1500 word essay - topic - loneliness

(bohomaz, 2020)

Identify an object

The object I have decided to use is a piece of artwork called “In connection to loneliness.” This artistic piece has an emotional connection with me, and is following the theme of loneliness. Loneliness is definitely a big subject, especially following the matters that have happened over the past year. This piece was designed by bohomaz, who specialises with paintings in LA. Within this painting, there is the theme of loneliness - there is a young female sitting away from the open window. The winter weather is almost attacking into her coloured wall, which could signify her bright personality being taken over by another emotion or feeling - “When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies but the pack survives.” (George R.R. Martin - Game of Thrones).

Personal/Observational Response -

Personally, I found this artwork incredibly relatable, especially over the lockdown period this year - in my eyes, the painting shows how the atmosphere around her is going cold and lonely - possibly overtaking how she is feeling emotionally; shown using the winter air blowing through the window into the colours in her room, which represents her emotions and personality before the loneliness hit. Loneliness itself is a big topic, “all my nights were spent waiting for that dawn” (Camus, 1942, p70) signifying how people who are feeling depressed or alone are just waiting for the day to feel something again instead of being numb to the world and feeling nothing. It is “a way of life” (Dumm, 2009. P1 - the title) which is the saddening fact where these people can’t remember living life any differently. I remember when I was feeling this way, and after recently finding this artwork I instantly found a connection with it. I believe it was conveying a very similar message to what I was going through, like how the loneliness progressed into my life, without me even noticing it. The colour was fading away from the walls, just like how my positive feelings were during lockdown. The darkness from the walls and floorboards represent the negative emotions overtaking my positive ones; but I was looking away from them, never realising that they were coming towards me, then one day they hit. In the painting, she is wearing dark clothing, which could mean that this is a very serious topic to talk about - loneliness is a global issue, it doesn’t matter if you are male, female, old or young, with or without a family, it can strike at any second - “loneliness grows around them, like mould or fur” (Laing,

2016, p24) where once loneliness starts it reproduces and spreads, destroying any happiness that person may have, it is then difficult to get rid of the “mould” and feel like you again. The wind coming through the window reminds me of a web, where the spider would replace it if it gets damaged. Similarly, the loneliness keeps coming back where “it can run deep in the fabric of a person.” (Laing, 2016 - Chapter 1 - Page 6) This would have connected to me whilst I was in lockdown, I was surrounded by my immediate family, but even when we had a couple of good days, the loneliness would come back and haunt me, it felt like I would never be the same person again, I was surrounded by people but still felt alone - I will forever feel sorry for those who had no one at all around them, “it’s possible - easy, even - to feel desolate and unfrequented in oneself while living cheek by jowl with others.” (Laing, 2016 - Chapter 1 - Page 5).

Societal themes

The artwork reflects multiple societal themes, especially at the moment, loneliness is becoming an epidemic problem, meaning that there is an increasing pressure on services such as the NHS and mental health services, which is costing us more money. Yet, there are more and more people who are continuously trying to find help and we simply do not have the services to help this many people; there are waiting lists for months and months - which isn’t quick enough for these people, they need help now. This painting shows the emotions of how these people are feeling, they are being saddened by the fact that they think there is no help, that there is no light at the end of the tunnel and that the darkness is moving closer to them and soon it may be too late to help them. The feeling of loneliness has spiked over the lockdown period (“young people alone are 3x more likely to have experienced lockdown”) (mental health foundation, 2020) that is causing much more pressure on services such as ‘Mind’ to help them. Multiple people have never felt so lonely or unhappy as they had over this lockdown, people need people to survive - “unhappy, as the dictionary has it, as a result of being without the companionship of others.” (Laing, 2016 - Chapter 1 Page 5). Multiple people had lost their jobs, had increased anxieties and physical distancing just kept on prolonging, this had a horrible affect on the wellbeing of many. This artwork could show how the light was still there in that person’s personality and it was keeping the dark away, maybe it shows a person coming back into the light rather than the dark taking over, similarly to when the first lockdown was over, people could see their friends and family - everything seemed slightly more normal - like how the colour was coming back into this females life in the painting.

Making connections -

There are multiple pieces of work which could connect to my theme of loneliness except for the specific piece I have used. For example, I have read multiple books such as, “The Stranger”, “The Lonely City”, “A field guide to getting lost”, “Lost Connections” and “Loneliness as a way of life.” They have all shown me multiple viewpoints on the subject, “The Stranger” has described loneliness using a male and the loss of his mother and this signifies that he is grieving from his loss and is feeling like

he will never recover from that - however, he does say that when going back to work it would feel normal, so he is the type of person who doesn't get affected as much by loneliness, he is quite introverted, "there wasn't a trace of shadow anywhere." (Camus, 1942 - Chapter One Part One Page 8). This quote could connote that he doesn't see the bad in things, maybe he sees her death as just a new stage in her life and she still lives on; however, he does still feel slightly lonelier in the world without her. Whereas, the "loneliness as a way of life" has an extremely relatable storyline for some, it is incredibly personal and is there to help those who need it to know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, for example "can we learn other effective ways of attaching ourselves to the world?" (Dumm, 2009 - Prologue - Page 18). This book has many ways to try and get others to understand what loneliness is, I found it very useful and relatable. It helped me to understand his story, and how loneliness can affect us in different ways, for example, some can have sleep problems, others can suffer from severe anxiety and self-esteem could be lowered.

(Qassim, 2020)

However, as for visual artefacts there are many, for example, the painting above can show that even with people around, you can still feel isolated or different from others around you - you could maybe even be envious of those around you who all seem like they are happy and living their best life. "To lose yourself, lost to the world, utterly immersed in what is present so that its surroundings fade away." (Solnit, 2010 - Page 7). This presents that you can easily get lost in your own mindset; which can be good for focusing on projects, however, when you are feeling low, it can have a damaging effect on your motivation and how hopeful you are for the future.

Conclusion -

Overall, there are multiple artefacts, whether they're visual or written, that follow the theme of loneliness. However, the first painting, "In Connection with Loneliness" has the most connection with me and how I felt when I saw it. The painting uses multiple objects that help the idea of loneliness show - the painting shows the dark taking over the light, which I relate emotionally too. The dark overpowering current positive emotions with negative ones - it is an incredibly moving painting, which conveys an important and current message to not just me but many people around the world.

Key Concepts lists -

- Loneliness
- Depression
- Hopeless
- Isolation
- Unhappiness
- Negativity
- Emotional well-being
- Discouragement
- Hope (things will get better)

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