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Essay 2

English 1101 (Prof. Scanlan)

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“All About the Dental”

       Photographs are commonly taken to capture the moment to keep as memories, to tell stories, to communicate with others, or to display meaning. Just as John Berger stated in *Understanding a Photograph*, “A photograph is a result of the photographer’s decision that it is worth recording that this particular event or this object has been seen” (292). In this essay, two photos are presented and will be elaborated to show the impact on my possible future in a career that fixates on the human oral cavity. Commonly as children, the insistence on taking care of our teeth made it seem as if it were a responsibility. Either we were told to make sure to brush before bed, not to eat too much cheese doodles or candy, so on and so forth. As we grew older, we became more aware of the importance of our oral hygiene. If not, then there would be an embarrassment either from someone telling you about your breath, your dentist informing you about cavities, or your loss of teeth. The two photographs that are going to be discussed revolve around the topic of learning about dental hygiene. Although photograph two, “The Tooth Pick for You” presents various dental products that emphasize on dental hygiene, photograph one, “The DANB” shows how I’ve been impacted not only to take care of my own teeth but to help others as well.

        When you’re first introduced to photo one, “The DANB” the studium is presented with a paper, a packet, and a photo of a tooth in a textbook. In the foreground of the left side of this photo is a textbook picture of a permanent mandibular first molar, which displays different parts of the tooth with the enamel, dentin, and pulp cavity. A printed-out email for an appointment confirmation for the DANB exam is slanted with a packet behind it. Bold black letters spelled, “Dental Radiology” is aligned on the cover of the packet. This photo appears to be bright with light but the papers are a dull color of white. The shapes formed in this photo resemble triangles, especially with the portion of the slanted paper aligned with the textbook. On the other hand, photo two, “The Tooth Pick for You” displays dental products such as: toothpaste, mouthwash, toothbrushes, and floss which are assembled in a pattern. By using rule of thirds, the center of the picture has a dental floss that’s placed on a big box of Crest toothpaste. Four little sample boxes of toothpaste by the companies: Colgate, Sensodyne, and Crest are positioned like rays on a sun on the overhead portion of the big box of toothpaste. Two toothbrushes from Oral B and Colgate are placed on each side; on the bottom of the big Crest box are mouthwashes from Biotene, Listerine and Crest. These dental products are on top of a white bag, which indicates that they were stored in it before the photo was taken. The light in this photo’s bright like photograph one but is different with the bright colors of red, blue, green, orange, and yellow on the products. The main shape in this photo, are mostly rectangles which are seen with the toothpaste boxes.

Despite the studium in both “The DANB” and “The Tooth Pick for You,” the punctum of these photos symbolizes the significant memories. In the same passage as previously mentioned, John Berger states, “What distinguishes the one from the other is the degree to which the photograph explains the message, the degree to which the photograph makes the photographer’s decisions transparent and comprehensible” (292). In the photo “The DANB” the packet and textbook displays my experience of being in a dental assistant major during my junior and senior year of high school. When I first entered the major, my junior class consisted of 30 students; the classroom had more people than seats. In this year, I would admit that I cruised through because the subject of teeth didn’t spark my interests at the time. My teachers for my junior class mostly made us read books and take quizzes on what we read. As time went on, I encountered my senior teacher, Ms. Didonato. This woman truly planned on making the best of the remaining 10 dental assistant students left in the major. She provided us with countless of papers and packets with information to help us prepare for the certification test, the DANB. I was able to become a visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learner in this major. Although my classmates and I were nervous to take the exam, on June 17th of 2016, all 10 of us could now call ourselves certified dental assistants. In the photo, “The Tooth Pick for You” the punctum is the various dental products. I received these items when I attended a dental convention at the Jacob Javits Center in late November of 2015. This convention was a gathering where dental businesses promoted their new work, either it be technology for the dental office, instruments to help better dental procedures, new hygiene products, or apps to get people interested. While walking booth to booth with my classmates, we received different responses as dental students. There were some people that wanted to speak to dentists instead and brushed us away with little souvenirs, others that were open to give us information and encouraged us to continue the dental path, and people that were fascinated with the fact that our high school provided such an opportunity of becoming a certified dental assistant. At the convention, the huge booths were major dental companies such as: Colgate and Sensodyne, they proceeded to show and distribute their new products, and provided information on oral hygiene. Their presentations displayed the importance of taking care of our teeth and how to help others learn. The two photographs have had different storyline, “The DANB” explains more how it has impacted me than “The Tooth Pick for You.”

The significance of photo one, “The DANB” has shown part of the work that I went through in my late high school years and can indicate the impact that it has done to me. John Berger has mentioned that “A photo, whilst recording what has been seen, always and by its nature refers to what is not seen” (293). Photograph one displays the stepping stone in my life, that I can say I’m looking forward to. If I didn’t join the dental assisting major, meet my senior teacher Ms. Didonato, learn about dentistry, take and pass the certification exam, I wouldn’t be here today considering to become a dentist. Even though, the photograph “The Tooth Pick for You” doesn’t quite have major impact on choosing my career, it does have relevance regarding dentistry and my experience.

(Words: 1126)

Work Cited

Berger, John. “Understanding a Photograph.” *Classic Essays on Photography*. 13th Edition. Alan Trachtenberg. 80 Edition. New Haven: Leete’s Island Books, 1980. 292-293. Print.