

## Image Essay Analysis

When I began to create this image essay I felt as though the images I picked were common sense and in many cases a perfect fit for the perception I wanted to convey. I think it helped that I wasn't interested so much in conveying a concrete statement (though I had one) but a more general concept. Of course, the fact that these images were obvious choices for me doesn't mean that they would convey the same thing to someone who wasn't in their 20s and female. Whereas the logic made a lot of sense in my mind, my choice and placement of images, the contrast that I portrayed and the colors of images I used have a potential to be misconstrued.

The logic behind my choices are rather simple. I used images of children to convey a sense of children and I was able to find great images of children reaching toward a "future" (which I represented using images of space and babies/toddlers reaching toward a clock and the planet earth). Ending in the upper right with the shot of the earth at sunrise was in my mind the ultimate image of the future. I was trying to find some way to represent "our" and I decided that a circle of joined child and adults hands would convey that sort of a sense. I also tilted the images of the children so that they leaned toward the part of the poster I was using to represent the future.

There is also meaning to the things that I decided *not* to use within the essay. I decided not to use any defined lines and perhaps that is due to my female "relationship" perspective toward the world versus a male "task" driven one. I also thought that lines who add a separateness to the piece that was the opposite of my intention. I was more interested in portraying a holistic, supportive type of feel. I decided to leave a lot of white space in all but the center and upper right corner of the poster to draw the eye in and focus it on the central meanings.

The viewer, however, brings characteristics that could distort the meaning of the essay. Racial background, socio-economic status, and cultural background would all impact the translation of this image. For instance, in societies in which children do not have an idealized status within society, this image would be difficult to translate. It is also possible that men would not automatically associate a collage of children within a

circle of hands as a visual representation of supporting children. Most of the children that I used are middle to upper class in their dress and perhaps viewers of a different socio-economic level would not relate as well to the meaning or would dismiss the essay entirely.

Focusing on any of the individual images instead of the whole would also distort the meaning of the essay. The image of the black girl and the white boy might also portray inter racial relationships to some or a healing of racial tensions.

In my interpretation of the future I used two pictures of children, and both of them were Caucasian. Audiences of another descent might read into the essay that the “golden” future is only available to white children. Or I suppose it could be interpreted as a white supremacist vision of the future. Some viewers might associate the babies and the space/time/planet images as representing something to do with that generation being successful for future space travel.

Focusing just on the space in the essay and not on the viewer’s previous experiences, I am a little concerned that the images of space might lead a viewer to think that the image essay is trying to convey something about how the next generation will be the one to explore space. I tried to isolate these images from their backgrounds so as to not distract from the meaning I was trying to convey. I was going to add lines to the image, but I was concerned that it would section off the separate concepts versus realizing them as a whole – as one leading into another. I chose instead to use a circle of hands to roughly sketch out a circle to represent “our” versus a more solid line.

I used various techniques and theories from van Leeuwen and Arnheim in the creation of this essay. I utilized Arnheim’s sense of salience in my choice of a central youth picture. The girl at sunset with the balloons to me seems to embody energy and youthfulness and I am hoping that it will cement the idea of children. It is also a bright vibrant orange and the contrast with the black background should draw the viewer’s attention. Van Leeuwen heavily influenced my placement of the images. I used a diversity of color as well as black and white youth and adult hands to represent diversity and to highlight the contrast of the hands. I placed the future on the right to represent new and in the upper half of the image to represent ideal. The children and hands are positioned to stretch toward the upper right and the “new” and “ideal” drawing the

audience's eyes toward the future. The use of primarily blue backgrounds in the images hopefully will also convey the ideal. By placing the children in the center I wanted to make the jointly supported children in a more salient position than the rest of the image. That is why I also chose children in brightly colored settings and in full color. They are paramount to the meaning of the essay with the second most important element off to the upper right corner. If the viewer is able to read the essay and go away with the sense of children being essential to the future that the general meaning has been successfully communicated.