

Student Name: Nico Wayles

Student Number: 2103624

Programme of Study: Illustration (BA)

Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

Task One: Manifesto Writing = 550 Words

Task Two: Semiotic Analysis = 475 Words

Task Three: Practice-based Writing = 475 Words

Tutor: Gwenllian Beynon

Manifesto:

1. It is important to push your boundaries and try thing you would not normally do/try.
2. Illustration can influence people's morals and how they see the world.
3. It is important to look at other people's art to inspire your own.
4. Exploring my imagination through illustration helps me guide my thoughts and ideas.
5. Illustration is important as it can give historians a good idea of what happened in/the trends of the past.
6. I like character design because I love to think about the stories the characters are going to be used to tell.
7. I know a lot of people who do not think digital art is real art.
8. I try to be creative whenever I can.

Keyword: Pushing Boundaries

1. It is important to push your boundaries and try thing you would not normally do/try.

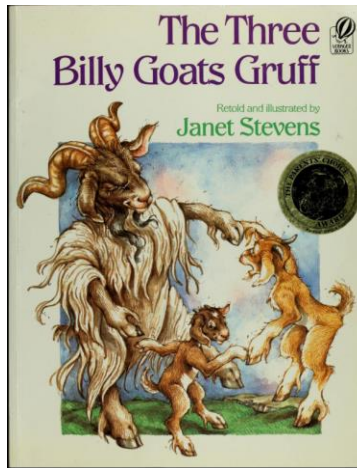


Fig, 1.

I believe that as an illustrator it is important to push your boundaries. For example, if you normally paint you can try out printmaking techniques like etching or lino-printing. These techniques have a much different "look" than paint does as it is not blended and is usually done in block colours. One example of an artist that has used a lot of processes in their work is Picasso (The Royal Academy Website, ND). Picasso shows that experimentation can lead to artwork looking fresh to audiences that may be used to seeing the same old techniques reused again and again (Stein 1984). This can be seen when Picasso took lead in the *Cubism movement* (Schmeller, 1956) revolutionizing modern art. In Fig. 1 it can be seen that breaking boundaries can make what would usually just be a simple drawing of a woman and a guitar into a new personal style for people to recognise you by.

Keyword: Imagination

4. Exploring my imagination through illustration helps me guide my thoughts and ideas.



Fig, 2.

Another important thing to me is exploring my imagination as it helps hone the skills I have already. This can often also be seen in children's books such as *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (Stevens, 1987) and *Hansel and Gretel* (Grimm, et al., 1990) where imagination is the key to getting a bestseller as you would not normally think that a troll would be under a bridge or a witch in the woods. The website Miracle (ND) states "Imagination aids in the development of social, emotional, creative, physical, lingual, and problem-solving skills in children." This means it is important children consume media that itself is creative so that they can develop properly as they age. This is often seen in children's books by the author using onomatopoeia as seen in *We're going on a bear hunt* (Rosen, et al., 2000) as it helps the child immerse themselves in the book and setting.

This shows that exploring your imagination throughout your practice of art can lead to you developing more skills than just art as stated in the article by Wallis (2013) "Adult maturity isn't fully formed until you get past 25 for most cases of people". Therefore, even though most people will think they are fully developed they aren't until they are much older. This means that exploring your imagination can still lead to your development as a person and hone the skills you already have.

Keyword: Shape Language

6. I like character design because I love to think about the stories the characters are going to be used to tell.



Fig, 3.

My favourite type of illustration is character design because I love all what can be seen from the design itself. This then helps me explore my imagination through making stories and the characters for them. Character design can influence everything you think about a character as if someone looks like they could be suspicious you would no longer trust them. For example, due to shape language, if you were to use a lot of triangles in your design people could view them as dangerous or if you were to use a lot of circles, they are more likely to be viewed as friendly (Anderson, 2019).

Anything you include in character design will be perceived by each viewer differently. Some people may love pink and be drawn towards a character who wears that colour and others may hate it. This is why I find character design so interesting as it can lead to interesting clashes of how humans perceive people/designs.

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Figure 1: Pablo Picasso (1910) *Girl with a Mandolin (Fanny Tellier)*. Available at:
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Figure 2: Janet Stevens (1987) *The three Billy Goats Gruff*. Available at:

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Figure 3: Harriet Wilson's Studio work (2015) *Practising with character design*. Available at:

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Semiotic Analysis

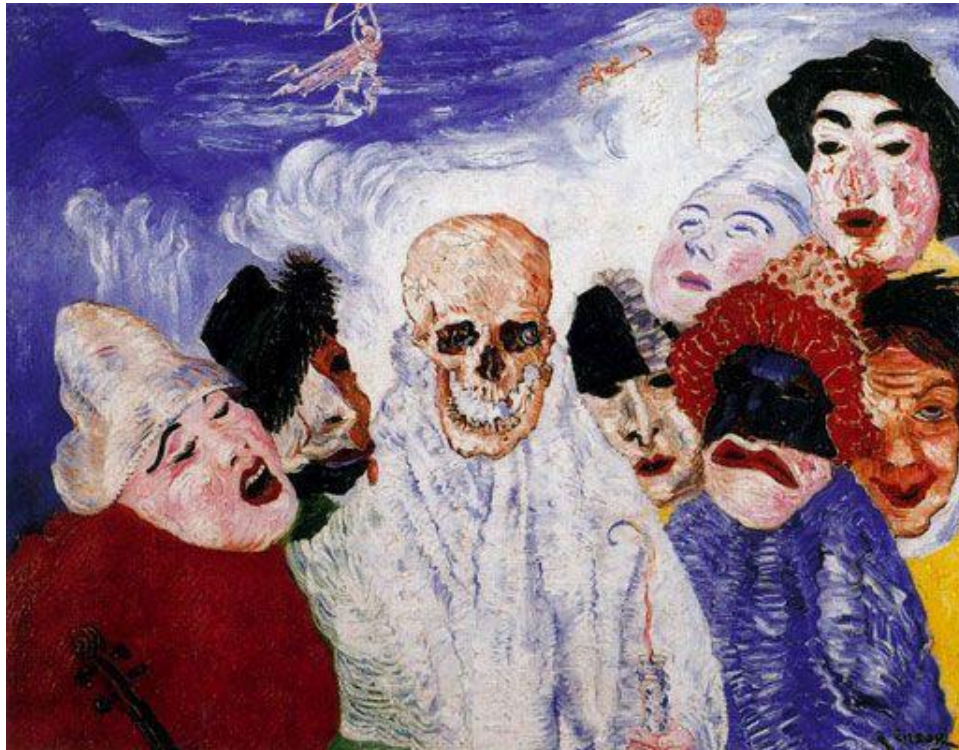


Fig. 1, Ensor, J. (1897) *Death and the Masks*

The purpose of this essay is to explore *Death and the Masks* (Ensor 1897) meaning through the application of semiotics. Semiotics is defined by Hébert and Tabler (2019) as “the study of signs”. However, that definition is not very clear and you can easily question, what would constitute a sign? Chandler goes into more depth explaining what is meant by signs, Chandler defines signs as “-anything which ‘stands for’ something else. In semiotic sense, signs take the

form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects.” (Chandler, 2007) Semiotics are important as they help us interpret meaning behind ‘something.’

Death and the Masks depicts a scene of 7 people-like characters wearing masks of human faces and a humanoid character with a grinning skull in the center. When I look at this piece, I get an eerie feeling that stems from the skull in the center of the canvas which then continues when I look at the disturbing masks next to the skull. Without context it is hard to understand this piece’s true meaning however I can still recognise the symbolism that is the skull representing death. The masks themselves remind me of theatrical masks which have been painted to resemble human faces. This may have been done to scare the viewer as Fritscher (2020) stated, “Masks distort the wearer's appearance, causing him to look strange and unusual.”

Umberto Eco (1989), a theorist of semiotic studies, designed a theory that, “-literary texts are fields of meaning, rather than strings of meaning; and that they are understood as open. Internally dynamic and psychologically engaged fields”. Literary texts can easily be applied to paintings such as *Death and the Masks* as they have the purpose of telling a story or entertaining the viewer. This means that paintings like the one above can be interpreted to be anything by anyone and that there is not one set meaning as it has an ‘open’ meaning.

Through the use of semiotics, I, and others, can interpret the meaning behind some of the symbolism in this art piece. For example, this piece of art is very crowded in nature except for a small piece of blue sky with clouds. In this section is a skeleton holding a scythe swinging down, going towards a hot-air balloon which could represent Ensor’s freedom from traditional Europe-Realism (Todts, ND). Ensor’s use of a cool colour palette tells me that this piece is meant to be seen as a soothing piece as suggested by *Colour Theory* (Scott, 2017). However, this piece does the opposite of calm the viewer due to the skull and masks. This may be because Ensor felt frightened by the thought of his local carnivals and festivals in Belgium being run over by tourism instead of the cultural unity he desired (The Art Story Contributors, 2021).

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Practise-based Writing:

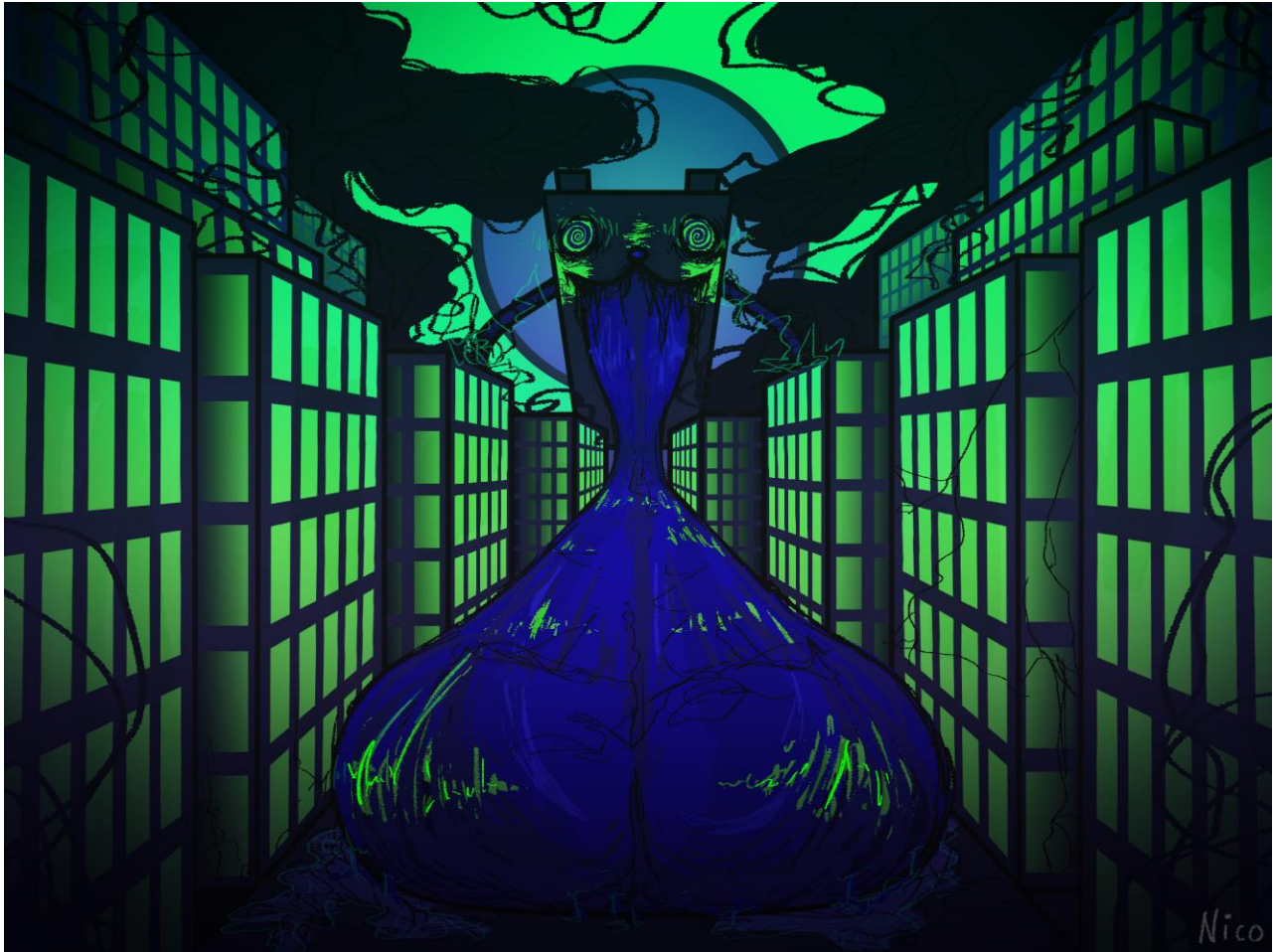


Fig.1, *Perspective Work*

A definition of perspective is the “ability to grasp the three-dimensional world and form an understanding of it” (Fisher, 2021). As part of learning perspective, we were instructed to create an illustration based off whatever we wanted as long as it included perspective. My interpretation of this brief ended up as a one-point perspective city-scape scene with the point of perspective being in the exact center of the canvas. I did this so that the focus would only be one the dog inspired building. Normally, I only focus on humanoid creatures with no background so with this piece I decided to challenge myself whilst also linking it back to my love of character design and concept art. After a few concept sketches, I found that I really loved the

idea of the tongue of my dog-tower taking up the whole main street to make it seem like its reaching towards the viewer.

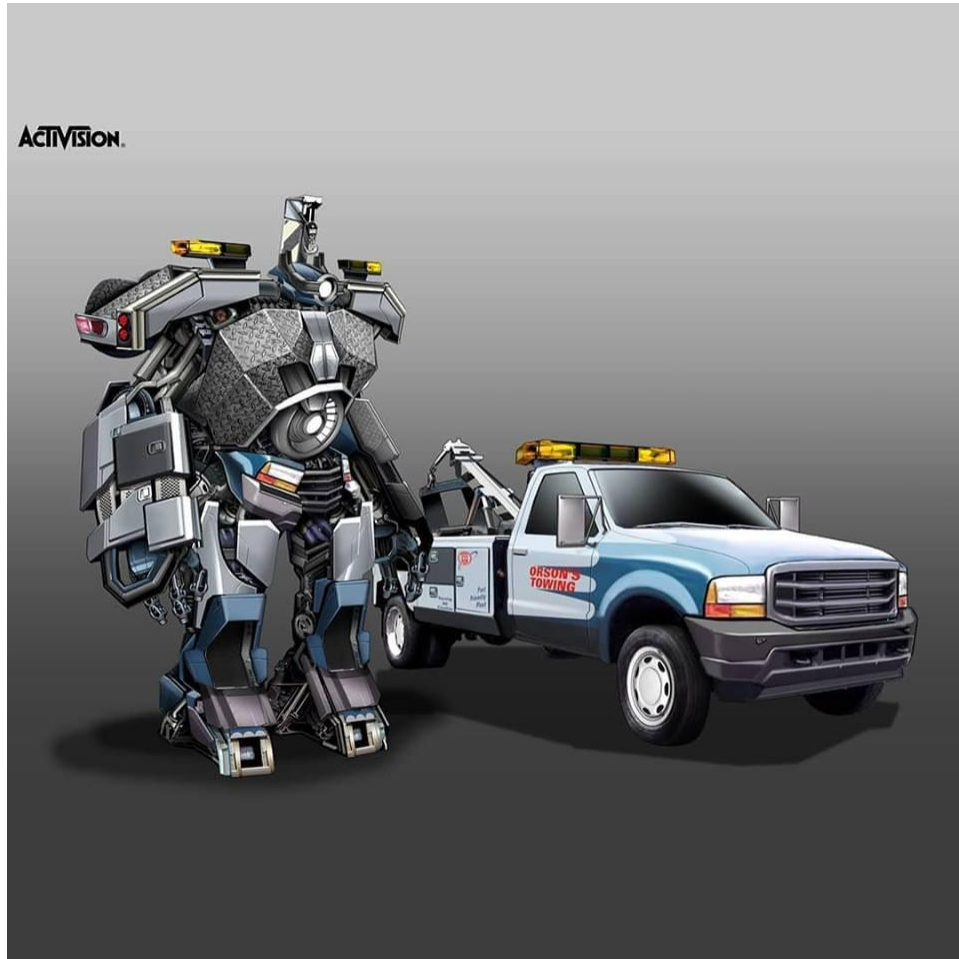


Fig. 2, *Transformers: The Game* concept art

When making my artwork I was very inspired by early transformers art as I liked the idea of my perspective piece to have a mix of realistic features and inanimate objects. For transformers this is usually with a car or other motor vehicles, but I chose a building as I thought having a city landscape mixed with a dog would be interesting and new.

I looked at Christiansen's work as my main inspiration as I liked how he made every part of the motor vehicle fit into the humanoid form. I applied this to my design by using the vents of the building as ears and using the same colour for the cities windows as for the eyes. I also read *The*

Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide. (2018) to further understand what landscape would fit my initial ideas.



Fig. 3, *Neon City*

When looking for a colour palette, I struggled to find inspiration in real life as we do not have neon towers in Swansea. This led to my decision to search online for ideas which is when I eventually came across *Neon City* (Skryleva, ND). As soon as I saw the colours used in this piece I knew I had to draw inspiration for the same selection of colours because I could tell that they fit the city-inspired theme I gave myself.

To create my art piece, I ended up using a brighter version of the colour palette used in *Neon City* as the colours are not as bright as I originally thought they were. On top of this, I found out

that fluorescent/neon colours, in colour theory, relate to city life and the theme of lights after dark (Fussell, 2019). I also took inspiration from *Lost in the City: Night Time* (2020) on how to illustrate the windows and the buildings to make it look cohesive with the dog-tower idea.

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Figure 3: Anastasiya Skryleva (ND) *Neon City*. Available at:

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