

Portfolio of Writing- Ways of Thinking

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Module: Ways of thinking lecturer's name: Julia Lockheart

Task 1: Observational writing = 491 words

Task 2: Manifesto = 494 words

Task 3: Practice- based writing = 506 words_

Task 1- Observational Writing



Fig 1: "Train de Nuit" 2009

<https://inside.chanel.com/en/no5/campaigns>

Semiotics helps us understand signs and their meanings. The sign is made up of the object and the meaning, the object is the signifier and the meaning is the signified. Saussure says that the signifier and the signified are separate but work together to make the sign (Chandler, 2019). Barthes was inspired by Saussure's knowledge about semiotics and applied it to an art context so that people could use it to analyse visual imagery. Barthes (1957, p.109) says, "Pictures become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful".

Chanel No.5 perfume was advertised in 2009 with a short film called "Train de Nuit" (The Night Train). The image was taken from this film as part of the promotion. It denotes a woman in an elegant, black, tight fitting evening gown. She is looking out of the window of a train at night. There is a large bottle of Chanel No.5 perfume in the bottom right-hand corner of the image. Text appears on the perfume bottle as well as in the top right-hand

corner of the advertisement. The typeface is minimal, classic and timeless representing the brand identity.

A beam of golden light glows from the open door of a room on the carriage but also seems to be coming from the perfume bottle. There is a lot of contrast between the illuminating light and the dark ambience of the wooden carriage. Strong leading lines guide the viewer eyes to the woman whose leg stretches out towards the perfume bottle to draw our attention to it. The use of perspective is dramatic and adds depth. The rule of thirds composes an interesting photograph.

The woman in the image who wears the iconic Chanel LBD (the black dress) is Audrey Tautou, who starred as Coco Chanel in a film about the designer in 2009. She reinforces that the iconic sign in the image is Chanel who represents the modern, sophisticated and independent woman.

The Chanel brand uses a very recognisable colour palette of black, gold and white. In decoding the image, we associate these colours with the brand which connotes simplicity, elegance and timelessness. They also remind us of Art Deco and classic Hollywood films. The wealth signified by the interior of the train links it to the book and film "Murder on the Orient Express" which gives a sense of mystery, drama and intrigue to the image.

The underlying myth is identified by Barthes as being "...a language" (1957, p.10). Images have an underlying story that we believe is true but is not necessarily the truth. The underlying myth within the image is that if you buy the perfume and wear it you too will be a wealthy, sophisticated, independent, beautiful woman.

By using semiotics I can see the importance of visual signs in advertisements and how they can persuade the audience. There is a quote by Sturken and Cartwright, (2009, p.9) that says, "everyday we engage in practices of looking to make sense of the world". I feel that Barthes gives us a good understanding of images, but the world and art isn't made of just images, its made up of our experiences and uses all our senses.

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Figure 1: Issermann, D. (2009) *Audrey Tautou- Train de Nuit* [photo]. Available at:
<https://inside.chanel.com/en/no5/campaigns> (Accessed: 22 December 2020)

Task 2: Manifesto

- 1) Artists and their artwork should not be judged based on their gender.
- 2) As artists and designers we should look after our environment.
- 3) Art supports our wellbeing.
- 4) We shouldn't forget traditional and handmade skills in our digital era.
- 5) Creative industries contribute just as much as any other profession.
- 6) Be a conscious consumer, only buy the things you love and need.
- 7) Making is a language that needs no words.
- 8) The artwork of all cultures should be respected and not exploited.

Artists and their artwork should not be judged based on their gender.



Fig. 1 *Tea Infuser and Strainer.*

I strongly believe that gender should have nothing to do with how you are valued and perceived. Reading Whitten Brown's essay (2019) 'Why Is Work by Female Artists Still Valued Less Than Work by Male Artists?' I was shocked that "the art world is not one of gender parity". Whitten Brown (2019) states that "Only two works by women have ever broken into the top 100 auction sales for paintings, despite women being the subject matter for approximately half of the top 25" this article was written in 2019, only 2 years ago and gender inequality still exists within our society.

Burrough (2019) says that despite the fame and opportunities the Bauhaus movement gave female artists and designers, they were discouraged from doing any practises that weren't typically feminine. A good example of this is seen by Marianne Brandt who challenged the Bauhaus belief by specialising in metalwork instead of subjects like textiles and weaving. She showed how skilled and accomplished she was producing work of higher quality than the majority of her male peers. Sadly she and other women from the Bauhaus, are still not very well known today.

As artists and designers we should look after our environment.



Fig. 2: F729 extralarge_redblue-flat



Fig.3: The Freitag Story

A lot of our work as artists and designers are inspired by our natural environment, but when it comes down to looking after our earth we forget the impact our practise can have on it. The fashion industry is the “second largest polluter in the world just after the oil industry” (Sustainyourstyle, 2020), as an artist this worries me for the future of our planet. Wendell Berry (1992) says that “our proper connection to the earth is ‘good work’” (Goodreads, 2020) from an artists perspective I think this means that our work and processes should be kind to the earth. Braungart and McDonough’s (2009) “cradle to cradle” model talks about reusing and upcycling products so that when they have been used they can become something new again. This is seen in the Freitag bag which upcycles and transforms the tarpaulin from transporter trucks. Freitag has also developed “F-ABRIC”, a material that is completely compostable. Both of these products follow Freitag’s philosophy: “We think and act in cycles” (Freitag, 2020).

Art supports our wellbeing.



Fig 4: Finding your flow with Hand Knitting- part of Textiles and Wellbeing.

Art has long been linked to wellbeing, and the idea of 'flow'. Robb (2019) in her BBC article, says "Flow is associated with subjective wellbeing, satisfaction with life and general happiness". In the TED Talk 'Flow, the secret to happiness' Csikszentmihalyi (2004), says 'flow' takes artists to another place when they are so focused on their work and forget time. Reynolds (2004) in her research found that by making textiles, women who suffered with long term illness coped better with their pain, were able to express how they felt and enjoyed making with others who had gone through similar experiences.

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Figure 3: Freitag (2020) *The Freitag Story* [Photo] Available at: <https://www.freitag.ch/th/media/about/company> (Accessed: 21 December 2020).

Figure 4: Paisley (2019) *Finding your flow with Hand Knitting- part of Textiles and Wellbeing* [Photo] Available at: <https://paisley.is/listing/textiles-and-wellbeing-finding-your-flow-knitting-2019/> (Accessed: 21 December 2020).

Task 3- Practise based writing

Sustainability

Sustainability has been defined as “the quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). The fashion and textile industry are known for how much they pollute the environment. Recently the effects have been brought to light and the industry has had to become more sustainable by using natural and biodegradable materials to reduce its impact. It is important for a lot of consumers that their clothes will last, that the makers of their clothes will get a fair pay, that the earth doesn't get harmed in the making process, and that their clothes don't go to waste or landfill. I think the future of fashion is sustainability, using plant based biodegradable materials, reducing toxic dyes and non biodegradable plastics and using a pre-ordering system to reduce waste.

Pineapple

A pineapple is a fruit grown in Central and South America, whose flesh and juice are consumed. Other parts, like ‘the skins, core and ends of the pineapple are not discarded ... but instead used to make a number of products such as vinegar, alcohol and animal food” (sciencekids, 2020).

When pineapples are harvested their leaves become a waste product. Dr. Hijosa did a research project in 1990 developing a fabric called Piñatex which uses these leaves to create a sustainable fabric which is a strong, durable vegan, leather alternative for fashion products. Piñatex has become really popular and is “... used in over 1000 brands worldwide including Hugo Boss, H&M and the Hilton Hotel Bankside” (ananas-anam, 2017).

One of the largest growing consumer groups for pineapple leather is the Vegan leather market, “in fact, the vegan leather industry is predicted to be worth \$85 billion by 2025” (Thomas, 2020). Leah Thomas in her article ‘Is Vegan leather a more sustainable option? The answer is complicated’, says that most vegan leather contains plastics which does not biodegrade. In their article on vegan leather and sustainability, Harpers and Bazaar claimed that vegan leather is and is “... actually

worse for the planet than regular” (Davis, 2020). I think that making the most out of a waste product such as pineapple leaves to create leather is a great sustainable option that benefits the consumer and the environment.

As a vegetarian and eco-conscious consumer, I like to buy, reuse and upcycle. I have bought vegan leather shoes and bag, presuming I was making an ethical and eco-friendly choice and so I was shocked to find out otherwise. As a product I found vegan leather disappointing it looked fake, shiny, and hard not softening with wear. Doing this research on plant-based fibres used to make textiles I am inspired to find out more and learn about how orange fibres, potatoes, grapes, banana plants, seaweed and even ground coffee are being used. I think that Piñatex and other plant based materials will have a positive impact the future of fashion and textiles.

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