

Task 1, Manifesto Writing – 525 words

Task 2, Practical-based Writing - 532 words

Task 3, Observational Writing – 441 words

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Graphic Design BA

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Task 1 – Manifesto Writing

1. *Music and sound are the greatest modes of inspiration for me.*
2. **Creativity and expression are the most important core aspects of humans.**
3. **The deeper evils of capital greed have adversely impacted the growth of art as much as it has assisted in it.**
4. *Not everything needs a substantial meaning – creating is meaning in of itself.*
5. **We enjoy debating and conflicting over trivial things too often and forget the struggles of other groups of people.**
6. *Mind, body and soul are intertwined. If one were to falter, the others will follow the same.*
7. *Patriotism has a dangerous overlap with nationalism – but being proud of where you come from is especially important.*
8. *There is a minimal amount of ‘human nature.’ We cannot blame the negative sides to our being on what we inherited.*

Exploring Manifesto Points

1. Creativity and expression are the most important core aspects of humans.

‘Art, for art’s sake’

We should strive to create as humans more than anything – whether it be art or through ourselves. Specifically, in reference to Maslow’s theory of motivation, we obviously require automation, or what Maslow will refer to as ‘the development of homeostasis,’ which refers ‘to the body’s automatic efforts to maintain a constant state of the blood stream.’ (1943, p. 4). But I would argue as our needs become increasingly more achievable in western society (global death rate declines over 50 years, UN, 2019), the importance of ‘self-actualisation’ becomes increasingly prominent. Expressing your true self is a core aspect of self-actualisation, as Maslow describes as “the desire for self-fulfilment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualised in what he is potentially” (1943, p. 15).

Achieving the top of this hierarchy is how, I believe, our true potential as a human race can be taken advantage of.

2. The deeper evils of capital greed have adversely impacted the growth of art as much as it has assisted in it.

“Works of art have always been reproducible. What man has made, man has always been able to make again” (Benjamin, p. 3). Copying is a part of corporate expansion: to be able to create what you sell in excess to fill the demand. It has the effect of creating more artists learning from the original to hopefully end up creating their own pieces of art. However, the rejection of artists remains a prominent problem in capitalism, where their representation in media is often overshadowed by corporate names (publishers), individual representatives (such as writers or film actors) or the sea of artists that are the backbone of productions (see image). Without the list of animators, despite how massive, the production would not be as popular as it is.

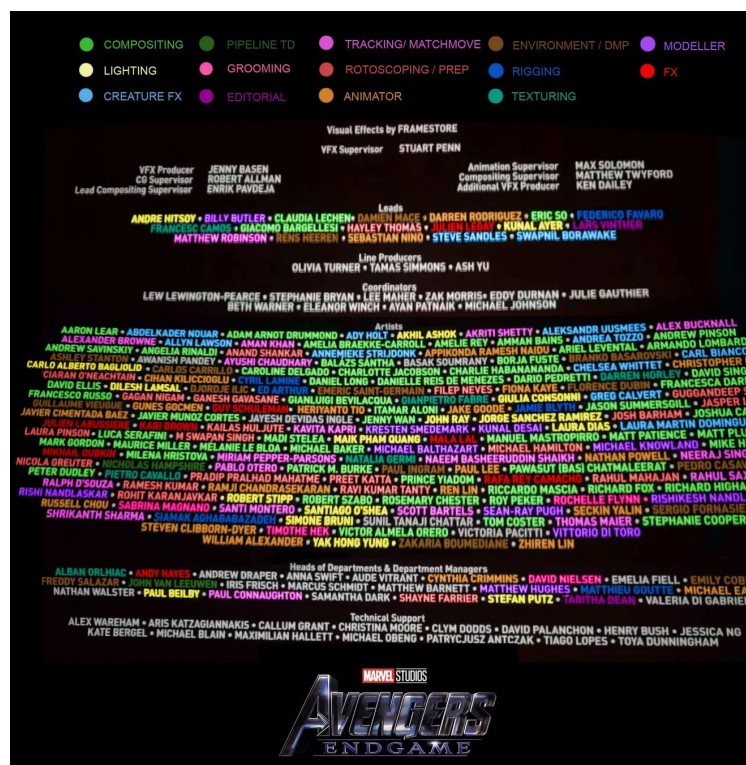


Figure 1. Marvel's Avengers Endgame's Credits Highlighted, Disney/Polygon, 2019

3. We indulge in debating and conflicting over trivial things too often and forget the bigger picture.

“It's no secret [...] that Twitter has a bot problem.” (Hutchinson, 2020).

The best way to interact with a so-called troll (Oxford defines as “a person who makes a deliberately offensive or provocative online post.”) is to simply not to engage with them – “don’t feed the trolls.”

According to Kate Crawford, “...trolling is a mainstream form of political discourse.” Malicious institutions take advantage of this trend. There’s value in political discourse – as can be seen during 2016’s US election where it has been confirmed that “there had been Russian interference according to the FBI, CIA and NSA” (Marineau, 2020). Despite evidence, the interference distracts others into believing truth to be unconfirmed, including UK prime minister Boris Johnson who says that ‘there is no evidence of Russian interference in UK democratic processes’ (2019). Berger rightfully says, that “by refusing to enter a conspiracy, one remains innocent of that conspiracy. But to remain innocent may also be to remain ignorant” (1972, p. 35).

Taking distinct advantage of our desire to argue, the discourse of political ideologies on the internet has created rifts we cannot contain within the political world.

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Task 2 – Practice-based Writing



This is a piece I created in 2016, which I submitted as my final for A-level Graphic Communication. I think it remains an interesting historic part of my education and a good source of reflection. My task was to submit two forms of work that utilised the broad term ‘dawn and dusk,’ and I had decided to create a ‘conceptual image’ that would reference what I had studied that year. I had researched nocturnal animals mostly in that year, which is why there is an image of both a fox and an owl.

I do not like this piece. I feel like it falls victim to both misunderstanding of what graphic design is and poor planning when I was taking the course. Although not every piece requires a place to be put upon such as a magazine cover, advertisement or poster – it does beg the question, what was this for?

Academic examination of the piece aside, it is not good looking at all. There are clear perspective and colouring issues, the owl’s silhouette is poorly presented (so it poorly reflected the research I had put into depicting them) and there’s no discerning subject to take hold of as the fox is almost meaningless... with a bright traffic cone to distract the eye. It is dull and I don’t consider it a good piece of my work.

I can see, upon reflection, why this is the case. My ambitions up until this point was to explore concept art, digital illustration and art within video games or comics but I had very little understanding of these areas and decided to go ‘with my gut.’ I also attributed so little time to developing a final piece and what its suit could be (could this be a poster that better represents something important?) that it unfortunately suffered when I was told to sit down for x many hours and produce something that reflects the last year’s amount of research.

As with most faults with my past I consider this to be a problem with youth – a distinct lack of experience that would only grow less of a problem with age and proper reflection. But I also would like to say that it would also fall onto the institution where I took this course. I feel like there was a distinct lack of proper resources for a proper graphic design course and I believe that the students would often fend for themselves. There was no clear definition of graphic design and it almost felt like a substitute 'art and design' course – and this problem could be because of lack of proper funding and understanding of the institution and not the lecturers or course makers.

I could not magically give myself the wisdom I achieved with age to my younger self to appreciate the time they had and the course they were doing, but I still value this time as an important point in my education timeline. Through reflection, I would have a much clearer understanding of what's being asked of me – and if I was asked to create this piece again, with the brief I was given 5 years ago, there would definitely be more professionalism involved.

Task 3 – Observational Writing

In 2020, all of us in the UK faced lockdowns following the global pandemic. As lockdowns restrictions were beginning to soften, many question ‘when will we go back to normal?’ (Harris, 2020) With the adjusted ways of living being uncomfortable to some – there is a clear desire for everything to go back to some form of normality. This text will illustrate forms of semiotics and utilise an example of polysemy in the form of an advertising campaign.



“The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe” (Berger, p. 8). A material aspect of a sign, *the signifier*, and the concept, *the signified*, are what make up what linguist Ferdinand de Saussure defines as a *sign*. A signifier could be an image of a pine tree – a natural plant – but what it represents as a concept could carry more meaning. The signified could be referring to a single tree, a forest or what it’s commonly used for – signifying a naturalist tourist attraction.

Semiotics also can be shaped over time. The world’s present has massive impact on what can be decoded from images. The later example shows this, as provided to society in as early as 2019 would provide very little signification. The audience is constantly given new things to help decode messages and the current world events have an impact too. Funnily enough, ‘back to normal’ might be a global language-barrier breaking term as we all face the pandemic together.

During 2020, US pharmaceutical company Mucinex published posters using optical illusions with *polysemic* designs that promote good health etiquette. It has been common amongst people having to stay home more often that they miss our old form of ‘normality’ and may even consider it ‘boring.’ However, to make committing to social distancing staying-at-home more, in Berger’s definition, *glamorous*, Mucinex has equated these simple acts as heroic. There is both an ironic sense of nostalgia for returning to our normality as well as illustrating a duty to continue being ‘boring’ in order to help stop a spread of a pandemic. The posters also utilise the optical illusion of both superheroes and everyday objects (such as a computer or coffee mug) as a mask, which has become a staple in public health etiquette in 2020.



In conclusion, polysemic images can be a great way to ‘glamourise’ mundane tasks and help create a better sense of ‘doing good’ when making them seem heroic – as the Mucinex posters are good

examples of that. My perception of the image has changed from being impressed by the visual art to being intrigued by the ability to produce multiple meanings through optical illusions.

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