

Title Of Essay: Portfolio Of Writing

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Module: ADDA4022/C Ways of Thinking

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Tasks in order and my word count for each task:

Task 1- Observational writing, 520 words

Task 2- Manifesto writing, 512 words

Task 3- Practice-based writing, 500 words.

Altogether- 1,532 words.

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.

Task 1- Observational writing

Semiotics have many aspects; the simplified definition for it is “A sign” (Peirce, 1931-1958, p. 228). There are many different perspectives and theories of semiotics through practitioners such as Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussur. Throughout this essay, I will be focusing on **Denotative and connotative** through ‘The Peircean Triadic Model’ along with **signifiers** in ‘The Saussurean Dyadic Model’ and **myth**, by applying them to the original Star Wars poster.

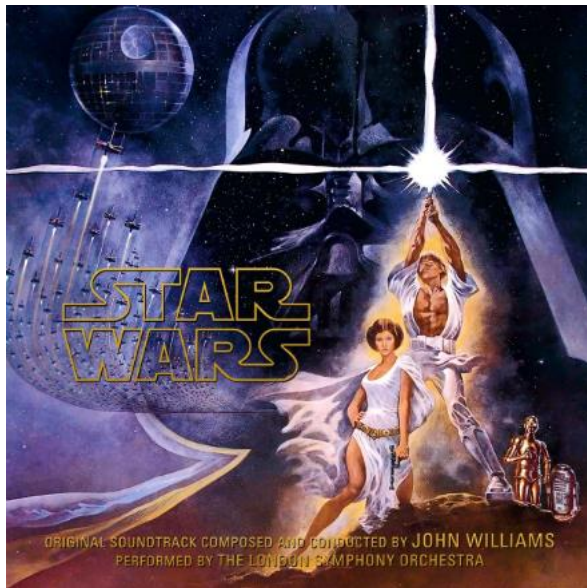


Fig 1, Tom Jung “A New Hope” Star Wars original poster (1977)

The Star Wars original trilogy movies were extremely popular and revolutionary when they first came out in 1977 and are still timeless movies today. This poster was designed by Tom Jung, who originally painted the poster with acrylic and airbrush whilst using stills from the film giving the poster a hand drawn feel. He was commissioned by George Lucas, to create a “good vs. Evil” (Brin, 2006) theme which has become a well-known modern-day myth. This makes it easy to identify clearly what the poster is about,

emphasizing the exciting adventure, futuristic science fiction 'space opera' movie genre. Furthermore, the division between good vs evil is apparent in this poster with the contrast between light and dark. Making it obvious to see who the heroes are, with Luke and Leia in the foreground wearing bright white whilst glowing, signifying hope compared to the looming darkness of Darth Vader dominating the background representing evil.

This poster has a variety of signifiers and myths within, one of which is where Luke's stance in the foreground. It is a 'power stance' pose, reminiscent of Greek sculptures showing he is the main hero and saviour in this movie. His bright lightsaber makes him look like a god-like figure. This has religious connotations to it, as it could be a cross, representing Jesus's crucifixion. Similarly, the King Arthur myth and legend of the sword in the stone is similar to Luke's pose with his hands raised above his head with the lightsaber whilst on a rock/stone. "pulling out this sword of this stone" (Malory, 1485: 58) Princess Leia's femininity is portrayed through her glamorous clothing. However, she also appears strong, powerful, and rebellious while holding a gun. She is a good example to other female viewers searching for equality and strength as she stands up to protect herself but in a glamorous way. "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish," (M Obama, 2012)

When this poster was created, it would have been within the cold war period (1947-91). This links to an era of tension, such as technological advancements through nuclear

threats. The 'Death Star' threatening the galaxy and The Empires forces representing our governments illustrates this. "A sign has both a signifier and a signified" (Saussure and Baskin, 2011, p.77) The Death Star has a cold metal feel along with Darth Vader's dark jet-black mask, signifying evil looming in the background depicting 'the Darkside'.

Before studying semiotics, I used to view this poster as fun and exciting. Now, I realise there is far more depth and symbolism involved. Such as the representation of governments, wars, myths, and religious connotations. It is not simply a poster about good versus evil.

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Task Two: Manifesto

1. Environmental single-use plastic awareness is so important.

2. Travel as much as you can and always explore new places; you only live once.

3. Treat animals nicely.

4. Always try to include everyone, so no one feels left out.

5. Mindfulness balance between work is so important.

6. Never stop learning and being hardworking.

7. Balance between work life and enjoyment and time for yourself.

8. Step out of your comfort zone and always try new things.

1. Environmental single-use plastic awareness is so important.



Fig 1, (Castro, 2016, *Plastic Pollution*)

“Plastics generated 1.8 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 – that's 3.4 per cent of the world's total emissions.” (United Nations, 2023)

I think we all need to take some sort of responsibility and be more conscious by thinking before we buy and waste, especially when it comes to single-use plastic. As we continue our way of binning things, we are contributing to the waste and negative effects it's having on our planet.

"Only we humans make waste that nature can't digest." (Moore, cited in Freinkel, 2011, p. 112)

We can help by just making the smallest changes in our daily habits, by not constantly buying single-use plastic bottles of water and buying a re-usable metal bottle which would be cheaper in the long run. Buying things secondhand from charity shops etc.

before brand new contributes to less waste, and most of the time it's cheaper. Or even selling things yourself instead of binning them through online platforms like Ebay and Vinted where you can benefit by receiving income. If we all make these small changes, it will help reduce these problems and help in the future.

5. Mindfulness balance between work is so important.



Fig 2, (*The Independent*, 2024, *Benefits of Yoga*)

I feel as though 'mindfulness moments' are incredibly important for everyone's mental health. It doesn't have to always be yoga. A tranquil peaceful walk in the countryside can help reduce stress. It's fundamental to take a walk or get outside anywhere for a breath of fresh air, especially away from work, to have a work-life balance. It also has an inadvertently positive effect on your work too, by inspiring to spark your creativity

which helps boost your motivation and productivity. It is so fundamental to have a break from work as it is important for both your physical and mental health.

An expert in mindfulness Jon Kabat-Zinn quoted “you can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Having mindful moments helps ground you to be in the present and enjoy current moments along with being able to deal with situations better.

8. Step out of your comfort zone and always try new things.



Fig 3, (McBurney, 2022, *Interactive Exhibition Vincent Van Gogh*)

Stepping out of your comfort zone helps you grow and develop as a person as well as learning new things. It helps you to build your own confidence, gain new perspectives, and experiences to help you discover new things you enjoy. It's always hard to overcome new challenges but it's crucial to keep learning. This can be interpreted in many different ways, as it could be to travel more, start a new hobby, job, or something you've never thought would be possible.

Although it can be daunting to start with, that is the sign and process that you are growing. "Becoming is better than being" (Dweck, 2006, p. 25). I found this relevant for moving away from home to University, I feel as though this is a big step in trying to live away from home etc. but it's a process that will help you achieve the things you want to achieve. As well as enjoying the journey of learning and adding your own flare to your creative artwork to create something new and revolutionary.

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Figure 2: The Independent (2024) *Benefits of Yoga*. Available At: <https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/outdoor-activity/yoga-benefits-kit-equipment-outfits-b2536448.html> (Accessed 26th November 2025)

Figure 3: McBurney (2022). *Interactive Exhibition. Vincent Van Gogh*. Available At: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/vincent-van-gogh-belfast-italy-dutch-naples-b2234355.html> (Accessed 26th November 2025)

Task Three- Practice-based writing:



Fig 1, (*Worms head, own mixed media painting, 2024*)

After visiting the Van Gogh Immersive experience in Bristol, where his paintings were reimagined, I was amazed how immersive the experience was. However, I couldn't take my Grandad there due to him suffering from cataracts at the time. "1 in 5 will live with sight loss in their lifetime." (RNIB, 2021) I realised that sight loss is a widespread problem and it's been overlooked and often ignored. I felt it is important to address this topic and spread awareness through a painting which could be appreciated by everyone including those with visual impairment.

I created a beach scene and sandcastle building that included 4 of the 5 senses which I learnt are fundamental for the visually impaired. I included Braille for the word 'press the

button' that played tranquil sounds. Essential seasalt and coconut oils were added to the 3D flowers for scent. I used light and textures to encourage viewers to feel the painting, applying a combination of acrylic and plaster to the canvas creating a sense of movement in the ocean. I also applied it smoothly like icing for reflections in the water of the sunset and created an impasto relief effect. These various processes show how important the materials are to create the painting as quoted by James Elkins "Painting is a fine art: not merely because it gives us trees and faces and lovely things to see, but because paint is a finely tuned antenna... fixing the faintest shadow of a thought in color and texture." (Elkins, 2004, p. 193)

"Colour... thinks by itself, independently of the object it clothes" (Baudelaire, 1955, p. 3)

Whilst creating this piece, I began to appreciate the impact colours have on the viewers' mood and emotions. I chose subtle pastel-like blue and pink, evoking a sense of calmness. The figures in this painting are shades of blue silhouettes and hints of colour from the sunset. This creates a sense of depth and foreground figures giving the viewers another perspective.

On reflection, I would now use an actual canvas, not a frame. It was difficult applying thick acrylic and plaster to the frame. However, using a frame helped the painting look as though it was a photo-framed moment. "We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience." (Dewey, 1933, p. 78) This quote shows how important it

is to take a step back and reflect upon your past artwork and to keep improving from the experience.

I learned from creating this painting how important it is to never give up and not to worry if you make mistakes. "In art, there are no mistakes, only discoveries," Bob Ross (1983) Understanding that mistakes are not a bad thing and reflecting on my work now will help me in the future.

By creating an all-inclusive art form, I now realise how art is appreciated differently by each individual, and how those with visual impairments may appreciate different elements of the work compared to other people. Whether through scent, touch, sight or sound.

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