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For this essay I will be deconstructing and defining three keywords: doublespeak, Nazi Germany, and addiction. I will look at the works of three artists that indirectly or directly relate to the keywords such as surrealist artist and painter Vladimir Kush (Doublespeak), storm chaser and fine art photographer Mitch Dobrowner (Nazi Germany) and artist and sculptor Steven Buccellato (Addiction). The theorists that will compliment my keywords and artists include William Lutz (Doublespeak), Martin Heidegger (Nazi Germany) and Patricia Santora, Margaret Dowell, and Jack Henningfield (Addiction).

I am interested in how seemingly beautiful things can be so destructive as well as the role that we as designers have in ensuring that the passing of information is done accurately. I will explore my keywords, artists, and theorists with these questions in mind, to cultivate questions that will guide my independent inquiry project.

DOUBLESPEAK

Doublespeak is defined as 'any language deliberately constructed to disguise or distort its actual meaning, often by employing euphemism or ambiguity, typically used by governments or large institutions' (Wordnik, no date). For example, politicians proclaiming 'we're going to war to fight for peace', this is cognitive dissonance at its finest. In contrast, Andre Breton, the principal theorist of surrealism asserted in his 1924 manifesto that surrealism was a new method of expression, a subjective type of verbal construct that aimed to cause ebullition (Balakian, 1986). It was a reaction that

went beyond the bounds of language, something that language couldn't conjure up. The purpose of surrealism was to bring dynamism back to language through the 'elasticity of connotation cultivated by the symbolists', as stated by Anna Balakin, author of *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute*, 1986.



Fig, 1, Kush, V. *Metamorphosis* (2006)



Fig, 2, Kush, V. *Deep Sea Project* (1996)

Most would describe Russian painter Vladimir Kush's work as surrealism. However, Kush describes the art style as 'metaphorical realism' after founding the movement in 1998 (Kush, 2002). Surrealism 'strives to give the unconscious free rein of expression' (Kush, 2020), Kush uses metaphorical realism to examine ideas, feelings and events that cannot be observed by logic (Kush, 2020). Vladimir Kush's paintings are characterised by a rich tapestry of imagery that draws from various sources, such as history, literature, and mythology, as well as his own vivid imagination. His works are not only visually arresting and beautiful, but also thought-provoking, as they challenge viewers to explore the deeper layers of meaning in the complex web of symbols and

metaphors that make up each painting. He explains "truth is always beautiful, and real beauty is always true" (Kush, 2020).

According to George Orwell, 1946, 'language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purpose'. However, words are 'often used in a consciously dishonest way' (Orwell, 1946), with the writer choosing their personal explanation, often forcing the viewer to acquiesce unwittingly to the given meaning, not the true meaning (Orwell, 1946). This is where surrealism and doublespeak diverge, as surrealism forces the viewer to look inside themselves at the deeper meaning, to tap into the conscious mind. Doublespeak on the other hand narrows the mind, giving false hope and tunnel vision, never questioning, and always assuming.

William Lutz, author of *Doublespeak* (2015), argues that although doublespeak can be funny, 'much of it is frightening'. Unlike language used out of callowness or haphazardness, doublespeak is the intentional use of language to manipulate and control, often weaponised at the detriment of the general population, 'The issue is not what we are doing to the language, but what we are doing with the language' (Lutz, 2015). Manipulation, exploitation, and oppressive language (Lutz, 2015, p.16) aren't things that you necessarily associate with the works of a graphic designer, but our role has the power to be preponderant.

Edward Sapir, in his essay *The Status of Linguistics as a Science*, 1929, writes that humans don't just exist empirically; guided by experience, but that there are abstract

and unwritten rules that we learn to exist with. For one reason or another, language is the chosen means of expression that humans have landed upon, and we wouldn't have adapted without it. Our language habits and how we interpret language shape our experience (Sapir, 1929).

Vladimir Kush believes that young people have an 'inner region of fantasy' which disappears as we age. When we reach adulthood our aptitude for imagination shifts into practicality and the prosaic nature of life (Kush Fine Art, 2020). Although people perceive to be ensconced by the realities of existence, they often miss that they are passing through an abundance of symbols. Everyday spoken language is replete with metaphors, which we may use without being fully aware of their impact. Visual metaphors can often be even more powerful than spoken metaphors. Vladimir Kush's approach to art, his approach to metaphorical realism, can be seen as an evolution of this thought process, using visual metaphor to create unexpected connections and insights that challenge the viewer's subconscious (Kush Fine Art, 2020).



Fig, 3, Kush, V. Woodsurfer (no date)



Fig, 4, Kush, V. Naturalist (2021)

Surrealism and doublespeak use language to subvert or challenge established meaning and ways of understanding, with emphasis on the subconscious or hidden aspects of human experience. Where surrealism taps into the unconscious mind to reveal deeper truths about the human psyche, doublespeak relies on subtle forms of manipulation that operate below the level of conscious awareness. They both reflect a fascination with the power of language to shape our perceptions of reality and challenge our established ways of understanding the world.

NAZI GERMANY

Nationalism and a sense of pride in one's country and heritage can seem like positive ideals, but they can also be destructive, as seen in the case of Nazi Germany. Similarly, while tornados may appear beautiful and peaceful, they possess the power to cause destruction. "Our job is to record, each in his own way, this world of light and shadow and time that will never come again exactly as it is today" (Abbey, 1998).

As Chancellor of Germany, Adolf Hitler declared a 'national revolution' and Jewish academia was eliminated, including the theory of relativity (Wolin, 1992). Academic freedom was expunged in light of unification. The unification, or the primordial truth, meant that instead of embracing what the Nazi's saw as humanities flaws, they wanted to eradicate the chaos or the accused problem (Wolin, 1992).

German philosopher Martin Heidegger was noted as one of the most prolific and illustrious philosophers of the 20th century. However, he was also a member of the Nazi Party and 'vigorously promoted the domestic and foreign policies of the Nazi regime' (Wolin, 1992). The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard had a great impact on Martin Heidegger's work with existentialism, particularly with the 'irreducible uniqueness of the individual' (Wolin, 1992). Martin Heidegger believed that there is a fundamental truth that lies at the heart of human existence, which he referred to as primordial truth; the inevitability of chaos (Wolin, 1992).

Chaos and humanity coexist, you cannot have one without the other (Wolin, 1992). This is observable in natural phenomena such as tornados, where beauty and destruction intertwine. The mesmerising beauty of a tornado's swirling winds, and its destructive force represent the coexistence of chaos and humanity. In the same way, humanity's flaws can be viewed as a reflection of the inherent beauty of our existence. It is therefore important for us to acknowledge and accept these flaws, just as we acknowledge and appreciate the beauty and power of a tornado. This rational acceptance of chaos and our flaws as a part of our existence is crucial for our ability to navigate the world, as individuals and as a collective, in order to prevent them from having power over us (Wolin, 1992).

However, there was an insipid and licentious quality to Heidegger and his theories. The German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers thought Heidegger's work would be 'disastrous in its pedagogical effects' (Wolin, 1992). As graphic designers are we liable

or have a duty of care to ensure we are not spewing the same 'grandiose illusion' (Wolin, 1992) as Heidegger ultimately was. His work was arguably 'merely a disguised quest for a kind of belief in God' (Wolin, 1992).

American photographer and storm chaser Mitch Dobrowner is known for his stunning black and white photographs of severe weather conditions. Looking at his work you can see the 'anticipated oblivion' and a hope for a 'better future' (Arendt, 2017). His work has a Chiaroscuro quality, the black and white tones emphasise the stark beauty and raw power of these severe weathers. This beauty and power can also serve as a reminder of the fragility of human life and the need to work towards a better future (Arendt, 2017).



Fig, 5, Dobrowner, M. Lightning Strikes (2016)



Fig, 6, Dobrowner, M. Mammatus (2016)

William Shakespeare often used storms as a metaphor for chaos, conflict, and turmoil in his plays. The imagery of storms in his works are associated with the disruption of order, both in nature and society, and the unleashing of powerful, destructive forces. The storms become another form of language, speaking to the 'intimation of apocalypse

and fatalistic doom' (Jones, 2015). Whereas George Orwell discusses the meaning behind words in relation to politics in his 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*. He suggests that Fascism signifies 'something not desirable' compared to democracy, which is not tied down to a specific meaning, but it's often used in an exemplary manner. Dictators will often aver that they are in a democracy, desperately trying to reclaim the word (Orwell, 1946).



Fig. 7, Dobrowner, M. *Bear's Claw* (2010)

History serves as a warning about the dangers of nationalism and the need for vigilance in preserving individual freedoms. Nazi Germany and storms both 'portend the same omen' (Jones, 2015). We must not forget how significant the power of language and imagery is in shaping public opinion and creating a false sense of unity.

ADDICTION

Santora, Dowell and Henningfield's 2010 book entitled *Addiction and Art*, explores the real-life complexity of addiction by showcasing work by those affected by addiction from personal experience. Instead of explaining addiction through scientific data in the form

of pie charts and bar graphs, they aim to truly show the multifaceted issues of those enmeshed in a life subjugated by addiction.

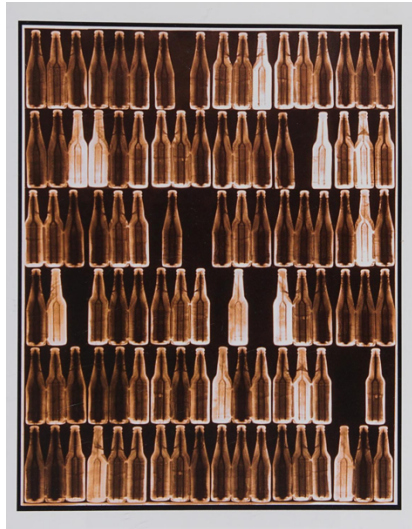


Fig. 8, Mendez, C.M. 99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall A Child's Introduction to Binge Drinking (for Andy) (2005)

However, there is a concern that the mere creation of this book may pose a threat to those in active addiction and recovery. Who is responsible to ensure the book doesn't become a pseudo-bible for those enthralled in addiction. American artist Michael C. Mendez, 2020, who contributed work to the book explains the work 'calls attention to the way innocuous material in our formative years can shape our future attitudes'. There is a balancing act between creating something that those find 'objectionable' or 'deeply moving'. Art is influenced by individual biases and there is an argument for creating a collection like this that 'would be challenging' (Santora, Dowell and Henningfield, 2010).

When the target audience leans younger, there needs to be a candid approach.

Authentic depictions of addiction are unsettling by nature due to their barbarous way of

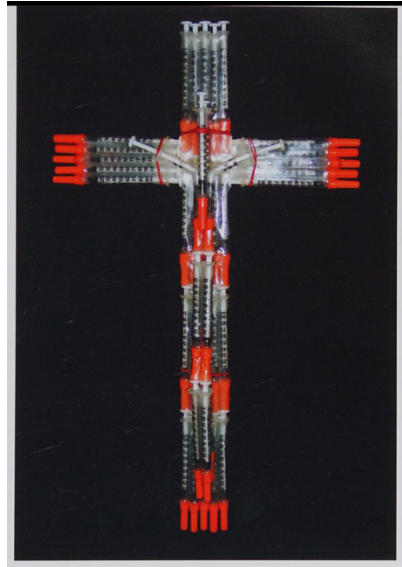
illustrating the reality of engaging in these behaviours. All of this not only ensures artistic intellectual honesty but also allows us to empathise with the experience as human beings. There is immense ‘value of art as a tool for health communications by educators and advocates’ (Santora, Dowell and Henningfield, 2010), but we cannot talk down the need for exposure to these real-life atrocities and painful human experiences. When you think about drug laws or prohibition and what little impact it has on addiction recovery, we cannot hide drug use and addiction away in fear of glorifying addictions or exposing people to these behaviours, proactive change comes with education (Santora, Dowell and Henningfield, 2010).



Fig. 9 & 10: National AIDS Memorial, AIDS Memorial Quilt (no date)

Looking to the past at the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we can learn meaningful insights to the response. Although the response was initially slow and wasn't taken seriously, 'political forces denied it and stigmatised it' (Sheridan, 2020), there are now huge efforts for treatment and prevention. Those in the HIV and AIDS community used art and the human experience to tell the stories of those suffering, 'Science was called on to provide a path to life, but art gave the reason' (Santora, Dowell and Henningfield, 2010).

Artists led the way to show the AIDS epidemic in its full context of the disease and society's perception and reaction to it.



Fig, 11, Buccellato, S. The Addiction Cross (2004)

In Steven Buccellato's 2004 artwork titled '*The Addiction Cross*', he seeks to understand the burgeoning use of intravenous drugs. There are parallels between 'the spiritual devotee' and the addict, the exchanging of goods to reach a higher power. Buccellato states 'one can feel the pain and hardship of the faithful (the addict), as seen in the anguish of the corpus upon the cross'. The communion or body of Christ is taken by the faithful follower in a bid to feel closer to God, whereas the addict exchanges old needles for new needles, in the same ceremonious way. Unlike the Christian who develops a closeness, the addict replaces the need for community with the apathy that the needle brings. Neuroscientist Dr Andrew Huberman explains that 'when people are taking opioids, they're basking in this world of pain and then everything is gone, they're numb, their neurology becomes numb'.

Another artist explains the importance of publicising a life of active addiction, 'the road to recovery would be more accessible if it were paved with understanding' (Santora, Dowell and Henningfield, 2010). Humanising addiction gives the general population the ability to engage with those in addiction in a more positive and forgiving way, instead of demonising and 'othering' those which only isolated the community greater.

American-British author Henry James penned a letter to H. G. Wells in 1915 stating, 'It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance... and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process' (Hill, 2012). The works in this book explore the allure, magnetism and bliss that hide in the shadows of addiction. Some are particularly ominous and a reminder of the Machiavellian nature that is brought out in addiction. Addiction is an imprisonment of not only the mind but the body, with the addicted persons cognizant to the fact that their addiction could make them lose everything.

After researching my three keywords individually, I am exploring the ways that they interact in conjunction with one another in the hopes of forming a research question. On the surface the keywords seem to only stand-alone but there is a strong correlation between them all. The concept of light and dark, hidden meaning, connection, language, imagination, distortion, fear, deception, and beauty are ways in which my original keywords link.

Some of the ideas that I was drawn to whilst writing this essay are 'light and shadow', 'deeper meaning', 'abstract and unwritten rules', and 'evolution of thought process'. I was also interested in nationalism and the pride of your country, and it reminded me of the first-year essay in which I wrote about my Irish heritage, Catholicism, and religion's influence on art which I thoroughly enjoyed writing.

With this in mind there are a number of questions that I could use as a starting point for my proposed project. These include 'Why are we always searching for the hidden meaning in art?', 'Is graphic design a form of deception?', 'What role do graphic designers play in ensuring information is accurate?', 'Research autism and the difficulties with abstract and unwritten rules and how graphic design can play a role in helping or hindering', 'Explore the ways in which light and dark interact with each other', 'Explore the connective nature of the world', and 'Is there beauty to be found in destruction?'.

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