

Independent Project

(ADAA6000)

Annotated Bibliography

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Annotated Bibliography.

Amelunxen, H., Derrida, J., Fort, J., Richter, G., Wetzel, M. (2010) *Copy, archive, signature: a conversation on photography*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Copy, Archive, Signature features a philosophical dialogue on photography between Jacques Derrida and other thinkers. The book examines how photographs function as both representations of reality and subjective interpretations influenced by culture. It questions the authenticity of images in a world saturated with reproductions, framing photography as a medium that challenges traditional notions of presence and absence.

The book explores photography as a trace and questions authenticity, echoing Barthes's concept of punctum in *Camera Lucida*. Both theorists emphasize how photographs engage with the themes of absence and presence. Like Barthes, Derrida is concerned with how images evoke emotional and philosophical responses, and he reflects on reproduction and originality in a world saturated by images. Sontag's *On Photography*, where she explores the cultural impact of mass-reproduced images and their influence on perception and reality. Cadava's *Words of Light* also intersects with Derrida's themes, particularly in how photography is a medium that transcends time, creating a dialogue between past and present that disrupts linear temporality.

Derrida's contributions are integral to my research, especially his reflections on the photograph as a trace. The discussions on copying and authenticity align with my exploration of how images are shaped and reshaped over time, engaging with themes of memory and identity. By researching these philosophical concepts, I aim to understand how photography articulates the complexities of past experiences.

Barthes, R. (2010) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes's *Camera Lucida* is a foundational text in photographic theory. Barthes introduces two key concepts: *studium*, which refers to the cultural and political context of a photograph, and *punctum*, which denotes the personal, emotional impact an image has on the viewer. Barthes reflects on his relationship with photographs, particularly those of his deceased mother, illustrating how images capture both presence and absence, linking life with death.

Camera Lucida is crucial for my research. It provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how photographs function as traces of existence. Barthes's exploration of *punctum* helps inform my approach to memory and representation, particularly in understanding how images evoke personal and collective memories. His reflections on the continuum of life and death relate to my project's focus on spectrality and hauntology.

Batchen, G. (2009) *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

In *Photography Degree Zero*, Batchen reflects on Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, focusing on Barthes's concept of the *punctum*. Batchen explores how photographs evoke emotions, linking viewers to themes of life, death, and absence. He emphasises Barthes's idea that while photographs document moments, they simultaneously highlight their transitory nature, marking the inevitability of death. Batchen argues that photography serves as a space where light and darkness coexist, capturing traces of what once was.

Batchen analysis of the *punctum* deepens my understanding of how photographs serve as memory traces, embodying both presence and absence.

Batchen's discussion complements the themes in *Words of Light*, particularly the cyclical nature of memory and history in photography, where past, present, and future converge. His work enhances my research by exploring the emotional and

existential impact of photography, reinforcing the idea that images are not static but continuously engaging with the viewer's experience of time and memory.

Cadava, E. (1997) *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Eduardo Cadava's *Words of Light* offers a philosophical reflection on photography and explores its relationship with history, time, and memory. Cadava argues that photography is not just a technical process—it is a fundamental way of perceiving and recording history that predates the invention of the camera. Photography functions as a form of historical inscription, capturing not only fleeting moments but also the fragmented and cyclical nature of time. It disrupts linear temporality by merging past, present, and future in its subjects.

Cadava examines photography's "spectral" quality, where the subject is simultaneously present and absent, positioning the photograph as a place where the living is captured in a state of suspension, neither fully alive nor fully gone. This perspective aligns with themes of mortality, memory, and identity, key aspects of my research. Although abstract, Cadava's work provides a philosophical framework for understanding how photography engages these themes.

This book is essential for my dissertation, which explores hauntology and memory. Cadava's assertion that photography exists before the camera and operates metaphysically aligns with my interest in how images capture brief moments that can be revisited or reinterpreted over time. His reflections on time and photography, especially the notion of eternal return, resonate with my focus on how the past continually shapes the present through visual representation. Cadava's description of photography as an inner space where thoughts and memories are processed, like how a darkroom develops photographs supports my investigation into the subconscious, memory, and the traces left by the photographic act. Overall, *Words of Light* serves as the philosophical backbone of my project, offering critical insights into how photography transcends temporal and spatial boundaries.

Sontag, S. (1979) *On Photography*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Sontag's *On Photography* examines the cultural and philosophical implications of photography. Through a series of essays, Sontag explores how photography shapes our perception of reality, influences social norms, and affects relationships between subjects and viewers. She discusses the power dynamics in photographing, the ethical considerations of the medium, and the idea that images can alter our understanding of memory and experience.

Sontag's work complements *Words of Light* and *Camera Lucida* by analysing how photography mediates between memory and representation. Her examination of photography's influence on social norms also aligns with Derrida's discussion in *Copy, archive, signature*, highlighting how images are shaped by cultural and subjective interpretations. Sontag's reflections on the power dynamics in photography also resonate with the emotional connections that Barthes's *punctum* evokes in *Photography Degree Zero*, reinforcing the idea that photographs affect both the personal and collective understanding of identity and memory. These insights are integral to my dissertation's exploration of how photography serves as a medium to navigate temporal and existential experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the texts discussed in this bibliography significantly enrich my research by offering diverse perspectives on photography's relationship with memory, time, and identity. By synthesizing the philosophical insights of Derrida, Barthes, Batchen, Cadava, and Sontag, my project examines photography as a spectral medium that captures traces of existence and engages with the complexities of past experiences. Their ideas inform my exploration of how photographs evoke both presence and absence, shaping our understanding of identity and memory in the photographic medium.