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Words, they are the bridge of communication to which connects us to people throughout our lives, it is our external expression, of thought, emotion and interaction, a “reflection of the sensory world” (Kemp, 2014 p. 7) conveying understanding and experience from various cultures and traditions, immortalised through the spoken word of rhythm and rhyme, throughout diverse language and literacy “ all of these forms have a hidden meaning for the wise who can read”(Roob, 1996 p.578) to which express stories through every change and discovery in which take the form of fables an echo of the lost.

Artists alike have used these “reflections” (Kemp, 2014) as a basis of restoring a mirrored memory “Recalling the actual experiences, so that we get an echo of the emotion” (Segal, 1991 p.81) that is relayed in artists paintings such as William Turners use of encapsulating the lost landscapes of the 19th century.

This task will be demonstrating and understanding the notion of words, involving folklore, narrative and memory to explore and analyse artists perspectives surrounding these topics, unravelling the inner meaning embedded within the paintings and sculptures, deciphering the lessons they possess, in associations of the key words surrounding my specialism.

When you think of the word folklore, what is the first thing that comes to mind ?

Is it the notion of childhood fascination of myths, monsters and magic to escape reality?, Is it the concept of fables and fiction that allude validity of tales of symbolic understanding over the passage of time ?, Understandings unbeknown to an array of minorities, cultures and traditions, dating back to the time of olympian belief, each culture conveying kaleidoscopic variations (Tatar, 1999 p. ix) of the original tale passing from each generation almost implies a sense of Chinese whispers



“reflecting on the origins of fairytales”(Tatar, 1999 p.ix) and the belief they instill in people whether to entertain or inform the reader to invoke new perspectives.

An artist who's work divulges into the religious aspect of folklore exploring the concepts of gods and heroism, an example of this is resembled with marble figure of “David” (Buonarroti, 1501-1504) by Italian artist Michelangelo Buonarroti who's work mainly consists upon “how to extract a figure from the marble” (Kemp, 2014 p.53) carving, an imitation of stone made flesh, in

16th century renaissance interpretation of Christianity in the observational study of religious figures and the human form, Michelangelo's statue "combines the biblical heroes athleticism with the divine resolution (Kemp, 2014 p.53) from the biblical tales of David and Goliath.

Folklores both religious and traditional each hold the lessons etched into our personalities instilled through these fables as Michelangelo represents the figure of David as a beacon of courage.

Michelangelo has used David's taut stature with a threatening glance of a distant horizon of ensuing battle as "the eye and fantasy feel themselves more drawn to the hazy distance than something that lies near and distinct before us" (Kemp, 2014 p.122) implies the visual stimulus of David's peripheral gaze of the horizon, as well as invoking a sense of vulnerability symbolised via the lack of protection and armour furthering the notion of David's courage in his belief that God will deliver divine protection. Similar to that of Celtic culture in association of going into battle with only gold torcs around their necks as a symbol of mystical form and protection, as David's symbol of protection is his sling.

Following on from Michelangelo's response to folklore's religious association, another artist who divulges into these mythical folklore's is Swedish painter, illustrator John Bauer in the analogy of Swedish folklore, Bauer uses real life models using the figure of his wife for inspiration in his visual characterisation, retaining a sense of grounding to reality using the notion of his wife insinuating her as his princess.

The piece "she's looking for her heart" (Bauer, 1913) by John Bauer best known for illustrations of land tomte och troll (Among Gnomes and Trolls) and landscapes illuminated through the depictions of his 1913 book based upon various Swedish folklore featuring Princess Tuvstarr and



the fish pond tale, the illustration emphasises a sense of longing and desperation to reclaim her heart defined through the posture of her body language almost bears a defeated impression whilst gazing into the dark waters as if it held answers in her reflection.

The scene also visualises the notion of ephemeral time, blurring past, present

and future illusion of the lost, gazing in endless wonder as "Many years have passed. Still Princess Cottongrass sits and looks wonderingly into the water for her heart. She is no longer a little girl. Instead, a slender plant, crowned with white cotton, stands leaning over the edge of the pool" (Art passions, Unknown) to which symbolises the embodiment of grief and inner turmoil of lost time almost forgotten, became part of the scenery of " a slender plant, crowned with white cotton" (Art passions, Unknown) like a peaceful statuette, a shell of her self, this intern connects to the notion of mental health "she cannot follow any more, as long as she is under the spell. The spell lies in the pool. Far, far under the water lies a lost heart." (Art passions, Unknown) Which communicates this immobile state of reliving trauma which the brain repetitively instills as reminder to " never to go back to where the traumatic event happened, because it's going to be always waiting for you. Here the memory threatens repetition and prevents a moving forward into the present"(King, 2000 p.27) underlying the moral of overcoming traumatic experiences in which the setting of the forest instills, notions of terror and fear.

Where as Bauer uses the notion of the elk to emphasise the animal as a protective guardian amongst tragedy, “worried that his strength and wisdom will not be sufficient to protect the little princess”. (Art passions, Unknown) Conveying an impression of parental responsibility in the elk to protect the innocence of the child from harm of reality.

Moving on from the aspects of folklore next is understanding the interpretational analysis of narrative art work, focusing on the works of Caroline Evans. “As we look silently at paintings in a gallery, we invoke words, phrases, and more or less sophisticated concepts to help us articulate what we see and feel”. (Haxthausen, 2002 p.63)

Narrative art is the genre in which embodies a story, “ it uses the power of visual image to ignite imaginations, evoke emotions and capture universal cultural truths and aspirations”(Lucas Museum of narrative art, unknown) using the symbolism of visual imagery to instill inner meaning and understanding through representation, it is “what distinguishes narrative art from other genres is its ability to narrate a story across diverse cultures, preserving it for future generations” Lucas Museum of narrative art, unknown) implied by the use of visual imagery for the viewer to infer their own interpretation of the piece.

The work of Caroline Evans depicts the external visual imagery to uncover the internal meanings taking aspects of initial childhood in the form of poetic narrative for “ people to find their own connection through the messages and visual stimulation”(Phillips, 2015) for the audience “to ignite imaginations”.(Lucas Museum of narrative art, unknown) Carolines artwork mainly consists on topics of both fantasia and folklore as well as real life events and scenarios.



This first piece titled “ facing my fears” (Evans, Unknown) in ink and coloured pencil media, in which distinguishes the tale of little red riding hood, inferred by many different cultural distortions ranging from the ideology of Roald Dahl’s use of rhyme to instill a memorable phrasing, such as “In came the

little girl in red. She stopped. She stared and then she said” (Tatar, 1999 p.21) to that of Brothers Grimm’s version of a more dark and sinister ending. But in this piece it almost shows the representation of killing with kindness, symbolised by the use of a red colouration implying love and passion in contrast to the greyscale background but also implies a sense of danger due to the flex in eye of the wolf insinuating conflicting intent.

The term inferred by the imagery indicates the wolf as a stimulus of fear or caution similar to that of John Bauers illustration, both hold notions of awareness but Carolines piece uses a different front as it implies the narrative to kill cruelty with kindness, embodied by both the figure of red riding hood’s and her expression resembles no hint of fear amongst the confrontation and the rose implies the fragility of kindness yet instills a powerful emotive response.

“There is a particular kind of emotion provoked by the works of visual art, and that this emotion is provoked by every kind of visual art, by pictures, sculpture, building, ect., is not disputed I think by anyone capable of feeling it”. (Segal, 1991 p.78)

Following on another artist who uses a more traditional approach to narrative artist, Sir John Everett Millais a English painter and illustrator in association to pre raphaelites movement using oil paint media, his work combines the use of literature figures from the victorian era both poetry and advertisement.

Such as this piece titled “Ophelia” (Millais, 1851-1852) by John Everett Millais depicts the scene of



the Ophelia drowning in a brook amidst the undergrowth, from the work of Shakespeare's hamlet consists upon the visual recreation of the character novelisation in which “captures the dynamic interplay between received images

and imagining”(Styles and Bearne, 2003 p.xiii) projecting the scene of “ attractive suffering”(Fisher and Silber, 2003 p. 131) in ophelia's developmental spiral into madness instilled from grief and emotional betrayal suggested by her body language conveyed through the notion of her cupped hands in the waters caress a gesture in which infers a sense of surrender to succumb to drowning as if in an acceptance of deaths embrace.

“even today ophelia remains emblematic of the troubled teenage girl”(Fisher and Silber, 2003 p. 131) insinuates the reflection of the female form as “ ophelia became an icon of attractive suffering:

a girl with long trailing hair in a white night gown garland with flowers”(Fisher and Silber, 2003 p. 131) in comparison to those of women stereotypical idealisms surrounding beauty “ With contemporary fashion magazines, to see how much these images of idealised beauty and suffering are still part of our cultures ideals about young women”(Fisher and Silber, 2003 p. 131) analysis of both the literacy visualisations of beauty in characters like ophelia, but compared to the idolised version of todays society creating madness of women’s mental pressure to meet these standards in which ophelia succumbed to tragic events, where as women today succumb to the social pressures of beauty stereotypes. As if the water instills her drowning in the pressures of meeting these notions which in turns resembles a moral to learn for women to not conform to these desired pressures of beauty and live despite it.

Memory, is a vessel for the moments and experiences we have in life, it is “ Here we can retrace, reclaim, retrieve, and even transform experience in our imaginative selves”(Bachelard, 1942 p. viii) it is the instiller of dreams interpretational response to how we see, influences who we are today as people shaped by these defining moments.

“ There are moments when memory seems to return us to a past unchanged by the passage of time”(King, 2000 p. 2) to relive past pleasures and emerge our imaginations in the reflection our former selves, dreams invoke the nostalgia of a simpler time, before adult pressures of the modern world, instills a certain longing, as though envious of childhood simplicity, to thrive on the magic of childhood imagination and play.

Artists like Dan May, a narrative painter, illustrator his work combines the notion of both narrative and memory, mainly focusing on depictions of surrealist “glimpses into the remembered world of childhood”(Styles and Bearne, 2003 p.ix) in this piece titled “stardust” (May, 2015) the piece



conveys an almost ethereal atmosphere as it symbolises a gentle interaction between the conscious and subconscious mind.

The scene depicts the gentle giants subtle caress over a ball of light, which reveals a sense of innocence and purity of a child, as they are defined as treasures, innocent and vulnerable, yet the creature is a portrayal of a guardian almost insinuates a maternal instinct, protective in its warm embrace over the dreams and aspirations of children encapsulated in

gesture.

May creates this surrealist illusion to emphasise perspective of memory, to protect, preserve, relive and emerge in nostalgia. Invoking a sense of wonder and curiosity over the after glow of dreams conveyed through the child's stature, as though he is looking on in fascination and discovery "the real treasure hidden within memory consists of images"(King, 2000 p.14) of the subconscious meant to inspire children's imagination which May has used this notion of narrative to symbolise memory as an unhindered mystery of imagination.

Another artist who uses the notion of memory is artist Fern Thomas who's work plays with the idea of myth, magic and dreams interweaved within her art in ritualistic expression, using the natural world as an anchor for her reflective art to infer interaction as if a conversation of movement.

This piece titled “ For a spell” (Thomas, 2020) is a video installation of a ritualist performance



based off welsh tradition it almost depicts a cult of children in costume as if horse riding as a traditional response to welsh song Gee Ceffyl Bach using folk song to create a social community space using the notion of puppetry and costumes in free flowing

interpretative dance.

This performative expression instills the initiative to connect, to create and construct a societal sense of place using the notion of the outdoors as a setting to emphasise a child’s sense of freedom through children’s competitive play on old customs, a renovation of old folklore instilled in the act of hobby horse theatric dance, performed as one body.

The basis of this is inferred via Gee Ceffyl Bach a tale, an embodiment of child imagination in the orchestration of adventure using the notion of a white horse as a main subject to symbolise an escape, a fantasia, an outlet to explore through dance ensemble of hobby horses props. Using reference to fairies and myths of pretend belief.

This piece of writing has demonstrated an analysis of moral conversation across various of artists discussed, each have expressed individual representations in response to selected key words surrounding the notions of folklore, narrative and memory from aspects of religion, tradition and

poeticism. Throughout has shown how artist exploration has developed across multiple media's from the performance of interpretative dance, to the the use contrasting colour schemes to invoke an emotive response in their audience, for them to interpret their own connection to what they see.

Each in-tales elements of how we perceive literature and how this has inferred visual interpretation, from the philosophy of Michelangelo to more modernised performance of Fern Thomas, in which demonstrates lessons imprinted into facets of our identity, from child novels use of narrative which has lead me to question how these realities contradict underlying morals with-held in a reflection of a painting and the written hand of authors, is it their influential aim to instill belief and confidence in their audience through literacy and visual means?

Is it to instill initiative in impressionable minds of children?

How has technological advancement encapsulated character visualisation of literature through imaginative constructs differ from the time of John Everett Millais of envisioned interpretations to that modern day projections of character novelisation of motion picture ?

How has our understanding of literature inferred visual interpretation across multiple art movements ?

Why do writers use narrations as stimulus for children is it for them to idolise these characters and intertwine facets of them their personalities to want to be like them eg Hermione Granger employs the notion of dedication and studying hard to aspire to a bright future.

Why fairytales perceive a more glorified deceptions and depict half truths of happily ever afters, non constructive to life?

Is it to insinuate an escapist freedom to explore the freelance imagination of writers to believe in a world to adopt as our own?

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