

Student name: Grug Medi Owen

P Number: 2400808

Program of study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4022 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 531

Task Two: Manifesto = 547

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 476

For this assessment, I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to support me in structuring my submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to create text for my submission. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI for creative materials, such as images.

Task One: Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics; a subject that has a variety of different meanings and interpretations. Most of which have been theorized by many key thinkers, including Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Saunders Pierce and Roland Barthes. With Roland Barthes himself stating, “...he grasps the meaning of these representations before he is able to analyze the ways in which that meaning is constructed” (Leak, 1994, p.9). However, a simpler explanation would be that it’s “the academic field dedicated to the study of signs” (Hebert, 2019, p.273).

Drawing on their theories, in this analysis I will decode the symbolic meanings embedded in this poster.

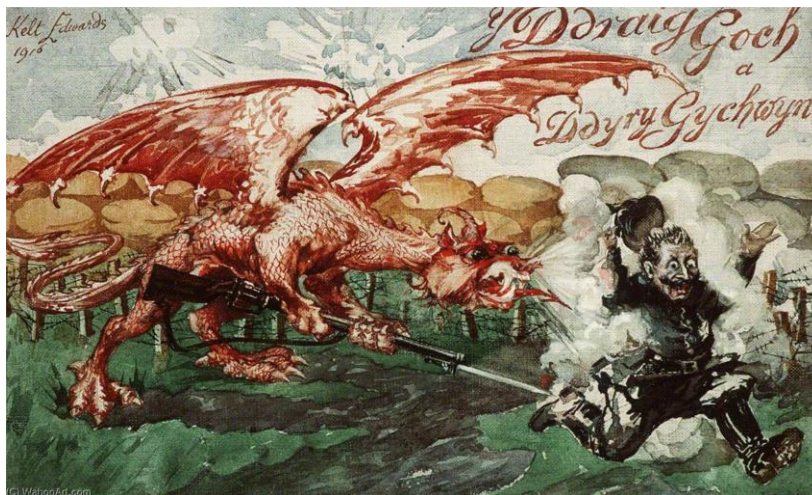


Fig 1, (Edwards, 1916, Y

Ddraig Goch a Ddyry

Gychwyn)

‘Y Ddraig Goch a Ddyry

Gychwyn’ is a war

propaganda poster by Welsh cartoonist John Kelt Edwards. It was created in 1916, in the middle of the First World War.

The impactful image of the dragon is what grabs the viewers' attention first. The denotation is the dragon itself; however, the connotation is that it's calling out to the viewer (young Welsh men) and calling them fierce and powerful. This was a propaganda technique to try and get more Welsh men on the battlefield. As John Berger states, "Publicity is the life of this culture" (2008, p.154). The use of the denotation and connotation here shows the impact of context. With the added meaning behind the dragon, it gives its purpose in the propaganda poster while simultaneously implying that it's directed towards the Welsh. "We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (Berger, 2008, p.9). The viewers see themselves as the dragon in the image because of that relation.

The gun in the dragon's hands shows us that this is a war propaganda poster. This sign created by the physical weapon (signifier) and the mental concept of war (signified) proves one of Barthes' theories, "there is no such thing as a non-significant or innocent object" (Leak, 1994, p.11). It also shows us that "anything has the potential to be interpretable, but nothing has an intrinsic meaning" (Chandler, 2007, p.16). This sign is one of the main indicators that this poster is referring to war. "Signification would not exist without the sign" (Parmentier, 2016, p.43).

The anchorage text in this poster sets the implied challenge to the viewer. The metaphor used - 'the red dragon will initiate' - implies that there is no choice but to fight. It will happen no matter what. This was the creator's way – after drawing them in with the visual

aspects – of convincing the viewer to act upon their wish and take part in the war. Derived from key thinker Ferdinand de Saussure, “Language is not complete in any speaker, it exists perfectly only within a collectivity” (Cobley and Jansz, 2012, p.24).

Following my analysis on this propaganda poster, I have learnt the impact of semiotics that are all around us. My initial reaction to this poster was that it was to convey the fierceness and brutality of war. But after semiotically analysing it, I learned that it was particularly aimed towards the Welsh, by using the propaganda technique of ‘stereotyping’ but hiding it by using positive forms of semiotics.

Bibliography:

Berger, J. (2008) *Ways of seeing*. London: Penguin

Chandler, D. (2022) *Semiotics: the basics*. 4th edition. London: Routledge.

Cobley, P., Jansz, L. and Appignanesi, R. (2012) *Introducing Semiotics*. London: Icon Books Ltd

Herbert, L. (2019) *An introduction to Applied Semiotics: Tools for Text and Image Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Leak, A. (1994) *Barthes, Mythologies*. London: Grant and Cutler

Kress, G. R. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading image: the grammar of visual design*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

Parmentier, R. J. (2016) *Signs and Society: Further Studies in Semiotic Anthropology*. Indiana: University Press.

The National Archives (2011) *Propaganda*. Available at:
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/propaganda/> (Accessed: 21 November 2024)

List of Figures

Figure 1: Edwards, J K. (1916) Y Ddraig Goch a Ddyry Gychwyn. Available at: <https://en.artsdot.com/@/AQV9BT-John-Kelt-Edwards-Y-Ddraig-Goch-a-Ddyry-Gychwyn>. (Accessed: 11 November 2024)

Task 2: Manifesto

1. Always consider Welsh Language jobs first.
2. Balance is always needed in life.
3. Don't pretend to be anyone you're not.
4. Honesty will take you far.
5. Connect to your work.
6. Look for jobs that are local to home.
7. Everything doesn't always have to be perfect; mistakes are meant to happen.
8. Inspiration is all around us, don't be afraid to take some.

1. Always consider Welsh Language jobs first.



Fig 1 (Keystone Press, 1963)

Throughout history the Welsh have been fighting to keep their language alive. With the threat of it becoming extinct inching closer and closer every day. Why is that? Because the average folk have become too used to dismissing the problem, going about their day-to-day life and not exercising their ability to speak the language. “Who speaks for Wales? That is both the problem and the encouragement” (Williams and Williams, 2021, p.47). Which is exactly why this is such an important manifesto point to me. To take an English language job, when there is also a Welsh one in front of me would totally be against what I believe in. However, it’s now a question of how we can make it other people’s priority as well.

For many people in Wales, the Welsh language is the essence of Welsh Identity. Yet, for the majority of the people of Wales, the language has only a marginal impact upon their lives. (Davies, 2014, p.11)

To increase its impact on more Welsh people will increase its longevity and its future as a language.

2. Balance is always needed in life.



Fig 2, (Eggleston, 1973, Untitled)

“Stress at work is rising year on year, with long working hours seemingly becoming the norm” (Hesketh and Cooper, 2019, p.1). People are neglecting the balance needed in their life. In recent years people have been rewired to think that having some time to yourself and having a break is a

reward. However, this can only lead to harm. Taking breaks is good for your brain, it promotes brain function – which then leads to a higher level of work being produced. That is why the focus is on balance. To create high level work, your well-being needs to be considered as well. “The more seamless that we can make work and life, the more we can start to enjoy both more, because they’re not opposing” (Sinek, 2021).

8) Inspiration is all around us, don’t be afraid to take some



Fig 3, (Prager, 2024, Hollywood (night))

A common misconception within the arts is that everything needs to be original. However, I believe that to be impossible. Going about day-to-day life, we take in inspiration that’s all around us without even realizing. Where do you think some of the world's most famous artists get inspiration from? As Anthony Burrill stated in his autobiography,

Seeing the world helps you to put you and your work in context. I’m constantly looking out for examples of interesting typefaces and graphic images. Seeing new things helps to spark off new ideas (2017, p.44)

This just proves that inspiration is encouraged and can bring so much more depth and culture within art.

People also often forget the impact the people around them have on their outlook on life. We don't get anywhere in life without input from others – if it's your parents or your educators, you will always have figures of admiration in your life. Scott (2024) discussed how the people around you influence you, "We soak up attitudes, ideas and characteristics like a sponge from the people around us without even realizing it". Which is inspiration from the early stages of life, that you don't even realize you're carrying with you.

Bibliography:

- Barry Kaufman, S. (2011) *Why Inspiration Matters*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2011/11/why-inspiration-matters>. (Accessed: 6 December 2024)
- Burrill, A. (2017) *Make It Now! Creative inspiration and the art of getting things done*. London: Virgin Books an imprint of Ebury Publishing
- Davies, J. (2014) *The Welsh Language: a history*. 2nd edition. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Hesketh, I. and Cooper, C. (2019) *Wellbeing at Work: How to Design, Implement and Evaluate an Effective Strategy*. London: Kogan Page; Limited.
- Scott, A. (2024) *People Power: How the People Around you Influence your Success*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2024/01/31/people-power-how-the-people-around-you-influence-your-success/>. (Accessed: 6 December 2024)
- Sinek, S. (2021) *The RIGHT way to do Work-Life Balance*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0yxJH2i0DE>. (Accessed: 1 December 2024)
- Williams, R. and Williams, D, G. (2021) *Who speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*. 3rd Edition. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Keystone Press. (1963) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/oct/30/dr-tedi-millward-welsh-language-protest-aberystwyth> (Accessed: 1 December 2024)

Figure 2: Eggleston, W. (1973) *Untitled*. Available at: <https://www.davidzwirner.com/artworks/william-eggleston-untitled-8425b> (Accessed: 1 December 2024)

Figure 3: Prager, A. (2024) *Hollywood (night)*. Available at: https://www.artnet.com/artists/alex-prager/hollywood-night-a-01GMSWXpLCRdglydtR3_Ew2. (Accessed: 1 December 2024)

Task 3: Practice-Based Writing



Fig 1, (*Sied Fach Taid*, own image, 2024)

Objects. That was the theme given to me for my year 13 art exam piece. Straight away I knew what I wanted to focus on: my grandfather's never-ending collection of tools. After contemplating my options, researching different artists, experimenting with different mediums and exploring my grandfather's chaotic shed – I knew I wanted to recreate his

chaotically organized wall of tools.

The aesthetic of the overall shed was important to me as I wanted to be able to portray the feeling of the place in my piece. As Angus McEwan (one of the artists i researched) stated,

“it’s about observation, it really is about me spending a little bit of time taking care of the information” (2023). Which is exactly why I spent a lot of my time in that shed during this project.

One of my favorite things about this piece is the rustiness that the cardboard brings. By having the tools and the base made of cardboard, it made the painting process a lot easier. It allowed me to use negative space to my advantage in the background. Allowing me to bring warmth and depth with my use of paint placement and colour. As Barnes (2019) discussed, “positive space and negative space work together to achieve balance in a composition”. And I believe that I accomplished this with the wood effect on the background. As for me, it’s an equilibrium that balances the whole piece, as well as invites you in.

However, I do believe that the pieces of deteriorated paint that I added to the background could have looked more realistic. Although it brought the needed colour into the piece and it does bring character, I feel as though it needed to be more obvious that it was supposed to be peeling paint on an old wooden door – one of the biggest features in my grandfather’s shed. The idea was there; however, the execution fell a bit flat in my opinion. But as stated by RMIT University (2024) “During your studies, you’ll learn to use reflection more intentionally to improve your creative practice, and these are skills you’ll continue to benefit from the rest of your career”.

Reflecting on this piece has definitely broadened my view on my own art. It is quite easy to get attached to your own work and not be able to criticize it.

A significant element of reflective practice is the process of drawing out learning from our experience, to be able to distil from our current or recent practice activities useful learning point that will guide our future practice” (Thomson, S. and Thomson, N., 2023, p.13)

To be able to reflect on a piece of work at this stage will definitely help me further along in my career. And certainly, teach me to not get too attached to pieces of work.

Bibliography:

Barnes, S. (2019) *How artists use Negative Space to say a lot with nothing*. Available at: <https://mymodernmet.com/negative-space-definition/>. (Accessed: 7 December 2024)

Berger, J. (2008) *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin

Chopine, A. (2011) *3D Art Essentials: the fundamentals of 3D modeling, texturing, and animation*. Oxford; Burlington: Focal Press.

Godfrey, T. (2020) *The Story of Contemporary Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Kolb, David A. (2015) *Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc

RMIT University (2024) *Reflective Practice in Context: Art and Design*. Available at: <https://rmit.pressbooks.pub/keytransferableskills/chapter/reflective-practice-in-context-design/>. (Accessed: 7 December 2024)

Terracotta (2023) *Textures in Watercolor – Video course with Angus McEwan*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqKBR4oDgTg>. (Accessed: 7 December 2024)

Thomson, S. and Thomson, N. (2023) *The critically reflective practitioner*. 3rd Edition. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Sied Fach Taid (own image, 2024)

