



Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit RST4B Section C Religion and the Visual Arts

June 2011 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work



2011 (June) Unit RST4B Section C Religion and the Visual Arts

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Grade B

- 11 **Examine the approaches taken towards the portrayal of judgement, heaven and hell in art by one or more religion(s).** (45 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

In Christianity, Judgement, heaven and Hell is mentioned in the bible, revelations 20/21, it clearly states that hell is a 'lake of burning sulphur' and heaven is a place of plentifulness and that there is no pain and God will 'wipe your tears'.

In 'the last Judgement' by Bosch, Jesus who is in the form of God (Holy Trinity) is surrounded in a holy glow called the mandorla, he is above in the sky judging people whether they go to heaven which is on the left hand side of painting, where the colours are bright and lively which connote happiness, however on the other hand is Hell which is represented as a place of fire and chaos. The painting is designed on triptych which allows the stages, heaven, hell and judgement to be shown separately, which they are.

Furthermore in the 'last judgement' by Fra Angelico, Jesus is once again represented as an important and significant person, as a halo surrounds his head, he is joined with the holy heavenly people and angels who are playing trumpets which is associated with the end of days, which symbolises judgement day is approaching, on the left it is heaven, where everyone is singing and dancing in a garden, on the contrary, hell is on the other side where a devil is awaiting for his victims who are all portrayed scared and hopeless.

Also in a 16th century French manuscript there is God pointing at a dead corpse, which shows what else is left to come if you disobey him, this reinforces God judging people on their actions, and gives a message to act as a better person.

As well as in an engraving of Noah's ark (1716), the colours are in a contrast, which show who God spares is in light and those who don't are in the darker bits, this indicates that God will judge and save those who have done good in life.

Furthermore, in Florence, Italy, the duomo church has an dome, which is concaved and has pictures of the 7 stages of heaven and hell. This highlights that God is up there and we are down here, this creates an inspiration in people to strive for excellence, in order to be up there with God.

Also another painting in Italy, in North Pugalò shows Jesus stomping through the gates of hell and into heaven. This shows that Jesus has opened the gates of heaven for people, and it is their choice if they want to go to heaven, depending on their actions.

Similarly another painting in South Pugalò shows demons eating and poisoning people in hell, this strongly sends a message about how awful hell is and that you should try not to be sent to hell.

On the other hand, a mid 12th century of the depiction of psalters shows the archangel (saint Michael) bringing up souls to Jesus for him to judge, this shows that after life everyone's soul would be judged.

Lastly in Christianity, the depiction by Rohan Masters called 'Death before God the Judge', shows God looking over at Lucifer (devil) and sending the archangel Saint Michael to take his soul into hell, this suggests everyones soul who is not pure will be sent to hell.

In Islam, depiction of anything e.g. people, animals and demons are forbidden as they believe it goes against sanctity of life and it is playing God and that on the day of judgement, (day of Qiyamah) everyones soul would be judged and asked to bring back pictures that have been drew alive, which is impossible. However blasphemists rebel against these rules and commit sin. In Pre-Islamic religion, in a 16th century Arab manuscript shows a Islamic angel weighing souls on a scale, this symbolises that after death, the actual soul would be judged and that the soul should be clean and pure which decides whether the person goes to heaven or hell.

In Hinduism, they believe in the cycle of life, which means hell is this life and that they need to escape the cycle of samsara by their good actions (karma) and reincarnate into a higher life form, so they can escape the cycle and enter moksha, where they can be in heaven, a place of bliss with their God Brahman.

There are many variations for the cycle of life where Shinje the God of death is holding the cycle, and the cycle shows the stages of life (Hell) in dark pictures and outside the cycle light and beautiful. Shinje shows that he is capable of destroying the cycle, your life depending on your actions.

Lastly in Buddhism, Hell is not talked about very much as it seen as not a pleasant topic to talk about, resulting in no art depicting of hell. However, heaven or commonly called Nirvana is a place of bliss.

In a panel of relief in the 2nd century shows Buddha passing from the world and resting in Nirvana in a pose called Parivartanasana, which shows that Nirvana is a peaceful place. Similarly two depictions in the 10th century showing avalokiteshvara (Buddha of souls) holding a victory flag and leading righteous people into Nirvana, also the other painting shows vaishravana (warrior king of Buddhist faith) leading his troops to Nirvana, these both show that Nirvana is a place for righteous and fulfilling people, and they are who will be led to Nirvana.

Furthermore, in Christianity, in 2 Kings 2:2, it states that Elijah had to be separated from his partner as he was carried in a 'chariot of death' into heaven. In my own experience, I visited Central Delphi pentecostal church in Greece, the entire right wall was painted representing Elijah being taken up into heaven, this highlights that we can also be in heaven, that we have to be the best person we are able to be and that we will surely will be in heaven, as it inspires us to do better.

And in Islam, heaven and hell are not represented in pictures, as they believe the Quran is the word of God, so people can read it to understand heaven, hell and judgement, which is stated as hell as a basic fire and heaven a place of plentifulness (Surah AZ – Zumar) (39:17). This shows the different religions portrayal of heaven and hell and judgement.

Commentary

This is a long list of examples of portrayals of judgement, heaven and hell from the art of the major world religions. Most examples are described and there is some examination of the portrayal of the themes using evidence that is mostly accurate and mainly relevant, especially in the earlier examples related to Christianity. It therefore demonstrates a reasonable understanding. The very large number of examples and the range of religions represented constitutes “a diversity of views”.

The limitation in this essay is that by focusing on a large number of specific artworks, it is slightly at a tangent to the thrust of the question, the “approaches taken towards the portrayal”. The essay focuses instead on what each work of art portrays, and there is too little commentary, especially on the later examples, to demonstrate more than “reasonable understanding”.

Level 5, 32 marks

- 12** ‘Religions have used artistic representations of judgement and hell in order to scare non-believers into faith.’ Evaluate this statement. **(30 marks) AO2**

Candidate Response

In Christianity, paintings such as ‘the last judgement’ by Bosch might scare non-believers as they portray hell as a painful pit of fire, which connotes a feeling of death, leading non-believers into faith. However they show hell as a disrespectful environment which may adversely make non-believers go against faith, as they believe if God was all-caring and loving, why would he create such an awful environment. This shows that representations of judgement and hell may or may not have an affect on people.

However, in the ‘Last Judgement’ by Fra-angelico, it portrays hell even worse, as there is a devil which is awaiting on victims to eat them, this itself can make people aware of the consequences of their actions and lead them into faith, however others may not be turned into a believer as they believe it is a false representation of hell and judgement as no one knows how hell looks, so they can’t present it accurately, this again highlights why some people might be scared into religion and others not, on the contrary, people can argue that it is a true representation, as they believe people like artists may refer to the bible as a source for information about hell and judgement, and since they believed the bible is the word of God, ‘all scriptures are God breathed’ Timothy 2, therefore can say it is a true representation.

Moreover in the engraving of Noah’s Ark (1716), judgement is portrayed, where God shines light onto those who he has spared. This may attract non-believers into faith, as it shows God is merciful and will show mercy on his people, however this is not scaring them into a belief in a religion, it is enlightening them, so therefore hell and judgement pictures do not scare people into religion.

However in the painting in North Pagulo, where the devil (Satan) is eating and pooping out people, immediately might effect people and scare them into religion, as they will be revolted and fearful of that happening to them. On the other hand people have their own minds and therefore can persuade themselves to believe that they won’t be in hell. This shows how people might / might not be scared into a religion.

On the contrary, in paintings such as the depiction of 'Death before God the Judge' by Rohan Masters, it shows that God is sending the devil (Lucifer) into hell by Saint Michael the archangel, which might scare them into believe that they could be them, as the painting uses dark colours and pictures of skulls which resembles death. Lastly some people may not be forced into a religion, as they believe that writing about hell/judgement e.g. in Bible, Revelations 21, is more effective as it sends out much more of a powerful imagery, therefore shows that not all artistic representations of Judgement and Hell, lead people into religion.

In conclusion, I believe that pictures of hell and judgement can force and scare people into religion as some representations may show unbelievably scaring representations, as actions in this case (pictures) speak louder than words, which in this case is the bible or any other holy scriptures.

Commentary

This is quite a simple binary approach to the question which does respond to the proposition.

The candidate uses a number of specific examples of art to make an argument, and for each there is an explanation showing how it may act to scare believers into faith, and how it may deter them from faith. The artworks themselves provide the evidence, and there is some limited analysis. Lack of attention to the audience for the artworks limits the force of the arguments.

The concluding evaluation is limited in scope and a little unclear in focus. However, it does follow from some of the reasoning.

Level 5, 21 marks

Grade A

- 11 **Examine the approaches taken towards the portrayal of judgement, heaven and hell in art by one or more religion(s).** (45 marks) A01

Candidate Response

The idea of an afterlife can be dated back to the Ancient Egyptians who mummified corpses to ensure eternal life—scrolls showing artwork depicting the judgement of a person in the form of their soul being weighed against a feather on scales. This idea of judgement can be seen in Christianity since the medieval times although the approach to art regarding heaven, hell and judgement focuses on the consequences of judgement rather than the process e.g. the frescoes on the walls of the church of St Thomas in Salisbury show a clear distinction between the consequences of a good life and a bad one: on one side there are people being raised from their graves and on the other there are distressed people in hell. Jesus stands in the middle judging.

This approach to emphasising the consequences of judgement in medieval times could be argued to be a method of social control and reinforcement of the church – Marx believed art and religion was used as a tool for justifying the inequality of people e.g. the caste system in traditional India is justified by belief in Hinduism. If people saw these horrific images of ‘fire’ and torture, they were likely to do as the church told them in order to lead what they believe is a good life. Fra-Angelico’s frescoes of Heaven and Hell show a clear distinction between the two places – with one depicted on the left hand side wall and the other the right hand side wall of the church the viewer is almost presented with the two choices and moved to live a good life to avoid the horrific images of hell. Through art these ideas were allowed to develop and become universally accepted – without art they would not be so powerful – the strongly visual approach in Christianity therefore had a big impact on peoples lives. George Braque said ‘art is meant to disturb’ – these pieces of art certainly do so perhaps that is why the approach is so effective.

This may no longer be the case however, although there is an increase in the interest in art, ‘Art has consolidated its status as an independent cult’ however, as Goethe goes on to say, it is ‘sometimes more flourishing than the church itself’. Art is a popular subject in the 21st century however the interest in artwork on judgement is not. Few artists choose to depict it despite the fact 70% of people say they believe in heaven. Perhaps it is because this is a more spiritual than religious belief and artists feel depictions of heaven and hell are outdated. One modern approach to portraying heaven was in the form of a film – Mark Wallinger’s Kingdom of Heaven. The setting is an airport terminal with people arriving through the doors and classical music playing. The ideas presented are fairly abstract Wallinger attempts to update the concept of heaven to the 21st century. It is difficult to say whether he is successful as Graham Howes said, ‘many people find abstract art to be psychologically inaccessible’.

In contrast, Jewish portrayals of judgement and the afterlife are rare. The emphasis in Judaism is on the written word and so the approach to portraying, judgement, heaven and hell is to not portray it – however the views on Heaven and Hell in Judaism have changed significantly over time – prior to the Jews being exiled to Babylon they believed that all humans go to a place called Sheol when they die. These ideas gradually began to change after they were oppressed in such a way and a focus on judgement developed. Perhaps, like Freud suggested, belief in judgment is a reaction against helplessness – people need to believe in justice in the end to get through their difficult lives. One Jewish portrayal of hell is focused on the Holocaust and is in the form of multi-scriptures of humans suffering. The horrific toyish images suggest a ‘Hell on Earth’ and give an almost ‘childs’ play gone wrong feel’. The approach here is a shocking one and emphasises the suffering of the Jewish people during World War 2. In contrast to the changes in Christianity which attempt to induce fear into people to lead a good life, the images here emphasise the pain in this life and give hope for justice and peace in the afterlife.

Similarly to Judaism, Islam focuses on the written word but has similar ideas to Christianity. The universality of the afterlife across religions suggests an innate need for justice. Although many Islamic groups forbid figurative drawings, in Iran and other countries that are accepting of it, the tendency is to depict the afterlife as part of 'The Night Journey' which Mohammad takes. However because of their restrictions in Islam these images are very occasional and so the archetypal view of heaven and hell is perhaps less defined than Christianity that tends to be depict heaven with angels and puffy white clouds and hell with fire and suffering.

The images in Buddhism are equally as horrifying as some of the Christian ones and portrayals of judgements often show a person looking into the 'mirror of karma' an idea reminiscent of the scales that portrayed judgement in Ancient Egypt.

In the past the approaches have differed greatly across different religions and denominations and although I have described the frescoes of hell and heaven in Christianity it is important to note denominations such as the Quakers and Protestants would have objected to them and opted for a focus on the written word like Judaism and Islam. Heaven has been described as 'the most delusive idea yet' and the idea of hell has now been rejected by the catholic church 'at least as a physical place'. The lack of recent art for the afterlife suggests these concepts are outdated and so although the approach to judgements, heaven and hell was previously very visual and shocking, it is the approach now seems to be a more spiritual one – due to the fact they refer to the afterlife, there's no way of verifying them perhaps they are not convincing and now seen as meaningless.

Commentary

This is, without question, a generally thorough treatment of the topic. The loose discursive structure of the essay allows the demonstration of sophisticated understanding (for example, the link with Marx's views on religion as social control, and there is a good deal of complex appreciation of the link between art and ideas. However, in places the focus becomes rather hazy (e.g. the discussion of Islamic art) and the thread is less than clear throughout.

The information is almost all accurate and relevant, and appropriate evidence and examples drawn from a range of sources and genres demonstrate a clear understanding. It does not quite amount to a thorough understanding because there is some want of detail and development in the use of factual material. For example, "One Jewish portrayal of hell is ..." really requires a clearer indication of what the work of art is or who it is by.

Confident use of language and good application of scholarly sources both contribute to the impression that this is a student who knows and understands the topic, but there is not sufficient attention to detail or to the structure of the essay to demonstrate a "thorough understanding" (Level 7)

Level 6, 40 marks

- 12 'Religions have used artistic representations of judgement and hell in order to scare non-believers into faith.' Evaluate this statement. (30 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

George Braque declared that 'art is meant to disturb'. He perhaps meant this to mean that art is an evocative tool and can stir emotions within us or he could have been suggesting it is there to break the boundaries of conformity. Perhaps the church also attempts to 'disturb' and stir emotions within atheists using artwork in an attempt to convert them into faith. There have been claims by the power of religious art and its ability to induce a somewhat religious experience and inspire a sense of the numinous e.g. standing in the tall and spectacular Amiens Cathedral or observing a painting that shows deep emotions. However these examples focus on the positive feelings associated with religion and faith – are religious images as effective for the non-believer when they are negative ones? Surely an atheist would be less affected by images of hell than a believer and less scared by them because they do not believe in the afterlife – they have nothing to fear when observing images of hell because for them the images are not a reality.

Statistics show that 10-15% of our society go to church on Sundays regularly compared to the medieval times when religious belief was the norm and everyone attended church it seems there has been a significant decrease in faith. It is difficult to know whether people did believe in medieval times or just practiced the religion and so it is difficult to assess how powerful the frequent images that were portrayed to people of heaven and hell were, but due to the prevalence of the church and the social contrast it had in the context of society it would appear a key reason people did believe was because of fear of the afterlife and hell – for example the frescoes of Fra-angelico present a clear choice between heaven and hell – they would have opted for a heaven because of fear of continued oppression and unhappiness in the afterlife.

Perhaps these images were at their most powerful in the past because God was the only explanation they required purpose. Nowadays science can explain many questions and so people are also likely to take a less religious stance on death and the afterlife – they no longer rely on religion and so perhaps it no longer has the power to affect people and images of hell no longer have the power to scare people because they see heaven and hell as scientifically impossible.

The Logical Positivists, a group of philosophers from the Vienna Circle were atheists and saw talk about God and the afterlife as meaningless – paintings of hell and judgement cannot be verified as true or false using the verification principle. For them and many non-believers like them, the images of hell would have no impact and induce no fear because they're seen as meaningless – many non-believers would be impacted far more by empirical evidence or explanation and so art would not have the power to convert them.

Perhaps in the past religions have attempted to use religious art to portray hell as a threat to believe and as Marx believed, exhibit social control, however the increase in atheism and secular society of today are unlikely to be swayed by such images – although it could be argued that the negative images of hell more than any other aspect in Christianity tap into the moral codes of atheists and encourage them to lead a good life. Despite this it seems the images are not powerful enough to elicit conversion and it also seems that religious people have accepted that this is not the most convincing method. The catholic church now holds the belief that hell does not exist 'at least as a physical place' perhaps due to the realisation that images of hell were not successful in promoting religion – instead they focus on the positive aspects and the prospect of heaven which seems the most effective response. Even some people who claim to be non-religious believe in some form of afterlife similar to heaven so perhaps this is the most effective image and concept to 'promote' for religions hoping to convert other people into belief.

Commentary

This response is a “satisfactory response”, but it fails to reach the higher levels because it lacks clarity of focus. The evidence presented is of a high order: Braque, Logical Positivism and Marx are discussed, with some critical analysis. The beliefs of the church are analysed with reference to the question. The style is fluent and confident, entirely appropriate to the higher levels.

What is lacking is an awareness of the effects of art on the audience for the works, which the question requires. The focus throughout is on the church and the institutions, and for that reason, it fails to address directly the effects, intended or actual, on the non-believers referred to in the question.

Level 5, 23 marks

Grade A*

- 11 **Examine the approaches taken towards the portrayal of judgement, heaven and hell in art by one or more religion(s).** (45 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

The idea of an afterlife is common to many different religion and faiths. However, Christianity places Judgement, Heaven and Hell as a central tenant to it, therefore, many artists have used the idea of an afterlife to base much of their artistic expression around. The idea of the afterlife begins with the concept of Judgement. Judgement is simply the idea that, at the point of death, accounts are made for your actions in this life, and the consequences of these actions determine the quality of your afterlife. The Christian ideas of judgement derive from many other religions, prior to Christianity. The idea of there being another life or a 'postmortem existence' is common to many religions, yet Christianity holds it as a focal point. For example, the resurrection is key to Christianity as it gives the faithful hope of an afterlife. Marlowe makes the point that 'Christianity took the image of Judgment to new levels of expression'.

Christian ideas of Judgement derive from different faiths and religions, including the Egyptians and the Jews. The idea of weighing a soul in balance to determine your afterlife comes from both of these. In the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' the heart, or the soul, is weighed against a feather, a symbol of truth. If the scales are unbalanced then the heart, and thus the soul is devoured and destroyed. In the Jewish book of Daniel from the intertestamental period, Belshazzar is seen to be weighed in balance as the writing on the wall at his feast says 'you have been weighed and are found lacking'. This idea of being weighed was the very beginning of the Christian idea of Judgement. Jesus' teachings even refer to the idea of Judgement, especially in his parable of the sheep and the goats. This is shown in the 5th century mosaic in the Ravenna, where Christ depicted separating the sheep from the goats. The mosaic shows us the Christian idea of good works in response to Christs teachings. It shows Christians that if they should follow Christ's commandments, such as 'love thy neighbour', they will be rewarded by a life of bliss. Although the mosaic does not physically depict the act of Judgement, it points towards it, allowing the viewer to take a leap of faith.

The turn of the millennium led many people to believe that the end of the world was going to happen. When this did not come around, the idea and depiction of Judgement took a dramatic change. Images of Hell and Heaven began to take graphic form as the power of the church grew. At this point, Judgement was no longer about how you treated others, but how you lived your own life. When the establishment of the doctrine of the seven deadly sins came about, so the images of Hell became more terrifying and graphic. We see this in the Torcello Cathedral painting, where the seven deadly sins are compartmentalised. This was a warning to the viewer of the consequences of these sins. At a time when death and starvation were rife, the idea of a glutton for example, was seen as extremely bad and sinful. The consequences of this were shown in Torcello, where the glutton is made to eat his/her own hands.

There was also the idea that heaven had to be a place much better than the life on earth. Heaven was just depicted as a heavenly court, usually with Christ seated on a throne, as Christ always referred to heaven as a 'kingdom' in his teachings. This idea later became humanised into an ideal paradise for what the people needed most. The 'Land of Cocaine' is a perfect example of this, as it depicts people simply eating and sleeping when they please, a land of food and plenty, the things that the people at the time wanted the most.

As the depiction of heaven was changing, the images of Hell were becoming more graphic. Throughout the medieval period, as the terrifying depictions of Hell grew, so did the power of the church. People were scared into believing that 'the images of sin and death', and that only the church had the power to absolve someone of sin. This was done through the use of indulgences or attending Mass, adding to the power and control the church had over the people. The people had no choice but to gaze up and the medieval 'Doom Paintings', that depicted the horrific consequences of sin. An example of this is St Thomas Salisbury as the sinful are depicted being eaten and boiled alive by devils. This painting shows us that no one was immune from this 'hell', as Bishops, Clerics and even Kings are depicted in the painting. To add to the fear that people had, the plague and black death mushroomed, consequently causing people to constantly live in fear of death.

In the 18th century, the reformation created a significant change in the way Judgement, Heaven and Hell were depicted. The Protestant and Lutheran theology concentrated on the idea of salvation through faith alone. Luther's main slogan of 'sola fide, sola scriptura, sola gratia' became key to the reformation. The painting 'Law and Grace' by Lucas Cranach exemplified Luther's theology perfectly. It gave the viewer the idea and the chance to control their own afterlife through faith in God. By this stage, the typical medieval image of Judgement, Heaven and Hell had gone, as most churches destroyed or obliterated the paintings. Heaven was no longer an ethereal place of bliss, but a place of plenty and recreation.

However, the ethereal quality of heaven returned in the 19th century, when Romanticism started to be established. John Martin's 'last Judgment', shows heaven to be an eternal, white place, surrounded with angels and light. On the other end of the scale, the industrial revolution caused the idea of Hell to be a 'Hell on Earth'. Hell resembled the idea of mills and factories, a 'dark satanic (Blake) place, full of depression and unhappiness. By this time the medieval image of Judgement, Heaven and Hell had completely vanished as we moved into the 20th century.

The modernist depictions of Hell in the 20th century changes significantly, as the idea of a 'Hell on earth' returned. World War was seen as an experience on earth that could be related to Hell. The idea of being inhuman to humanity was enough for brothers John and Dave Chapman to produce 'Hell'. This is a piece of art made up of deformed, small figures of Nazi's and concentration camps. The art is full of gore and horrific imagery, emphasising the idea of Hell being experienced on earth. Recently, the modern idea of Judgement, Heaven and Hell is changed again through Tracey Emin through her art, heaven is seen as an extremely personal place where you are re-united with your loved ones. She shows this through her neon light piece, she has formed the sentence 'meet me in heaven, I'll wait for you' in her own handwriting. This makes heaven not only personal but can also be seen as reducing the afterlife to the modernist view of just a logo.

Commentary

This is a confident, focused answer to the question. By centering the structure of the essay on the evolution of ideas about heaven, hell and judgement through time, and by using a good range of artworks to demonstrate, illustrate and develop the ideas, the candidate has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the topic through good use of evidence and examples.

Each section begins with an explanation of the development in thinking about the nature of judgement, heaven and hell, and then an example is introduced. The example is considered with respect to the way it illustrates the development. The information used is accurate, relevant and comprehensive in scope.

The nature of the treatment of the topic illustrates a diversity of views, and there is confident use of scholars in appropriate places.

The quality of written communication is very high, consistent with the top level, especially noticeable in the appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary, and in the very clear and coherent organisation. This essay fulfils all the criteria in the mark scheme and level descriptors to earn full marks.

Level 7, 45 marks

- 12 **'Religions have used artistic representations of judgements and hell in order to scare non-believers into faith.'** Evaluate this statement. **(30 marks) AO2**

Candidate Response

Religious art, especially Christian art has used the idea of Judgement and Hell to inspire, give the imagination and to comment on human experience. When Marlowe questions the purpose of Christian depictions of Judgement and Hell when he says 'do they act as a means of inspiring belief or as means of policing individual behaviour'. The purpose of this religious art cannot be derived from the context in which it is put, be it theological or historical. Necessarily, any evaluation of these representations must acknowledge these factors.

In the 5th century, the mosaic art of Ravenna can arguably be described as inspiring belief rather than scaring a non-believer into faith. The mosaic depicts the parable of the sheep and the goats, reminding the viewer to love and do good works for other people. For example in the parable it says, 'you clothed me when I was naked', showing the viewer how they should behave towards other people. This mosaic allows Christians to follow and learn from the teachings of Christ, inspiring them, rather than scaring them.

When the turn of the millennium came around, and the end of the world did not happen, the idea of judgement and hell completely changed. More attention was payed towards the depiction of Heaven and especially Hell as the church gained more power. The establishment of the Doctrine of the seven deadly sins in the 14th century, now meant that people were being weighed against certain sins, an idea derived from the Egyptians 'Book of the Dead', and the Jewish 'Books of Daniel'. People were terrified into buying indulgences and receiving absolution from the only place they know how, the church. Images such as the painting at Torcelle and Doom paintings scared people into belief. The painting at St Thomas Salsbury did not only scare people, but showed them that no one was immune and that evil was at work in the world today. This is shown through the depiction of Clerics, Bishops and Kings in Hell and through the depictions of the devil stepping out of the painting. At this time, you could argue that the Christian depiction of Judgement and Hell was in order to scare people into belief.

However, at the time of reformation in the 16th century, a complete change in the depiction of Judgement and Hell occurred. Lutheran theology of salvation through faith alone became popular, along with his slogans 'sola fide, sola scriptura, sola gratia'. These slogans allowed people to be inspired, rather than scared into belief. Through the art of Lucas Cranach, people were reminded that, through the grace of God and faith, you will end up in heaven. Marlowe makes the point that by this time, 'medieval images of Judgement no longer existed'.

When the depiction of Judgement and Hell came to the Romantic and modern age, it changed again to comment upon human experience rather than to scare people. The industrial revolution and war created the idea of a Hell on earth, depicted in works such as 'Hell' by Jake and Dinos Chapman, or John Martins 'Last Judgment'. People began to believe in the idea that Hell could be experienced here on earth through the horrors of the inhumane world wars, for example. This changed the depiction of Judgement and Hell completely, allowing artists to express their attitudes towards the human condition. In 1999, Pope John Paul II said 'We no longer subscribe to the medieval idea of Hell'.

To an extent, if you take into account Pope John Paul II's declaration, you could argue that the humankind experiences Hell and Heaven on earth, rather than in the afterlife. There have been periods in the past at which Christianity has used artistic expression to control people, yet the majority of the time, Christian depictions of Judgement and Hell are used to inspire, in context with the human condition at the time. As Marlowe said, 'Christianity put the artistic expression of Judgment centre stage'. Much of the medieval art caused a leap of faith to be taken by the viewer, whereas the inspirational art allows for the viewer to take their own leap of faith.

Commentary

Once more the historical, ideas-based approach works well to produce a very well focused response to the question. For each period discussed, the candidate shows what the intended and actual purposes of the art were, and how these relate to the proposition in the question. Perceptive critical analysis of the ideas discussed throughout lend the argument authority, and the evidence is presented in measured ways to support the developing argument.

The building up of reasoned responses to the proposition for each period in Christian thought leads inexorably to an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning. The form and style of the writing, and the accurate use of specialist vocabulary, are further indicators that this is a good level 7 response.

Level 7, 30 marks