

Observation	Location	Analysis
Berger questions and explains what oil paintings are. Before even thinking about the meaning of paintings, the fact that they are objects with market value and that can be owned makes them art. This quote is Berger's direct definition of this concept.	"What are these paintings? Before they are anything else, they are themselves objects which can be bought and owned." Pg 85	This is a very interesting statement to me as this is Berger's definition of what a painting is, which is not necessarily universally agreed upon. It reminds me of the history of "readymade" art, in which objects such as a urinal were put on display in a gallery by Marcel Duchamp, and labeled as art. This caused a lot of controversy for many reasons, but mainly because it was not considered art since Duchamp bought it. I think Berger's statement supports Duchamp's concept of what art is, in that in order to be art, an object does not necessarily have to be made by the artist presenting it, but merely something that can be bought.
Berger explains the impact of the oil painting, and how (in his opinion) it impacted social mentality and attitudes.	"...that a way of seeing the world, which was ultimately determined by new attitudes to property and exchange, found its visual expression in the oil painting, and could not have found it in any other art form." Pg 87	I have a hard time agreeing with this statement as I feel it is centralized on Western mentality. I can't help but feel that a different medium in a different area of the world (Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania) would have had the same impact that the oil painting did in Europe in its respective area.

Berger explains the purposeful use of imagery in oil paintings, that were used to convey messages about the identity of those being portrayed. He specifies that these symbols were understood by few, who were alluded to be those who were educated.

"The painted objects on the shelves between them were intended to supply - to the few who could read the allusions - a certain amount of information about their position in the world." Pg 94

The symbols in this painting were very specific, such as a bible, scroll, navigation tools, an Asian rug, and a mosaic. These all represented that the men being depicted were educated, wealthy, and traveled to different parts of the world. This alludes to colonialism. The part of this painting that is most interesting to me is the distorted skull, which even if unrecognized, looks sinister and symbolizes something darkly looming. What this means to me is that from the very birth of capitalism (colonialism), scholars and artists knew the negative effects and calculated nature of capitalistic structure. It supports the fact that capitalistic structure is not coincidence, or human nature, but knowingly enforced. Since the use of objects in oil paintings were painted purposefully, the skull in the painting was most likely a message about the dark nature of colonialism

Sidney Ha
07 February 2019

Observation	Location	Analysis
Zadie Smith explains the imagery on the billboard in front of her apartment, and how its message can be seen in other parts of New York City culture.	"The tone is pure Manhattan. Echoes can be found in the personal growth section of the bookstore, and in exercise classes..." (Paragraph 4)	Here, Smith is describing an aspect of the visual culture of New York, in that there are repeated images that generate a general understanding among city-goers. This relates to John Berger's text, in which he talks about the distribution of images, and how it impacts a society's response to these images. The ability to duplicate a common message in billboards, bookstores, and in classes, shows how these images infiltrate every part of New York City life, almost forcing a cultural message onto people.
She explains what attracts people to New York, and what fuels the city's rich culture.	We have always worked off the energy generated by this town, the money making, and tower building as much as the street art and underground cultures." (Paragraph 15)	I feel that this is a purposely narrow standpoint on New York city, as Smith later admits that she lives in a very privileged area. I think the idea that New York is made up of money makers and artists contributes to gentrification. There is so much more to New York culture, including working class immigrant communities, that are often overshadowed by wealthy communities or artistic communities. The idea that the city is for a certain type of person can cause a lack of empathy when communities that do not fit into these categories are displaced.

<p>Berger explains how publicity is a symbol of freedom, by providing freedom of choice for purchasers, and freedom of enterprise for manufacturers. Because of this, publicity is a beneficial tool for the economy.</p>	<p>“The great hoardings and the publicity neons of the cities of capitalism are the immediate visible sign of ‘The Free World.’” (Page 131)</p>	<p>If publicity is used as propaganda, is it still a sign of freedom? If publicity is weaponed, it can be used as a way to “brain wash” the public. Also, those who can afford to pay for publicity and advertisements will ultimately have control over what people see. Factoring in a capitalistic society, in my opinion, takes away the aspect of freedom in publicity.</p>
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Sidney Ha
21 February 2019

Observation	Location	Analysis
Graeber describes how juxtaposed images create powerful messages. He	"Property destruction, then. Is an attempt to "break the spell", to divert and redefine." (Graeber, Pg 5)	I do believe that our current capitalistic structure must be uprooted in order for any real change to occur. However, I do not believe that damaging store fronts will aid in dismantling these capitalistic structures. I think in the short run, the only people who will truly be affected is working class people who cannot go to their jobs for a little bit since the store front was destroyed. Ultimately, these companies have a lot of money and will be able to restore their buildings, without a lot of sacrifice.
Wiles explains how hi-vis jackets are a symbol of French protests.	"There is a long established link between protest and hi-vis" (Wiles, Pg 2)	This is an example of how fashion/garments can be weaponized. Other examples of this include pussy hats, long/ natural hair, and button pins. I think that weaponizing fashion pieces can be very powerful, but at the same time they can have different connotations among different groups of people, thus carrying its effectiveness.

Sidney Ha
28 February 2019

Observation	Location	Analysis
Sontag explains an incident Virginia Wolff had, in which she had a discussion with a lawyer about the reactions of people towards photographs of war. Wolff explains that no matter who you are, you will react with horror and disgust to images of war.	"We do have the same responses, "however different the education, the traditions behind us," she says to the lawyer. (Sontag)	Something that I thought about when reading this was the reaction to violence by those fighting, since they experience firsthand the horrors of what is depicted in war photos. I specifically thought of The Rape of Nanking by Iris Chang. She describes how soldiers would kill for fun, and the unimaginable ways of killing their employed. Soldiers would cut open the bellies of pregnant women, burn groups of people alive, and rape women after killing their families (among many things). I am certain such heartless and sinister actions occur in every war, but I wonder how this lack of empathy is achieved? If such vile and merciless acts are employed on the killing field, can the same lack of empathy be had when viewing photos of war secondhand? I can imagine a greater lack of empathy when viewing photos, since it is a secondhand experience.

Preliminary research questions:

1. What is traditional Chinese herbalism?
2. What is the significance of tea in Chinese culture?
3. What is the history of tea shops in Chinatown?
4. What makes certain tea leaves significant in Chinese culture?
5. How were herbalist remedies discovered and proved to work?

Sidney Ha
04 April 2019

Observation	Location	Analysis
Thurm explains that memes must be understood, and to explain their meaning would either be impossible or drain the joke of its comedic value.	“Trying to explain why something is funny often drains a joke of all comedic value; on the internet, where something can strike thousands of people as funny one minute and painfully trite the next, trying to force explanations is lethal.” (Thurm, Page 10)	I do not think this is always the case. Most often we view memes on Instagram, which has a comments section. I have often seen questions clarifying what is being referenced in a meme. I sometimes look at the comment section for answers on the meaning of a meme if I do not fully understand it. Often times this clarification makes the meme funny, once it is understood, and does not kill the joke. I think this statement by the author is too precise. I think the point of questioning a meme provides the clarification needed to be “in on the joke”. Think the only time explanations of a meme might ruin the comedy if someone has no idea of what memes are in general, and have no basis of understanding.

<p>The author explains how gifs of black faces are used excessively on the internet to express sass or extreme emotion. This creates black caricatures, and is reminiscent of minstrels and echoes the history of black face.</p>	<p>“Digital minstrels often operate under stolen profile pictures and butchered AAVE. Quite often it comes in the form of an excessive use of reaction GIFs with images of black people.” (Jackson)</p>	<p>I think this article is very interesting, as it does not necessarily ask for people to stop using black faces in memes, but asks us to be cognoscente of the history it is reminiscent of in western culture. I think this is a difficult topic, as black culture is American culture, and permeates every sphere. Though some adaptations of black culture are ingenu and racist, some cultural tendencies that originate from black communities are adopted by people of other races or ethnicities due to proximity. For example, I am fully aware of the fact that I speak in AAVE. However, I cannot help this as I grew up speaking this way. It is not performative or code switching. However, like the memes, I think it is important that I am aware of why I speak the way I do or why I am influenced to be the way I am. The fact that I am influenced by black culture is not a negative thing and should not be seen as such. Things begin to be problematic when adopting black culture is performative or to code switch.</p>
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Sidney Ha
11 April 2019

Observation	Location	Analysis
Nelson describes in detail her kind of sexual desire, in reaction to a romanticized fantasy written by William Gas.	"For my part I have no interest in catching a glimpse of or offering you an unblemished ass or an airbrushed cunt. I am interested in having three offices stuffed full of thick, veiny cock in those most unforgiving poses of light." (Page 24, #64)	I think Nelson portrays femininity in the most genuine and untraditional light. She reveals the existence of and unacknowledged reality of female sexual desire. She writes about it with gross conviction, and she is cur yet still feminine. I also don't see what she says as being sad or "blue" in a melancholy way. They are just true and genuine statements.

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<p>Lonetree describes how Native Americans are working to preserve and document their culture and history through museums, while simultaneously decolonizing their representation.</p>	<p>Tribal museums serve many functions, of course, and they have done a decent job of challenging the many stereotypical representations of Native history produced in the past. (Lonetree, Pg 5)</p>	<p>Stereotypical representations of Native Americans in the past provided no nuance in depicting cultures, and often reduced the meaning and complexity of certain practices. Differences and relationships between tribes were also ignored. What I am curious about is what it would look like if museums went in depth into specific tribes, rather than concentrating on Native Americans as a whole. I think examining all Native American tribes together is what reduces them. Acknowledging the fact that there were different tribes and that they had complex relationships with each other I think would make for accurate representation.</p>
<p>Mitchell begins to explain in this paragraph how representation of Western vs. Eastern culture is used to create national identity and imperial purpose.</p>	<p>But is there, perhaps, some more integral relationship between representation, as a modern technique of meaning and order, and the construction of otherness so important to the colonial project? (Mitchell, Pg 294)</p>	<p>Representation used to push agendas and social order makes me think first of caricatures and political cartoons. Creating caricatures generalizes and stereotype a group of people into a single image, and reduce their complexity. If a reduced image depicts a group of people as “savage” or irrational”, it can be used to support an agenda to take over a group of people. I think specifically of the caricatures of Asian women being the “flower” stereotype or the “dragon lady” stereotype. The “flower” caricature in which Asian women are depicted as soft and submissive can be used to justify rape or assault, or placing Asian women in submissive jobs. The “dragon lady” caricature in which Asian women are depicted as sneaky and dishonest, can be used to justify the denial of certain rights. If groups of people were not represented as caricatures, this supposed “justification” would be erased in a sense.</p>