

Artistic Response to War Essay Assignment

THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR GRADING AND POSTED TO DISCUSSION BOARD FOR CLASS COMMENTS. YOU MUST SUBMIT TO ASSIGNMENT AREA FOR GRADING AND POST TO DISCUSSION BOARD.

(600 to 750 words of analysis. Include the word count in your title.)

"From time out of mind, and in all cultures, war and art have reflected one another."
Donald Anderson, Editor, *War, Literature, & the Arts*

Donald Anderson edits a scholarly journal housed at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Reading what he has to say about the artistic responses to war guides us as we begin our independent projects focusing on artists use war as a subject of their work.

Overview

For this assignment, you will prepare a visual analysis to share with your classmates. You will insert an image into a Word to display an image of the art you have chosen along with your own written commentary in text form. You will attach your document to a post in the discussion area, after you have submitted it through Blackboard for grading.

You may use some information from the museum or gallery notes in the opening paragraph of the ARTW Essay in order to set the context for what you will discuss. However, NO borrowed information should be used, paraphrased, or followed for the analysis portion of the essay. Site the source of the background information in a parenthetical citation. See the sample essay for more information on how to do this.

Directions

Follow the steps below to complete your project.

- Choose an example of an artistic response from one of the following three mediums: 1. Painting on display in a public gallery; 2. Photograph on display in a public gallery or printed in a public, recognized book or periodical; 3. Public monument You may not use the painting featured in the sample ARTW Project or something from your own personal collection or the collection of others
- Place an image of your chosen artistic example into your document—see the sample ARTW for guidance. Make sure you identify the place where you located this artistic example. Use caption or a line of text to acknowledge the source.
- Study the artistic response you have chosen, and think about how this specific artistic expression responds to war or engages the subject of war. Place your written analysis into your project. You should do more than merely summarize what you are seeing or hearing. Think critically about theme and meaning. Use our discussion of "The Things They Carried" as a model for your own analysis.
- Your analysis is not your personal reaction; it is an analysis of the way the artistic element engages the subject of war. You might think about your analysis as a response to

these questions: "What does the creator of the artistic piece want me to think, want me to feel, or want me to believe?" Then address whether the artist is convincing, compelling, or effective in getting the response the artistic element is intended to evoke. Do not base your analysis on what you have read about the work of art. The analysis is to be your own original ideas and work. If you read too much about the work of art, you won't be able to distinguish between your ideas and those you read.

- You will make your project available to your classmates on the discussion.
- You must also submit your assignment to your instructor through Blackboard for grading. In other words, you will submit the assignment and then you will post it to the discussion board so that your classmates may see it. If you miss either one of these steps, you will not be able to receive a passing grade on this project.
- You will be able to view all of the class projects. You are required to view and post a discussion comment about **three** other student projects. Your comments should be analytical and not merely a statement on how much you enjoyed looking at the projects. Think about your comments as part of the continuing conversation on how artists respond to war. Your posts to the discussion post are due by posted dates and times.

Prepare for your project by reviewing the sample on the following pages.

Student Name
ENGL 2329 Section 001
Fall 2016

Don't forget your heading

Artistic Response to War Project: An Examination of "Washington Crossing the Delaware"

(708 Words)

The painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868) was painted in 1851 and is now owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (metmuseum.org).



Figure 1 | Image from Met. Museum

Leutze's painting serves as an artistic response to war primarily because it recognizes the heroic leadership of General George Washington during the Revolutionary War by showing his steadfast posture, by using saintly lighting, and by depicting forward movement. Washington's gallant and courageous demeanor is depicted in this painting as he stands steadfast at the bow of the rowboat while the vessel is tossed about in the icy, dangerous waters of the Delaware River. Washington's upright, standing position is contrasted with many of the other occupants of the boat who seem to be struggling to keep the boat on course. Some are seen leaning into the oars using their strength to move the boat forward. Others are shown holding their hats on their heads to keep them from being blown away. One occupant grasps the American flag fighting against the gusts of an apparently strong wind. This juxtaposition clearly suggests that that in order to inspire troops and gain their confidence during the perils

Commented [KP1]:

Commented [O2]: Use this format for the title of your ARTW Project.

Commented [KP3]: Provide the word count of your essay.

Commented [O4]: Remember to place your word count under the title.

Commented [O5]: In the first sentence, above the image, give the context for what we are seeing. Give the name of the piece, the artist, the medium, the date of creation, and the current location of the piece.

Commented [KP6]:

Commented [KP7R6]: You may use some information from the museum or gallery notes in the opening paragraph of the ARTW Essay in order to set the context for what you will discuss. However, NO borrowed information should be used, paraphrased, or followed for the analysis portion of the essay. Site the source of the background information in a parenthetical citation.

Commented [O8]: Make sure the image you use to depict the piece you will examine, is clear, focused, and easy to view. Also include a caption or line to tell us where you found the image you have placed in the document. Here we see that the Metropolitan Museum of art not only owns the original painting, but the rights to the image (photograph of the painting).

Commented [KP9]: Once you begin your analysis, you are not to use any outside sources at all. Do not just paraphrase what others have said about the work of art. This section is to be entirely your own analysis.

Commented [O10]: Start your ARTW with a clear thesis. This will be the first sentence below the image. Make sure your thesis clearly states how the piece you examine responds/comments on war. Note how in this sentence that all three major points are listed as part of the thesis statement.

Commented [O11]: Note the first major point of the ARTW is stated clearly in a focused topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph explains and analyzes this point.

of war time, brave officers, who inspire confidence and unity, must emerge to lead the troops to victory. Symbolically, many are being tossed about in the struggle of the boat, representative of the way in which soldiers and civilians are uprooted, placed in dangerous situations, and frightened by the turmoil in an actual war. Additionally, the depiction of General George Washington, keeping his balance in the rowboat and remaining steady amidst the icy waves, serves to symbolize his steadfast leadership during battle. Furthermore, Washington's boat does take the lead in this scene as it is foregrounded to show that it is going ahead of those who follow, clearly a strong depiction of brave guidance.

A further response to war that one finds in this painting is the way it draws the eye to the idealized General Washington. At the top of the painting, the apex of the clouds seems to frame Washington from above. The light from this part of the painting shines on Washington in such a way that it emphasizes his stature in halo-like illumination. There is a saintly quality about the way the light seems to hover over the figure of the general. Here, again, Emanuel Leutze emphasizes another important element of the kind of strong leadership that is required in war. The leader must inspire others to follow and trust, and Leutze uses heavenly light to suggest an almost sanctified deification of General Washington. Revered for his service, his bravery, and his clarity, Washington's legendary status would propel him into the office of President of the United States.

A final way in which this painting focuses on the importance of strong leadership and the qualities of leaders during war time is the forward movement of all the boats shown in the frame. Although General Washington's boat is most clearly depicted, the painting shows a second boat in only a bit less detail. In this second boat, men are struggling with their horses, and the animals are looking back to the safety of the nearest bank of the river. The soldiers are calming them and holding them steady, clearly in charge of the animals' safety. Just as horses must be led and guided by a skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced riders, in this scene we see the General confidently standing upright, and by looking forward, guiding his soldiers safely to the other side for an attack on the Hessian soldiers who had been conscripted to assist the British during the war. In times of war, moving forward is necessary for ultimate victory, and Leutze portrays the steadfast gaze of General Washington as determinedly moving ahead to battle.

"Washington Crossing the Delaware" remains one of the most iconic paintings in American History. Although many may view it as a painting that serves to memorialize a moment during the Revolutionary War, a closer analysis suggests a more profound message. Emanuel Luetze's work responds to war by depicting the characteristics necessary in military leaders in order to gain victory in battle and to gain the respect and trust of the soldiers who follow.

Commented [O12]: Note how this entire paragraph analyzes the way that Washington's posture contributes to the art responding to war by highlighting strong leadership.

Commented [O13]: Note the second major point of the ARTW is stated clearly in a focused topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph explains and analyzes this point.

Commented [O14]: Note how this paragraph explains how light in the painting draws attention to the figure of Washington and how this use of lighting emphasizes his qualities of leadership.

Commented [O15]: Note the third major point of the ARTW is stated clearly in a focused topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph explains and analyzes this point.

Commented [O16]: Note how this paragraph discusses the forward movement depicted in the painting as an important aspect of leadership.

Commented [O17]: The essay ends with a brief conclusion.