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VISUAL ANALYSIS OF LIVING WITH CANCER AS SEEN THROUGH A LENS OF POSTSTRUCTURALISM

This analysis uses a narrative thematic methodology from a first-person perspective to explore meaning-making in personal photography when documenting death. The specific focus of the research is a man diagnosed with esophageal cancer, a terminal disease in this instance. The site of visual inquiry is primarily four individual photographs, although video interviews with the subject are also analyzed. An acknowledgment that the meaning of photographs varies dependent upon the viewer prompts an exploration of the concept of synesthesia and finding truth in images. A poststructuralist perspective regarding the ability of photographs to emotionally effect viewers, inclusive of Roland Barthes' claim that death is the essence of a photograph, underscores the unique ability of photography to keep us all alive even after our physical demise. A focus on context layers the conclusion that all visuals are dependent upon overlapping semiotic influences.

BIO:

Shane Epping joined the Communication and Journalism Department at the University of Wyoming in 2021 in fulfillment of the Model Professorship in Photojournalism. Epping teaches photojournalism courses, including introductory photography and entrepreneurship as it relates to professions focused on creativity. He also is a Federal Aviation Administration-certified remote drone pilot.

In the final stages of his doctoral degree at the University of Missouri, his research explores the intersection of photography and health care and examines how photojournalism serves as a conduit for social justice and meaning-making for people both behind and in front of the camera. Most recently, Epping was part of a team of researchers who analyzed how those living with HIV documented their lives with a camera.

In his personal life, Epping annoys his loved ones by routinely making pictures of them. He enjoys running and has completed several races, including finishing dead last in a 39.3 miler. Epping loves listening to music in any format but is particularly fond of his vinyl record collection of more than 1,300 albums.