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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 554 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 555 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 552 words

Task 1: Observational Essay

Semiotics is the study of signs and objects; it is a theoretical approach adopted to read images and texts. As Ferdinand de Saussure, one of its founders stated, Semiotics is “the life of signs within society” (1974: 16), this can be applied when deconstructing a text to analyse the communication and representation within advertisement, so that we can understand how it can be accepted or rejected by society. This will be furtherly scrutinised in this text by deconstructing a ubiquitous advertising campaign created in the fall of 2015 for the fashion brand, *Dolce & Gabbana*, whilst referencing to semiotic theories.



Fig 1: #DGMAMMA, Dolce & Gabbana advertising campaign, 2015

John Berger begins his seminal text by stating “seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak” (1972: 7), this epitomises the influence signs have on humans, highlighting the importance it can have in advertisement purposes to symbolise a metaphor, an emotion or a deeper meaning. Linguistic Signs are defined to have two primordial characteristics, this dyad is made up of a signifier (the material aspect of the design) and a signified (the mental concept)

(Saussure, 1974: 67). An example of this can be perceived in the advertisement from the choice of the elder woman's clothing- black clothing (the signifier) is signified as mourning a family death in Italian culture. This is seen as a tradition or mythological ideology in their society. Echoed through Andrew Robinson's theory, 'A sign, in this context, refers to something which conveys meaning – for example, a written or spoken word, a symbol or a myth' (2011), this implies an object is inadequate without a meaningful concept.

According to Louis Hjelmslev, semiotics is first and foremost a hierarchy. Natural language is a denotative semiotic, and the former, connotative semiotics, is the latter meta-semiotics (1969: 88). This was later adapted by Roland Barthes in his seminal publication, *Image, Music, Text* (1977), in his concept 'The photograph paradox'. He suggests how the idea that an image is made of two comprise, idiosyncratic messages 'a *denoted* message, which is the *analogon* itself, and a *connoted* message, which is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it' (Barthes, 1977: 17). This can be applied to the *Dolce & Gabbana* advert from the male presences; firstly, is the man holding a ladder, which is denoting an working environment but connotes the responsibly being a caretaker of a family, working for the expense of the women in the foreground so they're able to wear the rich clothes associated with this brand. The second is the elder men dressed in a black suit, connotating hierarchy and social status- this also aligns with the paradigm of career success and is codification of formal attire. Broadening the discussion of connotations, B.T.S Atkins later developed a lexical conception named Polysemy, constructed from the realisation that a sign can have more than one connotation (Atkins, 2000: 91). In the advertisement, Polysemic feminine patterns are used within the women's and children's clothing, the choice of pink colouring for the children can connotate innocence and femininity whereas the red rose imprints on the women's clothing signifies sexuality, love and passion.

This semiotic analysis is a valuable tool which can be exerted to deconstruct any metaphoric, intertextual or metonymic meaning of a sign.

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Task 2: Manifesto Writing

1. Accept no form of racism. Support all races; We are all one. Be a firm supporter in the 'Black Lives Matter' movement.
2. Art has no gender. It can be created by whomever, wherever, whenever. All genders should be paid equally.
3. Be kind to the environment- recycle all waste and reuse anything that can be reused within your art.
4. Be and create the good you want to see in the world. Allow your work to be positive in a world of negativity.
5. Deconstruct art with intellect, but also with emotion. Don't follow the crowd- if you perceive work differently to others, allow/accept it. Artwork affects everyone differently, it's the power of personal understanding without another's verbal/visual instruction.
6. Use reliable resources- do not trust social media for news and information.
7. Be present, be active, be a part of the conversation. Ask questions. Learn.
8. Opinion and knowledge can change over time. History changes through growth and understanding. If history teaches us anything, it is good to become more understanding and accepting of change.

3 areas of exploration:

Except no form of racism. Support all races; We are all one. Be a firm supporter in the 'Black Lives Matter' movement.

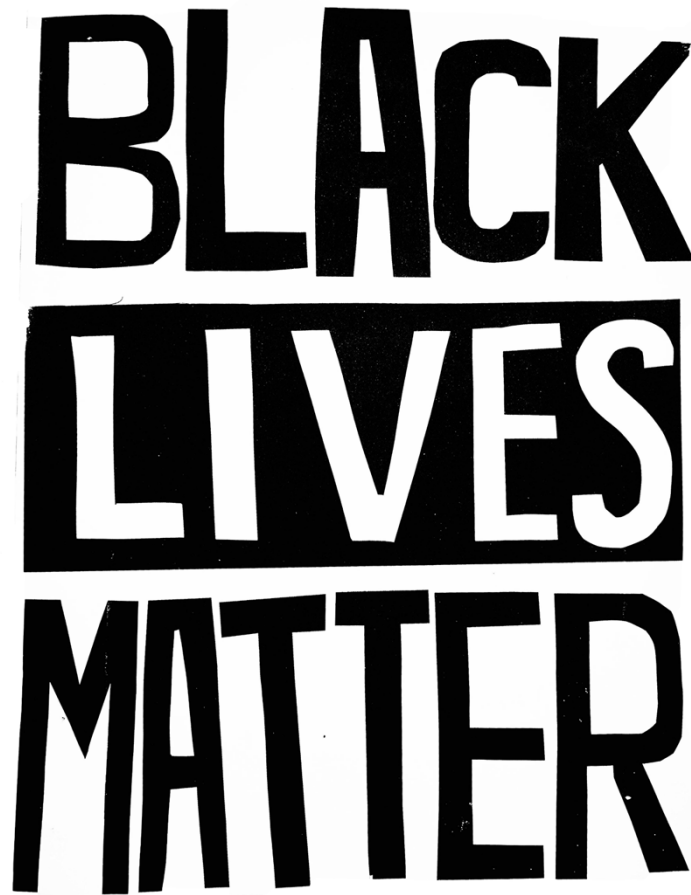


Fig 1. Black Lives Matter Poster, 2016.

On the 25th of May 2020, an African American man, George Floyd, was killed by a Minneapolis police officer named Derek Chauvin, as he knelt on Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 48 seconds, all for an alleged counterfeit \$20 bill. His death caused a global uproar, resulting in protests that were held against police brutality, racial injustice and a lack of police accountability. This tragedy shone a harsh light on the racism that is still present in our 'woke' generation, as many black people live in fear of the people who are supposed to protect us. As the Black Lives matter website states, "We don't deserve to live like this — and we continue to fight until white supremacy no longer permeates every corner of this country — until we can live full lives — freely" (2020). Racism is still an endemic to our society, it is seen in for example, education, income, unemployment and, sadly, in Art. Art is discussed as a representative school subject that concretely demonstrates some of the problems of the multicultural and/or antiracist curriculum (Sarup, 1991). Artwork should not be defined by race, class nor gender.

Deconstruct art with intellect, but also with emotion. Don't follow the crowd- if you perceive work differently to others, allow/accept it. Artwork affects everyone differently, it's the power of personal understanding without another's verbal/visual instruction.



Fig 2. Weeping Woman, Pablo Picasso, 1936-39.

Art is not necessarily always about the context of the piece, sometimes it is about what every individual person feels when experiencing the artwork for themselves. As stated by Jerrold Levinson in his book 'The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics', expression is understood as a matter of the communication/transmission of emotion or feeling from artist to audience via the work of art (2003). Just like a person can be moved by or associate to a song without knowing the original perspective of the artist, audiences can look at a piece of art and be moved by minor or major characteristics involved in it, such as particular colours, symbols that work on a subconscious level or scenes which compared to similar life experiences or memories. In Pablo Picasso's 'Weeping Woman', the painting depicts a great amount of sadness which I gather from the element of intense expression in the model's eyes. The use of cool colours represents this despondency, as her hands cup her face in fear. This work is a

silent protest of the bombing of Guernica, and the family deaths women had endured from war, even without context, viewers are able to perceive the emotion without verbal motive.

Opinion and knowledge can change over time. History changes through growth and understanding. If history teaches us anything, it is good to become more understanding and accepting of change.



Fig 3. Futurist manifesto, F.T. Marinetti, 1909.

Throughout the years, specifically seen in 20th century Art manifestos, opinions change radically, some manifestos strive for political correctness, some develop questionable ‘antidotes’ for a better environment and some were written by egotistical men who romanticised fascist tenderises. With time, knowledge and new evidence comes a wider range in opinions, this progressing into new declarations and new beliefs. A good example of change within Art is seen when comparing the Futurist Manifesto to my own. As Dan Redding points out in his article, *Art Manifestos and their Applications in Contemporary Design* (2010), The Futurist manifesto was “an avant-garde movement that glorified technology, modernity, and even war” (2010). Futurists were “strongly patriotic, excited by violence and opposed to parliamentary democracy” (The Art Story Contributors, 2019). This is extensively different to what is seen in my manifesto, as equality and impartiality are extremely

important to me as an artist. I strongly believe that art has no gender, whereas the futurism Manifesto was written by *only* male artists whom contempt women.

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Task 3: Practice-based writing



Fig 2. Hyperrealism Portrait, 2019

In the last unit of my Art Foundation course, 2019, we were given the brief titled 'State of Change'; my final A2-sized illustration was based on the premises that the inevitable fluctuations in life tamper with our external bodies. The man in the drawing is my uncle, Jon, someone who has battled heavily with mental health problems since a young age thus becoming a majoring factor in his 'premature ageing'. This portrait, influenced by the advancement of photorealism and the hyperrealistic movement, was drawn with Graphite and Charcoal pencils, and acquired 3 months to complete.

My original plan for this brief was to complete *three* A2-sized hyperrealistic portraits, each subject would come from a different age group and all have a diverse spectrum of life experiences (these varied from work problems, health issues, turbulence in relationships) to elucidate the passage of time on their skin. Following the style of photorealism, I was going to create these drawings from photographs I had taken;

sharpness of detail is evenly distributed over the whole picture (except where out-of-focus effects in the photograph are faithfully recorded), but the scale is often greatly enlarged, as when portrait heads are blown up to giant size

Chilvers and Glaves-Smith, 2015: 1878

This was also to ensure to involve the hyperrealism movement by inserting emotion and messages into the drawings (2015). But this was the first time I had drawn anything on a scale this large, which led me to underestimate the time it would take to complete one portrait, this evidently becoming the setback. I was unable to complete the three portraits which led to a change in my outcome. My final eventually consisted of an A2 portrait, a recorded interview with the subject and conceptual, illustrative vision of the theme (presented on my booth's walls).



Fig 3: *The Final Exhibition*, 2019

I believe on the whole my project went well (albeit the given time management problems). Focusing primarily on the portrait, I was influenced by the artist Antonio Finelli in his statement he made to Scene360, 'The aim of my artwork isn't creating realistic drawings but rather the *documenting of a reality*' (2015). For me, similar to Finelli, it was important to produce a visual message: the skin is enriched with lines, marks and spots; all concentrated details of a life well lived. I wanted the audience to observe the stress on his skin but also overlook that and understanding his journey, recognising the poignant meaning, ageing *is* beautiful, it is sign of strength. Although all his troubles, he is still *here*. I also think I made the best choice by drawing from a two-dimension rather than three-dimension. In a

study by Linda Carson, Parthipan Siva, and James Danckert (2020), results shows an overall better Accuracy in two-dimension portraits rather than three-dimension.

I have learnt through this project to be more cautious of my time management, I thought I would be able to draw three A2 portraits in three months with no experience in illustrations on this scale. I now know I overcompensated- the bigger the size, the more time is needed. Moving forward, I will acknowledge this so I can spend more time developing my portraits skills rather than trying to rush and complete too much, too fast.

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