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Delay Train

Taking a good photo is a lot like making a good joke or catching a train, your timing is everything. There have been many occasions where I missed the train because I was a second late and I had to wait 23 minutes for the next one. Timing plays a key role in taking a photo because it could be the difference of taking a picture of Usain Bolt as he crosses the finish line or taking a picture of the runner up. In *Understanding a Photograph* by John Berger he explains that a photograph is distinguished by the meaning the author gives. I disagree with this, I believe that timing, the studium and the profilmic event play a role in the distinguishability of a photograph. I will prove my point with My two photos “Williamsburg J” and “Broadway L” I will also be using Jose Parla’s *Research and Memory* and even John Berger to prove the importance of timing on a picture.

John Berger stated in his article *Understanding a Photograph* “The principle of photography is the image is not unique”. However, my first photograph “Williamsburg J” would prove rather hard to imitate naturally. As shown in the picture there are two cars going in the same direction across the Williamsburg bridge ; a minivan and a yellow NYC taxi. To the far left there are three trees, the blueish east river and the coastline of Brooklyn with a crane extending in the back. In the midground there is a long red cage for the bike/walk way and in the background there is the highest point of the Bridge. In the foreground there is the black guard and the train door. There is also the reflection of the lights on the train window and below them

the train tracks are visible. My photo is pretty unique because if I tried to take the exact same photo again then there would be significant differences between the two photos. To replicate this photo I would need to take the photo at the exact same time that those three trees and the coastline of Brooklyn are in sight. The timing for this photo make it distinguishable because a second later and this would of been a photo of the Underground tunnel, graffiti and train tracks.

The Time a picture is taken makes just as much a difference as the timing, if a picture is outside. Jose Parla stated in *Research and Memory* “time is a part of these painting” the same is true for any photograph. The time of day drastically affects the outcome and feel of a photograph. In my second photo “Broadway L” The dark skies and light coming from the MTA building indicate that it’s night, 2:30 to be exact. If this photo was taken in the day there would of been a significant change. There would be blue skies with a few white clouds, no lights coming from the building and the lighting in the picture would be different. This is another picture that is distinguished not just by the meaning I give it but also the timing and what's in the picture. In the foreground there is the yellow platform edge and the grey platform, The first car of the train is blurred along with the conductor and there is a small soccer ball wedged in the tracks. In the midground there are two men sitting at opposite ends of the bench and above them is the black and white sign that read “Broadway junction” cut off by a striped black and white sign. In the background are the lights coming from the orange MTA building and the dark skies. For this picture timing was a key factor, a second later and it the train would of taken up the entire picture. The blurred train and the focused people show that the train was moving so if the shutter speed was slow or my phone delayed in taking the picture for whatever reason the two people in the back would have not been there.

The profilmic event is important to “Williamsburg J” because it tells that i’m crossing bridge going from Brooklyn to Manhattan. The profilmic event of a picture also make it distinguishable from any other picture because it’s the difference of taking a picture of LeBron James dunking a ball or Alexander Rodriguez hitting a home run. In “Broadway L” The profilmic event behind it is that there was a delay on the L train, which is common at night, so the first train to come had more people on it than normal. In my photos the profilmic event do not play an important role as the timing and the time, but, to leave out the importance of the profilmic event would take out some meaning from the picture.

I do not agree with John Berger's statement that a photo is distinguishable by the photographers meaning alone. The timing, studium and profilmic event in the photo play a part in it’s meaning. I use my two photos to show that timing is a very important factor in what shows up in a picture. A photo take a second later would be a completely different picture and I would have to give it a different meaning. From the two cars crossing the Williamsburg bridge to the two men sitting at opposite ends of the bench, timing is everything in a natural photograph. The only instance where timing doesn’t matter is when the photo is staged.

Citation

Parla, Jose. the place where we dwell: reading and writing about new york. Dubuque:
2014. print.

Berger, John. Understanding a photograph. London: 2013. Web.