

ART IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

INSTRUCTOR | Edward Tingley, PhD

OUTLINE OF SECTION 2 EGYPTIAN ART

LESSON 4 | **The interpretation of symbols** 39 minutes

A | Signs & symbols

- 1 | **Codes** 0:42
- 2 | **Symbols vs signs** 4:04
- 3 | Hypothesis: art is symbolic 8:32

B | Interpreting symbols (vs signs)

- 1 | Interpreting how? 14:09
- 2 | Where is the meaning of the symbol? 16:58
- 3 | The issue of **certainty**
 - (a) 'How can we be sure that the meaning we get out of a symbol is really *there*?' 19:43
 - (b) What drives that question? 20:00
 - Poem by Billy Collins, "Introduction to Poetry" [see below](#)
 - (c) What drives it may be the *assumption* that art is **communication** 21:57
- 4 | A theory of meaning & its theory of art
 - (a) 'The meaning of a painting is established by the **intention of the artist**' 22:11
 - (b) Link with a further theory 22:51
- 5 | A theory: **art as communication**
 - (a) 'Because art is communication between the artist & the viewer, the meaning of a painting is the meaning the artist *intends* to communicate' 23:02
 - (b) A model of communication 23:34
 - (c) But is it true that art is communication (or is the question, rather, who is communicating with us)? 33:25
- 6 | *Who speaks* in the symbol? 33:47

Introduction to Poetry

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide
or press an ear against its hive.
I say drop a mouse into a poem
or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.
I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.
But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.
They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

— Billy Collins

WORKS CITED & FURTHER READING

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