

Eduqas A Level Unit 8D Close Study Products Student Workbook 2024 Exam Onwards

Paper 1 Section B Radio Woman's Hour & Have You Heard George's podcast

This is the Workbook for use with **EDUSITES Eduqas SET PRODUCTS UNIT 8D A Level MEDIA STUDIES**. All of the notes refer to the content of this unit of work. They are designed to help you create a useful set of notes to help you with understanding the ideas covered in this examination, to support you in your Home Learning and be a clear revision aid in your preparations for the final examinations that you are required to take. You need to always keep in mind the examination board Assessment Objectives that your work is to be assessed with.

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the theoretical framework of media, contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.
- Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media, including in relation to their contexts, to make judgements and draw conclusions.
- Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

Create products for intended audience and evaluate communication of meaning

- Demonstrate K&U of theoretical framework – *the Key concepts*
- Contexts of media products & production
- Analyse products by application of the framework/concepts/context

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Teacher's Standards

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Lesson 1

Set Products

The Radio set product requires awareness of the evolution of the radio industry in the age of podcasts and the way the industry construct their audience.

The nature of modern media requires consideration – the convergence of platforms and radio as part of global cultural industries desire to exploit new platforms such as podcasts and streaming services as well as the use of social media.

Useful research is into contemporary media institutions.

The close link between audience and radio products, especially in such a long running product as **Woman's Hour**, is one area for research to support understanding of the shifting relationship between society and its media products.

Clearly, the framework element requires the study of two products with different media platforms that represent two very **different ideas of organisation and production**.

We need to be aware as to how these influence and shape the products.

Each will require an exploration of modern media technologies and their influence on radio institutions. It will require consideration of each product as part of the cultural industries.

Clearly, the theoretical framework element of audience intersects with the study of visual codes and genre

crucial to analysing mode of address and techniques of persuasion and representation. We need to explore the way each product functions as a form of communication of ideas.

We need to consider niche audience and mainstream and how products address these. We need to consider how over time audience ideas, beliefs, and needs change and the way radio products reflect or shape these changes.

We need to consider how each show represents changes in the wider social and cultural ideas of gender and ethnicity and reflects **shifting patterns of audience consumption**. We need to consider the changes in the economic climate and the impact of technological change and audience access shown in each product.

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WOMAN'S HOUR requires awareness of developments in the media representation of women and the evolution of radio and the demand to target audience needs.

Useful research is the BBC as an institution that has evolved from its foundation in 1922 as a Radio only broadcaster into a major cultural element of the whole of the UK media and its place in a market dominated by commercially driven global media conglomerates. Audience theories of market segmentation are rich in ideas for your own research, as are the theoretical models such as Fandom – *Woman's Hour and Radio 4 have fiercely loyal followings* - and the models of *Silverstone and Livingston & Lunt as well as Maffesoli, Van Zoonen and Hall*

Have You Heard George's Podcast requires awareness of developments in the radio industry initiated by the concept/format of podcasting. The show also requires an understanding of the changing nature of UK society and attitudes towards representation of ethnicity requiring understanding of the evolution of radio's ability to target audience needs.

Useful research is the BBC evolving from its foundation in 1922 as a Radio only broadcaster into a major cultural element of UK media. Podcasting has clearly shaped the range of product the institution produces and the platforms for access. *BBC Sounds* is a key element here, enabling traditional scheduled broadcast and listen on demand. Audience theories are rich in ideas for your research, as are the theoretical models such as Fandom and the models of *Silverstone, Baym, Livingston & Lunt, Shirky as well as Maffesoli, hooks and Hall*.

Lesson 2

The BBC

The BBC is funded by a license fee that all households pay each year whether they watch BBC programmes or not. **This form of fund raising is called a *hypothecated tax*, meaning it can only be used by the government for one purpose** – in this case funding the BBC.

In September 2016 this was extended to downloads and access of BBC content through tablets, laptops, and phones.

This means BBC income is known and guaranteed each year. *They do not have to make popular programmes just to attract a big audience. They can afford to make*

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expensive projects without worrying if they will make a profit, they can make niche programmes that cater for a wider variety of tastes and interests that the commercial channels find unprofitable to cater for.

They can take risks without worrying they might fail to attract a large audience. They can nurture a show, not worrying if its first series attracts only a small audience.

The values of the BBC were set in place by Lord Reith in the 1920s and have remained unchallenged and unaltered ever since:

Educate, inform and entertain

A vital element of this is its provision of magazine style news shows, products central to BBC radio programming since its' inception in 1922.

The BBC has an international reputation for honesty and reliability in its reporting. This is because it is one of few impartial sources of news available to audiences in other countries during wars or those suffering under dictatorships. Its funding protects it from commercial pressures to 'dumb down' or government influence

Hesmondhalgh is a key figure in fostering the idea of the existence of what we term cultural industries and in exploring the forces that drive them and shape their output.

These institutions are powerful forces in our society both in terms of the numbers of people their ideas can reach and through the persuasive way ideas are presented.

Key in his research was that media producers take into consideration the fact that in cultural industries the commercial risk is high. This is because of the difficulty in predicting success.

As a result, media institutions find products based around already successful ideas such as familiar subject matter, the way the product is structured, the celebrities involved etc.

The way of minimising risk by investing in the repetition of products that have proven successful is what Hesmondhalgh refers to as formatting.

The significance of the licence fee is that whilst the BBC are freed from commercial pressures – *consider Seaton, Curran and Hesmondhalgh on the effects of these on media industries and institutions* – enabling them to broadcast programmes considered to have too small a potential audience – *the “niche” audience of Have You*

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Heard About George's Podcast, for example would struggle to find a place on commercial radio - they are bound by the imperative to provide value for money, to not be seen to be indulging in wasteful programming.

Accountability to license fee holders means that audiences feel that they are entitled to complain about programming they find goes against their values, usually the dominant hegemonic values of mainstream and conventional society.

The BBC has a thin line to tread between catering for diversity and avoiding alienating the larger audience.

Shows like *Woman's Hour* and *HYHAGP* are made up of unrehearsed, unadorned dialogue with controversial issues explored with a specific mode of address – *the audience is assumed to be educated, aware, concerned and prepared for controversial opinions, strong language and shocking or intimate issues explicitly discussed.*

Lesson 3

Woman's Hour

Woman's Hour is a daily magazine programme targeted at women. It was first broadcast in October 1946 on what was then called the BBC' Light Programme.

This Light Programme broadcast popular cultural programmes such as quizzes and panel shows and played popular music. It was a popular station with a wide audience and was active between 1945 and 1967 when the BBC revamped its platforms to come into line with the developing needs of the wider UK audience.

The changes – *prompted by the success of Pirate Radio stations attracting the youth audience* - created Radios 1-4 with each station charged with targeting different age groups and offering different types of entertainment or information deemed suitable to that groups needs and interests.

The early broadcasts had a very clear and distinct idea of what a woman's interests should be – focusing on cooking and family and seeing the audience as stay at home housewives able to listen to its output.

The first presenters were all men.

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Today programme has evolved to cover hard-hitting topics such as, domestic violence and equal pay, alongside features on the menopause and women's health and sexual well-being. The show attracts high profile guests such as Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey. and Hilary Clinton.

Today the presenters are younger women seen as relatable to the audience.

The show broadcasts every weekday from 10:00 till 11:00 and is available as a podcast and a weekly weekend omnibus edition.

Curran and Seaton's research findings that **commercial media companies are concerned with maximising profit and minimising financial risk** impact all aspects of media production from what gets made to the representations and ideas they contain.

One result of institutions pursuing profit is that it comes to dominate their output. This means that often institutions are unwilling to commit to shows targeting a niche audience or those that court possible controversy in the choice of subject matter.

Curran and Seaton argue that media products come to feel 'all the same'.

We see here the reasons why Woman's Hour can only be made by an institution that puts the need of the audience above matters of profit. The BBC remit to 'Educate, inform and Entertain' enables Radio 4 to make the programme unrestricted by conventional ideas or formats.

Clearly the show must maintain ratings and demonstrate that it is popular and relevant to those needs and those objectives. Such matters explain changes in presenters and the expansion into Late Night editions.

Media discussion and reporting influences the way the audience 'see' the world.

Agenda Setting Model: Giving a particular issue importance by appearing in the broadcast gives the event/issue prominence and relevance for the audience. **The selection shapes the ideas and values the audiences assume to be important in society**, and shapes their understanding of what should be their own values and concerns

Agenda Framing Model: focuses on the way the story is presented (*language used; images used; tone of voice; use of soundbeds etc*) which aligns the audience on how they think they should see the event/issue.

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For Woman's Hour you might consider the 'type' of presenter as constructing an idealised version of the audience – a role model and influencer.

The content is the BBC attempt to indicate issues of interests/concern to the female listener, thus shaping their ideas of femininity reinforced by the manner of presentation – approving; critical etc.

The institution is guided by its remit and the idea of matching and extending the diversity of the listening audience.

We understand gender through **discourse** – *the narrative and spheres of action presented in the media products we consume*. Van Zoonen holds that the media's repeated use of stereotypical images reinforces what are felt to be the dominant societal views. She feels media producers use these as they feel it offers greater chance for the commercial success of their products.

The model sees the discourse as following changes in societal ideas from era to era and culture to culture. They may only be understood by consideration of **context**.

She sees **women objectified by media products** – their bodies presented with value residing in being something to be looked at. Women's bodies are commodified. Thus, women in mainstream products do not need to be understood.

Shows such as woman's hour appear to present a 'safe space' for women to hear issues and ideas relevant to their own needs as women. The early years represented woman in a very specific role living in a patriarchal society, one shown to be confined to the domestic whilst men were presented in aggressive or heroic spheres of action. The current format and presentation show the evolution of a less constrained idea of femininity. The influence of Van Zoonen and ideas of fourth wave feminism are much more to the fore.

First broadcast in 2015, **Late Night Woman's Hour** is a spin-off from the long-established **Woman's Hour** that has been a staple of BBC Radio broadcasting since the 1940s.

Whilst **Woman's Hour** broadcasts Monday-Friday at 10:00 each morning, the **Late-Night** variant broadcasts once a month in a late Friday night slot. Whilst the original show broadcasts some challenging material, it was felt that the mid-morning audience

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would find some of the issues that the makers increasingly wished to tackle too sensitive for such a slot. There was concern at Radio 4 that its audience was aging (average Radio 4 listener is 56) and the station needed to produce programming appealing to a younger demographic.

A BBC Review charged Radio 4 Controllers to target an educated 35–54-year demographic.

Woman's Hour has, over the decades evolved from its initial quite parochial concerns and ideas of what women might find interesting (*the original shows were produced and presented by men!!!*) to a brand that has increasingly concerned itself with presenting ideas and opinions offering greater knowledge and understanding for its audience of the pressing social concerns of modern living.

The show most often adopts a presentational style based around interviews, debate, and discussion rather than the traditional journalist reporting used by Radio 4's magazine news shows *PM* and *Drive*

Lesson 4

Woman's Hour Audience

Reception theory there are **referred, negotiated and oppositional** understanding to the ideas in media products.

This involves understanding who the audience are and constructing a profile of the demographics and psychographics of this group.

From this we can make informed assessments of how they might respond to the style, content and tone of Woman's Hour. How far you believe the show reflects the way the educated, middle-aged, female audience are likely to think (most often we can assume that they align in taking the preferred reading presented by the influencer hosts).

The BBC considers the likely appeal of their output to their target audience. In this way we can apply Hall's ideas to the presenter, the format, the mode of address and the content.

You must take your selected broadcast and explore the evidence that indicates how the show does this.

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- Consider Barnett's interview style – the tone; her words; her appeal to the audience who feel she is relatable, so they want to agree with her (Blumler & Katz)
- Consider the content of the show – is it selected to be challenging or reinforcing of ideas the female audience have of themselves?

Intersectionality identifies the oppressive nature of the patriarchy that controls society and disadvantages many groups. **Intersectionality:** *the point where the interests and legitimate concerns of different 'outside', 'excluded' or marginalised groups meet*

There are differing modes of discrimination and privilege, of advantage and disadvantage. These might include *gender; ethnicity; caste; class; religion; disability; weight; appearance*

hooks holds it wrong to place women in one group. There are levels of oppression adding levels of disadvantage to that of biological identity (*poverty; ethnicity; class etc.*) A focus on the representation of women is not the struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression but part of a wider struggle to end the ideology of domination of any one group or faction.

The show is not overtly 'political' in the sense of having an ideology leaning to one political wing or having a specific agenda of change. The show sees its remit as offering a view of events and issues in society that have a direct impact or interest for women and their lives. Here we might link to the BBC remit – Educate; inform; entertain – and the recognition of the need to represent the culture and life of the more diverse UK society of today.

It should be becoming clearer that the BBC as a national institution has demands that shape its output. These are not the same as those shaping commercial organisations whose objective is profit.

These are currently that as well as delivering the Reithian concept of Educate, inform, entertain there must be clear evidence of the wider appeal of the output of the institution to the multicultural diversity of the UK in the twenty first century. This is in

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the form of specific channels targeting ethnic groups – *Asian Network* – or age groups – *Radio 1Xtra* – or interests – *Five Live Sports*. Sometimes these are shows within stations – Radio 4 hosts *Woman’s Hour* but also *Gardener’s Question Time* or *The Media Show* that cater to specific interest groups.

In looking at the set products – as this concept/understanding may be an obvious subject matter for an examination task – we must consider the ways each product can be seen/used as example of this.

For *Woman’s Hour* we may look at the journey from its early 1950s remit and values of seeing women as home makers whose focus was husband and children to modern fourth wave feminist ideas of women as career orientated and sharing family and relationship roles and responsibilities with their partners.

For the *HYHGP?* we may see the podcast as evidence for the changing role of the BBC in a digitally convergent world where access to platforms and listening habits have shifted.

In some ways both offer ideas of what might be seen to be relatively niche demographics and how the institution attempts to meet the remit in the way it constructs its appeal to their needs.

The BBC has been accused of being too white and middle-class. There is certainly evidence that the audience for BBC radio stations such as Radio 4 is an aging one with the average age of audience for BBC Radio 4 of just over 55.

Radio 1 targets 15–24-year-olds.

Radio Five Live targets 25-54.

In 2017, an Ofcom report stated that there was too little diversity at reported that young people and ethnic minorities felt particularly alienated from BBC content.

In 2021, the corporation began a Diversity and Inclusion Plan

Part of which involves commissioning content that “authentically and accurately represents diversity in the UK”.

The BBC is considered a cultural institution. One of the key parts of the mainstream institutions that reflect, shape and evolve the sense of UK identity.

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Globally, the organisation is viewed as one of the most reliable and trustworthy sources of news and of events, something particularly important to the brand in the age of 'fake news', enabling its high-quality products to be exported globally.

If we apply **Hesmondhalgh and Curran and Seaton**, we can see that *Woman's Hour* might be deemed too 'niche' and too narrow in its demographic appeal for commercial radio broadcasters whose focus is always on attracting numbers.

The show has largely female contributors, is predominantly made up of unadorned dialogue (*speech without music, sound effects etc.*). These make it a harder 'listen' than news items on commercial stations where news is most often played over sound pads (think *Newsbeat*) with predominantly male presenters.

The content of the show is at times controversial, and not an 'easy' listen. Commercial stations are wary of material that listeners may find offensive or troubling causing them to switch stations. They prefer the less challenging shows.

The mode of address can be seen to be one anticipating that its audience are well educated and comfortable with specialised vocabulary. *Woman's hour* places certain demands on listeners who are assumed to be focused on the broadcast rather than more casual listeners.

The BBC Radio 4 Audience

- **Reach:** 11.55 million adults listen to Radio 4 each week, 21.2% of the population.
- **Hours:** Radio 4 has a loyal audience. The average Radio 4 listener tunes in for 11 hours a week
- **Share:** Radio 4's share of listening is 12.3%, or one in every 8 minutes of all radio consumed.
- **Genre:** News attracts the largest number of listeners at 10.34m per week, while factual reaches 9.41m. Drama attracts 6.96 million average listeners a week
- **Online:** There are 5.4m million iPlayer requests for Radio 4 programmes weekly,
- **Demographic:** (49% male / 51% female). **The average age of the Radio 4 listener is 56 years old and skews towards an older audience.**

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The Radio 4 target audience is 35-54 ABC1 (commonly termed 'replenishers') and makes up 24% of the audience. The station continues to have an upmarket bias – 75% of those tuning in fall into the ABC1 demographic.

Lesson 5

Woman's Hour Presenters

There are media products that are inextricably linked with their stars - Cumberbatch as Holmes, for example - and this extends beyond actors and characters they play in fictional narratives

Non-fiction shows are as liable to such associations – Paul Hollywood in *Bake-off*; Sugar with *The Apprentice*.

In radio we associate shows with the presenter – Radio 1's *Breakfast Show* was for many years as much about the personality of Chris Moyles as the music. Equally shows centre on the personality of presenters who craft the content around themselves. On Radio 2, for many years the *Breakfast* slot was based on Terry Wogan's personal appeal to the audience. When Chris Evans replaced him there were protests and concern that the *Breakfast* would be 'ruined'. Evans made the show his own based on a very different appeal. He too has now been replaced by Zoe Ball with a very different take on the format.

With its many admirers and a loyal audience of over 3.5 million regular listeners, *Woman's Hour* still carries some sense of a brand aimed at a very specific range of women: middle aged-elderly; educated; white.

In terms of values, these lie somewhere in the middle territory of being liberal minded enough to care about the plight of women around the world, concerned about LGBT+ issues, prepared to discuss in a frank manner issues of women's health and hygiene – recent shows have covered FGM; vaginal discharge – and an interest in an arts centered culture – recent shows covered female rappers and the MOBO. *Woman's Hour* is associated with a well-defined 'type' of audience.

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Gwyneth Williams, controller of Radio 4, lavished praise on the programme saying: “It is hard to imagine Radio 4 without Woman’s Hour. For 70 years the programme has been celebrating women and focusing on the issues that most affect their lives. It is part of our radical tradition, and I am proud of the fresh voices, originality and alternative perspective that Woman’s Hour offers our listeners every day.” The show remains, according to presenter Emma Barnett, “the Rolls Royce of Radio 4 ... It’s a programme that brings out the best in people as they know they have the space to share deep feelings with an incredibly engaged audience hanging on their every word,” she said. “It’s listeners, male and female, trust it implicitly and the female gaze through which it reflects the world is invaluable and unique.”

The nature of a show is often bound up with the presenter. The choice of presenter in a magazine format such as *Woman’s Hour* is one subject to careful construction.

The presenter must ‘fit’ the ideas of the target demographic of how they ‘see’ the presenter and the presenter as idealized image of themselves or of a relatable figure. They are influencers, their ideas and values communicated in their mode of address and their house style of the show.

In the case of *Woman’s Hour* the elements are to be approachable, to be someone the audience would wish to engage with. To carry the sense of the ideas of the audience, to understand the audience so not ‘talk down’ or patronize them yet make the topics accessible to all the potential listeners (though these are deemed to be middle-aged 35-55; educated; ABC1 for the most part).

The presenters can be seen to embody the ideas and values of the show, for the audience to see themselves represented in these presenters. The style has moved from the ‘instructional’ of the early decades – *How to Hang Your husband’s Suit* – to one that is more one of like-minded friend as interested as you are in discovering more about the guests or the issues of the day.

Lesson 6

Woman’s Hour Contexts

One of the key ideas about modern media is that of the audience ability to ‘speak back’ to media producers. Shirky states changes in technology have had a profound effect

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on the relations between the media and its audience. The idea that interactions between audience and product play a vital role in shaping media is an important part of what audiences now expect from the media.

Shirky's idea of audiences as no longer passive – wanting to share and comment can be found in the social media platform feeds of the show. Here look for evidence that the media no longer washes over audiences and that the show is succeeding in meeting needs of its target demographic and role within the BBC and the wider media landscape.

Audiences want and expect to be able to share likes and comments and to interact with products and other audience members – you should look for evidence of this in considering numbers of subscribers, nature of the comments etc.

That the ability to use social media to 'speak back' to producers offers greater power to the audience to shape products and to influence how they are understood.

Lesson 7

Have You Heard George's Podcast

Have You Heard George's Podcast is a magazine podcast targeted at an educated diverse youth audience of in particular Afro - Caribbean heritage. It was first broadcast in as an Indy podcast in 2018 but began its breakthrough with the September 2019 when it was taken up as part of the BBC Sounds platform.

Unlike most podcasts on the Sounds platform, the Have You Heard George's Podcasts do not have a scheduled radio slot for broadcast although they are inextricably linked to the BBC Five Live station.

The show is constructed as a series of Chapters on a particular theme that are produced by George and the Bendrick Production company.

The format is unique in its mix of sound, music, interviews and commentary and won a coveted Peabody Award in 2019

The podcast is unlike any other product on the BBC Sounds platform (is in fact unlike any other podcast anywhere) although it does meet the remit of the institution of Educate, inform and entertain.

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The show is nominally under the umbrella of the BBC Five Live radio station. The broadcast is clearly one initially seen as too niche for commercial stations. Even after all its success, it may still be viewed as a podcast of limited commercial appeal because of its unconventional structure and controversial content.

Curran and Seaton's research findings that **commercial media companies are concerned with maximising profit and minimising financial risk** impact all aspects of media production from what gets made to the representations and ideas they contain.

One result of institutions pursuing profit is that it comes to dominate their output. This means that often institutions are unwilling to commit to shows targeting a niche audience or those that court possible controversy in the choice of subject matter.

Curran and Seaton argue that media products come to feel 'all the same'.

We see here the reasons why Have You Heard George's Podcast can only find a home on the platform of an institution that puts the need of the audience above matters of profit. The BBC remit to 'Educate, inform and Entertain' enables Five Live and Sounds to host the George/Benbrick production, a product format unrestricted by conventional ideas or formats.

Clearly the show must demonstrate that it is relevant to those needs and those objectives.

- Media discussion and reporting influences the way the audience 'see' the world.
- **Agenda Setting Model:** Giving a particular issue importance by appearing in the broadcast gives the event/issue prominence and relevance for the audience. **The selection shapes the ideas and values the audiences assume to be important in society**, and shapes their understanding of what should be their own values and concerns
- **Agenda Framing Model:** focuses on the way the story is presented (*language used; images used; tone of voice; use of soundbeds etc*) **which aligns the audience on how they think they should see the event/issue.**

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- *For Have You Heard George's Podcast you might consider the role of George in constructing a format that relies entirely upon his persona and his ability and reputation as a poet/performer to carry such an unconventional format.*
- *The content centres on George's own interests/concerns – they are an exploration of ideas and events he wishes his audience to be aware of. In one sense he curates the content, indicating its importance. His unique approach aligns the audience to his values and thinking on these matters.*

Gilroy's model of post-colonialism in *Black Atlantic* suggests media representation of ethnic groups is based on ideas of ethnicity established during the days of Empire. Gilroy sees the media as too often offering simplistic binary representation of ethnic groups based on long established stereotypes. Black audiences engage in double consciousness – forced to see themselves as represented through the eyes of other dominant ethnicities.

Analysis of Have You Heard George's Podcast must of course reference the issues of ethnicity. The objective of the podcast is to shed light on ideas and events from George's own perspective of growing up a young black male in the urban environment, of being part of the diaspora from Africa that Gilroy's model of constructed identity is concerned with. George's Chapters and Episodes cover political movements of mid-century African leaders as well as issues arising from Grenfell or musical movements. George's podcasts explore issues, his own journeys into his culture and identity are carefully researched before being formed into what he has called rhyming essays. We can see here the remit to educate and inform is to the fore but always grounded in the desire to entertain.

Lesson 8

HYHGP Audience

Mainstream products are the creation of major media institutions.

They are most easily defined by having been made with the advantage of a large budget with the ability to attract celebrity or star figures attachment to the product.

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The financing linked to potential audience means such products can employ the high production values – celebrity presenters/stars and large budgets that attach a gloss to the completed product in terms of the styling and look of the completed piece.

They tend to follow known formats within their genre that make them ‘safe’ commercial projects for the institutions.

Niche products are those created by small production companies.

They are outside the main institutions and operate on much smaller budgets, often being distributed outside the main platforms or TV channels.

They rely on creating interest within a well-defined audience who have shown interest in products that challenge the formatting of so much of the mainstream media output or an audience that feels their interests and point of view are rarely the concern of mainstream products.

Reception theory there are referred, negotiated and oppositional understanding to the ideas in media products.

This involves understanding who the audience are and constructing a profile of the demographics and psychographics of this group.

From this we can make informed assessments of how they might respond to the style, content and tone of Have You Heard George’s Podcast. How far you believe the show reflects the way the educated, diverse youth audience are likely to think (most often we can assume that they align in taking the preferred reading presented by the influencer hosts).

The BBC considers the likely appeal of BBC Sounds to their target audience. In this way we can apply Hall’s ideas to the presenter, the format, the mode of address and the content.

You must take your selected broadcast and explore the evidence that indicates how the show does this.

- Consider George’s presentational style – the tone; the words; his appeal to the audience who feel he is relatable, so they want to agree with him (Blumler & Katz)
- Consider the content of the show – is it selected to be challenging or reinforcing of ideas the diverse audience have of themselves?

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Intersectionality identifies the oppressive nature of the patriarchy that controls society and disadvantages many groups. **Intersectionality:** the point where the interests and legitimate concerns of different 'outside', 'excluded' or marginalised groups meet

There are differing modes of discrimination and privilege, of advantage and disadvantage. These might include *gender; ethnicity; caste; class; religion; disability; weight; appearance*

hooks model though based in Fourth wave feminist ideas can be applied to a range of media products to do with ethnic identity and understanding. Her work encompasses oppression other than disadvantages of biological identity (*poverty; ethnicity; class etc.*) A focus on representation is the struggle to end the ideology of domination of any one group or faction.

The show is clearly overtly 'political' in the wider sense of the word rather than simple party politics. The Chapters and Episodes focus the audience on those social and political issues that impact on the lives of ordinary people. The remit is based on George's own sense of those topics he sees as relevant to the world he lives in and this desire to make a fairer, more just and equal society. His podcasts offer a view of events and issues in society that have a direct impact or interest for people living in a diverse UK society. Here we might link to the BBC remit – Educate; inform; entertain – and the recognition of the need to represent the culture and life of the more diverse UK society of today.

It should be becoming clearer that the BBC as a national institution has demands that shape its output. These are not the same as those shaping commercial organisations whose objective is profit.

These are currently that as well as delivering the Reithian concept of Educate, inform, entertain there must be clear evidence of the wider appeal of the output of the institution to the multicultural diversity of the UK in the twenty first century. This is in the form of specific channels targeting ethnic groups – *Asian Network* – or age groups – *Radio 1Xtra* – or interests – *Five Live Sports*. Sometimes these are shows within stations – Radio 4 hosts *Woman's Hour* but also *Gardener's Question Time* or *The Media Show* that cater to specific interest groups.

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In looking at the set products – as this concept/understanding may be an obvious subject matter for an examination task – we must consider the ways each product can be seen/used as example of this.

For *Woman's Hour* we may look at the journey from its early 1950s remit and values of seeing women as home makers whose focus was husband and children to modern fourth wave feminist ideas of women as career orientated and sharing family and relationship roles and responsibilities with their partners.

For the *HYHGP?* we may see the podcast as evidence for the changing role of the BBC in a digitally convergent world where access to platforms and listening habits have shifted.

In some ways both offer ideas of what might be seen to be relatively niche demographics and how the institution attempts to meet the remit in the way it constructs its appeal to their needs.

The BBC is considered a cultural institution. One of the key parts of the mainstream institutions that reflect, shape and evolve the sense of UK identity.

Globally, the organisation is viewed as one of the most reliable and trustworthy sources of news and of events, something particularly important to the brand in the age of 'fake news', enabling its high-quality products to be exported globally.

If we apply **Hesmondhalgh and Curran and Seaton**, we can see that *Have You Heard George's Podcast* might be deemed too 'niche' and too narrow in its demographic appeal for commercial radio broadcasters whose focus is always on attracting numbers. That Five Live as a branding/institutional source may offer a sense of its place in the BBC sounds remit.

The show focuses on the ideas and appeal of a single presenter, and each Chapter episode is an unusual mix of inner voice; music pads; sound effects; voices; interviews and poetry. These make it a harder 'listen' than news items or magazine style formats or documentaries on commercial stations.

The content of the show is controversial, and not an 'easy' listen. Commercial stations are wary of material that listeners may find offensive or troubling causing them to switch stations. They prefer the less challenging shows.

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The mode of address can be seen to be one anticipating that its audience are educated and comfortable with a mix of specialised vocabulary and what might be termed 'street' language and terms (which may be of appeal to a younger demographic and off-putting to an older one). The podcast places certain demands on listeners who are assumed to be focused on the broadcast rather than more casual listeners. The subject matter involves convoluted narrative and political ideas.

Lesson 9

Presenter

Hesmondhalgh sees **cultural industries** as powerful forces in our society both in terms of the numbers of people their ideas can reach and through the persuasive way ideas are presented.

Key was that media producers take into consideration the fact that in cultural industries the commercial risk is high. This is because of the difficulty in predicting success.

As a result, media institutions find products based around already successful ideas such as familiar subject matter, the way the product is structured, the celebrities involved etc.

However, he also saw formatting and repetition of conventional ideas leaving some sections of audience excluded, those tired of the formula who seek out new ideas that reject or evolve the conformity of the mainstream media's output. Here he sees a place for innovative products or ideas having limited success by finding such a niche audience. Sometimes these innovations are so successful they feed back into the mainstream creating a set of new or evolved conventions that refresh the format before repeating the cycle all over again. Here we might apply this to George's podcast, a hybrid form garnering critical success and audience approval.

There are media products that are inextricably linked with their stars - Cumberbatch as Holmes, for example - and this extends beyond actors and characters they play in fictional narratives

Non-fiction shows are as liable to such associations – Paul Hollywood in *Bake-off*; Sugar with *The Apprentice*.

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As we have seen with the study of Woman's Hour, we associate magazine style shows with the presenter.

For George, the podcast is clearly inextricably bound to the nature of George himself. The shows – episodes- are his own musings on ideas/issues/events he feels define aspects of modern life, in particular that of the minority ethnic groups of young people living in the larger urban landscapes.

The show is crafting the content and stylings around George. As social commentator and performance poet.

The attractions of the show are George's ability to present himself as role model and influencer in the broadest sense. He does not endorse products or seek to persuade his audience to any political point of view or to any commercial enterprise, simply offering a very personal take on events in history or in popular culture.

Lesson 10

Contexts

Domestication Theory: How technology and innovation is 'tamed' or appropriated by its users. Silverstone describes four steps that technology goes through when being adapted into peoples' lives:

- New technologies are **integrated** into everyday life and adapted to daily practices (**Appropriation**)
- **The user and their environment change and adapt** accordingly to fit the technology. (**Objectification**)
- These adaptations **feedback into innovation processes** in industry, shaping the next generation of technologies and services. (**Incorporation**)
- The way that the **technology represents status and culture** of a household. (**Conversion**)

We can see in application to the HYHGP that George and Bendrick have exploited the opportunity offered by not only the technology of construction of the product – sound pads; music; effects; voice; pre-recording – but in finding its audience that would previously have been out of reach of such ideas and forms on conventional broadcast platforms. Certainly, we see appropriation and objectification of the podcast format with incorporation present in the Common Ground platform.

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One of the key ideas about modern media is that of the audience ability to ‘speak back’ to media producers. Shirky states changes in technology have had a profound effect on the relations between the media and its audience. The idea that interactions between audience and product play a vital role in shaping media is an important part of what audiences now expect from the media.

Shirky’s idea of audiences as **no longer passive** – wanting to share and comment can be found in the very pro-active social media platform feeds of Have You Heard About George’s podcast, the Common Ground website. You should visit the site and check in on the feedback and the threads that listeners have created. There are poems and aural responses to the subjects George presents in the podcast. Here look for evidence that the media no longer washes over audiences and that the show is succeeding in meeting needs of its target demographic and role within the BBC and the wider media landscape.

Audiences **want and expect** to be able to share likes and comments and **to interact with products** and other audience members – you should look for evidence of this in considering numbers of subscribers; nature of the comments etc.

That the ability to use social media to ‘speak back’ to producers offers greater **power to the audience to shape products** and to influence how they are understood.

The change in audience access to BBC Sounds requires research

Digital technology (DAB) has significantly improved the quality of sound (something the George podcast and its aural soundscapes takes full advantage of) as well as enabling easy access to digital files for the audience to listen when they want. This adaption of what some term Martini Media – *anytime, anyplace, anywhere* – widens the opportunities for audience to engage with shows.

The improvements in platforms – phones, pads, laptops – also facilitates easier and greater opportunities for listening, in turn increasing the potential audience.

The format also enables niche products to find their audience and to evolve it, both in the UK and globally. The success of the George Podcast in the USA is a clear example of this fact.

Fandom: fans are groups of devoted followers who actively engage with media products to construct meanings and interpretations beyond the original message.

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Audiences see products as a disposable commodity, fans see them as essential elements of their social life and identity.

Fans construct an interactive relationship between the producer and audience actively participating in the reception of a product and its development and understanding.

Consider the ways in which the pre-recorded product uses the *Common Ground* platform to invite audience in as ‘fans’ and involving them in submitting their own items into the creative process as much as commenting on the debate around the episode topic.

Hesmondhalgh: cultural industries have an interest in making profit. Without profit their products would not be made. Hesmondhalgh sees competition between two forces – do cultural institutions produce products that speak genuinely about the world or do they prioritise serving the interests of their stakeholders, placing profit above making important cultural products. The minimising of risk inevitably leads to formulaic genre products.

However, one of the forces Hesmondhalgh identifies is that the dominance of these cultural industries leads to the production of some products that subvert such values. Products offering ideologies that challenge the prevailing dominant hegemony – the greed and corrupting influence of capitalism, inequalities of gender or racism.

Hesmondhalgh sees this as a consequence of competition. There will always be a market for products that are different to the mainstream, products that appeal to the need of some in society for something ‘new’ or non-generic. They desire the shocking or the subversive. Also, products that appeal to the evolving youth audience seeking separation from the values, ideas, and perceived failings of adult society

Neo-tribalism identifies the idea that humans evolved to live in tribes rather than a mass society. Maffesoli saw this as a way of understanding why we seek to form new networks (small masses) or tribes within the great mass of society.

In Time of the Tribes (1988) puts forward the idea that humans seek identity and comfort from a tribal existence. He states that in modern society (he is very much seen as a post-modernist thinker) tribes are not simply based on ethnicity or geography but on shared ideas, their identities distinguished by ‘lifestyle and taste’. They are not fixed

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or have any great longevity. Instead, they come together around events, ideas, eras or sub-cultures.

Maffesoli's model sees the active audience of the Common Ground site as a response attempting to explain the vibrant and fast-moving mass society, a tribes comprised of youth cultures etc. the group dynamic is inter-active and collaborative and speaks to George's own political and social thinking evidenced in his episodes that utilise a range of diverse talent – music; speech; performance; spoken word; soundscapes.

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