Student Name: [redacted]

P Number: [redacted]

Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4022 Ways Of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 518 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 476 words

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 540 words

Task One: Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics have many different interpretations, the easiest definition is that it's "the study of signs" (Chandler, 2007, p. 2). Many key thinkers have theorised semiotics including Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Pierce, and Roland Barthes. Although these three-thinkers had different perspectives and approaches to semiotics, their contributions to the subject have enriched our understanding of words and images. Using some of their models of thought, I will de-code this poster and the female character.

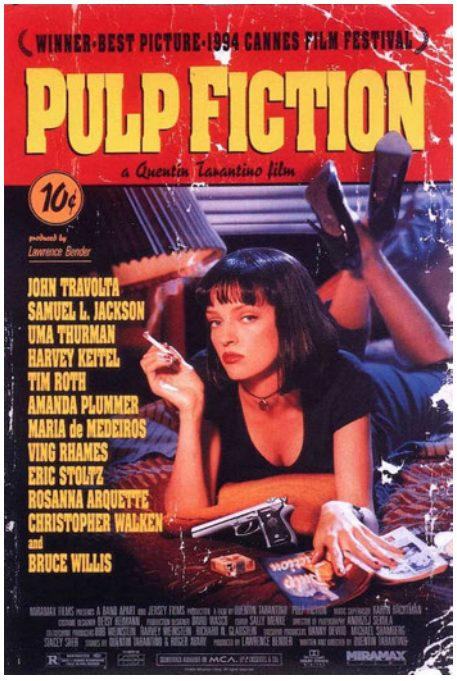

Fig 1, (Zahedi, 1994, *Pulp Fiction Poster*)

Pulp Fiction is a popular movie directed by Quentin Tarantino. The movie was released in October 1994. The actress on the poster is Uma Therman, playing the character of Mia Wallace. This photograph was taken by Firooz Zahedi in April 1994. Firooz said when directing the shoot, he created a "seedy motel room" set, inspired by the 'film noir' books from the 50's. (Gardner, 2021)

When the viewer first reads the anchorage text Pulp Fiction, the viewer can straight away get a clear understanding of what to expect from this film. As Barthes states, “To arrive at a definite meaning, language must come to the rescue” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 18). Pulp Fiction’s were originally magazines and are known to be exciting, thrilling and violence themed magazines from the 40’s/50’s. (Tyler, 2023) In this era, ‘pulp’ magazines were printed on wood pulp, which has been highlighted on the edges of the poster. Using Saussure’s model, the rough edges and the 10-cent icon are signifiers that the contents of this movie are low quality, throw away, cheap and trashy (signified).

“Signification would not exist without the sign” (Parmentier, 2016, p. 43). This can be decoded when we look at Mia’s red lips and fingernails, these signs signify she makes considered choices when it comes to her own grooming. The lips and nails are symbolic and perpetrate the myth of her femininity and sexuality.

When you meet Mia’s eyes staring back at you, you get the impression that she is indifferent and that she’s in control. She is inviting you to look at her. From the way her lips are pouted and her body position, she looks confident, strong, and rebellious. Men could look at this poster with lust and women could look at is with feeling of empowerment. We all know that a gun is a weapon that shoots bullets, the connotation of that weapon and its relationship with this character suggest it is a vessel for protecting herself. She is living in a dangerous world, possibly a man’s world and as John Berger states, “Men survey women before treating them” (1972, p. 46). I think this could be said for this character.

Although there are many other semiotics within this poster, the key takeaway from this analysis and my research, is that Semiotics are all around us. There are many signs that can

be interpreted at first glance, but these can also change. My first response to this poster was that she was a key character who was 'bad ass', however now I see the darker signs to her situation and how she is ultimately the victim to the life surrounding her.

Bibliography:

Bailey, J. (2013) *Pulp Fiction: The Complete Story of Quentin Tarantino's Masterpiece.* USA: Voyager Press.
Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of seeing.* London: British Broadcasting Corporation.
Chandler, D. (2007) *Semiotics the basics.* 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
Gardner, E. (2021) 'The Case of the 'Pulp Fiction' Movie Poster: Who Deserves Credit for This Image?', *The Hollywood Reporter,* 13 September. Available at: https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/pulp-fiction-movie-poster-who-deserves-credit-for-this-image-1235012663/ (Accessed: 13 November 2023).
Kress, G. R. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading image: the grammar of visual design*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
Parmentier, R. J. (2016) *Signs and Society: Further Studies in Semiotic Anthropology*. 1st edn. Indiana: University Press.
Tyler, A. (2023) 'Pulp Fiction's Title Explained: What It Really Means', *Screenrant,* Updated 12 February. Available at: https://screenrant.com/pulp-fiction-movie-title-meaning-explained/ (Accessed: 13 November 2023).
Zhou, Y., Yang, F., Yang, J., & Wang, H. (2023) 'The Influence of Feminist Movements on the Change of Female Images in Film and Television Dramas: Based on the Theory of Semiotics.' *SHS Web of Conferences*. Les Ulis, France, 28th June, EDP Sciences. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202317103026 (Accessed: 23 November 2023).

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Zahedi, F. (1994) *Pulp Fiction Poster*. Available at: https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/pulp-fiction-script/ (Accessed: 31 October 2023).

Task Two: Manifesto

1. Keep learning, knowledge can't harm you.
2. Work life balance is important.
3. Think second hand first, we don't need brand new.
4. Treat animals with kindness.
5. Go places, travel, try new things, meet new people, explore... step outside your comfort zone or just your front door.
6. Everyone should feel equal.
7. You don't have to be the best, just be authentic.
8. You won't always get it right first time.

2. Work life balance is important.

Fig 1, (Lopez, 2020, *Song From A Window*)

COVID 19 brought life threatening and heart wrenching pain throughout the world which is something we will never forget. As hard as it is for some to look back at that period with any positivity, there were some more rewarding and beneficial circumstances that came with it.

The “Great Resignation” (Brace, 2022) was a time where people took back the reins and embraced what their working life could be. Among many, we had the opportunities to work from home, embrace our creativity, start new businesses, get the bike we always wanted and actually ride it. Ultimately, we had more time and control. “Both job control and schedule control affects people’s well-being, their pursuit of healthy behaviours like adequate sleep and exercise and their attitudes about their jobs” (Kelly & Moen, 2020, p. 81). This newfound time, which wasn’t being used up on commutes and additional hours inevitably created more motivation, productivity, and appreciation for your work. Conclusively, work life balance is something that should be at the forefront and top of the list when it comes to people’s employer choices and future careers.

3. Think second hand first, we don’t need brand new.

Fig 2, (Bernetti, 2021, *Fast Fashion Contamination*)

> Second hand goods clothe, educate, and entertain billions of people around the world. All of this is accomplished using less energy and fewer raw materials that what’s required for new goods (Minter, 2019, p. 16).

I think we all have a responsibility to be more conscious of our consumptions and of our waste. I'll be the first to admit that I love shopping however instead of the buzz of buying something at the click of a button, my new interest is heading to the high street of charity shops. Embracing this has saved me money, I'm wasting less and my favourite of them all is that I find truly unique pieces. By thinking second hand, we are instantly helping to reduce the carbon footprint that mainstream fashion and other industries are having on the world.

> Globally the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions, with textile production alone is estimated to release 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere every year (Beall, 2020).

Just by making small changes we can contributing to a better future and can feel better about our purchases.

8. You won't always get it right first time.

Fig 3, (Stuart, 2006, *New Bond Street)*

In today's world everyone is striving for perfection, however we all know that is an unrealistic goal. Mistakes are lessons and through these mistakes we grow, become more resilient and embrace our imperfections. As Kessels writes "The ubiquity of Apple +Z means that we can literally undo any mistake before it has had time to breathe, be considered or perhaps evolve into something else" (2016). We live with the fear of getting it wrong, however what if getting is wrong is the way to get it right. If we can change our mindsets to support imperfection, then we can allow ourselves to be more creative.

Bibliography:

Beall, A. (2020) 'Why clothes are so hard to recycle'. *BBC Future,* 13th July. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200710-why-clothes-are-so-hard-to-recycle (Accessed: 28 November 2023).

Brace, R. (2022) 'Work-Life Balance In A Post-Pandemic World'. *Forbes,* 2nd August. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/08/02/work-life-balance-in-a-post-pandemic-world/ (Accessed: 30 November 2023).

Kelly, E.L. and Moen, P. (2020) *Overload: how good jobs went bad and what we can do about it*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Kessels, E. (2016) *Failed It! How to Turn Mistakes Into Ideas and Other Advice for Successfully Screwing Up*. London: Phaidon Press.

Minter, A. (2019) *Secondhand.* New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Thomas E. Backer. (2006) 'Balancing Work, Life and Creativity - Lessons from Artists', *Well-Being: The Balance Between Wet and Dry Conference.* Claremont University, February. Available at: https://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/wellbeingconf-sph.pdf (Accessed: 28 November 2023).

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Lopez, P. (2020) *Song From A Window*. Available at: https://twitter.com/AFP/status/1243353520629317634 (Accessed: 30 November 2023).

Figure 2: Bernetti, M. (2021) *Fast Fashion Contamination*. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/earth-photo-2022-shortlist-climate-b2110548.html (Accessed: 30 November 2023).

Figure 3: Stuart, M. (2006) *New Bond Street.* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2016/may/08/fails-and-the-art-of-imperfection-in-pictures-failed-it-erik-kessels-phaidon (Accessed: 30 November 2023).

Task Three: Practice-based writing

Fig 1, (*Welsh Coast*, own image, 2020)

Who doesn't love a surprise? That's how I felt when I started painting during COVID 19 lockdown. I started painting on broken pieces of slate we had in the garden, a friend soon after asked if I could create him a painting of the Welsh coast. For me, the Wales map outline was an obvious choice so that the audience knew exactly what this painting represented. I started googling and looking at images of the Pembrokeshire coast in particular, the main aspects I took away from that research was the ruggedness of the coastline and the contrast between the green grass and the blue ocean. I wanted to include associations of Wales within the painting like a small cottage, mountains, and sheep. I wanted this painting to be a homage to Wales.

Gillie Bolton says,

> Reflection involves reliving and rerendering: who said and did what, how, where, and why. Reflection might lead to insight about something not noticed in time, pinpointing perhaps when the detail was missed (2001, p. 13).

This quote is interesting, as it has been a few years since I have reflected on this painting. What I see now, is different to how I saw the painting when I completed it, I remember feeling unhappy with the outcome because I thought it looked too simple with not enough detail. However, the simplicity and the feeling of the whole piece now brings me a lot of enjoyment. It feels like a little piece of home. I feel proud of the time and thought I put into the piece.

"The palette is more than just a place on which to squeeze out colours. It can be a roadmap for thinking about colour and colour mixing" (Albala, 2009, p. 20). Upon creating this piece, it become apparent how important my understanding of colour theory was. I used acrylics and I only had the primary colours. This was a good test for me to play around and use my imagination. I become more confident mixing and using colour. The mountains in the background of this painting are a shade of purple, this was done on purpose. I wanted to add depth, atmosphere and to try something different to green. A key aspect of this painting is the slate, it has its own texture, which adds presence and feeling. Not only does it represent Wales in its physical form, but it makes it more than just a painting which is a success.

One of the aspects to the painting that I think I could be better, is the black outline of the map. I didn't use the best brush, I should have tried using a flat synthetic brush, which

would have been more versatile so that I could adjust the thickness of the line and shape and given me more control. (*Artist's painting techniques,* 2016, p. 134)

I feel one of the key takeaways from reflecting on this painting is self-confidence and having the confidence to make mistakes. Reflecting on my work can only make it better next time, as candy states "Reflective practice has benefits in increasing self-awareness, a key element of emotional intelligence" (2020, p. 251). Being able to reflect at this stage, can only help me in the future.

Bibliography:

Albala, M. (2009) *Landscape painting: Essential concepts and techniques for plein air and studio practice*. New York: Watson Guptill Publications.
Artist's painting techniques (2016) London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd.
Bolton, G. (2001) *Reflective practice, writing & professional development*. 3rd edn. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
Candy, L. (2020) *Learning from the reflective practitioner.* Oxford: Routledge.
Hockney, D. (1988) *A Retrospective.* Los Angeles: County Museum of Art & London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
Schon, D. (1991) *The reflective practitioner.* Oxon: Ashgate Publishing.

List of Figures:

Figure one: *Welsh Coast* (own image, 2020).