

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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Tasks in the order I received them -

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 554

Task Two: Manifesto = 531

Task Three: Practice-based Writing = 553

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Task One: Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics is defined simply as "the study of signs" (Chandler, D, 2007, p. 2.), though it

also encompasses the study of symbols, their implications, and their applications.

Several scholars have proposed theories on semiotics, including Charles Sanders

Pierce and Rolan Barthes, with these scholars having contributed to a better

understanding of the topic and therefore, I will be applying their theories to this semiotic analysis.



Figure 1, (War Production Co-Ordinating Committee, U. S. C., 1942, *We Can Do It! Rosie the Riveter*)

During World War II, 1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945, Rosie the Riveter was the face of a push in recruitment for women in the defence trade with her debatably becoming the most identifiable representation of a working woman. The original Rosie

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the Riveter image was created in 1942 by Pittsburgh artist J. Howard Miller. This is the image displayed in Figure 1.

In Figure 1 Rosie the Riveter is posed strongly, and we can see the signs of her having her sleeve rolled up and the muscles in her arm flexed – which creates the signified meaning of challenging traditional gender roles and how women were portrayed in this period. Men would have been more likely to be seen in this type of stance, whilst women were expected to stay at home and care for their household. This traditional concept strongly juxtaposes Figure 1 where she challenges the myth of masculinity by questioning the paradigm that only men have muscles (signified).

Using Saussure's model, we can see that Rosie's clothing is symbolic of male manual labour. Rosie's characteristic red bandana, and denim overalls are signifiers of the strength and dedication of the woman who helped to break down the gender barriers in the workforce but also set the stage for a more gender equal society (signified).

Accompanying the main image of Rosie is the anchorage text "We Can Do It!", which creates the signified meaning of unity and determination, which would have especially been evident within the woman of the 1940s, where they saw their work as being critical to the war efforts. Even at a glance it is clear what is being asked within this piece of text and the implications behind it. As stated by Barthes, "To arrive at a definite meaning, language must come to the rescue" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 18.)

Overall, the poster left a significant legacy in terms of women's empowerment, and subsequently inspired movements for gender equality. This can be evidenced by future events where it can be said that "the first generation of girls raised on empowering

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female characters like Wonder Woman and Rosie the Riveter became the generation of the women's liberation movement". (Hanley, T, 2014, p. 41.)

In terms of semiotics, after analysing this poster I feel that the way I perceive it has changed. Rather than just focusing on a singular aspect, I found myself jumping between different signs and signifiers of the poster and how they are interconnected, bringing a greater meaning to the piece as a whole. When accompanied with my research, this gave me a broader outlook on what this poster's design symbolised and how it would have interacted with the woman of the 1940s, with self-empowerment and inspiration in terms of moving forward to a more gender balanced society. "We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves." (Berger, J, 1972, p. 5.)

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List of Figures

Figure 1: War Production Co-Ordinating Committee, U. S. C. (1942) *We Can Do It! Rosie the Riveter*. Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669753/>. (Accessed: 24 October 2024)

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Task 2: Manifesto

1. Don't over think it
2. All you can do is try your best.
3. It's okay to have a break.
4. Everyone is different, not everyone will agree, so do what you think is best
5. Live a life of honesty, solidarity, and unconditional love.
6. Never lose sight of what is most important.
7. To leave this world having left pieces of myself behind in the form of art and having made mark in doing so.
8. To use art to make the world a more beautiful place.

2. All you can do is try your best



Figure 1, (Auguste Rodin, 1904, *The Thinker*)

Growing up I always found that I struggled when it came to academics, and I often worked myself to the point of burnout in order to get to the point my peers did with ease. I find it hard to look back on those times now as it caused a lot of mental distress for me, however, my parents were a big help in motivating me and reassuring me in that all

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they wished for is that I simply “try my best”, and that all they could be was proud of me.

I didn’t understand this until I was in sixth form/ college where I found that I was less distressed when it came to academics now being able to focus on just 3 subjects as well as realising that what I was doing was for me and not in competition with my peers.

This ultimately paid off as in the end I left sixth form/ college with the grades I was more than happy with and that would pave the way for my next step - university. As W. Bruce Cameron said, “failure isn’t an option if success is just a matter of more effort”. (W. Bruce Cameron, 2010, p. 150.

1. It’s okay to have a break.



Figure 2, (Henry Moore, 1969, *Reclining Figure*)

In school, I would often overwork myself both in and out of school in order to keep up with my peers and attempt to reach my academic goals. Studies have shown that increased levels of stress can lead to physical health problems such as high blood pressure and increased risk of heart attack. This impacted on my emotional health more than my physical health, and often led to burnout. Burnout is the “overwhelming sense of falling further behind, of “lagging behind the pace car.”” (Kello, J.E. and Allen,

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J.A., (2022), p. 1). I did struggle with this for a long time, however, I eventually realised

that as long as I was trying my best, that it was okay to take a break. “The more

exquisitely and delightfully you can do nothing, the higher your life’s achievement.”

(Elizabeth Gilbert, 2007, p. 61.). I now take this statement and apply it on a daily basis,

making sure to take small, frequent breaks to avoid burnout and to maintain focus.

7. To leave this world having left pieces of myself behind in the form of art and having made mark in doing so.



Figure 3, (Banksy, 2002, *Girl with Balloon*)

I have always thought that in death I wouldn't want to be forgotten or have left without a trace so I have always thought that I would like to leave something behind, to have tangible proof I have contributed in some way to the world and not just taken from it, to know that there is something out there that wouldn't exist if weren't for me. As Neil Gaiman says “Go and make interesting mistakes, make amazing mistakes, make glorious and fantastic mistakes. Break rules. Leave the world more interesting for your being here.” (N. Gaiman, 2012). This concept, in conjunction with to my general love for the arts, is what inevitably led me to want to pursue a career in the subject.

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List of Figures

Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, (1904), [bronze]. Le Penseur in the [Musée Rodin](#) in Paris

Banksy, *Girl with Balloon*, (2002), originally stencilled on the walls under Waterloo Bridge in London

Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure*, (1969), [bronze]. Lola Beer Ebner Sculpture Garden, Tel Aviv Museum of Art in Israel

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Task 3: Practice-based writing



Figure 1, (*Stop Making Sense*, Martha Stephens, 2024)

Learning to work within the constraints imposed by a client is an important aspect of working in visual communication. Often the typefaces, colours, and type sizes incur limitations and in response designers must work hard to produce work that accurately reflects what the client is asking for and in a way that is engaging and stimulates a specific response from the intended audience.

The piece displayed in figure 1 derives from a brief that was given to me that had two stages, one with a stricter set of design rules and the other with looser, with my response to the second stage being the subject of this reflection. The set of design rules that this second stage of the brief refers to is as follows; You can only use the font Helvetica, the design must utilise black and white only.

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In order to form my response, I took what I had learned from the previous stage in this brief, in which was very restrictive and expanded upon it. In addition to this I also took into consideration my new understanding of design being “Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.” (Jobs, 2003). I felt that this brief was a good test in enabling me to take a deeper dive into the different aspect of typography and layout, and how not everything has to be black and white. By doing this I was able to take the different components of the piece and use them to highlight the most important component (being the dates), which I feel helps to create a greater sense of depth and atmosphere to the piece.

A key aspect of this piece I feel is the title in which I decided to present along 3 of the outside edges of the piece. “Design means to be in control of every detail” (Vignelli, 2010, p. 74) is a quote that summarises my thoughts when choosing to have the elements of my design extend to the edges of the page. This not only helps with emphasizing the dates (as mentioned previously), but also adds to the overall presence of the poster and the band (the subject of the poster). This is backed up by the stylisation and effects I have added in breaking up the letters in the words and flipping certain characters. “Typefaces are the personality on the page” (Drew de Soto, 2011, p. 81)

One aspect of this piece I feel I could have done better is the comprehension of the poster which I feel can be misunderstood in some situations due to the stylisation, especially at a glance. “Art is a means of communication” (Tolstoy, L, 1995, p. 123), which is why the comprehension of a piece is a major aspect, as if it is unclear what is

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being conveyed then this may put viewers off and can result in missed detail and an overall lack of interest.

One of the key takeaways from reflecting on this piece I feel is the importance of having confidence in being bolder and more imaginative in utilising different design techniques in ways not done before, especially in terms of restrictive briefs. The key with graphic design is to not restrict yourself, and to not be scared to experiment with new and fun ideas.

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Figure

Figure 1: *Stop Making Sense* (Martha Stephens, 2024).