

Student Name: Ryann Davies

P Number: 1802589

Programme of Study: Fine Art : Studio Site and Context

Module: M4X01560

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan task) = 528 words.

Task Two: Manifesto (Julia Task) = 439 words.

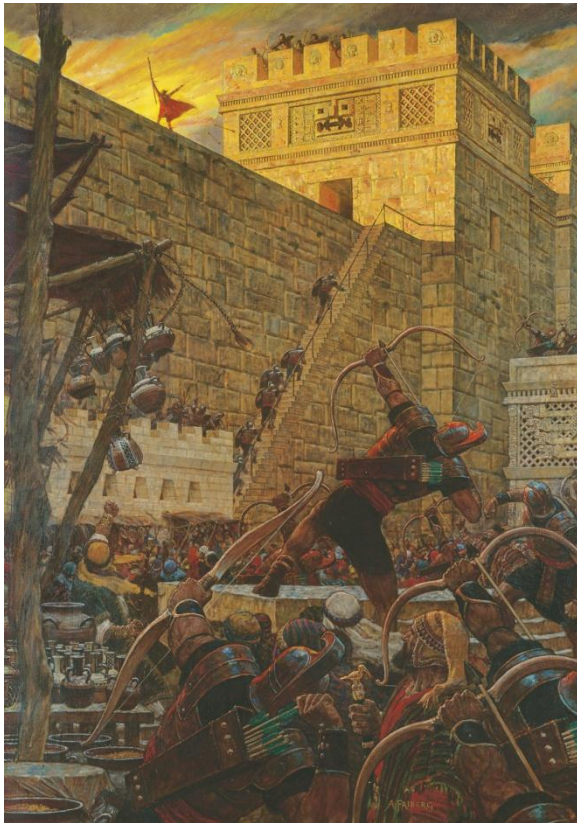
Task Three : Reflexive (Jon Task) = 472 words.

Task One : Semiotic Analysis (Ryan's Task)

Semiotics, in its most basic terms, is the study of signs. This is not just in paintings and photographs, but in every aspect of our lives including, but not restricted to, words, sounds and body language. (Chandler, 2007) John Locke, a forefather of Semiotics, ties these signs to specific meanings which John Berger explains we are taught from birth. Ferdinand de Saussure defines these 'signs' themselves as any motion, gesture, image or event that conveys meanings. With these signs we form our understanding of the whole word. Take the colour red in western culture, a very emotionally intense colour that raises our blood pressure and respiration, meaning we associate it with danger, energy and power, as well as love and passion. (Pastoureau, 2016)

Another forefather of Semiotics, Charles S. Peirce states in *Some Consequences of Four Incapacities* "We do not have the power to think without signs". For example, how would one easily describe an object that carries other items without the use of the word 'bag', which is a word, or a 'sign', we made up to use for that object. Every image has two meanings, the denoted, or the literal thing one sees when they look at it, and the connoted, or the coded message inside. (Barthes, 1977)

In the 1950's Adele Cannon Howells commissioned the artist Arnold Friberg to paint



Samuel the Lamanite on the Wall - Arnold Friberg 1952-1954

a set of images for *The Children's Friend*.

(Swanson, 2001) This included the a

depiction of Helaman 16, and forms the

denoted image of a Samuel preaching on

a wall to a city which had cast him out.

The connoted image inside is found with

the use of colours, such as red and yellow,

to show the love of God and the goodness

of God, and the arrows and Samuel's

body forming a saltire, both representing

martyrdom (Audsley, 1865) - after all,

after Samuel jumped off the wall he was never seen again, though if this was

because he died, or for another reason, this is never stated in the record.

However, when one looks at the image, one needs to remember that it is not

historically accurate, hardly a surprise when one takes into account it was painted

nearly two thousand years after the event happened, and the artist himself admitting

to adding to the story. (Swanson, 2001) Guy Debord states in the Society of the

Spectacle "when the real world is transformed into mere images, images become real

beings" (2005:13). In the case of Christian art this quote applies well, with the only

information of these times written in books that where more about recording the

spiritual events, with a lot of the word poetic with its descriptors rather than

focusing on realism. This art almost creates a false narrative, leaving the viewer believing this is what the historical events looked like rather than just an artist's impression of the past.

Semiotics can be used to help a person deconstruct a narrative of any image so they might be able to understand the significance behind the image, as well as allow them to realise the false message that could be hiding inside it.

Bibliography

Audsley, W. & G. (1865) *Handbook OF Christian Symbolism*, London: Day & Son Ltd.

Baghdadi, N. & Zribi, M (2016) *Land Surface Remote Sensing in Urban and Coastal Areas*. Unknown: Elsevier.

Barthes, R (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana Press, pp. 20.

Berger, J (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London, Penguin, pp. 46.

Chandler, D (2007). *Semiotics : The Basics*. 2nd Edition. Oxon, Routledge, pp. 1-2.

Debord, G (2005) *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated from French by Knabb K. London: Rebel Press.

Nordquist, R (2019). Semiotics Definition and Examples, Available

at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/semiotics-definition-1692082> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Pastoureau, M (2016). *Red : The History of a Color*. Translated from French by J.

Gladding. New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Pierce, C.S. (1869) 'Some Consequences of Four Incapacities', *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 2, pp. 140-157

Swanson, V.G. (2001) 'The Book of Mormon Art of Arnold Friberg, "Painter of Scripture"', *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 10(1), pp. 26–35.

Toone, T (2012) Insight into Arnold Friberg's Book of Mormon Paintings, Available at: <https://www.deseret.com/2012/5/21/20502627/insight-into-arnold-friberg-s-book-of-mormon-paintings#arnold-fribergs-young-nephi-subdues-his-rebellious-brothers> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Task Two : Manifesto

- 1) Thou shalt keep humble.
- 2) Thou shalt not fear failure.
- 3) Thou shalt explore many mediums.
- 4) Thou shalt remember thou never own thy art.
- 5) Thou shalt seek opportunities to compose thyself better
- 6) Thou shalt not live in a bubble.
- 7) Thou shalt place as much values on scribbles as final pieces.
- 8) If the opportunity for art arises, thou shalt shun all commandments except from those granted by the LORD, thy GOD.

Keywords And Images

Failure



Leonardo da Vinci - Study of Male Profiles

2. Thou shalt not fear failure.

Everybody knows the words from *Worstward Ho!* by Samuel Beckett "Try again. Fail again. Fail Better." (1989:101). It is far too easy when making art to stick to what one knows, repeating the same work with only minute changes, because it feels safer, or easier, than exploring new possibilities. However, art must keep moving forward. One way an artist can avoid falling into this trap is by following one's inspiration, quickly making a piece of work, without thinking too much on whether it will work out, as mistakes are important, allowing one to learn and discover a greater depth of work. (Lucas, 2012)

Own



The Motherland is Calling by Irakly Toidze

4. Thou shalt remember thou never owns thy art.

A piece of art should have a purpose behind it, and should appeal to the emotions of the viewer who is looking at it (Loomis:1952) or there is no reason to make it. While it is

inevitable that the creator's personality will be infused in the work when it is being made (Morris:2019), it is important to remember that once the piece has been made and 'released' into the world, it is no longer under the creator's control, and every person that views it will take something different away from the piece. No longer will the carefully constructed meaning that the artist formed in their work apply, and instead new meanings, feelings and emotions will be produced in response to it, and the work will no longer belong to the individual, or individuals, who made it, but rather to the people. (Zetkin:1924)

Bubble



Louise Bourgeois, Cell XIV, 2000

6. Thou shalt not live in a bubble

In 2016 'filter bubble' became one of the most topical words of the year. (Söderberg:2016).

This term was coined by Eli Pariser in 2011 to describe the phenomenon of the limiting of a person's full exposure to information on the internet by algorithms. This results in a space

that only reinforces our already existing ideas and thoughts (another word used for this expression is 'echo chamber'). While this had always existed - from the people we spend time with, to the newspapers and magazines we have always read - the internet has increased this problem, bombarding us with the same opinion until we become completely unaware that there even if another side to the argument.

(Pariser: 2011)

For one to fully understand the world we live in, one must try and see the world from all sides and avoid this 'filter bubble' at all costs.

Bibliography

Beckett, S (1989) *Nohow On*, London: John Calder. pp 101

Beete, P (2013) (National Medal of) Art Talk with George Lucas, Available

at: <https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2013/national-medal-art-talk-george-lucas> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Exodus 20: 3-17, Holy Bible, The Joseph Smith Translation

Grömping, M. (2014) 'Echo Chambers', *Asia Pacific Media Educator.* , 1(24), pp. 39-59.

Kampik, T & Najjar, A. (2019) 'Technology-facilitated Societal Consensus. Available

at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332414006_Technology-facilitated_Societal_Consensus (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Loomis, A (2012) *Successful drawing*, London: Titan Books. pp 12

Morris, K (2019) The Art of Putting Yourself Into Your Work, Available at: <https://medium.com/better-marketing/the-art-of-putting-yourself-into-your-work-bddb1cd80b49> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Pariser, E (2011) *Filter Bubble : What the Internet is Hiding from You*, New York: Penguin Press.

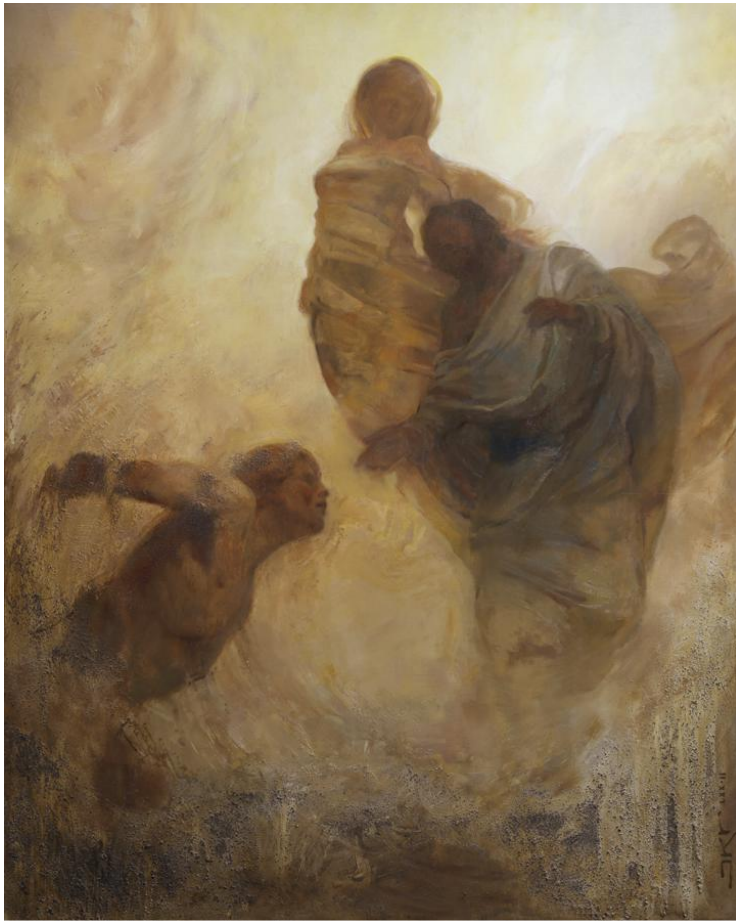
Söderberg, B (2017) 'Inside the echo chamber: A qualitative study on anti-immigration internet media, political polarization and social trust in a fragmented digital landscape'. Available at: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1067734/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Unknown (2016) Soviet Art, USSR Culture, Available at: <https://soviet-art.ru/art-belongs-to-the-people-vladimir-lenin/> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Various (2014) 'The Art of Failure: The Importance of Risk and Experimentation', *NEA Arts*, (4).

Zetkin, C (1924) *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1924/reminiscences-of-lenin.htm> (Accessed: 16th December 2019).

Task Three : Reflexive Analysis



Breath of Life by J. Kirk Richards

While Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* maybe the most famous painting depicting Genesis 2:7, it is far from the only one to do so. In 2011 J. Kirk Richards painted *Breath of Life*. What makes this piece of work stand out is the fact both Heavenly Parents are present in the scene.

The Heavenly Mother, in

Latter Day Saint theology, is rarely talked about, and the knowledge of Her in the faith is underdeveloped (McDannell, 2019) and it is rare to find any art with Her in, let alone one depicting such an important part of history. It is important to note that, while She is included, she is still a shadowy, robed form. She is behind the Father and is clearly more in a 'support' role than a part of this life giving process. However Richards is well known for painting more controversial topics, in 2016 making an image of black Eve eating the fruit of knowledge - not because, as one might expect, because of her colour (it is a majority white religion (Pew Research,

2018) with a rather rocky past with racism (Green, 2017)), but rather because people insisted it was wrong for a white man to depict a black woman topless. (Jones, 2016)

Another thing which sets Richards out from other Latter Day Saints artists is his more abstract style. Most members prefer the realistic style of Arnold Friberg and Del Parson, and it is unlikely one will see a more abstract painting in their local chapel. (Goble, 2017) As different as Richards' work maybe from Parson's, they do share the common theme of church art - they both blend unique religious ideals with the great faith the artists have. (Givens & Barlow, 2015), and just because it belongs to a new religion, it still obviously is a Christian piece of art, and inspired by those that came before it. The use of light and the form of the Heavenly Father is all in line with early Christian work. (Audsley, 1865)

While I am not a painter this image interests me because it is religious. In 2018, 52% of the population of the UK say they do not belong to a religion (British Social Attitudes, 2018) and only 0.28% of the population is of the same religion as me. (Adcock, 2018). Today it often seems like religion and modern art are bitter enemies, with satirical artists such as Cattelan and Serrano produce art with a negative attitude towards faith. However, looking at artists like Richards, and others such as Bill Viola whose video installations where shown in St. Paul's Cathedral (Sooke, 2014), gives me hope that modern artists can still find a way to put their faith in their work, and is something I aim to do in my own work.

Bibliography

- Adcock, M. (2018) *Facts and Statistics - United Kingdom*, Available at: <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics/country/united-kingdom> (Accessed: 18th December 2019).
- Audsley, W. & G. (1865) *Handbook OF Christian Symbolism*, London: Day & Son Ltd.
- British Social Attitudes (2018) *Religion*, Available at: https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf (Accessed: 18th December 2019).
- Givens, T., Barlow, P.L. (2015) *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goble, C. (2017) *The Problem of Mormon Art*, Available at: <https://www.timesandseasons.org/harchive/2017/06/the-problem-of-mormon-art/index.html> (Accessed: 17th December 2019).
- Green, E. (2017) *When Mormons Aspired to Be a 'White and Delightful' People*, Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/09/mormons-race-max-perry-mueller/539994/> (Accessed: 17th December 2019).
- Jones, V.E. (2016) *Roundup: Controversial Eve painting, liturgy, protest, visualizing belief, and "Ya Hey"*, Available at: <https://artandtheology.org/tag/j-kirk-richards/> (Accessed: 17th December 2019).

McDannell, C. (2019) *Sister Saints: Mormon Women Since the End of Polygamy*, New York: Oxford University Press. pp 18.

Pew Research (2019) *Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Available at: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/church-of-jesus-christ-of-latter-day-saints/> (Accessed: 17th December 2019).

Sooke, A. (2014) *Does Modern Art Hate Religion* , Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/culture/story/20140602-does-modern-art-hate-religion> (Accessed: 18th December 2019).