



**UNESCO Chair
on Visual Anticipation
and Futures Literacy
towards Visual Literacy**



TROJAN WOMEN RE-IMAGINED

ACTIVITY 9: FREEDOM OF THOUGHT & SOCIAL CONDITIONING

Text Reference

At 12' 40" in the film we hear the statement "No mortal is free".

Objective

The objective of this activity is to discuss mental and cognitive freedom and social conditioning. It examines how tacit influences shape our assumptions and how these assumptions impact our decisions although we believe we are making free choices.

Instructions

Learners note what mental and cognitive freedom means to them starting with the phrase: "I think freely because..." and explain the reasons why they believe their thoughts are not the outcome of social conditioning.

Ask learners to share sources (advertisements, media, schoolbooks, cultural habits, rituals, arts, heritage etc.) that dictate notions, ideas, values, roles, behaviours, aspirations, address fears and concerns etc. Learners need to think of their own notions, values, behaviours, ideas etc. and match with respective sources.

Discuss how hidden factors, such as cultural expectations, media, upbringing, education, cultural norms, power structures, subconscious biases, and personal experiences might affect their thinking.

Divide learners into two groups. One group will argue that people have true freedom of thought, while the other will argue that external influences constrain that freedom. Discuss how assumptions about free thinking and choice are challenged by this activity.

Learners imagine and write how they would wish to be as individuals in an ideal scenario where they have absolute freedom of choice of what to be and how to live.



Indicative Discussion Questions:

- ✚ How can we distinguish between our own desires and external influences?
- ✚ How can we identify the invisible influences that condition our lives?
- ✚ How often do we make truly independent decisions?
- ✚ What are the limitations in decision-making we unknowingly set in our lives?
- ✚ What steps can we take to free our minds from external manipulation?

Outcome

Learners write a letter to an unborn child sharing with it their experience of how a personality is constructed and advising it on how to navigate in life safeguarding its' individuality and authenticity.

Recommended Application of Visual Literacy tools

This activity is mostly compatible with the “Barcoded Baby”, the “Babel”, the “Visuality Iceberg”, the “Alternative Futures”, the “White T-shirt” and the “Letter to an unborn child” visual literacy tools.

NOTE: The Visual Literacy tools list is accessible at <https://vickykaraiskou.com/> Check the “Visual Literacy” tab and go at the “Visual Literacy tools” page.