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Essay 2

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Nature as Its Own Artist

Nature is a mysteriously beautiful thing. It breathes life into humans, it creates beauty out of rocks and dirt, and it brings peace to those who appreciate it. Nature is unpredictable and constantly changing much like people. Most of the time, people take nature for granted when they become so introverted and stuck in their daily routine. This causes people to miss the art that nature can create all on its own. People forget that nature in itself is a reflection of who they are and what they do. “Reflection” and “Rising” are two photos I will be discussing. They are of nature and its different aspects such as; the tall trees that tower over us, the sky, the sun as it rises over the Bronx, and the shadows that clouds can cast over a certain area. One photo includes tall green trees in the midafternoon in the beginning of October, a small sign reads, “The truth is I reflect you” which seems to be pointing toward the trees. The second photo includes a different aspect of nature in which the sun is rising above the skyline of the Bronx; the clouds cast a dark shadow over the buildings giving the photo a unique kind of aesthetic. It makes the sun seem as if it is setting because the light that the clouds are reflecting from the sun is almost orange and blue. Therefore, the aesthetic of the photo is sort of odd and unique.

Many people argue that photography is a form of people documenting their lives. Others argue that photography is a form of expression, a way of life, and even an art form. John Berger explains the concept of photography being a form of documentation instead of art in his essay “Understanding a photograph.” In Berger’s essay, he compares photography to paintings and sculptures saying that they are two completely different things. Paintings and sculptures have their own language; they depend upon their own “internal reference” as Berger says. He says the meaning and message of a painting is never direct, the meaning of a painting depends upon the artists themselves. However, with photography, its references are completely external; they depend upon the composition of the photo. Photography deals with events; it translates those events into an everlasting amount of time, a continuum. Therefore documenting something specific or important. I would argue that photography is an exquisite form of expression. When combined with art, it is a very powerful thing. To me, photography and art go hand in hand; they have the ability to reflect each other; and to define each other. Photography is to document a specific moment in time, as painting is to document a specific emotion within that continuum.

The two photos that I have taken have some specific differences due to certain features like the studium and pro-filmic event of the photo. The studium of the first photo titled “Reflection” consists of a multitude of tall trees. The trees vary in color from dark green to a pale green, yellow color; the trees make up most of the foreground and background of the photo. The sky is also visible in both the foreground and background. The background of the photo includes buildings, light poles and other messages like the one in the center of the photo, which reads, “The truth is I reflect you.” The angle of the message made it seem as if it were pointing to the dark green tree that settles in the right hand area of the middle ground of the photograph. The studium of the second photo, titled “Rising” differs from that of the first photo. The studium of the second photo consists of the sky as the sun is rising on an early October morning. Unlike the “reflection” photo, most of the middle and background of this photo is defined by the sun’s light, which is accentuated by the clouds in the background. The clouds seem to be hanging low, creating a huge white, fluffy blanket over the foreground of the photo; this causes a dark shadow to be casted over the foreground of the photo, which consists of buildings and lampposts that rest on the train platform.

Much like the studium, the pro-filmic event also varies in both photos. In the “Reflection” photo, the pro filmic event was much more diverse; taking place in the middle of the day where most people were out on their lunch breaks, since the park is located in such a busy area. People were walking around and talking to each other. People were sitting on benches, eating or reading. The pro filmic event was busy and livelier externally. In the “Rising” photo, the pro filmic event was much quieter, calm and almost serene. I was waiting for the train at the West Farms Square train station in the Bronx, it was about seven-thirty in the morning and not a lot of people were out. There were maybe two to four people on the southbound side of the platform but on the northbound side, there were only around two. People were listening to music rather than talking to each other and creating a much livelier atmosphere like in the first photo. The pro-filmic events of these photos are obviously very different when being compared to each other, one is more lively and populated with many people while, the other is very calm and quiet. Although these photos seem to have many differences, they also have some similarities.

The photos previously described seem to differ from one another but they are similar in a multitude of ways. In earlier paragraphs, I said that the studiums of the photos differed from each other but they are also similar because the photos were taken during the day and around the same time within the month of October. The photos also share the same aspect of documenting nature.

These photos document something that people can see in their everyday lives, they are not photos that seem to have an art like element such as the use of filters or any editing done to them therefore, making them documentary photos and giving them a high reality effect. The dominant impression is also something that the two photos share as a similarity because when I look at the photos I feel in some way calm internally. The photos make me feel small compared to nature but, they also make feel appreciative toward nature because I have realized that nature has many beautiful elements to it. Some of the elements being tall, green trees that provide oxygen to our lungs and carry out vital photosynthesis processes that help us sustain daily activities; or the beauty of the sky while the clouds wash over the city as sun paints a lilac sky over us. As I look at each photo, I feel at peace with nature. I feel calm and happy that I am able to witness the art that nature is able to create on its canvas that is earth.

Nature is its own artist it creates beauty out of nothing but the ground itself, in the same that an artist creates beauty out of nothing but a blank canvas and paint. Nature has the ability to adapt to constantly changing elements; it has the ability to create things that no one can create on their own. If we continue to neglect nature, to abandon its beauty and to stay unappreciative of it there will come a time, where there will be nothing to appreciate anymore. I took these photos to document the fact that we are a reflection of nature, our actions, our thoughts and emotions are all reflections of the environment around us. If we create a toxic environment of negativity, we will adapt to that type of reality, nature will adapt to that type of reality. The way we treat nature is the way that nature will treat us therefore, if we are able to realize the beauty of nature and we are able to take care of nature correctly, that behavior will reflect upon us.