Digital Translation Project

In this project, I turned the lyrics of *Every Teardrop Is A Waterfall* by Coldplay into a digital art form inspired roughly from Microsoft Word's WordArt. First released on June 3, 2011 as a single and later re-released in their album *Mylo Xyloto*, the cover of the single featured a rainbow of colors reminiscent of spray-painting a rainbow on a concrete wall and the song's title in bubble letters, characteristically devoid of any typographic counters. The official music video of the song features a party atmosphere in with the band playing their instruments in front of a dynamically changing environment; graffiti is constantly updated with the song's lyrics. Though one can easily find the lyrics online, even officially on Coldplay's website, only the site's background reflects the music video and the lyrics are typeset in standard Arial, like one would find typing on a regular Google Doc for the first time. I was inspired by the websites shown by Max Cohen and Shelby Wilson in *The HTML Review* during the guest lecture and wanted to create a version of the lyrics that properly reflected the boisterous nature of the song itself. Similar to how each of the websites in the web journal are interactive, the lyrics on my website are interactive as well as the user has to scroll down to see the song's progression from verse to verse to bridge to chorus. And similar to the progression of a song, my updated lyrics also dynamically update in font size and font weight to reflect the emphasis on the chorus and the build-up and release of tension. The typography lecture last week greatly helped me out the creation of the website as tools like letter spacing, leading, font weight, color and font family were heavily used to place emphasis on key words within a lyrical phrase and the lecture on sizing also proved helpful in ensuring each verse had enough spacing to be read on its own instead of having nearby verses entrench upon its space. Margin was used mostly for this but the title box and the musical interlude box also benefited from some textual padding.

The main challenges in creating the website was how to visually change the text to reflect the song. One can hum and hear the song in their head or listen to the song on a streaming platform but unless one knows the song by heart, the textual conversion to lyrics loses all sense of rhythm or movement compared to listening to the song in person. Which words in a sentence should I put emphasis on to not only reflect the singer's intentions but also make the sentence visually appealing to the eye? How do you dress up the chorus in an outlandish manner such that dressing up the prior verses to lead the reader to continue scrolling? What elements of style can one take from a music video and strategically add them to the website without the color scheme going all over the place? In the website, I tried my best with updating the margin per word by 10 pixels to reflect the horizontal rush of water in a full waterfall and symmetrically changing the margin on both sides of a sentence to reflect the small movement of a tear as it slowly peels from the eye down into the face. Lots of cool colors were also chosen during the chorus to reflect the natural colors of a waterfall – a stock image of a waterfall is even at the beginning of the transcription to set the mood for the upcoming transformation. I decided to stick with classes for a majority of the CSS styling solely due to the ability to share styles across the large amount of paragraph tags and span tags used to style each letter, word and phrase in a given sentence. As ids are not transferable, this proved to be a much easier way to go around with styling the lyrics, even though JavaScript and some inline styling could remove some small duplicate styling. While one can only interpret lyrics from their own understanding of it during reading, many WordArt lyrical transformations end up performing if not equal but much better than their static art and music video counterparts, as can be seen with occasional demonstrations at MoMa in New York City.