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Programme of Study: BA Set Design

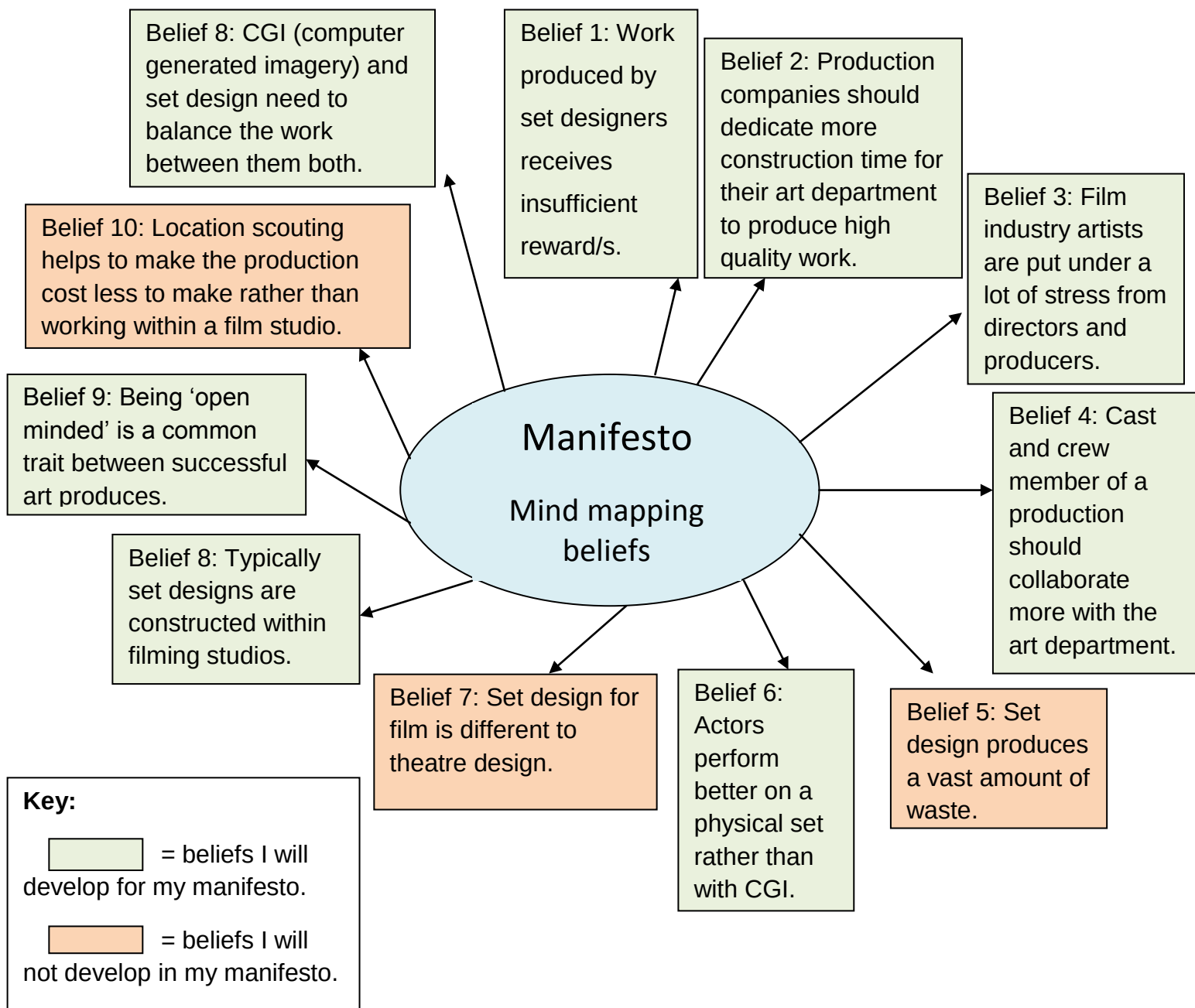
Module: ADAD4018

Tasks in the order I received them:

1st: Manifesto (Julia's Task) = 537 words

2nd: Reflective Writing (Jon's Task) = 538 words

3rd: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan's Task) = 465 words



Belief 1:	Belief 2:	Belief 3:	Belief 4:	Belief 6:	Belief 8:	Belief 9:	Belief 10:
Talk about how other members of the cast and crew receive less recognition for their work within the production.	Explain about the problems and struggles the art department has when instructed to build a set within a small time frame.	Describe the stress film industry artists are put under to produce work to a high quality.	Express the belief of having the art department collaborate with actors to develop a character.	Explain how actors perform differently with a physical set rather than with a Computer generated set.	Give detail about how physical sets for a film are built within a film studio.	Put into words how successful set designers share the common trait of being 'open minded'.	What and why computer generated imagery is and how it has replaced physical sets produced by set designers.

Manifesto (Julia's Task)

Eight statements for manifesto:

1. Set designers receive insufficient reward/s for their work.
2. Actors and set designers should collaborate to learn about and develop characters.
3. Physical set designs should be used more within films rather than Computer Generated Imagery (CGI)/ special effects.
4. A film's art department employ an insufficient number of artists needed for the visuals of a film.
5. Physical sets within film and theatre enhance actors' performances.
6. Most set designed stages are found within a filming studio.
7. Set designers working 'under pressure' need to think efficiently and effectively and act quickly.
8. An 'open mind' is a requirement of being a successful set designer.

Statement 1: Physical set designs should be used more within films rather than Computer

Generated Imagery (CGI)/ special effects.

Film audiences can argue that movies such as; Jon Favreau's 'The Lion King', Lasse Hallstrom and Joe Johnston's 'The Nutcracker and the Four Realms',

and Carl Rinsch's '47 Ronin' use "Computer Generated Imagery" CGI, (Roy, 1989, p.1) excessively to decrease the film's production

cost. In doing so, it sacrifices potential work for production set designers. Masako Masuda - '47 Ronin' production's set designer wishes for there to be physical sets built rather than it being done with CGI, (Grouchnikov, 2013a). A production's crew rely on the production set designer's materialised work, to help them implement their own work upon the set stage. CGI however, challenges this and can install doubt within the work of the film production crew. More shots take up valuable time and are costly in postproduction, (Olson, 1999a, p.68).



Fig. 1. The Nutcracker and the four realms behind the scenes from Movie VFX (2019).

Statement 2: A film's art department employ an insufficient number of artists needed for the visuals of a film.

Entertainment productions always have an art department team. They are "responsible for creating the overall look of a television show or feature film" that a director desires, (Foster, 2019). To construct a high quality set within a limited time



Fig. 2. 47 Ronin film behind the scenes from Vimeo (2015)

frame, many artists are needed. If the number of art department members decrease, the production becomes delayed due to there not being enough artists to meet the director's demands: studio producers demand work to be completed within a one month period with fifteen employees, rather than hiring five employees for a three month project, (Grouchnikov, 2013b). By doing so, directors risk the film looking unfinished.

Statement 3: An 'open mind' is a requirement of being a successful set designer.

Successful set designers open their minds, to allow themselves to discover answers to questions by their "willingness to consider alternative opinions" (Stanovich and Toplak, 2019). An inspiring practitioner is film production designer Rick Carter. Over the past 38 years, Carter has worked as a film production designer on 24 films, ranging from: sci-fiction, realism, animation, historical dramas and film based on books genres. Carter was the production designer for figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 during his film career. Figure 8, depicts a poster advertising James Cameron's *Avatar*" (Pak, 2016, p.215) science fiction production.

Whereas figure 6, 'The Post', finishes Steven "Spielberg's trilogy of historical dramas" (Chang, 2018, p.1), figure 6. Lastly are Robert Zemeckis's

'Back to the Future part 2' and 'Back to the Future Part 3' (figures 5 and 6) that end the



Fig. 3. *Back to the Future Part 2* (1989)



Fig. 4. *Back to the Future Part 3* (1990)



Fig. 5. *Avatar* (2009) poster



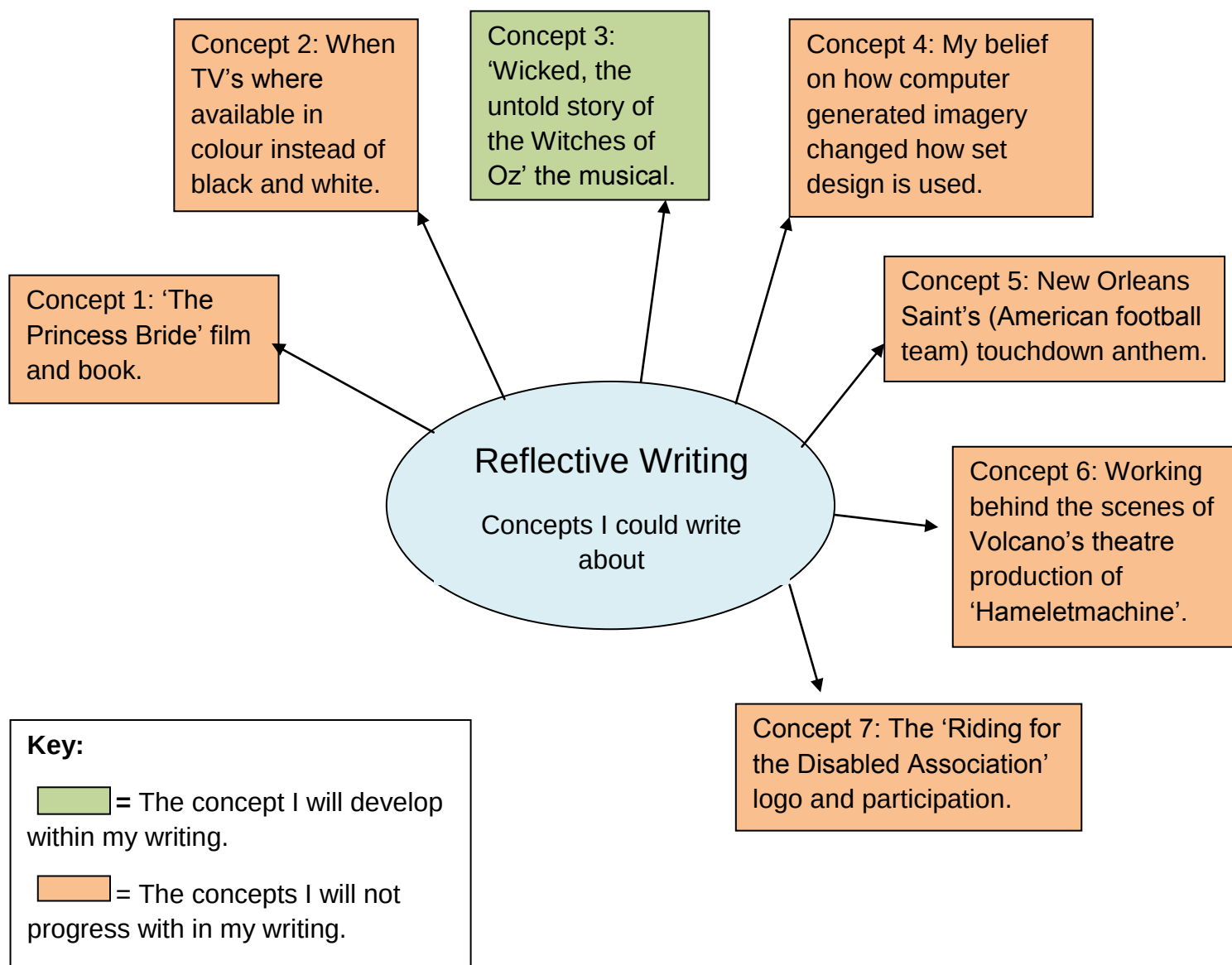
Fig. 6. *The Post* (2017) poster

“time-travel story” (Freer, 2010, p.2) trilogy. Each category has required Carter to conduct specialist research and produce exclusive creativity to give each film its own unique “sets, props, costumes, colour schemes, lighting...” (Olson, 1999b, p. 2). A film production designer must think about those elements for the production to differentiate from existing film set designs.

Manifesto referencing List for figures and quotes:

- *Avatar* (2009) Directed by James Cameron [DVD]. Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox.
- *Back to the Future Part 2* (1989) Directed by Robert Zemeckis [DVD]. Los Angeles: Universal Pictures.
- *Back to the Future Part 3* (1990) Directed by Robert Zemeckis [DVD]. Los Angeles: Universal Studios.
- Chang, J. (2018) 'Ridley Scott's 'All the Money in the World' and Steven Spielberg's 'The Post' Offer a Revealing Study in Directorial Contrasts'. Review of *The Post* by Steven Spielberg. Evanston: PopMatters Media Inc. Available at: https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/2014368374?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo (Accessed: 1st January 2020).
- Freer, I. (2010) '25 Years of "Back to the Future"' Review of *Back to the Future*. By Robert Zemeckis London: Emap Metro Ltd. Available at: https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/753504767?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo (Accessed: 28th December 2019).
- Grouchnikov, K. (2013). *The art and craft of set design- interview with Masako Masuda*. [Interview] Available at: <https://www.pushing-pixels.org/2013/07/20/the-art-and-craft-of-set-design-interview-with-masako-masuda.html> (15th October 2019).
- Hall, R. (1989). *Illumination and colour in computer generated imagery*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- MasterClass (2019). *What is the Art Department and What Does it Do?* [Video]. Available at: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-the-art-department-and-what-does-it-do> (Accessed: 1st January 2020).
- Movie VFX (2019). *The Nutcracker and The Four Realms – VFX Breakdown by MPC*. [Video]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQM9JrrSIY4> (Accessed: 31st December 2019).

- Pak, C. (2016). *Transformations and environmentalism in Science Fiction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Standovich, K.E. and Toplack, M.E. (2019). *The need for intellectual diversity in psychological science: Our own studies of actively open-minded thinking as a case study*. United Kingdom: Elsevier. Available at: [https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/science/article/pii/S0010027719300617](https://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/science/article/pii/S0010027719300617) (Accessed: 31st December 2019).
- *The Post* (2017). Directed by Steven Spielberg. [Film] Los Angeles: Twentieth Century Fox.
- Vimeo (2015). *MPC 47 Ronin VFX breakdown*. [Video]. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/95493146> (Accessed: 3rd January 2020).



List of what I should talk about	How I should talk about it	References I could use
Wicked the untold story of the witches of Oz (musical).	What the musical is about.	Books (autobiography and biography) Articles
What was the inspiration behind making the musical 'Wicked'?	How and what inspired the director to make the novel a musical.	Books (autobiography and biography). YouTube Program from 2013 Online website
Seeing the musical in 2013.	My perspective and thoughts about the performance.	Program from 2013 performance

Reflective Writing (Jon's Task)

Stephen Schwartz (composer of *Wicked*), came across Gregory Maguire's 1990 novel "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West" (Platt, 2013a, p.2) as seen in figure 1. Maguire's inspiration for his novel originated from; "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by American writer L. Frank Baum" (Platt, 2013b, p.2) and historical events of 1990 that included; the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops that sparked the beginning of the Persian Gulf War, the release of Nelson Mandela following in excess of 27 years imprisonment, the re-unification of East and West Germany and Margaret Thatcher's resignation as Prime Minister, (Platt, 2013c, p.2).

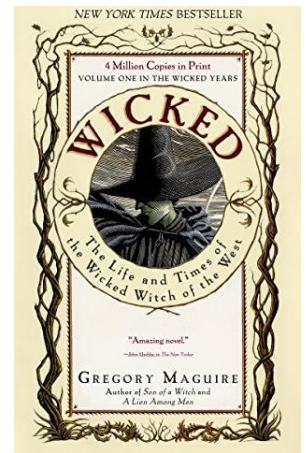


Fig. 1: Maguire, 2009.

Schwartz's admiration for Maguire's novel (Universal Studios, 2009a) inspired him to transform Maguire's book into a musical. In the year 2000, Marc Platt, *Wicked the Musical's* producer (IBDB, 2019) was "developing a screenplay based on Maguire's novel" (Universal studios, 2009b) but believed "something in the storytelling" to be missing (Universal Studios, 2009c). Schwartz phoned Platt about his concept of turning the novel into a musical; leading to Platt's realisation, their collaboration and the creation of the musical.

Wicked the Musical is mainly based on Maguire's English novel, an extension of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz", the American novel and the film "The Wizard of Oz", 1993 (IMDB, 1990a). The Oz world has fascinated American children since the release of Baum's children's book in 1900 (Platt, 2013, p.2). Over the course of the 19th century, the story has been recreated into a film, targeting new and widening existing audiences to increase the global popularity. By transforming the classic novel and film into a musical, it automatically attracts Oz audiences to the "untold story of the Witches of Oz" (Universal Studios, 2009d). The musical opened in San Francisco on the 28th May 2003 (Universal Studios, 2009e), 64 years after 'The Wizard of Oz' movie premiered in America (IMDB, 2009b). Throughout the last century, the parental guidance (PG) rated adaptation has attracted UK and USA families alike and grossed \$24,790,250 in the USA alone, (IMDB, 2009c).

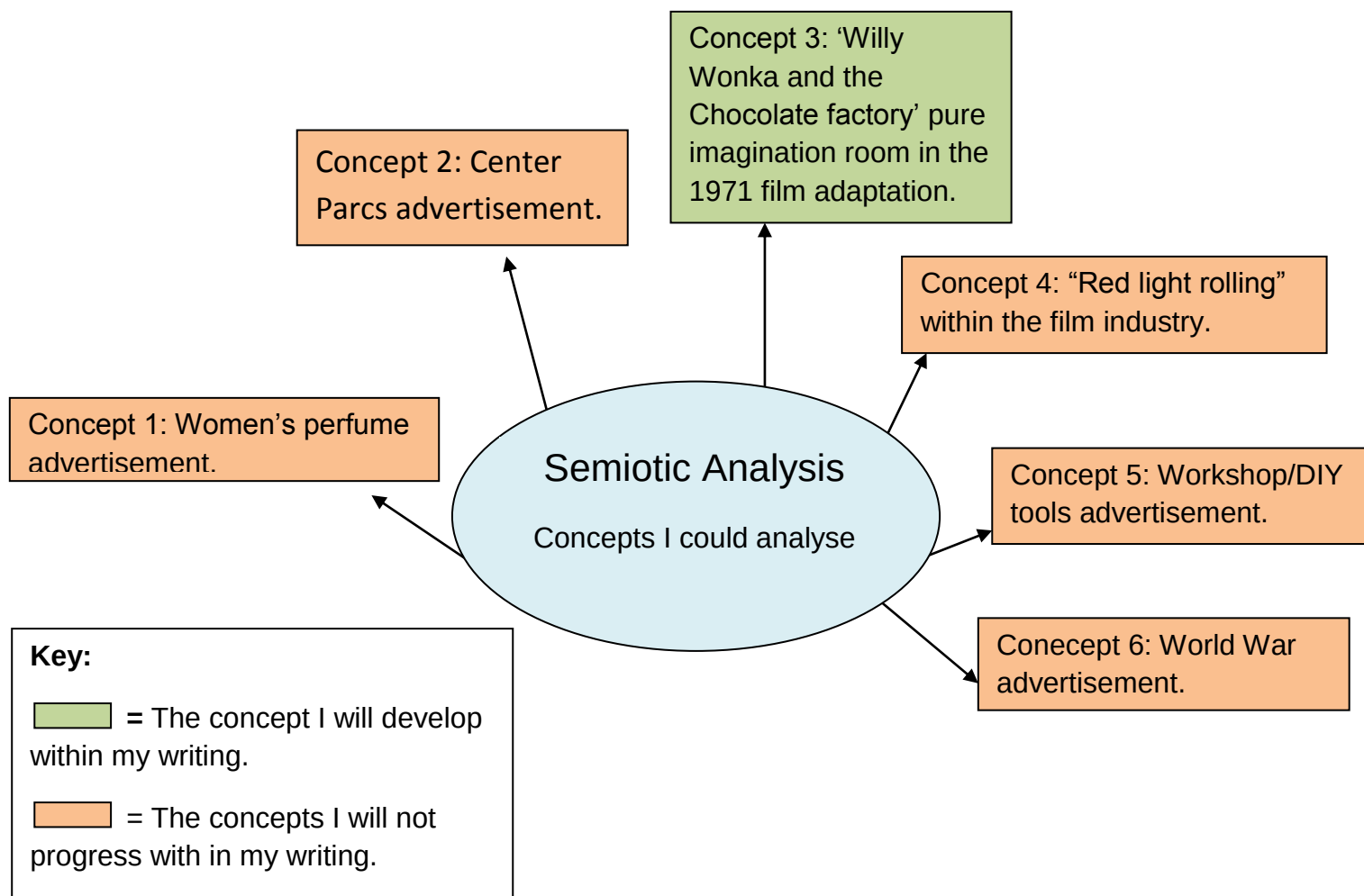
Before Maguire's novel, the history of the two Witches of Oz history remained unexplained. Therefore many audience members, including myself, have conjured up many assumptions on why the Good Witch is good and the Wicked Witch is wicked. Personally, since watching the *Wicked the Untold Story of the Witches of OZ* in 2013, I believe; the musical aims to unravel the dramatic history between the two witches' before Dorothy entered Oz (Universal Studios, 2009). By the end of the musical, I felt that I had gained an in-depth understanding of the characters connection and their actions through the novel and films' narrative.

As a set design student, I have discovered how diverse a script can be interpreted through set design for film and theatre. Personally, I believe that with extensive forethought, planning and the creation of meaningful and symbolic set design, audience members' experiences can be optimised.

Today, *Wicked* can be seen in theatres across the UK and USA (including West End and Broadway productions). Since the production's release in 2003, the musical has won 124 awards including 3 Tony and a Grammy, (*Wicked the untold story of the Witches of Oz*, 2019).

Reflective writing reference list for figures and quotes:

- IBDB. (2019) *Marc Platt*. Available at: <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/marc-platt-116997> (Accessed: 12th November 2019).
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- Platt, M. (2013) *Wicked the Untold Story of the Witches of Oz*. London: The Araca Group.
- Universal Studios, (2009) *YouTube* [video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZVp2ZOGAhw> (Accessed 5th November 2019).
- Universal Studios (2009). *YouTube* [video]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=carlAbk6THU> (Accessed: 5th November 2019).
- *Wicked the untold story of the Witches of Oz*, (2019) *Wicked the untold story of the Witches of Oz*. Available at <https://www.wickedthemusical.co.uk/london/about/awards> (Accessed: 12th November 2019).
- *Wicked the untold story of the Witches of Oz*. By Winnie Holzman. (2013). Directed by Joe Mantello. [London, 8th August 2013].



List of what I should talk about	How I should talk about it	References I could use
How Roahl Dahl's message and vision within 'Charlie and the chocolate factory' was adapted into a film.	Describe the importance of making the room a fantasy dream set to emphasis the message.	YouTube Articles Film Film reviews
Chocolate boat ride	What the image of a boat ride does to emphasis the element of 'fun' within the scene.	Festival reviews Internet
Colourful Tubes	How the tubes symbolise the industrial industry/factories.	Factory books Engineering books
Enormous sweets	How they support Dahl's message within his book.	Internet Books

Semiotic Analysis (Ryan's Task)

The 1971 movie, 'Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory' (IMDB, 1990), depicted in figure one, had evolved from Roald Dahl's children's book entitled 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' (Dahl, 2016, p.1).



Fig. 1: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, 1971

Since the book's release in 1964, Roald Dahl's website has conservatively estimated that twenty million copies of the tale have been sold internationally in 55 different languages, (Dahl, 2018).

Within figure 1; the film's audience becomes attracted to the fantasy set of Willy Wonka's factory. As shown, Wonka's factory resembles a natural environment yet full of infamous, enormous sweets as well as a theme park with aluminous tubes and a boat ride upon a flowing chocolate river.

Traditional sweets are displayed within this scene like a natural landscape. Popping-up from, what are assumed to be edible rock and grass patches are humongous mushrooms, gummy bear trees and lollipops that transform the factory into a sweet meadow. To build upon this delectable display is the additional chocolate river bank and a cascading chocolate water fall-brimming, with blooming sugar 'foliage' dotted around.

Garish aluminous tubes upon the set are striking due to their 1970's psychedelic hues of yellow and pink. Symbolically the tubes signify the industrial workings of a real factory. However, within Dahl's fantasy world of Willy Wonka, the tubes would be constructed from edible confectionary. The colours, the tubes exaggerate the 70's strong primary, concrete grey and brick red colours for architecture (Mari, 2011, p.27). Due to the film being based upon a children's book, this implies that the film was targeted towards young children; therefore the set designers had to design a set that would attract a younger audience. Whilst instructed to do so, the set designers changed the

popular brick red colour to a vibrant pink tube to link the chocolate factory to the Wonka Bars' packaging, rather than industrial factories or house decoration.

During Willy Wonka's factory tour, he takes his audience onto his chocolate river boat ride. A circular canopy on the boat resembles a carousel ride within a fun theme park ride. This implies that his chocolate boat ride is going to be a joyful ride similar to the popular carousel ride.

This section of the film represents; Dahl's literary message of not ever being able to predict what is ever going to happen to a guest even in their wildest dreams (Dahl, 1964). To further elaborate the message from the fictional book, the movie producers had Gene Wilder, the actor who portrayed Willy Wonka in the 1971 film adaptation, perform the song 'pure imagination' while roaming through his 'dream-like' factory set, (*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, 1971). Audiences thus receiving the underlying message of the children's book, that there is no limit to one's imagination.

Semiotic Analysis reference list of quotes and figures:

- Dahl, R. (2016) *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. (1971). Directed by Mel Stuart [DVD]. Wolper Pictures Ltd: Los Angeles.
- IMDB (1990) *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* [website]. Available at: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0067992/?ref=nm_sr_srsq_1 (18th December 2019)
- *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. (1971). Directed by Mel Stuart, [Film]. Wolper Pictures Ltd: Los Angeles.
- Roald Dahl (2018) *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Available at: <https://www.roalddahl.com/roald-dahl/stories/a-e/charlie-and-the-chocolate-factory>
(Accessed: 18th December 2019)