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Topic Proposal

Though Photography has always had the purpose of capturing the truth of a single moment, human bias has warped this fact. People tend to form bias and opinions on images from their own ideals, even people in power can create propaganda from an image alone. This holds even truer in the era of the photographer Doris Ulmann where stereotype and racism ran rampant in this nation. Despite her rich upbringing from a wealthy New York based renounced family, Ulmann's work for the most part did not reflect any of the bias one would expect to come from her. Instead she was genuine in her curiosity of discovering how other people different from her lived their lives. This has peaked my interest in her especially in her personal life and photography style. I would like to research how Doris Ulmann's work revealed the "truth" of people and how her photography style created a legacy for her

In the late 19th century, came about a a term known as muckrakers. These were photographers and journalist who set out to expose society's ills such as poor living conditions of the poor or poor food quality. It was usually a term to mock or disrespect those in that line of work even if they were helping reform many social aspects of society. One famous muckraker was Jacob Riis, who exposed the horrendous living conditions of early european immigrants in lower manhattan. To some extent, Doris Ulmann could be considered a muckraker too. She would travel to Native American, African American, and White Southern communities to properly document these societies which changed the way society viewed them through her work. The bare

photos she would produce in their natural state couldn't even be denied by those

seeping with bias view. However it was her work versus a whole society that have used

media to control the narrative on different ethnic groups.

Controlled outlets and their portrayal of images always seem to control the

general public's view on the topic in question. This has been seem in so many cases

ranging from narrow views of third world countries, stereotypes of minorities,

propaganda or etc. These photos become powerful statements due to the fact that

everyday people rely on news to inform themselves about what is going on in the world

around them. Weather it be good or bad, it is by no doubt a single image portrayed by

the media can set a nation into a frenzy. In Ulmann's era, it would've been harder to

print or produce non-bias photographs on different ethnic groups. Her work and style

were able to be published and even recognized despite all the barriers and controversy

it might have brought.

In-Closing I am asking for approval on this topic due to the extreme relevance in

today's society and also the long history attached to it. Society's use of photographs in

today's world is so important to understand due to such a large audience being

reached. To understand the portrayal of photographs and the components of message a

photographer is trying to make can make people better analytical thinkers.