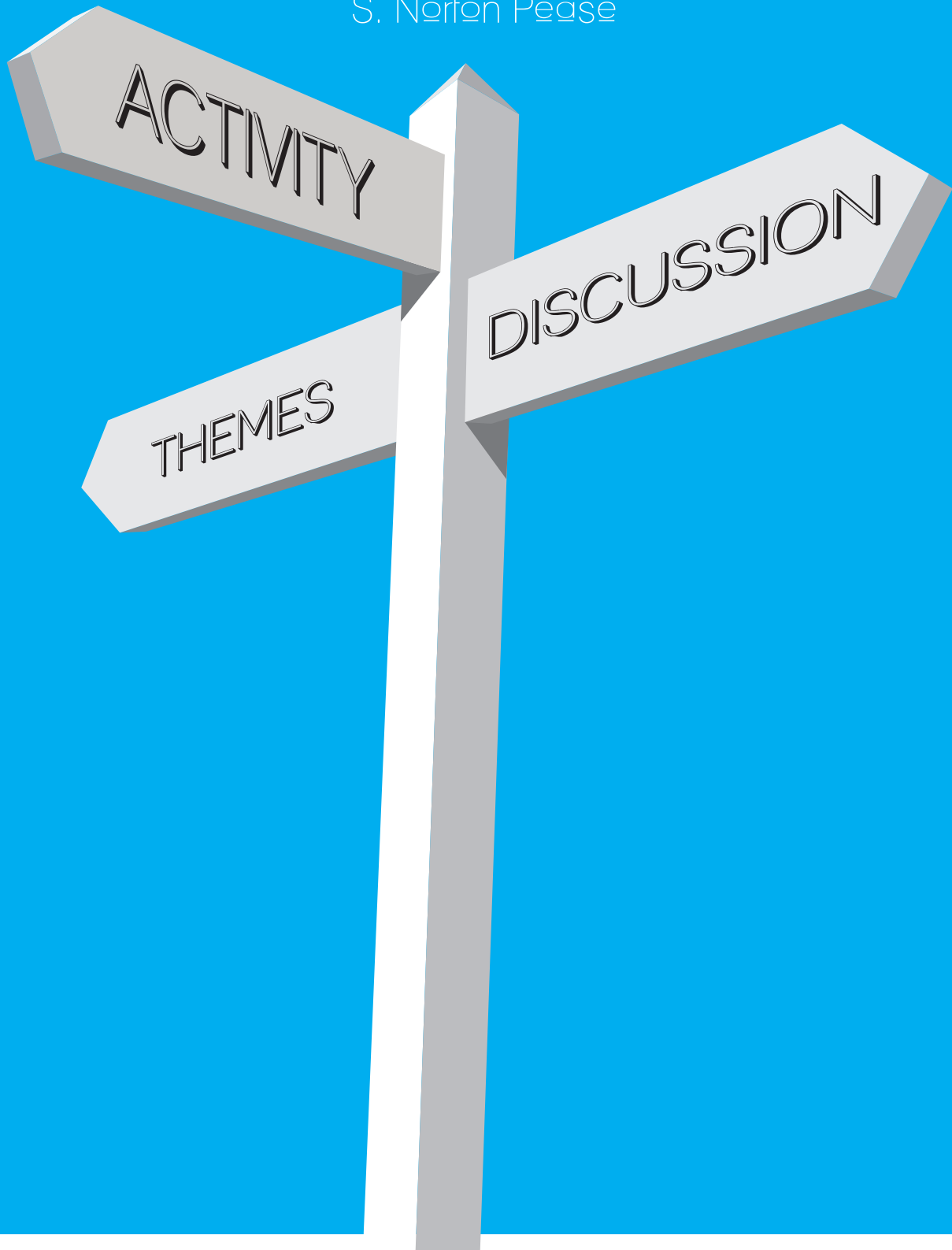


Facilitating a Group Discussion:

A Brief Survey and Comparative Analysis of Native American
Perceptions in Art, Then and Now

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THEMES COVERED:

The Sacred Realm
Politics and the Social Order
Stories and Histories
Looking Outward:
The Here and Now
Looking Inward:
The Human Experience
Invention and Fantasy
The Natural World
Art and Art

George Catlin (1796–1872):



left: Eeh-nis-kim, Crystal Stone, Wife of the Chief Blackfoot/Kainai, 1832
middle: Catlin and His Indian Guide Approaching Buffalo under White Wolf Skins, 1847
right: Stu-mick-o-sucks, Buffalo Bull's Back Fat, Head Chief, Blood Tribe Blackfoot/Kainai, 1832

Charles Wimar (1828–1862):



left: Attack on Emigrant Train, 1850
middle: Abduction of Boone's Daughters, 1855-56,
right: The Captive Charger, 1854

Frederic Remington (1861–1909):



left: Indian Scouts Watching Custers Advance, 1892
middle: Indians Simulating Buffalo, 1908
right: Fight for the Waterhole, 1903

Wendy Red Star (1981–):



left: Four Seasons Series: Fall, 2006
middle: Four Seasons Series: Indian Summer, 2006
right: Soulx Wildfire, 2013

Materials/Technologies/Equipment Needed:

Click here for: visual library (<http://wesmell.com/arth160/artists.html>)

Electronic Visual library includes the following images:

George Catlin:

Eh-nis-kim, Crystal Stone, Wife of the Chief Blackfoot/Kainai, 1832

Catlin and His Indian Guide Approaching Buffalo Under White Wolf Skins, 1847

Stu-mick-o-sucks, Buffalo Bull's Back Fat, Head Chief, Blood Tribe Blackfoot/Kainai, 1832

Charles Wimar:

Attack on Emigrant Train, 1856

Abduction of Boone's Daughter, 1855-56

The Captive Charger, 1854

Frederic Remington:

Indian Scouts Watching Custer's Advance, 1892

Indians Simulating Buffalo, 1908

Fight for the Waterhole, 1903

Wendy Red Star:

Four Seasons Series: Fall, 2006

Four Seasons Series: Indian Summer, 2006

Souix Wildfire, 2013

Discussions for face-to-face will take place during the class time, and the discussions should extend into two class periods (100 mins). Online discussions will be incorporated into a week long discussion covering the Themes in Chapter 3. A link to the visual library will be provided as a resource.

Learning Objectives/Targeted Outcomes:

Upon completing this activity, students should have a deeper appreciation for the works viewed and their correlation to themes of art. Students will also walk away with an understanding of different approaches to a common subject, reflecting on differing perspectives.

The following readings will be incorporated before the discussion:

William Truettner, *The West as American Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), (pp. 44, 149-151, 287, 297, 338);

Jules David Prown, Nancy Anderson and William Cronan, *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), (pp. 5-8, 19-23);

Wendy Red Star on the Rise by Luella N. Brien - *Native Peoples Magazine*;
<http://www.nativepeoples.com/Native-Peoples/November-December-2014/Wendy-Red-Star-on-the-Rise>

The Plains Indian Exhibition: A Milestone for the Met - The Metropolitan Museum of Art;
<http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2015/plains-indians>

You Won't Believe How This Artist is Fighting Native American Appropriation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCdh7pIVPiQ&ebc=ANyPxKpUkkZV7kfhWZJFxCihobicS1GrGD2TLFqpFd0V4Tm9mqMqUtLCtuB6EfjgpAZndXGjM1ahAlsrMadz1W4t1ukCy3YA&nohtml5=False>

Discussions:

Students will first do the assigned readings at home and will be given images to review.

Next, the following discussions will run in order:

1

Understanding the artists and their relationships to their respective time periods. What were/are the politics and social order of their era? Describe the underlying politics and social order in Wimar's paintings.

Understanding the context of their work is important in understanding the sincerity, bias and even fantasy related to the works. Guiding students through this discussion is key in setting the tone for the following discussions.

Allowing students to bring their views--albeit limited understanding of historical context--is important. However, it is imperative to disseminate general facts, when needed, to correct historical inaccuracies which may arise.

2

Compare the works of these artists from one another. (i.e. Catlin and His Indian Guide Approaching Buffalo Under White Wolf Skins with Indians Simulating Buffalo).

Through discussion "one" students are then to make comparisons of works. For example, Catlin actually experienced buffalo hunts, while Remington is basing his information secondhand. This process allows students to further investigate the images. The discussion is then brought back to the students to reflect on how the dates impact their perceptions. For example, which works are more genuine in their pictorial portrayal?

Responding to students' comments should be more reserved in relation to question one. This is a great moment for students to expand their visual vocabulary as they make these comparisons.

3

Identify the “Here and Now” in Catlin’s paintings.

In reviewing the themes, starting with “The Here and Now,” specific artists are used as examples. These themes compound the information gained from questions “one” and “two,” and allow for students to further explore the works of these artists.

As the instructor responds to student comments, it is important to value and encourage differing views. For this example, it is clear that Catlin worked objectively and not through subjective means.

4

Wimar’s paintings have been seen as propaganda for Westward Expansion and helping facilitate Manifest Destiny as a mantra. Give examples, from the chosen images, where he facilitates this theme?

This question is more pointed and leads to a specific response, which automatically moves the students to the center of this theme. As it correlates with question “one,” it “paints” the works with a subtext, and dismantles what the students may or may not be seeing by way of content.

As the instructor responds to student comments, he/she should respect any response made, but the crux of the question needs to be maintained. Tangents, which have the potential to derail the discussion, need to be addressed in a way that brings the discussion back to the question.

5

Why are Remington’s works good examples of Invention and Fantasy?

Remington has been exposed as a “poser in Western Art,” but his works are still masterful in their approach. He is a prime example of creating works that are based on a romanticized view of the West.

It may be beneficial to reflect on previous themes and examples as a way of comparison for this discussion. As the instructor responds to student comments, he/she should be respectful of student responses.

6

Describe how Red Star incorporates “The Human Experience” and the “Sacred Realm” within her works.

This is the introduction of a native artist, and it is needed to stress the significance. Not only is Red Star Crow, but she is a female artist. As it relates Western art, the instructor can reflect on question one. Western Art has historically been exclusively male and a majority of the earlier painters have been Western European.

The examples included incorporate the artist as content. Wendy either is creating an “inventive” landscape or making commentary on previous perceptions that have been explored through image. For example, Red Star parodied the 1950s movies, *White Squaw*, and the 1980s literary series of the same name. It might prove beneficial to add the following questions: Why is she the subject? Why is Red Star making satire? How does this relate to the “Sacred Realm?”

7

Describe how Red Star plays with the “Natural World” as a theme.

Red Star explores this theme through artifice as seen in “The Four Seasons.” The instructor can allow free interpretations to flow freely in this discussion while addressing the contradictions that the works visually create.

The most striking question that should arise from using these images is how they connect to this theme of the “Natural World.” Wendy is using artificial props as natural elements, and this brings focus to this theme. At this point, other artists can be used to explore the theme (ie. Albert Bierstadt and/or Thomas Cole), both artists created landscapes from direct observation. The core text should have an example of Smithon’s Spiral Jetty, an earthwork.

Assessment:

Assessment for the face-to-face discussions can be left to observation. As I typically have 40–50 students, it is difficult to assign a rubric to a 1–2 class discussion with 10 or more students. However, I have created the following rubric for the online discussion, but it could also be utilized for face-to-face:

Criteria	Meets expectations: 1 point	Does NOT meet expectations: 0 points
Substantive Thought Expressed	Grounded in information found in course readings and lectures; ideas and positions are clearly explained. Above all, the comment furthers the class discussion.	Purely opinion based response without reference to course readings or lectures; ideas are not clearly expressed; arguments are not backed up with citations. Comment merely agrees with that others have said.
Complete Post	Respond to all topics’ parts. Addresses all parts of the topic. All instructions are followed and attended to.	Some of the topic is present; some parts of the topic are not addressed.
Meets minimum required number of posts	Student posts the minimum number.	Student does not post the minimum number.
Overall Score:	Level 2: 2 or more	Level 1: 0 or more