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Essay 2

My Daily Transportation Life

Like many other people, public transportation is a necessity for me. As a college student who has to take public transportation every day, my daily routine consists of using the MTA. The train and bus I have to ride now are the R train and the B63 bus. My daily routine of using the train and the bus inspired me to take a photo of each. The studium is the basic level of interpreting a photo. In this case, it depicts public transportation at New York. On the other end, the perspective, the depth of field and the frame will allow me to deeply explore the significance of both photos. I will compare these two modes of transportation and their similarities and differences. These two modes affect my daily routine. I chose the title “My Daily Transportation Life” because the two specific modes take me from start, which is from home to my destination, then finishes by taking me from my destination back home.

        The studium plays a significant role as it visually describes both photo’s different characteristics. The studium is the important details that grabs the viewer’s attention. The first photo is a close up of the R-Train, which has the doors open and a text saying Bay Ridge-95 Street. In addition, the photo is taken in an angle, where the train takes up half the photo, but get smaller at the other side of the photo. The angle of the photo portrays the direction the train is moving, which is heading to Brooklyn. The second photo shows a bus, high traffic, and many low-leveled buildings such as a Duane Reade. The bus is stuck on traffic and is unable to move. Visually, the two photos both starts from the back to the front of the train and the bus. The grey color in both photos represent the dullness of transportation. Both photos characterize my daily life as I experienced high traffic many times when using transportation.

        Visually, both photos depict both modes of transportation giving a sense of motion. However, both modes of transportation are not moving in the photo, giving a sense of delay. These visuals of both photos shows their perspective. One of my significant experiences upon using transportation is delays for the train and traffic for the bus. I consider this experience important because when riding the train or the bus, delay and traffic wastes my time of my journey from one place to my destination. Both photos were taken in an angle, where both modes start at the back of the photo, then ends to the front. Even though both modes of transportation seem motionless in their respective photos, the angle of both photos portray the motion of both modes of transportation. In “Understanding a Photograph,” Berger states, “I have decided that seeing this is worth recording, we may now decode it as: the degree to which I believe this is worth looking at can be judged by all that I am willingly not showing because it is contained within it.” (pg. 294). Intentionally, I left the delay aspect invisible in both photos because it is already contained in both my photos and impact the analysis of the photo. I consider that my daily life is similar to both photos I have took because both forms of transportation moves from start to end in the photos and my daily life moves from start to finish using transportation.

        The depth of field can give photos either equal significance or specific significance. Both photos have the same deep depth of field. This means that every detail in the photos is equally important. For instance, the cars passing by in the second photo depicts the sense of everyday living in the city. On the other hand, the first photo has a shallow depth of field. The doors, windows, and the ceiling depicts a sense of darkness because of the colors of the details and the steel and concrete. What makes the second photo have an equal depth of field is its large focus, while the first photo has less focus. The depth of field catches both photos’ geometrics well enough. Teju Cole states in his essay, “Perfect and Unrehearsed”, “The reality is that there is usually a much more improvisatory and flexible mathematical order at play in a successful photograph.” The distance and aperture defines the quality of both photos.

The frame gives the viewer an intense feel that mirrors the feeling of reality I get when I actually stand near a mode of transportation. The train in the first photo takes up almost a half of the frame. When I walk or stand on the platform of the station when the train pulls into the station, I feel a serious wind blowing to me, reflecting the intensity and speed of the train. In contrast, the bus in the second photo takes less frame of the photo. As a result of the framing, the photo mirrors the reality of the calmer feeling as the bus approaches you. In order words, when the bus approaches you, it comes to a stop at a slower speed, therefore giving a soothing feeling. As John Berger states in his essay, “Understanding a Photograph”, “Every photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality,” (pg. 294), these two photos reflect my reality of public transportation.

Ultimately, I learned photos have a lot more meaning than I thought. I learned to interpret photos in many different ways. The studium, which involves the important, general details in the photo are important, may be important, but it is better analyzing the photos even further because every photo has at least one aspect that is not directly shown in the photo and that one aspect can even define on its own. Every detail in the photo can have an equal significance, which means that every detail in a photo are equally important, but many photos also have only one detail that has significance. Photos reflects the reality of the subject the photo was taken on.