

Contextual Studies

Dissertation proposal

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BA course :documentary photography
and visual activism

Words count :2348

In this essay I will talk about my three key words and images in order to come up with a question for my final year dissertation. The main theme of my upside down essay is travel and social media and cultures. I feel like these will give me a good base to start thinking of a question. I also have some artists who have caught my interest while I was researching some of these words. Those artists are Lola Akinmade, Timothy Allen and Jim Richardson. These artists all have similar interests to what I would like my photography to be about.



Travel

Image from google accessed 27th march

My first key word is Travel, the definition of travel is to:

"Go from one place to another, typically over a distance of some length. The vessel had been travelling from Libya to Ireland".- google 2021

I have chosen 'travel' as my first keyword because it is the main focus area for my proposal idea for my dissertation. The reason being is because I love to travel. I have a

drive for travel. It is something I dream of doing some day. I adore exploring new and exciting places with unique scenery around every corner. My next big goal in life is to go travelling because I love learning about different cultures and experiencing a new area of the world for the very first time. When I go travelling I will hopefully be going to Norway, Canada, Australia, the Caribbean, and many more places. I'd like to visit the harsher places such as Iraq, Egypt and the poorer countries. I would like to explore these countries to discover what life is like for them.

However, I do also know that travel is a hobby that most people have and love to do. Through the past year it is needless to say that we have been deprived of travelling and tourism. Due to that deprivation it is something I want to do more than ever, because if this global pandemic has taught me anything: it's that we need to start doing more of the things we love and less of the things that we do day in day out.

I know that travel and exploration is important to us because it can help our economy grow drastically. The more that people go to visit these countries, the bigger the boost in job opportunities and therefore, increases the profit for the specific country. If people decided to shop locally while they were abroad, by going to independent shops and stalls rather than purchasing from bigger chain companies, not only will it help that country's economy, but it will help the people of that country massively by boosting their income. Unfortunately, we've seen quite the opposite in the past year due to coronavirus. We have witnessed millions upon millions of small and local businesses having to make their workforce smaller or close their doors altogether. Millions of people

losing their jobs and a good percentage of people were furloughed. It's easy enough to see now just how important tourism and travelling is to the economy, especially to get the economy back up and running again, safely. Not only does travel help where the economy is concerned: but it also helps to fund things such as new paths, roads, schools, hospitals and the general community. It helps keep the wildlife protected, as many businesses are currently choosing an eco friendly future.

The other reason why travel is a keyword is because while travelling you get to learn about different cultures and expanded your knowledge on the world, you also get to learn how to travel responsible .While most people travel to go and relax, I would like to go traveling and learn how to responsibly look after and learn different cultures during my stay which then brings me to my next keyword which is cultures

Cultures



image from google accessed 27th march

The definition for culture is:

“The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society”.

- Google 2021

Why is culture so important to us a human race for many people? It is a way to celebrate their way of life and to celebrate who they are as people. I think that learning and understanding other ways of life is very important, because the more we learn the more we grow as people. We can also help others come to understand how culture can thrive in our modern world.

Personally I would love to learn and dive in to these other cultures so I can see how different my way of life is to someone else's, for example, I would love to see how the Austronesian people live, they live on a small island called Nauru,

, "it is just an area of 21km² with a population of 10,000." (online).

I have seen videos of the natives playing football in the airport as there is very little amount of air traffic . In the video's the tourists travel to one side of the island and they could still see the other end clear as day. I would love to go there myself and just embrace their way of living and hopefully be able to share that with the world to show and celebrate their people's ways of life.

Another reason why cultures are important to the world is because it in itself creates uniqueness. If we were all the same, life would be less vibrant. It gives people a sense of

self and it allows them then to explore their personal history. It also can help them in a time of need, for example, during the time of apartheid the people of South Africa were made to work in poor conditions in the gold mines. They were made to wear a bandana, no shirt and gumboot or wellington boots. They weren't allowed to talk to each other, so they came up with a way of communication which was to hit their boots. To signify this that "the boss was coming" or to talk about how poor the conditions were. Eventually the bosses noticed this and they would allow the people of South Africa to do the dances for guests and family; but more often than not the dances were mocking them unknowingly to bosses. This is an art form called stepping. This is now a performance that is used to show their pride in Africa.

Another reason why I believe we should learn about different cultures is because I want to live their lifestyle while I'm there. I want to be enriched with their history of their culture. There are a number of examples where foreign travelers who have disrespected their beliefs, for example, sometime in 2015 two California travelers carved their initials into the wall of the Roman Colosseum. Similarly a German tourist climbed up the Pyramid of Cheops, he knew the risks and he did it just to get a cool image. I want to do my best to avoid making the people of the country uncomfortable. This is why I would always do my research and be respectful of my surroundings. I will also be sensitive to the things I post on social media because the people I'm photographing might not want to be published online. Which then leads me to my next keyword which is social media.

Social media



image from google accessed 27th march

The definition of social media according to google is

“websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.”

The main reason why I chose social media as one of my key words is because it is something that the majority of everyone uses. It has become a lot more easier to use and way more accessible in recent years. Social media can help with a lot of things; one of the main things being awareness .It has helped people launch businesses a lot quicker than it would have been before. Nowadays you can post a 60 second video with some interesting stories in the background and people will watch them and be interested in the product that they are making. It is one of the many ways to start up a

social media presence. So the more people that 'like' you, the more likely you are to be noticed by bigger companies who need help selling their products.

Why is it important to have social media presence in the day and age we are currently in? . I know it is important to have a website and social media accounts especially as a travel photographer because it gives you a bigger audience than some travel magazine because not everyone will buy them. However if you have social media, your audience will vary. As well as people who are solely interested in travel there will be people who are interested in other aspects. Social media is important because you can spread a message faster than you would be able to via a newspaper or magazine.

Social media can only work efficiently if combined with travel and culture because you have set your destination you know the history and then when you post this you give the context behind the image. If you get that mix right then you're more likely to get noticed who will then by word of mouth spread it to their friends.

It is also important to have a social media account because you can be/ keep in contact with people that you may wish to collaborate with or have collaborated with. Also with a social media account your images become a universal language that billions of people all over the world can connect with. Since we are in a post truth era we need to keep to the truth as much as we can

While needing social media is a very important part of being a travel photographer; there are some things you should be wary of such as not telling / portraying the truth, for example, the very famous photo of Sharbat Bibi or better known as the Afghan girl, she was a 10 year old girl who was in school, Steve McCurry was a photographer who was sent by National Geographic to Pakistan to photograph the Afghan refugee camp people who went there because of the Soviet war that was happening at the time. While he was in the camp he went into the school and saw Sharbat he was taken back by her green eyes. He didn't take into account of her religion; as a follower of Pashtun she can't be photographed taken she nor be in the same room with another man who isn't family. So Steve McCurry made her take this photograph not only against her wishes, but also against her religion. He also didn't ask anything about her life and then went on to publish the photo with the quote

"her eyes reflect the fear of war". - National Geographic

Interestingly that wasn't the case either; it was more of anger that her beliefs were being ignored and this all goes to show that can photographers abuse their power and why you should always stick to the truth. Especially on social media.

Contextualise

How do all these keywords come together to form my overall question? I thought about something I have wanted to do for a long time and travelling has always been on my mind; especially now that we can barely go anywhere due to COVID19. I thought travel would be an interesting way to push my work further; then I thought how travel and culture go hand in hand and I was surprised at how many people didn't know of things about

culture. I thought social media is the main place where you see all the holiday images or advertising images, and I thought about my question for a long time and I wanted it to be something I would love to do so I did some research about some travel photographers. I saw three people that majorly inspired me because of their work and how it relates to the things I want to do in the future. Now that I have explored all of my keywords i'm going to explain why I have decided to use them to form my overall question. I adore traveling, it has always been a dream of mine and I would love the opportunity to do it full time as a career. I narrowed it down to travelling and learning about different cultures and I thought to myself why travelling is important to me, I came up with a lot of reasons as to why. Some of those reasons are ; I love learning and doing new adventures, I love to meet people, learning the history of different cultures , I love taking photographs of meaningful images and I just love how after I leave a place my mind is always filled with more knowledge than before. Then I wondered why others love to explore as well.. That led me to my final question which is; why is travel photography important to society? I would love to explore this further and go into more depth about this topic and in doing that I could think about all these subquestions; like why do people love to travel?

Why doesn't everyone know about responsible travel? How much does travel photography bring in not only in money but awareness too?.Why is culture important? How does social media help us spend awareness?

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