

Molly Maccormack

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Literary and Composition 11 Honours

April 12th, 2019

Photo analysis project



This iconic photo is important to the history of our western culture because of what it makes the audience feel when looking at it. The black and white colour of the photo reminds you of the old days, spiking nostalgia and memories. The old-fashioned outfits take you right back to the day it was taken after WWII finally came to an end. The endearing emotion between the man and the woman seeps through the photo, making it seem like you know the people. This photo displays the environment around it as loving and happy, due to the surrounding people's joyful expressions. As they gaze at the kissing couple, the person looking at the photo feels as if they too, are one of those civilians watching this event in real time. These two young adults sharing an intimate moment perfectly represents the mood of the country finding out that the war was over and all the soldiers could come home.

The Smooch that Saluted the Country

Beams of light bounce off of the thirsty concrete

As a prance down the boulevard.

Buildings as big as bomb explosions surround me.

On the tip of my tongue I taste the air, the free air

I hear murmurs of excitements
 People flocking to each other like molecules under a microscope
 Their face stretched wide, their eyes glowing in the light
 Words splattered across black and white flyers
 Catch my eye
 The headline: "The Fight is over; The War is won"
 My eyes stay glued upon the man in the white and blue uniform
 His ship strategically placed atop his head, as a hat
 His feet are leading up like a dog with a leash
 He stops and starts
 He twirls with the wind and lets out hyena cries.
 Rosy-cheeks and a confidence overload
 Although blurry eyed and beer-breathed, they stay glued to her.
 Like an angel that had just checked in at the hotel down the street
 Like a snowflake who had just made her way down from a comfortable cloud.
 Like a dream.
 My fingers grasp tightly to my memory documentation machine.
 He swoops her into his arms.
 Like two lovebirds who hadn't seen each other since separation
 Like two teenagers that still believe in true love
 Like a man who had just returned from war.
 Blinking would cause you to miss this moment.
 His lips meet hers, like rain onto the tips of your fingers
 Their souls dance to the sound of the city.
 The happiness of the country represented in the connection
 from his mouth to hers.
 Eyes closed, body hanging on to body
 FLASH!

This photo was taken by Alfred Eisenstaedt, a photographer from TIME magazine during the 1940's. Eisenstaedt was simply in the middle of Times Square in New York city when he witnessed a sailor continuously kissing women all around the street when suddenly the sailor grabbed hold of a nurse, swoop her in his arms and kiss her. Quickly, he snapped a photo of this joyous-filled moment, due to the aesthetic value of the colours of their clothing and also their positioning. The circumstances behind this photo was him taking in the scenery around him and taking photos of what he found to be a good way to represent the mood of the city. It was taken in plain sight in the middle of the day from where Eisenstaedt was already standing, he didn't plan the lighting nor the angle. It ended up working out perfectly after a few quick shots. This photo was taken on V-J day, which was the 15th of August, 1945. It was the day where Japan finally surrendered and brought WWII to an end.

In the poem *The Smooch that Saluted the Country* by Molly Maccormack, the poet used many words and literary devices based on their knowledge of the history of this photo. For example, the mood of the entire poem is very old-fashioned and tries to bring the reader back in to time, as if they were a spectator watching this event happen with their own eyes. The references to how the sailor was drunk also displayed the poet's research finding out that he was, in fact, under the influence of alcohol during this moment. Maccormack used a lot of alliterations, assonances and

consonances to make the poem flow and remind you of the feeling of being kissed as you read it. For example, "Buildings as big as bomb explosions." (3 Maccormack) Also, in the poem, repetition is used to emphasize the main event that happened: the kiss, "Like two lovebirds who hadn't seen each other since separation/Like two teenagers that still believe in true love/ Like a man who had just returned from war." (23-25 Maccormack). Similes were also used a fair amount, to make sure the audience felt the emotions and tone of the iconic event.

Work Cited

Eisenstaedt, Alfred. *V-J Day in Times Square*. New York, 14 Aug. 1945.
Maccormack, M. (2019). *The Smooch that Saluted the Country*.