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Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Jonathan Pugh

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 473 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 545 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 452 words

Task 1: Observational Writing



Figure 1: Jenny Saville, Stare (2005)

In this section of my essay, I will be conducting a semiotic analysis of Jenny Saville's painting *Stare*. This painting was created for iconic British pop band Manic Street Preachers as an album cover for *Journal For Plague Lovers*, there was a decent amount of controversy surrounding the cover of this album. The cover was banned by some supermarkets such as Tesco, "...judged too offensive to go on public view. The painting can apparently be interpreted to show blood on the boy's face." (Jones, 2009)

I have chosen this image due to the somewhat controversial nature behind it and it has been one of my favourite art pieces for a long time. The image depicts a young boy no older than 6 or 7. On his face we can see that there is a burst of reds, spanning from his chin to his eye, as well as the occasional red gash – this can be taken in a few different ways.

Upon the first look at this image, it gives a feeling of sorrow, the boy in the painting looks injured. We do not have any context to this image, however one of the first thoughts that come to mind is violence. The boy has been injured by something, or someone. Personally, my initial thoughts are that he has been hurt by someone at home, my reasoning for this is because if we look closely at the image, it appears that the boy is wearing a simple white shirt. Whereas if he were injured at school and the artist wanted us to know this, he would more than likely be wearing a school uniform of some kind. Another aspect of this image that is somewhat shocking is the facial expression of the boy, the dazed look in his eyes and the position of his mouth.

When you first look at this piece of art one of the colours that our eyes first see are the background colour which is blue. This particular shade of blue could allude to a character of innocence and someone who is trustworthy, however on the flipside it can allude to sadness and gloomy feeling. The second colour the eye goes to is the different shades of red in the boys' face. These colours can represent blood, anger, malice, stress, danger, and caution. In this context the choice of the colour red can be perceived as negative, with many considering the red to represent blood.

Taking these colours into account we can now look at the image itself again. The blue of the background would suggest the boy is very innocent – as a child would be – it could also allude to sorrow in this particular context, pair this with the angry red tones marring his face we can take this to mean that the analysis was correct.

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Task 2: Manifesto Writing

1. Actively seek out female empowerment and female artists.
2. Participate in bringing down elitism and elitist views.
3. In a society that seemingly turns a blind eye, diligently resist political malpractice.
4. Now it is more important than any time to recognise and oppose racial hatred and white supremacy, as well as the sexism that often accompanies it.
5. Inclusivity in art is incredibly important, therefore emphasis that art is for everyone and is for free expression for all is needed.
6. Religious bigotry and hypocrisy will not be tolerated.
7. Self-expression is important in a world of people following trends and fast fashion, individuality is incredibly necessary.
8. Strive to bring attention to and overcome the oppression of women's bodies and the governments desperate bid to control how women are allowed to function.

3 Areas of Exploration

Bringing attention to the oppression of women's bodies and how the government is desperately trying to control them.

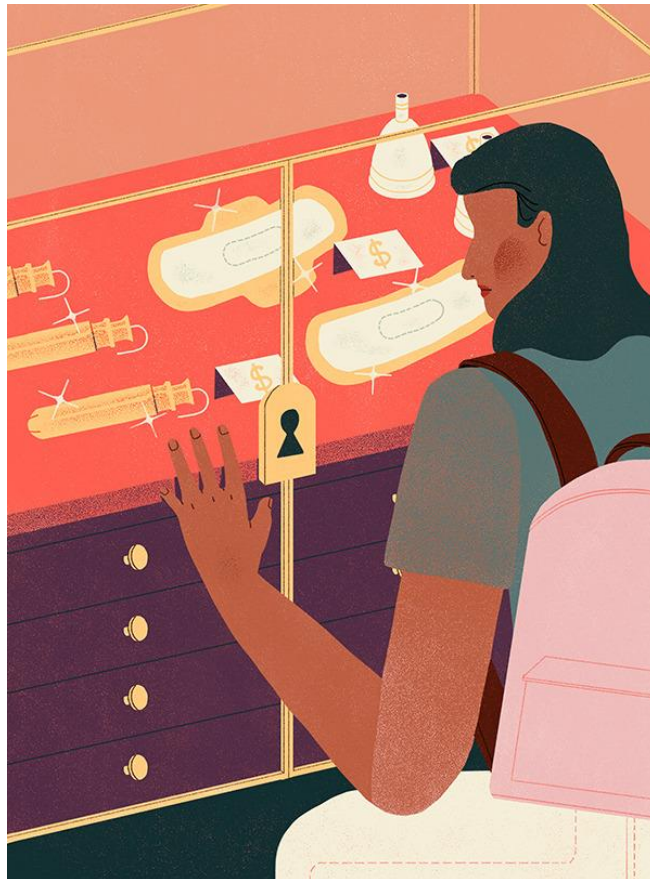


Figure 2: Period Poverty for United Church Observer, Illustration by Jeannie Phan (2019)

"women's bodies are increasingly coming under state control – however unwittingly."

(Barnett, 2020)

Up until around March 2020 to have an abortion, you would have to answer a series of personal questions about yourself over the phone, at your appointment you are asked more intense personal questions before you are given an ultrasound and then made to take your first dose of Mifepristone in front of a nurse/doctor after which you are then given the

second round of tablets to take at home. “If you make abortion difficult for girls and women to access, the problem does not go away. All that happens is that it goes underground and becomes unsafe.” (Regan, 2020)

Following this subject is medical sterilization. Those who have a womb and decide that they would like to be sterilized have to go through rigorous questioning and often require the permission of a husband or partner. In the UK, you do not need your partner's permission, but you do need your GP or family doctor's permission to be sterilized.

“you are more likely to be accepted if you are over 30 and have children.” (The NHS, 2021)

Some people simply would like to be child-free; they should not have to be over 30 with children to make that decision for themselves, nor should they need their GP to agree with their life decisions.

Sanitary products are another way that the government readily controls the bodies of those who have periods. I am a strong believer that we should not have to pay for period products, especially seeing as it is a completely natural bodily function - since the pandemic has hit, period poverty has increased dramatically.

Actively seeking out female artists.



Figure 3: The dinner party, Judy Chicago (1974-1979)

Female artists are just as important as their male counterparts; however, we rarely see a female artist receive the same praise as a male artist.

Before my research, it was very difficult for me to think of female equivalents to artists such as Da Vinci, Van Gogh, and Matisse. As a woman, it is incredibly important for me to see representation of women with artistic talents to help inspire me and further my development. One female artist that I admire is Judy Chicago, a strong presence in the feminist art movement. She inspires me to be unapologetically feminine and stick up for my rights as a woman. Many men were unimpressed by Chicago and her ideals and artwork, and yet she continued to create and still educates to this day.

In a society that seemingly turns a blind eye, diligently resist political malpractice.



Figure 4: *Boris Johnsoned*, SPK (2016)

In recent news, our very own prime minister Boris Johnson has been accused of using political donations to refurbish his home. With the pandemic he has also been accused of outsourcing and giving Covid-19 contacts to friends of the conservative party. Neither of these accusations are surprising to me, I have a strong political alignment with left-wing views and believe that someone as unqualified as Boris Johnson should not be in charge. Political malpractice is something that we as a society should take very seriously as it can have adverse effects on our country. Pieces of protest art can be found in the early 1900's, some earlier pieces of anti-war art include Picasso's *Guernica* and *Massacre in Korea* and some more recent protest pieces include Void one's *Fit for work* campaign and Ai Weiwei's *Snake Ceiling*.

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Task 3: Practice-based Writing:



Figure 5: *Bleach*, Jenny Saville (2008)

For my practise-based writing, I have chosen the artist Jenny Saville as my inspiration. “Her studies focused her interest in “imperfections” of flesh, with all of its societal implications and taboos.” (Gagosian, 2021)

Looking at her artwork she heavily focuses on details that create a sensation of visceral discomfort. One of the first pieces I saw of her was a triptych called *Strategy (South Face/Front Face/North Face)*, this artwork is of an obese woman in her underwear from three different perspectives. Upon first seeing her artwork, I was rendered speechless. Her artwork produces feelings of discomfort and can even cause some to recoil.

Saville’s work produces a strong emotional response with her brutally honest perspective, viewing her intense work inspires me to use a similar technique.

Looking closely at Saville's work I can see that she uses broad - almost careless - brush strokes, she also tends to use intense colours for flesh tones. However, when we look at the facial features of her subjects - specifically the eyes - they are highly realistic and packed full

of emotion that forces the viewer to sympathise with. Her artwork is sometimes deceitful, especially in the piece I have chosen - upon first glance, the painting is simply a blonde woman. Upon closer investigation, this is a woman who looks sorrowful, the colours around her eyes, mouth and nose allude to someone who is crying or has been crying recently. We look into her eyes and we see that her eyes are heavily lidded and saddened. Even the light blue and grey tones in the back allude to the feeling of sadness this painting possesses.



Figure 6: Aileen Wuornos, Me 2021

In response to Bleach by Jenny Saville, I have created a piece based on Aileen Wuornos on an A3 piece of paper in acrylic paint. I initially tried to create a piece using Saville's technique, however I reminded myself that this is a response piece. With that in mind, I redirected myself and started to take inspiration but not copy the art piece. I attempted to develop a similar way of conveying the aggressive onslaught of emotions that Saville evokes,

I found this very hard as I am not a seasoned artist like Saville. However, at my current skill level I feel as though I caught a level of emotion in my piece that I usually would have found difficult. I decided to use the mugshot of Aileen Wuornos as the reference for my piece as I find her to be a controversial figure that could elicit a level of emotion on her own. For this piece I believe I was successful in capturing the essence of Jenny Saville's work, and you can see the inspiration in my piece.

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