

# Media Studies

## Getting ready for A Level study

Whether you have studied Media at GCSE or not, you will find tasks in this booklet to ensure that you are ready to start studying Media at A Level.

Complete the work using the student booklet or your own document (handwriting if it is more convenient).

### Getting started: What is Media Studies?

#### Watch this:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE-B\\_XkoAgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE-B_XkoAgQ)

There are 4 key concepts in Media Studies:

Media Language	Representation
Audience	Institution/ Industry

You also need to understand **Media Contexts** as media texts are always constructed in a specific context, for a specific audience.

#### Complete – Answer the questions using the information from the video

1. What is Media Language? Answer using the words 'codes', 'denotation', 'connotation' and give at least one example.
2. What is 'representation'? Give at least one example.
3. Why is the concept of audience so important? Give an example.
4. What do we mean by media institutions and why is it key to consider the media industries to understand media texts? Give an example.

## Topic 1: Understanding Media Language

# MAIN COMPONENTS OF MEDIA



### Context

What were, **culture, society & politics** like when the media text was created



### Media Language

How the following create **meanings**:

- Images
- Colours
- Layout
- Genre
- Narrative



### Audience

How audiences are divided and **appealed** to, based on:

- Age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality
- Interests, psychology, behaviour



### Industry

How **businesses** use media to make **profit**, including:

- Production
- Regulation
- Marketing
- Distribution
- Ownership



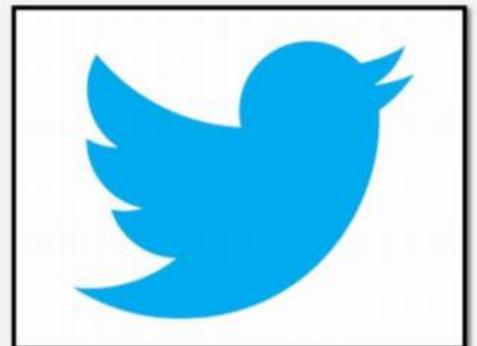
### Representation

How **accurately** the media represents and **portrays**:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Groups
- Places
- Ideas

# SEMIOTICS

The study of **signs & symbols** and their **use** or **interpretation**



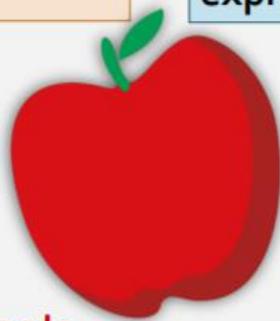


## CREATION OF A SIGN

**Signifier** → **Signified**

The **physical form/shape** the sign takes on

The **meaning or thought** the sign expresses

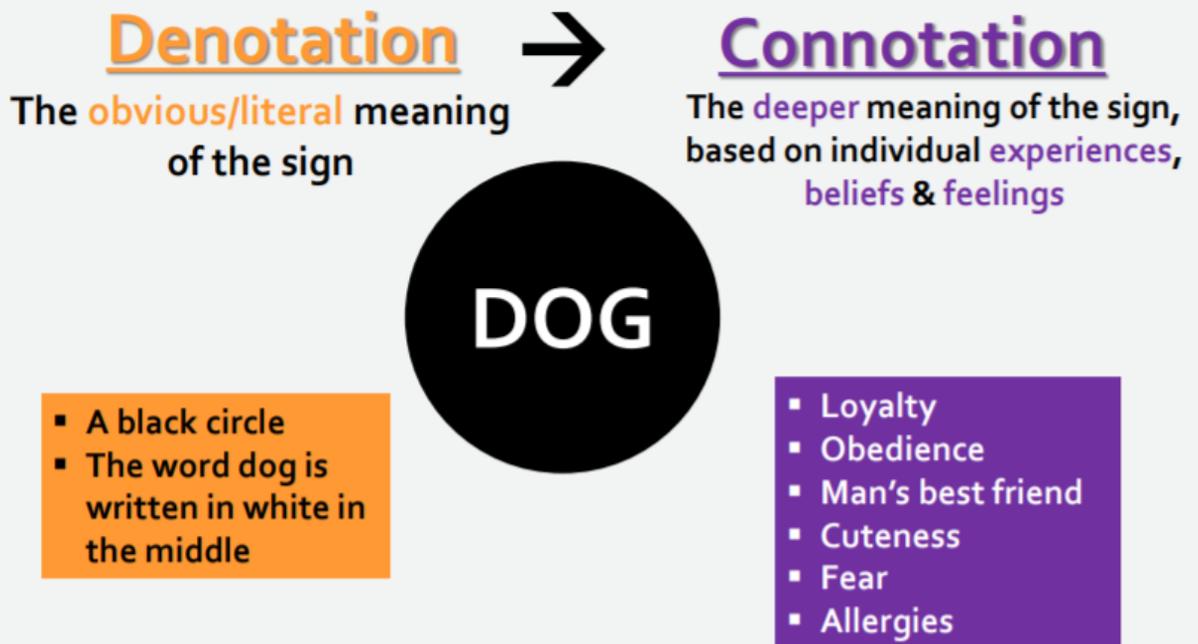


Analysed further through connotations

Red – Leaf – Round – Apple

Fruit – Temptation – Gravity – Computer

# ANALYSING A SIGN



# ANALYSING A SIGN

Sign	Denotation (obvious/literal)	Connotation (deeper → experiences, beliefs)
	Two golden arches, creating the letter M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A symbol of American culture</li> <li>Fast food</li> <li>Unhealthy</li> <li>Obesity</li> </ul>
		
		
		

Learn more about Semiotics

<https://www.slideshare.net/MediaStudiesSaltash/semiotics-for-beginners-as-level>

And a big more advanced: <https://youtu.be/p3XvJDxjlpU>

# MEDIA LANGUAGE

The way in which the *meaning* of a media text is conveyed to the audience.

## VISUAL

- Camera Shot/Angle/Movement
- Lighting
- Colours
- Focus
- Framing
- Mise-en-scene (costumes, hair, make-up, props)



## WRITTEN

- Font, colour & size
- Placement
- Language techniques



## AURAL

- Diegetic
- Non-Diegetic
- Dialogue
- Narration
- Soundtrack/Score
- Sound effects



## Genre

- Narrative
- Characters
- Setting
- Codes & Conventions
- Iconography
- Intertextuality



# CAMERA SHOTS & ANGLES

- **Extreme Close-Up** - A shot of a facial feature, body part, or object → **tension**
- **Close-Up** - A shot of head or head and shoulders → **emotion**
- **POV shot** – A shot showing a character's point-of-view/perspective
- **Medium shot** - A shot which shows characters from the waist or hips up
- **Two-Shot** - A frame containing two people, usually head and shoulders
- **Shot-reverse-shot** - Used for conversation, the camera switches from one person to the other and back again
- **Over-the-Shoulder shot** - Often used in conversation - the camera is positioned behind a character, looking at the other
- **Long shot** - A shot which contains full body of people from some distance
- **Wide shot** – A shot that shows the entire surrounding, including characters
- **Establishing shot** - An extreme wide shot used to show where we are
- **Closed frame** - A frame which has boundaries or barriers on each side or above
- **High-Angle shot** - The camera looks down on the scene → **weakness**
- **Low-Angle shot** - The camera looks up at the scene or character → **dominance and power**
- **Birds' Eye View** – A high angle shot looking down from above



Extreme close up shot



Close-up shot



Medium shot



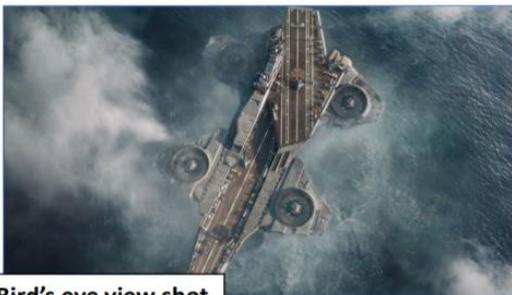
Long shot



Wide shot



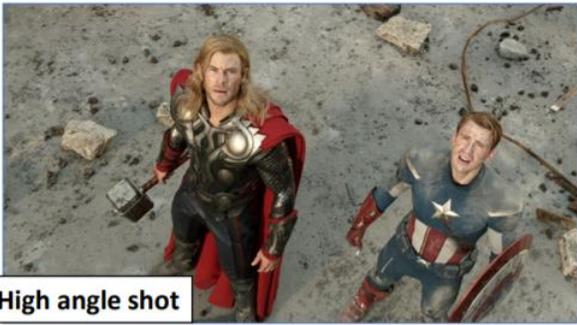
Establishing shot



Bird's eye view shot



POV shot



High angle shot



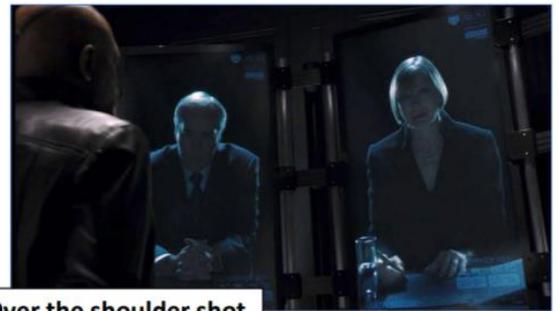
Low angle shot



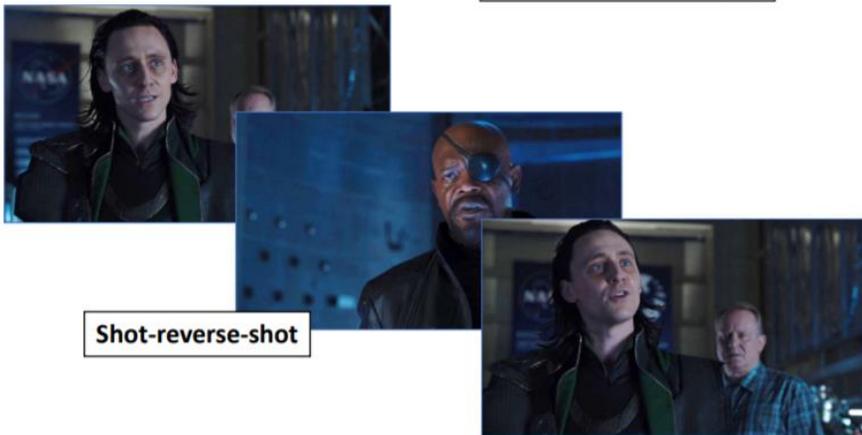
Closed frame



Two shot



Over the shoulder shot



Shot-reverse-shot

Top up your knowledge – learn more about camerawork and mise-en-scene:

<https://www.slideshare.net/andywallis/film-terms-and-techniques-introduction>

<https://www.slideshare.net/andywallis/film-terms-and-techniques-shots-and-angles-part-2>

# CODES & CONVENTIONS

- **Codes:** Signs which create meaning.
  - **Technical codes** = ways in which equipment is used to tell the story in a media text (camera, lighting, position)
  - **Symbolic codes** = what is beneath the surface of what we see (a character's actions show you how the character is feeling)
- **Conventions:** What the audience expects to see in a particular media text
- Each type of media text has different conventions (requirements & expectations)
- Same codes can be applied to different media texts

## Watch:

What Are Camera Angles? | Let's Talk Theory

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE\\_wTuLN48A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE_wTuLN48A)

Editing is another crucial element of media language.

Cuts and transitions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAH0MoAv2CI>

Make some notes on key points you have learned from watching these.

## Learn some more:

Top 10 Opening Shots of All Time

<https://youtu.be/PnhZXELUmUs>

And : The Robert Rodriguez 10 Minute Film School - Part 2 of 2

<https://youtu.be/sLxqNwc1oYU>

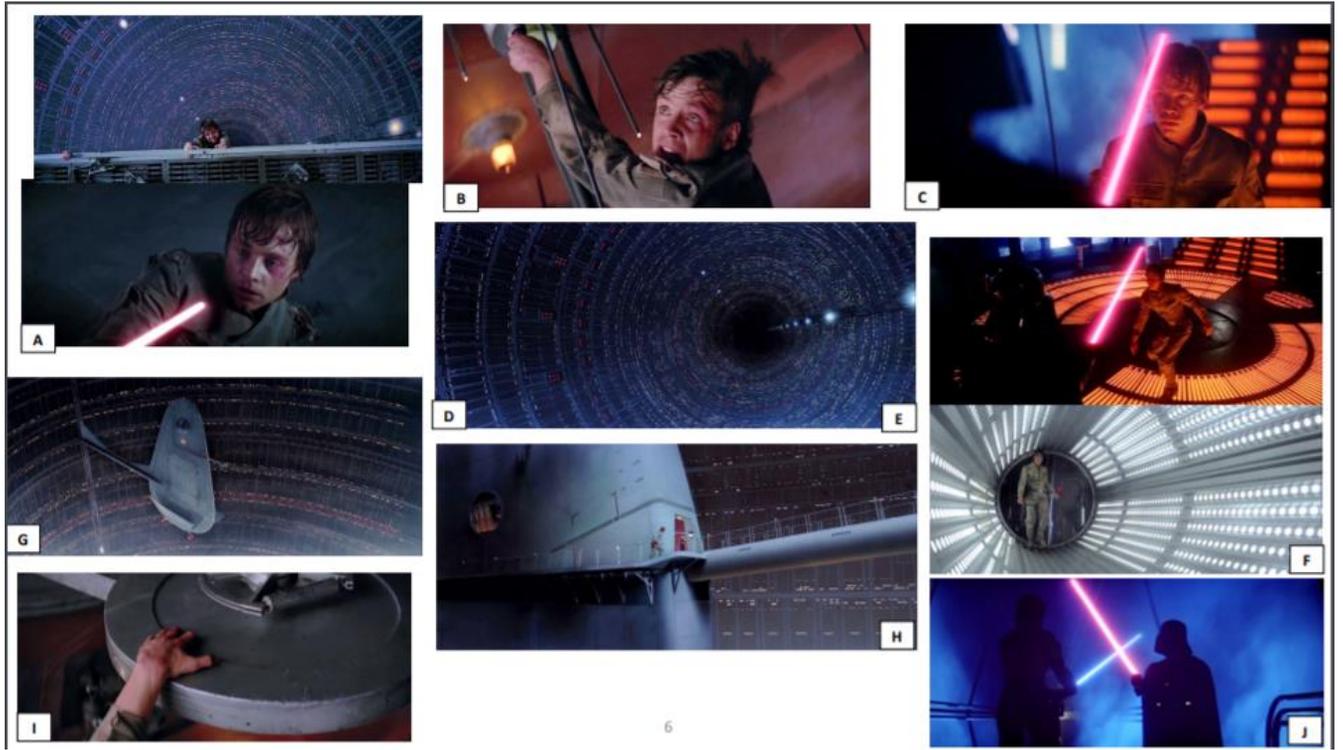
## Complete – on the next pages are more screenshots to annotate

Annotate each one to explain what meanings are created by the media language used, both through the camerawork and editing.

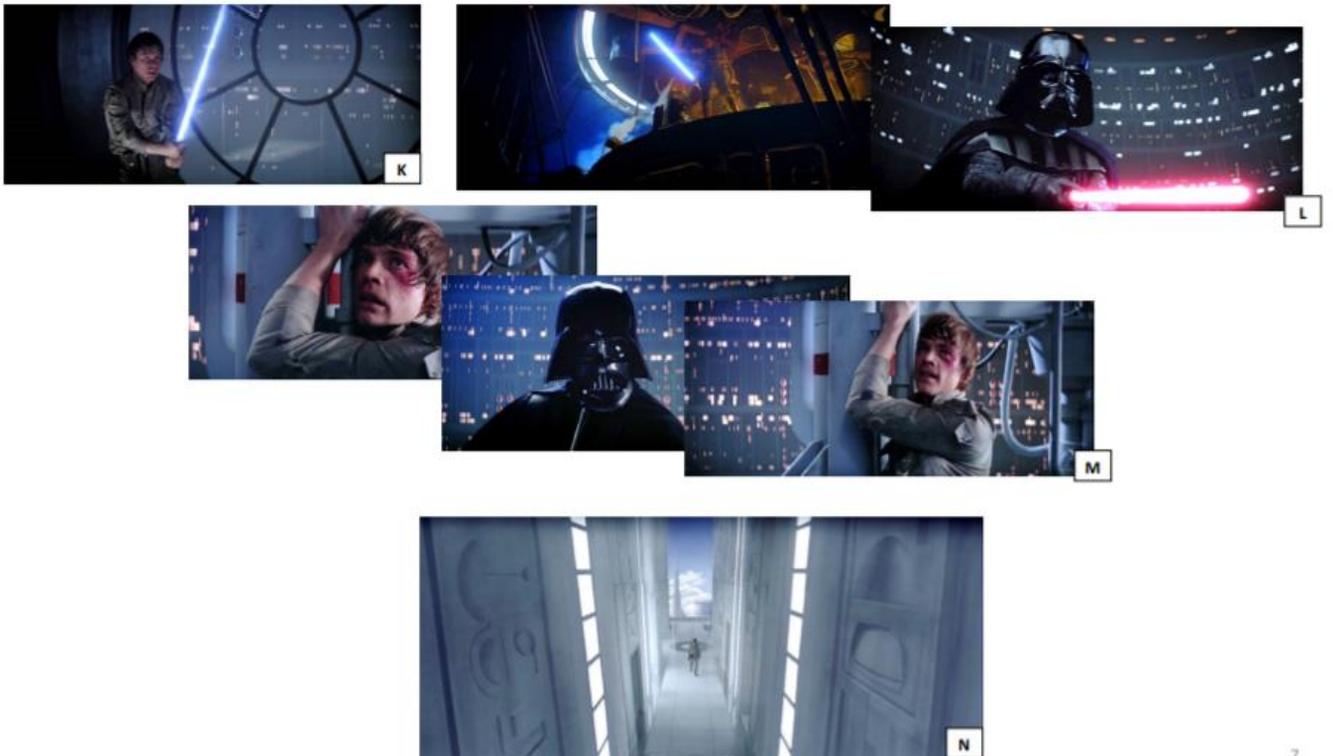
Do a 200-300 word write-up.

Watch the sequence first!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgyitSIMtMY>



6



7

# Practical work

1. Take an interesting photo of one or two characters and explain your). Share your picture.

EXEMPLAR:



\*This is a high angle MS of a white teenage male character.

\* He is wearing a grey hoody, the hood nearly covering his eyes so it casts shadows across his face, signifying that he may have things to hide.

\*He sits against a brick wall in the dark with a spotlight shining on him which creates an interrogation-style effect.

\*As one eye is covered a sense of mystery is connoted, as well as darkness which could represent that the character is evil.

\*The actor is giving direct address to the camera, which seems chilling and gives a sense of horror.

\* The photo is in colour, but the actor is wearing dark clothing which makes him seem evil, as he is central in the photo and we are drawn to the darkness.

\*We had to turn off the lights in the hallway so that there was darkness surrounding the actor and the only light came from the police, as if to signify that the character is bad and the police interrogating are good, which plays upon opposites which are a common feature in horror films.

\*Furthermore, the actor looks like a 'deer in the headlights', which is great we achieved a feeling that he was not expecting to be caught.

\*The shot was achieved using a teenage male sitting against a wall, with someone holding a pag light (without filters) in front of the male.

\*I also put dark makeup underneath the teenager's eyes so that he looked more devious.

2. Keep practising different types of shots and angles and share some of your photos.

3. You can experiment with video as well. Many apps can be used to edit, such as iMovie.

## Topic 2: Understanding Representation

### Odd-one-out?



What do you notice about the first two images?



What about this one?  
What point is this image making?

**Representation:** how the media portray events, issues, individuals and social groups.

Watch this introduction (3:26):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOecpti7Qf8>

### Checklist of key points:

- Representation is the way in which aspects of society and social identity, issues and events are re-presented or portrayed to an audience.
- All media products are constructions; they do not simply reflect the real world, and the representations within them are also constructions as they are not real but are often accepted as such by an audience because they give an illusion of reality.
- The creators of media products make choices about how representations are constructed through selection and combination (as well as omission – what is NOT included is often significant)
- The representation is controlled by the product’s creators and as such encodes values, attitudes, beliefs.
- The repetition by the media of a particular representation may result in that representation being accepted as normal.
- Representations are affected by the context and purpose.
- Media products may construct stereotypes which can be both positive and negative.

Representations position audiences differently and audience responses may vary.

## Representation

How media texts deal with and present to an audience:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- National and regional identity
- Social issues
- Events

**Selection** + **Construction** + **Mediation**

What has been selected to be included in a media text

The way a media text is put together  
(layout, design, wording)

- The process everything goes through before it reaches an audience constructing an
- Interpretation of an event or group  
(rewrites, paraphrasing, image cropping)



# Task: Does Marvel have a gender inequality problem?

## Men in Marvel



- What do the men have in common?
- What adjectives can be used to describe them?

## Women in Marvel



- What do the women have in common?
- What adjectives can be used to describe them?

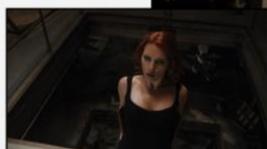
## A bit of theory:



## MULVEY'S MALE GAZE THEORY



- **Laura Mulvey** is a theorist who wrote an essay titled *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*
- She claimed that cinema was created **by men** and **for men**. Therefore, women were presented in a way to please men onscreen
- **Women on screen are looked at by three groups of men:**
  1. **Male characters within the film**
  2. **Male director/cameraman/editor**
  3. **Male Audience**



Women would often be characterised as three **archetypes** (specific representation):

- A **sexual object** (attractive to men, sexually arousing, pleasant to look at)
- A **motherly figure** (taking care of men, nurturing them)
- A **threat to men / femme fatale** (dangerous woman, using sexuality as a weapon)



## Watch, read and answer questions:

1. In this clip, how are men represented? How are women represented? Think about themes, settings, costumes, gender roles, dialogue, narrative (aim for 150 words minimum)

<https://youtu.be/dNPKJ7eEVDU>

2. Does Marvel have a gender inequality problem?

<https://youtu.be/LivZEK30FsY>

This serves as an introduction before the article on the next two pages.

Bullet point two or three key points made in this video.

## 'Avengers: Age of Ultron's' Black Widow Disgrace (May 05, 2015)

In Joss Whedon's mega-charged superhero sequel, Scarlett Johansson's badass assassin is reduced to a baby-obsessed flirt. For shame.

A couple of years back, I had the pleasure of conducting a sit-down interview with filmmaker Joss Whedon for Newsweek magazine. The occasion was his post-Avengers passion project, *Much Ado About Nothing*—an impeccably staged and delightfully droll riff on the Shakespeare classic filmed with a cast of pals over 12 days at Whedon's Santa Monica home.

The experience was, according to Whedon, a spiritual cleansing of sorts; a respite from the drudgery of assembling a gazillion-dollar superhero epic that reminded him why he fell in love with visual storytelling in the first place. And, like many film and television projects in the Whedon canon, from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Dollhouse* to his unproduced *Wonder Woman* screenplay, it featured a ballsy, no-nonsense heroine at its centre.

"I was raised by a hardcore feminist," said Whedon, whose father also wrote for *The Golden Girls*, of his affinity for heroines. "I was also much smaller than my brothers and bullied a lot, so I identify with the feeling of helplessness."

Our chat eventually touched on Hollywood's reluctance to make a superhero film with a female hero in the lead. It was the only moment in the talk where the genial artist got fired up.

"Toymakers will tell you they won't sell enough, and movie people will point to the two terrible superheroine movies that were made and say, 'You see? It can't be done,'" Whedon said. "It's stupid, and I'm hoping *The Hunger Games* will lead to a paradigm shift. It's frustrating to me that I don't see anybody developing one of these movies. It actually pisses me off. My daughter watched *The Avengers* and was like, 'My favourite characters were the Black Widow and Maria Hill,' and I thought, 'Yeah, of course they were.' I read a beautiful thing Junot Diaz wrote: 'If you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves.'"

Whedon also decided to take the leap and join the incendiary echo chamber that is Twitter to drum up publicity for his black-and-white experiment. On Monday, however, Whedon deleted his Twitter account. The reason isn't entirely clear, though numerous media outlets have reported it's due to the backlash he's received over his rendering of Black Widow in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, which grossed \$187 million during its opening weekend.

Now, Whedon is an outspoken ally of feminism with the resume to back it up. But his portrayal of Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow, played by Scarlett Johansson, in *Ultron* does a great disservice to the most badass woman in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

In *Ultron*, following an overcrowded opening action sequence, we're introduced to Romanoff behind the bar at Stark's pad. The gang is celebrating its apparent victory over HYDRA and Romanoff, as the token female amid a plethora of towering bros, is tending bar. She makes Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo) a snazzy drink, and the two exchange a few flirty lines and furtive glances. This triggers Captain America's (Chris Evans) BroDar, as he struts over and launches into an explainer on Romanoff's history of "flirtation" with several of the Avengers—Hawkeye, Cap, and now Hulk.

Romanoff's demeaning history isn't entirely Whedon's fault, and perhaps this was the filmmaker's way of pointing out how wrong it is, but it came off like a group of chauvinistic mega-men taking potshots at the lone female in the group. And that isn't even the most troubling sequence.

Later on, Romanoff is describing her origin story to Banner. Like the comics, it involves her taking part in a ballerina/black ops project as a young child (think: *Black Swan* crossed with the fraternity of assassins in *Wanted*). She complains of being sterilized by her captors. She turns to Banner and sombrely says, "You're not the only monster on the team."

Her infertility then becomes the main focus of Romanoff's *Ultron* journey. While none of the other Avengers really worry about raising a family, Romanoff yearns for the domesticated life of Hawkeye's secret pregnant wife, Susan, played by Linda Cardellini. They've even named their future son after her. At the end of the film, the happy couple texts Romanoff a picture of her wee namesake. Troubled, she looks off into the distance, before regaining her composure and delivering a rousing speech to the rest of the Avengers.

Because she's a woman, saving the world isn't enough for her. She'll always got that cursed void to fill. After all, it's what makes her, as she says, a "monster."

Let's get back to the way the MCU has handled Romanoff—which has been disappointing, to say the least.

When she's introduced in Iron Man 2, the first words yelled at her by Tony Stark are, "What's your name, lady?" He then eyeballs her digital resume on his computer, including a modelling photo of her in a lace bra and panties, before marvelling (sorry) at her ability to kick Happy's ass. He turns to his secretary/lover Pepper Potts and proclaims, "I want one."

Thankfully, director Jon Favreau chose to leave an even more "flirtatious" scene between Romanoff and Stark on the cutting room floor.

In the first Avengers, similar to the comics, she gets close to Jeremy Renner's Hawkeye. Then, she's brought on in Captain America: Winter Soldier as a leather-clad vessel whose sole purpose is guiding his voyage of self-discovery by serving as a lame, quasi-romantic interest.

"It's more of a work-wife, work-husband relationship," co-director Joe Russo told Empire of Romanoff and Cap. "Of course there's sexual tension between them, but I think she's more interested in pulling him into the modern world and trying to help him try that identity he's looking for."

The MCU's decision to have Romanoff function as a cog that services the storylines of not one but four Avengers—Iron Man, Hawkeye, Captain America, and Hulk—all while denying her a standalone feature despite the fact that Johansson is the only one among them that can open a non-franchise blockbuster all by her lonesome (see: Lucy), is a total head-scratcher, and led Renner and Evans to jokingly brand her a "slut" and a "complete whore," respectively (they've since apologized, citing a long and exhausting press tour).

Johansson even mocked the way the MCU's handled Black Widow in a recent SNL skit—a satirical trailer for a fictional standalone Romanoff romcom from the writers of 27 Dresses that depicts her trying to juggle a job in fashion (this, bizarrely enough, was an actual storyline in the comics), and a romantic relationship with... Ultron.

If that all weren't enough, there's the issue of Black Widow's noticeable absence in Marvel merchandising—one so glaringly obvious that it led Ultron star Mark Ruffalo to diplomatically voice his disapproval on Twitter: @Marvel we need more #BlackWidow merchandise for my daughters and nieces. Pretty please.

So why is Black Widow, like Guardians of the Galaxy's Gamora before her, being short-changed in the world of Marvel swag? According to a post written by a former Marvel employee on the feminist-leaning website The Mary Sue, it has to do with good ol' fashioned sexism.

"This exclusion of women from Marvel movie merchandise is completely purposeful. I know; I was there," the unnamed ex-employee wrote. "While working at Marvel post acquisition, I saw a deck circulated by Disney's Brand Marketing team. I'm prohibited from sharing the slides, but the takeaway is that, unlike the actual demos, the desired demographics had no females in it whatsoever. I asked my supervisor why that was. Ever the pragmatist, he said, 'That's not why Disney bought us. They already have the girls' market on lockdown.'"

The ex-employee continued, "Disney bought Marvel and Lucasfilm because they wanted to access the male market. To achieve this goal, they allocate less to Marvel's female demo, and even less to a unisex one. They won't be interested in changing how they work until consumers understand what's going on." Perhaps, then, this isn't so much Whedon's fault, but a company-wide directive that's been passed down from the powers that be at Marvel, including MCU architect Kevin Feige. Either way, Johansson's Romanoff will be starring in several more MCU films, including the already-announced Captain America: Civil War and the two-part finale, Avengers: Infinity War.

Hopefully, she'll have more to do in those movies than flirt and whine about being barren.

Or maybe they'll just have her f\*\*\* Thor.

### Answer the following questions:

1. What is the central argument made in this article?
2. How is 'Hollywood's reluctance to make a superhero film with a female hero in the lead' explained?
3. In what ways is the sequence introducing Romanoff / Black Widow problematic in terms of gender representations? Which stereotypes of femininity are deployed?
4. How is her character developed in subsequent sequences and films?
5. What do we learn about the institution (studios, in this case) behind such decisions – including the question of merchandises?

**Read:** Is there hope that things might start to change?

## *A New Study Finds That Movies Starring Women Make More Money*

Article by [Lindsey Romain](#) Dec 11 2018

<https://nerdist.com/article/new-study-women-movies-more-money-box-office/>

If you frequent social media, you've heard the noise: Female-centric movies are ruining Hollywood. Women, with all their *hair* and *drama*, are infiltrating popular franchises like [Star Wars](#) and [Marvel](#), spreading their inclusivity agenda with a smirk and scowl. But it's just a phase. You'll see. We're obviously being sarcastic here, not only because women-led films pose no real danger outside of, you know, showing off the unique power of half the world's population. But now, a study is here to prove that it's literally wrong to say women-starring films are "ruining" Hollywood; they are, in fact, keeping it alive. According to [a report](#) conducted by the Creative Artists Agency and tech firm Shift7, movies with female leads actually out-gross male-led rivals at *all* budget levels.



The study compiled box office data from the 350 highest-grossing films from 2014 to 2017 and broke them into five categories based on what it cost to get them made. The greatest gap in female vs. male-led grosses was at the top tier, or movies that made over \$100 million. That category contains films like [Wonder Woman](#), Disney's live-action [Beauty and the Beast](#), and Star Wars films like [Rogue One](#) and the two episodic sequels, [The Force Awakens](#) and [The Last Jedi](#), which are also the third and 11th [highest-grossing films of all time, respectively](#). Also factored into the report was the Bechdel Test. Films that pass the test feature a female lead who speaks to at least one other woman about something other than a man. The report found that, since 2012, all films to pass \$1 billion in global box office passed the test. A low bar, yes, but it shows progress when you realize how many popular films fail that simple practice.



This may all sound like revolutionary new information, but, in fact, female viability at the box office has been the case even before the timeline used for CAA's report. In 2015, The Black List's Kate Hagen [found that](#) female-led films with at least a \$1 million budget released after 1/1/2000 outgrossed male-led films overall. As Hagen writes, "the data actually says we minimize downside risk and increase upside potential when making female-driven movies." So don't listen to the trolls who lament the advent of large-budget female-starring films, the people who call diversity "box office poison" or accuse studios of foisting an agenda on moviegoers. The numbers don't lie: When women star in films, more people see those movies. It's just a fact. Here's hoping the powers that be feel bolstered by this data and extend the same starring-role-power to [other under-represented groups](#). We have a feeling they might be surprised by those numbers, too.

## Checklist of key points

### Representations of Women in the Media

- The representation of women has developed to reflect changes in society in relation to women's roles, creating more realistic representations and positive role models (this is happening more slowly in the film industry than in the TV industry)
- However, stereotypical representations of women still exist in some media forms and products. The more unrealistic representations of women that appear tend to define women by how they look, often objectifying them, and by their relationships (reinforcing heteronormative messages).
- Where women are constructed in a more positive way, challenging outdated stereotypes, they are seen as more active and have a key role in shaping the narrative. They are defined by what they do rather than what they have done to them.
- Some theorists argue that, while women's roles and representations in the media have changed, they are equally limiting, as women are expected to be 'strong' and indeed to demonstrate 'masculine' attributes.
- Representations of women change in order to reflect cultural shifts in relation to gender and to satisfy audience expectations (think of the impact of the 1960s Women Liberation movement for instance).



### Representations of Men in the Media

- Similar to the representations of women in the media, the representation of men and of masculinity has changed and adapted in order to reflect social and cultural change.
- There is now a range of representations of men in media texts and the role of men within society has been called into question and examined in the light of the #MeToo campaign.
- As is the case with representation of women, while there has been some fundamental changes in representations, essentially, masculinity tends to be defined by physical strength, sexual attractiveness and/or prowess, success in relationships and power / authority. This is reflected in some media forms more than others, for example advertising and mainstream films.
- Other forms, for example music videos, while reinforcing some typical male characteristics, have also been a platform that allows men to present themselves as more rounded, realistic individuals.



# Next level of understanding! Representation of issues and social groups

## Representations of Ethnicity in the Media

- Just as with gender, the representation in the media of people from diverse cultures has changed in order to reflect social and cultural changes. Many areas of the media offer positive representations of minority groups and there are fewer instances whereby these social groups are defined as being 'other'.
- However, the construction of **stereotypes** and the **misrepresentation** and **under-representation** of these social groups in certain areas of the media continues to be problematic, as the way in which ethnicity and race are presented in the media is often the only experience of these cultures that an audience may encounter and so will accept as truth (think of the representation of immigrants in some of the UK newspapers, and the depiction of Muslim characters as terrorists in films and TV drama).
- Certain stereotypical representations are **reinforced** across different forms. For example, black and Asian people are often represented as 'exotic' in magazines, advertisements and music videos. Some newspapers **demonise** young black men, defining them in terms of gang culture and violence. This **perpetuates** a negative representation of certain social groups.
- Other media forms offer more positive representations of minority ethnic groups, including music videos and certain TV dramas.

**Answer:** What do you think are the possible consequences of repeated messages about certain social groups in newspaper front pages such as in the Daily Express' emotive and biased pages below?



**Watch and answer the questions below:**

Cecilia Menjivar, a KU Foundation Distinguished Professor of Sociology, speaks about her report into the effects of such problematic media representations of immigrants in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPSB-71Cua4> and the linked article: [NEGATIVE MEDIA PORTRAYALS DRIVE PERCEPTION OF IMMIGRATION POLICY, STUDY FINDS](#)

'We find that media have a central place in shaping the public's views of immigrants and immigration but also on shaping the immigrants' views of themselves in relation to others.'

"The more a message is repeated — in this case in the news media — it becomes a 'fact' even if it is not true. And most sensationalist one-liners are not accurate," she said. "But because most people can't do the research themselves, their only source of information are these messages, told over and over again."

**Q: WHAT EFFECTS HAVE THESE MESSAGES HAD ON THE IMMIGRANTS' BEHAVIOURS ACCORDING TO THE REPORT?**

## Topic 3: Understanding Audience

### Checklist of key points

- Media texts are constructed with a specific audience in mind, usually defined by categories and audience profiling.
- The relationship between the audience and the media product changes in order to reflect social and technological developments.
- Technological developments mean that audiences have higher expectations but are also easier to reach across different platforms.
- The way in which audiences access media products has changed dramatically and media industries have had to adapt the way in which they target and reach audiences.
- Audiences are not a mass; they are made up of individuals. Audiences will not respond in the same way to media products. The responses will be affected by social and cultural factors.

### Audiences are categorised by the media industries in order to make them easier to research and target.

Different ways of grouping audiences include:

#### Demographic profiling:

This categorises audience groups from A to E according to class, occupation and income. Categories A and B contain the wealthiest groups in society with the highest disposable income. Age and gender are also factors used in constructing demographic groups. This method of audience profiling can be seen to be outdated but is still widely used by some media industries (e.g. Magazines)

Social grade	Description	% of the UK
A	High managerial, administrative or professional	4
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	23
C1	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	29
C2	Skilled manual workers	21
D	Semi and unskilled manual worker	15
E	State pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only	8

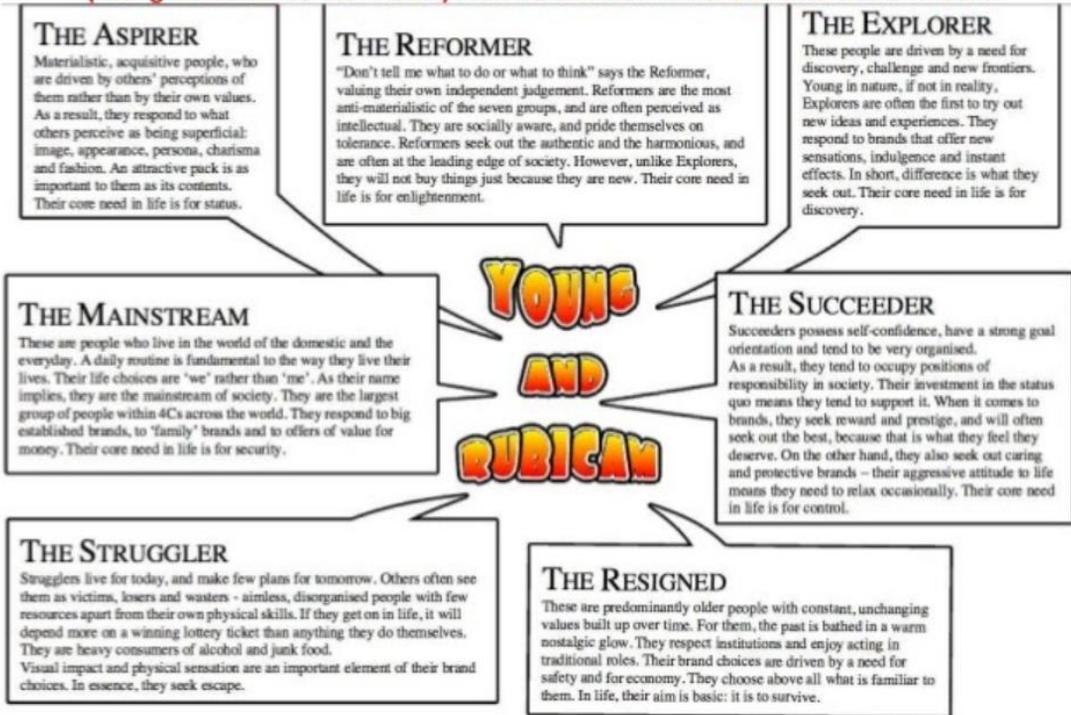
#### Psychographic profiling:

This is an audience defined by their values, attitudes and lifestyles (VALs). Young and Rubicam's Four Consumers (four C's) categorises audiences according to their cross cultural characteristics, using their motivational needs and VALs, including security, control, status, individuality, freedom, survival and escape.



Try and work out which category you fit into and one which you would like to fit into.

**(Young & Rubicam's 4Cs model) cross cultural consumer characterization model**

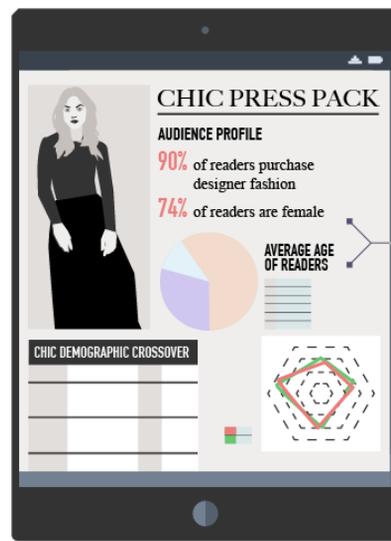


**Answer:** How do these different music magazines appeal to different target audience?



## Profiling the audience

Many major magazine publishers produce **press packs** to attract potential advertisers. The press pack will give details on the audience **demographics** of the magazine and provide the advertisers with information about their **target audience**



Press packs reveal audience demographics

Age and gender are both major aspects of demographic profiling

Advertisers use press packs to gain an understanding of a media text's target audience

## Read and research: GQ audiences

See the press pack for GQ here:

[https://cnda.condenast.co.uk/static/mediapack/gq\\_media\\_pack\\_latest.pdf](https://cnda.condenast.co.uk/static/mediapack/gq_media_pack_latest.pdf)

Press packs (or media packs or media kits) are useful for advertisers who can then decide whether their products will appeal to the magazine demographics.



### AUDIENCE PROFILES



Source: PAMCo 3, 2018; HHI from Conde Nast Luxury Survey 2018

**Watch:** Media Kits

<https://youtu.be/VD-kGt2acJl>

**Answer:** What information can you gather about the GQ audience?

## LUXURY INFLUENCERS

### INFLUENCERS

85% of readers are passionate about **sharing** their knowledge and 47% regularly write blogs/reviews online

85% of the GQ audience have influenced others to **purchase products or services based on their recommendations**

81% of readers have **researched** a product/brand after seeing it featured in GQ or on GQ.co.uk, while 74% have **bought** a product/brand after seeing it in GQ or on GQ.co.uk

### STYLE INVESTORS

91% of the GQ audience agree that "it is important to look well dressed", while 74% agree that "fashion and grooming is an integral part of my lifestyle"

Collectively, the GQ audience have spent **£5.8 billion** on fashion in the last 12 months

### VANGUARD

GQ's online audience are 40% more likely to be '**High Net Worth City Workers**' who are 64% more likely to be **early adopters** of technology

Source: The GQ Portfolio Survey 2018 (based on regular GQ readers); collective spend calculated by extrapolating audience spend from Conde Nast Luxury Survey 2018, by total brand reach (PAMCo (Oct 17 - Sep 18); HHI based on 4 rolling week data ending 16th September 2017).



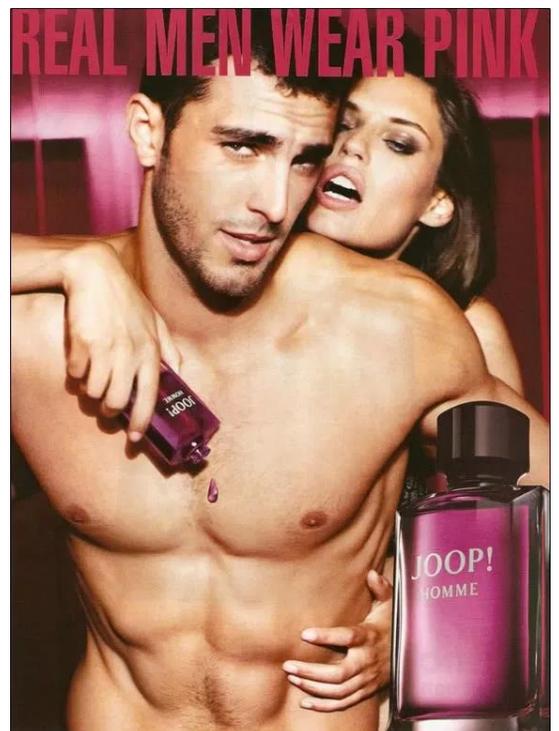
## How media products target, attract, reach, address and construct audiences

All media products have a specific audience; some target a broad or **mainstream audience** and some a **niche** one. Depending on the audience, the product will use a range of techniques this audience with the product, including:

- **Technical and audio codes:** the choice of shots and editing style.
- **Language and mode of address:** use of lexis (words / language) and tone may be target-audience specific.
- **How the product is constructed:** the choice of images, composition and the way the product is put together may appeal to particular audiences.
- **The marketing and distribution of the product:** determines the audience **reach** and will differ according to the target audience.
- **The way in which the audience is positioned by the product:** will encourage audiences to engage with the product and **accept the encoded meanings**.
- **The way in which the product is created and its marketing:** construct the idea of the audience they are targeting. Over time, advertisements have constructed an image of an audience which may not reflect the actual consumer. The audience sees an **aspirational** image of themselves that can be persuasive.
- **Some products produce profiles of their audience** to target them more effectively and to provide advertisers with information.

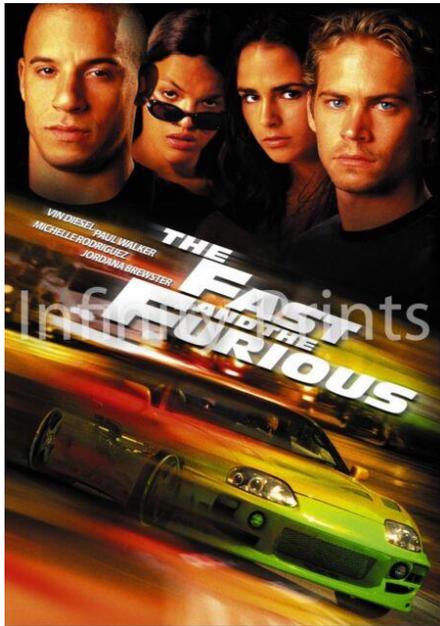
1. Who do you think is the target audience for these media texts?

2. How are they targeted and appealed to by the media texts?



1. Who do you think is the target audience for these media texts?

2. How are they targeted and appealed to by the media texts?



<https://youtu.be/ybji16u608U>

Black Widow film trailer

<https://youtu.be/TVIzUikxZks>

Asda TV advert 2020



<https://youtu.be/ssrNcwxALS4>

Assassin's Creed Valhalla 2020  
(warning: 18 certificate)



Sun frontpage, June 2016

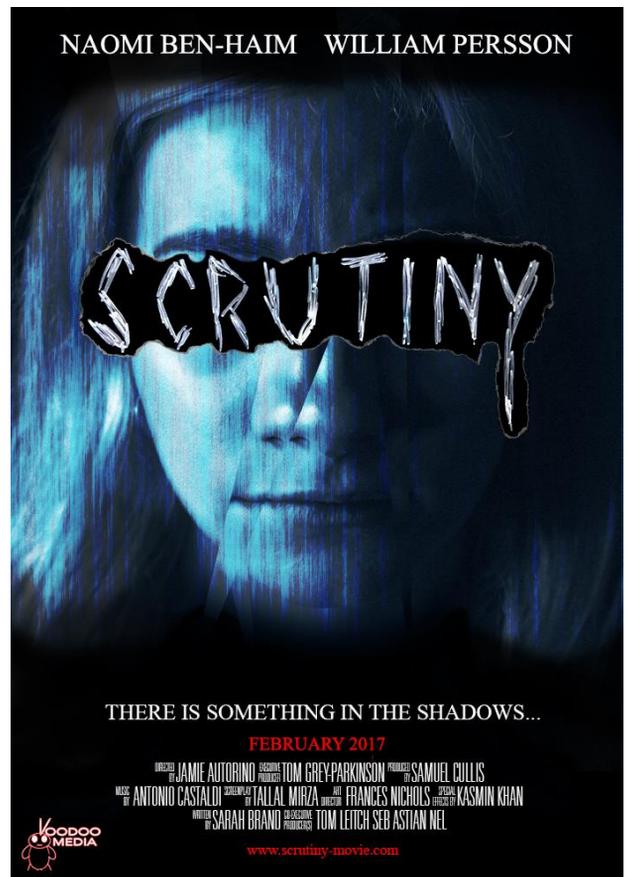
# Practical work

Create a mock up of a new print advert for a film or fragrance of your choice.

Alternatively, you may want to create the front page of a music magazine or even a CD cover.

**KEY: Explain some of the media language choices you have made to address your chosen audience (and don't forget to tell us who the audience are)**

You can draw it or be more creative (even with PowerPoint)



## Topic 4: Understanding Industry

When studying the media, you will also need to know quite a bit about its institutions. For example, you will need to know:

- How media organisations, groups and individuals produce, distribute and circulate their products, and how this may differ according to the institution and the audience.
- How media organisations use marketing in order to create, appeal to and maintain audiences.
- The ways in which technological developments have had an impact on the production, distribution and circulation of media products.
- How the different media industries are regulated.
- The different patterns of ownership and control and the impact this has on the different industries.

### Watch and respond: Film production

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5EoMcoUI2Q>

What processes are included in the film making process?

### Watch and respond: Film Theory: Should Disney Buy Spiderman for \$10 Billion? (Disney vs Sony)

[https://youtu.be/K\\_IHoG1Xfol](https://youtu.be/K_IHoG1Xfol)

Sum up in 4-5 bullet points the key points around **ownership** dealt with in this video. Use the diagram below first if this helps.

## Ownership of *Spider-Man* Films

Japanese **multinational conglomerate corporation** with diversified business includes **consumer and professional electronics, gaming, entertainment and financial services**

**SONY**

U.S. headquarters of Sony, dealing with **electronics, entertainment, interactive entertainment, and music**

**SONY**

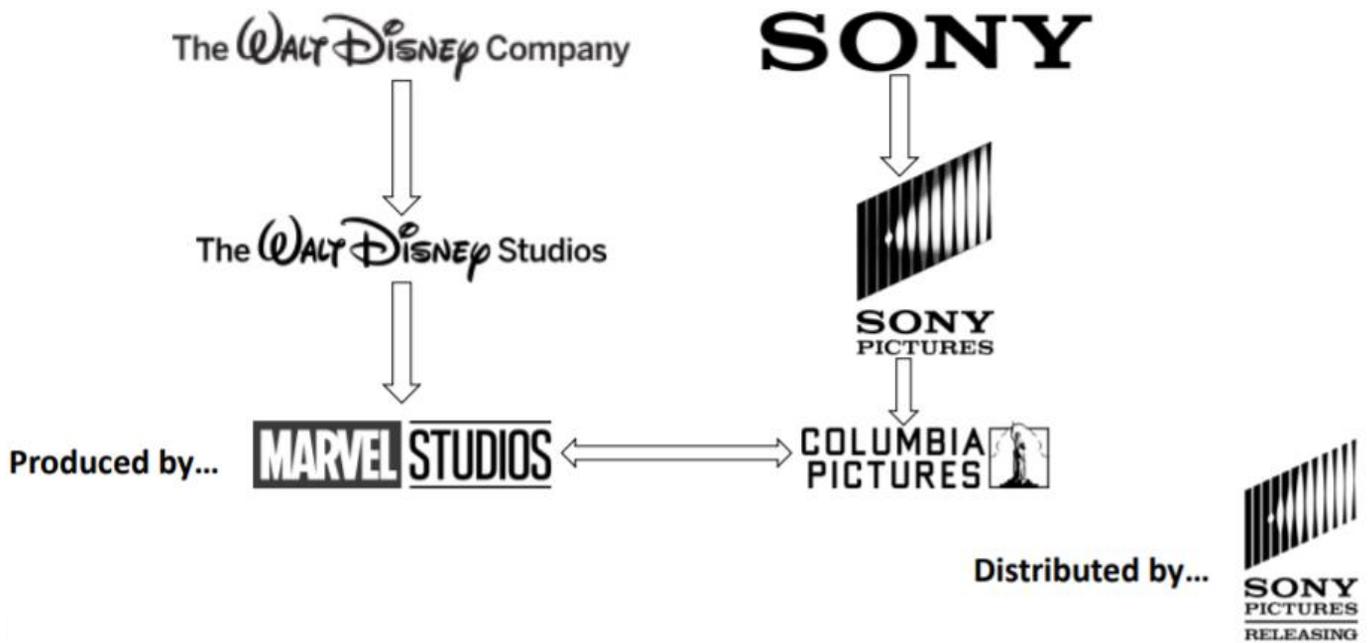
American entertainment company that **produces, acquires and distributes** filmed entertainment



American **film studio and production company**



# Spider-Man: Homecoming Integration



## Read and make notes: BBC Bitesize – The Film Industry

The next few pages will make use of the pages from BBC Bitesize.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9hrwxs/revision/1>

**Categories:** Film is a huge, global industry generating massive sums of money each year. Films themselves can be divided into different categories and defined according to:

Category	Description
Genre	Comedy, Thriller, Horror, Action, Fantasy etc.
Actors	Some actors are recognisable to a specific audience. For example, Jason Statham to an Action fan or Adam Sandler to a Comedy fan.
Production companies	Major Hollywood studios (Universal, Paramount, Warner Bros, 20th Century Fox and Sony amongst others) and Independent ones (Film Four, BBC Films, Warp Films etc.)
Production values	Is it big budget or low budget?
Certification	What age group is the film appropriate for?

There are two main production contexts in the film industry:

**Studio:** mainstream films with big budgets made by major Hollywood studios. Studio films have high **production values** and star actors. Examples of this might be *The Hunger Games* series, *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* or a James Bond film like *Spectre*.

**Independent:** films with smaller budgets and sometimes as a result, lower production values. They are less likely to have so called **A-list** actors. Examples might be *Juno*, *Birdman* or *Brooklyn*.

## Studio films



This is the industry model for a 'Hollywood' or 'Blockbuster' movie.

They are usually made by big Hollywood studios and follow a formula:

- Obvious characters, usually **stereotypical**, such as **the action-hero**.
- An **easy-to-follow narrative** with **universal themes**, which can be described in one sentence and can be used as a **tagline** to promote the film.
- **High production values**, expensive costumes and locations. These films often use special effects and/or CGI.
- The film may be **promoted** and **marketed** via **merchandise** such as **tie-in deals** with food chains. In some instances, pop stars will produce songs for the soundtrack which will help market the film to a wider audience. We refer to this cross-promotion process as **synergy**.
- **High profile** celebrity actors. These actors can often be related to the film genre, such as Jason Statham in the action movie genre.
- The main roles in the film are 'larger than life' characters rather than ordinary or real people.
- The visual appeal of events or situations you would not see in everyday life, such as explosions, car chases, fantasy worlds and historical settings.
- **High drama** and exciting, easy to understand plots.
- These films are usually **distributed by the studios** that make them. The studios are often **multinational media conglomerates** that own companies across a range of various media platforms.
- This means that these conglomerates can use all the companies they own to promote and market a film.
- This use of all a media conglomerate's companies to produce, promote, market, and distribute a film and its official merchandise is called **vertical integration**.
- **Horizontal integration** is when a conglomerate uses smaller independent companies to help with marketing, distribution or even the **exhibition** of a film.

1. **Make sure to research and make a note of the key terms related to industry highlighted above.**
2. **What are the biggest film studios now?**

## Independent Films

Independent films are produced by **smaller production companies**. They do not follow the same formula as studio films. Instead, they **vary** in style and genre.

Independent films are often designed to make you think about certain subjects or issues, and feature **challenging storylines** that are **more realistic** and **less escapist** than in studio films.



An official poster for the film Brooklyn

Examples of UK independent film companies are BBC Films (Brooklyn), Big Talk Productions (The World's End), Heyday Films (The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas), Cloud Eight Films (Selma), Ruby Films (Suffragette), and Vertigo Films (StreetDance).

### Financing

- Independent film productions **raise money from a variety of sources**.
- Some small production companies may **collaborate** on the production by **sharing** industry skills and financial resources.
- Independent production companies can secure funding from private investors but usually they are **funded** by arts agencies, such as the British Film Council or the British Film Institute.
- Some television broadcasters, like BBC Films and Film Four, also fund independent films.
- The internet has enabled independent filmmakers to seek funding from **online donations or crowdfunding**.

### Distribution

- Unlike studio films, which usually have a mainstream cinema release, independent production companies enter their films into local, national and international **film festivals to gain exposure with distributors who may then buy the distribution rights**.
- **Distribution** companies work to get independent films **theatrical releases** - nationally and internationally - and make deals for DVD, Blu-Ray and on-demand releases.
- Independent films tend to have a **limited theatrical release** in comparison to studio films, though there are many cinemas throughout the world catering for audiences and fans of independent film.
- In the past, independent films have been considered to have **lower production values** than studio films, but this has **changed with technological innovations**, including better and **more affordable** cameras and computer software for special effects and editing.
- The ability to achieve high production values on low budgets has enabled independent films like Juno to **find mainstream success**.

1. Find at least two examples of independent film companies in the UK.
2. Find at least two examples of independent productions which have secured mainstream success at the box office.

## Marketing and promotion



Film posters use different strategies to market a film to a target audience

- Studio films are 'hyped' up by the companies that produce them.
- **Cross-platform** strategies are used to appeal to a full range of potential audiences. The James Bond film *Spectre* used a marketing method which included:
  - An official website for the film, produced by Sony Pictures
  - A **viral** campaign, using **teasers** and trailers on YouTube with associated **hashtags** (#spectre) as well as mobile games and apps like *James Bond 007: World of Espionage*.
  - Adverts or interviews with the stars of the film in the print media (newspapers and magazines), including feature articles about the film, along with posters and billboards advertising the film.
  - Press releases announcing the production of the film, and then the film release
  - Theatrical and TV trailers
  - Actors on talk shows to promote the film, for example the *Spectre* stars on *The Graham Norton Show*
  - The use of **merchandise** and official products to promote the film. Accessories like *Spectre* wallets and notebooks, collector's items like *Spectre* jewellery and promotional artwork.
- This cross-platform marketing can be driven by **word of mouth** as more and more people talk about it.
- This makes the film more attractive to potential viewers who might feel they will be missing out, if they don't watch it.
- Social media buzz reflects this word of mouth and most promotion will use a specific hashtag for marketing campaigns.

## Independent film promotion

- Independent films **rely heavily on critic reviews** in newspapers, magazines or online publications that specialise in independent film.
- **Prizes from film festivals** help attract potential audiences and can increase the amount of cross-platform media coverage a film can achieve.
- Like studio films, most independent films will have **official websites, press releases, trailers and teasers**.
- Independent films will not normally have merchandise or television adverts to promote the film, these films will rely more heavily on word of mouth and social media.

## Regulation

The **BBFC rating symbols** used for film industry regulation



The film industry in the UK is regulated by the **British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)**. The BBFC is responsible for classifying films that have a cinema and DVD release.

The BBFC uses published Classification **Guidelines** for certain age ranges, ensuring that the content of the film is age appropriate and that children or young people do not see films that are unsuitable for them.

The BBFC Classification Guidelines are based on regular research with the public and updated every 4-5 years. The research involves more than 10,000 people from across the UK, including teenagers. The Classification Guidelines are available on the BBFC website.

<https://www.bbfc.co.uk/about-classification/classification-guidelines>

The classifications are: (see appendix on the next page for guidelines)

U – Suitable for all

PG – Parental Guidance

12A – Only used for films shown in cinemas and suitable for 12 years and over. However, people younger than 12 may see a 12A so long as they are accompanied by an adult

12 – Video release suitable for 12 years and over

15 – Suitable for only 15 years and over

18 – Suitable only for adults

Occasionally film classifications create controversy.

When *The Dark Knight* was released, some film critics thought it was too violent for children.

This was a problem for the film's production company, Warner Bros., as the film was based on the DC Comic franchise, Batman, which is popular with younger audiences.

The BBFC gave the film a 12A certification meaning children under the age of 12 could see the film if accompanied by an adult.

Many commentators felt this rating was inappropriate given the film's tone and content, however it remained a 12A throughout its theatrical run.

**A film is only reclassified if the company who owns it submits it to the BBFC for a new classification.**

1. Find the BBFC rating for the following films: *Avengers Endgame* (2019), *Joker* (2019), *Little Women* (2019).
2. For each of the film, refer to the guidelines to explain why the film was awarded such a certificate by the BBFC (You will need to visit the website – one example is given on the next page)
3. Read this article titled *Where have all the 18 certificate films gone?*

<https://www.denofgeek.com/movies/where-have-all-the-18-certificate-films-gone/>

According to the article, what factors have played a key role in the dwindling number of films with a 18 certificate rating?

**NOW, take the BBC Bitesize test to check your understanding!**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9hrwxs/test>

The management of content against a set of rules or guidelines to primarily protect vulnerable audiences.



- Applies only to cinema releases.
- Films under this category are considered to be unsuitable for young children. Cinemas in the United Kingdom are only permitted to supply tickets to films in this category to children under the age of 12 if they are accompanied by an adult aged 18 or over.
- May contain mild language (frequent/aggressive use may result in the work being passed at a higher category) or sex/drug references.
- May contain moderate violence if justified by context (e.g. fantasy).
- May contain infrequent very mild language.
- May contain very mild sex references and mild violence, if justified by the context.
- Films under this category do not have limitation on the foul language that is used.
- Portrayals of illegal drug misuse are generally allowed, and explicit sex references along with detailed sexual activity are also allowed.
- Very strong, gory, and/or sadistic violence is usually permitted.
- May contain mature themes, hard drugs, (frequent) strong language, strong violence and strong sex references, and nudity without graphic detail.
- Sexual activity may be portrayed but without any strong detail.
- Sexual violence may be shown if discreet and justified by context.
- Use of very strong language may be permitted based on frequency and how they are used, as well as contextual justification.
- May contain adolescent themes, discrimination, soft drugs, moderate language, moderate violence, sex references and nudity.
- Sexual activity may be briefly and discreetly portrayed.
- Sexual violence may be implied or briefly indicated.
- Use of strong language may be permitted based on frequency and how they are used, as well as contextual justification.

# JOKER (2019)

► Home ► Releases ► JOKER

## JOKER (2019)

15

- **Type:** Feature
- **Approx. Running minutes:** 119
- **Release dates:** 04/10/2019
- **Ratings Info:** strong bloody violence, language
- **Genre(s):** Drama
- **Director(s):** Todd Phillips
- **Cast includes:** Joaquin Phoenix, Zazie Beetz, Robert De Niro, Frances Conroy, Brett Cullen, Marc Maron
- **Summary:** JOKER is a thriller in which an aspiring comedian becomes increasingly unstable after funding for his psychiatric support is curtailed.
- **Cut:** All known versions of this work passed uncut.

## Ratings info

**Ratings info publication date:** 24/09/2019

**Note:** The following text may contain spoilers

JOKER is a thriller in which an aspiring comedian becomes increasingly unstable after funding for his psychiatric support is curtailed.

### Violence

Scenes of strong violence include stabbings and shootings, with accompanying bloody injury detail.

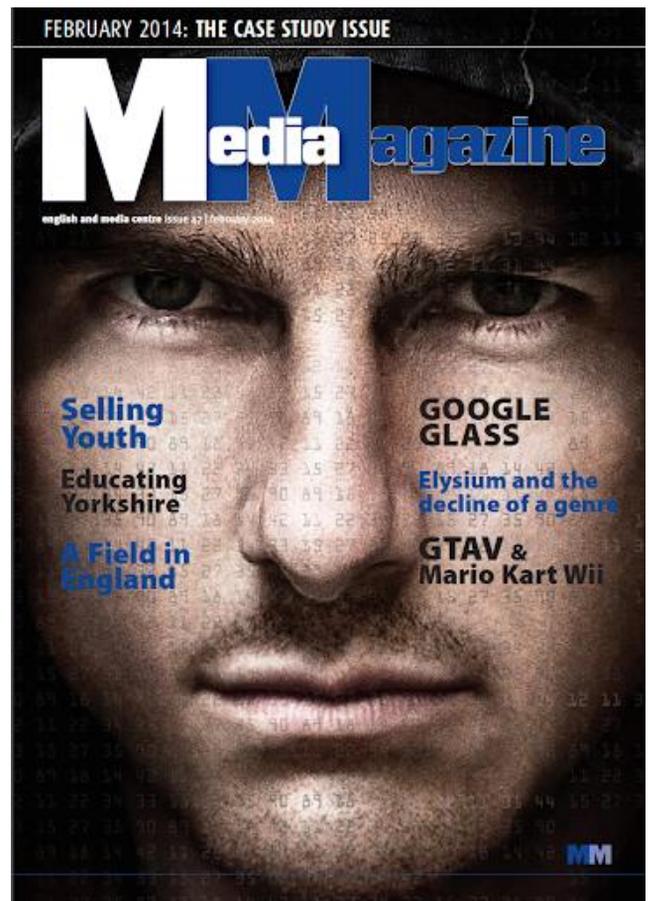
### Language

There is strong language ('f\*\*k') throughout, as well as milder terms such as 'prick', 'asshole' and 'shit'.

There are some briefly glimpsed images of models posing naked.

# Extra tasks for those who want to stretch further....

The following pages will target a more advanced level and use articles and tasks from the Media Magazine, published by the English and Media Centre.



From Media Magazine #69

# Deconstructing a Newspaper Front Page: Ownership and Bias

## 'March 29th, 2019: The Day Brexit Didn't Happen'

### Exploring the article

■ Read **March 29th, 2019: The Day Brexit Didn't Happen** (MM69), by Jonathan Nunns.

■ Answer the following questions, drawing on the article for information and ideas.

1. What are some of the insights that you can get about a particular news event by studying a front page? How does these apply specifically to Brexit?
2. The article talks about 'deconstructing' a front page. What do you understand by deconstructing? Use a dictionary to help you if need be. In what ways does deconstructing a text differ from analysing a text?
3. What are the different regulatory systems that govern broadcast and print news? What are the consequences of the different systems in terms of what newspapers are able to do and their influence? What are your own thoughts about the pros and cons of these different systems?
4. The article mentions four tabloid and mid-range newspapers: *The Sun*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail*. Based on what the article says, what do you understand to be the key differences and similarities between these publications. You should consider:
  - » Their ownership
  - » Their stance towards Brexit
  - » Their broader political affiliations
  - » Their readership
5. What are the agendas of the two broadsheet newspapers referred to: *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*. Are they different in any significant way to the tabloids and mid-range papers?
6. The article ends with a quotation from Umberto Eco: 'It's not the news that makes the newspaper, but the newspaper that makes the news.' To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? You might consider where you get your own news from, and how reliable, biased or politically motivated it might be.



# MARCH 29TH 2019

## THE DAY BREXIT DIDN'T HAPPEN

In a world of fast-paced news cycles, events and positions can change before the ink on the page is dry. Jonathan Nunns takes a snapshot of a day's reporting and analyses what the papers made of the day Brexit didn't happen.



The coverage of Brexit day was as muddy and unclear as Brexit itself. However, one issue stood out. We may think disinformation is a modern, internet-age phenomenon but newspapers have always expressed strong bias and spun stories to their owners' advantage.

**H**ow to write about Brexit? Amidst the turmoil, anything written, even taking into account all the available facts, could be reversed by midnight, let alone by the time you read this. There have been some writers (and politicians) for whom truth has been dismissed in favour of career and agenda. However, it is more difficult when trying to catch the actual authenticity of something constantly changing. Writing about Brexit is like walking across a crusted lava field. What may appear firm is not, so tread carefully.

One way to circumvent this is to take a snapshot, deconstruct it and see what you learn. Where did things stand on March 29th? This was the day, as the then Prime Minister, Theresa May reminded the nation, Britain was due to leave the EU. How was the big (non) event covered by the newspapers? By this means, it may be possible to provide fruitful analysis that doesn't become outdated before the ink dries.

### News in Context

UK TV and Radio news are different (in more than the obvious ways) from the coverage provided in print. Broadcast media are regulated by OFCOM, (The Office of

Communications) a quango responsible for regulating communications in the UK. They require that broadcasters provide impartial/balanced coverage. No such rules apply to newspapers, which are allowed, as far as libel law will permit, to spin the news as they see fit. They are regulated by IPSO (The Independent Press Standards Organisation), a self-regulatory body criticised by some as toothless since it was set up and is run by the industry it scrutinises. For these reasons, the press acts more as a mouthpiece for the views and agendas of their proprietors than TV news ever does. The CEOs of the UK's news networks may have agendas to push, but their regulator largely prevents them.

For this reason, despite financial losses and declining circulation, newspapers remain much sought after by the rich and powerful. To own a

newspaper is to amplify your voice to a nationwide audience, an example of both hegemony and two step flow. To own a paper is to be an influencer, and influence has value beyond money. Newspapers aim to shape events by influencing the actions of those in power. No democratic government can be oblivious to their representation in the press, so policy may be changed to deliver coverage conducive to the re-election of a politician or party.

### Extra, Extra, Read All About It! The Redtops do Brexit

Rupert Murdoch's *The Sun* stoked the anti-EU campaign that fed Brexit, complaining endlessly about the alleged undermining of Britain by Europe. Unsurprising, since as a proponent of unchecked capitalism, Murdoch had been on a lifelong quest to remove regulations/rights that obstructed his companies gaining maximum influence and profit. This naturally put the bureaucratic EU directly in his way, so Murdoch applied *The Sun's* influence to secure a UK withdrawal. If you doubt this, take a look at the similar agendas of his Trump-supporting American network, Fox News.

*The Sun's* March 29th headline urges MP's to support May in what would become the third failed



Writing about Brexit is like walking across a crusted lava field. What may appear firm is not, so tread carefully.

attempt to get her Brexit deal through parliament. With support hinging on the votes of the Northern Irish DUP, the writers created a characteristically pun-filled front page.

'Come on Arlene' ran the headline, intertextually referencing the 80's hit, Come on Eileen, by Dexy's Midnight Runners. The nod is one of the primary indicators of the readership. Few under forty-five would recognise a song seldom heard today but huge in the 80s. To emphasise the link, the pre-heading played on the band's name to add topicality, punning with 'Brexy's Midnight Runners'.

With an older C2 to E demographic, *The Sun's* pro-Brexit stance was culturally on message and consistent with the ideology of their earlier splashes such as 'EU dirty rats' and 'See EU Later!'.

Compared to the pro-Conservative *Sun*, the Labour-supporting, anti-Brexit *Daily Mirror* is a rarity in a UK press dominated by Brexit-supporting, right-of-centre titles. On Brexit day, the paper took a muted tone. The cover featured only brief reference to Brexit/May's stalled deal, running instead with a royal story and a splash on an old story, the unsolved murder years earlier of the presenter, Jill Dando. The writers may have anticipated Brexit-fatigue in their demographic and avoided leading on it. There are questions about *The*

*Mirror's* anti-Brexit stance. Their owners, the renamed Reach Group, purchased Richard Desmond's right-wing *Express* titles months before, leaving the group with both the pro-Labour/anti-Brexit *Mirror* titles and the enthusiastically Conservative/UKIP/pro-Brexit *Express* titles. Which begs the question as to what the political stance of the group actually is? Currently it is shouting at itself, supporting both sides of Brexit from within the same stable.

### Shock Horror! How the Mid-market Tabloids Handled Brexit Disappointment

Reach's *Daily Express* ran with 'Darkest Hour For Democracy' superimposed across an image of Parliament overshadowed by storm clouds. Reversing the coverage by its *Mirror* stablemate, *The Express* ran with Brexit as the splash and the Dando story in support, reflecting the differing political orientations within a demographic otherwise similar to that of *The Mirror*.

*The Daily Mail* had been renowned for its contempt for Europe under the stewardship of veteran editor,

Conservative and Brexiteer, Paul Dacre. That positioning had been successful for the owner, the 4th Viscount Rothermere, whilst Brexit could be spun as a success. Once political deadlock set in, Dacre's position became untenable and Geordie Greig from the *Mail on Sunday* was rotated in as a more moderate voice to replace him. Hence the *Mail's* coverage was not what might have been expected. Instead of 'no deal' and 'hard-Brexit', the paper ran with 'One Last Chance', a reference to its newly-minted support for May and a slightly softer Brexit. The splash ran over a low-angle of Big Ben showing 11pm, the moment Brexit was meant to happen. The softened position reflected the proprietor and editor's thinking that a hard-Brexit stance was no longer as effective in retaining their readership of older C1s and C2s as awareness grew that Brexit was going badly wrong.

### Press Ganged! The Broadsheets and the Non-event

The anti-Brexit, centre-left *The Guardian*, the only independently owned national UK title, ran with coverage that reflected a title that did not have to obey the demands of a proprietor. Brexit was indirectly mentioned in 'May Tries To Buy Time As Ministers Say: Go Now', a reflection of their view that the

To own a newspaper is to amplify your voice to a nationwide audience, an example of both hegemony and two step flow. To own a paper is to be an influencer and influence has value beyond money.

PM was weakened by the failure to deliver Brexit. The core demographic of educated, public sector, B and C1s might be expected to sympathise with the anti-Conservative/anti-Brexit position. The nuancing of the cover allowed the title to appear impartial in its coverage whilst speculating on the race for the PM's job.

It was left to the pro-Conservative/pro-Brexit *The Daily Telegraph* to headline with genuine disappointment and disillusionment with the Brexit non-event. Running with both a splash and op-ed on the cover, *The Telegraph* ran with the polysemic 'Day of Reckoning', over a shot of stereotypically older, white Brexiteers assembling for a pro-leave march.

Beneath, for the op-ed, ran a more sinister heading 'Champagne celebrations have been replaced by the bitter taste of betrayal': the first steps towards a narrative that blames not the concept of Brexit for the failure but politicians who can be made responsible for 'dropping the ball' on the 'otherwise

excellent' Brexit project? This outlook reflects the agenda of the proprietors, the billionaire Barclay brothers, who are arch deregulators, running their businesses from a helipad-equipped castle on their own private island.

### Scoop?

The coverage of Brexit day was as muddy and unclear as Brexit itself. However, one issue stood out. We may think disinformation is a modern, internet age phenomenon but newspapers have always expressed strong bias and spun stories to their owners' advantage. As the Italian postmodernist Umberto Eco commented, 'It's not the news that makes the newspaper, but the newspaper that makes the news.'

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# Do you want to conduct more independent research? Complete the following.

## Selecting two newspapers to study

The BBC publishes all of the UK's leading newspapers' front pages every day at [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs/the\\_papers](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs/the_papers).

- Visit the web site and select two newspaper front pages that particularly interest you.
- Before you begin to deconstruct the front pages, you are going to research each publication. (Searching your newspaper on Wikipedia should give you a good overview of this information.) You need to make a factfile on each that includes the following:
  - » Is it a tabloid or a broadsheet, or somewhere in between (a mid-range newspaper)? Is the distinction to do with the size of the publication (the tabloid format is smaller than the broadsheet one), or is it to do with a typically tabloid or broadsheet approach to news?
  - » Political leanings – is the paper broadly left or right wing? Do they give support to a particular political party? Do they express strong views about particular issues? Do they campaign for any issues?
  - » Readership – what is the demographic of the newspaper's readership? You might think in terms of age, social class, gender, ethnicity and so on.
  - » Ownership – who and what can you find out about the company or individual who owns this publication? What else do they own? What other interests might they have?

## Comparing coverage

- Now look at the front pages of your chosen newspapers on any given day.
  - » What do you notice about the stories they have decided to cover?
  - » How much space is given to different categories of stories e.g. political, UK, global, health, education, entertainment, celebrities etc.? What might this reveal about how the newspapers might be trying to affect public opinion?

## Look more closely

- How does the language used in the headlines, standfirsts and captions differ across the front pages (this is especially interesting when the same lead story is covered across more than one paper)? What might this reveal about the attitude of the paper towards the subject being covered?
- Look at the images selected – does the headline or caption anchor the meaning; is the meaning possibly just an interpretation of the image? Has the image been deliberately constructed and if so in what ways and with what aims?
- Write a comparison of the two front pages you have studied or, if you're craving some production work, make a vlog sharing what you have learned from your research.

# Theory: The Impact of Hegemony on the Media you Consume

## Exploring the article

- Read the theory drop article, *Hegemony (MM65)*, by Claire Pollard.
- Answer the following questions, drawing on the article for information and ideas.
  1. According to the article, what is hegemony? What are its consequences for Western society? Why does the article's writer find it such an interesting concept to apply to media texts?
  2. Which two 'behaviourist' models for analysing the effect of the media does the the article identify? Why does it find these models inadequate for explaining the effect of the media?
  3. The 'uses and gratification' model of media effects is in binary opposition to behaviourist models. What does the article identify as the problem with either of these binary models?
  4. How is hegemony perpetuated in the media? What are its consequences for representation?
  5. What is 'pluralism'? Why does it offer a meaningful challenge to hegemony. Do you think that pluralism is both desirable and possible?
  6. The article ends by referencing the 'Legally Black' campaign, in which activists replaced images of white actors in film posters with black actors. Some examples are displayed alongside the article. What do you think about the posters? In what way might they challenge hegemony?

The Theory Drop  
The Theory Drop

# Hegemony

## What is Hegemony?

Hegemony is basically the idea that the media continually reproduces images of a dominant group as superior or powerful. In Western society, the dominant group is middle class white males and because the media are predominantly produced by middle class white males, they tend to represent middle class white males as superior. And the rest of society – working class, BAME, LGBT, disabled, female – as less powerful or inferior. But the key point about hegemony is that it is so subtle that arguably the white guys making the media don't even realise they are doing it, and nobody challenges it; and thus the established hierarchies in society that are constantly reflected back to us in the media become the accepted norm. This is what theorists such as Antonio Gramsci and later, Noam Chomsky, meant by saying the media 'manufactures consent'.

I like to teach Hegemony because in the messy relationship between the media and society, it's the theory I most agree with. I always see it as offering

a chance to think about the current *status quo* – where we are now – in terms of how audiences interact with or are influenced by the media. It can also be seen as part of a continuum: a long line of developments in audience theory that stretch back to the beginnings of mass media.

## Behaviourism: The 'Original' Audience Theory

With every new form of media comes a wave of panic about the 'effects' it will have on the individual and society. Many of you will be familiar with the Magic Bullet theory – certainly it's a fave with my own students from GCSE to A2. It's the very simple idea that the media fires messages into our brains; that we are passive consumers of the media who believe everything we are told. Similar to this is the Hypodermic Needle theory; that media messages are injected into our bloodstream. Both of these ideas are 'Behaviourist' or 'passive audience' theories – simply put, the media have a direct impact on our behaviour. Most of us would probably agree that this idea of media

consumers as almost lobotomised zombie-people reacting to or copying what we see in the media is both patronising and utterly ridiculous; and yet it's still pulled out from time to time to deflect from more serious issues in society. For example, Donald Trump this year insisted that violent video games and films were to blame for the high school shooting in Florida, rather than acknowledge that the problem might be with the America gun laws. This tragedy subsequently inspired the March For Our Lives movement where thousands of high school students marched in Washington DC to call for gun reform. So not quite the passive, docile consumers that gun-loving Trump would have us believe.

## Uses and Gratifications

As the media became more commonplace, 'active audience' theories developed. Many of you will have studied Maslow's Needs and Motivation theory, but the GCSE Media big-hitter is Uses and Gratifications. Mostly attributed to Blumler and Katz (although, as the media evolves, so

# HEGEMONY

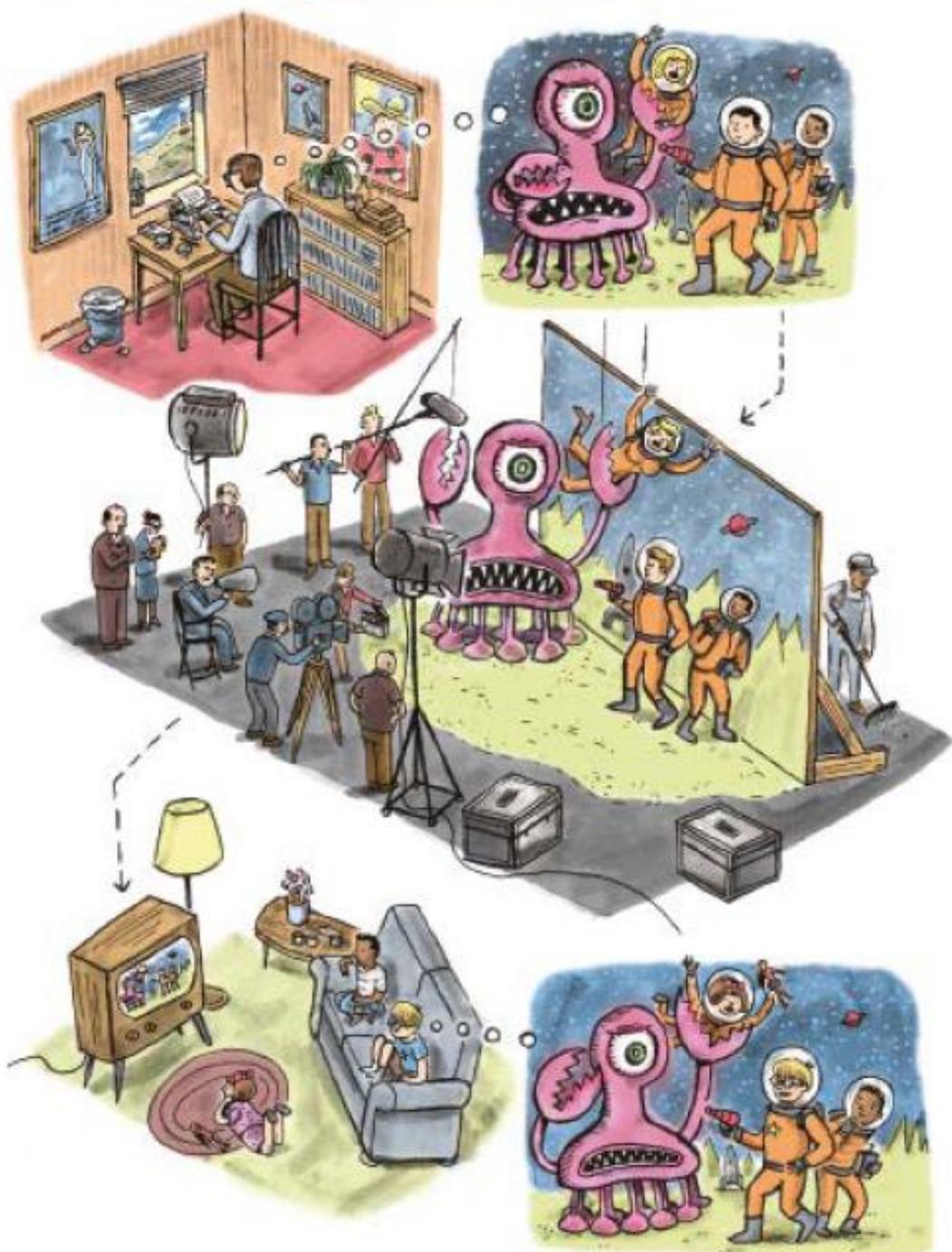


Illustration Tom Zahno



Legally Black's recreations of famous movie posters were spotted online by advertising activists Special Patrol Group who distributed them across the capital



does the theory – see the Wikipedia entry on Uses and Gratifications for the full evolution) the theory suggests that audiences have control over the media they consume – they pick and choose different media for various needs (uses) and desires (gratifications). This is the antithesis of the magic bullet theory, with the consumer in the driving seat sifting through the available media, rejecting and selecting based on what we like and what we want. Much better! I feel powerful now.

These two theories are in binary opposition to each other. I often ask my classes to choose a side, decide whether they think audiences are active or passive. But it's a trick question. The truth about how audiences and the media interact, lies in the massive grey area between the two.

### A Corrupt System

So that's an abbreviated summary of some of the more popular and easier to understand audience theories. Let's get back to the messy business of Hegemony. Women make up more than half the population of this country yet only 13% of working film directors in the UK are women. BAME people make up 14% of our population but according to Ofcom, the regulator for the UK broadcast media, only 12% of employees in the industry and only 6% at senior levels where decisions about what stories get told and how they get told are made. Disabled people are grossly underrepresented. It's a problem. And what these stats don't tell us is about the backgrounds of those people.

Research carried out by the

Sutton Trust found that over half (54%) of today's top journalists were educated in private schools. This is beyond disproportionate when you consider only 7% of the population attend private schools in the first place. A further 33% of journalists went to selective grammar schools, while just 14% attended comprehensive schools, which now educate almost 90% of children.

So it's not easy for the average, lower middle or working class person to get a job in the media, let alone the underprivileged, transgender, ethnic minority or immigrants. And when the lives of these groups are depicted in the news, written into stories or framed by directors, styled by production designers, cast by casting agents in the UK media industry, representations are likely to be constructed from a

Behaviourism/Passive audience  
(Magic bullet, Hypodermic needle)

Uses and Gratifications/Active audience

Images like this are immediately eye catching – they do seem weird to most people and if they do to you too, it's not because you're racist, it's because the media is.

middle class, usually white, privileged, and often male, perspective.

If the people who decide what gets filmed, published, reported, screened etc. attended private school from a young age or grammar school as teenagers, their understanding of British society and culture is immediately cut in two as they interact only with the privileged people, the dominant people. How accurate can their understanding of the rest of the population be?

And how do we consent to this system? Well, unless we actively fight against it or complain about it or call it out, we are consenting to it. If we don't trust a politician because he or she doesn't 'look the part', or if

we don't challenge the ideas fed to children from a very young age that doctors, pilots and astronauts, are all posh white dudes, and cute dollies and Barbies are white, blonde and blue eyed with wonderful friends then we are consenting to a corrupt system that prevents us from developing more varied, plural depictions in the media.

### Pluralism

The flipside to hegemony, its nemesis, the Black Panther to its Klaw, is 'Pluralism' – the idea that in order to change the way we all think we need to see many and varied representations of people from different social groups, rather than the repeated stereotypical ones. The single best example of the need for pluralism is the poster campaign carried out earlier this year by Legally Black. I almost don't even need to make the point here as they did it so perfectly. Images like this are immediately eye catching – they do seem weird to most people and if they do to you too, it's not because you're racist, it's because the media is. As long as the media is created and dominated by privileged white people then we will never get the pluralism of our society reflected in the media we consume.

Claire Pollard is editor of *MediaMagazine*.

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## Cultivation Theory

Gerbner's 'Cultivation theory' sits nicely between the polar opposites of the passive and active audience. This theory suggests that although we do pick and choose the media we consume, we are not oblivious to the effects of repeated ideas or images which are constantly reproduced and, over a period of time, can subtly affect our views.

A friend's mum who is an RE teacher in a rural British county once told me that the children she teaches are 'terrified' of Muslims. In a school where there were very few Muslims in a fairly affluent and mostly white area, their only experiences and understanding of the Islamic faith come from stories they see in the news: stories of violence and extremism. This cultivates a fear and a lack of understanding that will, in almost all cases, influence their opinions of Muslim individuals they encounter in daily life. This is still a 'behaviourist' theory but more subtle than the Magic Bullet Theory.

Research carried out by the Sutton Trust found that over half (54%) of today's top journalists were educated in private schools. This is beyond disproportionate when you consider only 7% of the population attend private schools in the first place.

## Researching hegemony

- Take a close look at the main Tom Zaino illustration in the article. It uses a classic Hollywood genre to highlight how much of the media we consume is conceived, produced and controlled by white, middle-class males. (Notice how women and BAME people are present but marginalised.)
- Choose a film or TV show that you know well and that you think shows hegemony in action (so representation replicates power structures in society at large). Use Zaino's structure to draw a diagram of who has shaped this media or film text. You should research its production details online, beginning with its conception:
  - » Whose idea was it?
  - » Who wrote the script or original storyline?
  - » If necessary, do further research online (Wikipedia is generally a very good source) to see if you can find out the gender, ethnicity and social class of the people you have identified. You might be able to find out about their education to help you: did they attend a grammar or private school? Were they university educated? If so, did they attend a Russell Group university? Did they attend before the 1990s, when fewer people went to university? What were their parents' jobs?
  - » Do the same research into the director and, if you can find it out, the commissioner at the channel.
- Finally, look again at the text itself.
  - » Does it show the dominant group (white, middle class, male) to be more powerful or even just more visible in the texts?
  - » How are women depicted?
  - » Are there plural representations of gender, class and race or do they rely on stereotypes that could cultivate negative ideas about different social groups over time?

## Further reading

- For further reading, have a look at this profile of Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – in the [New Yorker](#). He says 'blackness is always seen through the lens of whiteness – the lens of how white people can profit from that moment'. He relates this to *12 Years a Slave* which is the story of black slaves, made by black people but in a white system with a white paying audience in mind.
- Glover's comedy drama series, *Atlanta*, is created by black people for a black audience. Try and track down a few episodes and watch them. Are the representations in *Atlanta* more positive or plural as a result? Do you think the fact that it was made for FX (a subsidiary of Fox in the U.S.) affects the content?

You can also find out more about media contexts in the next task which focuses on one of the A Level set texts.  
Why not simply read this final article?

# TIDE TO THE KITCHEN SINK

If you want to understand a place and time, then look at their advertising. It is as good an indication of society's values, ideologies and aspirations as anything else. In this article, Jonathan Nunns examines a 1955 advertisement for Tide washing powder to see what it reveals about the socio-political context.

Advertising is, by nature, a condensed form of communication intended to imprint messages upon the psyche of its' demographic in seconds. Even in the past when methods of persuasion were less evolved, landing a powerful message quickly and memorably was paramount. This has been so for at least a hundred years, during which the mass media has marched, (largely) to the beat of advertising's drum. Funded by and therefore serving the needs of paymasters in the advertising industry, the media has sought to make itself a comfortable ideological home for the advertisements that jostle for space between and within the TV shows, articles, web pages and social media streams that make up their other content.

EDUQAS Media Studies features as a core text a Procter and Gamble washing powder advertisement from 1955, 'Tide's Got What Women Want'.

Understanding any text involves the skills of textual deconstruction. The vibrancy and excitement of the reds, the purity of the whites, the simplicity of language and direct mode of address; these things are important and will comprise a core element of your examination analysis. However, context remains king. Deep and thoughtful insight can only be had from understanding the historical moment, outlook and zeitgeist that determined the style/ content of the message. That is the focus of this article.



The new America sought to reward returning servicemen with 'homes fit for heroes'. These new homes were the 'castles' that American husbands could be king of, with a dutiful wife and adoring children.

## What (American) Women Want?

It was certainly a successful campaign; ad agency D'Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowles' campaign helped make Tide the market leader for years to come. As an American ad, it was calibrated to reflect the aspirations and attitudes of the time and place. America had recently emerged from the trauma of World War Two and before that had suffered the economic devastation of the Great Depression. Emerging into the post war period, a new America was envisaged by the politicians and CEOs of the time. Stability and prosperity would be the foundation of this new USA.

Like the UK, wartime America had accommodated the enlistment of much of its male workforce into the military, by encouraging women out of the traditional homemaking roles expected of them and into the workplace. Women were trained to take on roles previously seen as for men only. Hence the famous 1940's propaganda poster 'Rosie the Riveter'.

After the war, policy makers feared that women, having tasted economic independence, would be reluctant to move aside for men expecting to resume their previous dominant socio-economic role. Film noir represented this in the character of the femme fatale, reflecting the fears of men who saw empowered, independent women as a threat to their economic and social entitlement.

In response, a concerted effort was made, spearheaded by the media, to force women from the workplace and back into the home, to take up their erstwhile roles as wives and mothers. This drive was further energised by other forces of the era. The new America sought to reward returning servicemen with 'homes fit for heroes' which were actually the mass-produced 'little boxes made of ticky-tacky'; huge suburbs that soon sprawled from the congested cities. These new homes were the 'castles' that American husbands could be king of, with a dutiful wife and adoring children. Each of these homes could be filled with the new consumer goods entering the market, making for a handy confluence of interests between government and business. Women needed to be persuaded to make the home their aspirational focus and to define themselves by consumerism as primary spenders of their husband's incomes.

The image of the 'perfect' housewife embracing her box of Tide contains a deeper meaning. She was symbolically embracing her family/role in the world by literally embracing a domestic product, an Indexical Signifier of those values.

No wonder you women buy more **TIDE** than any other washday product!

**TIDE'S GOT WHAT WOMEN WANT!**

NO SOAP-NO OTHER SLUDS-NO OTHER WASHING PRODUCT KNOWN-WILL GET YOUR WASH AS **CLEAN AS TIDE!**

### ONLY **TIDE** DOES ALL THREE!

#### 1. World's **CLEANEST** wash!

Yes, Tide will get your wash cleaner than any other washing product! (Tide settles soap, removes lint, dirt and soap suds.) Its formula means Tide gets into fabrics faster than any other washing product!

#### 2. World's **WHITEST** wash!

It's a secret! In laundry water, Tide will get your whites, sheets, towels, white-cas, white-curtains, etc. soap or any other washing product bleaches!

#### 3. Actually **BRIGHTENS** colors!

These all mean washable colors in Tide. Wash all the world's cleaning power, Tide is your job... and actually brightens soap-dusted colors.



**TIDE** GETS CLOTHES CLEANER THAN ANY OTHER WASHDAY PRODUCT YOU CAN BUY!



The Tide campaign acts as a microcosm of a broader onslaught inflicted on American women in the 1950s enforcing conformity. As Laura Mulvey and Stuart Hall might have it, patriarchal domination of the American elite led to Male Gaze media that prioritised the interests of men.

## Time and Tide Wait for no Man

DMB&B's Tide campaign was, for a while, a successful attempt to turn back the clock on gender politics, redefining the idea of what the aspirational and successful American women should be. She would be trim and white, straight, concerned with her looks and eager to please her family and her man. Her focus would be domestic. Her success would be judged in terms of the perfection of that home and family. There she would find affirmation and fulfilment in the acceptance of her peers and the love of her family. The man might 'wear the trousers' and 'bring home the bacon' but she would fashion the perfect home.

Other female identities (gay, black, single, careerist etc.) were viewed as unacceptable in comparison to the ideal of the perfect wife and mother. Women were encouraged to view work as a stopgap on the way to marriage and motherhood. Those forced to work by circumstance or ambition were disdained as failures as true women.

In this climate of intense social pressure, the attitudes of Tide's *Got What Women Want* and similar ads of the era make sense. If women's fulfilment was to be found in the home and American industry enriched by their spending, then the image of the 'perfect' housewife embracing her box of Tide contains a deeper meaning. She was symbolically embracing her family/role in the world by literally embracing a domestic product, an Indexical Signifier of those values. Notice the love hearts fluttering, reinforcing the 'emotionality' expected in the stereotype of the 'perfect' woman. It reflects the perception that in her eyes and those of all who mattered, this product (and those like it), embodied the pathway to her success, and fulfilment.

Sexism and racism were common and much of the advertising of the day encouraged it. A woman who looked outside the home for fulfilment was un-American and selfish. Few ads featured women outside the house. Men were often absent, since their role was to be at work. The male in the home, when there, was expected to treat it as a haven. This was where he relaxed and his wife worked. Adverts such as the campaigns for Van Heusen clothing and Chase and Sanborn coffee (featuring a man spanking his wife for buying bad coffee) made clear who was expected to serve whom and the 'jokey' consequences of failure. Some ads made light of abuse, using straplines such as 'Have some fun, beat your wife tonight' with the 'funny' coda that he was actually being invited to beat her at bowling or some 'female' activity, such as cooking.

The Tide campaign acts as a microcosm of a broader onslaught inflicted on American women in the 1950s

enforcing conformity. As Laura Mulvey and Stuart Hall might have it, patriarchal domination of the American elite led to Male Gaze media that prioritised the interests of men. What was encoded was the need of the elite to control society, the intended decoded consumer response was to see the ideologies conveyed as normalised, natural and aspirational.

## Mother's Little Helpers

The pressure to conform drove the majority of American women into early marriage and domesticity, whether that suited them or not. However, there was a price. Many women wondered if, with family, house and consumer goods in place 'this was it'? Was serving others all that life had to offer? Not surprisingly, the consumption of

prescription anti-depressants amongst American women began to skyrocket. The boredom and social isolation of a domestic life took its toll. Women struggled to find the fulfilment which Tide and others promised.

This led, within a decade, to change. Educated women in particular began to coalesce around a movement that would seek to redefine gender politics and free women from the oppression of the 1950's. This movement would become Second Wave Feminism, creating a pathway to changes that would include legal entitlement to equal pay, birth control, abortion and anti-discrimination.

Currently, when *The Handmaid's Tale*, (Hulu, USA, 2017) looks like the manifesto for a second term Trump/Pence Presidency, the prospects for American women might seem grim. However, the Tide ad shows how much things have improved. We need to understand and learn from the past to make the future a more equal place. Ads contain no fundamental morality. It is 'the gaze' behind them that has the power. Control 'the gaze', control the message. The past may be set; the future is not. Is this the modern moral of Tide's sinister primary coloured time capsule?



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