



Getting to Know...

GQ and The Gentlewoman

for A Level AQA Media Two

In-Depth Study: Magazines

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been written for the AQA Media Studies A Level specification (7572), with a specific focus on Media Two In-depth Study: Magazines: *GQ* (March 2022 edition) and *The Gentlewoman* (Issue 23 – Summer 2021).

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

As a 'Getting to Know' pack, this resource has been constructed to actively engage students with the source material through a range of stimulating, focused and entertaining magazine-style articles exploring different topics across the media frameworks and theories. Discussion tasks are included throughout to recap knowledge. At the end of the resource, we have included a range of more challenging essay-style questions for students to test their learning.

The structure of the pack is as follows:

1. **What Should I Know?** – a brief overview of the key facts/information about both close study products.
2. **Getting to Know** – 17 articles on a variety of topics (15 on each separate text, two comparative articles), such as the production background, industrial context, representation and cultural context. In these articles, we have tried to focus on the more niche aspects of the texts that may not have been covered by textbooks, to broaden students' understanding.
3. **Show What You Know** – various essay-style questions on the close study products across a range of difficulty levels complete with an answer section.

Our aim with this resource is to provide variety for those students who may feel overloaded by textbooks and other learning materials with a solely academic writing style. Ideally, the blend of informative content and entertaining presentation style will not only help to strengthen a student's knowledge of the texts, but also help to foster a genuine interest for the texts.

What Should I Know?

GQ

Background information

- GQ is the top-performing men's lifestyle magazine (as of 2023 data).
- Owned and produced by US media conglomerate **Conde Nast**, which is head of a huge number of film, TV, and digital video programming companies.
- American edition first published in **1931**, with the UK franchise hitting shelves in 1991.
- As of 2019, GQ has 27 global editions circulated monthly.
- The magazine focuses on men's fashion and style brought to you by industry experts.
- **GQ magazine** provides entertainment, fashion, lifestyle, culture news, reviews, and more.
- The front cover typically features a cover model who is **a celebrity, an actor, or a public figure**.
- The current editor-in-chief for the original American edition is Will Welch.
- The total global physical circulation of the GQ franchise (as of December 2022) is **932,580 copies globally, per month**¹.

GQ UK facts and figures

- GQ UK has a **separate editorial team** from the American magazine.
- Current editor-in-chief is **Dylan Jones**, who has held the position since **2023**.
- The magazine's production is based in Vogue House, located in central London.
- As of 2019, the magazine has a monthly circulation of approximately **85,080** copies, derived from paid-for subscriptions.

The Gentlewoman

Background information

- *The Gentlewoman* is a British independent magazine founded in **2010** and published by Jonker and Oppen van Bennekom.
- The **Dutch** duo publishes only one other publication, **Fantastic Man**, which is aimed at people working outside of the mainstream publishing industry.
- The magazine has an average biannual circulation of **100,000** copies and a subscriber base around **100,000**.
- The chief editor is Penny Martin.
- It covers subject matters such as **the arts, culture, sustainability, fashion and more**.

Edition

- Issue 23 features actress Scarlett Johansson on the front cover.
- The articles for study include a feature on Somali female boxer Ramla Ali and Isabella Tree.
- Stella McCartney also features and promotes sustainable (vegan) fashion.
- The magazine features an unconventional layout for the text and images with soft, informal and natural mise en scène, rather than the typical studio digital photography of mainstream magazines.

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¹ <https://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/magtitlesearch.asp>

Getting to Know...

1. GQ production background

GQ is one of many titles owned and published by Conde Nast. This company is one of the leaders that dominate the publishing world, and the company also has a huge presence in print, online and broadcast world. Therefore, as it is a publishing **oligopoly** there is little competition.

It claims to be one of 'the world's most culture-defining brands'. It claims to have 6,000 individual titles serving 37 brands in 26 languages, spanning 32 markets worldwide. China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico and Latin America, Spain, Taiwan and the US, with additional licence partners around the globe.

Conde Nast is based in New York City and was established in 1873. It has an approximate annual revenue of upwards of **\$2 billion** (2021 figures). The multinational conglomerate owns **assets** – companies or media titles such as *Vogue*, *Glamour* and *Wired*. Conde Nast Entertainment was launched in 2011 to develop film, television, and premium digital video programming.

It has recently launched influencer-based platform 'Next Gen'. Moving with the times and utilising technology, it aims to harness a new approach to content creation. The campaign was revealed across video, mobile, display, and social media. It uses approximately 3,500 influencers, with a collective following of over 300 million, which enabled it to target specific audiences for specific advertisers using CitizenNet (a social data analysing tool).

Franchising

GQ is a global brand and launched its UK edition in 2005. With cross-Atlantic cultural links between the UK and US it made sense to distribute to its cousin over the pond. Our close political and cultural relationship with America means that we have much in common (e.g. fashion, movies and fast-food chains), and many American media **conglomerates** branch out with a British regional **franchise**.

But of course, even though British and American cultures are strongly linked, they aren't one and the same – not everything that plays well across the pond is likely to be successful here, and vice versa. While the celebrities that get featured on the front cover, such as Robert Pattinson, are going to be instantly recognisable to readers in the UK, other things would be inaccessible, such as if the magazine recommended products to buy from American shops, listing prices in dollars, or used imperial measurement systems instead of British units. There is a large degree of crossover in television, film and other media are all so popular here. Equally, there is a domestic edition essential in order to be as successful as it possibly could.

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Editorial staff

Currently, the editor of *GQ* UK is Adam Baidawi. He was previously a reporter for the *New York Times* and *Vanity Fair* then joined the *GQ* family and became editor for *GQ* Middle East in 2018. With him, he brought a fresh perspective to the brand and helped to instigate more contemporary and progressive values for the modern male reader.

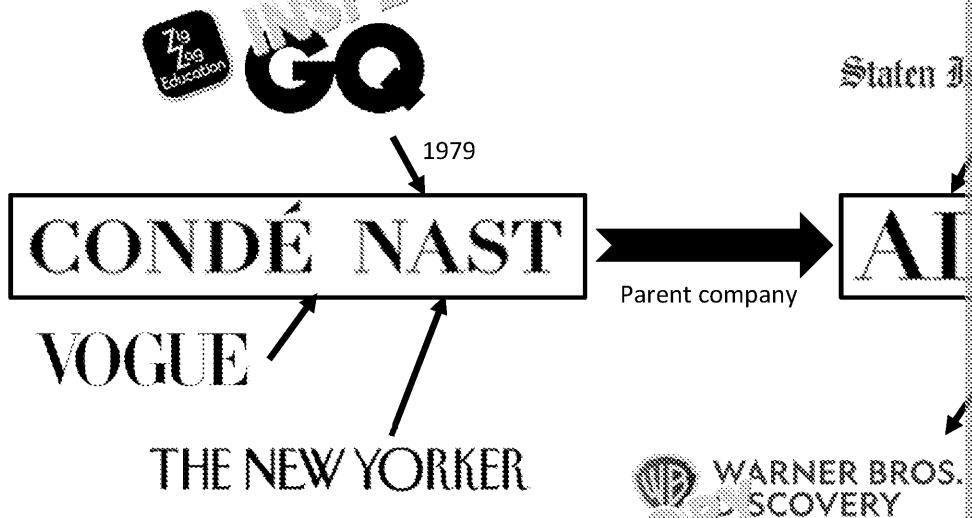
As a large company with substantial financial backing from a parent company, *GQ* can afford to employ a large number of full-time staff writers, content editors and art directors across its 35 regional editions, instead of being solely reliant on freelance contributors. The advantage of this is that having a professional team in-house is far more efficient than having to coordinate a large host of individual creators working remotely.

Distribution network

Conde Nast has a global distribution network, and here in the UK it can be bought on the high street or by subscription. *GQ* has an incredibly wide UK **distribution**, appearing on the shelves of all the major supermarkets, such as M&S, Waitrose, ASDA, Tesco and Sainsbury's. You can also buy it from major chain stores such as WHSmith. The popular choice is to have a subscription for either getting a physical copy delivered directly to the home or for a downloadable digital copy for PC or tablet.

Ownership

Conde Nast was acquired by Advance Publications in 1951. Its parent company portfolio which includes shares in other companies such as Reddit and the media Discovery and is owned by the Newhouse family.



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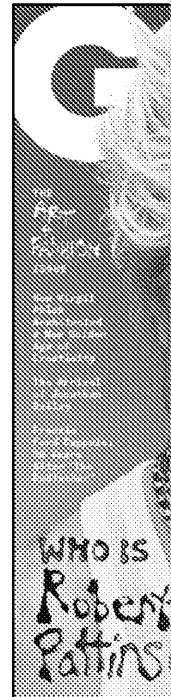
Discussion questions

1. Which type(s) of integration does Conde Nast Communications utilise?
2. Does it have a monopoly of the print industry?
3. Why do you think *GQ* set up a UK edition?

2. Look, layout and language of *GQ*

Front cover breakdown

The cover of the edition for the course somewhat 'breaks the mould' for *GQ*'s usual choice of image. Instead of featuring a well-dressed celebrity in perhaps a suit, it has an image that refers to an earlier time – the punk era. The actor is presented in an unconventional manner compared to what audiences would normally expect him to appear. This works to intrigue them and make them interested in finding out the reason why he is so altered.



GQ (magazine)

➤ Central image

- The photo of Robert Pattinson has been carefully constructed to convey a sense of rebellion and revolution
- The spiky hairstyle has intertextual references to Sid Vicious (infamous '80s punk frontman for band The Sex Pistols), which some audience members of the older demographic might remember
- The tattoos, heavy chain and nose injury all denote aggression and force
- The non-verbal codes present him as confident and sensual through the direct eye contact, parted lips and suggestive stare; some audiences may find this appealing and inspiring

➤ Coverlines

- The main coverline 'Who is Robert Pattinson' is written in a graffiti-style font as indicated by the large size. It's positioned in the bottom-left that are sold on shelves so that the lead story is seen when displayed
- The other coverlines are in a typeface font which contrasts with the main coverline, providing a sense of conformity at play
- The other coverlines reveal that within this edition you can read about other celebrities like Abloh (CEO of streetwear fashion company Off White) and Francis Ford Coppola, indicating a more diverse line-up for the content
- The edition is called the 'Art and Fashion' issue, which indicates that this offer is different compared to the usual monthly content

➤ Colour scheme

- The colour scheme of the fonts, images, and other elements such as text is mostly black, with tones of desaturated blue being used for major elements such as the masthead, contrasting with the conventionally masculine aesthetic in society, where products are often darker and less colourful, as well as fitting the March weather when the cover is published
- The masthead itself is almost hidden behind the main image, implying that the magazine needs explicit positioning and that the celebrity featured has high status
- The colour scheme is usually a neutral palette, so this blue choice intentionally stands out, which again highlights that this issue is different from the conventional ones

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Privileged knowledge, privileged people

For generations, newspapers and magazines have used exaggeration and emotive language on their front covers to draw audiences in so that copies will sell quickly. Online, the term used for this is **clickbait**. It is the strategy of using sensationalised statements to get attention from people and entice them to find out more by clicking on the link. In print, coverlines are used to 'hook' the interest of the reader and entice them to 'look

This edition of *GQ* utilises a similar tactic. Many of the coverlines on this front cover are examples of **enigma codes**, as the semantic meaning of the headlines poses questions in potential buyers. They act as bait, enticing readers to seek out information that draw you in like a fish to a fly, promising information, like – why IS Pattinson so altered? And, how has Vigil Abloh impacted the 'Age of Creativity'?

Overarching narrative: look sharp, live smart

The brand slogan encapsulates its values. The message is that to be respected you need to be clever and look good. *GQ* claims to be a lifestyle magazine that offers content on: '*entertainment, sport and culture news, reviews and comment.*'

In the Eddie Redmayne edition, the slogan can be perceived through the codes used. He is presented as smart, cool, brooding, orderly and in control. The alternative issue featuring Robert Pattinson with a punk makeover suggests something 'new' in this edition; rebellious, yet still 'rough' and masculine. This alternative style could suggest that this edition has alternative representations, ideas and content to the usual formula.

However, both feature celebrities who are young and successful.

Discussion questions

1. Why might the use of questions in the coverlines motivate someone to buy the magazine?
2. Why do you think *GQ* has decided to 'go rogue' with the format of this edition featuring Robert Pattinson?
3. What sort of 'needs' might be gratified through the content promised through the coverlines?

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3. GQ: Masculinity in crisis?

Traditional stereotypes of masculinity include the appearance and behaviour traits of men being physically muscular, with brooding and bearded faces with a tendency towards being sexually motivated. Obviously, over time attitudes towards gender evolve and GQ sees itself as a platform for such evolutionary developments. The men featured (specifically Robert Pattinson and Jonathan Bailey) drift from these stereotypes and indicate a broader, more progressive representation of what it means to be male.

Depictions in GQ often showcase the male form as something to be applauded and admired, a notion that Van Zoonen puts forward in her theory on gender. Men's bodies are celebrated for their power and strength, and this is still the case in many men's magazines today (see *Men's Health*, for example). The status quo has been that it is normal for men to be preoccupied with their physical prowess and to be admired by other men and women alike for their efforts.

GQ has moved on from presenting such a linear interpretation of masculinity and focuses more on men having power in other ways. The covers often present well-known individuals (occasionally women) who are dressed in formal attire. The oft-used 'headshot', or medium close-up, brings attention to the face as opposed to the entire body, and so detracts from form.

There has been much debate about the topic of 'masculinity in crisis' and GQ sees the concept that it is, in fact, not in crisis. Feminism has been categorised as being the source of uncertainty, when in fact it is the damaging historical patriarchal prototypes that define what it is to be male. The implications of this are brought up with is that they have to be assertive and always be a winner. This has led to a decline in mental health for many men as they strive to meet a standard that may not be natural to them.

The diverse representation of men from different industries, races, ages and sexualities is a progressive and supportive brand. The focus tends to be on success in terms of wealth, talent, and infamy. It could be said that GQ is playing a part to aid the transition from traditional masculine to a more inclusive and diverse masculine. For example, the typical perks of traditional masculinity – power, privilege, and success – are being moved towards a movement that embraces vulnerability and inclusivity as strengths.

For a visual representation of this, see the gender spectrum graphic here:

<https://www.themichaelteaching.com/michael/masculine-feminine-duality/>

According to Judith Butler, masculinity is a construct. This concept that is often linearly imagined, reimagined and reshaped over generations. It is extreme traits that may include aggressive and dominating behaviour, for example.

Gauntlett's identity theory helps us to see how an individual's sense of self is not a fixed 'shelf' set of traits, but an adoption of traits from a spectrum of what are deemed acceptable. Just as the glut of 'self-help' books helps a generation to 'edit' a sense of self into a desired identity, today still play a role in influencing readers on how to project their identity and gender. The interpretation of what it means to be 'masculine'.

Discussion Questions

1. How do biological traits for men influence their sense of masculinity and identity?
2. How is patriarchy damaging to men?
3. How can media texts influence audiences' sense of identity?

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4. GQ: Identity in the modern era

Typically, we define ourselves against the 'other' – anyone 'outside' ourselves is perceived as a threat). Collective identities also produce this effect; groups of similar looking or oppositional perspective to those who are 'other' to their group. This is most distinct when we are not women; therefore, they are 'other'. This sense of othering can also take place on race, age, and even religion. The primary sense of self is 'I', the person. However, there becomes a collective sense of self. Validation and safety are felt when group is the same (or similar). However, with this sense of identity there are also levels of power.

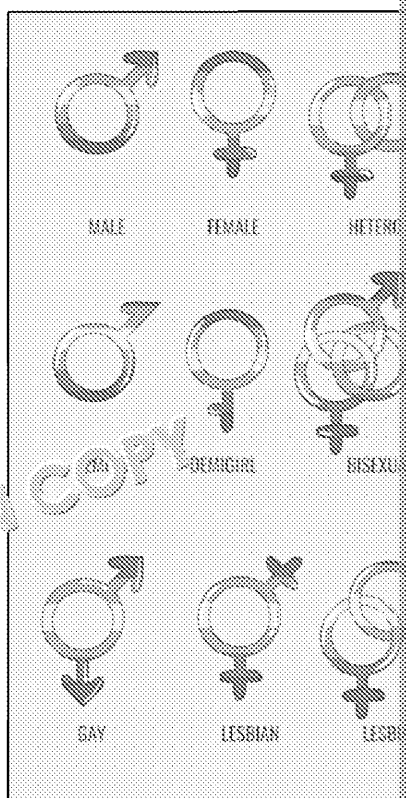
The retention of power in political, economic, or even social – has historically been specific demographics (white, wealthy males). Movements and revolutions in the past have led to a fragmenting of power, and, therefore, a more nuanced set of identities coming to the fore.

Binaries such as male versus female have become less defined; it is accepted that men or female are far more fluid and interchangeable than people have thought in the past. People feel very unsettled by this notion because if they see others who appear to change gender, then it makes them question who they are – it destabilises their sense of reality, and this occurs because we define ourselves by comparing who we are to those around us. Somehow we are different too. According to Byrad Yyelland, Professor at Virginia Tech, Qatar, we are architects and continually build our sense of self and identity.

The twenty-first century has been a time of big changes in how we think about sexual orientations and gender identities all over the world. In many countries, people are discussing these topics and making new laws to support them, such as allowing same-sex marriage and being more accepting of sexual minorities. For example, some countries now let LGBTQ people serve in the military. However, there are still many arguments about these topics, and some places have not granted LGBTQ+ rights.

At the same time, this century has seen a lot more visibility for transgender people and about gender identity in the mainstream. We now talk about things like assigned sex, gender presentation, and gender pronouns.

Researchers and scientists have changed how they study sexual orientation and gender identity, too. They used to try to find out what caused someone to be gay or straight, but now they're more interested in the experiences and stories of LGBTQ+ people. Some important books and studies from the early 2000s started to look at things such as young people not wanting labels for their sexual orientation, bisexuality, and how schools teach about gender and sexuality. This approach has become even more popular in the last 10 years. Now, researchers study things like the language we use to talk about gender and sexuality, new experiences of being gay or lesbian today, and different kinds of sexual orientation. They also study gender identities, like pansexuality and non-binary. They also study less known or less understood sexual orientations, such as asexuality, kink, and polyamory.



LGBTQ+ gender symbols

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Jonathan Bailey

GQ contains a feature article on actor Jonathan Bailey. The article is in the form of an interview and covers the topic of his 'coming out' and how this juxtaposes with his 'straight' role in *Bridgerton*. The representation of this queer actor is positive, and he is given 'voice' to communicate his thoughts and feelings, which is a refreshing alternative to the common recurrent style of articles used by many mainstream magazines. The image used has Bailey posed in relaxed and somewhat seductive postures which subvert the common positioning of men in mainstream media showcasing their muscular physique and looking tough with serious countenance. Bailey is here seen arranged on a chair, looking into the far distance with a wistful look – not a traditional male representation.

Van Zoonen states that gender stereotypes are so embedded within media and culture that they are perceived as 'natural'. *GQ* can be seen as challenging such stereotypes with a preoccupation with grooming and fashion which counters the idea of being tough, rough and burly. Progressive gender ideas that alter those contexts are reflected through the media and presented by the media to evoke new

Gauntlett's belief that identity is a fluid and ever-evolving state of being can be also presented as more of a 'spectrum' of being than a fixed set of traits. *GQ* March 2020 features Christopher Coppola and Jonathan Bailey, which could perhaps be seen as keeping feet in both worlds for male readers – Coppola would appeal to perhaps the more typically masculine readership while Bailey would appeal to all orientations (queer, bi or straight!). Fashion and beauty have traditionally been the domain of women's magazines; however, *GQ* dedicates much of its content to this, demonstrating a more binary interpretation of gender while also perhaps appealing to the female demographic.

Butler states that we all 'perform' a gender through our rituals and routines that are socially constructed. The men featured in *GQ* perform a part or version of masculinity – perhaps this is a different version of masculinity that we 'know'; Bailey plays a straight man in terms of his sexuality as a performer. Masculinity is presented as something beyond archetypes.

Other editions of *GQ* have put the LGBTQ+ community at centre-stage with covers featuring individuals such as Olly Alexander, Ricky Martin, Lil Nas X, and Sam Smith. This move to go against the heteronormative status quo indicates that the brand feels the benefits outweigh the risks in business terms, as the diverse clientele it attracts will counteract 'loss' sales with more traditionally minded male readers. In this edition we again see an inviting pose, with Olly looking directly at the reader with parted lips and an enticing gaze. The glamorous outfit also indicates a more open representation of masculinity that celebrates lavish designs and embellished fabrics, which again undermines typical fashions for men and provides alternative options for readers.

In addition, a cursory glance at the social media presence of *GQ* and the content on its website will also establish how inclusive it has become in order to widen its readership and provide a broader set of representations for its audiences.

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Discussion questions

1. Do you think that including representation of the LGBTQ+ community is a selling tactic – a ploy that the magazine uses to make it appear inclusive rather than 'be' inclusive?
2. There have been women and people of colour featured on the front covers of other editions of *GQ*. How does this more pluralistic range of representations affect your view of the magazine?

5. Social and cultural context for *GQ*

GQ was founded in 1931 in the US (New York), fashion and style capital of the world. Over the generations of people have lived through a world of different trends, styles and fashions, social attitudes and perspectives have also developed. Typical notions of femininity and masculinity have morphed and now even our language is growing so that our terminology is more distinct. Today's young people are rejecting societal expectations of what a man or woman should be, and to keep audiences feeling both validated and understood, magazines update their versions of representation so that readers do not feel alienated.

Movements such as #MeToo and the Gender Revolution have encouraged more progressive and inclusive content that have been largely absent in the past. Dylan Jones, former *GQ* editor, claimed that the magazine's movement towards 'recalibration' that was 'necessary and long overdue'.

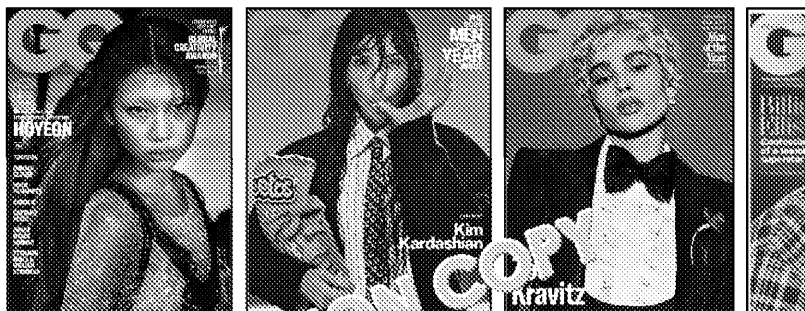
An acknowledgement of the mental health crisis (particularly in young men) has been reflected in the content and representation of modern men. The understanding that living up to societal expectations and not sharing fears has helped it to produce more sensitive and considerate content. This is evident in articles such as 2023's online piece entitled, 'How to improve your mental health' and 2020's piece 'Black men's mental health is the next pandemic'. These articles challenge stereotypes and indicate that these 'universal truths', these hegemonic ideas, are not universal and men to have mental health issues and it is also OK to talk about them.

Attitudes towards women also appear to have evolved over time. Unlike most men's magazines, *GQ* has featured women on the cover. However, this has often been used as a voyeuristic selling point, with women scantily clad and posed in seductive positions.



Left to right: Lana del Ray *GQ* September 2012 cover; Naomi Campbell *GQ* September 2018 cover; Charlize Theron *GQ* September 2023 cover

More modern covers have adjusted the representation of women to be a little more dignified and less sexualised.



Left to right: Jung Hyeon *GQ* April 2023 cover; Kim Kardashian *GQ* May 2023 'GQ's Men of the Year Issue'; Zoe Kravitz *GQ* June 2023 cover

These covers from the last 10 years present women as less sexualised as they are more dignified. There is also a more ethnically diverse set of representation. The 'Zoe Kravitz' cover is a good example of the inclusivity of our time. Portrayals of men on the cover have also changed. Men are now more often shown in obvious heterosexual relationships and posed to look stern and in control, rather than the previous image of men as objects of desire. The outfits are less exposing and, therefore, objectification is less prominent. The 'Zoe Kravitz' cover is a good example of the inclusivity of our time. Portrayals of men on the cover have also changed. Men are now more often shown in obvious heterosexual relationships and posed to look stern and in control, rather than the previous image of men as objects of desire. The outfits are less exposing and, therefore, objectification is less prominent.

Social evolution

GQ covers from the past few decades illustrate the change in style of the magazines that are represented. Covers focus on the individual and what they stand for (fame, status), as well as to idealised relationships or settings.

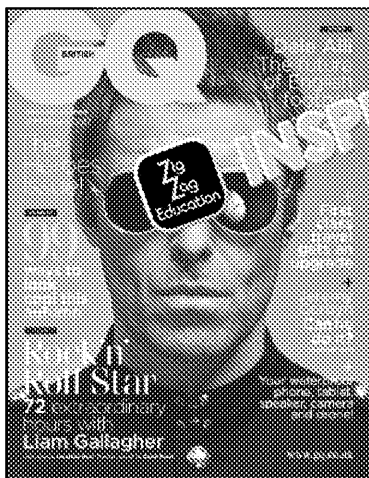
Then:



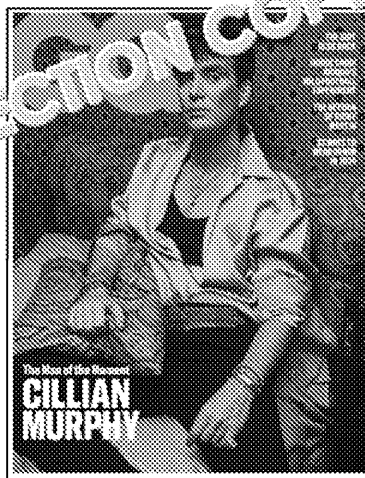
GQ November 1960 cover

Instead of focusing on being part of a 'couple' and thus indicating worn out ideal material and providing for a family, thus proving you're a 'real man'), more up-to-date, more toxic and more open to change.

Now:



Liam Gallagher
GQ September 2017 cover



Cillian Murphy
GQ March 2024 cover

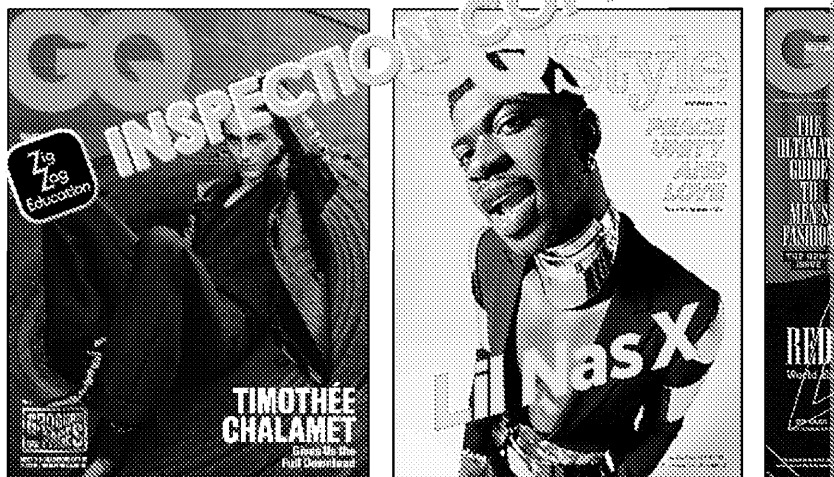
These opposite and different versions of masculinity are positioned in a way that creates a new expression. We see how this contributes to the recent edition of the magazine, which features him with open, brightly coloured, and a more extravagant style that creates a warm and inviting atmosphere. This is something that sets these magazines and their expectations and interpretations apart.

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Covers that include Eddie Redmayne, Timothée Chalamet and Lil Nas X indicate a traditional masculine representations. The pose, outfits and 'soft' expressions reveal, for instance, the fact that these individuals are svelte as opposed to muscle-bound. Redmayne has been lit with low-key lighting, which depicts him in a seductive and vulnerable way. Audiences will recognise him for his roles in films such as *The Danish Girl*, where he played a transgender woman, which again reflects the progressive choices being made by *GQ* to include men who challenge traditional ideals of what masculinity means.



Left to right: Timothée Chalamet *GQ* October 2023 cover; Lil Nas X *GQ Style* Summer 2021 edition; *GQ* 'The Ultimate Guide to Men's Fashion' cover.

#BLM

Although more diverse representations of ethnic minority groups have often been present in *GQ*, since the BLM movement more support for representations of people of colour have appeared on the covers. In 2020, it launched a special edition with a black male on the cover. In 2022 there were three black males featured on the front cover of the *GQ* UK editions and in 2023 there were two. No doubt this is down to editor Baidawi, who committed to an 'emphasis on diversity, gender equality, sustainability and mental health'. The Donald Glover edition featured here presents him as Hollywood's 'favourite provocateur', which indicates that he is seen as an individual who likes to be rebellious and incite change through his behaviour. By featuring him, *GQ* both backs and encourages Glover's creative methods to inspire revolutionising attitudes and preconceptions about black males.

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Discussion questions

1. List some examples of traditional masculine roles.
2. What does hegemonic masculinity mean?
3. Why might *GQ*'s representation of masculinity be potentially helpful to readers?



6. GQ: Diversity in men's magazines

Historically, women's magazines have played the role of villain when it comes to preying on vulnerable young women and exploiting their feelings of inadequacy for monetary gain. However, men's magazines cannot escape their part played in doing the same for men.

Magazines such as *Men's Health* and *Loaded* focus on the physique and sense of status men need to strive for in order to appear like a 'real man'. However, they have not been held to blame for providing very narrow interpretations of masculine shapes and attitudes, but also of colour.

It could be argued that in contemporary times, with racial equality on society's radar, this would result in far more equal representation in magazines. Sadly, this is not the case. It would seem that in order to minimise risk to financial margins, most conglomerates decide to stick to the hegemonic notions of male representation: namely being white. Evidently, in most industries there are more people who are from non-white backgrounds, but this is not necessarily reflected in the content of mainstream media texts. Some genres of music and film tend to have a somewhat inclusive representation of various groups, but often these are limited to specific genres.

GQ fighting the trend

Following the death of George Floyd, companies have been 'virtue signalling' in order to appear diverse, inclusive and progressive. No one wants to have the 'racist' badge pinned on them, so movements to include black representation have been picked up at rapid rates. Star marketing has been utilised to give status and kudos to the brands that feature people of colour. For instance, the October 2019 edition presented J. Cole Williams on the cover with the explicit coverline 'The New Masculinity'. The singer was posed wearing a full-length 'puffa-dress' which had a vague semblance to regal wear of the 1600s. This bold move to dress in something extreme, and bright yellow to boot, jettisoned typical versions of male fashion into the proverbial bin. Williams states in the interview article, 'Well, I'm ashamed to say it was an aesthetic choice first. I liked something, and I put it on. Then the philosophy came behind it. And I do have my lines. Like, I can't wear no skirt. Nor am I interested in wearing a blouse. That's not my deal. But things that are made for women that I feel will look good on me—that I like—I will wear.' Including the perspective of a straight black artist who is confident enough to select how he appears, whether it includes typically feminine pieces or not, allows modern readers to feel more at ease when experimenting with their own look and forging their own gender identity.

In addition, the later August 2019 edition featured Travis Scott with the main coverline 'The Concept of Evolving and Growth to the Readers' mind that his vision is a place where we could just all sit across from each other and other side of the table where we all realize we're equal. As just humans.' GQ allocates a page for a detailed interview about not just the career of the individual but his support for the Black Lives Matter movement, which by osmosis means it too is an advocate for the cause. Critics could see this as an example of 'virtue signalling', where the brand appears to be acting philanthropic for financial ends.



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According to **Van Zoonen**, gender is socially constructed and so individuals are in characteristics of their gender according to what they see and accept as the 'norm' they have been assigned (usually attributed to the biological sex you are born with). That gender is a somewhat fickle concept and is an ongoing process. Take, for example, colours have been engendered but as time passes and fashions change, what is deemed a colour can alter. Pink used to be the hue of choice for anyone born female, yet in the 1950s it was deemed the proper palette of a gentleman. *GQ* reported that in 1950, a whole range in pink – which was stated to be ubiquitous in the spring season for men. Therefore, it is clear to see that ideas surrounding the topic of gender are ever-shifting and a liberating prospect for those who have more fluid ideas about who they are.

bell hooks argues that black women have more common ground with men in terms of identity and personality, she has a point. Historically, people of colour have been only in limiting and simplistic ways. However, she also states that it is patriarchy that is the problem. In her book *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* she makes it clear that men believe that they should be emotionally distant and judged by their physical prowess. Masculinity does not have to be 'defined with authority and power'. *GQ* is evident in that it provides its male readership with alternative notions of what masculinity can look like. It provides a familiar set of values of what is deemed admirable in order to be a respected man. It includes a range of masculinity, with the inclusion of black rappers and fashion designers as well as brands to wear and how to 'wear pink right'.

Having an established brand and readership means that *GQ* can take the risk of presenting a new masculinity which help to break down damaging binaries of what 'is' and 'is not' a man. Essentially, it wants to make a profit, but utilising modern trends on gender help to create the 'modern man'.

Discussion questions

1. To what extent do you think the *GQ* brand is virtue signalling?
2. How is it that it can include black contemporary celebrities in a magazine that claims to be for white men?
3. What messages is *GQ* communicating to its primary audience?

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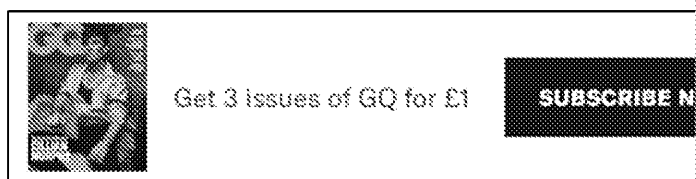
7. Global impact of GQ

Digital media dominates most industries, and conglomerates such as Conde Nast take the opportunities that such digital means can give. This can be seen through Conde Nast's extensive online and social media presence.

Reach results from the site Statista show that GQ has the largest digital reach in men's lifestyle magazines, and *Men's Health* has the largest print reach. See details at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/231234/gq-monthly-reach-by-demographic/>

Most magazines now have websites too. But there are differences between print and digital. Digital offers a variety of content on their sites to get people interested. They have blogs, video updates. Some magazines also show old articles for free or as part of a paid service of past editions that subscribers can access.

Visitors to the website for the magazine are greeted with this invitation:



<https://www.gq.com/>

which is designed to encourage business and increase readership figures. Many print subscriptions, will fail to remember to cancel it and so a recurring income is maintained. The website differs from GQ.com in that more culturally significant features that will be presented. For example, in March 2015, the UK site featured Vinny Jones with a sober, five years after the death of his wife, cinema's go-to tough guy is learning to indicate a more progressive presentation of the 'hard man' image. Whereas the Oscars ceremony is able to give readers an insight by interviewing 'Survivors of the most cutthroat contest', which indicates a far more salacious Hollywood vibe than the continent is common and much like how the print front covers will often more they are sold in; the website pages are able to keep up a constant state of alteration edited in real-time and provide readers with updates as and when relevant to the

Social media accounts

Content on social media has the ability to reach many, *many* more people than so corner shop. Conde Nast markets on these platforms due to the valuable and popular GQ franchise.

- GQ Twitter account (@GQMagazine) has 1.3 million followers
- On Facebook the account (GQ.COM) has 2.9 million followers (697k for UK page)
- The GQ YouTube channel has around 7.67 million subscribers, and includes including videos of Millie Bobby Brown, Natalie Portman and Marques Brownlee of people, albeit all with celebrity status

Being a media conglomerate with millions of social media followers, Conde Nast and writers specifically are dedicated to curating its posts and managing its interactions.

Having such a large and pervasive online presence enables the brand to not only commercial values (as well as those of diversity and inclusion), but also to enable participation by leaving comments, sharing articles and re-tweeting links. All of which community over boards, seas and airspace. Shirky would state that thanks to the internet become a part of the product and influence the content and success of the brand.

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GQ:

- Employs 6,000 individuals
- Serving 37 brands in 26 languages
- Spanning 32 markets worldwide including China, France, Germany, India, Italy, America, Spain, Taiwan, the UK and the US, with additional licence partners
- Competitor magazine titles include *Men's Health* and *Esquire* (both owned by Time Inc.)

Discussion questions

1. How can social media help health magazines to enhance their image?
2. How is online advertising more effective than print media?
3. Why is it so important for a corporate social media account?

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8. Who is it for? – the audience of GQ

Gender categories

GQ states: 'As the flagship of men's fashion and style in Britain, to be GQ is to be forward-looking, progressive and cutting-edge. Entering a new era of leadership and influence under Adam Bidaoui, GQ explores the powerful and progressive forces shaping culture, society and commerce in Britain. Building on a 35-year legacy of print excellence through journalism, photography and design, Britain's most influential magazine is today also a digital, social, video and experiential powerhouse – a **community where people gather to be inspired and exchange ideas around style, creativity and culture**. As masculinity evolves and men's fashion has moved to the centre of the global pop-culture conversation, GQ's authority has never been broader or stronger.'



Key qualities of its core readership

The media kit, which is a document that publishers put together that sums up the agencies who might want to buy space in their pages or online, states that the magazine is 'about style, culture, entertainment and business. ... They are people of action, interested in the style arbiters among their peers.' This complimentary primary of their readership encourages them into being loyal to the brand and to assimilate the values and culture of the magazine.

Demographic and psychographic profile of the average reader:

- Social class – AB (household disposable income 100k+)
- Age bracket – 25-44 (primary audience)
- Gender – predominantly male
- Psychographic – succeeders and aspirers
- Values and interests – status, reputation, culture, business, wealth, style and appearance
- Heterosexual (not exclusively)

As highlighted in the Media Pack's infographic (top right), the typical readers of the magazine are upper-class individuals who own their own homes and businesses, like to travel, and are interested in the form of exercise. What is interesting to note is the not insignificant number of individuals who are a part of the demographic.

Psychographic factors

The name of the magazine 'Gentleman's Quarterly' has connotations of class and good taste. The focus on fashion, wealth and status appeals to readers who aspire to the admiration of peers and business associates. However, the concept of what makes a man a gentleman is not clear. GQ aims to present a place where a man can find interpretation of what it means to be a gentleman. However, the overarching theme is one of capitalism and appearance – the magazine is an 'IQ' insult, that is, it is intelligent if they adopt the values proffered by the magazine.

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Hall

Stuart Hall's reception theory helps to define different ways in which the magazine might be received by audiences. Obviously, producers want the intended set of messages and values to be accepted by the readers as this promotes their value system and greases the wheels of the fashion industry. However, not all immediately buy into the intentions, and some may outright object. Take the edition featuring Eddie Redmayne, for example. You could break down the readings as follows:

- **Preferred reading** – to be masculine and tall, perfect men should be well-dressed in own branded goods, and attractive in general
- **Negotiated reading** – this person looks tidy but it's not my style; I do not want to waste my money on branded names, but I appreciate some branded goods are good quality
- **Oppositional reading** – this is for upper-class rich people who don't have a care about the value of money; I'd never wear a suit, it makes me uncomfortable, I wouldn't want a woman who's just attracted to my bank account

Uses and gratifications

The average *GQ* reader is going to find their need for 'surveillance' (information) through the magazine's content that focuses on what to wear, how to wear it, and Entertainment is also offered through the feature articles as well as a sense of being aspirational figures that resonate with their beliefs or looks within the magazine.

Independent Learning Task

1. Read through an edition of *GQ* and discuss examples of analysis content that would explain which 'needs' are being met.
2. Can you think of alternative ways to 'sell' the magazine by applying Hall's reception theory?
3. What secondary audience would you write for *GQ*, and why?

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9. Industry and regulation: *GQ*

Perishing print...

Print is living on borrowed time. To remain 'safe' in the market and ensure profits, it must fund the print production which is supported through the advertising space sold to promote ideals and products that anchor to the values and aspirations of the brand. This is applied here as being part of a conglomerate provides more financial support for sales. The genre is also 'safe' as men's lifestyle magazines are well established in the market (e.g. *Vogue*, *Wired*, *Vanity Fair* etc. dominates the shelves).

One downside of being an oligopoly is that creativity can be restricted, and more representation is lost. This ultimately leads to affirmation of hegemonic ideologies. Horizontal competition results in more of the same content to appeal to mass audiences.

To keep the brand current and expose it to a digital audience, *GQ* has embraced digital platforms which helps to minimise risks. It has a dedicated website which replicates the print brand with up-to-date information. The social media links retain the *GQ* values and reinforce itself. By having such a coherent sense of digital convergence it ensures the brand maintains its established position.

Livingstone and Lunt believe that these types of companies are a potential risk to society. With few companies at the helm of many products it means the same thoughts are repeated and transmitted throughout their global reach. To prevent damaging and negative impacts, the platform is regulated. Without regulation, mega conglomerates could potentially dominate a market, a company having 100% control in a market. However, given the other major media companies, print, it's unlikely that Conde Nast would be able to completely dominate the entire market.

In order to move with the digital times, *GQ* has become a part of the 'metaverse' by expanding its digital presence by entering the metaverse through the social media channel. This will serve as a space to discuss trending topics, showcase fashion ensembles, and upcoming ventures. As part of Conde Nast, *GQ* aims to diversify its online offering and transform itself into a digital enterprise. By establishing a presence on Discord, which has since attracted streetwear enthusiasts, sneakerheads, and NFT collectors, *GQ* has joined its audience and join the ongoing conversations. Joel Pavelski, *GQ*'s social media manager, is hosting an inclusive celebration where everyone is welcome to participate.

Regulating magazines

Magazines that are published in the UK fall under the jurisdiction of IPSO – the Independent Press Standards Organisation (set up in 2014 to take over from the PCC). However, the IPSO is not involved in regulation before publication, and primarily deals with complaints after publication. It upholds quality journalism and provides a service to the public if there is content that causes offence. It can impose fines or require printed apologies.

Conde Nast Publications Ltd has a standard complaints procedure across all publications, available on the website of each title. Members of the public can register an editorial complaint by completing an online form, by sending an email, or by submitting a complaint in writing. Complaints received in line with the published procedure, or referred from IPSO, are recorded and then assessed by the responsible person, who will work with the publication to resolve the matter with the complainant. Complaints that fall outside the procedure, i.e. are not referred to the relevant department/person. Where the regulator finds against a publication, under Regulation 19, the publication would comply with the findings and any action taken by the regulator.

Discussion questions:

1. What are the downsides to being part of an oligopoly?
2. What is the role of IPSO?

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10. *The Gentlewoman*: A fresh format for a modern

Unlike conventional women's magazines, *The Gentlewoman* offers a fresh format. *Gentlewoman* is minimalist, meaning that the focus is on the women featured; this is achieved through the use of puffs and banners to distract or divert the reader's attention. The cover is minimalist, as opposed to the usual additions of puffs, banners, graphics and images.

Front cover breakdown



the gentlewoman

The masthead

The design is simple and the use of the definitive article 'the' ensures that the female is given status; the name carries similar connotations to that of 'gentleman', which implies civility, class, wealth and standards. In addition, the use of lower case on the masthead, the capitalisation of proper nouns and implies an 'alternative' to conventional expectations. The serif font, which is a modern font and evokes a contemporary and progressive tone.

The format also belies convention by having a lack of coverlines. There is a simple main image with one single caption beneath the image. The lack of **typography** evokes themes of originality and nonconformity. This creates an enigma for what is within the magazine. The centralised label, the celebrity's name is the only other text apart from the masthead title, issue number, and pricing, on the page; it provides a caption for the portrait above, providing an anchor for the image, and makes a statement.

The main image

The full-page photograph of a well-respected and familiar face (actress Scarlett Johansson – known from film franchise *Avengers* as well as others) capitalises on stardom to sell the issue. The photograph is constructed using a low-angle shot, which serves to elevate the model and refuses an objectified agenda; the styling of her hair and make-up suggests that the magazine is focused on visual appeal but not for a **male gaze**. A recognised convention retained is the use of a white, youthful and famous female on the cover; however, the pose, framing, use of colour and expression all contradict expectations.

The use of bold colours is apparent on not just the make-up used on the model but also the border of the front cover itself. The **palette** of bold orange connotes a both fresh and high quality, which mirrors the values of the publisher. The minimalist approach suggests a no-nonsense, direct address, with a focus on the idea of 'woman' and what it means in the current era. The overall 'look' helps to establish the identity and values of the brand.

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The pose is unusual because the model is looking down and the facial expression is atypical of models used in women's magazines as she is not smiling inanely or seductively. The lighting does much to aid a flawless look; however, the block colours used on the face hint that this magazine is something out of the ordinary. The overall effect of this fresh format is that this magazine is for a new generation of readership; one that is confident, bold, serious and daring.



Palette – range of colours used in the image

Male gaze – a media theory that refers to the sexual pleasure/gratification of an audience

Typography – the font style used to present text in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

Masthead – the name of the publication, which is bold and designed to establish the brand.

Discussion questions

1. Consider the connotations for the name for the magazine; what ideas do you associate with it?
2. How does the typography used for the masthead subvert usual font choices for women's magazines?
3. Why do you think the art directors chose to style (make-up, pose, hair, etc.) the cover model in this way?



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11. Contextual factors: *The Gentlewoman*

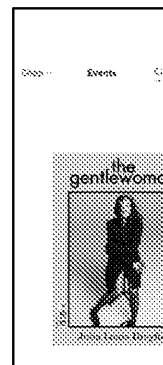
Production

The Gentlewoman was launched in 2010 in London and is a sister publication of *the i*, a niche, 'quality' product with a biannual release (twice a year), which gives the print magazine time to construct content and deliver a product that is of a high quality. This produces a sense of value when print was appreciated and kept for posterity. Circulation figures (approximate) are 10,000 per edition. The content focuses on style, culture, artists and sustainability.

The magazine is independently produced, which means that it is not part of any large Dutch publishing group. The founders, Jop van Bennekom and Jop van Bennekom, who according to Readman, committed to 'beautiful design' and as a pair have 'achieved cult status in print culture as the originators of gay magazine *Butt* in 2001, so are considered progressive and radical. Despite being a small setup, they have partnered with Penguin Press in the past with *The Happy Reader* in 2014. The duo are not interested in being bought out and Jop van Bennekom 'design' is definitely a form of editing. I always try to have a clear idea and concept that correspond to that concept; that's why I sit on things forever. They become really everything.' It is, therefore, clear to see that *The Gentlewoman* is seen as 'art' as well as a magazine. There is a retro appeal to its print artefact style, and the fact it is considered more of a mainstream text is illustrated through the presentation and polished finish of the magazine.

Distribution

The biannual availability of the magazine makes it seem exclusive and appealing to those 'in the know' and those who subscribe to gain access to the magazine's earliest releases. This sense of elusiveness may appear risky to some business models; however, it is part of this elitism and its unique selling point; the readership like having something that seems limited edition and, therefore, is special. The fact that each cover features a different image that it still is recognised as a prestigious magazine that even the 'stars' want to be a part of.



Unlike common practice, the move to digital form for this print product has been limited. While magazine members can access digital content, the main purpose is to create awareness and encourage orders for subscriptions so that the magazine can be mailed out. This promotes a sense of exclusivity and yet also encourages audiences to stay in touch, and even states on the home page 'miss out now, would you?' Their 'shop' invites new members with the declaration 'Gentlewoman are available through magCulture, who offer an impeccable internet experience?' The informal mode of address and use of rhetorical questions creates a friendly atmosphere aimed at broadening its reach of customers.

The twice-yearly hardcopy produced is marketed as a high quality product that justifies its cost. This cost can be covered through the subscription price paid by readers and sponsors of the magazine. Additional profits can be made through the merchandise that is sold on the magazine's website, and that includes items such as a t-shirt, pyjamas, cocktail stirrers, a black card, and 'modern manners'.

Research tasks

1. What are the pros and cons of being an independent company?
2. What are the advantages of having a website when you are a niche outfit?

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12. Audience and readership: *The Gentlewoman*

The Gentlewoman could be seen as a modern revival of 'zines', which were home magazines made by and for a particular niche community, often for subcultures, movements and activist groups, or other groups and interests overlooked by the mainstream. Zines embodied a creative spirit whereby people made these pieces of media not to share their interest with like-minded people and make connections through that, but given the Internet's ability to link people together, from across the corners of the globe, the same necessity for their existence.

Of course, *The Gentlewoman* differs from these zines (often called 'fanzines' because they are heavily added to by groups of fans) because it is a product. Zines were amateur run and Shirky's theories of the breakdown of the barrier between creator and consumer, in this case, photocopyers) allowed people to make the things they wanted to make and experience. But where the comparison comes from is that *The Gentlewoman* defined its content and aesthetic in order to appeal to an equally precise target audience of creatives.

The Gentlewoman claims to appeal to a broad range of age groups but the stats show that a substantial 61% are aged 28–46. This is logical when you consider that the price and content would most likely appeal to those with disposable income and who have time and interest in contemporary topics that are hosted within the magazine. The articles featured in the AQA CSP booklet showcase a young black female boxer, an environmentalist socialite, and a renowned fashion designer of sustainable trends – Stella McCartney. This implies that the readership would most likely be a psychographic mix of succeeders, reformers and ethically minded (if stylish!) readers. A socioeconomic group of ABC1 is indicated by the average income on their website of £37,255, which again implies a large disposable income which can be exploited to not only buy copies of the magazine but also support the events and campaigns that it promotes. The fashion element – as seen in most women's magazines – is of high-end and ethically sourced manufacturers so these readers are also appearance conscious and have the deep pockets to afford looking good and having a clear conscience about what they are buying. The magazine also features articles that interview elite and wealthy women (in this edition, Isabella Rossellini) which suggests that the readership are environmentally minded and have strong attitudes towards the maintenance and sustainability of lifestyles we live.

The Readership

The Gentlewoman is aimed at women from 18 to 46 who have a desire for culture and want to enjoy the high end of fashion.

Median age ...
22%
61%
11%
6%

distribution

The Gentlewoman is available with an extensive network of newsstand and online.

UK
Europe

newsstand and online

Each new issue is accompanied by a promotional poster for the US.

Applying Hall

The Gentlewoman can be 'read' in various ways. According to Hall, audiences can have dominant, negotiated or oppositional readings. Some audiences would take the magazine as the producer intended and believe that women are powerful and influential, and revered the opportunities of male counterparts. Whereas negotiated readings might conceive of the magazine as offering opportunities to be instrumental in the change of attitudes and actions in society, using their celebrity status to make social changes. Alternatively, oppositional readings might see the magazine as featuring just a minority of voices that do not make much impact on hegemony.

Applying Jenkins

In our digital age, it is not only easier to engage but also audience participation is not only helpful to gauge levels of interest and influence further content, but also to connect fans to the brand. The adoption of thoughts, beliefs and values is instrumental to building a readership, but also maintains an identity that connects the product with the people.

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What 'needs' might *The Gentlewoman* satisfy?

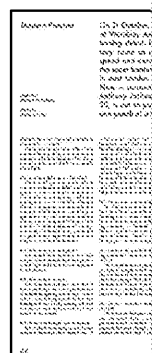
Audience needs and gratifications granted through media texts are far more complex than perhaps implied by Maslow's theory. According to Richard Dyer (Professor of Film Studies) and Asa Berger (American Media Theorist), appeals are far more ranging than the simplistic needs for 'diversion' and 'surveillance'. Human identity is ever evolving and adapts to new contexts and cultural developments. This means that audiences' needs are nuanced and, therefore, different texts will provide



'solutions' to these needs. *The Gentlewoman* may well fulfil the need for information by providing details about relevant events and also helps readers to become more proactive in their beliefs. For example, the article on Ramla Ali and the need for sustainability to rectify the damage caused by urbanisation will also motivate readers to adopt a more environmentally minded perspective and change. This interest in the world around them is satisfied, but then so is the need to support something that isn't rooted in self-interest. In addition, the need to be part of something through not only joining in campaigns but also by being part of the magazine's community. Despite the world being a negative place, texts such *The Gentlewoman* help to provide audiences as they can buy into the 'solutions' that they offer.

The aesthetic of the magazine would also provide another gratification – appreciation of the magazine itself. Asa Berger offers an extensive list of contemporary appeals that

- To satisfy curiosity and be informed.
- To be amused.
- To reinforce beliefs in justice.
- To reinforce beliefs in romantic love.
- To re-examine ourselves in history.
- To see heroes in action.
- To experience the ugly.
- To experience the beautiful.
- To find role models to imitate.
- To identify with the deity and divine.



The Gentlewoman

By taking a look through the magazine you should be able to identify some of these appeals. Take, for instance, the article on Ramla Ali. The interview most certainly satisfies one's curiosity and yet also provides a role model for women to imitate. By featuring a woman of colour, this would also satisfy the 'need' for identity for readers who see their ethnicity represented through the inclusion of this individual.

Transmedia story
information via various platforms with the added benefit of being provided to fans. These are then 'retweeted' (retweeting, etc.)

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Discussion and research tasks

1. In which other ways can you apply some of Dyer's 'utopian solutions' theory to the magazine?
2. Take a look at the website. How else are audiences' 'needs' gratified, and how?
3. Why might *The Gentlewoman's* website and magazine be a tool for transmedia storytelling?

13. Representation in *The Gentlewoman*

Proudly female-only zone

The edition for focus omits male presence and features just women. Not only do women, but these also happen to be women from various ages, ethnicities and so on. To feature only females is a purposeful choice and perhaps indicates that this magazine is a platform for voices of the gender-repressed only. Although owned by two Dutch women, in-chief is Penny Martin, and has been since its inception. She has a background in media, which is reflected in the composition and content of the magazine. Penny writes: 'This publication that's produced by so few people as ours ... you can take a lot of risks about your editorial tastes.' She is hailed by 'BoF' (*Business of Fashion*), as 'The new academic...' in the helm of one of the industry's most intellectual and informed voices. It is clear to see how her 'lens' on how women are represented in her magazine is from a female perspective.

Radical role models

The article 'Modern Punches' is about Ramla Ali – a professional female boxer, who fought her way to the top of her game and aims to be a spokeswoman for the oppressed. Ali was a Somali refugee and has lived in Britain since her childhood. Despite this, she stays true to her heritage and is passionate about inclusion and has spent a lot of time working as an equal opportunities activist and humanitarian with UN Women. One of her main projects is Sisters Club, which she set up in 2018 to provide a safe space for women from ethnic and religious minorities, as well as victims of violence, to learn how to box. The club offers free weekly sessions where vulnerable women and girls learn boxing techniques and how to protect themselves from punches. Sisters Club has branches in London, Los Angeles, New York and Texas. In addition to her activism, Ali is also a model for IMG (*International Modeling Management Agency*), which means as a USP for her magazine cover, she is very saleable – she is not only an empowering role model but also conforms to idealistic notions of thin, young and beautiful.

Liesbet van Zoonen

Zoonen proposed that traditional masculine values included 'competition, individualism, and physical and mental strength challenges this ideology. Her image, standing in victory, effectively conveys her self-determination and power to the audience. On the blue tracksuit she wears plays with the colour codes traditionally associated with the tomboy stereotype as a threat to society because it undermines the binary opposition between men and women. However, the tone of the article suggests that Ramla takes pride in this image of independence. Butler (1990) argued that gender is a social construct that is created through behaviour and interactions with others. Gender is performative in the sense that it is a 'stylised repetition of acts'. Ramla is fully aware that she is resisting the dominant gender norms and promoting alternatives to other women.

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Elevating the environment



The Gentlewoman 'Blazing' her way on
Frontier, Issue 10, August 2021



The article entitled 'Isabella Tree' is an interesting feature in a women's magazine. The focus is on the idea of a 'course' and for us to avoid our 'manicured garden'. The article is about committed conservationist Isabella Tree, but the article does not put her in the spotlight at all. In the project she championed, by presenting a range of images, from a close-up shot of some Tamara trees to a wide shot of a forest, she effectively orchestrates and turns the reader's attention to the environment that needs protecting. Much is said and so emphasises the values and ethics of sustainability and care about our world is important.

Advocating change

True to typical women's magazines, the theme and core topic for the content is fashion. However, this comes with a twist. Instead of featuring a collage of shots of women draped over sports cars or inanely grinning at the camera, *The Gentlewoman* advocates change at fashion from a more unconventional stance. An article features Stella McCartney, daughter of singer Sir Paul McCartney – and vegetarian crusader Linda McCartney – as a fashion designer with a difference. She may be accused of trading on the well-established name of her parents, but she continues to use her status, wealth and influence to promote values of sustainability – a somewhat contrasting notion with today's disposable fashion trends. The informal shot and framing of the designer wearing all black also works to support this subversion of conformance we expect to see in magazines.

Discussion Questions

1. How do the photographs in *The Gentlewoman* subvert typical conventions of a women's magazine?
2. Why do you think the articles are not composed typically in the magazine – what might this suggest?
3. What values do you think the magazine is trying to deliver to its readers, and how can you see this in the content?



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14. Values and ethics as a selling tactic: *The Gentlewoman*

Traditional women's magazines promote ideas about how to adhere to tradition. In many fashion and beauty magazines, the representation of women tends to be heterosexual. Accompanying these visuals are headlines that are both conventional and aspirational, such as 'The perfect wife' (featured on the front page of the 1995 magazine *Marie Claire*). The loss remains a significant concern for women, despite the existence of more pressing economic, environmental, political and cultural matters. These publications frequently suggest that women should conform to traditional values such as being the perfect wife with a happy family, following a perfect career path and possessing excellent culinary skills.

How are values different in *The Gentlewoman*?

Although there is a focus on style and status, *The Gentlewoman* aims to offer a wider range of values than traditional magazines. The front cover may well feature a female celebrity, who admittedly conforms to ideals surrounding beauty (slim, white, straight, youthful), but Scarlett Johansson also symbolises success, philanthropy and empowerment. She is one of the highest-earning actresses of her time and took on Disney in a lawsuit when they contravened a clause in her contract that prevented further earnings from her role in *Black Widow*. Such confident and assertive action is inspiring to other women – not just in the world of film but in life, to know your worth and fight for equality in wages. She is also renowned for her work with various charities and campaigns that centre on not just aid for those in need but also against harassment in the entertainment industry. In 2018 she collaborated in the 'Time's Up' initiative and supported its goals in protecting women from discrimination in the film-making industry. These sorts of values and ethics are not the typical fare of women's magazines and it is refreshing that a magazine states, 'wealth confers power', and she chooses to use it as a platform for change.

The article introducing Isabella Tree, who is known for her pioneering work on the first low-impact rewilding project in England, is written from the perspective of a journalist who had the opportunity to walk around the estate with Isabella Tree and gain insight into her thoughts and goals. This format allows the writer to delve into Tree's background and provide a broader environmental and political context for the success of the rewilding project. Tree emphasises that there are more gardens than nature reserves in Britain and encourages people to get involved in their own small plots of land to support nature. The article challenges readers to reflect on their manicured gardens and develop a deeper connection with the natural world. The accompanying photographs further highlight the beauty and resilience of the landscape. The image featured of a 550-year-old oak also includes the feet of an unseen individual (perhaps Isabella herself) and could serve to emphasise the size of the tree or to remind audiences of the fleeting nature of human life compared to the long-lasting trees. Another photo shows a rainbow, symbolising hope and optimism, over trees whose roots have been damaged by past agricultural practices. This image suggests that, despite our past mistakes, we can follow Isabella Tree's example and work towards a brighter future for the environment. Overall, *The Gentlewoman* promotes a generation of environmentalists through its coverage of individuals like Isabella Tree and protection of the environment.

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The magazine is also updating its 'take' on the fashion world by reimagining its products to challenge traditional notions of womanhood. This departure from the norm is evident in the interview with Stella McCartney where she expresses her distaste for things that are overly cute or masculine. Essentially, she doesn't conform to conventional gender expectations. McCartney also discusses the importance of environmental and animal conservation, a sentiment shared by Isabella Tree in her interview. This commitment is exemplified by McCartney's highly sought-after 'vegan handbag'.

In contrast to the limited perspective of glossy magazines, *The Gentlewoman* is part of a growing movement that appeals to its discerning readership by championing sustainability and ethical practices, as opposed to the profit-driven companies of the past. Nonetheless, the magazine does rely on selling advertising space and offering sophisticated forms of content marketing to luxury brands looking to reach their affluent audience. For instance, Stella McCartney uses the interview as an opportunity to showcase her own clothing line, featuring items such as the Adley jacket, which originally sold for over £1,000, and can be purchased at her store. Given Ramla Ali's sponsorship deals, it is no surprise to see her sporting these brands in the photoshoot. Scarlett Johansson's fur-free outerwear from Stella McCartney, along with shoes from high-end designer Prada, further reinforces the magazine's image. Despite its progressive stance, *Gentlewoman* presents itself as forward-thinking and contemporary, its underlying focus still centered around a culture of consumerism.

Discussion questions

1. Why do you think *The Gentlewoman* has decided to present these alternative values and principles in a women's magazine?
2. How might these values connect with the readership and promote change?
3. Why do you think the celebrities featured in the magazine have been chosen?

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15. *The Gentlewoman*: How do independent magazines survive?

Despite the decline in most print products and the associated financial risks of publishing, there has been a steady revival of independent titles in the UK. *The Gentlewoman* is not associated with a large company, so it has more creative control over the content than mainstream titles. The tone also differs in that it is more personal and offers an alternative view of the fashion industry by interviewing designers and discussing the culture of the industry. It offers readers images of how they 'should' look. This promotes a sense of community with an invitation to 'join their club'. This is a good opportunity to be a part of an international 'sophisticated' and 'fabulous' community. The publishers deliver an 'agenda of culture plus active membership' including walking tours, film screenings and card nights.

How to stay in business

Advertising has remained the 'bread and butter' income for print. The profits from advertising cover the cost to create, produce and then distribute a magazine. To appeal to a wealthy audience, income to be spent on the products associated with the magazine, they need to be in the advertising space. Names such as Dior and Caravaggio have utilised such spaces in issues of *The Gentlewoman*. The magazine has a high advertisement-to-article ratio, which is lucrative.

In addition, *The Gentlewoman* also offer packages to access advertising spaces or collaborations and partnerships in order to make an elite relationship appealing. The magazine's newsletter contains a classifieds section for advertisements to be sent via email to those that subscribe online have their data used to enable this 'extra' service).

Unique selling points

To attract an audience there has to be something special about your product. High quality content, or even a scandalous cover, might work to hook in a potential reader, but they will be more discerning. Appealing to a collective where they share the same values or interests is the profit motive. In the media, 'virtue signalling' has proliferated. Media products that the sense of 'doing good' and supporting a cause can be used as a selling tactic. The ethical stance presented in *The Gentlewoman* is one that can be harnessed and used to massage the virtuous egos of wealthy women. Indicate that by reading the magazine you are inadvertently supporting the environment, and 'ping!', you have a sale.

Virtue signalling
one's high moral opinions on political issues likely be agreed with no intent to act

In addition to behaving virtuously, *The Gentlewoman* also presents the appeal of something luxurious and indulgent. An interview with editor Penny Martin in *System* magazine's opinion on this when she stated, 'Print can provide a rare source of pleasure that is not available in digital work.' Penny and other editors claim that 'digital is ready-to-wear; print is couture' brought to the reader through the print format. The digital generation that are glued to their screens through content do not stop and appreciate the 'art' that can be delivered through print, the collectability, the sense of 'ownership' once you have it over handling one's own magazine editors. The resurgence of print can be down to the simple fact that a magazine is not 'easy' to access is important; the experience is 'real' and valued.

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Discussion questions

1. What evidence of 'virtue signalling' can you obtain from the articles in *The Gentlewoman*?
2. Can you recall three ways in which the magazine is able to remain profitable?
3. What benefits could a conglomerate ownership provide for an independent magazine?

16. Paper versus touchscreen (*GQ* and *The Gentlewoman*)

Newspaper and magazine industries are well aware of the inevitable demise of their legacy. Digital technology has seen to it that the world of mass media in print form has outlived its reign, and in the name of sustainability, its days are numbered. Paper is perceived to be old-fashioned, expensive and too disposable. However, does this mean that the only way forward is to be married to the screen? It does have its benefits: accessibility, limitless content, speed of information etc. However, what can be lost by print on a smaller scale? Does it also mean that it will cost the environment? Are there ways to make it more sustainable for today's generation?

Is technological advancement always better?

Digital platforms have invaded most media industries; from CGI-composed movies to streaming services. It seems to be an influx of inauthentic content. It is no surprise, therefore, that there are actually people who have a hankering for the retro-style media products – those played on record, videotape, and even read on bound paper. Media texts that are genuine and have been sought after. Yes, one can subscribe to a digital magazine and even experience the 'turn of the page' on the online text, but what about the physicality of a print version? Modern readers of *The Gentlewoman* like the feel and the visual appearance of having a quality artefact on their desk. Screen time for some is 'deadtime'; reading a magazine is perceived as 'quality time' and is intellectually nutritious and cerebrally enriching.

Carbon footprint

Large-scale printing is not an environmentally friendly process because of the materials needed and the manufacturing process. Although *The Gentlewoman* is predominantly a paper magazine, a key thing that differentiates it from *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* is the scale of production. *GQ* is a massive fashion magazine that's manufacturing millions upon millions of copies every single month across the world, while *The Gentlewoman* is a small-scale magazine that is far less carbon-intensive as there is a smaller production and distribution network.

Discussion questions

1. Why might consumers now intentionally choose retro/traditional media formats such as print?
2. From a business perspective, why might a media company be averse to producing retro-style media landscape?
3. Does *The Gentlewoman* conform to or subvert Hesmondhalgh's idea of major media companies?

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17. Differences in tone and approach (*GQ* and *The Gentlewoman*)

Tone

Overall, the two magazines have contrasting tones. Tone is how something (a new painting, etc.) *feels* to the audience. It's the overall atmosphere or vibe you get from it. Is it aggressive, is it light-hearted? Tonality matters; it can immerse you massively on the emotional level. It can make you feel like a member in either a good or bad way, so what tones are the two texts creating, and why?

GQ's overall tone is one of curiosity and allure. The coverlines '50 Holy Grails' and 'Robert Pattinson?' are presented in a way that makes it seem as if the magazine has a 'backstage' pass to the lives of celebrities. The use of close-up shots of the actor invites an intimate moment between the brand and the audience.

The Gentlewoman has a confident and assertive tone. The colour scheme of bold black text on a white background with the border empty space makes the content seem uncluttered and minimalist. The magazine is far more revealed about what to expect in the 'Art and Fashion' edition. The front cover's avant garde approach reflects its eccentric spirit.

Attention grabbing versus aesthetically pleasing

On a visual level, *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* are worlds apart. All you need to do is look at the two covers to see the contrast in look between a magazine designed for commercial success and one with an individual style.

- *GQ* is not visually unappealing but nor is it particularly interesting or unconventional.
- The bold text, the high volume of copy in the full-page spread, and the stylised portraits of the models and Bailey in the photographs are typical for *GQ* and the industry, conventional for the genre.
- *The Gentlewoman* is noticeably design-conscious. In the formatting, the typography, and the 'naturally posed' photographs.

Magazines are like advertising. Advertising is always made to be eye-catching and attention-grabbing. Is it an advertisement that is so good it goes into the background or that no one sees? Beautiful design is a key feature of *The Gentlewoman*, which is extremely subtle and even subdued, making it aesthetically pleasant but not always striking. *GQ* is more commercial, although *The Gentlewoman* is atypical it isn't necessarily going to strike a chord with the general public.

Degrees of commercialism

At the end of the day, both texts are ultimately products; they are things designed to sell. They differ in just how commercial they are.

The Gentlewoman, despite being a niche product, contains big-name brands in its advertising. However, this can be seen as a profit-only tactic as it isn't solely a fashion magazine. As established earlier in the 'audience breakdown' article, that *The Gentlewoman*'s creatives care about the sustainability and ethical production of what they buy. The magazine's focus is on the characteristics to the magazine editors and the audience, but they certainly aren't the primary focus for the companies because they are expensive.

When it comes to flaunting its commercialism, *GQ* has no qualms, and the magazine has a tonne more advertisements. Advertising space is highly expensive and in high demand, which makes sense given that the UK franchise has a total reach of roughly a million people (including its digital media reach). *GQ*'s vast fan base and diverse themes make it a popular choice of product for many brands and companies, in contrast to *The Gentlewoman*, which has a more niche appeal due to its emphasis on sustainability and ethical products.

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Gender representation

Even though they are at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to industry and aesthetics, the two publications share a similarity in their relative depictions created by and for an audience of mostly women, and *GQ* is created for an audience that has more of an equal gender split when it comes to the editorial staff.

However, the fact that each one solely caters to one gender and/or category is where *GQ*'s representation of masculinity has evolved from earlier titles such as *Men's*. A progressive tone is demonstrated through more diverse inclusion: people of colour and LGBTQ+ community are featured and given 'voice' in their publication. That's not to say hegemonic values permeate, but ideas around masculine traits have somewhat expanded more about the role of men as a source of inspiration to women through the voice of influential and powerful men towards attaining powerful and proactive roles in life – rather than telling women they can't. You can see evidence for David Gauntlett's assertion that representation of masculinity in contemporary media is more flexible and malleable, because *The Gentlewoman* displays much more openness to presenting various versions of masculinity that

Eminence versus empowerment

This is possibly where the two diverge the most. *GQ* is ultimately about image; to respect, kudos and capital permeate the magazine. The subtext indicates to the reader that if you are wealthy and famed for your occupational successes then you are not 'looking shallow'. This implication works to home in on men's insecurities and embed hegemonic values of 'enough'. Of course, readers that reject these values will understand that 'success' is not enough and that what you wear does not 'maketh the man'. Traits that include being kind, witty and perhaps those undervalued through the mass media messages sold to men are ones that any thinking individual may well realise give them the chance.

The Gentlewoman offers an opposing voice to *GQ*, where the notion of 'success' is replaced by empowerment. The magazine is more celebratory of women, whether in the arts or in business, and its audience is more likely to be women. The magazine's aim is to inspire readers by giving women a voice. The section featuring women's voices is an excellent example of this attitude of empowerment, rather than making you conform in order to have worth in this world.

Research tasks:

1. Why do magazines such as *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* feature big-brand advertising?
2. Why would advertisers want to purchase advertising space in a niche, biannual magazine?

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Show What You Know

1. How have technical and visual codes been used in the photography and images of *The Gentlewoman* to convey meaning and tone? Refer to theories of media language in your answer.
2. Compare and contrast how *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* differ in how they appeal to emotional/cognitive responses, and why. Refer to appropriate theories in your response.
3. What aspects of *The Gentlewoman* are unconventional, and why? Consider language, representation, industrial factors and audiences, and include relevant theories.
4. Argue both for and against this statement: '*The Gentlewoman* will not last long because of social and economic factors.' Explain your reasoning.
5. How does the representation of gender differ between *The Gentlewoman* and *GQ* in each magazine, how they are represented, and the decision-making of the editors?
6. According to Neale, genre conventions need to evolve in order to attract and retain an audience. To what extent do you agree? Refer to both magazines in your deliberations. Be sure to refer to Neale.
7. How can Butler's theory about gender performativity be applied to represent gender in the magazines?
8. Audiences use media products to construct a sense of self and create an identity. How does this play in this? Refer to appropriate theories to explore this topic.
9. Intersectionality, according to hooks, means that media texts omit and marginalise certain groups in positive and empowered ways. How is this supported or subverted in the magazines you have studied?
10. Print magazines fail to appeal to a digital generation. To what extent is this true?

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Answers

1. GQ production background

1. **Which model(s) of integration does Conde Nast Communications utilise?** Both horizontal competitors but the processes of printing, marketing and distribution.
2. **Does it have a monopoly of the print industry?** Yes, with over 6,000 individuals serving markets worldwide.
3. **Why do you think GQ set up this edition?** To tailor the content and appeal to the British market.

2. Look, language and language – the visual and writing styles of GQ

1. **Why might the use of questions in the coverlines motivate someone to buy the magazine?** Intrigue potential readers and entice them to buy and read the magazine in order to find the answers.
2. **Why do you think GQ has decided to 'go rogue' with the format of this edition featuring ideas about masculinity and male identity are in flux.**
3. **What sort of 'needs' might be gratified through the content promised through the coverlines?** 'Esteem' as the knowledge of what to wear in order to 'look sharp' is promised through the coverlines.

Masculinity in crisis?

1. **How do biological traits for men influence their sense of masculinity and identity?** Men are seen as strong, and, therefore, ideas about physical strength and power are deemed important in society.
2. **How is patriarchy damaging to men?** It does not allow for vulnerability, emotion or insecurity. Men are expected to feel and behave in dominating manners, which imposes pressure to behave in ways that are not natural to them.
3. **How can media texts influence audiences' sense of identity?** Media texts encode in them the idea of how we 'should' look and behave like; this can be both helpful and damaging as some expectations may not be realistic.

4. Identity in a modern era

1. **Do you think that including the representation of the LGBTQ+ community is a selling tactic that will help them appear inclusive rather than 'be' inclusive?** Although it may provide a more inclusive representation for marginalised groups so it could be seen as a good thing, it may also be seen as a selling tactic.
2. **There have been women and people of colour featured on the front covers of other editions of GQ. How does this more pluralistic range of representations affect the magazine's identity?** Pros would include more diverse profits as perhaps different groups would buy the magazine; cons might be that core audience might feel 'alienated' by the images that do not reflect their identity/demographic.

5. Social and cultural context for GQ

1. **List some examples of traditional male gender roles.** Traditionally men were expected to be the breadwinners, protectors of the family, and successful in their careers.
2. **What does hegemonic masculinity mean?** Usual, accepted and common ideas about what it means to be a man.
3. **Why might GQ's depiction of masculinity be potentially helpful to readers?** Because it gives readers a more diverse view of what it means to be a man. They can be bodybuilders, fathers, or even straight. They can be fashion designers, gay, and even transgender.

6. Diversity in men's magazines

1. **To what extent do you agree that the magazine is virtue signalling?** GQ could be perceived as virtue signalling to attract a more diverse audience, but it could also be said that it is genuinely providing a more inclusive representation of men's identities.
2. **How important is it to include black contemporary celebrities in a magazine that claims to be inclusive?** Including black contemporary celebrities helps combat the idea that due to 'white privilege' black people do not have a platform or a voice. It helps portray a society where black people are celebrated for their achievements.
3. **What values and messages is GQ communicating to its primary audience?** The primary audience is men who are interested in fashion and style. The magazine promotes values of sophistication, style, and success. It also promotes a more inclusive view of masculinity.

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7. Global impact of GQ

1. **How can social media be utilised by magazines to enhance their image?** Social media has the power of two-way communication. Sites allow content to be recognised, liked, and shared on upcoming issues. The use of interactive graphics, audio and video can help the brand open up to its audience. The use of interactive graphics, audio and video can help the brand open up to its audience.
2. **How is online advertising more effective than print media?** It is easier to hold a 'captive' audience on the page when they're scrolling; it is also easier for them to articulate the links and go directly to the advert, and this makes it more likely for sales to occur as they are online and can purchase the magazine can be easily 'lost' as they turn the pages and ignore the left-side.
3. **Why is engagement important for a brand's social media account?** The better the engagement, the more awareness and followers are acquired. Engagement builds a community and a fan base. With the right strategy, the platform will not only result in more sales and profits but also in a more loyal customer base.

8. Who is the target audience? – the audience of GQ

1. **Read through an edition of GQ and discuss examples of articles or content that would appeal to the target audience.** Consider audience 'needs' theories (consider Maslow, Blumler and Katz, Berger, Dyer), audiences need to be included, have self-esteem, and be entertained. Their needs are met through the information they receive, feeling a connection with like-minded readers and inspirational role models (Pattinson, Beckham).
2. **Can you think of alternative ways to 'read' the magazine by applying Hall's reception theory?** The same values communicated from the magazines advertisements and article content suggest that 'sharp' and basing ideas of success on wealth and status are not important.
3. **What secondary audience can you profile for GQ, and why?** Female readers might be approached – they may be a fan of the person or aspire to be like them, so would be interested in the content.

9. Industry and regulation

1. **What are the downsides to being part of an oligopoly?** It hinders creative content as a product is more likely to be the same.
2. **What is the role of IPSO?** To investigate complaints and impose fines if needed.

10. A fresh format for modern women's magazines

1. **Consider the connotations of the name for the magazine; what ideas do you associate with it?** The term 'Gentlewoman' suggests politeness, civilised and educated individuals.
2. **How does the typography used for the masthead subvert usual font choices for women's magazines?** The font style is a serif which does not conform to grammatical rules so suggests it is subversive; the font style is a serif suggesting confidence and an assertive tone.
3. **Why do you think the art directors chose to style (make-up, pose, hair, etc.) the cover model differently?** The alternative look for the actress indicates something novel and new with a sense of confidence.

11. Contextual factors for *The Gentlewoman*

1. **What are the pros and cons of being an independent company?** Budgets can be tight but there is more control over the brand.
2. **What are the advantages of having a website when you are a niche outfit?** It can help to reach a wider audience; you can market your print product, you can create a community with interactive content.

12. Audience and readership for *The Gentlewoman*

1. **In which other ways can you apply some of Dyer's 'rituals of distinction' theory to the magazine?** The theory, media texts fulfil a 'need' – a void in our lives. Magazines offer a diversion from the real world, images of style where perhaps the audience do not have this in reality.
2. **Take a look at the website and how are audiences' 'needs' gratified, and how?** The need to join the Gentlewoman Club to receive a fortnightly newsletter, and invitations to fabulous events; they are part of a community and gain a sense of 'belonging'; the need for looking at female celebrities and the way they behave and appear can be seen as a blueprint for the audience.
3. **Why might *The Gentlewoman's* website and magazine be a tool for transmedia storytelling?** The concept that stories are told across various media platforms. *The Gentlewoman* can be seen as a tool for the empowered role of women in not just its print magazine but on the site where you'll find women who tell their story and how they arrived where they are in life.

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13. Representation in *The Gentlewoman*

1. **How do the photographs in *The Gentlewoman* subvert typical conventions of a women's magazine?** The usual barrage of images that focus on make-up products or wardrobe pieces; the images are more about the person. The expressions on the faces do not tend to be inane, but serious; there is a focus in the content on nature and the environment – not as a backdrop for a 'summer shoot' but to celebrate the person.
2. **Why do you think the articles are not composed typically in the magazine – what might the layout and copy be like?** The layout and copy are not organised in a conventional layout, which suggests it is trying to be different and take notice by subverting their expectations.
3. **What values do you think the magazine is trying to deliver to its readers, and how can you see this in *The Gentlewoman*?** The magazine subverts typical values on relationships, domesticity and gossip by featuring articles on achievement and success to people who have 'made it', not just in terms of wealth but in terms of their own life – that is overcoming hardship or being an activist for the environment.

14. Values and ethics as a selling tactic in *The Gentlewoman*

1. **Why do you think *The Gentlewoman* has decided to present alternative values and principles to mainstream magazines?** Because they want to provide alternative ideologies and aspirations for women.
2. **How might these values connect with its readership and promote change?** The demographic is young women with income and modern values so getting them onboard to support campaigns and use their work to not only create an empowered community but also enable women to be a vehicle for change.
3. **Why do you think the celebrities featured in the magazine have been chosen?** The women featured are all have a 'story' of success of some version to tell. Stella McCartney is renowned in the fashion world for her commitment to sustainability. The set of values she embodies would appeal to and persuade the audience and so be a selling point for the magazine.

15. How do magazines stay in business?

1. **What examples of 'virtue signalling' can you obtain from the articles in *The Gentlewoman*?** The inclusion of Stella McCartney and the inclusion of a black female model could be seen as 'ticking a box' for inclusion.
2. **Can you recall three ways in which the magazine is able to remain profitable?** Advertising, offering 'collaborations' with large designer brand names.
3. **What benefits could a conglomerate ownership provide for an independent magazine?** Belonging to a conglomerate would help with the production, distribution and marketing costs. The cost of having less control over the content and having to stick to the conglomerate's values.

Comparative articles

16. Paper versus touchscreen

1. **Why might consumers now intentionally choose retro/traditional media formats such as vinyl records or film photography?** Goods have a collectable quality and a sense of celebrating history. People like to own something in the digital age.
2. **From a business perspective, why might a media company be averse to producing retro/traditional media?** Because of production costs, pressures on sustainability and the desire for innovation.
3. **Does *The Gentlewoman* conform to or subvert Hesmondhalgh's idea of major media companies?** Hesmondhalgh argued that a 100,000 biannual circulation figure illustrates the success of this small and independent magazine. It has risks in its content and layout but still survives; perhaps by finding the correct niche market. The fact that it is a success supports his theory that to be successful you need to find a niche.

17. Differences in style and approach (*GQ* and *The Gentlewoman*)

1. **Why do magazines such as *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* feature big-brand advertising?** Because they target a deep pocket of people who can afford the designer price tag on the product being advertised.
2. **Why would advertisers want to purchase advertising space in a niche, biannual magazine?** The magazine has an elite and exclusive audience who are willing to spend their income on the product being advertised and its values.

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Show What You Know

- How have technical and visual codes been used in the photography and image of *Gentlewoman* to convey meaning and tone? Refer to theories of media language.
 - GQ* features a close-up shot of 'punked' Pattinson to evoke ideas of rebellion, giving an alternative impression of the celebrity and inferring some sort of message suggesting we too can be 'different' if we wish?
 - The Gentlewoman* also has a close-up shot, of a more pre-looking Johansson, tones, perhaps implying a vibrant and aspirational life to the publication.
- Compare and contrast how *GQ* and *The Gentlewoman* differ in how they appeal to emotional/cognitive responses they evoke, and why. Refer to appropriate audience theory.
 - GQ* appeals to a majority of males who seek status and style through the website slogan 'Look Sharp. Live Smart' to encapsulate its ethos and the centrality around material wealth and cultural capital.
 - The Gentlewoman* targets a niche group of educated, independent and affluent women than the stereotype offers; they appeal to their sense of liberty by featuring inspirational objectives and outcomes that will act as a model for them to measure up to.
- What aspects of *The Gentlewoman* are unconventional, and why? Consider language, representation, industrial factors, and audiences, and include relevant evidence.
 - The layout and the content are unconventional. There is a lack of cover images, articles are arranged atypically with headings and images unconventional. *The Gentlewoman* does not focus on typical women's magazine topics so there are no stories about getting your body 'beach perfect', or collages of cheap beauty products. There is an article interviewing black Somali boxer Ramla Ali which discusses gender and a dominated sport. This would challenge hook's notion that intersectional representation in media products.
 - It is also unconventional due to its independent ownership; as it is not a mainstream product, and enjoys being an exclusive, high-quality product for women of style and purpose.
 - The audience are not mainstream consumers. The females that purchase this magazine are types who have higher disposable incomes and high ethical values.
- Argue for and against this statement: '*The Gentlewoman* will not last long because of social and economic factors.' Explain your reasoning.
 - For: Print costs are high; we live in a digital age where most people are on their 'pocket' – print is hard to store; times of financial stress dictate a magazine is less likely to buy a magazine if it is a 'treat'; the digital era means interaction driven by the Internet – print is not engaging in the same way as online content – plus limited time and attention means audiences tend to 'dip' in a magazine requires more of a linear experience.
 - Against: Readers of niche products tend to be part of a 'fandom' and strongly emulate their values and interests; quality media products like *The Gentlewoman* objective isn't to be fed information in a hurried and disposable fashion but to luxuriate in and to lead to quality time spent on consuming the interest. The distribution model means production costs are kept within budget and the content – readers anticipate the 'drop' and expect that two issues per year.
- How does the representation of gender differ between *The Gentlewoman* and *GQ* in each magazine, how they are represented, and the decision-making of the representation?
 - GQ* holds hegemonic signs of masculinity, but also aims to appeal to a wider audience, therefore, it has more inclusive content where people of colour and men are represented (consider Jonathan Bailey and Virgil Abloh).
 - The Gentlewoman* also represents women in more pluralistic ways as not just the age of 30, and a size 0. Instead, you can see from the back catalogue that different ethnicities and sizes are celebrated for their successes. This would work to also reflect more inclusive attitudes of the reformer type reader.

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6. According to Neale, genre conventions need to evolve in order to attract an extent do you agree? Refer to both magazines in your deliberations. Be sure
- If a product becomes overly familiar it can become boring and stale; Neale argues that you have to evolve in order to attract and appeal to both old and new. The alternative image of Robert Pattinson on the cover of *Q* which may have been the 'novelty' factor would attract potential buyers of the magazine as they would find out why the new look.
 - *The Gentlewoman* is a product that entirely plays with the typical conventions to have a cluttered cover featuring coverlines that communicate hegemony and gender with coverlines. The high-fructose main image is used to 'deliver' the message that members are assured to 'know' the kind of fayre that will be served up.
7. How can theories about gender performativity be applied to representation in media?
- Butler proposes that people adhere to gender expectations by having to 'perform' as males or females; she figures that your biological sex is not your gender, you 'behave' a gender by performing rituals associated with the gender choice. *Q* presents itself as a guide for discerning males wanting to be stylish and they decide (or being heavily encouraged) to wear high-end fashion to impress them.
 - *The Gentlewoman* perhaps paints a more pluralistic version of femininity. In issue 21 of 2022 may wear make-up and wear 'on trend' outfits, but they are 'doing' more than how they look. Therefore, there is less focus on the 'rituals' of gender and more on their successes as women.
8. Audiences use media products to help forge a sense of self and create an identity. How does this play in this? Refer to appropriate theories to explore this topic.
- *Q* can be seen as assisting men in creating a sense of identity through the images of the men in the photographs, and the articles about lifestyle, fashion, and buy. The brands advertised convey values of identity, class, wealth and status, which give men a sense of self and help them to form ideas about who they are and what they want.
 - *The Gentlewoman* assists its readers to create a sense of identity by providing a base for their views and values on. They may see an individual such as Stella McCartney in the fashion world but also respect her ethical standpoint and they could adopt them as their own, which would make them more upmarket.
9. Intersectionality, according to hooks, means that media texts omit and marginalise groups represented in positive and empowered ways. How is this supported or subverted in the texts you have studied?
- *Q* has featured several black men and women on its front covers and has very diverse representation on its website and social media accounts. It is a platform from which groups from typically marginalised groups can be heard. Some may argue that those featured are still 'elite' in that they are famous and wealthy, which would alienate those from poorer social backgrounds.
 - *The Gentlewoman* is inclusive in terms of featuring females from various backgrounds. Ramla Ali's article presents an empowered woman of colour who is a professional athlete. Focusing on presenting female voices and experiences could allow for a challenge to patriarchal perspectives.
10. Print magazines fail to appeal to a younger generation. To what extent is this true?
- *Q* has robust circulation figures and a strong online presence, so it could be argued that it has failed to appeal to a younger generation. The brand is well-established and has a long history, so both those that enjoy physical copies and those that prefer digital are appealed to.
 - *The Gentlewoman* trades on the idea of quality and luxury so the physical copy is likely to appeal to a wealthy readership enjoy having on their coffee table. It does not consist of gossip and fashion but contains interesting and insightful articles that cater to the cerebral pleasures of the target audience. Therefore, because of the age of the target audience it is not the 'scrolling' generation it is targeting.

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