

Topic on a Page

A Level – All Specifications

Theoretical Perspectives

J Kelly

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Activity posters are provided for each of the above.

All Topic on a Page posters are provided in both A3 and A4 format.

Teacher's Introduction

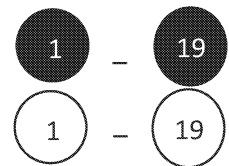
This resource is primarily intended to be used during revision by students studying A Level Media Studies. It is important for students to have a good knowledge of theoretical perspectives across all A Level Media specifications. This knowledge will enable them to analyse media texts with more confidence and support their arguments in their written exams. Students are almost guaranteed to be asked questions which relate directly to a specific theorist or theoretical perspective. This resource is designed to ensure students have all the knowledge they need to excel in these areas of their exams.

As a revision tool that focuses on a fairly specific aspect of Media Studies, this resource is comprehensive and thorough in the knowledge it imparts. It offers key terminology, background information on theorists, explanations of their key ideas and a series of examples to demonstrate how these perspectives can be applied to the analysis of texts. Throughout the resource, there are also references to other theorists designed to enrich the student's knowledge of key concepts and provide useful context for the core theoretical perspectives. This information is also presented in the form of visual 'mind maps' so it is not too overwhelming for students to approach. It is especially suited to visual learners, and those who find it difficult to revise only from written notes.

The resource is intended to be applicable to all specifications, i.e. Eduqas, AQA, OCR and WJEC, and, therefore, an effort has been made to approach the topic as generally as possible.

The resource consists of:

- 19 completed mind maps, which provide solutions to the activity mind maps, labelled:
- 19 activity mind maps (partially complete) for students to complete, labelled:



All mind maps are provided in both A3 and A4 formats.

How to use this resource:

- The sheets can be handed out at the end of the course, or at the end of each topic for revision purposes.
- The mind maps can be printed out in poster size and displayed on the classroom walls for students to reference, so that they can constantly reference relevant theoretical perspectives as they analyse and evaluate specific media products.
- The resource also includes partially completed mind maps, which include exercises. Students could be encouraged to complete the exercises as a way of recapping knowledge from the topic at the end of teaching.

J Kelly, September 2020

Update v1.1, June 2021

Wording improved on Summary Poster 1 and Activity Poster 1

Update v1.2, October 2024

Removed erroneous photographs from Poster 3

RECAPPING SEMIOTICS

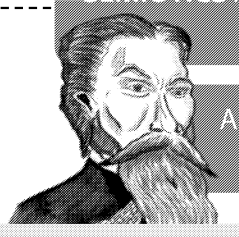
Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) proposed that every sign is made up of two elements:

1. **Signifier** – The form of a sign – something which can be seen, heard, touched, smelt or tasted, e.g. *Thumbs up*
2. **Signified** – The idea or meaning conveyed by the signifier, e.g. *The idea that you have done a good job*

Sign = Signifier + Signified

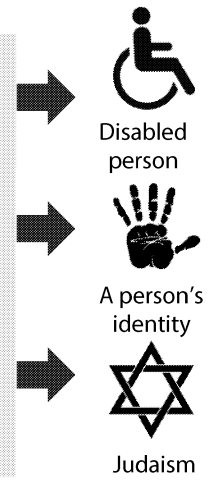
- The relationship between these two elements communicates **meaning** to the audience
- One cannot exist without the other – audiences will always interpret the **signifier** and connect meaning to it, even if that meaning is confusion
- The interpretation of the **signified** can depend on its context and the personal experiences and ideas of the consumer

SEMIOTICS is the study of how **signs** communicate meaning in our culture

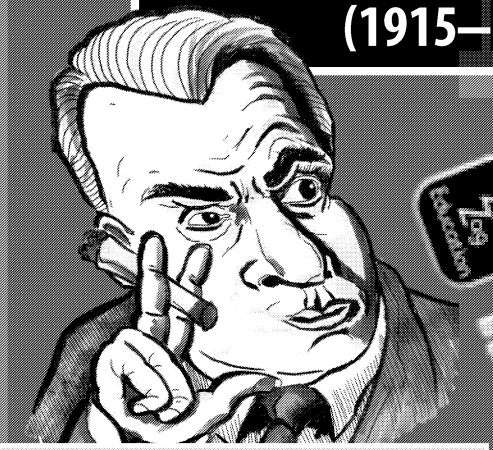


Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) proposed the **triadic model** – there are **three** different types of sign, each of which has a level of relativity to that which is being represented

- 1 **Iconic sign** – Holds physical similarities to the object it signifies and resembles what it stands for
- 2 **Indexical sign** – Holds some physical or literal connection to what is signified, although there is no direct resemblance
- 3 **Arbitrary sign/symbol** – Bears no physical or literal resemblance to what is signified – the meaning it conveys is a culturally accepted convention that must be learnt



BARTHES' FIVE CODES (1915–1980)



Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a French philosopher and semiotician who was heavily inspired by the work of Saussure. His work on the 'system of signs' has contributed massively to **structuralist** theory and has made him one of the twentieth century's most important cultural theorists.

Barthes was revered for taking a **semiotic** approach to the study of narrative. He suggested that there are **five** codes that media producers regularly employ in narratives to create meaning for an audience to interpret:

- 1 **The hermeneutic/enigma code** – anything in a text that is not fully explained, thereby setting up a puzzle for the audience to solve. This is designed to generate intrigue.
- 2 **The proairetic/action code** – minor units of action that lead to narrative progression. Multiple codes of this type tend to follow on chronologically from one another in a process of cause and effect, i.e. *one often leads to another*
- 3 **The referential/cultural code** – references in a text that can be understood with a good knowledge of news, events and culture, both contemporary and historical
- 4 **The semantic code** – something in a text that **connotes** more than just a surface level of meaning and significance
- 5 **The symbolic code** – non-literal meanings in a text that use **binary opposites** to demonstrate meaning

Signifier →



Signified →

- Person 1: Skull and crossbones
- Person 2: Pirate ship
- Person 3: Danger

FURTHER SIGNIFICATION

Barthes explains semiotics in a similar way to Saussure through a process of **signification**. He argues that there are two levels of signification:

1 **Denotation** – The literal, or universally

Barthes acknowledged the complexity of this process and proposed that there is an **order of signification**:

The first order of signification is denotation, by which the audience reads the literal meaning of the object, word or image. At this level, a picture of a Cadillac would signify a car.

Barthes proposed that there is also a **Third order of signification**

He put forward the idea of '**myths**', i.e. things that society **accepts as innate and true** but

NATURALISATION OF MYTHS

If a constructed sign or convention is repeated enough, it becomes **naturalised**

Barthes argues that the repeated signs in dominant media texts, e.g. *action heroes are always male*, allow consumers to understand the signs as 'common'

SEMIOTICS



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RECAPPING NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE refers to the way in which a sequence of events is constructed. It defines how the events are positioned in relation to each other for the benefit of the audience

Narrative is not the same as **story**

Story refers simply to the sequence of events as they happened

If you reshuffle the sequence of events, the story is still the same, but the narrative is now different

Narratives are concerned with: **causality** (one thing leading to another); **time** and **space**

WHAT DRIVES NARRATIVE?

- Most narrative theories are united in the idea that characters are **primary causal agents**, i.e. they are the driving force behind narrative
- Narratives often use **hooks** as a means of gripping the audience and pulling them into the narrative, e.g. a tense opening scene
- **Cultural tropes** are commonplace themes, plot points and visual cues that appear in a narrative to help the audience's understanding of it

AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA – KEY TERMS

- **Analepsis** – Another word for flashback
- **Prolepsis** – Another word for flashforward
- **Restricted** – A quality of narratives that withhold



NARRATOLOGY

Tzvetan Todorov (1939–2017)



- Todorov (1939–2017) was a Bulgarian-French philosopher and **structuralist** literary critic who studied classic folk stories and fairy tales before applying his findings to film and media
- He proposed that most narratives share an **underlying structure**; this is known as the theory of **equilibrium**
- There are five key stages to his proposed structure:

DON'T FORGET

Todorov applied this structure to **linear narratives**. Many audio-visual products, e.g. crime dramas, music videos, will manipulate space and time for dramatic event. **However**, these complex narratives can still be analysed by the criteria of these five stages.



IDEOLOGY

- 1 **Equilibrium:** The opening of the narrative in which the world is in a state of balance; there is no major conflict between characters
- 2 **Disruption:** The point at which the state of balance is disturbed by a key action or event
- 3 **Recognition:** The point at which the protagonist acknowledges balance must be restored
- 4 **Resolution:** The characters attempt to solve the conflict and restore some kind of balance
- 5 **New equilibrium:** The conflict has been resolved so a new equilibrium is established

EXAMPLE – *GET OUT* (2017)



THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF NARRATIVE:

2

CLOSED – A narrative with a clear beginning, middle and end. It ends in a state of equilibrium, e.g. *The Lion King* (1994), *Jaws* (1975)

OPEN – A type of narrative with no clear or definitive conclusion – the story continues on after the text has stopped, e.g. *The Simpsons* (1989–), *EastEnders* (1985–)

MULTISTRAND – Multiple different story threads and characters, often overlapping or intertwining, e.g. *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), *Love Actually* (2003)

LINEAR – A narrative in which the events are told/presented in chronological order as they are in the real world, e.g. *The Dark Knight* (2008), *1917* (2019)

NONLINEAR – A narrative in which the events are told/presented out of chronological order, unlike the real world, through flashbacks, reverse-ordered stories, time travel, etc., e.g. *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Lost* (2004–2010)

CIRCULAR – A narrative that returns to the very place it began from e.g. *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), *Memento* (2000)



Vladimir Propp (1895–1970)

GOOD TO KNOW

- **Vladimir Propp** is another primary example of a theorist who believed that narratives are driven by the actions of characters
- Propp analysed Soviet folklore and proposed that characters in narratives can be classified into **eight** different categories:

Hero – The protagonist of the story. Embarks upon a journey motivated by the lack or loss of something.

Villain – Antagonistic character who wants to prevent the hero from completing their journey



GENRE CATEGORISATION is a way of grouping texts which share common attributes and characteristics.

GENRE

- Texts that share similar codes and conventions in terms of **form**, **style** and **content** are grouped into genres
- However, genre labels – horror, comedy, drama, etc. – are not rigidly fixed. They are fluid.

SUBGENRES

These can be defined as smaller categories within a larger, 'parent' genre. By breaking down a broad genre into smaller parts, niche interests of audiences can be appealed to with more precision.

GENRE HYBRIDITY

This arises when a text does not precisely fit into one single category but instead holds the conventions of two or more different genres. Unlike **subgenres**, hybrids do not fall under the bracket of a 'parent' genre – they are something new entirely

These are the two key ways in which genres borrow from, and overlap with, one another – something Neale identifies as commonplace

HISTORY AND CULTURE – GENRE POPULARITY

Genres and their popularity are emblematic of both audience trends and evolving cultural views.

For example, Hollywood cinema throughout the 1970s was notably more pessimistic, explicit and realistic than it had ever been before. Audiences were becoming increasingly aware of social inequality due to the civil rights movement and the second wave of feminism. They had also been exposed to news footage of the Vietnam War and the horrific Sharon Tate murders – many believe that Hollywood films were responding to these shifts in American society.



GENRE THEORY

Steve Neale

The way in which the genre of a media text is classified depends on the media form. Print media can be categorised in various ways:

Structure → The ways in which iconography and technical codes are arranged in texts, as well as the themes, locations and character types used in the text

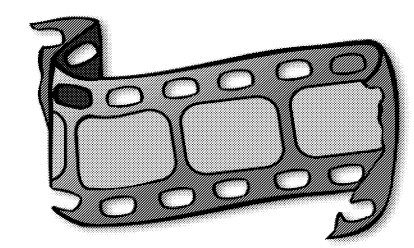
Why repetition appeals to audiences

Audiences enjoy having their expectations met – genres offer comfort

It is easier to identify meaning in a media text with a contextual

Why variation and difference appeal to audiences

Most audiences like to be challenged and to experience something 'new' whenever they consume a media text



Steve Neale (1950–) is a professor at Exeter University who studies genre, particularly in relation to Hollywood cinema.

Note: His findings can be, **and have been**, applied to other media forms

He proposed that...

- The key to genre is not just the repetition of codes and conventions, but difference and variation as well
- Films will subvert certain conventions and stereotypes so they can differentiate themselves from previous genre entries and not be considered an exact **copy** of a previous film
- The maintaining of genre is a **process** – It is not as simple as drawing upon the same **repertoire of elements** again and again

REPETITION AND VARIATION

- **Repetition** – Through this process, certain generic conventions can become established and easily identifiable for audiences
- **Variation** – Texts that break the mould are equally important in order to prevent genre stagnation and keep audiences engaged



See how *Joker* (2019) appealed to audiences through the repetition of comic book codes/conventions **and** through variation and difference

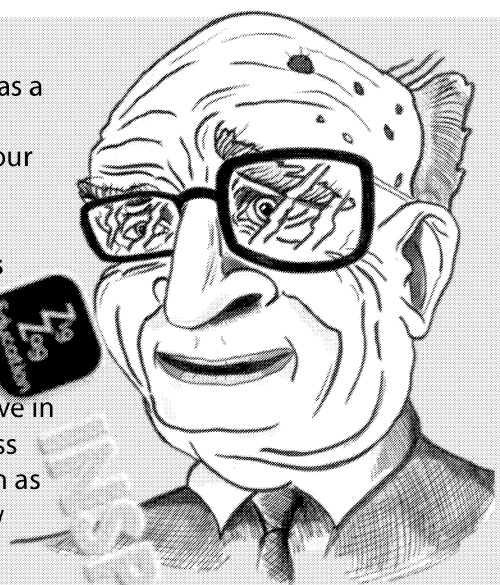
Repetition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• References various comic books and graphic novels• Featured 'Easter eggs' that probably only fans of previous comic book films would be able to spot• Shows a character's transformation from an ordinary person to a supervillain – 'An origin story'• Lead actor, Joaquin Phoenix, has star appeal
Variation and difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Features brutally realistic scenes of violence• Focus on themes of class inequality and mental illness• Emphasis on dialogue and character over action scenes• References to Martin Scorsese films such as <i>Taxi Driver</i> and



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- **Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009)** was a French anthropologist who sought to understand human thoughts, behaviour and culture
- He believed that all human cultures shared similar overarching **structures** and that the human brain naturally organises and combines pieces of information to create **models** which help us make sense of the world we live in
- While studying in the USA, Lévi-Strauss founded the school of thought known as structural anthropology, which is now better known as **structuralism**



STRUCTURALISM

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009)

Structuralism is an analytical methodology based on the idea that a single element – such as a thought, an action or a cultural ritual – can only be fully understood when compared to the larger systems that it exists within. In essence, we can only access the full meaning available within a media text if we acknowledge its various connections to other similar texts.

BINARY OPPOSITES

The idea that two completely opposing ideas or concepts – e.g. light and dark, wet and dry, good and evil – can only be understood fully through their relationship with one another

Structural analysis views binary opposites as the primary way that meaning is conveyed in media texts

BINARY OPPOSITES CAN TAKE MANY FORMS...

Narrative – Conflict is key to the development of drama – conflict, whether internal or external, always feature a binary opposition at their core

Examples – War vs peace, chaos vs order, guilt vs redemption

Character – Human beings are prone to clashing based on their morals, motivations and identities – when such clashes take place, these characters come to represent binary opposites

Examples – Cop vs criminal, superhero vs supervillain, master vs apprentice

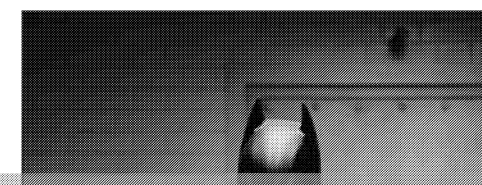
Themes – Most media texts are infused with themes that help convey meaning to the audience – themes usually represent a form of conflict that raises moral questions for the audience

Examples – good vs evil, life vs death, care vs neglect

Aesthetics – Binary oppositions are also present in imagery – frequently exemplified in how light and colour are used

Examples – Dark vs light, red vs blue, grainy vs crisp

These different elements can often work in tandem, i.e. a single moment or image can display multiple binary opposites simultaneously:



1. **Ideology** – Batman's sense of order stands in opposition to Joker's love of chaos
2. **Costumes** – Batman's multifaceted, armoured suit as opposed to Joker's ragged, mismatched shirt and waistcoat

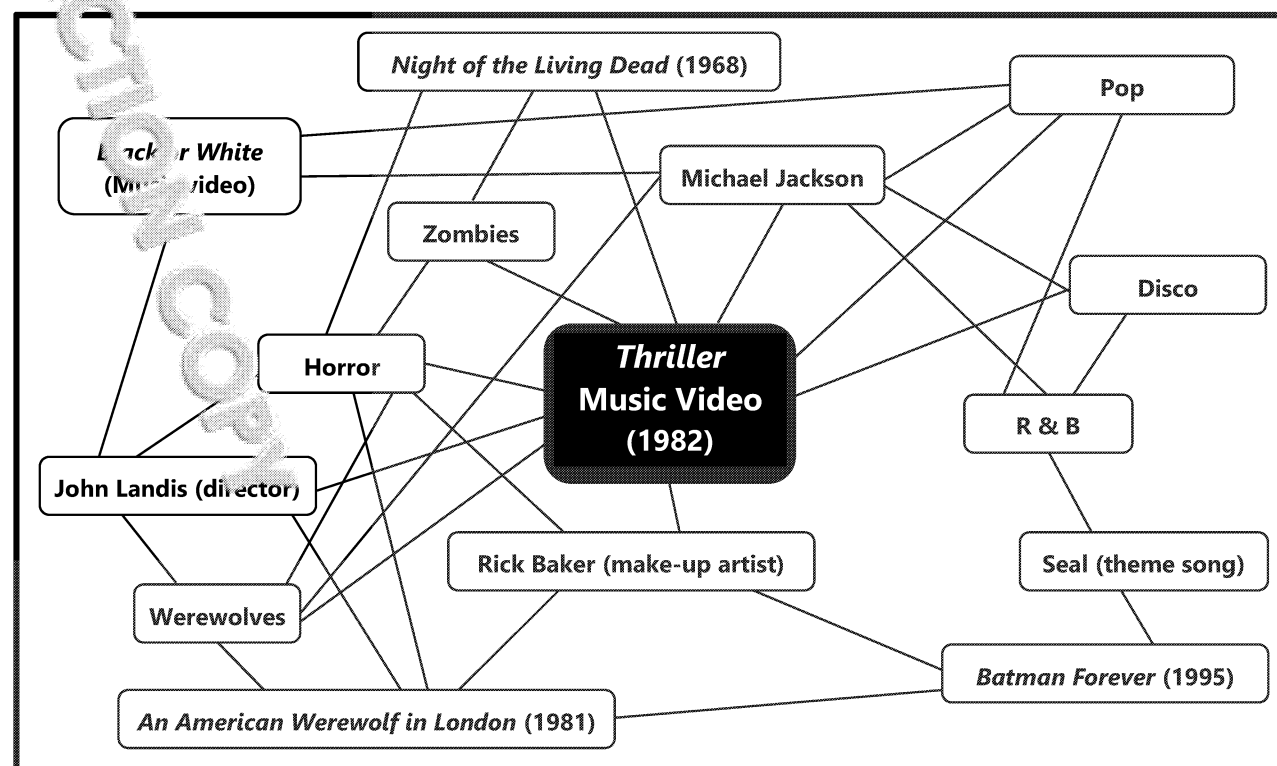
Defining aspects of structuralism

No text can be understood in isolation

A text exists within greater structures that influence its meaning

For example, every media text is connected to a series of others that share codes, conventions, themes, producers, subject matters, etc.

The diagram (see right) demonstrates that a single text does not exist in isolation – almost every aspect of it can be more clearly understood if we acknowledge the ways in which it is connected with other media texts, genres, producers, etc.



- **Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007)** was a philosopher and sociologist who specialised in **postmodern** and **poststructuralist** thinking
- His 1981 book *Simulacra and Simulation* coined three key concepts of postmodern analysis – the ideas of **simulation**, **simulacra** and **hyperreality**
- These three terms all relate to Baudrillard's proposal that society is becoming an **urbanised culture of consumption**



Simulacrum – A sign that imitates something original but lacks its inherent quality or essence – over time, it has become disconnected from the original

Example – Pictures of celebrities on posters and magazines are often Photoshopped to make the colour and texture of their skin more conventionally 'attractive' – the edited pictures do not authentically represent the faces of these celebrities, but yet we eventually accept them as authentic

OTHER MAJOR POSTMODERN THEORISTS



Fredric Jameson

Linda Hutcheon

Michel Foucault

Baudrillard proposed that this occurs like Chinese whispers in a process he called **the precession of simulacra**, which is thought to result in **simulation**

- **Stage 1:** A copy of something real is created. We accept it as authentic because it basically resembles the original.
- **Stage 2:** The truth of the original is further corrupted by the creation of a second copy – we no longer trust the copy as it appears to 'distort' reality
- **Stage 3:** A sign is created that claims to faithfully represent the original, but it is a copy without an original
- **Stage 4:** Pure simulacrum – there is no relationship whatsoever between the sign and reality

Simulation – The idea that the space we exist in as modern humans is a combination of both the physical real world and the constructed technological world of the media to the extent that we can no longer

Baudrillard's analogy – A great empire creates a map that is of the same physical size and detail as the empire itself. The map is then laid over the empire itself. When the empire collapses, the map remains as a disconnected replica of the original. Living in

POSTMODERNISM

Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007)

Postmodernism is a school of thought designed to question and deconstruct the theories and conventions of modern Western philosophy

Postmodernists tend to believe that the barriers between the 'real' world and the world conveyed through the media are crumbling. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate reality from simulation – this growing lack of distinction between the two might be called **implosion**.

PRINCIPLES OF POSTMODERNISM

- 1 Rejects the idea of **grand narratives** – refers to belief systems that seek to explain or justify the human experience, e.g. a religious faith, Marxism, liberalism, etc.
- 2 Sceptical of existing structures in art and society, e.g. genre, capitalism
- 3 Rejects the idea of **highbrow** and **lowbrow** culture
- 4 Promotes moral relativism – the idea that 'right' and 'wrong' are not fixed, but rather they are fluid notions dependent on context and situation
- 5 Rejects the idea of **techno-futurism**, i.e. the idea that innovations in science and technology will enlighten the world and make it a better place

PROMOTES THE CONCEPTS OF...

Subjectivism – The idea that the true meaning of human existence lies with the individual, i.e.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTMODERNISM

Intertextuality – When a media text makes reference to other pieces of media, art, literature or the real world beyond itself.

There are several forms of intertextuality used by postmodernist texts that help display a sense of self-awareness:



Collage – When a text is constructed from parts of other pre-existing texts, creating new meaning through the assembly of individual parts, akin to a more sophisticated method of collage

Parody – The imitating of a writer, artist or genre, but executed in an exaggerated manner that comments on the original text

Pastiche – An imitation of another's work, usually in a comedic but respectful way, but without the same sense of commentary on the original text

Homage – When one text respectfully plays tribute to

THEORIES OF REPRESENTATION

Stuart Hall (1932–2014)



Stuart Hall (1932–2014) was a Jamaican-born Marxist theorist known primarily for his work in sociology and cultural studies. Hall studied the way in which economic and social power structures affected language and representation in the media.

Meaning is created through language

Note. when Hall refers to language, he is referring to any system of signs (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, clothes, objects), not just spoken or written words.

Hall suggested that there are three types of signs used in media

Reflective – Language reflecting a 'fixed truth' that is already present in the world. The representation authentically mirrors the meaning of the object, person or setting.

Intentional – Language expressing the opinions of the producer as opposed to the truth

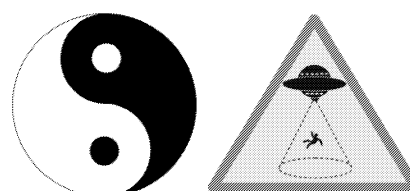
Constructionist – Signs that embrace the understanding that meanings in media texts are always artificially constructed. They should not be confused with 'fixed truths' in society.

Diegetic sound

Editing techniques

Non-diegetic sound

- Hall proposed that every person holds a series of conceptual maps in their mind that helps them to



SHARED
CONCEPT MAPS

Hall proposed that **stereotyping** is one of the most common forms of representation

Stereotyping

Representations that reduce a person or group to a narrow set of traits and characteristics through a process of **simplification***

Simplification – Process which makes something easy for an audience to understand, reducing any sense of complexity

In reality... Women, people of colour and the LGBTQ+ community, among many other diverse groups, have been represented stereotypically in the mainstream media

Key term	Examples in Western mainstream media
Positive stereotyping: The attribution of seemingly positive qualities to a person or social group. This form of stereotyping still reduces groups down to fit a narrow expectation, instead of reflecting the diversity of real life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black men as athletic and sport obsessed Asian students as intelligent and academically motivated Italians as friendly and amazing at cooking
Negative stereotyping: The attribution of negative qualities to a person or social group. With this form of stereotyping, media producers position the audience to see the person/group in a 'bad' light.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabs as villains and fools Muslims as terrorist sympathisers Homosexual men as effeminate and physically weak
Countertypes: Representations of people or groups that actively combat stereotypical thinking, usually promoting a more tolerant and progressive society in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women as action heroes Men being sensitive and understanding Disabled people being independent and confident

WHY STEREOTYPING OCCURS...

- The use of stereotypes – particularly negative ones – in the media often exposes a particular **bias** or **ideology** on the part of producers. Stuart Hall suggested that stereotyping often occurs because of **essentialism** – the belief that aspects of identity, particularly gender, are biologically determined at birth, *e.g. men and women are naturally born with a set of traits and characteristics*
- This is the opposite to **social construction** – the idea that concepts which separate people into categories are created and perpetuated by society

Hall suggested that stereotyping reinforces the **dominant ideology** – the attitudes, beliefs, and values shared by the majority of people in society. This is usually the ideology that is presented by institutions and people in positions of power.

Hall suggested that **othering** can occur because of...

Ethnocentrism – The belief that one's own culture is ideologically superior to the cultures of others.
Patriarchy – A society in which white, heterosexual men are granted social, cultural and economic power at the

THEORIES OF IDENTITY

David Gauntlett (1971–)



David Gauntlett (1971–) is a sociologist and media theorist who focuses on the ways in which modern media texts shape the identities of audiences.

Gauntlett suggested that we model parts of our identity based on the media we consume and the products we buy:

- Products such as cars, clothes and mobile devices act as signs that can contribute to our values and attitudes
- Interests in music, books, films, games, etc. can also become a defining part of a person's identity

In this sense, media texts provide us with the 'tools' we need to construct our identities – most people will take different tools from different texts, *e.g. the fashion sense of Naomi Campbell, the speaking style of Holly Willoughby*

PRODUCTION OF MEDIA → CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA → CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY



EXAMPLES OF THIS PROCESS IN MOTION



Media text

Tools/resources

Constructing an identity

'YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT!'

- According to Gauntlett's theory, audiences can be heavily influenced by the representations they see in media texts – it is, therefore, important for media producers to avoid negative stereotyping and to ensure they are not glamorising harmful behaviour
- Many fear that the prominence of violent male protagonists in video games might encourage young boys to model their identities based on these characters

The fluidity with which gender is now conveyed is far more successful in representing the reality of the world we live in

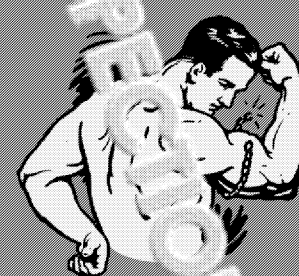


There is thought to be a causal link between revolutions in technology and the increasingly diverse representations available to audiences. In previous decades, audiences could only learn about the world's events through newspapers and a limited number of radio and television channels – now they have more newspapers, hundreds of channels and thousands of online resources to learn about a particular news story. These modern audiences will naturally be exposed to a much wider range of representations.

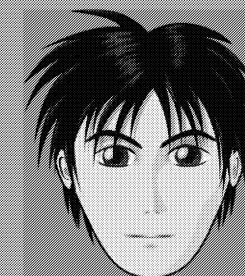
The effect of new media – Audiences have been given a platform to be more vocal in their opinion of media texts:

DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

In previous decades, the mainstream media was **reductive** in the way it represented male and female identities. The **ideals** of male and female identity were shown to be very singular and specific. In recent years, the media shows us a diverse range of stars, icons and characters that exist on a spectrum. Audiences can pick and choose which ideas and behaviours they admire from this spectrum and apply them to their own identities.



FOR EXAMPLE



In the 1960s, the majority of male film stars, *e.g. Paul Newman, Sean Connery, John Wayne*, were traditionally handsome, stoic and masculine. **Now**, successful male film stars can range from traditionally muscular types like Dwayne Johnson and Vin Diesel to more delicate and sensitive types like Ed Sheeran, Ed Redmayne and Timothee Chalamet.

In the 1950s and 1960s, most advertisements conveyed women as blonde, slender, sexualised and submissive to their male partners. **Now**, the women we see in adverts are much more diverse in terms of ethnicity, sexuality, socio-economic background and body shape.

THE 'DICK AND MIV'



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Useful Background Knowledge

- Mulvey (1941–) is a British **feminist** theorist who studied the representation of women in mainstream **cinema**
- In her 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* Mulvey suggested that visual media is constructed in a way that caters specifically to the pleasure of male, **heterosexual** spectators – Mulvey referred to this theory as the **male gaze**
- The idea is that female characters are always designed to be viewed by men, whether within the dialogues of the film, by the film-makers, or by the audience
- Mulvey's theory supports the idea that women are often represented as **passive objects**, as opposed to **active subjects**



Laura Mulvey (1941–)
Male Gaze



Van Zoonen's work can be more easily understood with a knowledge of these influential theorists:

John Berger (1926–2017) – Art critic

- Berger outlines that in imagery, beginning in Renaissance art and continuing into modern imagery, **men are constructed as active** whereas **women simply appear**.
- He drew people's attention to the abundance of paintings that show women as passive objects of physical beauty.

Berger: 'You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting "Vanity," thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure.'

This quotation of Berger's draws attention to the link between sexual objectification and the denial of **agency** – women have been historically vilified in the media for being sexually confident and promiscuous. However, it has been accepted as normal when the males who possess cultural capital create work that eroticises women's bodies.

BODIES AS SPECTACLE



The idea of a human body displayed in imagery as something for the viewer 'to behold' – this can be achieved through costume, make-up, framing, camera movement, etc.

Codes, conventions and techniques used to present women as spectacle:

FEMALE BODIES

FEMINIST THEORIST

Liesbet van Zoonen (1959–)

Liesbet van Zoonen (1959–) is a Dutch professor of popular culture, famous for books such as *Feminist Media Studies* in which she explores issues of gender, diversity and politics in the modern mass media from a feminist perspective.



GENDER IDENTITY AND DISCOURSE

Van Zoonen rejects the idea that gender is a rigid binary of set masculine and feminine behaviours and attributes. She theorises that gender is a **fluid concept** susceptible to different contextual and cultural factors.

- Van Zoonen believes that contemporary culture is largely designed to promote rigid gender roles and to encourage men and women to behave in a way that fits an **essentialist** philosophy
- This has led to the widespread **subjugation** of women since women have been traditionally encouraged to be soft, submissive, agreeable and the general **carers** in society

This form of **subjugation** has been enabled to thrive in **Western patriarchal culture** – a society that is structured to serve the interests of white, heterosexual males at the

Van Zoonen puts forward the idea that intentional, **systematic** sexual objectification of women in imagery is a core part of the patriarchy's power, because it has caused men to believe that women should act and look a certain way. It has also caused women to **internalise** these messages as a result of ongoing **reinforcement**. The

FEMINIST THEORY

bell hooks (1952–)

PATRIARCHY

- The theory that society is structured in a way that grants white, heterosexual men complete social, cultural and economic power at the expense of women and minorities
- The term comes from the Greek phrase *patrarchia*, meaning the 'ruling father'
- Mass media has long conveyed a dominant ideology that the patriarchy is innate and that women are biologically inferior to men, in order to benefit those in power that control the **cultural hegemony**
- However, according to hooks, patriarchal society is more complex than a simple hierarchy in which all men dominate over all women

hooks writes that the patriarchy is also **white** supremacist and **capitalist**, and that there are racial and class-based **hierarchies** within it. As such, men are still treated favourably on the whole but white **women** from affluent backgrounds are afforded more privilege than black **men** from **working-class** backgrounds.

White men

White women

bell hooks (1952–) is the pen name for Gloria Jane Watkins, an American author, social activist and feminist theorist who focuses on oppressive systems in society and the effects of capitalism on race and gender. Her books include *Feminism is for Everybody* and *ain't I a woman: black women and feminism*.

hooks described **feminism** as a struggle to combat sexist oppression and the ideology of domination

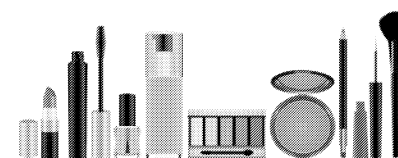
She believes that **race** and **economic status** are intrinsically tied in with **gender** to form patriarchal structures



Bell hooks (1952–)

For hooks, Feminism is not just a hobby. It is a political commitment

Women's beauty standards



hooks considered how fashion magazines glorify a specific type of body image (*slender, pale*) which can, in reality, have a damaging psychological effect on female audiences

She proposed that, rather than rejecting the value of beauty altogether, female beauty should be viewed and appreciated outside of the normal sexist structures that objectify women

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

A school of feminism acknowledging that women's identities and experiences are diverse and complex. It proposes that issues such as race, age, class, mental ability, etc. contribute to discrimination as well as gender.

COMMODIFIED BLACK CULTURE

Western popular culture has a habit of devoicing people of colour by **appropriating** their work and sanitising it for a mass, predominantly white, audience – this essentially turns black cultural identity into easily digestible, 'homogenised' entertainment

hooks cites the way in which blues, jazz and soul were adapted into the more commercial rock and roll, popularised by artists such as Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly – much of the authenticity and political intention from the original movements is then lost in translation



Another example could be Quentin Tarantino's film *Django Unchained*, which blended elements of the *blaxploitation* movement with more mainstream genres to construct a narrative surrounding slavery in nineteenth-century America – certain scholars and film-makers criticised the way in which a horrific 'black' experience was translated by a white man into entertainment, while others praised Tarantino for tackling the subject head on

THE OTHER

GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

Judith Butler (1956–)



Judith Butler (1956–) is an American philosopher who gained recognition for her work on third-wave feminism, queer theory and gender roles.

PERFORMATIVITY

Any form of word or utterance that directly causes social or social change – the power and impact of this language is highly dependent on context

A judge's sentence in a court can cause someone to prison

A judge's verdict on a talent show can kick-start someone's career

The words 'I do' mean very little in isolation but in the context of a wedding they are life-changing



Butler proposes that performativity relies on the repetition of **rituals** – it takes more than just a singular act to make something performative

Rituals – Choreographed acts that are repeated by people on a regular basis. Usually they will have a specific societal importance.

Singing hymns and psalms at a religious mass

Military drills

Singing the national anthem at a sports game

GENDER ROLES

Butler used these ideas to counter the argument of **essentialism**, i.e. the idea that gender roles of masculinity and femininity are innate and predetermined from birth. Instead, she proposed that a person's gender is established through the way in which they behave and the actions they take. In this sense, gender is a performance that is dictated by social and cultural norms. Like rituals, gender performativity is repeated and gradually cultivated over time.

Butler analysed the ways in which men and women are prescribed to behave in a certain way so as to fit into society's expectations of them:

Boys are encouraged from an early age to:

- ★ be strong and athletic
- ★ be brave and not cry
- ★ occupy positions of power in society
- ★ have interest in Maths and Science
- ★ play with action figures

Girls are encouraged from an early age to:

- ★ be slim and delicate
- ★ play with Barbies and doll's houses
- ★ have long hair and wear make-up
- ★ have interest in Arts and Humanities
- ★ want families and undertake caring roles

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RITUAL AND IDENTITY

Traditional view

Our identity determines the ways in which we perform and the rituals we partake in – these behaviours then

Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the way in which males and females differ biologically. **Gender** refers more to the roles males and females hold in society. Butler suggested that no one has a gender identity beyond a series of 'gendered expressions' which are manufactured and performed

MORE OF BUTLER'S IDEAS

Feminist thinkers that solely attribute the oppression of women to men are creating their own divisions between genders that are potentially as harmful as those established in a patriarchal society

Traditional feminism historically excludes the narratives of people who lack formal categories of identity, e.g. *non-binary people*

Traditional feminism, while claiming to be a uniting force for all women, is fairly restrictive in the way it categorises women – this categorisation has been applied based on elements such as biology, sexuality and people's capacity to bear children

ETHNICITY AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Paul Gilroy (1956–)



Paul Gilroy (1956–) is a British academic and cultural studies theorist who has written on issues regarding black British identity and the effects of colonialism on contemporary attitudes towards race and ethnicity. Some of his most influential books include *The Black Atlantic* (1993) and *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987).

Gilroy argues that Western modernity promotes and maintains colonial attitudes in regards to race. He proposes that the hegemonic perception of non-white cultures is affected by the history of European colonialism.

COLONIALISM

Colonialism is the practice of European states claiming foreign territories, displacing or enslaving native populations and profiting from the natural resources of these territories.

- * The **period of European colonisation** began with the exploration of North America by explorers such as Christopher Columbus (British) and Ferdinand Magellan (Portuguese)
- * It ended with the outbreak of World War I, which led to the dismantling of many European empires
- * At its peak, the British Empire was the largest colonial empire in the world – its dominions included India, Canada, Australia and a number of African nations

Racist attitudes from colonial times have trickled down through history to shape the racial tensions that still exist in Britain and America today

DIASPORA

A mass group or population that are involuntarily dispersed or displaced from their homeland

Examples of diaspora

- People of African ancestry living in North America because of the transatlantic slave trade
- The 'Windrush' Caribbean diaspora who came to Britain to work following the Second World War
- The Jewish people who were forced to flee Nazi-occupied nations in Europe

Diasporic populations often feel that their cultural identity is **disconnected**, that they neither belong in the country they live in nor their country of historical origin – Gilroy mentions that black British people have been made to feel they are not truly British or European because they are part of a diaspora from either slavery or forced migration

A term coined by Gilroy for a prejudiced ideology that establishes clear binary divides between societies and races that are 'civilised' and those that are 'uncivilised' or 'savage'. According to Gilroy, this ideology will always create racial hierarchies in which the 'civilised' societies are considered more advanced and sophisticated – furthermore, geopolitical relations will continue to function in a way that considers the differences between cultures as opposed to the similarities.

The criteria for 'civilised' is defined by European/Western standards, and has been used historically as a moral justification for colonialism – settlers believed that they were civilising the natives by enforcing their culture and religious practices. This ideology has created a hierarchy in which white Europeans and Westerners are considered superior and are, therefore, empowered to subjugate other races.

Example – Much of Western children's animation throughout the twentieth century was designed in a way that 'othered' non-white cultures, particularly the African-American community. This was executed through the way in which certain facial features, body proportions and linguistic ticks were exaggerated to a grotesque extreme. Examples can be found in:

- Early Disney films, e.g. *Dumbo* (1941), *Song of the South* (1946)
- Censored Eleven cartoons

Gilroy views on diaspora

It is important not to conflate the terms race, ethnicity and nationality – they all carry their own unique and important meanings

Your racial heritage is not necessarily the same as your ethnicity or nationality

Diasporic groups have created and shared music, art and culture in order to reclaim

CIVILISATIONISM

Gilroy suggests that much of the **modern mass media** is still constructed in a way that allows the continued existence of colonial discourses – a culture of **civilisationism** is still apparent

Black culture (and other non-white cultures) is still portrayed as 'niche' or secondary, whereas Western culture is depicted as the norm or the mainstream

POWER AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Curran (unknown) and Seaton (1947–)



Together, Curran and Seaton wrote *Power without responsibility: the press and broadcasting in Britain* – this is widely praised as one of the most important works on British media

- Jean Seaton (1947–) is a professor of Media History and an official historian for the BBC who has written many books on the relationship between the media and politics in Britain
- James Curran is a Professor of Communications who has written many books on the media including *Media and Power*, *Media and Democracy* and *Misunderstanding the Internet*

NEW MEDIA

Developments such as the Internet and digital technology have led to new forms of media (e.g. blogs, vlogs, social networking sites) which are harder to regulate than traditional media forms – this is due to the rise in UGC (user generated content), which allows a much wider range of media producers to showcase content.

This could be seen as a step towards more **socially diverse patterns of ownership** in which the media landscape is allowed to become more exploratory and exciting (something Curran and Seaton argue for).

However, **Curran and Seaton** argue that online media requires regulation:

- It is easy for children to access content that is harmful, disturbing or inappropriate through online platforms – for example, age-restricted games can be downloaded on a parent's account and

CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP

Conglomerate – A large business organisation comprised of multiple different companies working within the same / similar industries

Horizontal integration – When a corporation which is already established for creating a particular form of media acquires another company operating within the same form

- * Curran and Seaton propose that the modern media landscape is owned and controlled by a small group of individuals and **conglomerates**
- * These media conglomerates wield great power in society – they are able to maintain **cultural hegemony** through the texts they produce
- * The conglomerates in possession of this power are primarily motivated by money – they minimise costs in order to maximise profits
- * Generally, ownership within media industries is becoming more and more concentrated over time, e.g. Disney has bought dozens of properties and rival studios over the past decade or so in a process of **horizontal integration**



Curran and Seaton argue that the higher the concentration of ownership, the less access audiences have to diverse and interesting forms of media. However, there are theorists who disagree, saying that long-established media conglomerates are better equipped to create quality works that appeal across a wide range of audiences. Furthermore, when independent companies are merged with larger conglomerates, they are arguably granted more money and resources to create high-quality work.

QUALITY AND CREATIVITY

- Curran and Seaton propose that the limited concentration of power restricts creativity, originality and quality within the mainstream media
- This is because the conglomerates in

'We want to shrink the media moguls'
(Curran, 2013)

The implication here is that powerful individuals (e.g. Rupert Murdoch) are stifling opportunity and creativity

MORE CONTENT = LESS QUALITY

REGULATION

Livingstone (1960–) and Lunt (unknown)



- Sonia Livingstone (1960–) is a social psychologist who has written extensively on media and communications, particularly the opportunities and dangers of thriving online technology
- Peter Lunt is a professor of media and communication who specialises in media regulation, audiences and the participation of the public in popular culture

Together, they have worked on several books and articles, most notably *Media Regulation: Governance and the interests of citizens and consumers* (2011)

TRADITIONAL REGULATION AT RISK

STRUGGLE IN THE UK

There is an underlying conflict at the core of British media regulation – the needs of the public as citizens **vs** the desires of the public as consumers

Needs of people as citizens

- Protection from content that is violent, disturbing or discriminatory
- Access to content that isn't politically biased or manipulative, e.g. *propaganda*
- The right to freely express themselves through media
- Access to important or evocative information, e.g. *freedom of the press*

Needs of people as consumers

- Access to a variety of media texts from a vast range of sources
- Access to media that is provocative and divisive, but greatly enjoyed by many
- The ability to choose what they consume and when they consume it
- A fair and competitive media industry

Livingstone and Lunt argue that these needs often contradict each other – protection often limits freedom and vice versa. They suggest through their writing that the needs of consumers are currently being prioritised over the needs of citizens.

TRADITIONAL REGULATORY METHODS (E.G. FILM CERTIFICATES, VIDEO GAME CERTIFICATES, PRESS REGULATION) ARE BECOMING LESS AND LESS EFFECTIVE

According to **Livingstone and Lunt**, there are three general reasons for this:

THIS PARTICULARLY APPLIES TO ONLINE MEDIA...

- Unlike traditional media texts, **disturbing/inappropriate/discriminatory** content can be posted online **before** it is reviewed
- Age restrictions are easy to bypass or ignore completely
- Regulatory boards do not have international authority, so potentially harmful content may be accessed without any safeguarding process

FORMATTING

Cultural products are formatted in way that will make them appealing to a mass audience and, by extension, commercially successful. In stream media, profit is prioritised over other factors.

Major cultural products are formatted in a way that fulfils the following criteria:

GENRE

- 1 Genres with mass appeal can usually resonate with audiences across nations and demographics
- 2 They usually feature 'family-friendly' content
- 3 Unpopular genres tend to be avoided by major companies, as these are only likely to attract niche audiences
- 4 Film genres such as action, adventure, comedy and thriller tend to be financially reliable
- 5 Film genres such as Westerns and social realism tend to appeal only to a niche audience

STAR POWER

- 1 The promise of famous actors, directors, writers, presenters, celebrities and notable figures can attract audiences to a cultural text

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

David Hesmondhalgh (1963–)



David Hesmondhalgh (1963–) is a professor of music, media and culture who is recognised for his work on media industries and production – his books include *Media Productions*, *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*, and, most significantly, *The Cultural Industries* (the fourth edition of this was published in 2018).

MINIMISING RISK AND MAXIMISING AUDIENCE

According to Hesmondhalgh, companies that produce **cultural products** operate like **traditional businesses** – they are profit-driven and want to attract as many consumers as possible. He talks of various ways in which these companies can ensure the commercial success of a cultural product.

Vertical integration

When a company owns most of the chain (if not the entire chain) of production for a media text, e.g. *Sony films tend to be produced, marketed, exhibited and distributed by Sony – furthermore, these films can be viewed on technological devices released by Sony. The entire process of production and consumption is facilitated by one conglomerate.*

Horizontal integration

When a company which is already established for creating a particular form of media acquires another company operating within the same form, e.g. *Disney has purchased 20th Century Fox, Marvel and Lucasfilm, so it has ownership over multiple cinematic properties*

NEW MEDIA

Corporations that **diversify** into several areas and that take advantage of multiple media platforms and technologies are more likely to minimise risk and maximise profit

For example — Joe Rogan produces one of the most successful podcasts in America — he ensures that his episodes are accessible through streaming services such as YouTube and through an official website. They are also available to download through Apple Podcasts and Spotify. These various platforms also allow audiences to access the podcast on PCs, laptops, mobile phones, tablets



The ultimate marketing campaign

Hesmondhalgh also states that commercial success relies on large-scale **marketing campaigns**. It is no longer good enough to market a film using just a poster and a theatrical trailer – the most successful films are advertised through magazine features, social media pages, TV ads, official websites, publicity stunts, etc.

Commodification – The process of transforming an existing item/idea into a product that can be bought and sold

According to Hesmondhalgh, culture is becoming more and more commodified:

- ❖ Works of art such as *The Mona Lisa* are copied onto postcards, prints, replicas, etc. These are then traded and sold to the public – this arguably

MEDIA EFFECTS

Albert Bandura (1925–)

Albert Bandura (1925–) is a Canadian-American psychologist recognised for his development of the **social cognitive theory**. His work on aggression and the ways in which children can imitate the behaviour they see can be effectively applied to the effects of media texts on audiences.



Bandura's social learning theory (early 1960s) – Children can learn to adopt aggressive behaviour from watching others act aggressively. He extends this idea to suggest that audiences can learn to imitate **transgressive behaviour*** they see enacted in media texts, particularly films and video games.

Transgressive behaviour – Any form of behaviour that exceeds the boundaries of convention or acceptability in civilised society, e.g. *violence, drug use, sexual provocation*

Bandura acknowledges the complexity of this theory:

- Factors beyond the media can allow people to learn aggressive behaviour, e.g. *social neglect, alcohol, drug use, abusive households*
- Individuals who experience these things might be more likely to **seek out** violent media texts and enjoy them – this opposes the idea that violent media texts make their audience more violent

The social learning theory is often used to explain high-profile cases of criminal behaviour

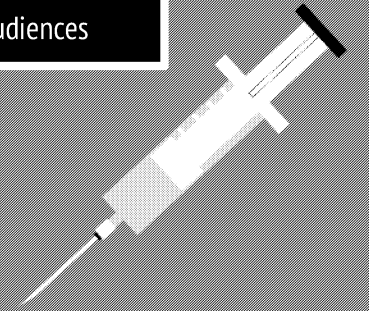
Example: In 1993, the horror film *Child's Play 3* was widely accused of inspiring the murder of two-year-old James Bulger – in reality, there were various social factors that may have caused his killers to enact the crime, e.g. *absent parents, behavioural issues*

The social learning theory has also been

CONTEXT

The hypodermic needle theory – this theory falls in line with Bandura's idea that media texts are capable of inserting ideas directly into the minds of audiences

- ✓ This model, also known as 'the magic **bullet**', was originated in Harold Laswell's book *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, published in 1927
- ✓ The idea was that media texts, like needles, insert ideas and messages into the **minds** of their audience, who are, in turn, **powerless** to reject these messages
- ✓ This theory was particularly accepted in the 1940s and 1950s – a period in which media forms such as **radio** and television were described as 'plug-in-drugs'
- ✓ This theory is now widely considered to be **outdated** and patronising – media theorists generally consider audiences to be more **active** than passive
- ✓ There are, however, more recent examples of people being plugged into this theory, e.g. *violent video games such as Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto were widely accused of being a form of drug abuse that would desensitise audiences to violence*
- ✓ This is sometimes referred to as **The Hypodermic Syringe Model**



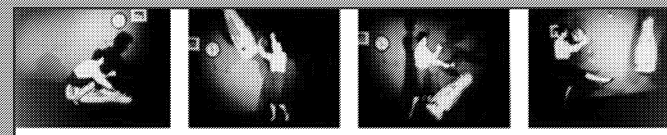
Desensitisation

Occurs when audiences are repeatedly exposed to acts of violence, sex, aggression and discrimination in media texts – They begin to feel less empathy, sensitivity or fear in regards to those acts

The Bobo doll experiment

An experiment conducted by Bandura in 1961 which built upon the **social learning theory**:

- Bandura placed three different groups of children in separate rooms with a 'Bobo doll'
- Prior to being placed in the room, two groups were shown different videos. One group saw a person being violent towards the Bobo doll, while the other saw a person treating the Bobo doll gently. The third group weren't shown any video.
- **85% of the children** who were **exposed** to the **violence imitated** the **behaviour** they had seen, whereas only **11% of the children** who were shown the gentle video acted violently towards the Bobo doll.



CONCLUSION

Bandura concluded that children will often **imitate** the behaviour they see enacted in media texts. In this sense, media texts are capable of implanting ideas into the heads of audiences, particularly children.

Issues with the theory

- The methodology of this experiment has been discredited by certain theorists



George Gerbner (1919–2005) was a professor of communication who gained recognition for his work on the effects of television, particularly his article *Science on Television: How it affects public perception*. He is most widely recognised for founding the **cultivation theory**.

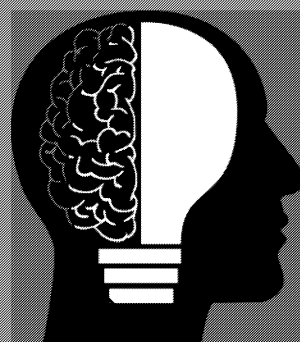
CULTIVATION THEORY

George Gerbner (1919–2005)

Cultivation – The act of developing something to make it stronger – in the context of media viewing, this will usually be an opinion or a world view

Key Proposals

- If someone is continuously exposed to mass media, their views will begin to match those expressed through the media texts they consume
- The cultivation of views and opinions relies on **repeated patterns of representation** – eventually these representations will become ingrained in the consumer's head
- The process of cultivation is usually very gradual – media texts influence audiences over extended periods of time
- The idea is that the media affects the views and opinions of consumers without them noticing



What is Cultivated?

- The media does not accurately represent the nature of reality – life is too nuanced and complex to convey accurately within a single text
- It is easier and more attention-grabbing to represent the world using stereotypes
- Cultivation tends to reinforce **mainstream values** that allow the **cultural hegemony** to be maintained – for example, advertisements are renowned for reinforcing **essentialist** ideas about gender, i.e. *they market products and services based on the assumption that men and women have fundamentally different needs and interests*

A POSITIVE SPIN

If we accept Gerbner's model, then our perception of certain people or social groups can be affected by media representation. For a long time, transgender people have been represented as cyphers or, worse still, as being mentally unstable – as society's understanding of gender develops, it is possible that we will gradually find more and more positive representations of transgender people in the mainstream media. These representations will affect people's ideologies and begin to form a new **dominant ideology** in which transgenderism is met with acceptance.

EXAMPLES – REPEATED PATTERNS OF REPRESENTATION



The Sun newspaper – Jeremy Corbyn

This front page is emblematic of the way in which *The Sun* newspaper reported on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn – the use of mocking alliteration to tie Corbyn to Jihadi terrorist groups paints him as both foolish and

- Gerbner's most influential studies took place in 1976 – therefore, his theories refer mainly to television as opposed to new media
- He argued that television has come to **hold the same power that religion has** in terms of its influence over people's ideas and behaviour. It only took television a few decades to achieve this.

TELEVISION

'MEAN WORLD SYNDROME'

A concept, also known as 'Mean World Index' relating to the idea that mass media can influence the attitudes of heavy consumers. Specifically, it relates to how people are made to perceive risks and dangers in everyday life.

RECEPTION THEORY

Stuart Hall (1932–2014)

Stuart Hall (1932–2014) was a Jamaican-born Marxist theorist known primarily for his work in sociology and cultural studies. As well as his theories on **representation**, Hall studied the process by which audiences read and interpret media texts. *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* and *Encoding/Decoding* are two of his most significant works on the subject.



Hall's Key Proposals

- 1 Producers always have an intended meaning that they wish to convey through a media text
- 2 Producers encode ideas into a text using media language
- 3 Audiences then decode these ideas
- 4 However, some audiences might not decode ideas in a way that was intended by the producers...

For example, the 2019 Gillette commercial entitled *We Believe: The Best Men Can Be* was **encoded** with messages that encouraged men to be respectful towards women and to call each other out for toxic or aggressive behaviour. However, a large section of the male audience **decoded** the advert and found it to be

THREE AUDIENCE READINGS

Hall proposed that there are three hypothetical ways in which audiences can read a media text – which reading an audience takes is based on the degree to which they are **willing** or **able** to **decode** the producer's intended meaning from the text:

PREFERRED READING

Also known as the **dominant** or **hegemonic** position

Occurs when an audience **fully decodes** the producer's intended meaning

They are agreeable and supportive of the ideology

NEGOTIATED READING

Occurs when an audience **partially decodes** the ideas infused into the text

They will agree with certain intended meanings while rejecting others

OPPOSITIONAL READING

Occurs when an audience **fail to / choose not to decode** the ideas infused into the text

They are perhaps able to decode the intended meaning but they actively disagree with its ideology

The reading an audience takes will often depend on contextual factors including the individual's particular life experiences. *For example, a newspaper story covering a care home abuse scandal might inspire a variety of readings:*

- A woman with an elderly mother might completely accept the intended meanings
- A woman who works as a carer might consider the story biased and unfair. She would be taking an oppositional reading.

Be careful not to generalise when you talk about how different demographics might respond to a particular text. For example, it was long assumed by producers that women prefer to consume media that explores subjects such as fashion, make-up and relationships. As discussions regarding gender have developed, these assumptions are now considered to be overly simplistic and outdated.

OTHER VARIABLES THAT MIGHT DETERMINE HOW SOMEONE READS A MEDIA TEXT

Gender	Age

FANDOM

Henry Jenkins (1955-)

The writing of Henry Jenkins (1955) mostly focuses on popular cultural forms – he reflects on his own, and other people's, experiences as media fans. His major academic works include *Convergence Culture* (2006) and *Textual Poachers* (1992).



WHAT MAKES A FAN?

Fans can be distinguished from **regular consumers** because they are actively involved in the creation of meaning beyond that which superficially appears in a media text

Key Proposals

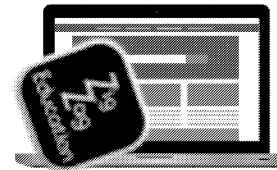
- Fandoms are **social entities**, i.e. they are groups that have a certain 'personality' or code of ethics
- Fans participate in **textual poaching**
- Fandoms** do not simply **consume** media – they are a devoted audience
- Fandom** goes against what is traditionally considered the **hierarchical** nature of the creator–audience relationship in which the audience **passively** consumes a text
- Modern media audiences belong to a participatory culture which thrives on social interaction

FANDOM AS SOCIAL GROUPS



Jenkins claims that media fans actively construct and circulate meanings among one another. The most pure example of this is the **fan theory**, i.e. a usually bizarre and radical interpretation of a media text – these theories are often circulated through social media sites and online forums.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S



Bizarre example – The 10 seasons of *Friends* (1994–2004) have been interpreted as Phoebe's (played by Lisa Kudrow) fantasy. The idea is that she is a homeless drug addict imagining an ideal life with friends she never had – series co-creator Marta Kauffman was shocked and repulsed by the theory, stating that 'someone needs a life'.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY → ADVANCED FANDOM

Developments in the Internet and digital technology have transformed fan dynamics – it has allowed fandom to flourish:

- Access to source material is now easier due to file-sharing and search engines
- Advanced software and digital technology is less costly and more accessible – fans are able to produce digital art and videos with more ease
- Social media presents the vital element of communication that allows subcultures to form and grow

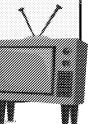
Responding to fandom

Fans can play a huge part in influencing the production of a media text:



When the first trailer for *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2020) was released, fans complained about the design of the titular character over social media – the film's producers responded by quickly redesigning the character before release – the fans helped shape the final product

Nielsen is an American organisation that measures data for audiences, the goods they buy and the media they consume – not only do organisations such as this analyse audience figures, they also measure the emotional reactions audiences have to television shows by analysing the responses expressed through Twitter posts. These insights are then shared with the television companies who can take this into consideration when they come to produce the next series.



Prosumers are media audiences who also create their own media texts, straddling the roles of both producer and consumer. It is debatable whether this gives a creative 'voice' to marginalised groups or whether it is simply another way to expand a capitalist model of consumption, e.g. *bloggers, social media users, creators of fan trailers*

TEXTUAL POACHING

This term is used by Jenkins to describe how fandoms often **repurpose original material** in order to create their own **fan art/fiction**

Issues with textual poaching

It is unauthorised by the creators of the

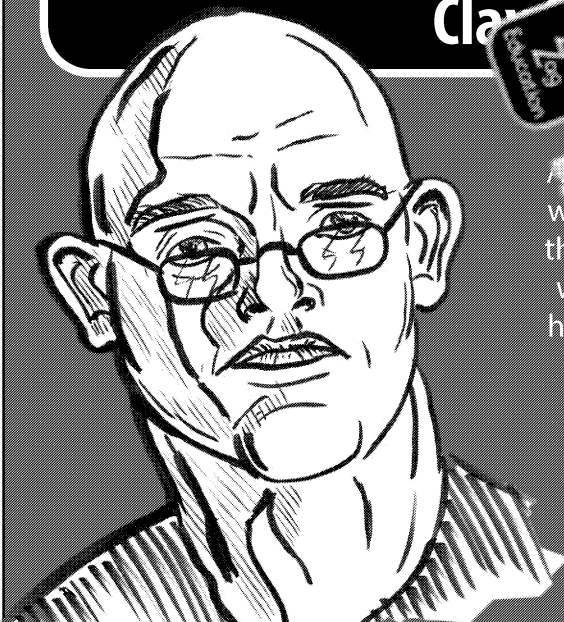
Fan fiction, e.g.

Recutting

Editing photos/

'END OF AUDIENCE'

Clay Shirky (1964–)



Clay Shirky (1964–) is an American author and academic who has written extensively on the Internet and its relationship with modern society. Some of his most notable works include *Here Comes Everybody: The power of organising without organisations* (2008) and *Cognitive Surplus: How technology makes consumers into collaborators* (2010).

Key beliefs...

- Developments in online media have changed human social dynamics at large
- The Internet has allowed people to form large, decentralised groups, *i.e. groups that take some of the power and responsibility away from dominant groups*
- Audiences can now share information which would previously be deemed inaccessible
- The transition into this 'new world' is not fully complete yet – the blurring of lines between **traditional passive consumption** and **active**

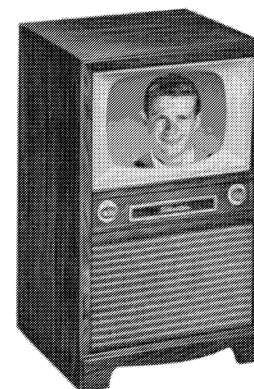


THE INTERNET AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

The relationship between media products and individual audience members has been totally transformed by online media and digital technology – it has made media audiences more active:

FOR EXAMPLE:

In 1950, you could sit down and watch a television programme at home – however, there weren't many other ways in which you could participate with the programme



In 2020, there are many ways in which you can participate with a television programme:

- You can share your opinion of the programme by posting on social media
- You can like or share someone else's post on social media if you agree with their opinion
- You can like, share or comment on posts made by the programme's producers
- You can message friends and encourage them to watch the programme on catch-up services
- You can review the programme through a blog or online forum
- You can upload a personal review on YouTube
- You can create fan fiction or fan art and share it online
- You can create memes and GIFS and share them online

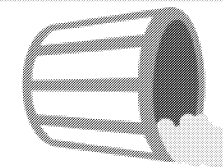
These developments over the past 50 years or so support Shirky's theory that audiences have become more active and participatory than ever before

'TALKING BACK'

- If audiences post positive responses to a particular film, more people are likely to seek out film out – particularly if the poster is an influencer
- However, when a film such as *Cats* (2019) receives overwhelmingly negative responses through Twitter, it tends to have a negative impact on the film's box office takings

Like Henry Jenkins, Shirky recognised that the traditional disparity in power between media producers and audiences is beginning to collapse – audiences can now 'talk back' and have their opinions heard by producers. Social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram allow for the amplification of both praise and criticism of a text, meaning that media companies have given increasing attention to the marketing and reception of texts on social media.

Review sites – IMDB (Internet Movie Database), Rotten Tomatoes, Metacritic, Letterboxd



These allow audiences to give films, TV shows and video games a star rating or percentage score. The sites are designed to aggregate these and present an overall score for the text. Review sites and social media have shifted the balance of power away from professional film critics and magazines, and more towards general audience consensus.

Rotten Tomatoes is particularly interesting as there can often be a huge disparity between professional critic scores and the scores given by general audiences:

Film	Critic score	Audience score
<i>Joker (2019)</i>	68%	88%
<i>Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017)</i>	91%	43%
<i>The Greatest Showman (2017)</i>	56%	86%

MASS AMATEURISATION

We are now living in an age in which traditional consumers are producing their own media. Shirky has

Advantages – Allows talented creatives from outside the mainstream to have their work seen and recognised on a wider scale. It also gives audiences a wider range of

RECAPPING SEMIOTICS

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) proposed that every sign is made up of two elements:

Provide definitions for both the signifier and the signified

1. Signifier –

2. Signified –

Sign = Signifier + Signified

Fill in the gaps with the words provided – context, meaning, signifier, signified

- The relationship between these two elements communicates _____ to the audience
- One cannot exist without the other – audiences will always interpret the _____ and connect meaning to it, even if that meaning is confusion
- The interpretation of the _____ can depend on its _____ and the personal experiences and ideas of the consumer

Signifier →



Signified →

- Person 1: Skull and crossbones
- Person 2: Pirate ship
- Person 3: Danger

FURTHER SIGNIFICATION

Barthes explains semiotics in a similar way to Saussure through a process of **signification**. He argues that there are two levels of signification:

Identify the two levels of signification based on the definitions

1. _____ – The literal, or universal

Define semiotics

What is a sign?
Provide an example

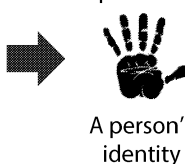
Which theorist proposed the triadic model?

Provide definitions for the following three types of sign

1 Iconic sign –



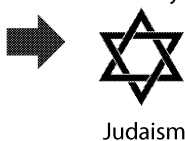
Disabled person



A person's identity

2 Indexical sign –

3 Arbitrary sign/symbol –



Judaism

SEMIOTICS Roland Barthes

Barthes acknowledged the complexity of this process and proposed that there is an **order of signification**:

Fill in the gaps with the words provided – connotation, denotation, cultural, literal, speed, signify

The first order of signification is _____, by which the audience reads the _____ meaning of the object, word or image. At this level, a picture of a Cadillac would _____ a car.

BARTHES' FIVE CODES (1915–1980)



Barthes was revered for taking a **semiotic** approach to the study of narrative. He suggested that there are **five** codes that media producers regularly employ in narratives to create meaning for an audience to interpret:

Identify which codes are being described below

_____ – anything in a text that is not fully explained, thereby setting up a puzzle for the audience to solve. This is designed to generate intrigue.

_____ – minor units of action that lead to narrative progression. Multiple codes of this type tend to follow on chronologically from one another in a process of 'cause and effect', i.e. *one often leads to another*

3 _____ – references in a text that can be understood with a good knowledge of news, events and culture, both contemporary and historical

4 _____ – something in a text that **connotes** more than just a surface level of meaning and significance

5 _____ – non-literal meanings in a text that use **binary opposites** to demonstrate meaning

Barthes was heavily inspired by which semiotician?

His work on the 'system of signs' contributed to which methodology?

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – myths, ideologies, innate, artificial constructs, personal

Barthes proposed that there is also a **Third order of signification**

He put forward the idea of '_____', i.e. _____

NATURALISATION OF MYTHS

Explain how myths can become 'naturalised'



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RECAPPING NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE refers to the way in which a sequence of events is constructed. It defines how the events are positioned in relation to each other for the benefit of the audience.

Explain the difference between a narrative and a story

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – primary causal agents, visual driving force, cultural tropes, hooks

WHAT DRIVES NARRATIVE?

- Most narrative theories are united in the idea that characters are _____, i.e. they are the _____ behind narrative
- Narratives often use _____ as a means of gripping the audience and pulling them into the narrative, e.g. a tense opening scene
- _____ are commonplace themes, plot points and _____ that appear in a narrative to help the audience's understanding of it

AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

Provide definitions for the following key terms

- Analepsis –



NARRATOLOGY

Tzvetan Todorov (1939–2017)

Provide definitions and examples for the following types of narrative (right). An example has been provided for you.

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – structuralist, equilibrium, film, underlying structure, folk stories

- Todorov (1939–2017) was a Bulgarian-French philosopher and _____ literary critic who studied classic _____ fairy tales before applying his findings to _____ and media
- He proposed that most narratives share an _____; this is known as the theory of _____

List the five key narrative stages according to Todorov – provide a definition for each key stage

1

2

3

4

5

DON'T FORGET

Todorov applied this structure to **linear narratives**. Many audio-visual products, e.g. crime dramas, music videos, will manipulate space and time for dramatic event. **However**, these complex narratives can still be analysed by the criteria of these five stages.



IDEOLOGY

EXAMPLE – *GET OUT* (2017)



THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF NARRATIVE:

2

CLOSED – A narrative with a clear beginning, middle and end. It ends in a state of equilibrium, e.g. *The Lion King* (1994), *Jaws* (1975)

OPEN –

MULTISTRAND –

LINEAR –

NONLINEAR –

CIRCULAR –



Vladimir Propp (1895–1970)

Complete the following statements about Vladimir Propp's work

- Vladimir Propp** is another primary example of a theorist who believed that narratives are driven by _____
- Propp analysed Soviet folklore and proposed that characters in narratives can be classified into _____
- These different character types are defined by _____

List the eight character types Propp identified. Explain how each character type functions in a narrative.

- 1.
- 2.



1 ? Briefly explain what is meant by genre

GENRE

1 ? What is meant by a subgenre?

SUBGENRES

GENRE HYBRIDITY

1 ? What is meant by genre hybridity?

These are the two key ways in which genres borrow from, and overlap with, one another – something Neale identifies as commonplace

HISTORY AND CULTURE – GENRE POPULARITY

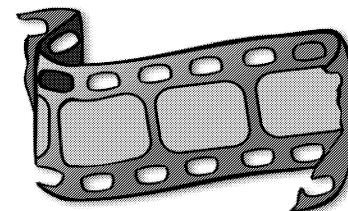
1 ? Describe a case in which a genre of media has evolved due to shifting audience trends or evolving cultural views

The way in which the genre of a media text is classified depends on the media form. Print media can be categorised in various ways:

Structure → The ways in which iconography and technical codes are arranged in texts, as well as the themes, locations and character types used in the text

1 ? Explain why repetition appeals to audiences

1 ? Explain why variation and difference appeal to audiences



GENRE THEORY

Steve Neale (1958–)

1 ? Fill in the gaps using the words provided – repetition, subvert, repertoire of elements, variation, stereotypes, copy, process

3

Steve Neale (1950–) is a professor at Exeter University who studies genre, particularly in relation to Hollywood cinema.

Note: His findings can be, **and have been**, applied to other media forms

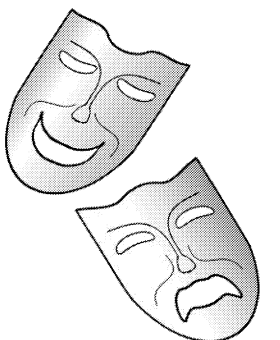
He proposed that...

The key to genre is not just the _____ of codes and conventions, but difference and _____ as well

Films will _____ certain conventions and _____ so they can differentiate themselves from previous genre entries and not be considered an exact **copy** of a previous film. The maintaining of genre is a _____ – It is not as simple as drawing upon the same _____ again and again

REPETITION AND VARIATION

- **Repetition** – Through this process, certain generic conventions can become established and easily identifiable for audiences
- **Variation** – Those that break the mould are equally important in order to prevent genre stagnation and keep audiences engaged



1 ? Use the table below to explain how a media text (of your choice) uses repetition and variation and difference to be successful

Repetition	
Variation and difference	

Fill in the gaps below using the words provided – structures, anthropologist, sense, models, structuralism

- **Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009)** was a French _____ who sought to understand human thoughts, behaviour and culture
- He believed that all human cultures shared similar overarching _____ and that the human brain naturally organises and combines pieces of information to create _____ which can help us make _____ of the world we live in
- While studying in the USA, Lévi-Strauss founded the school of thought known as structural anthropology, which is now better known as _____



STRUCTURALISM

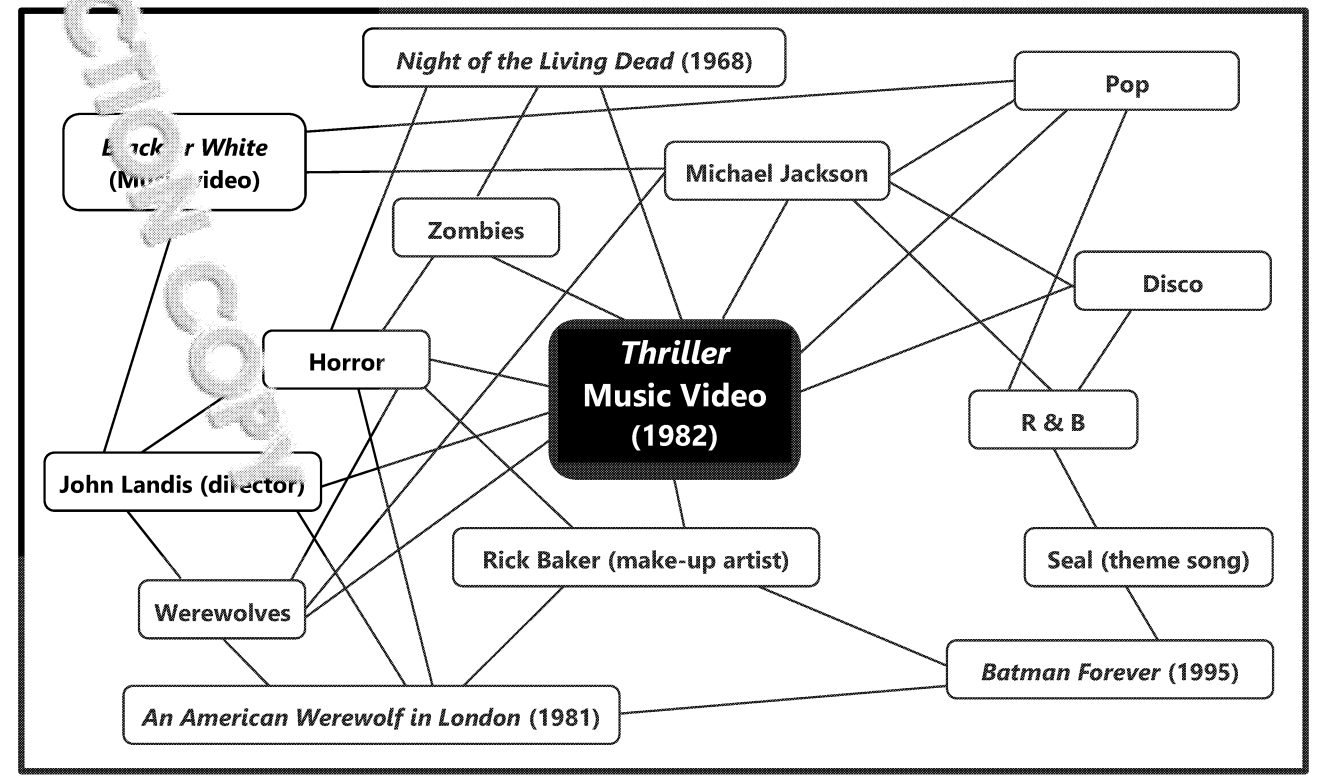
Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009)

Briefly explain what is meant by structuralism

Defining aspects of structuralism

Identify some of the defining aspects of structuralism

The diagram (see right) demonstrates that a single text does not exist in isolation – almost every aspect of it can be more clearly understood if we acknowledge the ways in which it is connected with other media texts, genres, producers, etc.



BINARY OPPOSITES

Explain what is meant by binary opposites

BINARY OPPOSITES CAN TAKE MANY FORMS...

Explain how binary opposites can take the following forms. Use examples to support your explanations. One has been completed for you.

Narrative – Conflict is key to the development of drama – conflict, whether internal or external, always feature a binary opposition at their core

Examples – War vs peace, chaos vs order, guilt vs redemption

Character –

Examples –

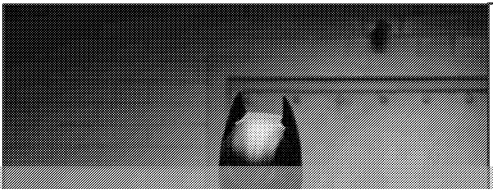
Themes –

Examples –

Aesthetics –

Examples –

These different elements can often work in tandem, i.e. a single moment or image can display multiple binary opposites simultaneously:



Look at the picture, left. Explain how multiple binary opposites are working in tandem.



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Complete the sentences to form a bio on Jean Baudrillard

- **Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007)** was a philosopher and sociologist who specialised in _____
- His 1981 book *Simulacra and Simulation* coined three key concepts of postmodern analysis – _____
- These three terms all relate to Baudrillard's proposal that society is becoming an _____



POSTMODERNISM

Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007)

OTHER MAJOR POSTMODERN THEORISTS



Fredric Jameson

Linda Hutcheon

Michel Foucault

What is meant by simulacrum?

Describe an example of simulacrum often found in mainstream media

According to Baudrillard, the stages listed below make up what?

- **Stage 1:** A copy of something real is created. We accept it as authentic because it basically resembles the original.
- **Stage 2:** The truth of the original is further corrupted by the creation of a second copy – we no longer trust the copy as it appears to 'distort' reality
- **Stage 3:** A sign is created that claims to faithfully represent reality, but it is a copy without an original
- **Stage 4:** Pure simulacrum – there is no relationship whatsoever between the sign and reality

What is meant by simulation?

What analogy did Baudrillard famously use to explain the concept of simulation? *Clue: It involves a map*

Briefly explain what is meant by postmodernism

PRINCIPLES OF POSTMODERNISM

Fill in the gaps below using the words provided – rejects, grand narratives, capitalism, context, moral relativism, technology

- 1 Rejects the idea of _____ – this refers to belief systems that seek to explain _____ the human experience, e.g. a religious faith, Marxism, liberalism, etc.
- 2 Sceptical of existing structures in art and society, e.g. genre, _____
- 3 _____ the idea of **highbrow** and **lowbrow** culture
- 4 Promotes _____ – the idea that 'right' and 'wrong' are not fixed, but rather they are fluid notions dependent on _____ and situation
- 5 Rejects the idea of _____, i.e. the idea that innovations in science and technology will enlighten the world and make it a better place

PROMOTES THE CONCEPTS OF...

Identify the following two concepts based on the definitions provided

_____ – The idea that the true meaning of human existence lies with the individual, i.e. meaning can only be found internally

CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTMODERNISM

What is meant by intertextuality?

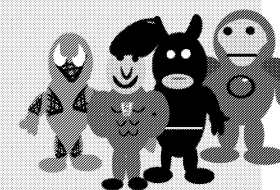
Provide definitions for the following postmodernist characteristics

Collage –

Parody –

Pastiche –

Homage –



THEORIES OF REPRESENTATION

Stuart Hall (1932–2014)



Stuart Hall (1932–2014) was a Jamaican-born Marxist theorist known primarily for his work in sociology and cultural studies. Hall studied the way in which economic and cultural power structures affected language and representation in the media.

Meaning is created through language

What is Hall referring to when he uses the term 'language'?

Identify the three types of sign used in the media (according to Hall) based on the definitions provided

_____ – Language reflecting a 'fixed truth' that is already present in the world. The representation authentically mirrors the meaning of the subject, person or

_____ – Language expressing the opinions of the producer as opposed to the truth

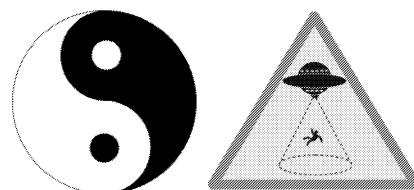
_____ – Signs that embrace the understanding that meanings in media texts are always artificially constructed. They should not be confused with 'fixed truths' in society.

Diegetic
sound

Editing techniques

Non-diegetic sound

Describe Hall's theory of shared conceptual maps



SHARED
CONCEPT MAPS

Hall proposed that **stereotyping** is one of the most common forms of representation

What is meant by stereotyping?

What is simplification and how does it contradict reality?

Provide definitions for the following forms of stereotyping

Provide examples of these stereotypes in Western mainstream media

Key term	Examples in Western mainstream media
Positive stereotyping:	
Negative stereotyping:	
Counter-types:	

Explain why stereotyping occurs in the mainstream media

According to Hall, what can stereotyping reinforce?

Provide definitions for the following key terms

Ethnocentrism –

Patriarchy –

THEORIES OF IDENTITY

David Gauntlett (1971–)



David Gauntlett (1971–) is a sociologist and media theorist who focuses on the ways in which modern media texts shape the identities of audiences.

Briefly summarise Gauntlett's ideas on the media and identity

PRODUCTION OF MEDIA → CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA → CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

Complete the table below using two more examples of your choosing

EXAMPLES OF THIS PROCESS IN MOTION

Media text	Tools/resources	Constructing an identity
------------	-----------------	--------------------------

'YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT!'

According to Gauntlett's theory, audiences can be heavily influenced by the representations they see in media texts

Why is it, therefore, important for media producers to avoid negative stereotyping in the media?

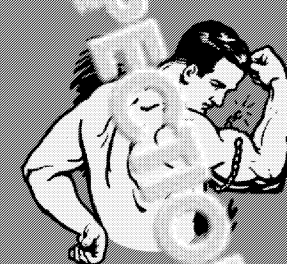
The fluidity with which gender is now conveyed is far more successful in representing the reality of the world we live in

Explain why there might be a causal link between revolutions in technology and the increasingly diverse representations available to audiences today

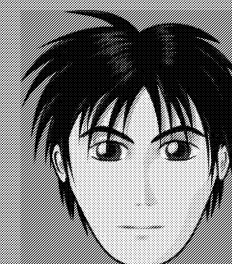
DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – singular, reductive, identities, ideals, diverse

For many decades, the mainstream media was _____ in the way it represented male and female identities. The _____ of male and female identity were shown to be very _____ and specific. In recent years, the media shows us a _____ range of stars, icons and characters that exist on a spectrum. Audiences can pick and choose which ideas and behaviours they adopt from this spectrum and apply them to their own _____.



FOR EXAMPLE



Describe two examples of media industries which have shown radical change in the representations of gender identity

List three ways in which audiences can be more vocal in their opinion of media texts

1.

THE 'Dick and Mizz' CONSUMER



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Useful Background Knowledge

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – cinema, feminist, narrative, male gaze, heterosexual, diegesis, active subjects, passive objects

Mulvey is a British _____ who studied the representation of _____ in mainstream _____. In her 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and _____ Cinema* Mulvey suggested that visual media is constructed in a way that caters specifically to the pleasure of male, _____ spectators – Mulvey referred to this theory as the _____.

The idea is that female characters are always designed to be viewed by men, whether within the _____, the film, by the film-makers, or by the audience. Mulvey's theory supports the idea that women are often represented as _____, as opposed to _____.

Laura Mulvey (1941–)
— The Male Gaze

Van Zoonen's work can be more easily understood with a knowledge of these influential theorists:

John Berger (1926–2017) – Art critic

- Berger outlines that in imagery, beginning in Renaissance art and continuing into modern imagery, **men are constructed as active** whereas **women simply appear**.
- He drew people's attention to the abundance of paintings that show women as passive objects of physical beauty.

Berger: 'You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting "Vanity," thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure.'

Explain how Berger's statement might be applied to the mainstream media

BODIES AS SPECTACLE

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – objectification, value, male

FEMALE

Identify some more codes, conventions and techniques which are used to present women as spectacle

Summarise, in a sentence, what is meant by 'bodies as spectacle'

FEMINIST THEORIST

Liesbet van Zoonen (1959–)

Liesbet van Zoonen (1959–) is a Dutch professor of popular culture, famous for books such as *Feminist Media Studies* in which she explores issues of gender, diversity and politics in the modern mass media from a feminist perspective.

GENDER IDENTITY AND DISCOURSE

Summarise van Zoonen's core views on gender identity. Be sure to include the following terms: binary, fluid, essentialist, subjugation, masculine, feminine

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – subjugation, patriarchal, minorities, systematic, power, internalise, reinforcement, internalised misogyny

This form of _____ has been enabled to thrive in Western _____ culture – a society that is structured to serve the interests of white, heterosexual males at _____.

Van Zoonen puts forward the idea that intentional, _____ sexual objectification of women in imagery is a core part of the patriarchy's _____, because it has caused men to believe that women should act and look a certain way. It has also caused women to _____ these messages as a result of ongoing _____.

FEMINIST THEORY

bell hooks (1952–)

PATRIARCHY

Explain what is meant by patriarchy

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – capitalist, white, women, hierarchies, working-class, men

hooks writes that the patriarchy is also _____ supremacist and _____, and that there are racial and class-based _____ within it. As such, men are still treated favourably on the whole but white _____ from affluent backgrounds are afforded more privilege than black _____ from _____ backgrounds.

White men

White women

Identify two major books written by bell hooks

How did hooks describe feminism?

As well as gender, which two factors did hooks identify as being tied in to form patriarchal structures?

bell hooks (1952–) is the pen name for Gloria Jane Watkins, an American author, social activist and feminist theorist who focuses on oppressive systems in society and the effects of capitalism on race and gender.

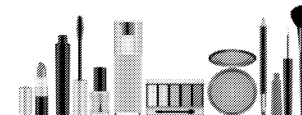


Bell hooks (1952–)

For hooks, Feminism is not just a hobby. It is a political commitment

Women's beauty standards

How did hooks propose we view women's beauty standards?



COMMODIFIED BLACK CULTURE

What is meant by 'commodified black culture'?

hooks cites the way in which blues, jazz and soul were adapted into the more commercial rock and roll, popularised by artists such as Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly – much of the authenticity and political intention from the original movements is then lost in translation



Describe another media text in which black culture has been commodified in the mainstream media

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

Briefly explain what is meant by intersectional feminism

As an intersectional feminist, which

THE OTHER

Explain how black women and their experiences have been 'othered' in Western popular culture

GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

Judith Butler (1956–)



Judith Butler (1956–) is an American philosopher who gained recognition for her work on third-wave feminism, queer theory and gender roles.

What is meant by 'performativity'?

A judge's sentence in a court can send someone to prison

Provide two more examples of performativity in society

Butler proposes that performativity relies on the repetition of **rituals** – it takes more than just a singular act to make something performative

Explain what is meant by a ritual

Singing hymns and psalms at a religious mass

Explain how Butler's ideas on gender counter the argument of essentialism

GENDER ROLES

Butler analysed the ways in which men and women are pressured to behave in a certain way so as to fit into society's expectations of them:

What are some things boys are encouraged to do from an early age?

What are some things girls are encouraged to do from an early age?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RITUAL AND IDENTITY

Traditional view

Our identity determines the ways in which we perform and the rituals we partake in – these behaviours then

Sex and Gender

What is the difference between sex and gender?

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – uniting, feminist, cross-dressing, patriarchal, men, biology, harmful, narratives, non-binary, children, gender trouble

_____ thinkers that solely attribute the oppression of women to _____ are creating their own divisions between genders that are potentially as _____ as those established in a _____ society

Traditional feminism historically excludes the _____ of people who lack formal categories of identity, *e.g.* _____ people

Traditional feminism, while claiming to be a _____ force for all women, is fairly restrictive in the way it categorises women – this categorisation has been applied based on elements such as biology, sexuality and people's capacity to bear _____

ETHNICITY AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Paul Gilroy (1956–)



Paul Gilroy (1956–) is a British academic and cultural studies theorist who has written on issues regarding black British identity and the effects of colonialism on contemporary attitudes towards race and ethnicity.

11

Fill in the missing letters in the statement below

Gilroy argues that W_s_e_n media promotes and maintains c_l_n_a attitudes in regards to race. He proposes that the h_g_m_n_c perception of non-white cultures is affected by the history of E_r_p_a colonialism.

Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – hierarchies, prejudiced, binary opposites, similarities, savage, geopolitical, Gilroy

Identify two major books written by Paul Gilroy

- 1.
- 2.

Explain what is meant by colonialism

1. How did the period of European colonisation begin?
2. How did the period of European colonisation end?
3. What were some of the dominions of the British Empire at the peak of its powers?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Racist attitudes from colonial times have trickled down through history to shape the racial tensions that still exist in Britain and America today

DIASPORA

A term coined by _____ for a _____ ideology that establishes clear _____ between societies and races that are 'civilised' and those that are 'uncivilised' or '_____'. According to Gilroy, this ideology will always create racial _____ in which the 'civilised' societies are considered more advanced and sophisticated – furthermore, _____ relations will continue to function in a way that considers the differences between cultures as opposed to the _____.

What is meant by diaspora?

Explain how the concept of 'civilisationism' relates to colonialism

Describe two more historical examples of diaspora

- People of African ancestry living in North America because of the transatlantic slave trade

- 1.
- 2.

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – origin, disconnected, European, black, migration

Diasporic populations often feel that their cultural identity is _____, that they neither belong in the country they live in nor their country of historical _____ – Gilroy mentions that _____ British people have been made to feel they are not truly British or _____ because they are part of a diaspora from either slavery or forced _____.

Describe an example in the mainstream _____ in which black culture has been represented as 'niche' or 'other'

Identify any additional views Gilroy had on diaspora

CIVILISATIONISM

Gilroy suggests that much of the **modern mass media** is still constructed in a way that allows the continued existence of colonial discourses – a culture of **civilisationism** is still apparent

Black culture (and other non-white cultures) is still portrayed as 'niche' or secondary, whereas Western culture is depicted as the norm or the mainstream

POWER AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Curran (unknown) and Seaton (1947–)



Which book is recognised as Curran and Seaton's most influential collaboration?



- Jean Seaton (1947–) is a professor of Media History and an official historian for the BBC who has written many books on the relationship between the media and politics in Britain.
- James Curran is a Professor of Communications who has written many books on the media including *Media and Power*, *Media and Democracy* and *Misunderstanding the Media*.

NEW MEDIA

Developments in the Internet and digital technology have made it harder to regulate media texts. How is this the case?

However, **Curran and Seaton** argue that online media requires regulation:

- It is easy for children to access content that is harmful, disturbing or inappropriate through online platforms – for example, age-restricted games can be downloaded on a parent's account and watched by

CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP

Correctly match the blocks on the left to the blocks on the right to form the correct statements

Curran and Seaton propose that the most powerful media landscape is owned and controlled by

These media conglomerates wield great power in society – they are able to maintain

The conglomerates in possession of this power are primarily motivated by money

Generally, ownership within media industries is becoming more and more concentrated over time,

Conglomerate –

Horizontal integration –

– they minimise costs in order to maximise profits

a small group of individuals and conglomerates

cultural hegemony through the texts they produce

e.g. Disney has bought dozens of properties and rival studios over the past decade or so in a process of horizontal integration

There are theorists who disagree with Curran and Seaton – summarise the arguments of these theorists

QUALITY AND CREATIVITY

Complete the following sentences to accurately summarise the views of Curran and Seaton

- Curran and Seaton propose that the limited concentration of power restricts _____
- This is because the conglomerates in power are _____

'We want to shrink the media moguls' (Curran, 2013)

The implication here is that powerful individuals (e.g. Rupert Murdoch) are stifling opportunity and creativity

MORE CONTENT = LESS QUALITY

REGULATION

Livingstone (1960–) and Lunt



- Sonia Livingstone (1960–) is a social psychologist who has written extensively on media and communications, particularly the opportunities and dangers of thriving online technology
- Peter Lunt is a professor of media and communication who specialises in media regulation, audiences and the participation of the public in popular culture

Which book is recognised as Livingstone and Lunt's most influential collaboration?

TRADITIONAL REGULATION AT RISK

REGULATORY BOARDS – Organisations that monitor media products being released or broadcast in a country.

Identify three major regulatory boards in the UK.

STRUGGLE IN THE UK

There is an underlying conflict at the core of British media regulation – the needs of the public as citizens **vs** the desires of the public as consumers

According to Livingstone and Lunt, what are the needs of people as citizens?

According to Livingstone and Lunt, what are the needs of people as consumers?

According to Livingstone and Lunt, how do these needs often contradict each other?

TRADITIONAL REGULATORY METHODS (E.G. FILM CERTIFICATES, VIDEO GAME CERTIFICATES, PRESS REGULATION) ARE BECOMING LESS AND LESS EFFECTIVE

What, according to Livingstone and Lunt, are three general reasons for this?

1.

Identify three reasons why online media is particularly difficult to regulate

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



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FORMATTING

1 Briefly explain what is meant by formatting

Major cultural products are formatted in a way that fulfils the following criteria:

GENRE

1 Identify four ways in which genre can ensure commercial success

1 Genres with mass appeal can usually resonate with audiences across nations and demographics

2

3

4

5

STAR POWER

1 Identify three more ways in which star power can ensure commercial success

1 The promise of famous actors, directors, writers, presenters, celebrities and notable figures can attract audiences to a cultural text

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

David Hesmondhalgh (1963–)



David Hesmondhalgh (1963–) is a professor of music, media and culture who is recognised for his work on media industries and production.

1 Identify two of Hesmondhalgh's most influential books

1.

2.

MINIMISING RISK AND MAXIMISING AUDIENCE

According to Hesmondhalgh, companies that produce **cultural products** operate like **traditional businesses** – they are profit-driven and want to attract as many consumers as possible. He talks of various ways in which these companies can ensure the commercial success of a cultural product.

Vertical integration

1 What is meant by vertical integration?

Horizontal integration

1 What is meant by horizontal integration?

NEW MEDIA

Corporations that **diversify** into several areas and that take advantage of multiple media platforms and technologies are more likely to minimise risk and maximise profit

1 Describe an example of a person or media product that has diversified into other areas in order to minimise risk and maximise audiences

1 Explain why effective marketing campaigns for media products are important

1 What is meant by commodification?

According to Hesmondhalgh, culture is becoming more and more commodified:

1 Describe two cultural products which have become commodified over time

MEDIA EFFECTS

Albert Bandura (1925–)



Albert Bandura (1925–) is a Canadian-American psychologist recognised for his development of the **social cognitive theory**. His work on aggression and the ways in which children can imitate the behaviour they see can be effectively applied to the effects of media texts on audiences.

Summarise the findings of Bandura's social learning theory

What is meant by transgressive behaviour?

Identify two flaws in Bandura's social learning theory

- 1.
- 2.

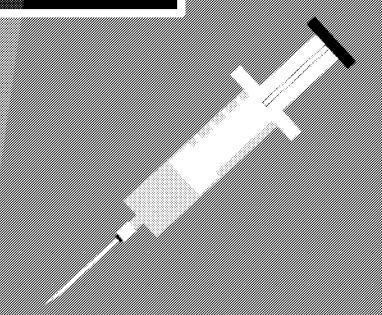
Describe a real-life example in which principles of the social learning theory have been used to explain high-profile cases of criminal behaviour

The social learning theory has also been

CONTEXT

The hypodermic needle theory – this theory falls in line with Bandura's idea that media texts are capable of inserting ideas directly into the minds of audiences

- Fill in the gaps using the words provided – , propaganda, minds, powerless, bullet, radio, drugs, active, passive, the hypodermic syringe model, 1927, outdated, desensitise**
- ✓ This model, also known as 'the magic _____', was originated in Harold Laswell's book _____ *Technique in the World War*, published in 1927.
 - ✓ The idea was that media texts, like needles, inject ideas and messages into the _____ of their audience, who are, in turn, _____ to reject these messages.
 - ✓ This theory was particularly accepted in the 1940s and 1950s – a period in which media forms such as _____ and television were described as 'plug-in-_____'. It was seen as a powerful and patronising – media theorists generally consider audiences to be more _____ than _____.
 - ✓ There are, however, more recent examples of people buying into this theory, e.g. *violent video games such as Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto* were widely criticised for being a form of drug abuse that would _____ audiences to violence.
 - ✓ This is sometimes referred to as _____.



What is meant by desensitisation?

The Bobo doll experiment

Briefly describe what was tested in the Bobo doll experiment

What conclusion was made following the Bobo doll experiment?



Identify two more issues people have had with this theory

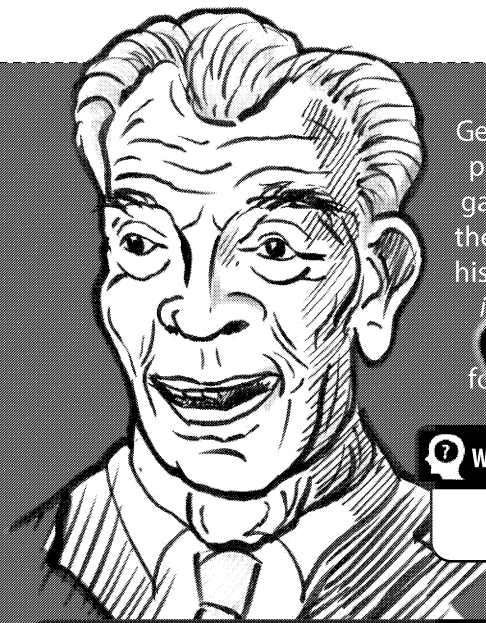
Issues with the theory

- The methodology of this experiment has



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George Gerbner (1919–2005) was a professor of communication who gained recognition for his work on the effects of television, particularly his article *Science on Television: How it affects public conception*. He is widely recognised for his work on the **cultivation theory**.

? What is cultivation?

CULTIVATION THEORY

George Gerbner (1919–2005)

A POSITIVE SPIN

? Use a historical example to explain how positive representations in the media have changed people's attitudes in society

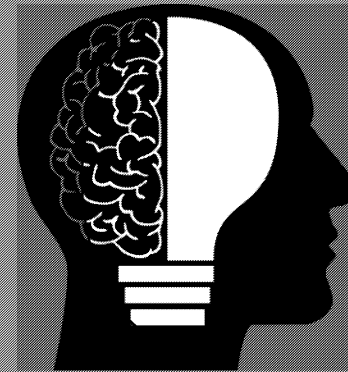
? Summarise Gerbner's key proposals relating to the cultivation theory. Be sure to include the following key terms in your answer: mass-culture, consume, repeated patterns of representation, gradual, affect

Key Proposals

What is Cultivated?

? Fill in the gaps using the terms provided – complex, mainstream values, cultural homogeneity, essentialist, reality, stereotypes

- The media does not accurately represent the nature of _____ – life is too nuanced and _____ to convey accurately with a single text
- It is easier and more attention-grabbing to represent the world using _____
- Cultivation tends to reinforce _____ that allow the _____ to be maintained – for example, advertisements are renowned for reinforcing _____ ideas about gender, *i.e.* they market products and services based on the assumption that men and women have fundamentally different needs and interests



EXAMPLES – REPEATED PATTERNS OF REPRESENTATION



The Sun newspaper – Jeremy Corbyn

? Analyse the front page of this newspaper (see left), referring to repeated patterns of representation in your answer

TELEVISION

Gerbner's most influential studies took place in 1976 – therefore, his theories refer mainly to television as opposed to new media

? Describe two of Gerbner's main observations of television

1.

'MEAN WORLD SYNDROME'

? What is meant by 'mean world syndrome'? What is the effect of it, according to Gerbner?

RECEPTION THEORY

Stuart Hall (1932–2014)

Stuart Hall (1932–2014) was a Jamaican-born Marxist theorist known primarily for his work in sociology and cultural studies. As well as his theories on **representation**, Hall studied the process by which audiences read and interpret media texts.



Identify two of Hall's most famous books/articles on the subject of audience reception

- 1.
- 2.

Identify the missing keyword in each proposal – encode, decode, intended, producers

Hall's Key Proposals

- 1. _____ always have an intended meaning that they wish to convey through a media text
- 2. Producers _____ ideas into a text using media language
- 3. Audiences then _____ these ideas
- 4. However, some audiences might not decode ideas in a way that was _____ by the producers...

Describe an example of a media text where audiences did not decode its messages as intended

THREE AUDIENCE READINGS

Identify the names of the three key readings based on the definitions provided

<div>Also known as the dominant or hegemonic position</div> <div>Occurs when an audience fully decodes the producer's intended meaning</div> <div>They are agreeable and supportive of the ideology</div>	<div>Occurs when an audience partially decodes the ideas infused into the text</div> <div>They will agree with certain intended meanings while rejecting others</div>	<div>Occurs when an audience fail to / choose not to decode the ideas infused into the text</div> <div>They are perhaps able to decode the intended meaning but they actively disagree with its ideology</div>
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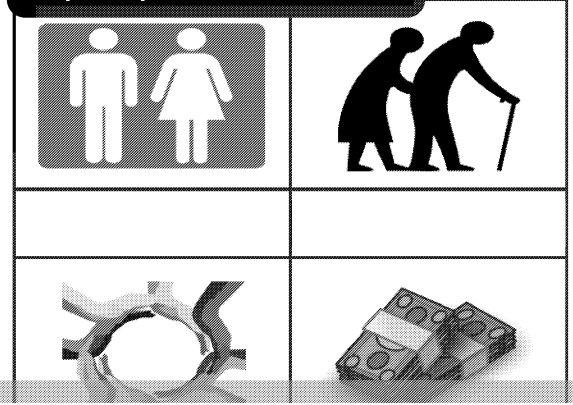
Describe an example of a media text that might inspire two different readings based on contextual factors or the life experiences of the consumers

Explain why this is important

Hall proposed that there are three hypothetical ways in which audiences can read a media text – which reading an audience takes is based on the degree to which they are **willing** or **able** to **decode** the producer's intended meaning from the text:

OTHER VARIABLES THAT MIGHT DETERMINE HOW SOMEONE READS A MEDIA TEXT

Identify these variables based on the pictures provided



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FANDOM

Henry Jenkins (1958–)

The writing of Henry Jenkins (1958–) mostly focuses on popular cultural forms – he reflects on his own, and other people's, experiences as media fans.

Identify two of Jenkins' most famous books/articles relating to the field

According to Jenkins, what differentiates a fan from a consumer?

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – consume, textual poaching, hierarchical, social entities, passively, social interaction

Key Proposals

- Fandoms are _____, i.e. they are groups that have distinct 'personality' or code of ethics
- Fans participate in _____
- Fandoms** do not simply _____ media – they are a devoted audience
- Fandom** goes against what is traditionally considered the _____ nature of the creator–audience relationship in which the audience _____ consumes a text
- Modern media audiences belong to a participatory culture which thrives on _____

FANDOM AS SOCIAL GROUPS



Jenkins claims that media fans actively construct and circulate meanings among one another. The most pure example of this is the **fan theory**, i.e. a usually bizarre and radical interpretation of a media text – these theories are often circulated through social media sites and online forums.

Describe a fan theory that you have heard or one you have come up with yourself about a media text

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY → ADVANCED FANDOM

Developments in the Internet and digital technology have transformed fan dynamics – it has allowed fandom to flourish:

Identify three ways in which this has enabled fandom to flourish

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Responding to fandom

Fans can play a huge part in influencing the production of a media text:

Describe an example which demonstrates the power and influence of modern media fans

Describe the function of data measuring organisations such as Nielsen and Kantar

Explain what a prosumer is

TEXTUAL POACHING

Explain why media producers might have a problem with textual poaching

What is meant by 'textual poaching'?

Fan fiction, e.g.

'END OF AUDIENCE'

Clay Shirky (1964–)



Clay Shirky (1964–) is an American author and academic who has written extensively on the Internet and its relationship with modern society.

Identify two of Shirky's most famous books/articles relating to this field

Key beliefs...

Summarise Shirky's key beliefs relating to audiences. Be sure to include the following key terms in your answer: online, decentralised, share, new world.

THE INTERNET AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

The relationship between media products and individual audience members has been totally transformed by online media and digital technology – it has made media audiences more active:

Use a specific media form to explain how media audiences have become more active over time due to the Internet and digital technology

These developments over the past 50 years or so support Shirky's theory that audiences have become more active and participatory than ever before

'TALKING BACK'

What effect can a site such as Twitter have on the success of a media product?

Fill in the gaps using the words provided – power, collapse, amplification, opinions, Jenkins, reception

Like Henry _____, Shirky recognised that the traditional disparity in _____ between media producers and audiences is beginning to _____ – audiences can now 'talk back' and have their _____ heard by producers. Social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram allow for the _____ of both praise and criticism of a text, meaning that media companies have given increasing attention to the marketing and _____ of texts on social media.

Review sites – IMDB (Internet Movie Database), Rotten Tomatoes, Metacritic, Letterboxd

Explain how online review sites have allowed media audiences to become more active

Rotten Tomatoes is particularly interesting as there can often be a huge disparity between professional critic scores and the scores given by general audiences:

Film	Critic score	Audience score
<i>Joker (2019)</i>	68%	88%
<i>Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017)</i>	91%	43%
<i>The Greatest Showman (2017)</i>	56%	86%

MASS AMATEURISATION

Describe the advantages of mass amateurisation

Explain what is meant by mass amateurisation