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The Box: Movie Analysis

The Film and passage “*The Box*” by Jack ketchum intrigued me as I read and watched it, to the point where I chose it as my muse for analysis. But what was the point of the story and the meaning of the box? The box is very multifaceted in terms of what it represents, but to me it represents having a meaning in life. It is an intangible force that takes the meanings from you, and if you don’t make your own, the box eventually seals your fate.

When Daniel gets shown the box, he in a way, loses his meaning to life. As a kid, you’re not philosophical or really looking deeper than the surface. I believe looking into the box took Danny’s purpose. He no longer wanted to eat after looking. It didn’t matter what it was, his favorite foods, tasty foods, school foods, he didn’t want to eat. Even as he grew weaker and could barely stand, Danny didn’t eat. Even in the hospital bed, he withered away. When asked why he hasn’t been eating by the doctor, Danny replies that he hasn’t been feeling like it, and when told the beauties and blessings of life from the doctor’s point of view, Danny just replied “so?”. What’s important to distinguish is the box took Danny’s purpose in life. He no longer finds enjoyment in things that are pushed on to society and glorified, such as themes of consumerism, enjoyment of food, escape into fantasy, and more. Dan doesn’t indulge in his favorite foods, but has no problem watching others consume. He sees no point, even when commanded or yelled at. Without purpose or reason, nothing moves. For this reason, when the doctor explains his purpose to Danny, he sees no answers. There wasn’t malice, superiority or even attitude in his response. It was a genuine wonder. Why eat? Why sustain? Why Live? Christmas is the only normal day for him since the incident, but even when the day was without worries, Dan went to the hospital the next day, representing the hollow and empty meaning of the holiday itself. When based on things like family and warmth it has meaning, but when based on things like consumerism, it is much like the day itself. Here today and gone tomorrow. The box represents emptiness, and the hunger it takes from you represents the motivation and purpose of life we as people have. That emptiness that Danny found in the box and passed on to those who connected to didn't affect the father, who felt a disconnect and loneliness to those around him. Even when the father heard remnants of the answer to what was in the box, he wasn’t affected like the rest of the family. This also alludes to the father having a newer given purpose because at the end of the passage, he says he’s hungry. He’s longing and trying, searching, and still wanting. The box took that sense of wanting and purpose from Dan, the mom, and the daughters to the point where subsistence wasn’t even a priority to them. The daughters were just told about what was in it and still became devoid of motivation and purpose, and the mom caring as much as she did for her children, saw no purpose in eating while her children starve themselves, allowing the box to indirectly take another casualty.

In conclusion, the Box that the man showed Danny represents a plethora of things, but in the end it’s a carrier and representation of purpose in life and its message is carried out not in what it holds, but what it lacks. Not what it gives, but what it takes, with that being a purpose to keep going.