Student Name: Sophie Henry

P Number:

Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Martin Bush

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 528 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 518 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 511 words

Task 1: Observational Writing

During the early 20th century Ferdinand de Saussure provided the foundations for the discipline of semiotics, the study of understanding underlying messages from images. In our day to day lives we see hundreds of images conveying messages and ideas and it was Saussure who developed the concept that semiotics is "A science that studies the life of signs within society" (de Saussure, 1959, p. 16).

To semiotically analyse an object you examine what it is, for example an apple, the mental concepts behind the apple may signify health, education or the fruit itself depending on the understanding of the viewer.

To complete a semiotic analysis a Samaritans advert from 2015 was chosen. The advert was part of the Samaritans 'We Listen' Campaign and posters were put up in railway stations throughout the UK to promote their 24-hour listening service and was show in the 'Can Graphic Design Save Your Life?' exhibition.

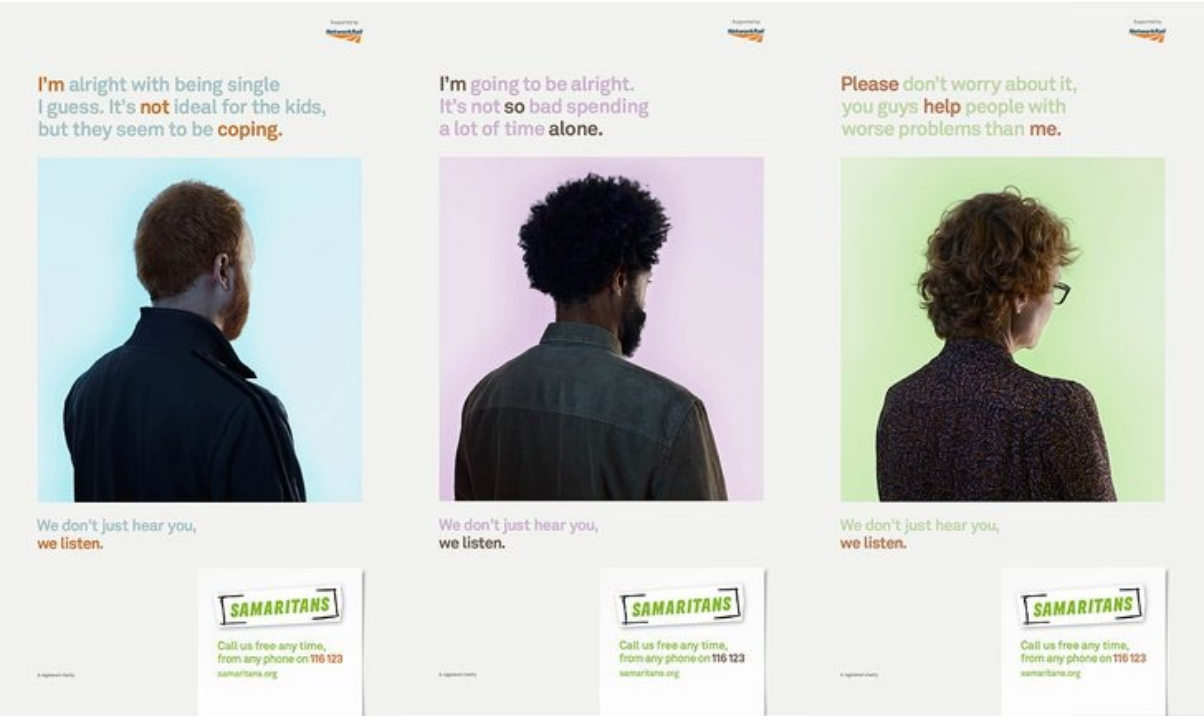

Fig 1. *We Listen,* Samaritans Advertising Campaign, 2015

The campaign images all feature a photograph of the back view of a person, in front of a pastel back ground. Caivano recognises that 'meanings are often assigned to colors independently of the object in which the color is seen' (Caivano, 1998, p.397). The poster aims to reduce suicide rates on railways, pastel colours were used as they subconsciously soothe and calm. The text in the advert is speech from the people describing their situation, the majority of text is in the same pastel colours as the background of the photo providing a link to the person, the pastel words seem to play down the seriousness of their situation.

The positioning of people in the advert is large and central, conveying they are important and the focus for the Samaritans' attention. Lawes discusses 'to consume is to take part in a semiotic game in which we communicate with each other and construct identities' (Lawes, 2019, p.256), in this advert the people all face away, purposely hiding their identities allowing anyone to relate to these people and their words. The anonymity of the people creates the impression of confidentiality of conversations with the Samaritans, reinforced by the lighting making the people look almost like silhouettes. The ear of each person is visible, signifying listening and conversations. The series of posters feature a variety of different ethnicities, ages and genders which infers inclusivity and cultural awareness of the charity and demonstrates that no stereotypical person needs the help of the Samaritans.

Three individual words are highlighted in the text in colours associated with danger or warnings, these words reveal the true meaning behind the longer sentence. The highlighted words are evenly spread throughout and point down towards the photograph, creating a relationship between the person and their hidden worry. The coloured text matches the

‘we listen’ slogan illustrating that the Samaritans listen on a deeper level and understand the issue.

At first this campaign appears quite simple, but closer analysis provides insight to the underlying semiotics, strengthening the subconscious reaction. Semiotics is successfully used to provide an emotional response and to connect with individuals. The poster design provides an insight to the hidden meaning behind words but semiotics provides the analysis of the subconscious meaning in visual language.

Bibliography

De Saussure, F. (1959) ‘The Object of Linguistics’ in Bally, C. and Sechehaye, A. (ed.) Baskin, W. (trans.) *Course of General Linguistics.* New York: The Philosophical Society.

Caivano, J. (1998) ‘Color and Semiotics: A Two-way Street’, *Color, Research and Application*, 23(6) pp. 391 – 401. Available at: researchgate.net/publication/299014196_Color_and_semiotics_A_two-way_street (Accessed: 27 December 2020).

Lawes, R. (2014) ‘Big Semiotics: Beyond Signs and Symbols’, *International Journal of Market Researc*h, 61(3), pp. 252-266.

Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing.* London, Penguin.

Oswald, L.R. (2012) *Marketing Semiotics: Signs, Strategies, and Brand Value.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Oswald, L.R. (2020) *Doing Semiotics: A Research Guide for Marketers at the Edge of Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Lomas, T. (2019) ‘Positive Semiotics’, *Review of general psychology*, 23(3), pp.359–370

Lyons, J. (1977) *Semantics, Vol1,* New York: Cambridge University Press

Figures

Figure 1. *We Listen,* Samaritans Advertising Campaign, 2015 Accessed from: https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/we-listen/ [Accessed on 27th December 2020]

Task 2: Manifesto Writing

1. Design is not just how something looks but the thoughts and feeling it provokes.
2. Good design solves problems, bad design creates problems.
3. Creativity should be encouraged in all schools as part of the core curriculum.
4. Creativity needs to be valued more as a skill by employers.
5. Art should not be privately owned but publicly owned and enjoyed by the masses.
6. Designers have a duty to consider ethical and moral values in all their designs.
7. Jobs in the creative industry need to be more highly valued.
8. Government funding for the arts should be increased to encourage creative stimuli.

<u>Three Manifestos Explored</u>

<u>Creativity should be encouraged in all schools as part of the core curriculum.</u>

Currently there is a lack of emphasis placed on creative arts subjects in the UK education system, in recent years more and more prominence has been placed on STEM subjects, the English baccalaureate encourages English, maths, science, modern languages and humanities, but not arts. Education in the arts is under rated and needs to become a bigger part of the core curriculum.

Creativity inspires, innovates and provides problem solving skills, not only are these highly rated by employers but in a changing world those with these skills will thrive. In 1999, UNESCO found strong connections between teaching of creative subjects to cultural

development and peace through developing new ways of thinking, understanding and empathy 'Arts are missing from our lives, which makes way for violence.' (Aprotosoaie-Iftimi, 2020, p. 198). In a developing world innovation is key. To have a scientific breakthrough or the next advancement in technology, a creative mind set is required, to think outside the box, approach problems differently and to pursue a new idea, education needs to develop these skills.

Good design solves problems, bad design creates problems.

Good design is all around us in day-to-day life, and often goes unnoticed because it's seamless. It is difficult to define what makes a good design however the Design Management Institute study found "that good design appears to have a rich, complex, multi-attribute structure" (Hertenstein et al, 2013, p. 8). Good design can be observed in graphics in how your eye travels around the page, what information you read first and the impact it makes. Bad design is often brought to light and can face public scrutiny such as the rebranding of the Gap logo in 2010, after only six day the new logo reverted back to the original logo due to public backlash.

Fig 1. Gap Logo rebrand before and after, 2010

Good design, whilst it solves one problem, can also create other issues, for example the invention of the car. When originally designed Henry Ford would not have realised the consequences the success of his design would have on traffic accident mortality rates, pollution, or destruction of landscapes being repurposed as roads. But the design of a car to meet the objective of a faster method of land travel has been an overwhelming success.

Designers have a duty to consider ethical and moral values in all their designs.

The purpose of design is to create messages, logos, campaigns and communicate effectively with target audiences, to inform and influence. Therefore, it is the duty of designers to consider their ethics and morals in their work, however everyone has their individual morals, so some choices may be acceptable to one person but not another. Designers have explored the idea of what is morally wrong or right within design such as Ken Garland, who with twenty-one other designers, wrote “First Things First”, a manifesto agreeing that the ‘prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes’ (Garland, 1964).

As well as considering moral values, designers should consider the environmental impact of their work. With increased issues of global warming and pollution, design techniques should be sustainable. Designers have responsibility for how they produce their work and the messages they are delivering through their work, to create work which does not offend or harm the viewer or their environment.

Bibliography

Aprotosoaie-Iftimi, A. (2020). '3. The Role of Arts in School Education', *Review of Artistic Education*, 20(3), pp.198–204.
Robinson, K. (2006) Do schools kill creativity? [video]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY (Accessed: 28 December 2020)
Craft, A., Jeffrey, B. and Leibling, M. (2001) *Creativity in Education*. London: Continuum.
Garland, K. (1964) "First things first", *The Guardian*, Jan 24 1964, p.22.

Fraklin, G. (2016) *GAP: 6 years later — still worst rebrand ever.* Available at: https://medium.com/@gfraikin/gap-worse-rebrand-ever-even-6-years-later-4a883d0cc736 (Accessed: 28 December 2020)
Hertenstein, J. et al. (2013) "What Is 'Good Design?: An Investigation of the Complexity and Structure of Design." *Design Management Journal*, 8(1), pp.8–22.
Stephens, J. P., Boland, B, J, (2014) "The Aesthetic Knowledge Problem of Problem-Solving with Design Thinking" *Journal of Management Inquiry,* 24(3), pp 219-232.

Imbesi, Lorenzo. (2018) 'Rethinking Ethics in Design', *Design Principles & Practices: An International Journal: Annual Review*, 12(1), pp.57–66.
Soar, M. (2002) 'The first things first manifesto and the politics of culture jamming: towards a cultural economy of graphic design and advertising', Cultural studies*,* 16(4), pp. 570-593.
Roberts, L. (2006) *Good, an introduction to ethics in graphic design*, London: AVA Academia.
Fisher, T., Gammman, L. (2019) *Tricky Design, The Ethics of Things,* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Figures

Figure 1. Gap Logo rebrand before and after, 2010. Accessed from: https://www.recognitioncreative.com/dont-use-comic-sans/ [Accessed on 28th December 2020]

Task 3: Practice-based Writing

To reflect on the surface pattern project, I first think back to why it was made, in response to a self-made brief for an A level Textiles and Fashion personal investigation to design a fabric collection for interior use based upon my chosen theme. The theme was inspired by intricate, detailed mouldings, carving and plaster work from English stately homes and historic houses, houses that have been described as 'every square inch of walls and ceiling is glowing encrusted with colour and ornament' (Girouard, 1978, p.93).

After visiting a number of houses collecting primary sources, I developed my designs and experimented with a variety of techniques and was pleased with how the designs evolved. Concluding that techniques such as screen printing, lino printing and free machine embroidery would be suitable, both visually and practically, so they could be used in interiors. Deciding that these designs would be featured on cushions, lampshades and upholstered chairs, which I would make after printing my fabric.

I settled on three designs printing on olive coloured plain fabric and toile de jouy fabric. An original idea I had was to contrast my pattern based on the classical inspiration with bright, bold colours, in reflection I did not pursue this enough, so if I did this again would focus on this area. I made my printed fabrics into final products, upholstering two Edwardian chairs, which reflected the carved elaborate details of the original inspiration, as well as sewing cushions and making lampshades so the collection could be seen in a variety of interior uses. The final project was then displayed.

Fig 1. *A Level project*, Sophie Henry 2020

Taking ‘a view of reflection which allows us to assess its strengths and weaknesses’ (Kornblith, 2012, p. 136) during the process allowed me to develop further in my discipline to produce a higher level of work. Overall, I was pleased with the final pieces, how they met the objectives, my development from the start of the project and the new skills learnt. The final pieces complemented each other and suited the theme and were appropriate for interior furnishings.

Creating a surface pattern project, stood out from others in the A level class with most students working on fashion projects, it would have been easy to try and blend in with the other projects but am I proud that I didn’t, sticking to preferred techniques and inspiration to achieve my desired outcome. Moving forwards, I have learnt to have courage in my ideas, not to try and fit in and to work and design what I enjoy.

‘Inspiration from architecture can take many forms. An entire building might be the beginning of a whole body of work but so might the detailing on a flight of steps’ (Genders,20, p.33), this was another important lesson I took from the project, that you can be inspired by the smallest of details as well as huge subjects. This will be what I take forward in my education, even though I am no longer studying textiles, the creative inspiration behind it is still something which can be used across all art disciplines.

Bibliography

Kornblith, H. (2012) *On reflection* 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Genders, C. (2002) *Sources of inspiration.* London: A & C Black.

Girouard, M. (1978) *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Nicolson, N. (1978) *The National Trust book of great houses of Britain*. London: Book Club Associates.

Lousberg, L. *et al.* (2020) ‘Reflection in design education’, *International Journal of Technology & Design Education*, 30(5), pp. 885–898.

Figures

Figure 1. A Level project, Sophie Henry, 2020.