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Introduction to the History of Art ARTH 1103

Writing Assignment Part 3 – Reflect

Before knowing what the prompt objects were for certain, I believed that the prompt object could've been a painting of two men that had some influence in the field of science. I had thought that the painting might have been a way to document the two men while they were recognizable for the work that they were doing. The painter could've been someone who was talented in painting portraits of well-known people that were rich or well-known or the painter simply admired the work of the men and had offered to paint them. Depending on this, the artist could've decided to make this painting in order for the two men to have or maybe the artist was a well-known artist that was offered by the two man standing in the painting the opportunity to paint them for educational value and/or personal value. When I had seen the prompt object for the first time, I automatically thought the painting taking place in the time of Shakespeare. It also made me wonder if there was any connection between the two men and Galileo Galilei since he was known as the “father of modern science” and I had believed that the two men were involved in the early studies of science.

After learning about what the prompt object truly was about, I learned that it was one of the most famous portrait of the Renaissance. It is from Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassadors* from 1533. One of the men standing is Jean de Dintevile who was a French ambassador sent by the king of France, Francis I to the English court of Henry VIII. The other man in the painting is Georges de Selve who was the bishop of Lavaur, France. What interested me the most was learning the fact that they were standing on the pavement of the sanctuary in

Westminster Abbey which has become such a historic place. According to the essay “The carpet and the globe” Holwein’s *The Ambassadors reframed*” by Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, the essay focuses on two important details in the painting which are the carpet and the globe. These two emphasize on the globalized trade of that century and the European imperial ambitions and colonization. Dr. Lauren explains how these types of carpet became very popular in Europe that people that made textiles began to copy it. Since these carpets were expensive, they were mostly seen in elite European homes and would cost as the same as paintings or sculptures. Dr. Lauren also provides us with an interesting fact which is that a carpet that expensive could’ve not been on the floor. Instead, it would be draped over a table just like the painting demonstrates, in order to be shown as a beautiful object to observe or delight in. The carpet was painted in this painting in order to elevate Jean de Dintevile and Georges de Selve’s status. The carpet also had other meanings that were politically and culturally. In a political sense, it spoke to Francis’s attempts to forge a political connection with the Ottoman ruler. Culturally, it was expensive and imported from the Anatolian peninsula. It’s placement in the painting is also a reminder that the ottomans were important in the European Renaissance culture. As for the globe, it replicated how a globe would look like in the sixteenth century. The globe was placed in the painting in order to remember the types of transformations going on in that time. The red lines seen on the globe are meant to represent treaties that happened. One of the lines ran through Brazil and divided the Atlantic which was the line agreed to with the Treaty of Tordesillas that happened in 1494. This treaty made the majority of the Americas becoming granted over to Spain and Brazil was granted to the Portuguese. Another line shows the Treaty of Saragossa which took place in 1529, also involved Spain and Portugal. This treaty divided the map giving Portugal the Moluccas or Spice Islands. Dr. Lauren makes the point of discussing how the lines on the globe “reveals the

importance of the competition between colonial powers for land, resources, and people, and the far-reaching implications that European maritime voyages and colonial expeditions would have across the globe”.

The relevance of this painting for this class is learning how art had a great impact on a specific time in history called the Renaissance. The prompt object and the assigned resources fit together and were assigned together because of the similarities in the objects that were being shown in the painting and with the objects being shown in the “investigate” section. In Keith Moxey’s “Mimesis and Iconoclasm” all of the paintings displayed are alike in a way that could make one have the illusion that they were all painted by the same painter. The expressions on the people’s faces look similar in that there is either seriousness or sorrow. In the article containing the image of the astrolabe, it looks very similar to the globe in the painting that is placed on the upper top of the table. The object in fact is from the medieval period as well. The website discussing information of the rectangular textile fragment that resembles the carpet placed on the table. Like how the essay written by Dr. Lauren explained, the Ottoman empire had impact on other places at the time. This website states that Bursa was the major production center of velvets in the Ottoman empire from the mid-fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries which impacted the way of how they got those carpets. In another article “Still Life with a Skull and a Writing Quill”, it resembles a lot to the famous skull in *The Ambassadors* painting that provides such an illusion to the eye because of the paint’s colors creating dimensions. I would revise my descriptions and hypothesis about the object based on what I have learned from the resources to look more in detail of the painting rather than stating what is more obvious on the painting. I should’ve looked closer into what the small objects could’ve meant rather than what the objects meant to the people standing in the painting.

## Works Cited

Kilroy-Ewbank, Dr. Lauren, and Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank. "The Carpet and the Globe: Holbein's the Ambassadors Reframed." *Smarthistory*, <https://smarthistory.org/hans-holbein-the-younger-the-ambassadors/>.

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