls, alas, are dwelling in

my breast». Beethoven's seclusion and Mozart's breaches of morals are further impressive examples that refer to alienation. But also recent artists like Jeff Koons often appear to be different from society and their sometimes radical works do not fit in, which can be understood as a clever move or as an essential characteristic. One may argue that alienation is linked to creativity, which has been identified as psychologically beneficial (see Schuster [2020]: 5). Yet, the artistic personality, occasionally associated with extreme subjectivity and isolation, is often imagined as tragic and sometimes even self-destructive (see Reitz [2000]: 33), thus, often as psychologically unstable, which leads back to Erich Fromm's work on the phenomenon.

As a result of all these aspects, the working definition for the present article is that alienation can be defined as the feeling of not being whole, not being part of something or not fitting in. Furthermore, alienation is a typical characteristic of human existence and at this point. However, it should be stressed that at this point, I do not want to evaluate it, whether it has to be understood as negative or potentially positive.

Integration

The Latin term "integratio" means the restoration of a whole, as well as renewal. It is linked to "integer" and "intact" and consequently has positive connotations. Just like alienation, integration is something that can be understood both as a process and as the result of a process.

Integration refers to the relationship to a superordinate whole, a «continuous alignment» (Baiden et al [2003]: 235) of various aspects, in which collaboration and cohesion play a role. The term is often used in socio-cultural contexts: unlike "exclusion" and "separation", it refers to the process of acculturation (see Boski [2008]), of growing together, or to the result of having become one. Thus, integration fulfils an inherent human need (see Deci and Ryan [1991]). The integration of other people with other cultural backgrounds is often associated with the acquisition of similar values, languages, and economic

well-being (see Mohammad-Arif [2008]: 327). In the context of integration, empathy often plays a fundamental role, defined as the «understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and variously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another» (Merriam-Webster), thus implying a connection.

Similar to alienation, integration can be understood not only on a social level but also with regard to the individual psyche and body. According to the APA Dictionary, «the integration of personality denotes the gradual bringing together of constituent traits, behavioural patterns, motives, and so forth to form an organized whole that functions effectively and with minimal effort or without conflict» (APA) and is seen in connection with mental well-being. Especially in humanistic psychology, integration plays an important role: people are striving for self-realization, which is seen as the realization of abilities, talents or missions and as a tendency towards unity within the personality. Here, integration is understood in the sense of inner consistency, but also of mutual connectedness (see Hartman [1959]).

For Carl Gustav Jung, people are motivated to achieve greater integration by what he meant increasing the recognition of unconscious processes, increasing self-acceptance and responsibility, and becoming more compassionate (see also Young-Eisendrath [2008]: 245) — aspects that strongly remind on Fromm's concept of self-love (1955). This context also links to practices like meditation and mindfulness whose effectiveness has been scientifically confirmed: «Brain-imaging studies have shown that mindfulness meditation could alter the structure and function of the brain and produce greater blood-flow in areas associated with attention and emotional integration» (Tobert [2017]: 28). As a working definition for our context, integration means being or/and feeling connected with others, but also understanding and accepting oneself as a consistent, "whole" being.

However, alienation and integration are not necessarily opposites, especially since they can take place at different levels: physical integration, for example, does not necessarily have to go hand-

in-hand with emotional integration, but often both are related.

In the following, we will explore how both aspects of alienation and integration play a role in photography.

2. THE RESEARCH

This research is based on two written anonymous surveys, conducted in India and the German-speaking countries. Both surveys had identical questions. Apart from demographic data I asked whether they would experience photography as integrating or alienating and why. Further, I suggested giving an ethical evaluation, which was done by around two thirds who mostly just wrote that it would be «*alright*» or «*an interesting topic*», and in some cases, participants asked to be informed about the results. The first survey was conducted with 50 photography respectively media students from India, age 18-29, 44 of them male due to the much larger number of men studying photography in India. They were studying either at Ajeenkya DY Patil University or the Indian Institute of Photography. All of them identified themselves as “Indian”. The second survey was conducted with 32 photography or media students from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, age 20-53 (most of them 20-30), among them 17 female and 15 male, either studying at the University of Applied Sciences Trier, the German POP or the Fotoakademie Köln. They identified as “German”, “Austrian”, “Swiss”, or simply put “European”. These two geographical and cultural areas were selected as photography looks back upon different histories: it was invented in the so-called “West”, whereas in India, it at first came as a technology used by colonialists—even though it was soon adopted by Indians (see Pinney [2008]: 176), pictures by the British dominated for a while. An open survey was chosen to give the participants the chance to freely put down their thoughts and in both cases had a lot of time to do so. As already supposed, the answers given referred to different levels. However, most participants — especially from the German-

speaking countries — stressed positive aspects, which can be attributed to the fact that it would cause cognitive dissonance to specialize in a field that they consider as problematic. Some research suggests that Indians might be able to better cope with cognitive dissonance (see Jerrentrup [2011]), which might explain the difference. The answers given were clustered with the help of content analysis, «a method for identifying and analysing patterns of meaning in a dataset» (Joffe [2011]: 209). Content analysis suits the topic as it not tied to a particular theory and serves as a useful tool to highlight the process of social construction (see Joffe [2011]: 211). Various patterns of meanings could be identified by the use of similar words, expressions, and in a few cases, personal examples of the participants had to be interpreted accordingly. When drawing such categories it is undeniable that—being familiar with the photographic theory and at the same time being a participant observer (see Altheide [1987]) — there were some preconceived assumptions. Yet, there were also unexpected clusters. Thus, the method matches David Altheide’s “ethnographic content analysis”, which «consists of reflexive movement between concept development, sampling, data collection [...] and interpretation. [...] Although categories and “variables” initially guide the study, others are allowed and expected to emerge throughout the study» (Altheide [1987]: 68). In this study, content analysis is also meant to bridge qualitative respectively interpretative and quantitative data (see Neuendorf [2017]: 10). Here, however, the quantity is not of the same relevance as the meanings of the answers given, e.g. as by chance, certain aspects might or might not have been on the participants’ minds when answering the survey.

3. ALIENATION THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

When looking at photography, we are again dealing with a concept that can be understood on different levels: as initially mentioned, photography refers to a general activity such as a hobby or a profession, to a concrete process, but also

the result of this process or the totality of photographic images. Thus, various ways of understanding photography can be linked to various perspectives on alienation and integration. Furthermore, photography includes various subjects: The photographer, the person in front of the camera, the recipient – just to name the most widely acknowledged, but there can be also stylists and designers etc.. Thus, the perspectives on alienation and integration can differ depending on the subject, but also on the purpose, e.g. if a photograph is a self-portrait meant as a memory for the photographer himself or if a photograph should be published for a wider audience. Further, it needs to be stressed that talking about alienation and integration does not necessarily imply any evaluation. Even though alienation tends to be given negative connotations such as the loss of connection to oneself and the society, while integration tends to be positively connotated, this does not mean that regarding photography, alienation aspects always have negative consequences.

4. THE CAMERA AS BARRIER AND INTRUDER

In the survey, more than one third of both the Indian and German-speaking participants wrote something like: «When taking pictures of an event I cannot really be part of it» or «I actually don't like roaming around with camera/ makes me feel like a tourist» which was clustered as “barrier” or “intruder”. This reminds on Susan Sontag's statement that the camera offers «both participation and alienation in our own lives and those of others — allowing us to participate while confirming alienation» (Susan Sontag [1973]: 167). The camera serves as a social tool, it is a «buffer against the unknown» (see Thurner [1992]: 35) and marks the status of the person: as someone who does not participate in the event in the narrow sense, but instead records it, thus, as an outsider. This is particularly the case if the photograph is taken conspicuously or if it is clear that this is an ambitious or professional activity. «Having a camera in your hands – this conveys a message even before

a photo is taken. The camera is a sign of power – sometimes also of wealth – and it assigns roles and creates a barrier between the photographers and the people being photographed» (Jerrentrup [2018]: 105, see also Spitzing [1985]: 114). The assigned roles seem to be clear: there is the photographer who actively does something that turns the photographed person “into a passive”. With the picture, the photographer owns something of the person he has photographed. It may only be a virtual possession (see Odom et al. [2011]: 149) but due to the indexical nature of photography, a certain power over the person photographed can be assumed. It is not for nothing that in some cultural contexts, people are sceptical about photography and fear its power (see Strother [2013]: 177ff.): the photographer may only own the visual component of a singular moment, but due to the static nature of the photograph, in a way, he can know much more about the person photographed than the person him/herself, can look at him/her much more closely, detect his/her tiniest peculiarities, and alter, or even destroy his/her visual representation. «A photographer may easily steal what is private» (Beloff [1983]: 165) and further, «interaction in photography accepts the power of the photographer's status. That status has always an edge over that of the subject» (Beloff [1983]: 171). This may be the case in model photography or street photography, but also refers to documentary photography e.g. in situations of war or crisis. «Our society tries to avoid suffering of any sort yet creates a great deal of curiosity about suffering, which is partly satisfied by photography» (La Grange [2005]: 62). In this context, the ethical conflict that underlies documentary photography and separates the photographer from his/her subject is particularly clear. On the one hand, the photographer may be motivated by the desire for a “good”, “interesting”, or “meaningful” photo, eventually even in order to raise awareness, but on the other hand, it may also make him feel bad to invade people's privacy, to objectify their hopes and sorrows.

There is also a dichotomy on the part of the person photographed: For many people today,

being photographed may be part of everyday life, nevertheless, people feel tense, and some try to avoid the camera. Posing and interacting with the camera shows a high level of awareness of the presence of the camera, resulting in intentional presentations (see Maleyka [2019]: 9) opposed to naturalness and authenticity. This does not necessarily mean that it implies an alienation, as for some people, Goffman's front stage can be a place for longing – for articulation, presentation, appreciation, and applause (see Blank [2017]: 58), yet it is assumable that for most people, it rather leads to a feeling of “being not oneself”, and consequently to a photograph that is not giving an authentic representation.

5. SEEING FROM THE OUTSIDE

This aspect refers to photographing one's own, e.g. if one is taking photographs of one's own cultural context or capturing oneself and one's social environment, which creates the situation of seeing the own from a new perspective. Just like a mirror, photography transforms the subject into an image (see Brodersen [2017], 145). The person sees him/herself from the outside and in this way learns to differentiate and identify him/herself. What happens to the individual in the mirror experience can be assumed for a group or a cultural context as well: photographing one's own culture transforms the lived experience into a two-dimensional, single moment, which on the one hand cannot reflect the quality of the actual experience, but on the other hand, condenses one's own culture in a photograph that its creator considers important or interesting. In doing so, the possible audience is usually taken into account: the photographer puts him/herself in the position of these persons who will see, classify and interpret the pictures. «It is the detached look from the outside» or «we make a concept from our culture and environment», these were the statements of around one third of the students. A conceptualization, however, is usually connected to a rationalization that implies taking a step away, leaving behind the

own sentiments, and thus can be seen in terms of alienation. «Once I noticed that even when I take photographs of my friends and family members, I retouch them. What [...]? My family is perfect, but looking at photographs, I start to feel conscious and look for flaws», as one German-speaking participant put it. This idea can be even pursued on a more general level than looking at the “own”: photography illustrates «that everything is perishable, and because the evidence it collects is arbitrary, it suggests reality is basically unclassifiable [...] This has manifested itself in a general attitude of alienation from reality» (La Grange [2005]: 42). No matter what is shown in the photograph, no matter if we are recipients, photographed or photographers, the photograph's subject is detached from the way we experience reality.

6. ALIEN(ATING) FORM OF EXPRESSION

Photography can be experienced as a practice that was not (originally) part of one's own cultural context. The mere existence of the medium brings about a new situation that can be unfamiliar. Of course, photography is now commonplace in most places, but the power with which selfie photography and photography for social media have changed the lives of many people in recent years may still be unfamiliar to some people and may not fit into their idea of the world they live in. The basic idea that media bring about new cultural situations is associated with Marshall McLuhan famous statement «the medium is the message: the “message” of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs» (McLuhan [1964]: 24). Even though McLuhan may have heavily underestimated the creative ways to use and appropriate media (see Carey [1967]: 28) and was criticized for the speculative nature of his thoughts, yet, a new media-materialism «is already present in the way technical media transmits and processes “culture”» (Parikka [2012]: 95). In Vilém Flusser's work (Flusser [1983], see also Marchessault and Guldin [2008]: 2), the focus is already on photog-

raphy. Flusser even believes that photography heralds a new epoch, a break in history. This fits in with the fact that some of the Indian participants referred to the fact that photography is a technique brought into the country from outside. Further, India does not have a tradition of black and white drawings unlike the west. Therefore, Ragbuhir Singh, one of India's most important photographers, understands black and white — which in the beginning was the only way to take pictures — as a form of alienation:

Singh sees "angst, alienation and guilt" as significant aspects of Western twentieth-century vision where people are alone in the universe without God, and this is best expressed in monochrome. This is alien to India's buoyant life and philosophy in which the cycle of rebirth is fundamental and colour is a "deep inner source". (La Grange [2005]: 160)

German-speakers did not indicate anything connected to this aspect. This could be due to the fact, that, in general, photography has long been firmly anchored in the German speaking context or that "Western" traditional art such as drawings or realistic paintings is more similar to the photographic results than Indian traditional art.

7. ARTIFICIAL MEMORY

«You don't really see and memorize» — around one quarter of the Indian and a little more of the German participants in the survey wrote something that can be interpreted in the context of "artificial memories": «Artificial memories not only supported, relieved and occasionally replaced the natural memory, but also gave form to our ideas about remembering and forgetting» (Douwe [1999]: 10) — and not without criticism: in the famous Phaidros Dialogue, which took place between Socrates and his friend Phaidros, the philosopher explains that writing is rather a means against memory than a support for it. Moreover, it does not create any new information and insights, which can only ever be achieved through dialogue. Admittedly, the dialogue could

only be handed down because his student Plato wrote it down. More than 2000 years later, the media philosopher Siegfried Kracauer dealt with memory and photography: in photography, a specific moment is picked out of the flow of time and then is preserved with visual precision. Human memory, on the other hand, is fragmentary and imprecise, but follows a logic that goes beyond capturing what has been there by emphasising its meaning (see Kracauer [1977]: 25). Accordingly, photography attempts to replace the interior — memory — with something external — a photograph. Compared to memory, the photographs can be perceived as weird, foreign, or alien. However, as will be shown later, photograph's connection to memory may also be related to integration.

8. INDIVIDUAL ESCAPE

Photography is «a way to get myself away from the normal world, it gives me a way to escape» — this is how an Indian students expressed his experiences with photography. Statements related to an "individual escape" were written by nearly half of the Indians and German speakers. None of them clearly said whether they would rather refer to the act of taking pictures or looking at them, however, both options are conceivable. With regard to the perception, it reminds on Terence Wright statement that one can look at a photograph as if it was a window (Wright [1999]: 6) — it does not only enable to *see* something that is not present in this moment, but also to *immerse* oneself into it. In this context, the "individual escape" can be understood as a refuge that offers relief and positive experiences, detaches from everyday life, and enables new, creative perspectives.

For both the photographer and the recipient it can also mean an escape from everyday perception towards mindfulness — which by alienating, by overcoming the own, judgmental perspective helps to achieve an inner peace. Understood this way, it even includes therapeutic aspects (see Anderssen-Reuster [2016]: 1): «Mindfulness is essentially about waking up to what the present

moment offers» (Brown et al. [2007]: 272). In this context, one can also observe the phenomenon of “flow” that can be associated with photography as an action (see Eberle [2016]: 99) both for the photographer and his team.

	Indian Sample: N=44	German-speaking Sample: N=32
ALIENATION		
Camera as barrier or intruder	24	20
Seeing from the outside	15	9
Alien(ating) form of expression	6	-
Artificial Memory	11	9
Individual escape	20	12
INTEGRATION		
Access – The camera as a ticket	25	24
Possession, appropriation and representation	12	9
Shared form of expression	8	5
Memory and Identity	23	19
Empathy and knowledge	18	13

9. INTEGRATION THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Even though “mindfulness” was mentioned as an alienation from everyday perception, it can be linked to the chance of an ultimate integration offered by photography: the intentional separation from everyday life can apparently pave the way to a deeper understanding and thus to more integration (see Kabat-Zinn [2012]: 1f.). As it seems, integration and alienation cannot be clearly separated.

10. ACCESS – THE CAMERA AS A TICKET

«The camera is an excuse to be someplace you otherwise don't belong. It gives me both a point of connection and a point of separation» — this quote by Susan Meiselas (in Boucher [2018]: 202) illustrates how the camera serves as an admission ticket: it assigns a certain role to the person, which allows him/her to enter social contexts he/she otherwise would not be admitted to. In this way, the photographer is e.g. given the chance

to enter certain private spheres — typically in the field of wedding photography. Entering such social contexts enables the gain of knowledge and understanding, from the first insights up to a more in-depth examination.

«I experience new things through photography» — similar statements were written by around two thirds of the Indian and even more of the German-speaking participants. In this context, the experience of new things may mean, on the one hand, to access situations that would otherwise have been closed to the person concerned. On the other hand, it also refers to situations that are not socially inaccessible but that the person would have not taken into consideration for him/herself, e.g. climbing on a tree for the sake of a good perspective, visiting a Gothic festival to take pictures of strangely dressed people, or — as a model — learning some dance or stunt poses. «You wouldn't be standing in the middle of a horde of children, holding one on each hand if you weren't going to be photographed. You would not put your arm around two completely unknown, photogenic dressed people who work as full-time or part-time photo motifs» (Turner [1992]: 31). Ingrid Thurner ironically reflects this aspect — but looking at the alternative, it would probably mean ignoring the children or not getting in touch with people. Photography is seen as a kind of higher value and in its service one is willing to open up to new things.

11. POSSESSION, APPROPRIATION AND REPRESENTATION

«To collect photographs is to collect the world» (Sontag [1973]: 1, quoted by a student) and, one could add, a particularly easy way to appropriate it. This has a long tradition and at first sight, mostly reminds of travel photos. Postcards have long ceased to be a souvenir for most tourists, whereas in the 19th century, they were bound in special albums. At least since the 1950s, self-recorded photos had to be added (see Turner [1992]: 24). What remained, however, is the focus on possession. In the context of photography and

possession, Susan Sontag famously wrote: «One can't possess reality, one can possess (and be possessed by) images» (Sontag [1973]: 126). This brings photography close to the field of virtual possessions: virtual possessions are considered «to include artefacts that are increasingly becoming immaterial (e.g. books, photos, music, movies) and things that have never traditionally had a lasting material form (e.g. SMS archives, social networking profiles)» (Odom et al. [2011]: 1491). To acquire something and to own it is the opposite of “alienation” in its original meaning—all the more this refers to virtual possessions, which are to be located quasi within ourselves. But Sontag does not only emphasize possession but also obsession. The art educator Karl-Josef Pazzini explains this connection: «We become obsessed with images [...]. These images design us and make us design others. They are the ones who are always ready whenever we become disoriented. With them, we modulate our bodies and the bodies of others» (Pazzini [2005]: 26). How we appropriate the world through photography influences our perception, creates and strengthens archetypes and stereotypes, for which Katharina Schleicher (2009) provides a memorable example.

Cultural appropriation also comes into play in this context: by owning the photograph, one can reinterpret what is shown and place it in new contexts, such as regarding the photograph of a ritual as an artistic object and putting it in an exhibition. But also the own culture can be “appropriated” and re-interpreted: «Photography helps to showcase my culture» was a very typical answer in the Indian sample, and it was put in context with integration. Those who take photographs and/or stand in front of the camera thus also have the opportunity to present their own culture in the way they consider appropriate and consequently help to shape their own image. Representing oneself instead of being represented is experienced as empowerment and can facilitate identity work (see Schönhuth and Jerrentrup [2019]: 203). Of course, re-appropriations are also conceivable: Carmen Brosig (2019) explains how American Indians in the American Indian Movement have re-appropri-

ated stereotypical representations of themselves in order to question power relations (Schönhuth and Jerrentrup).

12. SHARED FORM OF EXPRESSION

«Photography is a world-wide activity – we all take and look at pictures, so it is integrating», as one German-speaking student put it: enjoying photography is a cultural universal (whereas the aesthetics might, except for some very general aspects like the golden ratio, differ depending on the person's character, experiences, culture etc., see Hogan [2015]). Further, photography tells us what is socially considered to be photographable respectively depictable and what is undepictable (see Jäger [2009]: 93).

Within one culture, it is also noticeable how certain photographic forms of expression are repeated and intensified, e.g. certain motifs as well as certain aesthetic aspects (see Manovich [2015f.]: 73). Through the use of social media, subcultures or scenes emerge that share their own modes of expression and need not be tied to a specific location. The individual is free to choose his or her own affiliations accordingly — and is able to integrate him/herself through his preference regarding visual aspects and photo content.

A «shared form of expression» also relates to photography's functions «as a means for communication» (Van Dijck [2008]: 58). This does not only refer to the time after the photoshoot when discussing its results but also to the shooting itself: many shootings are teamwork which means that contents, styles etc. have to be negotiated with the other team members. As most teamwork, this requires skills such as the willingness to compromise, which can serve one's personal development and ultimately facilitate one's social life, thus pave the way for feeling socially integrated. Furthermore, creativity can help the development of an inner core of the individual against external resistance (see Reckwitz [2012]: 218), which can be understood in relation to the feeling of inner strength and being at peace with oneself.

13. MEMORY AND IDENTITY

In the survey, around two thirds of both Indian and German speakers wrote statements referring to memory and/or identity, however, both aspects were often connected, e.g.: «Photography helps me to remember things that matter to me», «it makes me connect to my past», or «(it is) a tool that helps to define what I have been and what I am». Identity can be understood as the constant work on the image of who we want to be (see Abels [2017]: 4) — this, on the one hand, includes how we present ourselves in photographs and on the other, what we photograph. Looking at the first case, there is obviously a strong focus on bodily existence. Seeing ourselves in photographs, we say «this is me», even though it only depicts our physical appearance and merely shows a tiny, past moment of our lives.

The increasing emphasis on the body is often explained with the fact that because of disintegrating social boundaries and the disappearance of traditional social classes, [...] it has become necessary to position and differentiate oneself through deliberately developing an individual style. An active self-marketing through performative strategies of image cultivation and staging of the self, in which the body plays a central role, has gained importance (Leimgruber [2005]: 213-14).

Following this line of thought, it also makes sense to identify with a past-time moment, as it adds consistency to the individual: identifying ourselves in a photograph, then, means to recognize it as a moment in the coherent path that is nothing else than *us*. The connection to the own past through photographs is so strong, that it seems to be easy to manipulate it by manipulating photographs: Elizabeth Loftus ([1998]: 61f.) and other memory researchers have shown in numerous experiments that subjects invented stories to fit childhood photographs that were processed without their knowledge — we strive for consistency and identify one way of achieving it in our personal chronicle kept by photographs. Further, «all photographs that a person takes, remembers, imagines, or even just decides to keep or show

someone, are all “self-portraits”, even if no person appears in them directly» (Weiser [2010]: 16, see also Hannah [2013]: 10). Photography offers a way of picking out individual items from the wide spectrum of visual perception. Besides, one can view, edit, change, destroy or re-view images (see Mechler-Schönach [2005]: 16) and thus work on one’s identity. Here, the term of integration fits in a very obvious way: people integrate certain images—or leave them out.

14. EMPATHY AND KNOWLEDGE

Even though photography has been criticized for being aggressive on the part of the photographer (see Beloff [1983]: 171) and promoting narcissism on the part of the photographed (Thurner [1992]: 29), it can also lead to greater empathy and knowledge: if one wants to take a good, i.e. representative, aesthetic, spectacular, beautiful etc. photograph, one usually needs to know something about the subject, e.g. when taking a photograph of an event, it is useful to know which moments are crucial. This may require not only factual knowledge but also empathy. However, factual knowledge and empathy are important not only in documentary but also in staged people photography: this way, one can stage topics appropriately and at the same time work cooperatively with one’s team. Gisèle Freund already noted that the photographer can only take a good photo of his/her model if both have a connection (see Jäger [2009]: 26). «I learn something about my subjects», «I learn to understand what I record», or «I feel it» — about half of the participants put it this way or similarly. Empathy also becomes relevant when looking at photographs: It «involves paying attention to its subject, and any attention, no matter how feeble, is usually preferable to ignorance and apathy» (Ow Yeong [2014]: 9) — even if the sheer number and the pace of images can stand in the way of empathy.

In this context, the Indian theory of art is particularly interesting. The original use of its central term *rasa* includes a variety of interconnected meanings:

a fluid that quickly tends to spill, a taste such as sour, sweet or salty, the soul or essence of something, a desire, a power, a chemical agent used in changing one metal to another, the life-giving sap in plants and even poison. Almost all these distinct meanings are exploited at different junctures of the complex aesthetic phenomenology centering the concept of rasa (Chakrabarti [2016]: 8).

In classical Indian thought, «affective states received as much philosophical attention as cognitive or intellectual states [...]. All that moves in front of our consciousness was taken as alive with breath (prāṇa) and capable of subjective feelings (cinmaya). To be is to feel or be felt» (Chakrabarti [2016]: 5). Ultimately, the boundaries between artists and recipients can be dissolved: «A taster of a sweet recipe or similar is rightly so designated only because he enjoys chiefly the aspect of his own inmost self-delight while judging the given recipe in the form, “this tastes exactly this way”, a form totally other than that of a tasteless glutton. Even in the case of plays, poetry, and such like the separate identity [of the perceiver and the perceived] is totally superseded», cites Neerja Gupta ([2017]: 110) the classical Indian philosopher Abhinavagupta.

Here, integration means not just taking over another perspective, but dissolving the distinction between different perspectives: becoming connected to everyone else through the emotion transmitted by a work of art such as a photograph. Admittedly, the *rasa* theory was rarely mentioned by the survey participants and if, only in the Indian sample. But it is possible that the *rasa* art theory was internalized by the Indian students, being socialized in a cultural context that builds on it.

15. RESUME

Integration or alienation — both Indian and German-speaking students found various arguments on both sides and it is striking that (except for the aspect of photography as an alienating form of expression, which was only mentioned by Indians) the students from both cultural and

geographical contexts tend to answer very similarly. This can be interpreted as a sign of photography's integrative potential or of the fundamental human aspects addressed by the medium, but at the same time, it also stands for the homogenizing tendency of photography, which through similar use and aesthetics ultimately abolishes cultural identity. From all these considerations and the recognition of photography's potential, a very practical question arises: How should we deal with photography? First of all, we have to acknowledge that photography is part of our lives, and probably almost regardless of where we have been socialized and live, whether we are rather photographers, if we enjoy posing for photographs or if we regard ourselves mostly as recipients. Photography is omnipresent, and now it is up to us to find ways to make the most of it. Media education and reflection on the medium play a central role here — understanding what opportunities and risks arise. This must be assessed on a situation-specific and individual basis: there are, for example, situations in which photography functions more as an admission ticket and others in which the camera is more of a barrier. For some people, the escape that photography can offer is a welcome retreat, while others see it as an unnecessary barrier. In any case, it is important to promote knowledge about photography and to pay more attention to its implications.

REFERENCES

- Abels, H., 2017: *Identität. Über die Entstehung des Gedankens, dass der Mensch ein Individuum ist, den nicht leicht zu verwirklichenden Anspruch auf Individualität und Kompetenzen, Identität in einer riskanten Modernen zu finden und zu wahren*, Springer, Wiesbaden.
- Altheide, D.L., 1987: *Reflections: Ethnographic content analysis*, “Qualitative Sociology” 10, pp. 65-77.
- Anderssen-Reuster, U., 2016: *Einleitung: Was ist Achtsamkeit?*, in Anderssen-Reuster, U. (ed.), *Achtsamkeit in der Psychotherapie und Psy-*

- chosomatik. Haltung und Methode*, Schattauer, Stuttgart, pp. 1-4.
- APA Dictionary of Psychology: Integration. <https://dictionary.apa.org/integration>
- Baiden, B.K., Price, A.D.F., Dainty A.R.J., 2003: *Looking beyond process. Human factors in team integration*, in D. Greenwood (ed.), "Proceedings 19th Annual ARCOM Conference, 3-5 September, Brighton", Association of Researchers in Construction Management, Vol. 1, pp. 233-242.
- Beloff, H., 1983: *Social Interaction in Photography*, "Leonardo" 16(3), pp. 165-171.
- Blank, B., 2017: *Kunst als Medium zur Selbst-Ermächtigung und Teilhabe*, in Halbhuber-Gassner, L., Kappenberg B. (eds.), *Mit Kunst Brücken bauen: Die Bedeutung von Kunst(projekten) in der Arbeit mit Straffälligen*, Lambertus, Freiburg im Breisgau, pp. 47-66.
- Boski, P., 2008,: *Five meanings of integration in acculturation research*, "International Journal of Intercultural Relations" 32(2), pp. 142-153.
- Boucher, M.L., 2018: *Using Photo-Methods to Empower Participants in Education Research*, in Wang, V.C.X., Reio Jr T.G. (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Innovative Techniques, Trends, and Analysis for Optimized Research Methods*, IGI Global, Hershey, pp. 202-219.
- Brodersen, S., 2017: *Modelfotografie. Eine fotografische Praxis zwischen Konvention und Variation*, Transcript, Bielefeld.
- Brosig, C., 2019: "Remember Wounded Knee". *Strategische Re-Appropriationen stereotype Repräsentationen Amerikanischer Ureinwohner im politischen Poster*, in Engel, J., Gebhardt, M., Kirchmann, M. (eds.), *Zeitlichkeit und Materialität. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf Theorien und Phänomene der Präsenz*, Transcript, Bielefeld, pp. 333-354.
- Carey, J.W., 1967: *Harold Adam Innis and Marshall McLuhan*, "The Antioch Review" 27(1), pp. 5-39.
- Chakrabarti, A., 2016: *Introduction: Contemporary Indian Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art*, in Chakrabarti, A. (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, Bloomsbury, London, pp. 1-24.
- Deci, E.L., Ryan, R.M., 1991: *A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality*, in Dienstbier, R. (ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation, perspectives on motivation Vol. 38*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, pp. 237-288.
- Douwe, D., 1999: *Die Metaphernmaschine. Eine Geschichte des Gedächtnisses*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt.
- Eberle, T.S., 2017: *Fotografie und Gesellschaft. Phänomenologische und wissenssoziologische Perspektiven*, Transcript, Bielefeld.
- Fromm, E., 1955: *The Sane Society*, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
- Hannah, A., 2013: *Extending the Instantaneous: Pose, Performance, Duration, and the Construction of the Photographic Image from Muybridge to the Present Day*, https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/977197/1/Hannah_PhD_S2013.pdf
- Hogan, P.C., 2015: *The Idiosyncrasy of Beauty: Aesthetic Universals and the Diversity of Taste*, in Bundgaard P., Stjernfelt F. (eds.), *Investigations Into the Phenomenology and the Ontology of the Work of Art. Contributions to Phenomenology*, vol 81, Springer, Cham, pp. 109-127.
- Goffman, E., 1969: *Wir alle spielen Theater. Die Selbstdarstellung im Alltag. Aus dem Amerikanischen von Peter Weber-Schäfer*, http://www.irwish.de/PDF/_Soziologie/Goffman_Erving/Goffman_Erving-Wir_alle_spielen_Theater-Die_Selbstdarstellung_im_Alltag.pdf
- Gupta, N., 2017: *A Student's Handbook of Indian Aesthetics*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle.
- Hartman, R., 1959: *The science of value*, in Maslow, A.H. (ed.), *New Knowledge in Human Values*, Harper and Row, Chicago, pp. 13-37.
- Jaeggi, R., 2013: *Was ist Entfremdung?*, in IG Met-
all, 7. *Theorie-Praxis-Dialog: Was bedeutet Entfremdung? Geschichte und Aktualität eines Begriffs und seine Bedeutung für die gewerkschaftliche Bildung*, pp. 9-17. <https://www.philosophie.hu-berlin.de/de/lehrbereiche/jaeggi/media/doku-tpd-07.pdf>
- Jerrentrup, M.T., 2011: *Kulturelle Identität und Dissonanz in Südindien. Eine semiotische Plakatanalyse*, Wiki, Köln.

- Jerrentrup, M.T., 2018: *Therapie vor der Kamera. Zum Potential inszenierter Menschenfotografie*, Waxmann, Münster.
- Joffe, H., 2011: *Thematic analysis*, in Harper D., Thompson A.R. (eds.), *Qualitative methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*, Wiley, Chichester, pp. 209-223.
- Kabat-Zinn, J., 2012: *Mindfulness for Beginners. Reclaiming the present moment – and your life*, Sounds True Inc., Boulder.
- Kaufmann, W., 2015: *Introductory Essay*, in Schacht, R. (ed.), *Alienation*, Psychology Press, London and New York, pp. XIII-LIX.
- Kracauer, S., 1977: *Das Ornament der Masse*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.
- La Grange, A., 2005: *Basic Critical Theory for Photographers*, Focal Press, Oxford.
- Leimgruber, W., 2005: *Die visuelle Darstellung des menschlichen Körpers: Gesellschaftliche Aus- und Eingrenzungen in der Fotografie*, in Haibl, H., Gerndt, M. (eds.), *Der Bilderalltag: Perspektiven einer volkswissenschaftlichen Bildwissenschaft*, Waxmann, Münster, pp. 213-232.
- Lévy, A., 2002: *Erich Fromm. Humanist zwischen Tradition und Utopie*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg.
- Loftus, E.F., 1998: *Illusions of Memory*, "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society" 1, pp. 60-73.
- Mah, H.E., 1986: *Karl Marx in love: The Enlightenment, Romanticism and Hegelian theory in the young Marx*, "History of European Ideas" 7, pp. 489-507.
- Manovich, L., 2015f.: *Instagram and Contemporary Image*, <http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/instagram-and-contemporary-image>
- McLuhan, M., 1964: *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McGraw Hill, New York.
- Mechler-Schönach, C., 2005: *InSzene Kunsttherapie*, in von Sprei, F., Martius, P., Fröstl, H. (eds.), *Kunsttherapie bei psychischen Störungen*, Urban und Fischer, München, pp. 9-22.
- Mohammad-Arif, A., 2008: *Pakistanis in the United States: From Integration to Alienation?*, in Kalra, V. (ed.), *Pakistani Diasporas: Culture, Conflict and Change*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, pp. 316-334.
- Neuendorf, K.A., 2017: *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, Sage, Los Angeles.
- Odom, W., Zimmerman, J., Forlizzi, J., 2011: *Teenagers and their Virtual Possessions. Design Opportunities and Issues*, "CHI '11. Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems", pp. 1491-1500.
- Ow Yeong, W.K., 2014: *Our Failure of Empathy: Kevin Carter, Susan Sontag, and the Problems of Photography*, "Think Pieces: A Journal of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences" 1(1), pp. 9-17.
- Parikka, J., 2012: *Forum: New Materialism. New Materialism as Media Theory: Medianatures and Dirty Matter*, "Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies" 9(1), pp. 95-100.
- Pazzini, K.J., 2005: *Kann Didaktik Kunst und Pädagogik zu einem Herz und einer Seele machen oder bleibt es bei ach zwei Seelen in der Brust? Kunstpädagogische Positionen* Heft 8, Hamburg University Press, Hamburg.
- Pinney, C., 2008: *The Coming of Photography in India*, The British Library, London.
- Reckwitz, A., 2012: *Die Erfindung der Kreativität. Zum Prozess gesellschaftlicher Ästhetisierung*, Suhrkamp, Berlin.
- Reitz, C., 2000: *Art, Alienation, and the Humanities. A critical engagement with Herbert Marcuse*, State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Schacht, R., 2015: *Alienation*, Psychology Press, London-New York.
- Schleicher, K.E., 2009: *Wie können Stereotype über Pressefotografien reproduziert werden?*, Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften, Wien. <http://othes.univie.ac.at/6175/>
- Schönhuth, M., Jerrentrup, M.T., 2019: *Partizipative Ansätze für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung*, Springer, Wiesbaden.
- Schuchard, O.A., 2005: *The Landscape in Black and White. Oliver Schuchard Photographs, 1967-2005*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London.

- Schuster, M., 2020: *Fotopsychologie. Fotos sehen, verstehen, gestalten*, Springer, Berlin.
- Spitzing, G., 1985: *Fotopsychologie*, Beltz, Weinheim.
- Sontag, S., 1973: *On Photography*, Rosetta Books, New York. <http://www.lab404.com/3741/readings/sontag.pdf>
- Strother, Z.S., 2013: "A *Photograph Steals the Soul*": *The History of an Idea*, in Peffer, J., Cameron, E.L. (eds.), *Portraiture & Photography in Africa*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, pp. 177-212.
- Thurner, I., 1992: *Tourismus und Fotografie*, "Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie" 12(44), pp. 23-42 <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-12851>
- Tobert, N., 2017: *Cultural Perspectives on mental Wellbeing. Spiritual Interpretations of Symptoms in Medical Practice*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia.
- Van Dijck, J., 2008: *Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory* "Visual Communication" 7(1), pp. 57-76.
- Weiser, J., 2010: *Using self-portrait photographs during therapy sessions to help people improve their lives*, https://phototherapytherapeuticphotography.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/weiser_self-portraits_piccini_book.pdf.
- Weiser, J., 2014: *Comparing PhotoTherapy and Art Therapy*, Photo Therapy Centre. https://phototherapytherapeuticphotography.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/phototherapy_compared_with_art_therapy.pdf
- Wright, T., 1999: *The Photography Handbook*, Routledge, London.
- Young-Eisendrath, P., 2008: Jung and Buddhism: refining the dialogue, in Young-Eisendrath P., Dawson, T. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 235-252.