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**Programme of Study:** BA (Hons) Graphic Design

**Module:** ADAD4018 - Ways of Thinking

**Tutor's Name:** Martin Bush

**Tasks in the order I received them:**

**Task One:** Semiotic Analysis = (550 words in total)

**Task Two:** Manifesto = (467 words in total)

**Task Three:** Practise-based writing = (534 words in total)

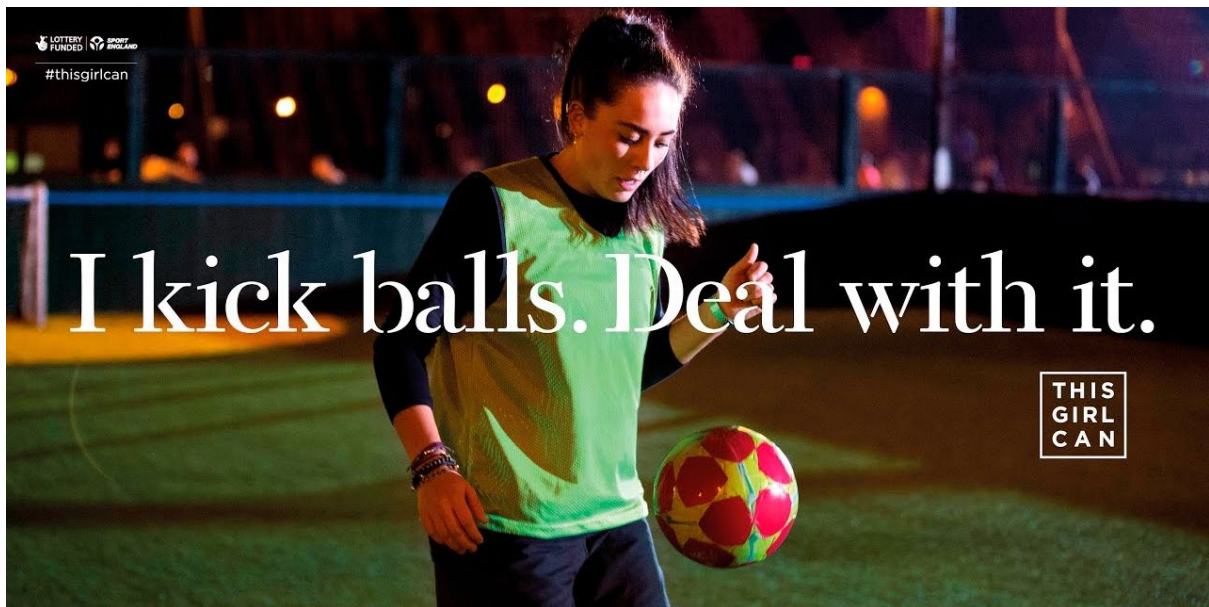
**1,551 words in total (all three tasks)**

### Task One – Semiotic Analysis:

How have we as human beings living on planet earth developed our mental concept around certain subject matters? Our complex organ, the brain, has the fascinating ability to automatically know meaning, knowledge and narrative regarding certain images, text, and symbols. We have developed clear links between the physical aspect (signifier) and the mental concept (signified) (Barthes, 1977). Just like when you are approaching a red stop sign whilst driving on the road. The signifier is the physical road sign that stands on the kerb but the signified is knowing that one needs to stop. In this first task, I will deeply deconstruct a well-known but controversial advertising campaign that involves sport, whilst taking reference and knowledge from past semiotic concepts.

An advertising campaign was released by This Girl Can (Sport England) in 2017, the aim was to encourage women to participate more actively in sports without feeling insecure. After research was carried out on this subject matter Sport England CEO, Jennie Price said that “...*Worries about being judged for being the wrong size, not fit enough and not skilled enough came up time and again.*” The advertisement clearly tried to break down this barrier by using a striking statement as the anchorage text, allowing it to be the main focus. There are many different ways in which one could deconstruct this element allowing the audience to decode what they view. Firstly, the phrase “*Kick balls*” immediately relates the sport back to men, this is a historical idea revolving around men being more dominant in the sporting world. In the modern world this isn’t the case and women theoretically should be telling men to ‘move over’ as they are capable too. The double entendre phrase relates it to the male anatomy but also in a colloquial language meaning to beat someone else in a sporting environment.

Fig.1 “I kick balls. Deal with it.” This Girl Can Advertising Campaign, Sport England. 2015.



When looking at the finer details, the symbolic sign, the physical football, is a vibrant pink. This stereotypically is a paradigm of femininity; the shade pink is often used to symbolise the female sex. But why is that? Historically pink was associated with girls because of it being similar to the colour red, symbolising their romantic and emotional side. (B. Mikellides, 2012.) This perpetrates a gender myth that we have gained through our cultural society and is one in which is still a common conception in the present day.

Photographing the woman naturally playing sport attempts to show the reality of physical activity, its hard work and messy but at the same time beauty. I believe that this design seeks to tell the real story of exercise to aid breaking down the self-image barriers by evoking a documentary style of imagery. This component shows much contrast from other 'high glossy performance' advertisements that popular brands like Nike use in the hope that the traditional beauty myths are disproved. This is something that made it controversial but essentially eye catching at the time. The public didn't expect the brutality of the campaign but fundamentally this allowed it to be a focal point and gained greater viewing.

The campaign that I have deconstructed positively increased participation numbers across the country, therefore it must have been effective. Semiotics helps us deconstruct any visual communication, allowing us to have a conception around what we physically see.

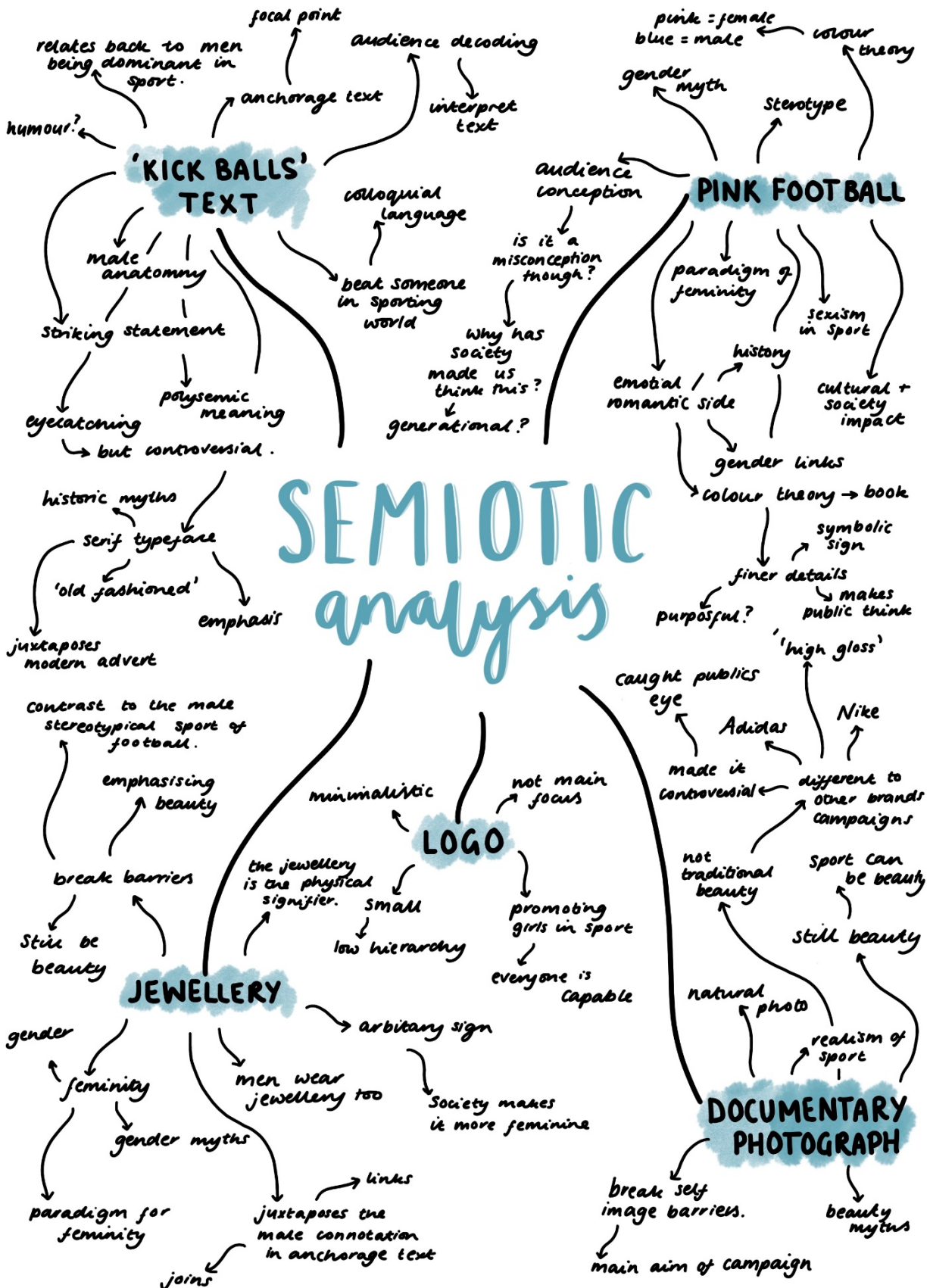


Fig.2. Initial map and notes on This Girl Can Advertising Campaign.

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## Task Two – Manifesto:

1. Be free with ideas before refinement - have fun with the process.
2. Enjoy what you create – please yourself AND your audience.
3. Question everything - ask yourself the obvious but silly questions.
4. Be willing to take risks – learn from your mistakes.
5. Happy creative accidents happen for a reason – don't dismiss them.
6. Don't break but bend the 'rules' – don't play safe, be brave.
7. Challenge and break down barriers – social & culture change, big or small.
8. Don't give up – I repeat, DON'T GIVE UP!



*Fig.3 'Don't Be Afraid to Make Mistakes' – Anthony Burrill, (2020). Work Hard & Be Nice to People.*

### **5. Happy creative accidents happen for a reason – don't dismiss them.**

As designers we face challenging problems along our creative design process, but often happy accidents occur that shouldn't be ignored. These obviously happen for a reason. Having an open-minded approach to your practise can increase the chances of an accident turning into something

quite spectacular that can be a turning point in your design. *"We don't make mistakes – we have happy accidents."* (Bob Ross, 2021) Our creative enemy shouldn't be the fear of making mistakes but for a lot of designers it is, by perceiving them as happy accidents we can attempt to demolish our so-called enemy. The world's most used form of antibiotics, penicillin, was created by Sir Alexander Fleming from a 'happy accident' in a science laboratory, mistakes can be life changing! Designers, myself included, normally enjoy being in control and having a precise plan but ultimately sometimes things don't go to plan, and our accidental designs can be the most successful so therefore let them flow and develop.

### **3. Question everything - ask yourself the obvious but silly questions.**

Every choice and decision in the world of a graphic designer should have a reason. Ask yourself the simple question of 'why?' By having the ability to justify your amendments allows there to be a reason behind your choices which fundamentally will underpin every element of your design work. Not only question every move but critically questioning throughout your design process to improve and build understanding. From a target audiences' perspective if every selection is considered with an emotional and deeper connection then more emotion and feeling will be evoked by the consumer. We aim as graphic designers to make a difference but without questioning what we are doing are we able to make a difference to our audience?

*Why that colour palette? Answer yourself.*

*Why that shape? Answer yourself.*

*Why that typeface? Answer yourself.*

### **2. Enjoy what you create – please yourself AND your audience.**

How often do you look at a piece of work and say, 'I didn't enjoy that'? Most of the time that specific piece of work probably isn't your favourite, that's because you didn't enjoy it. The competitive creative industry consumes us to design for our clients and our clients only. However, it is your work, and you personally need to be pleased with the final product. Allow yourself every step of your journey to take pleasure and satisfaction from your creative ability, without this your designs will lack your personal

touch and enjoyment. Being free and fun with every process will open your imagination to many new and exciting ideas that will allow you to love what you do. The passion and drive will shine through in your work and inevitably make you a more successful designer. Enjoy your creativity.

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### Task Three – Practise Based Writing:

I will be self-reflecting and analysing a piece of completed work surrounding the taboo subject of females and cervical screening. The brief received was one that required great research and maturity to encourage more women to attend their cervical screening appointment, which could be lifesaving. I was faced with the challenge of trying to increase uptake in the small county of Herefordshire, a challenging brief! In this final task I am going to deeply critique and reflect upon my design as an important process every designer should draw upon just like Donald A. Schon said *“Competent practitioners usually know more than they can say. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit. Nevertheless.”*

Fig.4 Cervical Screening Final Poster Design with Mock-ups – Laura Wade (2020)



My aim when completing this design was to break down the barriers revolving around the topic with a simplistic style including little information to seem encouraging. The stigma around women not attending their appointment is because of factors such as body image, being self conscious and misunderstanding. In an attempt to tackle this I used the slogan ‘Takes 2 minutes...the same time it takes to brush your teeth’ to persuade women the small proportion of their day it would take. Brushing

our teeth is an everyday activity that we don't second guess so why should women second guess having their cervical screening when it could be life saving? Reflecting on the poster design now, I would adjust the typeface used because the type seems thin with no structure therefore can appear hard to read from a distance. Furthermore, I would adapt my level of hierarchy because the words '2 minutes' is higher in hierarchy than 'Cervical Screening' which can be confusing and misleading.

My choice of colour palette had a much deeper meaning, cervical screening is essentially a feminine topic and because of this most previous poster designs only use the colour pink. My theory of including blue was to be gender inclusive and involve the male sex, it is important for men to understand the process and help encourage female partners, friends and family. I believe that everyone can play apart. This is an element that I believe was successful and thoughtful which received great feedback. Evaluating my straightforward illustration I feel this could be improved and lacks in complexity, I deeply regret using a standard illustration that is used often and not designing something more unique. I feel this lets my design down on the whole and could be of a better standard. This leads me onto my improvement in skill over the past few months, I have become a more experienced and skilled practitioner and when critiquing this design there are small details in the typeface, illustrations and decorative elements that could have been refined however this shows my overall improvement.

I deeply feel that this project was successful and fitted the brief received because of the simplistic nature which engages the audience in a quick and easy manner, this in turn would hopefully reach my female target audience. I tackled a large social topic which included huge stigma which was challenging as a young designer but through relating the matter to everyday life hopefully it made more women question the importance and ease of the process.

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