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INTRODUCTION

(150 Words)

Propaganda, politics and colour theory are examples of key terms that are discussed in academic and non-academic writings, they influence the world around them, and they each contain deep meaning and history.

These key terms have been thoroughly discussed by theorists and artists who have provided their own ideologies that have shaped their own fields, artists such as Howard Chandler Christy, Pablo Picasso and Shepard Fairey have provided a deep understanding of their fields through the work they have produced. Furthermore, theorists such as Aldous Huxley have shaped the world around them through their writings and the manner in which they describe their findings.

The purpose of this essay is to explore these keywords in detail and understand the manner in which they interact with graphic design and similar fields. I expect to come to a conclusion on my dissertation question by the close of this exploration of these keywords.

CHAPTER ONE: PROPAGANDA

(702 Words)

Propaganda is the use of information that has been changed to show a biased or misleading nature and is often shown to promote a political cause or a certain point of view. The main target of propaganda is to persuade a particular demographic to adapt to a different point of view. Propaganda can also be used to promote products, services or even ideas.

One of the many characteristics of propaganda is that it is often one-sided and always biased, it will only provide the information from the point of view of one side and will either ignore or attempt to discredit any opposing views towards the matter. Propaganda is usually charged with emotion, and it uses powerful language designated to ensure that strong messages are associated with dominant imagery from the audience.

Key thinkers such as Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), have introduced an ideology over the use of propaganda and the damage that it poses towards society, he stated that “The propagandist’s purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human” (Huxley, A. 1937). The quote shows a deep understanding of the causality of the damaging use of propaganda and allows the reader to ensure a deeper connection to the understanding itself. Through the book ‘Brave New World’ (Huxley, A. 1937), we understand that the dystopian future warped through scientific advancements has methods of brainwashing citizens through means of propaganda. The methods used are ‘hypnopaedic platitudes, genetic engineering and Neo-Pavlovian’ (Martin del Campo, 2023), as extreme as the methods shown in the book are they show a fundamental understanding of the nature of propaganda and the methods in which they influence basic ideologies in everyday life such as political, economic or subtle changes within society. The book balances the idea of propaganda well through subtle references throughout and ensures that the concurrent

themes is kept throughout whilst incoherently changing the course of the plot. This is shown by this quote from the book “Community, Identity and Stability” (Huxley, A. 34), this quote furthers the information we have on propaganda and benefits our understanding. Aldous Huxley showed a ‘distrust of 20th-century trends in both politics and technology’ (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019), this informs the reader that an outside perspective through the mind of a theorist that already has a biased understanding of propaganda understands the magnitude in which it is used throughout history and how it is still relevant in the modern era.



Figure 1.1 'Gee! I wish I were a man' (Christy, 1917)

Propaganda has shown an impingement on the understanding of graphic design and the way it is received, there is no better example, than the artwork that was created during military wartime attempting to recruit civilians to their cause and influencing them to stand their ground against whom they considered foes. Many pieces of such work were produced during the 20th century ranging from basic recruitment designs to more aggressive forms of political persuasion. An example of the work that was created is shown in the art piece 'Gee!! I Wish I Were a Man' (Christy, 1917), Figure 1.1 depicts a young woman in a traditional navy uniform in an appealing pose to the younger audience, the artwork is an active piece of propaganda which attempts to appeal to the early 20th-century audience to induce them into enlisting into the American navy. Using a young woman as the centrepiece of the main design appeals to those young men to enlist by taking advantage of basic levels of attraction and implication. The artwork is a fundamental example of propaganda within graphic design which is shown through its basic colour lithograph design. The main text is shown to be underlined to extenuate the point to ensure that the message is clear. The title of the work tries to grab the reader's attention and influence them into joining to protect their

own masculinity, doing so, makes the viewer subject to a simple form of propaganda. This poster serves as a relic from its time when so many similar designs were being created to appeal to young men to enlist in the armed forces in the ongoing 'Great War', this is because women were a valuable asset in recruiting men to the military (MoMA. 2013).

CHAPTER TWO: POLITICS

(705 Words)

Politics are a part of everyday life, they control the manner in which we govern others and govern ourselves. The Cambridge Dictionary defines politics as 'the activities of the government, members of law-making organizations, or people who try to influence how a country is governed' (Cambridge Dictionary. 1995). As controversial as politics are, they are necessary to keep the economy stable and to bring order to the general population.

There are many characteristics of politics, through my research I have found that politics is a 'Dialectic solution' (Bain, 2008), Bain stated that "Politics is the governing element of society because it is capable of resolving tensions between different groups and moving the whole society in a particular direction", the quote clearly outlines the importance of politics and the role they fit. They ensure that governments can thrive and that civilisation can progress. Within graphic design, however, they hold a different sentiment, they walk hand in hand as "In its essence, graphic design is a political tool" (AALofts Design, 2020).

Through my research, key thinkers have stood out and given examples of the use of politics within graphic design, one of which is the American contemporary artist Shepard Fairey (b.1970), this artist has displayed his understanding of politics through his art and shown his deep appreciation for what he believes in. In his own words, he has stated: "I want to be proud of this country, but when aspects of our policy don't align with my ethics, I want to protest them and try to change them" (Obey Giant, 2014), through this quote, he has



Figure 2.1 'Hope' (Fairey, 2008)

displayed his passion for social justice within the country he lives in, through the understanding we can see the deep roots that politics takes within us. Through his work this is ever present, many pieces that he has created contain deep meaning and show his compassion for social change, and many designs such as the 'Hope' (Fairey, 2008) shown in Figure 2.1, show his praise of the politician Barack Obama (b.1961), though he has shown some opposition towards his actions in his interview through Obey Giant in his comments, he stated 'There's a lot of ways that Obama has disappointed me' (Obey Giant, 2014). The key thinker has shown me how to interpret political views through means of artwork and the stand they can take to promote social change and ensure that people can thrive in their communities. They have expanded my understanding of the keyword and what it represents.

One of the major functions of politics is that it is required to be in control of conflict and social cohesion, however, through social history it has proved to perform the opposite, often promoting war. This is more prevalent when we perceive different ideological and cultural views between different groups of people. More so when a country is divided through heavily differentiated views on what is required for the future of a nation, this is relevant within the art piece 'No Future' (Fairey, 2020), Figure 2.2 depicts the current state of the world with the subtext of 'Manifest Destiny' which is to expand its dominion and spread democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent' (Editors, 2010), the use of this term stands out, this is due to the fact that it displays a deep understanding of the political system within the United States and the clear example of what the artist thinks of the current climate of the US political system. The



Figure 2.2 'No Future' (Fairey, 2020)

use of the terminology clearly shows disdain, as well as a clear view of his own ideology. Through the understanding he has shown here, it expands our knowledge on the subject,

the fundamental idea that there are multiple angles to see when viewing politics in their element could not be clearer here.

Furthermore, we learn from the key artists' perspective the way we can manipulate politics and display them through means of graphic design in manners which are heavily tied with propaganda, this teaches us to understand further the connection between the keywords and their own individual relation with art itself. Finally, through politics, we can see the compassion and motives artists share through their art and expressive means to display their ideologies.

CHAPTER THREE: COLOUR THEORY

(708 Words)

Colour theory is described as ‘the collection of rules and guidelines which designers use to communicate with users through appealing colour schemes in visual interfaces’ (Interaction Design Foundation, 2020). Colour theory is also a way to understand how people perceive colour and how it can affect emotion in ways that benefit artwork and go against it.

Chromaflow technologies describe that the characteristics of colour are determined by three different elements: hue, chroma and value (Chromaflow Technologies, 2023). Hue is the easiest element to recognise, there is no limit to the range of colours within the hue. Secondly, Chroma controls the intensity and purity of the colour. As a higher level of chroma can make colours appear rich and full, the opposite will make the colours appear bleak and plain. Chroma can also be related to the saturation of a colour. Finally, Value manages the brightness of colour by allowing the lightness and darkness to be altered. Colours within this element are referred to as tints while the darker options are called shades.

Many artists use their understanding of colour theory in their own creations, one of these artists is the Russian painter and art theorist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) His understanding of colour values and their purpose allowed him to be one of the most recognised artists of his generation. He stated that “Colour is a power which directly influences the soul”

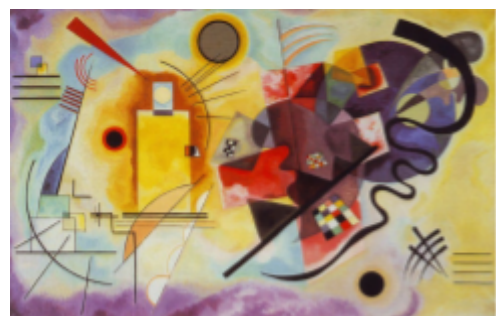


Figure 3.1 'Yellow-Red-Blue'
(Kandinsky, 1925)

(Wassily Kandinsky, 2000), through this quote he has demonstrated a deep compassion for colour and the manner in which it is beneficial to the world of art. He has shown through his own work the understanding he has of colour theory, this is demonstrated in his work entitled

'Yellow-Red-Blue' (Kandinsky, 1925), Figure 3.1 is a clear demonstration of using colour theory to create an abstract depiction of emotion, using the understanding of unrecognised objects and presenting clear shapes it appeals to the viewer's emotions to benefit the presentation. LadyKFloe when giving their take on the artwork stated that 'he composed emotional orchestrations out of colourful shapes' (Katherine Flores, 2022), this quote shows an understanding of the artist's emotions and the way he perceives colours, and this benefits our knowledge of colour theory and the manner in which it can manipulate our emotions for the benefit of the art piece.

Another key artist who has shown their appreciation for colour theory is the French painter Claude Monet (1840-1926), they have stated that "Color is my daylong obsession, joy, and torment" (Clemenceau and Michelson, 2017), Claude Monet also showed deep compassion for colour, in which he displayed through his works of art, the manner in which he understood colour was groundbreaking, his understanding helped to define the road ahead for other artists and change the way they perceived colour, it also set a precedent for future artists and more artistic movements to develop over time.

Within the colour theory, there are many artists that stand out, one of which, is Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), the Spanish painter was one of the most influential artists of all time. His work is ever-relevant today and has shown his incredible talent and understanding of colour through a vast range of mediums. He experimented heavily with the ideology of colour theory by using many different colour palettes. He took time to understand the way that different tints and shades can affect a person's mood, the meaning of the piece on the whole and the emotion that can be taken



Figure 3.2 'The Old Guitarist' (Picasso, 1904)

away from it. This is especially prominent in his piece entitled 'The Old Guitarist' (Picasso,

1904), Figure 3.2 uses heavy tones of blue and sombre tones which give off the element of sadness towards the viewer, without direct description towards the viewer the design still manages to convey emotion by the understanding of colour theory and that using soft blue tones ranging from light to dark the understanding is met that the image is sombre in design. This goes toward expanding the understanding of Picasso's knowledge of colour theory and expresses his appreciation for colour palettes and the manner in which they can work together to create works of art that appeal to viewers and convey heavy emotion through tints and shades by understanding how the three elements of colour theory benefit designs.

SYNOPSIS

(360 Words)

Throughout this essay we have defined each keyword and allowed a deeper search through theories and key artists that have to provide a take on their own respective fields. Propaganda has provided a deeper understanding of the effects that it poses and how it differs from other areas, however, it has also shown a deep connection with politics and colour theory due to the manner in which it is used throughout history.

Each keyword has shown how they relate to others through a similar format, colour theory has provided a deeper understanding of how it affects emotion which is a major part of the use of propaganda due to the manner in which it deeply connects to the heart of the viewer, it actively influences them through subtle changes in their mood through the use of colour. This is often used in politics to convince people to understand a certain ideology and change their political view which is the fundamental nature of propaganda showing a clear link between the three keywords used.

In conclusion, this essay has allowed me to understand the nature of these keywords and how they interact with each other, they have allowed me to further my knowledge of the effects of these terms and how they affect the academic world. This essay has allowed me to further my research and come closer to the conclusion on the subject of my dissertation for the third year. For my dissertation, I want to explore the manner in which propaganda was utilised by the Nazi regime in WW2 and the damage it imposed towards society. This question will allow me to better my understanding of the way in which it was used and the destruction it caused on such a global scale.

Furthermore, the research through this writing has allowed me to understand the project I want to work on alongside this dissertation, the dissertation would allow me to create an example of propaganda using similar styles and bettering my understanding of the work that goes into such a controversial design. This essay has cleared my understanding and paved the way for my final work in my third year.

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