Lauren Crisci

Kate O’Donoghue

English 204

13 December 2022

Final Portfolio

***Tantum Ergo (An Ekphrasis on The Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo)***

Suspension, as elevation that is.

A subtle raise of the eyes,

Look up.

The lost may question morality while the found appreciate the affirmation.

A sinner closes their eyes, turns their head down, and pushes guilt further down in their chest.

*Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, your grace into our hearts.*

The realist casts judgment on the subject, a man who fell at the hands of a woman.

A woman made from man, one bone passed to the other and the world fell at her hands.

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum, Veneremur cernui.*

Knees become one with the ground,

A true adoration.

***Six More Feet ( An Ekphrasis on the Hulu series Tell Me Lies)***

L U C Y. open your fucking eyes. i see you in me and me in you. you’re the kind of girl that would turn off auto-capitalization on her imessage just to seem quirky. you rewatch your own instagram stories to see how you are being portrayed in the eyes of others, but not before you see if he has viewed them. you option for a beer rather than a vodka soda because you “don’t care about the calories.” only for him not to give a damn. the only thing you have in common is mommy issues. but you’re Lucy, and he’s Stephen, and that’s enough for you. we’re just girls trying to shovel our way through the dirt that we threw on top of ourselves. it is when we expect others to grab the shovel and start digging that we end up six feet under. but he’s Stephen… so what’s six more feet?

***Found Home (An Ekphrasis on Brittany Broski Meeting Harry Styles)***

New Message

To: Therapist

How can I feel overwhelming joy for two people that I have never met before? Am I crazy?

SENT

I wonder what he smelled like. I mean I know he is supposed to smell like Tobacco Vanille by Tom Ford but what if he forgot to put it on?

The two smiles that beam from dimple to dimple break the fourth wall right to mine.

The mermaid wrapped around her back and the butterfly touching her chest don’t inflict envy, but rather a happiness that feels stronger than any liquor ever could bring.

A room filled with love.

And not just from the red hearts on his shirt, or the flowers on the table,

But from a simple human interaction that undeniably was formed from love.

New Message

To: Therapist

Never mind.

SENT

 \*\*\* I had to include the image here for reference, but I was really inspired from the video of this interaction… had to include Harry Styles in some way! \*\*\*

***Text Me (A digital visual poem)***

A screenshot of a video game

Description automatically generated

**In- Class Writings**

**10/27/22- Erasure Poem**

Letter

Description automatically generated

**11/1/22**

“Paddle Wheel Car”

The gushing sound of a river has been replaced

With the soul crushing sound of my wheel on pavement.

My god what happened to me?

I was not made for this.

Or perhaps I was, which may be more cruel.

My wheel must turn in the waves of the water

Not the grooves of the pavement.

Who made me like this?

My wheel must be damaged.

The hot surface must have torn me to shreds.

Or maybe I was strong enough to face it.

Let me check.

One look down and my heart stops.

A wheel, beautiful and complete in its creation.

Encompassed in rubber with slits.

I was made for this.

**11/15/22**

The first thing I noticed about both of the videos was the simplicity of the actual video. Not the spoken words or the background voices/ noises but of what the viewer could actually see while watching. Both videos seemed to show only one “scene” that coincided with what you could hear. It allowed the viewer to focus on both the context and the content at the same time. The second video shown stood out specifically in its repetition of “it all begins the same” and the way in which it altered the meaning of the poem at different points. The obvious discrimination of the black community and especially police brutality is something that I as a white woman have never and will never experience- which I fully recognize and acknowledge. I feel as though sometimes I don’t want to speak out on topics like police brutality because I don’t know what that feels like or what it would feel like to live my everyday life in fear of it occurring. There is a blatant disregard to the reality of life as a black person and how different they must live their lives in order to protect their own life from those who are supposed to protect them. I recently had a friend tell me that during peak Covid when George Floyd was murdered by the police, he was in such fear of his life that he was scared to even get in the car and drive. I think these videos allow for an opening of conversation that doesn’t have to be some overwhelming argument or political statement, but rather an emotional statement and expression of perspective that is often not sought out.

**11/17/22**

Lingering on the videos that we watched in class on Tuesday, I couldn’t help but to think of the way in which topics such as police brutality and overall racial discrimination are portrayed through media that I see. There are many ways in which the media chooses to portray these subjects and most of them are far from reality. It is interesting to me how we as citizens of this nation allow for our neighbors and peers to be put in positions that threaten their lives on the daily that are resulted from simply living. Far from anything that I have ever experienced as a white woman,

**11/29/22**

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

**12/1/22**

I recently watched the movie My Policeman starring of course my favorite Harry Styles as well as another favorite Emma Louise Corrin, and ever since watching I’ve been thinking about the movie, its content, and the beauty in not only the message but also the actual videography . The styling of the characters, the different film locations, the actual artistry that is acting and performing all are a cohesive work of art. So I am drafting a poem here about the movie:

Imagine, a gate; literal, metaphorical, tangible to the eye and the soul

A blockage, interference, set back.

Can you feel it?

Not between the screen and the viewer

It lies between the viewer and his morality

I see it.

It makes him uncomfortable. Sleepless. Rotting from the inside out.

Keep the gate closed.

He knows where the key lies. The code. The answer to all of his prayers.

Dwindle, hang, forget, lose.

Imagine a world where your actions do not result in consequences.

**12/06/22**

“The profound silence of the world that is always at the periphery of our consciousness, no matter how hard we attempt to ignore it, wants to be looked at. We are filled with an excruciating longing that no one outside of ourselves will ever be able to quench."

* I feel like I was drawn to the creativity that I found when I engaged with the ‘profound silence of the world' because I constantly desire noise and chaos. It’s an interesting contradiction to what I’m used to that I opened my mind to the thoughts and ideas that I create in the silence. Sort of a way of filling the void.

**12/08/22**

 I learned to not limit my creativity so much. Often I feel like I limit my creativity to certain mediums or formats like prose or short stories, but there are so many other outlets that I can expand my creativity to and use to create something that I truly love and feel proud of. I find myself feeling as though I can’t share in class because my opinions are either obvious or not to the dimension or quality of others opinions. This is probably an anxiety thing but it really limits my openness to discussion and learning. I feel like this class by the end made me realize that I don’t have to have some amazing scholarly opinions or thoughts on something, that I can simply share what I notice and care about and that is enough to engage.

Reflection

Upon reflection of this class as a whole, I found I was most impressed by what I gained from the exposure to such different forms of creativity through art and poetry. As we were discussing our expectations coming into the class at our last class, I thought back to before the semester started and realized that I really had no prior expectations or ideas. I think I simply saw the title of the course and thought “great these are two topics I am interested in!” I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised with the material that we covered and to see that you were teaching it! Previously I had no knowledge of the concept of Ekphrasis at all. I sort of saw poetry and art as two separate topics and wasn’t necessarily expecting us to look at the combination of the two. Both being forms of art, it makes sense to connect them and make analytical and descriptive inferences of both. I really appreciated that as our instructor, you did not expect us as students to have some crazy or in-depth thoughts on the material that we covered, as it made it easier to just share what the art and poetry made us feel. So I thank you for fostering a welcoming and comfortable environment for us students.

On creating my own ekphrastic poems, I found it quite liberating yet also structured. By liberating I mean that I was able to really explore the emotions that art was evoking in me and translate that into poetry. I found this process quite emotional especially regarding my first ekphrastic poem of the Sistine Chapel Ceiling. This poem was a personal challenge which is what I wanted to do. I found it challenging to face my own religious trauma caused by the Catholic church while also admiring such beautiful and intricate artwork. I thought of the Sistine Chapel and originally wanted to create a poem about the section of the ceiling that portrays God’s creation of the earth. This quickly changed when I realized that I wasn’t draw to creation, but rather the downfall of it. This drew me to pulling from prayers and including the Latin language to write about both my own personal trauma but also being general enough to possibly be applicable to anyone standing and looking up at Michelangelo’s work in the chapel.

The second ekphrastic poem that I made was inspired by the tv show “Tell Me Lies.” With this poem I wanted to directly address the character Lucy rather than encapsulating the series. The poem I created is quite aggressive, I know, but the intention was to speak to Lucy as if the author was her boyfriend, Stephen. He is an aggressor and manipulator and truly a viscous man that treats her like trash. I as the poet was mimicking his language and tone displayed on the show toward Lucy and I really enjoyed how it turned out. It was a bit difficult to write as it felt like I was being mean and manipulative to the character too. When I read the poem back I was shocked at how bitchy I was, but upon further reflection I was impressed at how I was able to mimic Stephen’s character. Obviously, I would never speak to another girl this way, but it made for some great poetry.

I really ran with the “getting weird” for my third ekphrastic poem, which I had a lot of fun with. I was still stuck in the pop culture world as I went into the third poem and thought about recent pop culture events that deeply affected me as a person. This led me to Brittany Broski’s vlog of her meeting Harry Styles. As I am writing this, I realize that is a little embarrassing, but I was truly changed by this moment. If you like Brittany or Harry, I highly recommend giving it a watch! Anyways, creatively I was thinking about how being a fangirl can be a little crazy sometimes and can cause some people to push the limits of communication and relationships. So from that I thought of texting my therapist about this interaction between Brittany and Harry. I was actually laughing as I was writing the poem thinking about how it is something that I would totally do. In between the beginning text message and the ending one, I wanted to properly portray the experience that both Brittany and Harry had, as well as myself. I really enjoyed this creative process and being able to write about something so silly.

For the visual poem, I originally wanted to draw something simple in my sketch book and use pen and paper like the old-fashioned way. I then got a text that is included on the poem, telling me that I look good and asking if I lost more weight. This text was unexpected and caused me a lot of sadness, as I have been recently struggling with that fact that people value me differently now than they did two years ago, simply because I lost weight. So, I thought about typing my own name into my iMessage and seeing if I could find any nice messages to cheer me up. This resulted in a lot of chaotic messages that made me laugh more than anything. I then collected several messages with my name in them and put them together with the background photo of my room, sort of representing me and my person. I then wanted to include other elements, so I found a poem in my notes app that I also wanted to include as well as a text conversation. I found this process sort of therapeutic, especially by the freehand writing that I did over the images expressing how the complete visual poem made me feel.