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Essay 2

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Two Sides of Nature

 When running and jogging through Forest Park in Queens, I often am surrounded by nature. It is a peaceful environment, and one I associate with happiness, this is why I chose to photograph two nature pictures in Pennsylvania. While nature photos may seem to only capture a moment they actually tell a story as well. “A picture is worth a thousand words,” is an idiom that is most commonly known and conveys this very point. Two photographs “Pathway into Nature,” and “Sunlight Between the Leaves” will be compared and analyzed for their own particular “story.” Both moments have vast similarity when it comes composition and an overall feeling which was peacefulness.

 The photograph “Sunlight Between the Leaves” is a picture in full, vibrant color. The photograph was taken in Poconos, Pennsylvania. The is area is known for the scenic imagery and a sort of “get away” from the states of New York and New Jersey. The studium in the picture can be described as, a view with trees that are towering over the grass, and stretching to the sky. The trees have very thin trunks, but as you look there are more trees in background. This causes the trunks in the background to be covered by leaves and almost disappear. The color in the lower background becomes darker within the trees because little sunlight hits the floor. The sky above the trees is very calm and blue. The sky is also filled with clouds. At the angle this photograph is taken one can see that these trees are quite tall.

 The photograph “Pathway into Nature” is a picture that is similarly taken in vibrant color. This photograph was also taken in Poconos, Pennsylvania. The studium in this picture can be

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described as trees towering over the grass. A clear dirt pathway cuts in between the trees. A bit of sky peeks over to the right of the photo. Sunlight can be seen hitting the dirt pathway. As you

look further down the foreground of the photo, the path stretches and almost disappears from view. A similar effect seen in “Sunlight Between the Leaves” with the tree trunks “disappearing” and being covered by leaves.

In both “Sunlight Between the Leaves” and “Pathway into Nature” the reality effect is very high. This means that the photo was not altered and if one was to stand in the same spot as the photographer in the same location they can duplicate the photograph. Both scenic and nature photos are not art pictures. The dominant impression of both photos can be described as tranquil and a sense of feeling quite small even microscopic in comparison to nature, more specifically in comparison to the trees.

 The pro filmic event for both photographs was a dark morning that was a bit brisk. The sun was hidden beneath a blanket of clouds and it was drizzling. When the sun appeared and rays of light bounced off the trees and leaves, it gave a “warm” feeling. Susan Sontag explains why people take pictures that are so visually appealing in her essay “On Photography.” Sontag says “A way of certifying an experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it – by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, souvenir. Travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs.” These areas were photogenic and that is why these pictures were taken. In fact, other areas that were not as photogenic seemed to get completely omitted and no photographs were taken there. These photos almost do serve as a souvenir of a weekend spent in the Poconos. The photograph “Sunlight Between the Leaves” does not follow the rule of thirds. The major focal point of the photograph is where the sky and

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tips of the trees meet. Your eyes automatically shift upwards. The sky does not rest on any lines or intersection of lines where a focal point would be, if the photo followed the rule of thirds. The photograph “Pathway into Nature” also does not follow the rule of thirds. The focal point if the pathway that goes into the forest of trees. This takes up a large portion of the photo so it does not rest on a certain line. Also it is centered in the picture.

John Berger in his essay “Understanding a Photograph” analyzes what the true definition of a photograph is. “At the simplest, the message, decoded, means: I have decided that seeing this is worth recording.” Berger is cognizant that photographs have more a personal value then monetary which is another point he articulates in his essay. Both photographs in this essay prove his point. Both photographs were chosen because they were worth recording in my opinion. I find photos of nature soothing in a way and appealing to look at. Every photograph of a certain scenic place was taken for a reason and that may be their story. “Pathway into Nature,” though similar to “Sunlight Between the Leaves,” captured a bit of mystery with the road ascending in the photograph. “Sunlight Between the Leaves” captured the beauty of the sunlight and sky with the surrounding trees.

How can photographs of nature have a story? This can be as simple as why the photographer took the picture, or even where this photo was taken. By simply digging a little deeper into a photograph one can perceive many things in a photo. A photo’s story can have a very broad definition that may vary from person to person.

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