Communication Assignment:

Multimedia Project - Interpretive text & Images

* Minimum 9 “chapters” (more permitted); Each chapter should be around 200 to 250 words totaling a minimum of 1400 words excluding References.
  + First chapter will be an introduction
  + Second last chapter will be References. (Use Author-date in-text citations Chicago Style)
  + Last chapter will be How to Cite This
* Include at least one passage from the translation, where applicable
* Ensure text is free from all spelling and grammatical errors
* Use proper citation format.
* Show a multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approach. Incorporate insight from at least three scholarly articles, each from a different disciplinary perspective
* Incorporate original rich observations(action, effect, analogy)
* Write in an interesting, engaging, accessible style
* Establish context succinctly and effectively
* Coordinate between written text and image
* Organize ideas well and use paragraphs to separate ideas.
* Thoughtfully select points for markers and consider the overall flow.

| Record url | https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/bcbfd832-086b-4874-80f8-87500e0de704/ |
| --- | --- |
| Title (Source: Cambridge) | The Fifth Stage (Isfandyar Slews the Simurgh) |
| MS ref. | Bodleian Library MS. Ouseley Add. 176 fol. 263b |

| **CHAPTER 1** |  |
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| Marker coordinates | 0,0 |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 1 |
| Chapter Title | 1 - Introduction |
| Chapter image(s) | The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image caption | Isfandyar Slews the Simurgh |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | This image is from the Shahnama, a long epic poem written by Ferdowsi. The Shahnama originated in Iran around 1000 AD, its subjects contain Persian mythology and the history of Iran up to the Islamic conquest of Iran during the 7th Century. The Shanahma is an epic poem of Persian literature, a poetry of action that reflects a court-centered society, while closely connecting to particular people and incorporating their history ideals and values (Lewis, 2015). This image is part of the many stages in the long epic poem, specifically depicting ‘The Fifth Stage’ also known as ‘Isfandyar Slews the Simurgh’. The scene being depicted in the image is of two important characters in the Shanahma, the Simurgh and Isfandyar.  The imagery of the scene uses an extensive selection of bright colors to depict the scene. At first glance, the two characters, Isfandyar, the man, and the Simurgh, the large and colorful winged-creature, seeming to be at odds with one another. The stance of the man, Isfandyar, shows him raising his sword and in a position to fight and defend himself from the Simurgh. The Simurgh is in flight, the wings are spread and the head is turned to face Isfandyar. The two characters in the image depict a battle between one another. There is no background behind the two characters, symbolizing that their interaction is of the main focus. |

| **CHAPTER 2** |  |
| --- | --- |
| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 3 |
| Chapter Title | 2 - Isfandyar |
| Chapter image(s) | Isfandyar |
| Chapter image caption | Who is Isfandyar |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | Here, we will focus on Isfandyar, one of the two characters depicted in the image ‘The Fifth Stage’ in the Shahnama. Isfandyar is an important character in the Shahnama, he is an Iranian hero as well as the son of the King Goshtap, meaning that he is also the crown-prince of Iran (Nikoghosyan, 2022). Isfandiyar is given seven trials to complete. The first stage requires Isfandiyar to slay the two wolves, the second stage requires Isfandiyar to slay a lion and lioness, the third stage requires Isfandiyar to slay a dragon, the fourth stage requires Isfandiyar to slay the witch, and the fifth stage, the one displayed in the image, requires Isfandiyar to slay the Simurgh.  There are two last stages that Isfandiyar is to complete, the snow blizzard and the burning sand. Isfandiyar’s seven stages symbolize his warrior-like mentality and his courage to overcome difficulties. Isfandiyar strength in the seven stages is a depiction of the greatness of the crown prince and a history of Iran in overcoming tumultuous milestones. The Shahnama is an epic poem of kings by Ferdowsi, based on mythology and glorification. Isfandiyar is a symbolization of this myth and glory. |

| **CHAPTER 3** |  |
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| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 2 |
| Chapter Title | 3 - The Simurgh |
| Chapter image(s) | Simurgh |
| Chapter image caption | What and who is the Simurgh |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | Here, we shift our focus on the second character portrayed in the image, the large and colorful winged-creature, known as the Simurgh. The Simurgh, a mythological bird-like creature, is an important character in the Shahnama. The Simurgh is seen in various scenes depicted in the Shahnama and has a connection with many of the characters. The Simurgh is well remembered through its depiction in the story of ‘Zal and the Simurgh’, where an unwanted offspring of golden-white features is abandoned by his father at the mountain Alborz, far from civilization and only inhabited by the Simurgh. The Simurgh discovers the child, Zal, and cares for the child, raising him like it’s own. The Simurgh’s relationship with Zal symbolizes the divine, being something of awe and mystery as a whole.  In the image ‘The Fifth Stage’, the Simurgh can be seen differently than how it was previously depicted in ‘Zal and the Simurgh’ due to the nature of the image depicting a man versus beast scenario. The Simurgh does not depict evil or goodness, but rather the mythology of beast and mystery that attain to support the growth of the element of kings in the Shahnama. In the text, the Simurgh is given its name by the merchants. It is said to be like a “flying mountain, combative” that is feared by other animals and incomparable to the beasts of Isfandiyar’s previous stages (Warner, 1910). The Simurgh also “hath two young, their wills to her affirmed” announcing the Simurgh is a mother and accompanied by two more young to add to her combative ability (Warner, 1910). |

| **CHAPTER 4** |  |
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| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 1 |
| Chapter Title | 4 - The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image(s) | The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image caption | Isfandyar Slews the Simurgh |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | In focus of the entire image, with an understanding of the background of the two characters, Isfandiyar and the Simurgh, we can now lay out the main story and its depiction in the image ‘The Fifth Stage’. The event being depicted in the image is ultimately a battle between Isfandiyar and the Simurgh, it is Isfandiyar’s fifth stage to complete. In the translated text, ‘The Fifth Stage: Isfandiyar Slews the Simurgh’, the event transpired beginning to end. Upon Isfandiyar’s completion of his fourth stage, he calls upon Gurgsar, a captive Turkman, to give him his next stage. Learning that he is to slay the Simurgh for his fifth stage, Isfandiyar exclaimes he “will sew up its shoulders with mine arrows, cleave its breasts with Indian scimitar, and bring it’s head from height to dust” (Warner, 1910).  Isfandiyar set out in a horse drawn chariot to slay the Simurgh. The chariot, from the text, was lanced with swords on its roof, thus when the Simurgh swooped in to attack was impailed by the swords “Its might and glory passed away” (Warner, 1910). The young of the Simurgh, upon seeing its mother impailed, flew away in mourning, and shed tears of blood as they wept. The image is vastly depicted in the text in the passage:  “In blood, Isfandiyar, all armed and shouting,  Emerged and hewed to pieces with his sword  That bird now mastered, once so masterful”  Isfandiyar had slain and beheaded the Simurgh, completing his fifth stage. The image represents the event of Isfandiyar raising his sword, ready to bring it down upon the Simurgh, killing it. |

| **CHAPTER 5** |  |
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| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 2 |
| Chapter Title | 5 - The Fifth Stage (the Simurgh) |
| Chapter image(s) | The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image caption | The Simurgh; imagery and symbolism |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | The Simurgh stands for a variety of importance and rich imagery in the Shahnama. In the illustration of the fifth stage, the Simurgh is rich in color. Its feathers are adjourned with blue, red, and green. The feathers of the Simurgh are not only colorful, but long and intricate, especially the flowing strands of its tail. The colorful portrayal in the illustration of the Simurgh symbolizes its grandoisity and magical-divine being. Its vast wingspan, sharp beak and talons invoke a symbolism of danger and respect for the creature. In addition, the text describes the Simurgh as ‘mountain-like’ relating to its size compared to Isfandiyar in the illustration, and is further described as a wonder and ‘masterful’ through its depiction in both text and image (Warner, 1910).  The detail of the Simurgh in the image and through the text capture the spirited and mythical element of the creature. The Shahnama contains Persian mythology, in which the Simurgh is vastly illustrated as a mythological creature through its greatness and imagery. The mythological factor relates to Greek mythology in which divine species are relatively comparable to the Simurgh. This capitalizes on the religious aspect of the Shahnama and its heavy roots in Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion of monotheistic faith. The Simurgh reflects the Zoroastrian concept and ideas in the Shahnama through its mythological depiction, its divine interpretation, and its symbolism to the mountains which are an extremely important aspect in Zoroastrianism and are displayed throughout the Shahnama. The myth of a giant bird is an extremely important aspect and heavily regarded in Islamic, Turkic, and Persianate cultures, such as the Simurgh, there is also a Turkic Tughril, and further lore about a black eagle in a Central Asian oral epic of Etoshtuk (Kapitaikin, 2016). The mythology of superbirds with extraordinary powers is deeprooted in numerous aspects of history around the world. |

| **CHAPTER 6** |  |
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| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 2 |
| Chapter Title | 6 - The Fifth Stage (Isfandyar) |
| Chapter image(s) | Isfandyar |
| Chapter image caption | Isfandyar; imagery and symbolism |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | Isfandiyar, through the text of the related image, accomplishes his task of slaying the Simorgh for his fifth stage. The image, rather depicts the moment before the Simurgh is slain, which is meant to interpret the conquest of Isfandiyar and his braveness in the moment of slaying the Simurgh, a crowning moment. The portrayal and symbolism of Isfandiyar from the illustrated image depicts his character in multiple ways. By being the only human character in the image, in a battle with the Simurgh, Isfandiyar is portrayed as brave and kingly, that he alone is the one to slay the Simurgh which symbolizes Isfandiyar as ‘the chosen one’. Through Isfandiyar’s clothing, which he bares a soldier-like uniform in the colors of red and gold, portray his warrior-esque nature and symbolize that he is fighting for his kingdom. A uniform is generally worn by soldiers in an army, which fight for a kingdom, which is generally reflected in the colors they wield. In this instance from the text, Isfandiyar is completing his seven stages while on a mission with the soldiers from his father’s kingdom. Furthermore, Isfandiyar is illustrated with weaponry, he wields a shield, sword, and arrows. These attributes to Isfandiyar in the illustration confirm, along with his uniform, that he is a warrior, but also symbolize the tools of man as a feature of mankinds dangerous elements. The beasts and creatures in the Shahnama are dangerous due to their size and features such as claws, talons, beaks, and teeth. Men with the use of their tools for weaponry, are also dangerous. |

| **CHAPTER 7** |  |
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| Marker coordinates |  |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 1 |
| Chapter Title | 7 - The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image(s) | The Fifth Stage |
| Chapter image caption | Isfandyar Slews the Simurgh |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | The symbolism of the illustration of ‘The Fifth Stage’ depicts the major moment of Isfandiyar slaying the Simurgh. Isfandiyar is shown wielding his sword above his head, insinuating his readiness to strike the Simurgh. Isfandiyar’s stance portrays his movement towards the Simurgh, symbolizing courage and bravery in his advancement. The Simurgh is in flight with its body facing away and its head turned to look at Isfandiyar, portraying its involvement in the battle. In the text, the Simurgh is wounded by the swords of the chariot prior to Isfandiyar’s final, one-on-one blow in which he slains the mythical creature. In the image the Simurgh is in-flight and does not appear to be wounded or bleeding. The image of an unwounded Simurgh in a battle with Isfandiyar portrays a more fair and courageous win by Isfandiyar, rather than him slaying an already-injured creature. This difference in text and imagery suggest the illustrated symbolism of Isfandiyar as a warrior of greatness and courage upon completing his fifth stage, leading to the fall of the Simurgh.  Further, the contrast between text and imagery can be explained by the fact that imagery was added to an already existing manuscript, meaning that through addition to manuscript, image attracts an aesthetic side that complicates the establishment of formal interpretations which often makes most images look like exceptions (Grabar, 2010). This could be the case within the difference between text and image in the Shahnama regarding ‘The Fifth Stage’, or it could be reversed, such as the translations of text differed from the actuality of representation in the imagery. |

| **CHAPTER 8** |  |
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| Marker coordinates | 0,7026 |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 1 |
| ChapterTitle | 8 - References |
| Chapter image(s) |  |
| Chapter image caption |  |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | Ferdowsi, Abolqasem, and Dick Davis. Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi Vol. II. First Print Replica Edition edition. Mage Publishers, 2015.  Ferdowsi, Abolqasem, and Jerome W. Clinton. In the Dragon’s Claws: The Story of Rostam and Esfandiyar from the Persian Book of Kings. First Edition edition. Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1999.  Grabar, Oleg. 2010. "Why was the Shahnama Illustrated?" Iranian Studies 43 (1): 91-96.  Kapitaikin, Lev. 2016. "Human Flight on a Fabulous Superbird. Uplifting Images between Sicily and Khurasan." Convivium : Exchanges and Interactions in the Arts of Medieval Europe, Byzantium, and the Mediterranean 3 (2): 84-105.  Lewis, Franklin. 2015. "Guest Editor's Introduction: The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi as World Literature." Iranian Studies 48 (3): 313-336. doi:10.1080/00210862.2015.1023063.  Ruben Nikoghosyan, “7 things you might like to know about the Shahnameh, Dec 08, 2020 in Persian Language” <https://aspirantum.com/blog/all-about-shahname>  The Shahnama of Firdausi [Vol. 5]. Translated by Arthur George Warner and Edmond Warner. Vol. 5. 7 vols. London, Paul, 1910. http://archive.org/details/shahnama05firduoft. |

| **Chapter 9** |  |
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| Marker coordinates | 4932,7026 |
| Marker zoom level (1-4) | 1 |
| Chapter Title | 9 - How to cite this |
| Chapter image(s) |  |
| Chapter image caption link(s) |  |
| Chapter image caption(s) link(s) |  |
| Chapter text | <Barry, Kiera> (Researcher, Scriptwriter, Storyboarder, Audio Editor, Image Editor) and Hussein Keshani (Coder). “The Fifth Stage: Isfandiyar Slews the Simurgh.” In Ibrahim Sultan’s Shahnama: A Digital Art History Student Project, edited by Hussein Keshani, November 30, 2022. |