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Programme of Study: BA Graphic Design

Module: ADDA4022/C Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 472 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 488 words

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 497 words

Task One: Observational Writing

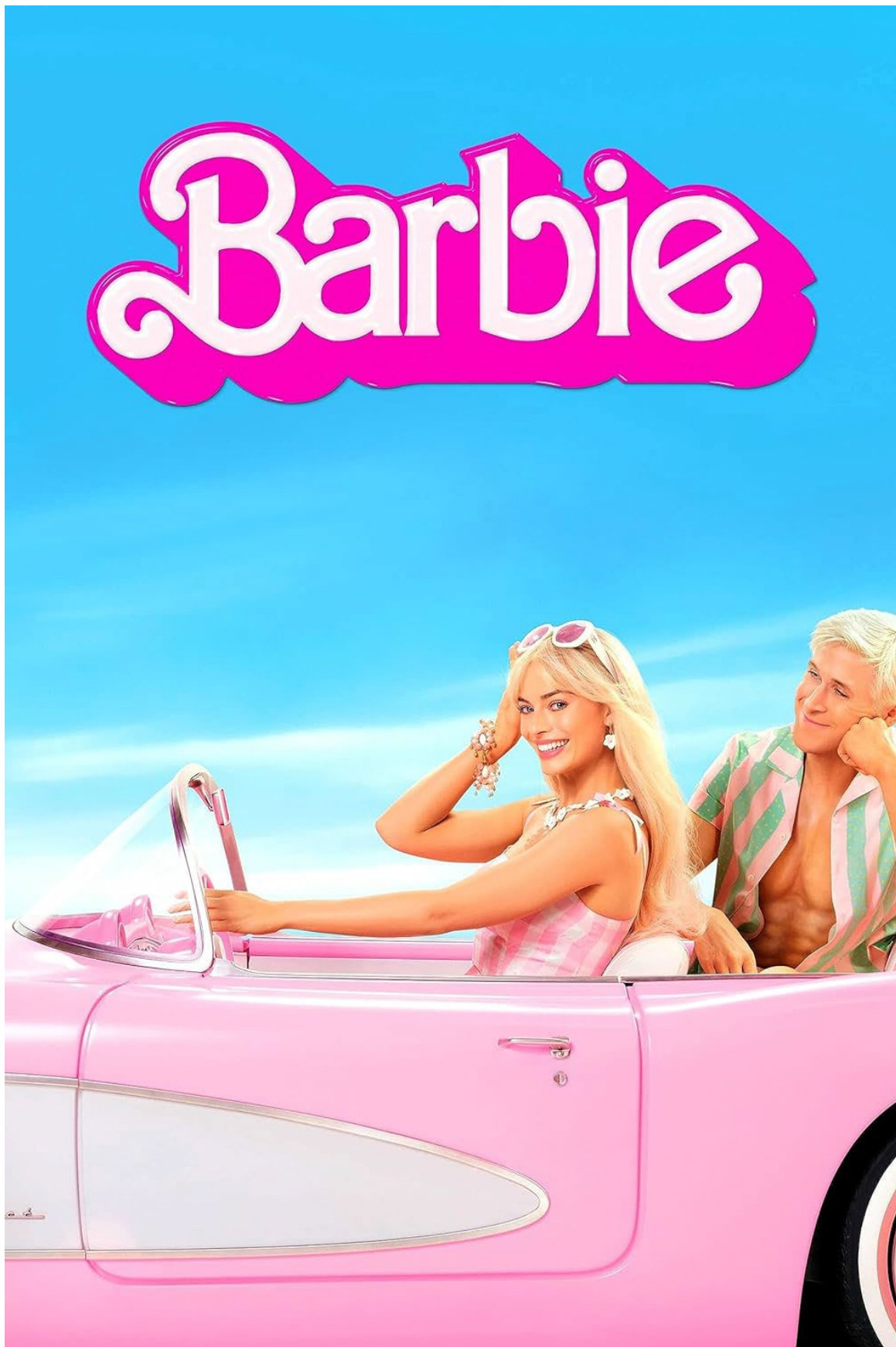


Fig. 1, Barbie Movie Poster (Amazon, 2023).

In the realm of visual communication, semiotics emerges as a tool for deciphering the language of signs and symbols (Chandler, 2004). Signs take the form of words, images, sounds or objects, according to John Berger (1990) such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. Therefore, in this essay, I will use my own experience, vision, and research to apply the principles of semiotics to the poster for the film 'Barbie'.

Barbie was created to support girls in 1959 by Ruth Handler, manufactured by American toy company Mattel (Barbie media). Barbie dolls are engaged in various professions, which conveys the idea that girls can be whoever they want to be. Over the 65 years of its existence, the doll's design has changed, but it has always demonstrated the perfect girl.

According to the signs of visual semiotics, Barbie is dominant, she drives the car, and Ken is just a passenger. The act of driving can symbolize freedom, adventure, and empowerment. Barbie as a driver can convey a message of female empowerment and activism. It could also imply that Barbie is leading the way and driving her own destiny.

Both characters are very attractive, even perfect, but while Barbie is pleased with herself and smiles at the viewer, Ken admires and looks at

her. This is another sign that she is in charge, and he complements her ideal world.

In this perfect world, they are tanned blondes with blue eyes. Blond hair and blue eyes were often associated with a perceived ideal of beauty, with notions of purity, innocence, and youthfulness. These physical features were seen as desirable and represented an idealized version of femininity or masculinity, depending on the context. Idealized images of a sunny suburban culture, beautiful suntanned women settings dominated popular culture during the 1950s and 1960s in California and quickly followed by the entire nation (Ainsworth, 2022).

According to Nugraha (2019) every color has their meaning, and this meaning absolutely relates to the linguistics area especially to the semiotics. The dominant color on the poster is pink. Pink is often associated with the feminine, it signifies women and sort of things related to them. Blue is the sky and the promise of beyond. The collective color of the spirit, blue invokes the qualities of rest.

The logo predominantly uses the color pink, which emphasizes its focus on women and associated with childhood and playfulness. It is bold font with curls that are typical of little girls' handwriting.

The weather is great: the sky is blue, it is warm and the sun is shining. It is a perfect world that revolves around the main character - Barbie. In my opinion, after detailed analysis, this poster is absolutely feminist and demonstrates women's strength and self-confidence.

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Figure 1: Amazon (2023) *Barbie Movie Poster*. Available at: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Barbie-Movie-Poster-Art-Glossy/dp/B0CGKXRN8N/ref=asc_df_B0CGKXRN8N/?tag=googshopuk21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=674877648446&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrant=14056087351237642231&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvl ocint=&hvlocphy=1007460&hvtargid=pla-

[2211754444319&mcid=6d3ffc643dac3a4a80b9e6cf6c406b9c&th=1](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmb.2023.107544)
(Accessed: 9 November 2023).

Task Two: Manifesto

1. Love what you do.
2. To be strong and kind.
3. Community and interaction. I believe in the importance of community and interaction for the exchange of ideas and the improvement of art.
4. Openness to changes.
5. Continuous self-improvement. Deep understanding of human psychology and search for the best solutions.
6. Design should be created primarily for people, taking into account their needs, convenience and make life easier for people.
7. Do not look for ready-made solutions, create new ones.
8. Modernity and heritage. Design should shed light on the past and the future, reconcile innovation with the preservation of cultural heritage.

Design should be created primarily for people, taking into account their needs, convenience and make life easier for people.



Fig. 1, Midvale School for the Gifted (The Far Side, 1986).

Donald A. Norman is an American professor and researcher who best explains the principle of designing with people's needs and comfort in mind, the importance of user-centricity and creating products that are easy to understand and easy to use.

“Norman doors” (Norman, 1988, p.1) clearly demonstrate that the design is not user-friendly. We know that doors have two end states, open and closed, and we intuitively should know from context whether to push, pull, or slide. Knobs, handles, latches, plates, bars, and rails all give us their

own hints at how to use them. This is a clue provided by the shape and position of the object. How do you know something is poorly designed? You have a hard time using it. If you have to guess whether to push or pull, it is a bad design.

Design created primarily for people should involves simplifying the structure of tasks, making things visible, getting the mapping right and stages of action.

Continuous self-improvement. Deep understanding of human psychology and search for the best solutions.

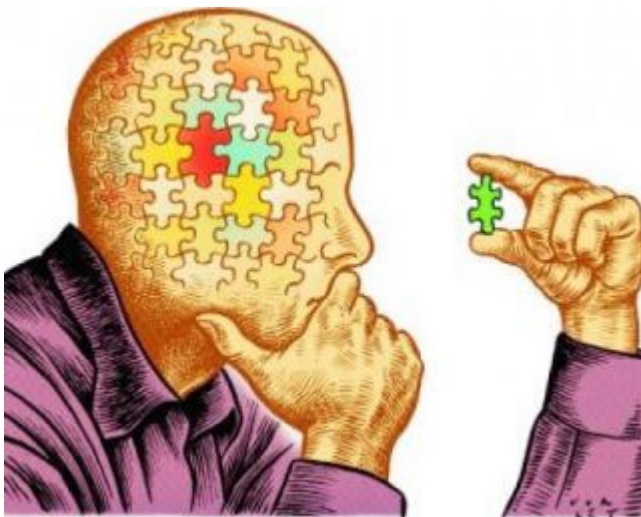


Fig. 2, All Self-Improvement Starts Here (Psychology Today, 2013).

Self-improvement and the search for the best solutions contribute to personal, professional and social development, which has a positive

impact on the quality of life and success (Brehm, 2022).

Whether you're designing a Web site or a medical device - or something somewhere in between - your audience is comprised of the people who will benefit from that design.

And the totality of your audience's experience is profoundly impacted by what you know - or don't know - about them (Weinschenk, 2011, p.11).

If you work for people, you have to understand their needs and the psychology of thinking and perception. The modern world is changing rapidly and constantly, with people changing and new technologies emerging. To be relevant and keep up with the times, you need to research and improve your processes and methods of work.

Modernity and heritage. Design should shed light on the past and the future, reconcile innovation with the preservation of cultural heritage.



Fig. 3, The Paradox of Progress: Is Our Quest for Modernity Is Threatening Our Cultural Heritage? (LinkedIn, 2023).

The contemporary world is defined by rapid changes, yet it is essential to remain connected to cultural heritage, which shaped our values. Design is guiding us through the space of time, shedding light on our past and pointing the way to the future.

Modern design, embracing innovation and cutting-edge technologies, can serve as a bridge between the past and the future. When Alfred North Whitehead stated, "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order" (Liebler and McConnell, 2020, p.27). He underscored the necessity of harmoniously merging innovations and preserving cultural legacy.

The use of traditional elements in contemporary design reflects a respect for heritage and defines an individual style. Design that highlights cultural heritage helps the modern world find a balance between innovation and preservation. Showing the past through aesthetics and functionality, contemporary design becomes a guide, testifying to our identity and strengthening our connection to cultural legacy.

Bibliography

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- Figure 1: The Far Side (1986) Midvale School for the Gifted. Available at: https://store.gocomics.com/product/the-far-side-comic-art-print-midvale-school-for-the-gifted-color/?ref=thefarside&_encoding=UTF8&tag=thefarside00-23 (Accessed: 30 November 2023).
- Figure 2: Psychology Today (2013) All Self-Improvement Starts Here Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/making-change/201308/all-self-improvement-starts-here> (Accessed: 30 November 2023).
- Figure 3: LinkedIn (2023) The Paradox of Progress: Is Our Quest for Modernity Is Threatening Our Cultural Heritage? Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/paradox-progress-our-quest-modernity-threatening-cultural-patel> (Accessed: 5 December 2023).

Task Three: Practice-based Writing.

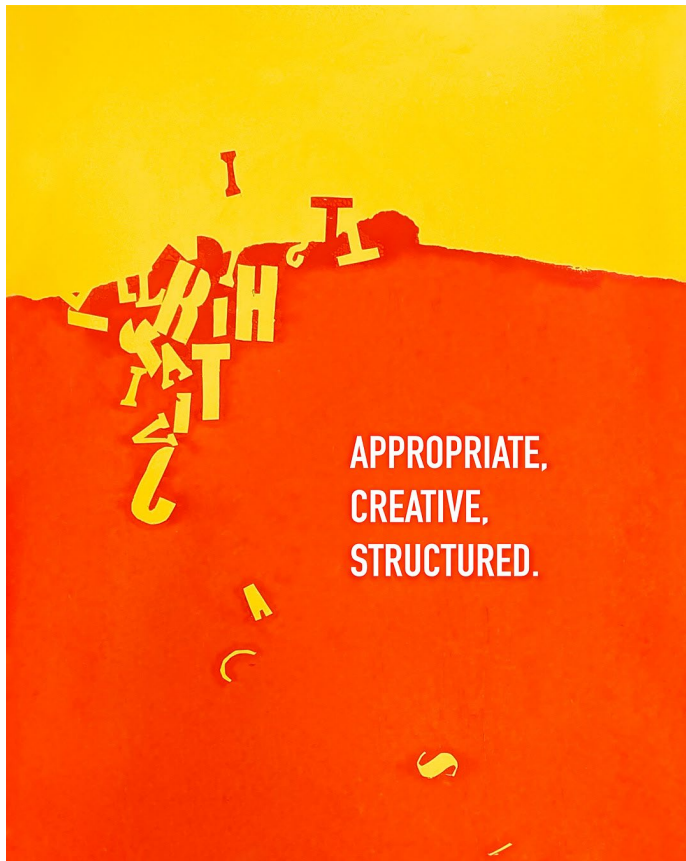


Fig. 1, Instagram quote (Muzyka, 2023).

In Figure 1 you can see an Instagram post with a quote from Alexander Boxill. This is one of the images made for the module ‘Learning in the Digital Era’. I made this image using Screen Print and later added text in the lower right corner using Photoshop.

My main idea was to create chaotic element on the one hand and structure on the other to emphasise the main point of the quote. Boksill said: “In my opinion, this should encourage designers to be experienced enough to make the design ‘work right’, to be creative but at the same time appropriate and structured” (Fiell, 2023, p.51). To achieve this, I depicted

letters of different sizes and styles flowing almost chaotically from the yellow field to the orange one. The arrangement of letters falling down the canvas creates a sense of movement and disorder. On the other hand, I added a quote in a structured and readable way.

Wassily Kandinsky once said, "Color is a power which directly influences the soul" (1977,p.25). Therefore, the color had to be bright to attract attention to the post, but not too much so as not to create anxiety, like red or yellow in combination with black. At the same time, be warm and joyful.

The combination of colors in the image - a radiant orange against a backdrop of bright yellow - creates a stimulating visual experience. The orange is energetic and dynamic, often associated with creativity and happy. Some common words associated with orange: warm, happy, autumn, friendly. Some words associated with yellow: friendly, joyful, light, sunny and stimulating (Nugraha, 2019).

"Designer create graphics with the assumption that viewers will understand their message - that upon viewing line, color, and shape, a communication will be transmitted" (Malamed, 2011, p.20).

Looking at the finished work, I think that in general I managed to convey the main idea of the quote through the poster design. I think the positive elements are the bold use of colour and the dynamic composition. This attracts the viewer's attention and creates visual interest. The vertical

movement of the letters adds a sense of action and can symbolise disorder and lack of structure, while the quote itself, which calls for being creative but at the same time appropriate and structured, looks structured.

On the negative side, the design's seeming lack of focal point may leave viewers searching for meaning or a place to rest their eyes.

For instance, adjusting the distribution of the letters to create a more balanced composition or employing Dilational Symmetry could add a sense of order to the chaos. This could make the poster more aesthetically pleasing while maintaining the dynamic tension that gives it energy.

I would also have added a quote to the design at the stage of Screen Printing to make the text look more appropriate. On closer inspection, you can see that the text was added to the image later, which looks a touch artificial.

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Figure 1: Muzyka, A. (2023) *Instagram quote*.