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The City of Lights and Escapes

Photography is much more than an art of expression, photography sparks perspective, feelings, curiosity and provides us with knowledge. Photographs can pass for proof that things happened, Susan Sontag has the same idea in “In Plato’s Cave” that “a photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened” (531). I have chosen two photos to compare, the first one is called “Beyond the Gates” and the second one is called “Views of Jersey”. I’m going to compare the feelings I get from these photos, they both have different scenery from each other but they give off the same feel to me.

I’ve always felt so isolated in Manhattan, it didn’t matter what borough I went to Manhattan was always visible. To me it stands as a constant reminder that no matter how far I go in this city, home is right around the corner but, there’s nothing new at home. I’ve seen Times Square a billion times and I got to say it doesn’t change nor improve. When I look at the photo’s I took I believe in what Susan Sontag had said in “In Plato’s Cave” that “It is mainly a social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power.” Looking at bridges and what lines on the other side of them does relieve me of the anxiety that my borough creates for me. The bridges spark a sense for adventure, exploration, and ignites my curiosity.

The Brooklyn Bridge from the view of The Manhattan Bridge, both are located on the East River. The gate around the lens being blurred out, was done to symbolize that I can no longer see the fences that surround me, I got a new location in my sights. Down below right beside The Brooklyn Bridge is “Janes carousel”, it is located at Brooklyn Bridge Park. If you

look to the right of the picture you could see the Manhattan skyscrapers that tower the city. When I took this photo, I incorporated the rule of thirds. The bridge is at the intersection of the grid that photographers use when they apply the rule of thirds. Capturing the bridge was the important part but, including the skyscrapers of Manhattan just gave the photo an even balance.

My second photo is a picture of the George Washington Bridge, I use the decisive moment when I took this. John Berger describe this in his “Understanding A Photograph Article” that “A photograph is a result of the photographer’s decision that is worth recording that this particular event or this particular object has been seen” (292). Below the view of the bridge you can see the trees and the empty Westside Highway. The time was 8:30pm and I was surprised that there were no cars speeding down the highway, at that moment I decided to take the picture. Across from the GWB you can see the state of New Jersey covered by the trees and wilderness of Fort Lee. The clouds are separating from each other so you can see some of the natural blue sky. You could still see a mixture of dark blue in it from the clouds. The George Washington Bridge has it lights on and there are close to a thousand lights on.

Seeing both bridges gives me a sense of escape, that is the dominant impress I gain from seeing both photos. Brooklyn has a lot of places I haven’t explored yet, so I feel like I can escape there. Across the George Washington Bridge is the state of New Jersey, New Jersey has 52 cities and many townships; there’s a lot to explore there. When I say escaping I mean breaking out of this borough of Manhattan, there’s so much more out there then 42nd street. When I look at these photos I wonder what life is like on the other side and it makes want to take that adventure.

I think these photos compare to each other because water takes up a good percentage of the frame in each. In my first photo of the Brooklyn Bridge called “Beyond the Gates”, the water

is a light blue because the sky is reflecting off it. The water color in my second photo called “Views of Jersey”, is a dark blue because the dark blue sky is reflecting off it. The mood is set by the color in the waters, I get this dark gloomy feel from them both. The sun is not out in neither of the photos and both bridges have a curve in the middle.

I think in the future cameras will have a new realistic feature. This feature will allow you to smell the air on that day the photo was taken; or feel the warmth, or the cold from that day. Still, with these new features added you must understand the principals of photography. The decisive moment will always be important to a photo, the factor of timing will always be useful. The rule of thirds as well, the use of the photography grid and putting the most important part of the photo in the intersections, will always be a clever way to take a photo. No matter what new advances emerge or what decade it is, the principals will always be important.

Work Cited Page

1. Berger, John. *Understanding a Photograph*. 1970.
2. Sontag, Susan. *In Plato's Cave*. 2013.