

Eduqas A Level Unit 9A Close Study Products Student  
Workbook 2024 Exam Onwards  
Paper 2 Section B Magazines  
Vogue, huck, Adbusters. Woman's Realm, Elle,  
TeenVogue and The Big Issue

This is the Workbook for use with **EDUSITES Eduqas SET PRODUCTS UNIT 9A 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

## Lesson 1

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This paper is all about your ability to write fluently and with a clear structure about the issues raised by the set products.

This paper is about ideas, the set products are there as a means of providing supporting evidence that upholds or challenges the theoretical models you have studied.

Each product is the product of an era.

You must combine a close and detailed analysis of products such as the set magazine with an understanding of how these products reflect the world that created them, the practice of the industry that constructed them and the audience that buy and read them.

The magazine industry in the UK is a highly challenging media environment, with thousands of titles competing for readers and market space.

Here, learners will study two magazines in depth, developing an understanding of the contextual factors that shape their production, distribution, circulation and consumption, as well as considering the historical, social, and cultural significance of the representations they offer. Learners will also explore how media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.

Each option includes two magazines that have been produced within **different historical and industry contexts and that target different audiences.**

- One of the magazines will be contemporary, whilst the other will have been produced before 1970.
- One will be a commercial magazine with mainstream appeal, whilst the other will have been produced outside the commercial mainstream.
- The magazines in each option therefore offer rich opportunities for comparative analysis.

## Lesson 2

The study of magazines requires understanding of the evolution of the format. Although this is not directly part of the examination, the set task requires a comparison of your selected older mainstream product – Woman; Woman’s Realm; Vogue - with its modern niche/alternative counterpart.

Having a clear understanding of the evolution of the format is knowledge enabling you to better demonstrate to the examiner your clear understanding of the products and of the tasks set.

Such an approach ensures you understand – how media language and ideas of genre and format have evolved; How representations mirror and shape the era they were produced in; the shifting nature of audience expectations and needs; the technological progress of magazine as part of the cultural industries.

For **Component 2 Section B**, you need to become familiar with the style and content of magazines.

The examination requires an understanding that products in this genre use widely accepted conventions in their content, structure, and representations, and that you can consider the impact of these on the audience reception of such products.

Whilst the first sessions focus on basic elements of magazine formats, you must be clear from the start that for success in the examination your understanding needs to go beyond this. You must be able to

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explore representations, themes, branding, celebrity, and the ideologies that made this platform a staple of media production.

Developments in printing technology meant that from the middle of the 19th century magazines moved from being a preserve of the wealthy. The number of possible printed copies increased, enabling the price of each issue to be reduced, and thus becoming available to the rising educated middle-class. The repeal of a tax that limited the use and profitability of advertising supported the development of new ways of increasing profit whilst also reducing the cover price and widened audiences.

Increased circulation, and increasing use of images, meant magazines became increasingly attractive to advertisers.

In the 20th century important figures emerged who shaped the future of magazine publishing. **William Randolph Hearst**, the owner of many newspapers across America, engaged in a merciless battle for readers. During the Cuban War for Independence, Hearst published horrific images of tortured and starving Cuban troops. The sensationalist nature of his publications attracted huge audiences. This gave rise to the term yellow journalism, used to label the sensationalist approach to the presentation of events equivalent to our own use of the word tabloid press.

**Hearst used this profit to expand his empire to magazine publishing** starting with the famous Good Housekeeping, National Geographic and Harper's Bazaar. Two other major figures – **Henry Luce** and **Thomas Hadden** - launched what were to be influential and far-reaching magazines - Time, Life, Sports Illustrated. **These titles established a vast popular audience for magazines and, in doing so, formed the template that later publications would follow.**

Thomas Hadden influenced the development of popular mass media culture to such an extent that many cultural analysts credit him with having changed the patterns of thinking and behavior of people in the 20th century.

As well as Time, he was instrumental in the development of Fortune magazine. Fortune originated from the business pages of Time to become a product widely considered to be the most influential American magazine.

- Fortune was the first high-quality printed magazine, with pages in full color.
- Fortune also invented photo-journalism, something that would make Life magazine famous few years later

Elle (French for “she”) launched in 1945. **Its influence on the development of modern women’s magazines is immense:**

- Weekly Elle instructed French women as to what it defined made a woman attractive and fashionable.
- It defined how to be attractive and a modern woman.

The success of the magazine was huge, readers more and more identified with its core values. Elle, and its editor and founder Helene Lazareff, were inextricably identified with by readers who soon unflinchingly followed its trends and ideology.

- New designers and fashion styles were launched such as Dior and his New Look;

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- Celebrity women were created such as Brigitte Bardot.
- Famous writers began there.
- By 1960, one out of six French women read Elle.

Other magazines began to mimic the content and layout and adopted the idea of creating their own brand identity for women readers. The modern magazine formats of Woman, Woman's Realm and in particular Vogue all have design and ideas directly traceable back to Elle.

In the same way that Elle in France set the format for modern women's magazines such as Vogue and Cosmopolitan, the New York of the 50's set the form of modern magazine art direction for titles such as Adbusters, Huck and The Big Issue.

Manhattan and a new generation of designers and art directors **established design and magazine advertising as we know it today**. This period is called **the Creative Revolution**.

One of the best and most influential magazines of this golden era, both visually and literally, was Esquire. Esquire transformed the magazine for men in the use of photographs and illustrations as art. This period can be used as a reference point for your contemporary alternative magazine product.

## Lesson 3

### Genre

**Genre is a relatively simple description of the many elements that might link two or more media products** – the presence of aliens in a sci-fi; of saloons in a western. As your learning progresses in the final year of A level, you will be asked to think a little more deeply about genre and discover that it is also a very complex part of the study of how and why media products [are made].

For magazines, we need only focus on **the surface features** of this genre, what we call the **conventions of the genre**. As the unit goes on you will be looking in greater detail at the more complex ideas such as audience, institution and the values that magazine products communicate.

Although A Level Media rarely gives focus to his work, modern media theories are underpinned by the work of Michael Foucault.

It was Foucault who during the sixties coined the term 'Archaeology' to describe his approach to studying history. For Foucault, the Archaeology Model is about examining the traces and forms left by the past in order to better understand what he termed a history of the present.

Foucault's work influenced all of those theoretical models now widely accepted to analyze contemporary media products by accounting for the active influence of past products and past representations. Foucault believed analysis must consider more fully how these have contributed to the shape of such products today.

In simple terms, the past shapes the present and without understanding the past we can never fully understand current media products.

**Genre is an industrial process:**

- To guarantee **pleasure and meaning for the audience**.
- To **offset financial risks of production** by using successful formats

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The intended audience find pleasure in difference and repetition - recognition of familiar elements and the way those elements are linked or the way that unfamiliar elements might be introduced.

Genre is what readers believe the product to contain based on prior knowledge of similar products.

It provides **a template for construction of messages and content and assumptions about the audience to be targeted.**

To the audience, **genre identifies a pleasurable formula** providing engagement and understanding.

Magazines are consumer products. They are a brand. In promoting the brand, a magazine's masthead's role is to be recognizable. In the sea of magazines on the news-stands they need the brand to stand out among the other competing genre products.

- The masthead must capture the publication's character, its attitude.
- It should fit the intended readership – serious, light, modern etc.
- Where possible, it is created to be versatile too, so that it can be used on other marketing materials.
- The ideal is that the title masthead is so recognisable it can be obscured by images on the cover and still be recognised by readers.

They go to great lengths to select the proper typography – the font – which all express ideas:

Is the publication a modern one, is it more traditional: is it cutting edge, challenging, cosmopolitan, urban, conservative?

## Lesson 4

### Covers

The cover of a magazine is its major selling point. It assures regular audience by informing them of its content and style and is used to attract new readers or casual readers by promoting its content and style.

A key element in this is the title and the way that it is constructed – its font choice, its colour, the use of any graphics. The title is synonymous with the brand, in many ways it is the brand and, as such is carefully thought out, rarely altered, and fiercely protected.

The title and associated graphics and logos are what is called the **masthead**.

The front cover is vital in communicating a clear sense of the brand identity of the magazine to the target audience and in appealing to potential readers at the newsstand.

In such a competitive print market, magazine front covers need to stand out and attract the attention of potential purchasers.

It is important that the front cover maintains a clear sense of familiarity for regular readers but also attracts potential new readers.

Front covers have a clear set of expected codes and conventions. Mainstream magazines tend to conform quite closely to these conventions while magazines produced outside the commercial mainstream are more likely to challenge or subvert these conventions.

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Barthes model suggests that the idea of an ultimate meaning or 'truth' for a media product is not possible. The many interpretations of meaning present in a product's combination of elements linked to the unknowable idea in its producers' minds makes any single 'true' understanding of its meaning impossible.

However, to be successful we understand that cultural products must show that they and their audience share ideas about the world and those matters deemed to be of interest to them.

For magazines, we must explore how as cultural products they attempt to shape their messages in ways that will prompt their readers/demographic to a similar understanding of the ideas/events the magazine hold to be important in defining themselves and their relatability to their readers. For the magazines to be commercially successful they must build and sustain an audience. They do so by applying to their content and images those ideas they believe the demographic to be interested in. This is often self-fulfilling. In the Elle example the focus on 90s fashion shapes readers ideas regarding looks and styling. The magazine's view that readers who wish to be fashionable should follow this trend will itself construct and influence that trend in society.

In Baudrillard's model, society has lost a sense of what is real and what is the image. The audience viewing a product are unable to decide what is 'real' and what 'fiction'.

- This is complicated when later successive media products raid existing media products and copy their narratives. The sense of the real then becomes further reinforced by a saturation of similar messages – images of images, a succession of images that appear real, so that life comes to resemble a room of mirrors: all reflection and no defining sense of what is real.
- Audiences are reliant on defining themselves and society through the world constructed by the media. Society has lost contact with the real world. Audiences struggle to tell the 'real' from the image of the real in the media they consume. More than this, he states that reality now imitates the model, blurring any distinction between the two.
- The sense of reality is reinforced by a saturation of similar messages – images of images, a succession of representations that repetition makes appear real. Life comes to resemble a room of mirrors: all reflection with no defining sense of what is real.
- He sees media images as highly controlled; the make-up; styling; lighting; etc. construct an image that is not true to reality. However, the audience consuming them believe them to be 'real' cementing the image until those people and events represented are seen only as the image.

For magazines we might explore their role as image makers – products that construct a view of not just a cover feature celebrity themselves but of wider ideas of gender and attractiveness. In the set products the covers feature highly controlled studio shots of models chosen to represent the audience. Seeing these images, the audience in turn come to believe that this is how they should look. The image shapes the reality and vice versa in a spinning cycle of meaning that never stops.

- Propp was interested in the relationship between characters and the narrative.

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- Propp held that stories are character driven - that it is the actions of characters that drives a plot. It is their actions and decisions that shape the direction of a story.
- Propp held that characters were defined by what he termed 'Spheres of Action'.
- It was the working out of the interaction of these spheres or roles that shaped the narrative.

The key roles are

- Hero
- Villain
- helper
- dispatcher
- donor
- false hero
- princess

In magazines we see that the covers and content create a narrative with the magazine often filing the role of donor to the 'hero' role of the reader. The magazine indicates ways in which readers may attain their objectives – the sense of identity; sexual appeal; style etc.

In the Elle example the straplines all indicate the ways in which the magazine contains ideas to support the reader in being stylish and attractive and understanding themselves – e.g., the why we always cancel article.

Todorov sought a model for analysing the structural elements of narrative. Through his studies of story, he evolved a formula, that holds true for most media products – films, TV, newspaper stories, advertisements etc.

- The story always begins with a balance that is disturbed by some action or force that throw the world of its characters into imbalance.
- To restore the balance of their lives the protagonists must embark on a search or quest that eventually, through a climactic event, results in a new equilibrium or a renewed state of balance being attained.
- In each quest the characters are changed by the experience.
- The formula sees narrative as a linear path proceeding along set lines of development.
- On magazines the journey is often indicated in the content – the stories, features and imagery and representations.
- For covers we might see these as the way in which the magazine will guide readers on the narrative journeys they chose to take.
- The 'future of Fendi' implies a narrative to be undertaken in the article.
- The cover feature of 90s fashion revival implies a narrative – a disruption and a return to prominence in the same way that 'the end of sequins' implies a different narrative path.

**Binary opposition** is a model of culture in which two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another. It is the in the contrast between what appear to be two mutually exclusive ideas, such as on and off, up and down, left and right or good and evil that we learn more about each than by

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seeing them in isolation. A heroic figure is more easily understood to be heroic when we see them pitted against a villainous figure. It is in the extremes of contrast that better understanding of meaning is established in the audience mind.

As a structuralist, Levi-Strauss, shares the idea of **Propp** and **Todorov** that cultural products are understood by their patterns and structures rather than consideration of context.

On magazine covers and content, we see ideas of what is acceptable expressed in terms of those things that are oppositional. On the cover of Elle it can be the 'end of sequins' implying it is the opposite of 'cool' placing it very much as oppositional to style conscious readers not wishing to be judged to be uncool.

## Lesson 5

### Contexts

Any media product represents the ideas, the way of thinking of the era that it is produced in and produced by.

A product made in an era of uncertainty may be more conservative, represent an appeal to older values to be defended and protected. The 1950s was dominated by right-wing conservative governments who were viewed as better equipped to handle a time of rationing and economic austerity better than a Labour party thought likely to be too free in spending money the nation did not have.

A time of social change and upheaval will produce products that are more challenging to the ideas of that era. The sixties was a time of plenty after the austerity of the fifties. Labour governments dominated the decade, people wanted freedom to spend their money and enjoy the more lavish lifestyle the economic boom promised. Youth dominated the era, challenging the old ways and demanding a more equal society in terms of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.

You might read about the effect of 9/11 on the politics and views of the early part of this Century, or the effect the Syrian war and refugee crisis has had on the world during your own teenage years. These contexts affect our lives, and the media reflect this.

This might be better understood in comedy. You've probably watched an old TV comedy show from an earlier era and wondered why people thought it was so funny or why the actors were such popular celebrities. Your parents & grandparents may well watch a comedy aimed at a youth audience and think the same.

In the era of the sixties, TV comedies such as Terry and June and Benny Hill were incredibly popular, often attracting audiences in the 12,000,000 range each week.

Their success was that they represented the way most of the audience of that time saw the world and their own day to day issues (in the case of Terry & June) or the simple slapstick, sexist, sea-side postcard comedy of Benny Hill that they thought funny.

The 1960s was an era of a world emerging from a lengthy post WW2 period of conservatism and tradition into a decade that would usher in vast social-political revolution. The evolution was heralded by a new and vibrant youth culture that moved from a concern with music and fashion of the late fifties

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and early sixties into a more widely aware generation of political action using civil unrest to challenge the old ways.

The sixties was the flowering of global social activism, with particular emphasis on Civil rights, anti-war protests, and the Second-Wave of feminism.

The era shifted large areas of society – challenges to laws on homosexuality, divorce, sexuality, drugs, capital punishment, education, health care and human rights.

Researching an era enables you to be able to respond to tasks requiring you to connect set products to their times.

## Lesson 6

### Contexts

The **zeitgeist** is a very useful term to apply in the study of products from any era, particularly if the product is one from the past where we can talk with a little more certainty as to its component parts.

The German translates as 'spirit of the age'. We use it to mean those ideas that seem to dominate the mood of a particular epoch or period. This includes all things social and political and economic but specifically cultural. The ideas and values and beliefs that shaped how people thought and behaved.

## Lesson 7

### Contents Pages

- The contents page has moved a long way from a simple listing of pages and navigation through a magazine.
- The contents page is second in importance to establishing brand identity to the cover.
- On the contents page layout goes further to creating a 'house style' that further cements the magazine with the reader. The images, use of graphics, the font, the colour, the positioning of each element is key in this. You should be looking in detail at layout, typography, colour and language.
- Here, we are concerned with how the magazine establishes itself as part of lifestyle of the demographic.

## Lesson 8

### Contents Features

#### The content of magazines:

**Regular features:** Each magazine has specific content that is a regular part of each edition. This might be the letters page or a problem page. It could be the review section where films, books or music are reviewed. It could be advice on money or family matters. It could be a make-up or fashion pages. Often it is the 'letter from the editor' where the editor talks directly to the reader about issues that are covered in the articles and features in the magazine.

- In the Woman study edition, it is the contents page editorial & problem page & Extra Special page; in Adbusters it is the letters page;

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- in Woman's Realm issue it is the contents page editorial, short story feature, and problem page; in Huck the statement of intent editorial and Beyond Binary feature;
- in Vogue it is the money feature; and in Big Issue the editor's letter, Letter to My Younger Self, Vendor Success Stories, and My Pitch feature

**Feature articles:** these vary from issue to issue. Usually, one forms the cover story. These are constructed to lure in the casual buyer/reader as well as maintain the style and tone expected by regular readers.

- In Woman it is the Hitchcock and A level beauty and kitchen feature; in Adbusters the climate change features.
- In Woman's Realm it is the beauty feature and cookery feature; in Huck the Ocalans Angels and Teenage Utopia.
- In Vogue it is the Fashion and Picnic features, in Big Issue the rise of Homeless Bakers

## Lesson 9

### Editorials

In most magazines there will be a letter from the editor/editorial. This is where the editor can direct readers to major stories or features that are of note, or where the editor might comment on current issues or wider events of interest or concern to readers. The editorial is fundamental to expressing the values of the brand and is a 'personal' contact or face for readers to identify with.

In analysing an editor's page, you must consider the layout of the page, but you need to read and discuss the written content.

## Lesson 10

### Design

Genre is an industrial process:

- To guarantee pleasure and meaning for the audience.
- To offset financial risks of production by using successful formats

The intended audience find pleasure in difference and repetition - recognition of familiar elements and the way those elements are linked or the way that unfamiliar elements might be introduced.

In studying magazines, we can see how the genre – such as the lifestyle magazine - demonstrates Neale's idea of the genre assuming a template for construction of messages and content that are based on the industry assumptions about the audience to be targeted.

We can see how the repetition of formats of design provide a quick and clear identity for the target audience, a pleasurable formula providing engagement and understanding.

In the study products from the sixties we see very particular ideas of expectations of readers highlighted by magazine layout. The example on picnics aligns the romantic notion of picnics with the Tissot painting. The design is classic magazine – dominant image and separated text, the image presented to simply illustrate a point. The Big Issue opts for a more modern interpretation – the text overlaid onto

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the image enables a more dramatic, provocative presentation of the ideas, the image now viewed as part of the tone and ideology of the article and the identity of the reader.

When considering which project to finance, cultural industries risk is high.

As **Hesmondhalgh** and the research models of **Curran** and **Seaton** have shown, this most often means that the industry relies on 'big hits' (the blockbusters) to cover the costs of the relative financial failures (such as the more niche products).

This way of minimising risk is for institutions to rely on investment in repetition using the 'same' or familiar content, similar features and genres that have proven successful. This strategy is what Hesmondhalgh refers to as **formatting**.

In magazine products we see how there are only a limited number of basic styles for presenting the ideas and content and values to readers. These often resolve around choosing a general format – modern; classic or cutting edge - and then tweaking the design to create a house style repeated for each edition.

## Lesson 11

### Mode Of Address

In looking at **language in magazines** we are interested in **the way that the magazine addresses its readers**. We are aware that the **images, graphics, font, layout, and colours construct the way that readers 'feel' about a magazine** but clearly, as a print product, the words used are of massive importance. You will have studied similar elements and effects in GCSE English [alliteration; direct address; etc.] and there is an expectation that you will be **able to apply some quite developed knowledge to your analysis of the connotations of language use** on covers and features pages in the set products.

## Lesson 12

### Advertisements

For many decades, the culture entailed all the fine arts such as music, theatre, painting and architecture. Culture today is defined as a way of life or a shared practice among a group, where meaning is made from visual, aural and textual representations. Our society relies on these representations to communicate with one another, messages are constantly being encoded and decoded. In modern society and cultures, communication is based on the ability to convey and understand the meaning of words and non-verbal images.

Along with film, radio and TV, advertising was the Twentieth Century's influential addition to culture. Advertising not only influences choices about what purchases we make, it also communicates cultural ideas about lifestyle, self-image, and identity. It instils beliefs and attitudes – with the influence on shaping and persuading large numbers of society to think a certain way.

Advertisements invite the consumer into the narrative life of the advertisement, suggesting that our lives would be like this if only we purchased that product brand.

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Women's lifestyle magazines were incredibly popular in the post-war period. By the 1960s, sales of these magazines in the UK reached 12 million copies per week.

While this was a period saw the beginnings of massive social change with increased independence for women, most of these magazines and their adverts perpetuated restricted and stereotypical ideas around gender.

In looking at the representations in the sixties era magazines you should consider the ideologies of consumerism perpetrated by magazines that were themselves driven by the need to 'deliver' readers to advertisers.

## Lesson 13

### Audience

**Uses and Gratifications theory Model** - audiences seek out products that best fulfil their needs.

- **Entertainment/escapism/diversion:** audiences consume media products for enjoyment, to escape from their own daily lives.
- **Personal Identity** - products carry similar values to their own. Consuming them evolves their own characteristics, ideas, and values.
- **Integration and social interaction** – media products produce topics of conversation. In discussion audience ideas are hardened, challenged and either reformed or evolved.
- **Surveillance (Information and Education)** – acquisition of information, knowledge, and understanding by consuming products.

Magazines address all four elements of the model. Entertainment in content and presentation of content; social issues (lifestyle); personal identity (gender & ethnicity); and news (surveillance).

Audiences read magazines motivated by surveillance, a desire to stay informed about the world, or looking for entertaining diversion from routines. This is probably most applicable to the sixties era products. For the later alternative magazines with a more political/value agenda styling we see the audience desire for identity reinforcement over issues of concern. We should remember the sense of connection to the tribe present in all such magazines.

- Butler questions whether gender behaviours seen by society as defining what a woman is are natural, biological or are behaviours learned by repetition. Butler sees **gender as a performance** based on conventions absorbed by individuals. Gender is living up to expectations of how women or men behave. If gender is seen as a social construction, it can be viewed as a fiction open to change and to being challenged.
- **Butler's model of Performativity is based on the idea of repeated rituals performed to construct and reveal our identity.** The model challenges beliefs that force us to conform to certain fixed standards for our identity.
- Butler states 'gender is the stylised repetition of acts through time'. Gender is not being but doing. Gender is a verb, not a noun. Gender can be seen as a scale travelling from masculinity to femininity rather than fixed immutable positions.

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In cultural products directed at specific audiences such as the female lifestyle magazines of Woman; Woman's Realm, Vogue – we see how readers are offered ideas of what it is to be a woman. Femininity is defined by set ideas linked to fashion and to roles of housewives and motherhood. By seeing such roles performed in each edition (and reinforced by all surrounding mainstream cultural products such as film, TV, advertisements etc.) women come to see these as a 'truth' defining their own sense of being a woman. In exploring the set products, we need to be aware of how the representations, style and content shape, sustain or evolve such ideas.

**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 each of your selected magazines. How far you believe they reflect the way the audience are likely to think (most often we can assume that they align in taking the preferred reading presented by the magazine).

Each magazine editorial team considers the likely appeal of their product to their target audience. In this way we can apply Hall's ideas to each element of design, content and the mode of address.

You must take your magazines and explore the evidence that indicates how the products do this.

- Consider cover style – the cover sets the tone and attracts readers; the listing of content and mode of address most often stress the product is relatable, readers want a product that reflects that sense of self and identity (Blumler & Katz)
- Consider the content – is it selected to be challenging or reinforcing of ideas the audience have of themselves?

hooks 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 anyone in one group. There are levels of oppression adding disadvantage biological identity poverty; ethnicity; class etc. A focus on the representation of women is not a 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 magazines from the sixties era may not appear overtly 'political' in the sense of the modern/contemporary magazine selection of Adbusters, huck or The Big Issue in having an ideology leaning to a distinct political wing or having a specific agenda of change. However, in offering a view of events and issues in society that have a direct impact or interest for women and their lives such female lifestyle products unwittingly did so.

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**Gauntlett** identifies those rapid changes taking place within media and in the world. He notes as an example the way that the depiction of the passive housewife that dominated mainstream media throughout the twentieth century is increasingly being replaced with images of assertive women taking control of their lives.

Time of the Tribes (1996) argues that conventional approaches to understanding cultural groups in society is wrong. He contends that what we think of as **mass culture has disintegrated** and that today social and **cultural identity is through fragmented tribal groupings, organized around the catchwords, brand-names, and sound-bites of consumer culture.**

For Maffesoli, **identity** is shaped by cultural elements of music videos, gaming, films and pop culture, rather than religion or politic ideologies.

He cites sociality - simply being-together in everyday life. Out of this sociality, evolves our sense of 'self'. This is how youth subcultures are formed which are **interstitial, transitive and temporary.** In his model, new forms of social media facilitate and expands such fragmentation.

These communities of shared taste are "not on the lookout for some distant, abstract and rather irrational sense of utopia, but instead seek a fragmentation into small interstitial utopias experienced...everyday."

## Lesson 14

### Values

In a consideration of the representations offered in the lifestyle magazines - and their influence on readers' values, ideologies and life choices - we must be sure to explore in more detail ideas of what audience needs are of such products.

If audiences are looking for products that they feel satisfy their needs (entertainment; identity; social identity; news) we can then make the step to accepting that such products represent a set of values and beliefs (ideologies) that the audience hold or are led to believe that they need to hold if they are to see themselves accepted as part of that social tribe - EG: desirable, young, successful women; attractive, ambitious successful males; mainstreamers; aspirers; etc.

Lifestyle products, by definition, focus on the lifestyles readers seek to be part of. How they see ourselves and wish others to see them. They are part of identity.

### Consumer Culture

To fully understand the notion of lifestyle we need to understand what is meant by consumer culture.

This argues that societies are organised around consumption.

- Rising Affluence. It is argued that the inhabitants of Western Societies now have far more money to spend on consumer goods, holidays and leisure.
- Decreasing work hours. This leaves more time for leisure/lifestyle pursuits.
- Identity. People are now taking more of their identity from what they consume and their activities as consumers. Previously, people's work was a much greater marker of identity. Old forms of

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identity, such as class, work, and location are rapidly breaking down because of increased globalization.

- The Aestheticisation of Everyday Life. There is far greater interest in the presentation of an image and construction of a lifestyle. The acquisition of certain goods are used as markers of social position. Increasingly, 'We are what we consume'.

## Lesson 15

### Industry Issues

Magazines are having to change. We cannot only be concerned with commenting on the change in attitudes or representations from the 1960s era set products to the current alternative magazine study products. The convergence of content onto digital platforms is driven both by technological innovation and the shifting expectations of audiences – the expectation of 24/7 access to cultural products across a range of devices encompassing both print, pads, and phones.

Magazine sales are falling and continue to fall. Despite this, the industry still forms a significant commercial market that is prized by advertisers because it enables targeting of very specific demographic groups.

The move to digital editions and to digital production processes – the move from traditional hot metal printing and journalistic practices – has enabled niche products to thrive. The reduced production costs coupled with the demands for specific specialist or niche content forms a virtuous loop for brands such as Adbusters, huck and The Big Issue.

We should have learned that whatever else we may think, the magazine industry has undergone significant changes since the era of the 1960s and the historical set products

There appear to be conflict in that the industry was smaller with less competition yet was significantly more widespread in terms of readership and profitability. This is explained by the technical innovations enabling less investment in production and the different platforms for consumption that promote a greater possibility for catering to niche audiences.

In the sixties the industry was dominated by a small number of major publishers. Though these still exist and still dominate (Hearst, IPC, Bauer) but do so through a wider range of titles.

As we have seen, print circulation is falling and there has been a rise in digital sales. Magazines need a strong online and social media presence as well as a clear, unique brand identity, to compete. A result is either the closure of brands or their move online – e.g. TeenVogue; Company.

At the turn of the century (2001) Woman's Realm merged with Woman's Weekly in an early indicator of this century's trends. At the time the publishing house IPC stated that Woman's Realm 'no longer reflected the financially independent lives of its target readership'.

Amid these changes, as mainstream magazines have battled commercial pressures – decline in advertising; competition; production costs - niche, specialised have found an audience.

**End of audience:** One of the key ideas about modern media is that of the audience ability to 'speak back' to media producers. Shirky sees how changes in technology have had a profound effect on the

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

- Shirky sees audiences as **no longer passive** – they want to share and comment; media no longer washes over audiences.
- Audiences **want and expect** to be able to share likes and comments and **to interact with products** and other audience members.
- That the ability to use digital media to ‘speak back’ to producers offers greater **power to the audience to shape products** and to influence how they are understood.

For our set products we see that the sites for the alternative magazines offer good examples of the more interactive and immediate nature of engagement with the ideas and the product enabled by convergence. Sites promote subscription to the print form as well as encouraging visitors to the site to sign up for email contacts and promotions. If you are studying the Adbusters product you will see that the site makes the point of the brand being ‘so much more than a magazine’ - a crucial piece of evidence for any exam task requiring analysis of the objectives/role/impact of magazine products.

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