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Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4022 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

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For this assessment, I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to support me in structuring my submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to create text for my submission. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI for creative materials, such as images.

Part one: Observational Writing

Studying semiotics reveals that society relies on this linguistic study. Semiotics is our interactions and decoding of the meaning of signs and symbols. It also explores the significance of the meanings that are placed on words by society. Graphic designers are aware of this and manipulate the connotations of signs and symbols.

Ferdinand de Saussure describes this as the signified because the way we understand language is through signs. These signs can be in the letters of a word where viewers use the signifier of the combination of characters to understand the meaning that is the signified (Hébert & Tabler, 2019), the connoted meaning and the ideas that are created in the viewers' head.

The following image came from the social media of Tim Horton's UK restaurants. This advert shows melted sandwiches and hot drinks. It also uses typography as anchorage text. The first impression is that the advert is trying to portray that their toasted sandwiches better than others. Their choice of the word 'perfection' indicates this.

MELTED TO PERFECTION



Figure 1: Tim Horton Advert (2024)

The most prominent sign in this coded image is the pose of sandwiches. The sandwiches on pedestals signifies a hierarchy of sandwiches being the best. They look like a pyramid, signifying that perfection is the peak. The four toasties in the image are signs for the available toasties in the restaurant. The position of the toasties may signify the popularity of the sandwich.

The designer has used the connoted meaning of the colours to suggest that the sandwiches are the best. The bright colour of yellow and orange are signifiers of the quality of toasting. A polysemic reading of this sign could lead to the toasties' colour being enhanced to unachievable perfection. The brand logo on the packaging of the cups shows the essential use of colour to make the product visible (Cheskin, 1947). The logo's use of the colours red and white signify the restaurants Canadian origins as colour in brand identity was first recognised in flags (Zaichkowsky, 2010). The wood at the bottom of the frame is a signifier for the viewer to feel as if they are at a table in the restaurant. This could also be an arbitrary sign, as Saussure highlights the arbitrary nature of signs (Tănase, 2022), for the company caring for the environment, a myth that can manipulate consumer's decisions. It could additionally connote that the company is more luxurious because of environmental standards.

The typography in the advert plays an important role more than just anchorage text. The curves of the font signify the comfort of the café environment. The line spacing used in this advert further draws the viewers' attention to the most important piece of anchorage text. The word perfection is on a line by itself this signifies it is the most important piece of anchorage text. It has connotations of the quality of the sandwiches.

After semiotic analysis, the advert conveys the coded message that the quality of the brands products will be continued in their toasties. The designers were conscious of the signs they encoded in this image to make the viewer want the toasted sandwich. By using the signs of typography, colour and the photo of the sandwiches the company is using their social media audience to gain sales.

References for Observational Writing

Cheskin, L. (1947) *Colors : what they can do for you*. New York : Liveright.

Hébert, L. & Tabler, J. (2019) A Short Introduction to Semiotics. In: L. Hébert, ed. *An Introduction to Applied Semiotics : Tools for Text and Image Analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 273-278.

Tănase, I. (2022) Linguistic terminology – with Saussure and after Saussure. *Diversitate si Identitate Culturala in Europa*, Vol.19(1-2), pp. 149-161.

Zaichkowsky, J. (2010) Strategies for distinctive brands. *Journal of Brand Management*, Volume 17, p. 548–560.

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Part Two: Manifesto Writing

My Manifesto

1. Jesus is King
2. Never hide information
3. Make stuff fun
4. Try the hard stuff
5. The things you're afraid of will be the most fun
6. Designing for others makes the best work
7. There will be another planet people matter more
8. Failed work is just good practice

My priority in all things is to worship Jesus. This is because he has saved me. I can do nothing on my own, but I have found that the Bible is true when it says *I can do all this through him who gives me strength* (New International Version, 2011, Philippians 4:13). The reason that my work must bring honour to Jesus is because after learning that there is life in Jesus and everyone who does not put their trust in Jesus is without life, I have concern for the people who have not made a choice to have Jesus as their advocate. I feel a big impact from C.S Lewis' famous quote *Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important* (Lewis, 1970). My prayer is that when people see my design work, they would know the infinite importance of Jesus and that my Lord would use my work so that people who do not know Jesus will be saved. This is a key point for me as a designer as it is important for me to choose clients whose principles align with my own.



Figure 1: Untitled (Calvin Klein) by KAWS (2000)

My sixth point is important for me as I feel that when I design others, it has a better direction that if I were to design for myself. When I work for others, it gives me the impetus to work to maximum effort, so the outcome is better than the work I do for myself.

I think that seeing the work from contemporary artist and designer KAWS supports my point. In an interview he said:

At the beginning, people thought I had political motivations, like I was doing an anti-advertising crusade. I'd get hit up from magazines

like Adbusters. But that's not really my thing. I actually liked the visual nature of these ads. I really liked some of the photographers I was painting over (KAWS cited in Maguire, 2012).

I think that the designers who make adverts make really beautiful work which should be celebrated. Work made for other people challenges the designer, and parameters force the designers into more creative visuals in their adverts. I disagree with movements like Adbusters and 'First Things First' manifesto written by Ken Garland (Garland, 1964) . The main argument in Garland's manifesto is that designers design for money rather than for a passion for the work. This is where I disagree, and I believe beautiful design comes from having a passion for the creative process.

My final point is important because it describes my design process. I think that doing lots of designs repeatedly makes the designs better because the ideas change and make better varieties. The contemporary artist Andy Warhol titled a book *I want to be a machine* (Warhol, 2018), which refers to the screenprinting process. This is a repetitive process but is an easy way to make copies with colour variations. I think that making bad designs is an essential part of the design process because it allows for reflection and helps with the defining my visual style. It also allows for experimenting with ideas that might not work with the brief as well as improving my skill in a certain technique.

References for Manifesto Writing

Biblica, Inc. (2011) *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Garland, K. (1964) *First Things First 1964 manifesto*. 1st ed. London: Ken Garland.

Lewis, C. S. (1970) *God in the Dock*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

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Warhol, A. (2018) *I Want to Be A Machine*. Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland.

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Part Three: Practice-Based Writing



Figure 1: Mighty Deliver Packaging by Ethan Entwistle (2023)

Reflective thinking is important because it is a critical factor in problem-solving and can promote reflection upon practice (Chang, et al., 2019). Therefore, I will examine a piece of work which I undertook as part of my A level graphic design mock exam. The reflective thinking cycle in design has been described by Schön as being when the designer reflects-in-action, they evaluate their moves in terms of their consequences, conformity to implications, and the new problems or potentials they create (2016).

One move I made with the creative freedom I had, was to choose that target audience. I chose to market towards families. This was successful because of my disruption to the

normal packaging design of fast food which tries to show the goodness of the food in a health-conscious perspective. I considered that the people wanting to eat my food would want it as a reward, so I chose a maximalist design style. I am still concerned that the packing is too different to the packaging that is offered by other brands.

When creating the name and logo for this imagined brand I considered consumer habits of ordering food to be delivered and in market research I found that lots of companies create seasonal packaging for Christmas. This informed my choice for creating packaging with a summer theme. This choice gave me the potential to use visual metaphor. I think the use of visual metaphor was the most successful part of my design because it adds humour to the design. Further evaluation of this action shows that this aids my design in appealing to the target audience.

Another part of the design where I have used reflective thinking on my work is the typography. For this I had my first experiment with 3D software. For this process I used Adobe Dimension as its 3D tools were easy to learn. A consequence of this was wanting to learn more 3D software and techniques including modelling in blender which I have used in other projects. I was impressed with how easily this allowed me to create texture and depth in my typography.

My biggest criticism is that on reflection, although some of the colours stand out like the waves and the inflatable flamingos, a lot of the colours blend in. I chose beige for background to match fast food but there needed to be more of a contrast when adding food to the package, as the burger buns, fries and chicken nuggets blended in. Another negative impact of the colours is that I think it may be too similar to a brown colour and brown colours have a strong association with faeces and rotten food (Palmer & Schloss,

2010). If I had used a tone or hue that is closer to a bright red it might have showed that red activated an avoidance motivation, which increased attention, memory (Mehta and Zhu 2009).

My conclusions are that although my design had lots of good ideas, it was far from being an effective design that could be used for fast food packaging, mostly because of the problems I have identified in my reflection. I have learned that next time I will experiment more with the possible colour options so that I can have all of the best elements of the design seen.

References for Practice-Based Writing

Chang, Y.-Y., Hwang, G.-J. & Chen, M.-R. (2019) A reflective thinking-promoting approach to enhancing graduate students' flipped learning engagement, participation behaviors, reflective thinking and project learning outcomes. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, Volume50(Issue5), pp. Pages 2288-2307 .

Mehta, R. & Zhu, R. J. (2009) Red or blue? Exploring the effects of color on cognitive task performances. *Science*, Volume 323, p. 1226–1229.

Palmer, S. E. & Schloss, K. B. (2010) An ecological valence theory of human color preference. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, Vol. 107(No. 19), p. 8877–8882.

Schön, D. A. (2016) *The Reflective Practitioner How Professionals Think In Action*. Abingdon: Routledge.

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