

Student Name:

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Programme of Study:

Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 519 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 481 words

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 501 words

Task One: Semiotic Analysis

In an age defined by the production of 'false narratives' (Phillips, 2018), 'fake news' (Carson, 2018) and 'alternative facts' (Blake, 2017), where does this leave our ability to read images, when images deceive as much as reveal? More importantly, how can we deconstruct the underlying production of these false narratives? This first task will deconstruct a popular, contemporary advertising campaign, whilst making reference to theories of semiotics and advertising, in an attempt to offer new ways of seeing.

From birth, we are taught how to read signs and symbols (Berger, 1972). We are taught the arbitrary relationship between language (the *signifier* of meaning), and their concepts (the *signified* meaning) (Barthes, 1977). The colour red means 'stop', the colour green means 'go'. The word 'cat' relates to the furry creature we physically know as being a cat. How words and signs generate concepts is the basis of semiotic analysis. Semiotics lays forth how we know how we know. Signs can take the form of words, images, sounds, smells, taste or objects, but these signs are empty vessels until we invest them with meaning. As Charles Sanders Peirce states, 'Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign' (1931, p.58) thus signs are loaded with cultural significance and require decoding.

In Roland Barthes seminal publication, *Image, Music, Text* (1977), Barthes proposes to set out a basic semiotic model for communication. Following on from the founders of semiotics, Barthes makes distinctions between the 'denoted', or literal reading of a sign, and the 'connoted', its implied meaning. He introduces the concept of *Photographic Paradox*, which 'breaks the photographic image into two' (1977, p.88), on one side, the objective, on the other the symbolic. Beyond this basic level of the 'denoted' and 'connoted', lie further signifying chains. In order to discuss these further signifying chains, we will introduce a recent Tesco advertising campaign.

In January 2017, the supermarket *Tesco* launched, *Food Love Stories brought to you by Tesco*. The campaign focuses on the narratives of 'everyday' people. Whereas our identification of models in advertising campaigns normally relies on glamour to sell a concept of idealisation, as proposed by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), here we are confronted with what Barthes terms as 'Naturalism' (1977, p.67). Naturalism functions on the connection between an audience and a product, and here, the concept of naturalism is compounded by the choice of models, who represent multiple ethnicities and genders. The message is clear that anyone can identify with the models.



Fig. 1, Food Love Stories, Tesco Advertising Campaign, 2017

In recent years, brand logos have taken a secondary position to ideological narrative. The narrative as promoted in the title of this campaign, *Food Love Stories* (see Fig. 1), uses words as metaphors for emotional connection. Through associative connection with the concept of home cooking, we get to; nostalgia, comfort, warmth, safety. The cultural code and vision behind this campaign then is the selling of the idea of 'comfort'.

This basic semiotic analysis of images can be applied to any form of sign. An understanding of semiotics can help the audience to deconstruct the metaphoric, intertextual or metonymic construction of meaning, which is often presented in the false narratives we find ourselves surrounded by on a daily basis.

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Figure 1: *Food Love Stories*, Tesco Advertising Campaign, 2017 Accessed: <https://bubbleoutdoor.com/tesco-food-love-stories-ad-review/> (Accessed on 12th October, 2021)

(NB. There are only three books here, but your bibliography should include all relevant research for this task. The bibliography will inform your reader/ marker of the breadth of your research. **Check Harvard referencing:**

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Task Two: Manifesto

1. Burn newspapers that propagate anti-Semitic viewpoints.
2. In the so-called era of 'post truth' and 'alt. facts', we must strive to question, subvert and challenge the mediation of images. We reassert the role of deconstruction in understanding the production of false narratives and meanings.
3. Always make an effort to 'be in the world' instead of being somewhere else (virtually).
4. The role of art and design in the commodity age is to make things visible. In order to break habitual ways of seeing/creating/making, we have to give ourselves time to stop 'using' and start 'contemplating' the world and how we inhabit it.
5. Do not use Facebook as a means to ask questions or get answers. Go direct to the source. Rumours fly. Truth prevails.
6. We must recognise that all categories of knowledge can change according to time, place, and use. Meaning oscillates.
7. You don't need prior knowledge when 'reading' an artwork. Emotional response is a valid response.
8. Passivity has no place here.

Keywords & Images

Post Truth



Fig. 1, Vote Leave Bus, 2016.

2. In the so-called era of 'post truth' and 'alt. facts', we must strive to question, subvert and challenge the mediation of images. We reassert the role of deconstruction in understanding the production of false narratives and meanings.

The Oxford English Dictionary announced their 2016 word of the year as 'Post-truth' (Midgely, 2016). Brought to the fore by the UK's 'in out referendum' to leave the European Union, and the United States Presidential election between Hilary Clinton

and Donald Trump. Our relationship to notions of truth have become contested and pushed to their limit. Whereas modernity favours the universal, postmodernism savours the singular and idiosyncratic. As discussed in John D. Caputo's book, *Truth* (2013), "If you ask a postmodernist, 'what is truth' they are likely to squint and say, 'It depends'" (2013, p.34). Our relationship to the truth is never a given, meaning oscillates. Our contemporary world has taken this to new extremes.

Keyword: Making Visible

1. The role of art and design in the commodity age is to make things visible. In order to break habitual ways of seeing/creativng/making, we have to give ourselves time to stop 'using' and start 'contemplating' the world and how we inhabit it.

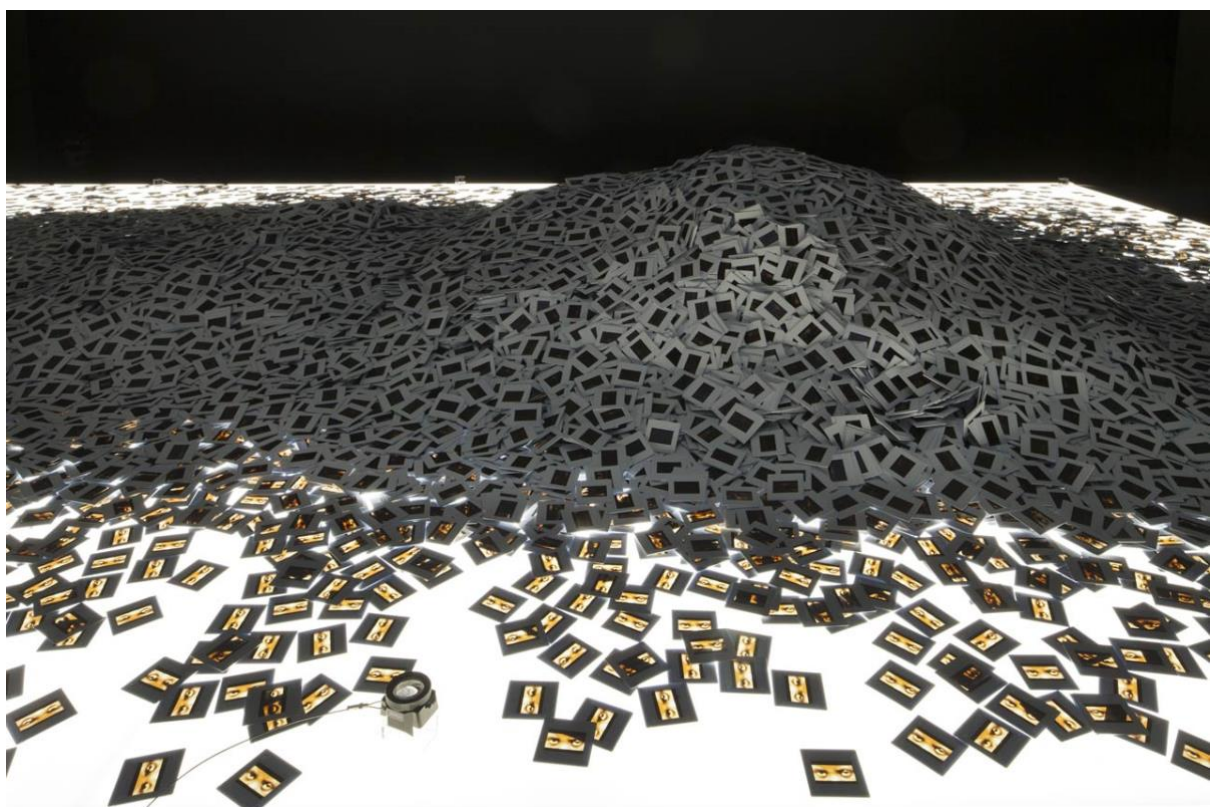


Fig. 2, *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*, Alfredo Jaar

In an age that often feels defined by division, compounded by unfair representations of 'otherness' (Channel 4's, Poverty Street, Donald Trump retweeting far right hate group 'Britain first'), representation is cruelly used to make rhetorical points that have nothing to do with anyone's ethnic or cultural background. Photojournalists often attempt to tell stories about the lives of others, but in Alfredo Jaar's (2004) *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*, Jaar doesn't make atrocity into a spectacle, instead Jaar uses representation to completely overthrow how we speak for others. Over a five month period in 1994, more than one million Rwandans, mostly members of the Tutsi minority, were systematically slaughtered as the world closed its eyes to genocide. Here, Jaar tells the story of 30 year old Rwandan, Gutete Emerita, who was attending mass with her family when a massacre began, Gutete's husband and two sons were killed before her eyes. Somehow, Gutete was able to escape. Here Jaar, instead of attempting to depict such atrocity that Gutete witnessed, takes one image of Gutete's eyes, which are repeated to the same number of deaths she witnessed. A subversive work of art.

Keywords: Emotional Response

You don't need prior knowledge when 'reading' an artwork. Emotional response is a valid response.



Fig. 3, Fernando Pessoa, Richard Serra, 2007-8

Encounters with art do not always go as well as they might. We are likely to leave highly respected museums and exhibitions feeling underwhelmed, or even bewildered and inadequate, wondering why the transformational experience we had anticipated did not occur. It is natural to blame oneself, to assume that the problem must come down to a failure of knowledge or capacity for feeling. As Alain de Botton points out in his book, *Art As Therapy* (2013); 'it lies in the way that art is

taught, sold and presented by the art establishment. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, our relationship to art has been weakened by a profound institutional reluctance to address the question of what art is for.' (2013: 4). In Richard Serra's *Fernando Pessoa*, a profound sense of sadness is present. In a world that often suggests we should be happy, all the time (#happiness), Serra's work does not deny our troubles. It tells us, through its materials and form, that sorrow is written into the contract of life. This art work is accepting.

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- Figure 2: Alfredo Jaar *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*, Accessed:
https://www.domusweb.it/en/news/2014/04/19/alfredo_jaar_tonight_no_poetry_will_serve_.html (Accessed on 12th October, 2021)
- Figure 3: *Richard Serra (2007-8) Fernando Pessoa*. Accessed:
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Task Three Practice-based Writing (will depend on research strand)

A practical reflection of the employment of Jacques Lecoq's Animal Study for character development.

To represent the movement of a particular character in a scene, I need to convey the character's traits in all possible ways; vocally, physically and in general appearance. While some of these are indicated by the intentions of the dramatist, director or designer, there are increasing opportunities for performance where there is no traditional script but significant room for artistic and creative input.

Proprioception, or an awareness of movement of the body in space, is central to conveying meaning on a stage and important for the individual performer (and the company) during performance, thus continued training is a vital part of the performers 'toolbox'.

One source of technical training is Jacques Lecoq, a French physical performance practitioner whose renowned Paris theatre school has been training students in Commedia Dell 'Arte, mask work, and forms of clowning since 1956 (Lecoq, 2000, p.xi).

Lecoq considers that 'the analysis of animal movement brings us closer to the study of the human body and helps with character creation.' (Lecoq, 2000:92).

I have read the works of Lecoq and observed video documentary of his training practice but it is necessary to physicalize the work to truly engage in the training.

Lecoq suggests that we must consider four factors in preparing our work through our bodies; how we connect to the ground, how mobile we are in any position and how quickly we can change that 'attitude' (Lecoq, 2000, p.92),

how flexible we are and finally how we move when travelling. All of these factors are considered in his Laws of motion (2000, p.94).

When I moved in the space as a Brown Bear, I used my weight to drive me forward, this made me feel confident. With increased more confidence I felt that I could occupy a larger the space as I moved, making me more physically imposing and potentially more menacing. This showed itself in my head movements which were now strong and deliberate – my fixed stare would unnerve the other performers- and my directionality which connected deeply with Lecoq's second law of motion 'Motion is continuous, it never stops' (2000, p.94).

The practical exploration gave me the resources to reflect upon when I was embodying a travelling man, who despite not walking as confidently as he once had, was obviously determined, and could become aggressive very quickly. In recalling these traits I prepared the gait and physicalized form of a character that was tired and seemed directionless, but held a degree of distinction suggesting a more fortunate past than the visible character showed. To develop this further I recalled Goffman's words (1959) that a group will always read a newcomers visible information, from clothes to movement in the room, in an attempt to 'glean clues from his conduct and appearance which allows them to apply their previous experience with individuals roughly similar to the one before them or, more important, to apply untested stereotypes to him.' (Goffman, 1959, p.13).

An audience's reaction to the appearance of a character with strong, directional, powerful movements might suggest a narrative backstory creating a more complete character through solid intentionality. Lecoq states that 'Actors have to be able to place themselves with reference to others, in a clear relationship of listening and response.' (2000, p.95), and through planning and developing my physical performance skills in line with a reputable practitioner I have succeeded in doing this.

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