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Task One – Semiotic Analysis

In our generation we are faced with many forms of advertisement and within this task I will be deconstructing the ideologies and the meanings behind certain objects, words or pictures that are used to signify a bigger meaning in various advertisements. Within this task I will be analysing various popular advertising campaigns whilst showing various theories of semiotics to show different and unique ways of reading advertisements.

As our generation continues, we are constantly becoming lazier in the terms of all media becoming strictly visual based. Nicholas Mirzoeff (1998, p.4) claimed 'the postmodern is a visual culture' suggesting to us that advertisements are mostly visually stimulating rather than a text-based message.

Everything we see has signs and symbols (Berger, 1972). For example, we connote that red means danger and that green means safe. These examples are all semiotics in the sense it's a sign that we see has another meaning. Semiotics can be in the form of words, images, sounds, objects and smells, but without our interpretations these are just meaningless. One theorist who supports this is Charles Sanders Pierce who presents that 'nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign' (1931, p.58) therefore these signs cannot be signs unless we present their meaning.

One of the most popular theorists when it comes to semiotics is Roland Barthes who proposed a model of semiotic communication. Barthes borrowed Saussure's ideas from linguistics and used them in everyday culture. He developed the idea of signifying and signified that for example, if someone says the word beach, we picture the sandy image of the seaside in our head. He showed us that we can deconstruct the original image into two with one image demonstrating the objective and the other image symbolising a connotation that we can perceive. To move forward, we can discuss Tom Ford's advertising campaign in 2007.

Tom Ford launched a fragrance advertisement aimed towards men with the main focus of the campaign striving to attract the male gaze in order to sell their product. Laura Mulvey claimed that 'the active viewer and females become the passive subjects, meant to represent male desire'. The very successful campaign consisted of images presenting a bottle of aftershave surrounded by a provocative image of the female body. The connotations linked to these posters was the idea that if you buy and wear the aftershave then women would be more likely to be interested in you sexually. The iconic Tom Ford logo at the bottom of each image puts across that it's a luxury brand and implies wealth. Jenny Diski (2013) also presented this when stating that the posters 'elicit social envy in order to sell commercial goods.' This shows that the luxury brand and their explicit advertising campaign creates envy from the audience to make them believe they can have what the advertisement is portraying.



Figure 1.

Overly the basics of semiotic deconstruction can be applicated to any form of media or text. The interpretation of semiotics can help the reader conclude to a metaphoric or intertextual meaning of the image. This can often be shown in false narratives that we see daily.

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Figure 1;
<https://aliciagarvie.wordpress.com/2018/04/23/>

Task Two: Manifesto

1. Be confident in your creations
2. Make what fills you with enjoyment
3. Prioritize your work
4. Put customers first
5. Use sustainable products such as biodegradable materials or low carbon footprint materials
6. Succeed through your failures
7. Good design is aesthetic

Key words and images.

Key words. 'aesthetic'



Figure 2.

When designing, a key selling point is to make the product as desirable as possible. One of the main ways to achieve this is to use various colours and shapes to make the item stand out.

An example used to find these results is the ERP experiment in Ningbo university ran by Aiqin Shi. This experiment consisted of 40 participants who were asked to analyse 60 products and rank them from high design aesthetics to low design aesthetics. The results of this experiment showed that the colours used and the shapes used determined how well liked a product was perceived. However, in the experiment there was a limiting factor discovered and this was the price of the product. The price was a huge factor in the aesthetics as when the product was reasonably priced with a nice aesthetic people showed an increased stimulus. However, with a product that is aesthetically pleasing with a high price people rated the item lower.

Keyword. 'Sustainable'



Figure 3.

When creating a product, we must be mindful of the current climate and conditions as we want our product to be environmentally friendly and not contribute to global issues such as the growing cause in climate change. One factor that contributes to this for example is rubbish pollution. A theorist that I will be linking sustainability within product design to is Schön. This theorist presents the idea of practising multidisciplinary design teams. To elaborate further, his idea teaches two stages of design, one being sense making and the other being future framing. It's said that his ideas lead to team learning and innovation. When

talking about future framing, we must think of the future applications of the products we design and what the environmental repercussions are of the product created.

Keyword. Failures

We as designers will always succeed and learn from failures. For example, if one product fails, we can see what went wrong and change and adapt future ideas to ensure we won't make the same mistake again. However, failures can also lead to success, one way this was achieved was in 1956 by Wilson Greatbatch. Greatbatch was trying to create a product that recorded the sound of the human heart, however he created a machine that gave out its own pulse. This product that he thought failed then went on to be a device that has saved millions of people, more commonly known now as a pacemaker.

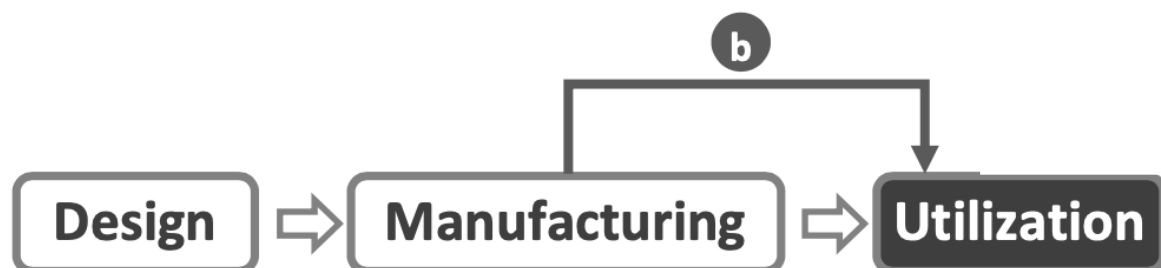


Figure 4.

In this map above we see that between manufacturing and utilization is an arrow. This arrow represents the failure stage of designing a product. As designers we are meant to fail, but the stage for failure is during prototyping. When using this process, we must adapt the product before it is used to ensure no mistakes have been made.

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Figure 2 . <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/05/beautiful-and-original-product-designs/>

Figure 3 <https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/rtf-fresh-perspectives/a1058-sustainable-practices-in-industrial-design/>

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Figure 4 - 15 - 18 August 2011, Luca Del Frate, Product Failure: A Life Cycle Approach

Task Three: Practise-based Writing:

Eco-Friendly

We hear or see the word ‘eco-friendly’ a lot within our lifetime whether that be in conversations or on product labels for example. The first actual definition for eco-friendly was something that was “not environmentally harmful” (Webster, 1998) meaning that products and their packaging have to be safe for the environment (Abdelrahman & Institute, 2020). Another way of looking at it is if any products or services cause harm to the planet when being made, used or wasted, they are not eco-friendly (Tweedale, 2020).



Figure 5.

If we look at a Coffee pod for example, this would be seen as not eco-friendly due to the rigorous manufacturing process, the amount of electricity used when using a coffee machine and the amount of waste left over after use. Coffee pods first became popular in 1988 by a man named Eric Favre who was an engineer for Nestle (Maza, 2022). There is a large variety of coffee pods all of which produce a different kind of espresso. They tend to come in different sizes and are often quite colourful to look more aesthetically pleasing. These capsules are typically made of polypropylene, polystyrene and aluminium. These materials are extremely harmful for the environment as the average decomposing time for polypropylene is 20/30 years, therefore creating a significant amount of waste. Between 1998 and 2012 it was estimated that coffee pods made up around 1% of waste in German and Swiss landfills, however recent research has shown that around 29,000 coffee pods end up in landfill every month (Cockburn, 2021).

Like myself, many coffee drinkers use coffee pods everyday with an estimated 1 billion coffee pods being used each year within the UK. The majority of people who own a coffee machine and use coffee capsules are aged around 25-34. This is quite a young age group and so some may be a bit careless as to how coffee pods affect the environment. I must admit, like the majority of people I use coffee pods most days without even thinking of the repercussions of the environmental damage they cause. I do believe they are a very useful product as they allow you to have a better-quality drink within the comfort of your own home and could potentially save people a lot of money in the long run.

I assume that along with many coffee pod manufacturers, I would like to change several things relating to the materials used. One thought could be to have the actual pod made of coffee so when the water enters the pod itself turns to coffee. However, if this idea isn't achievable, I would change the non-biodegradable plastic to an eco-friendlier alternative to achieve a shorter decomposability time, therefore achieving a more desirable product to customers as it is still the same product without the harmful repercussions of the plastics being used today.

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Figure 5 - <https://www.coffeefriend.co.uk/p/coffee-capsules-compatible-with-dolce-gusto-set-nescafe-dolce-gusto-cortado-3-x-16-pcs/>

