

Appendix 2: Ideas for Classroom Discussion  
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**1. Visualizing an imagined life.**

Tarot cards inspire us to imagine our future, and so do advertisements. Find an advertisement in a magazine or on the internet that promises the consumer a happy future through the purchase of a service or product. How does the visual element work in the ad to make purchase appealing? How does the image create a happy future? For example, the consumer might be imagined as part of a smiling crowd of beautiful people enjoying leisure time on a sunny beach. Now compare/contrast this image to one of the tarot cards depicted in this article. What are the differences between the tarot and the ad as visual maps? What do both the ad and the tarot card have in common as tools of the imagination? What are the benefits and potential problems of putting faith in either one?

The sheer appeal or challenge of tarot cards and advertisements alike can astonish us, please us, and make us laugh. But we rarely find either in art museums. Why is that? What argument would you make to persuade a museum to purchase examples of both? What criteria would the museum need to use to determine their artistic value?

**2. Authenticity**

Popular TV shows depict experts authenticating old and unusual objects that viewers present them: are the objects valuable and truly antique, or just odd stuff from the attic?

"Authentic" Victorian jewelry, for example, can fetch a high price because it is relatively rare and many people are willing to pay lots of money to obtain it. Think of the objects you have in your bag now. What makes them authentic? Consider your cell phone, your dollar bill, and your

USB flash drive. What questions do you need to ask to determine their authenticity? What do these questions show about what we value as authentic?

Taking our definitions of authenticity and its uses, let's look again at the European and Japanese tarot cards. What information do we need to know to authenticate each? Does it matter that one has a longer history than the other, and if so, why is that? Does it matter that some of the Japanese images reflect reconstructions or fabrications that have little relation to a particular history or culture?

### **3. Cultural concerns**

During the 20th century, the Western holiday of Valentine's Day was incorporated into Japanese social life. It was modified to accommodate Japanese notions of gift-giving, cultural meanings, and social obligation. For example, on Valentine's Day women in office setting began to give inexpensive chocolate gifts to all their male co-workers, a type of gift that became known as *giri-choko*, "obligation chocolate." Do you think there is a similar type of accommodation to Japanese cultural notions reflected in Japanese tarot cards?

### **References**

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