

A Level **Media Studies**



Knowledge **Booklet:** **Component 2**

APPENDIX B

Summary of Theories to be Studied

MEDIA LANGUAGE

Semiotics - Roland Barthes

- the idea that texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification
- the idea that signs can function at the level of denotation, which involves the 'literal' or common-sense meaning of the sign, and at the level of connotation, which involves the meanings associated with or suggested by the sign
- the idea that constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving the status of myth through a process of naturalisation.

Narratology - Tzvetan Todorov

- the idea that all narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another
- the idea that these two states of equilibrium are separated by a period of imbalance or disequilibrium
- the idea that the way in which narratives are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

Genre theory - Steve Neale

- the idea that genres may be dominated by repetition, but are also marked by difference, variation, and change
- the idea that genres change, develop, and vary, as they borrow from and overlap with one another
- the idea that genres exist within specific economic, institutional and industrial contexts.

Structuralism - Claude Lévi-Strauss

- the idea that texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying structure
- the idea that meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions
- the idea that the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

Postmodernism - Jean Baudrillard

- the idea that in postmodern culture the boundaries between the 'real' world and the world of the media have collapsed and that it is no longer possible to distinguish between reality and simulation
- the idea that in a postmodern age of simulacra we are immersed in a world of images which no longer refer to anything 'real'
- the idea that media images have come to seem more 'real' than the reality they supposedly represent (hyperreality).

REPRESENTATION

Theories of representation - Stuart Hall

- the idea that representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs
- the idea that the relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes
- the idea that stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people to a few simple characteristics or traits
- the idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other' (e.g. through ethnocentrism).

Theories of identity - David Gauntlett

- the idea that the media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities
- the idea that whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

Feminist theory - Liesbet van Zoonen

- the idea that gender is constructed through discourse, and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context
- the idea that the display of women's bodies as objects to be looked at is a core element of western patriarchal culture
- the idea that in mainstream culture the visual and narrative codes that are used to construct the male body as spectacle differ from those used to objectify the female body.

Feminist theory - bell hooks

- the idea that feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination
- the idea that feminism is a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice
- the idea that race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited, discriminated against or oppressed.

Theories of gender performativity - Judith Butler

- the idea that identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (it is manufactured through a set of acts)
- the idea that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender
- the idea that performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual.

Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory - Paul Gilroy

- the idea that colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity in the postcolonial era
- the idea that civilisationism constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.

MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Power and media industries - Curran and Seaton

- the idea that the media is controlled by a small number of companies primarily driven by the logic of profit and power
- the idea that media concentration generally limits or inhibits variety, creativity and quality
- the idea that more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.

Regulation - Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt

- the idea that there is an underlying struggle in recent UK regulation policy between the need to further the interests of citizens (by offering protection from harmful or offensive material), and the need to further the interests of consumers (by ensuring choice, value for money, and market competition)
- the idea that the increasing power of global media corporations, together with the rise of convergent media technologies and transformations in the production, distribution and marketing of digital media, have placed traditional approaches to media regulation at risk

Cultural industries - David Hesmondhalgh

- the idea that cultural industry companies try to minimise risk and maximise audiences through vertical and horizontal integration, and by formatting their cultural products (e.g. through the use of stars, genres, and serials)
- the idea that the largest companies or conglomerates now operate across a number of different cultural industries
- the idea that the radical potential of the internet has been contained to some extent by its partial incorporation into a large, profit-orientated set of cultural industries

AUDIENCES

Media effects - Albert Bandura

- the idea that the media can implant ideas in the mind of the audience directly
- the idea that audiences acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through modelling
- the idea that media representations of transgressive behaviour, such as violence or physical aggression, can lead audience members to imitate those forms of behaviour.

Cultivation theory - George Gerbner

- the idea that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them (i.e. cultivating particular views and opinions)
- the idea that cultivation reinforces mainstream values (dominant ideologies).

Reception theory - Stuart Hall

- the idea that communication is a process involving encoding by producers and decoding by audiences
- the idea that there are three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be decoded:
 - the dominant-hegemonic position: the encoder's intended meaning (the preferred reading) is fully understood and accepted
 - the negotiated position: the legitimacy of the encoder's message is acknowledged in general terms, although the message is adapted or negotiated to better fit the decoder's own individual experiences or context
 - the oppositional position: the encoder's message is understood, but the decoder disagrees with it, reading it in a contrary or oppositional way.

Fandom - Henry Jenkins

- the idea that fans are active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings
- the idea that fans appropriate texts and read them in ways that are not fully authorised by the media producers ('textual poaching')
- the idea that fans construct their social and cultural identities through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, and are part of a participatory culture that has a vital social dimension.

'End of audience' theories - Clay Shirky

- the idea that the Internet and digital technologies have had a profound effect on the relations between media and individuals
- the idea that the conceptualisation of audience members as passive consumers of mass media content is no longer tenable in the age of the Internet, as media consumers have now become producers who 'speak back to' the media in various ways, as well as creating and sharing content with one another.

Black Mirror

San Junipero

(Series 3, Episode 4)

AS Component 2: Investigating media forms and products

A Level Component 2: Media forms and products in depth

Focus areas:

- Media language
- Representation
- Media industries
- Audiences

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Black Mirror* is a science fiction **anthology** TV show, created by Charlie Brooker and Annabelle Jones. Unlike many contemporary TV dramas that follow a long-form ‘**novelistic**’ format, *Black Mirror* recalls vintage anthology shows like *The Twilight Zone* or *Tales of the Unexpected*, with each episode acting as a standalone **TV movie**.
- The first two seasons (three episodes each) aired in the UK on Channel 4 in December 2011 and February 2013; in 2016 it moved to streaming platform Netflix for seasons three, four and five (each containing six episodes and a special).
- *Black Mirror* could be classified as ‘**speculative fiction**’ or ‘dystopian’ sci-fi, where specific elements of our contemporary world are exaggerated and distorted in a near-future setting. Each episode also uses conventions

of other genres, e.g. police procedural (*Smithereens*), horror (*The Black Museum*) or political satire (*The Waldo Effect*). The focus episode *San Junipero* could be classified as sci-fi romance.

- The ‘**showrunner**’ for all five series is journalist and comedy writer Charlie Brooker. He has collaborated with a range of other writers including his wife, Konnie Huq, and *Succession* creator Jesse Armstrong.
- The main theme of *Black Mirror* is the (usually unpleasant) effect of technology on human bodies and consciousness. Some have noted that the first two series were bleaker than the Netflix-produced seasons (including the focus episode) which has a lighter tone.
- *Black Mirror* was placed on many publications’ ‘Best TV of the 2010s’ lists and won an Emmy in 2012 for ‘Best TV Movie’. *San Junipero* won the Emmy for ‘Outstanding TV Movie’ and for ‘Outstanding Writing’ in 2016.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Consider the codes and conventions of media forms and products, including the processes through which media language develops as a genre.

Genres are ‘types’ of media product that present **codes and conventions** in a way that provides very specific **audience pleasures**. They are favoured by producers and institutions as they often represent a risk-free investment. Audiences (and creators) have a complex relationship with genres, involving a balance between familiar tropes and fresh elements that enable genres to evolve.

- *Black Mirror* is an anthology show, where each episode has a different cast, setting and plot. This means the show can be watched in any order, with each episode a standalone narrative.
- *San Junipero* could be classed as a sci-fi romance – but also as a ‘**period**’ piece as much of the action takes place in the 1980s and 90s, with appropriately detailed production design and music. It also has elements of 1980s teen movies like *Pretty in Pink*. Many older audiences would not only enjoy the plot but also the **nostalgia** for the different time periods.
- *San Junipero* has a notably more emotional and optimistic tone compared to the previous two series of *Black Mirror*, a deliberate decision by Brooker to counter criticism that the show had become ‘Americanised’ after its move to Netflix.
- The focus on a same-sex couple could also put the episode in the LGBTQ+ ‘coming-of-age’ genre such as *Moonlight* or *Blue is the Warmest Colour*. Critics praised the episode for avoiding the tragic ending that is conventional for same-sex romance narratives.

Some of the ‘speculative’ fiction conventions that *Black Mirror* uses are as follows:

- The **protagonists** are ordinary people trying to negotiate the impact of technology on their lives in the near future. This differs from ‘hard’ sci-fi like the *Star Wars* or *Star Trek* franchises that feature traditional heroes, spaceships, aliens

etc. (an exception to this is the *Black Mirror* episode *USS Callister* where many of the ‘space opera’ conventions are played for laughs or are subverted).

- In most episodes there is no clear **antagonist** – usually it is the technology itself that produces conflict with the main characters.
- The majority of the episodes follow the conventions of **dystopian** fiction – principally, the extrapolation of something recognisable from our contemporary reality (like social media approval in *Nosedive*) and its pessimistic impact on the lives of the characters.
- The **narrative** in dystopian fiction usually has an unhappy ending – *San Junipero* is unusual for *Black Mirror* in that it shows the more hopeful (though nonetheless problematic) aspects to virtual reality technology and ends on an optimistic note.
- *Black Mirror* has been applauded by critics for re-introducing the anthology format. Successful shows that have also adopted this structure are *American Horror Story* and *Solos*. You could consider how this format offers different audience pleasures (e.g. narrative resolution and closure) compared to other long form TV dramas.

Consider the processes through which meanings are established through intertextuality.

- The 1980s and 1990s settings for *San Junipero* contain a wealth of intertextual references to American culture from the period. Kelly’s costume in the 1987 segment was specifically inspired by ‘Control’-era Janet Jackson.
- The music used in the nightclub Tuckers evokes the historical period, but also underscores the central romance (e.g. *Heart and Soul* by T’Pau) and the main concept of existing in a computer-generated virtual reality (e.g. *Living In A Box*).
- The different movies that are playing at the San Junipero cinema are also period-specific but also link to the themes of the narrative, e.g. *The Lost Boys* whose tagline is ‘Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow up. Never grow old’!

- Shots of other ‘vintage’ technology like Pac-Man and Top Speed arcade games and different models of TV sets also help to establish a sense of time and place but also offer suggestions that perhaps this environment is an escape from the ‘real’ world.

Theoretical approach: Narratology – Todorov

- Consider how *San Junipero* fits into Todorov’s five step **narrative structure**, and how it also plays with it.
- The **equilibrium**: the first scene shows Yorkie going to the nightclub, yet the ‘twist’ is that this is an artificial virtual reality, and the ‘normal life’ of the character is lying in a hospital, paralysed after a car accident. The equilibrium can also be the ‘reveal’.
- The **disruption**: for the characters, this is their meeting in the first scene followed by ‘losing’ each other in different time periods. However, for the audience, the disruption could be the revelation that San Junipero is not a real place at all.
- There are **enigma codes** associated with each of the episode’s genre ingredients – e.g. the ‘will-they-won’t-they?’ narrative of a conventional romance and the questions raised by the apparent time-travelling element from sci-fi and how it is possible.

Consider how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning.

Visual codes:

- Codes of clothing**: compare the costumes worn by Yorkie and Kelly in the different time periods. How does Yorkie’s costume convey her awkwardness and lack of confidence? How does Kelly’s costume do the opposite? (Particularly in the way it references strong female pop stars like Whitney Houston and Janet Jackson.) Notably, Yorkie’s costume does not change throughout the narrative – to reflect on this you may want to consider the ‘nerd makeover’ trope often seen in teen movies like *The Breakfast Club*.
- Gesture and expression**: despite being science fiction, the initial flirting and evolving relationship are played **naturalistically**, and

with an authenticity that has been praised by LGBTQ+ audiences.

- Iconography and setting**: consider how the use of sets, props, costumes, and music evoke the historical periods featured in the virtual environment. These challenge our expectations of a science fiction show. Compare to the scenes set in the real world: how does the *mise-en-scene* establish scenes as taking place in a near-future world of advanced technology?

Technical codes: Audio codes

Dialogue:

- There is an authentic and compelling tone to the dialogue between Yorkie and Kelly that is both flirtatious (“*I’m regarding you*”) and wary.
- When the ‘real world’ is revealed, there is a notable absence of ‘tech-heavy’ terminology that would be usual for the science fiction genre – this keeps the emphasis on the emotional core of the narrative.

Music:

- The music used in each time period has two functions: to establish the period setting (from 1987 to 2002), but also to underscore the emotional and thematic content. You may wish to look at the lyrics to *Heaven Is a Place on Earth* by Belinda Carlisle, *Fake* by Alexander O’Neal or *Living in a Box* by Living in a Box – consider how these songs contribute to our understanding of the characters’ lives.

Consider how genre conventions are socially and historically relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way (A Level only).

- The same-sex romance reflects the changes to social norms that have taken place in the late 20th and 21st centuries.
- Notably, the romance has a happy ending – a departure from films and TV featuring LGBTQ+ characters, where often the characters are ‘punished’ for their sexuality with a tragic finale. You may wish to investigate this convention further by watching *The Celluloid Closet*, a documentary film that examines portrayals of homosexuality in Hollywood films.

Theoretical approach: Genre – Steve Neale

- Neale says that though genres may be seen as being limited by familiar **tropes**, they are also marked by difference, variation, and change. Science fiction and romance have a recognisable array of conventions that produce audience pleasures. From narrative ingredients like the use of advanced technology and virtual reality (sci-fi genre) to the ‘feel-good’ response created by watching two characters fall in love despite significant obstacles (romance).
- However, Neale would say they also need to display something original to set them apart from other examples. Evolution is essential to sustain a genre, and *San Junipero* does this by introducing elements that could be seen as nostalgic (associated with period dramas set in a recent history) and making the romance a same-sex love affair (distinguishing it from other, heteronormative sci-fi love stories like *The Time Traveller’s Wife*).

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Consider how representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences (A Level only).

- Brooker said the first draft of the script had a heterosexual romance at its centre, but he decided to change this to a same-sex relationship as a comment on the acceptability of LGBTQ+ relationships (including gay marriage) in the 1980s and 1990s.
- The episode was warmly received by the LGBTQ+ community, especially as the sexuality of the characters is not portrayed as problematic; the love between Yorkie and Kelly has numerous obstacles, but their sexuality is not one of them.
- Actor Mackenzie Davis (Yorkie) said “*I could never have anticipated what a healthy, biracial gay love story – in which neither character dies – could mean to those who had experienced a dearth of positive depictions of their identities.*”
- The revelation that, in actuality, the relationship is between two elderly women also challenges stereotypes of this age group.

- Though both characters *do* physically die by the end, spiritually they remain together for eternity (driving into a literal sunset, in a reference to *Thelma and Louise*). This subverts the common portrayal of LGBTQ+ relationships as doomed or tragic.

The effect of social and cultural context on representations.

Representations of gender and sexuality:

- Brooker has said he deliberately wanted to create more female and non-heteronormative characters in *Black Mirror* after realising the first season focused on straight male protagonists.
- He said that it is “*powerfully resonant*” that same-sex relationships would have been condemned in 1987 and some of the other time periods. Adding to this was the context of Donald Trump winning the US presidential election. Trump is a right-wing politician, who vocally condemns liberal and progressive ideas, especially ideas regarding gender and sexuality. His appointment was widely feared by members of LGBTQ+ communities.
- The fact that this is an inter-racial relationship between two elderly women, one of whom is physically disabled, also challenges more stereotypical representations of these social groups.
- The episode’s double Emmy and BAFTA wins were welcomed as a cultural shift towards more positive attitudes towards same-sex relationships.
- The portrayal of more extreme alternative sexualities seen in the Quagmire fetish club are less positive, representing these characters as ‘lost souls’.

Theoretical approaches: Feminist theory – bell hooks (pen name of Gloria Jean Watkins)

- bell hooks identifies **patriarchal** power as a major problem in society. She says patriarchy victimises both women and men, forcing them into stereotypical roles, and punishing them if they do not conform to these roles.

- *San Junipero* challenges this view by portraying a ‘heaven on earth’ where the female LGBTQ+ characters are free to interact, flirt, have sex and fall in love without the disapproval or persecution of patriarchal society.

Theoretical approaches: Gender performativity – Judith Butler

- Butler asserts that gender is not a fixed, biologically determined characteristic, but rather a fluid **social construct**. She suggests people ‘perform’ a gender role composed of clothes, hair/make-up, posture, and other behaviours.
- It’s interesting that though ‘anything is possible’ in the virtual environment, both the main characters choose to remain female.
- Another *Black Mirror* episode that you may wish to consider is *Striking Vipers* which more explicitly explores the performance and fluidity of gender and sexual identities.

Theoretical approaches: Identity theory – David Gauntlett

- Gauntlett asserts that audiences actively borrow from media texts to help construct their identity: “*a narrative of the self*”. These are not stable, they are **fluid**, depending on the media text and characters being consumed.
- Long form **multi-protagonist** dramas offer audiences a range of different characters for audiences to identify with. *Black Mirror* departs from this, as each of the episodes is self-contained, usually focusing on one or two main characters.
- Nonetheless, *San Junipero* has been widely acclaimed by critics and by the LGBTQ+ community for showing a healthy, optimistic portrayal of a same-sex relationship, the result of which has had a very positive effect on queer viewers’ sexual identity. Kelly’s shift from a heterosexual marriage (and motherhood) to a LGBTQ+ relationship with Yorkie also suggests a fluid nature to sexuality.

PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Media industries

Consider the processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups, and individuals in a global context.

- *Black Mirror* was created by Charlie Brooker and producer Annabelle Jones. The first season was produced by Zeppotron (a division of Dutch media company Endemol Shine) for Channel 4.
- Brooker was inspired by the intimate relationships people were developing with digital technology. He wanted to explore what an extrapolation of these relationships might mean for the individual and society. Read this interview with Brooker for more on this theme: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2011/dec/01/charlie-brooker-dark-side-gadget-addiction-black-mirror>
- After two seasons it was announced *Black Mirror* would become a **co-production** with a US institution.
- In 2014, Netflix bought exclusive US distribution rights, and later won a bidding war to produce the show. Initially, this was to be a co-production with Channel 4, but after issues regarding budget and creative freedom, Brooker and Jones opted to work exclusively with Netflix. In 2015, the streaming channel commissioned 12 new episodes (which would become seasons three and four).
- Due to the global reach of Netflix, by 2016 *Black Mirror* was available in 80 territories.
- In 2020, Brooker and Jones formed Broke and Bones production company to continue making *Black Mirror* for distribution by Netflix.

Consider the significance of economic factors to media industries and their products.

- After the first two seasons, Channel 4 cited **budgetary restraints** as a reason for delaying the commissioning of a third season. The search for a co-production partner led to a bidding war in the USA, which Netflix won by committing to producing another ten episodes.

- Lucy Pyke, producer for Netflix, said the move would ensure that *Black Mirror* would be “bigger and better” and more international than the first two seasons (which were based in the UK).
- You may wish to consider the differences in style and tone between the first two (UK-produced) seasons and the more recent ones (produced by Netflix in US and set in a range of different countries).

Theoretical approaches – Cultural industries: Hesmondhalgh

- One of Hesmondhalgh’s key ideas is that the radical potential of the internet has been limited by the domination of large cultural institutions (which are increasingly indivisible for technology giants like Google, Apple, and Amazon).
- In contrast to this, Netflix (and other web-based streaming services) invest vast sums of money in their productions, and yet leave almost all creative control to the showrunners. This has led to a **diverse** range of products, unafraid to take risks and ‘push the envelope’ of what makes successful TV.
- Another of Hesmondhalgh’s assertions is that cultural industries are different to other manufacturers. Media texts are purchased usually just once, and then continually re-used rather than wearing out and having to be replaced. This means IP (intellectual property) and the range of products using it must be sold (and re-sold in different forms) very carefully to maintain a profit. This leads to heavy investment in familiar products (including stars) and less experimentation.
- As Netflix is subscription-based, it means it is free from some of these constraints. It still needs to make entertaining shows that engage with a range of audiences, but unlike TV channels using a **commercial model** (where funding is dependent on advertising), they have more opportunity for experimentation. *Black Mirror* is a good example of a show that explores challenging themes without the pressure of drawing a huge audience.

Consider recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation and the impact of digitally convergent media platforms (A Level only).

- Due to its global reach on a digital streaming platform, *Black Mirror* has extended its audience beyond the UK (and US) into over 80 different territories.
- In addition, the *Black Mirror* brand has been extended into a number of **webisodes** produced by Netflix Polska and América Latina in collaboration with some of Poland and South America’s most popular YouTubers. This extends the audience reach and may attract more viewers to watch the full seasons and episodes on Netflix.

PART 4: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

How media products target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences.

- The theme of how technology has an impact on individuals and society particularly targets those who already have an intimate relationship with their devices.
- The dystopian nature of these relationships, and the way they can potentially warp human bodies and consciousness would also appeal to viewers who are cynical and suspicious about technology.
- With the focus episode, there is also a clear market for LGBTQ+ audiences; the hopeful finale would be especially appealing.
- The global reach of the show and distribution by a trusted streaming service like Netflix may also attract new audiences for whom a show like this is a new experience.
- Charlie Brooker is a well-known comedy writer, journalist and broadcaster, and the fact he is the showrunner would target audiences who already enjoy his brand of caustic, cynical but also emotional content.

Theoretical approaches: Reception theory – Stuart Hall

Hall asserts that individual audience members will interpret media texts in different ways according to their established **values and beliefs**. He believed there were three modes of ‘reception’, where audiences **decode** what they consume.

- **Dominant/intended meaning** – the audience accepts the intended meanings and ideology of the text’s producers. In the case of *Black Mirror*, this would be viewers who already find the implications of our dependence on technology problematic. With *San Junipero* particularly, an LGBTQ+ audience would appreciate the heart-warming ‘against the odds’ romance.
- **Negotiated meaning** – the audience accepts some of the intended meanings but rejects others. Some viewers may enjoy the romantic element but will be more suspicious of this episode’s hopeful view of an afterlife inside virtual reality (e.g. ‘What happens if the servers are turned off?’).
- **Oppositional meaning** – the audience reject the intended meaning and instead formulate their own interpretation. Viewers who were fans of the UK-based first two seasons – which were far darker in tone – may interpret the Netflix-produced seasons as too sanitised and ‘Americanised’.
- Having said that, *San Junipero* has created a passionate fan group, especially amongst LGBTQ+ audiences. There are regular posts from fans on Twitter and other social media, even many years after the episode was first released. Many have created **fan art** and **‘femslash-fiction’** that honour the characters and extends their story beyond the original narrative: in the virtual world of *San Junipero* anything is possible, and fans have imagined Yorkie and Kelly in other historical settings or interacting with LGBTQ+ characters from other films/TV.
- The spin-off **webisodes** in Poland and South America were written and directed by YouTubers, who could be considered **‘prosumers’** – fans who have created their own professional standard versions of the show’s themes, distributed via each creator’s YouTube channel. However, these were still commissioned by Netflix, with the intention of using them to market the series in these territories.

Theoretical approaches: Fandom – Henry Jenkins

- Jenkins asserts that fandom is a deeply personal and **creative relationship** with media products. He believes that genre films and TV in particular can unite marginalised people, and even be appropriated for political purposes (e.g. the use of the three-finger salute from *The Hunger Games* by Hong Kong democratic protestors).
- As an anthology show – with standalone episodes instead of a multi-strand, ongoing narrative – it is less likely that audiences would identify with a particular character and their ongoing arc.

THE RETURNED

(Series 1 Episode 1, 2012)



THE RETURNED

(Series 1 Episode 1, 2012)

Section A: Television in the Global Age (A Level)

Focus Areas:

Media Language

Representation

Media Industries

Audiences

Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- This product is the non-English Language product studied for Section A: Television in the Global Age at A Level, alongside an episode of *Humans*.
- The set product is Episode 1 of Series 1 broadcast in the UK on Channel 4. It was first broadcast on Channel 4 at 9pm in June 2013.
- *The Returned* is a French supernatural thriller created by Fabrice Gobert and produced by Haut et Court. It was originally broadcast on the Canal+ network in November 2012 and was inspired by the French film *Les Revenants* (2004). The programme ran for two series with 8 episodes in each.
- The main distributor was Zodiac Rights, and the programme was shown globally in over 70 countries.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Language

The codes and conventions of media forms and products, including the processes through which media language develops as a genre.

- In its simplest terms a genre is a type of media product, but it is more complex than that; genre provides a way for producers to communicate messages to audiences. Audiences need to be able to recognise genres and the codes and conventions are established over time. The audience have expectations that need to be fulfilled and establishing the genre is key to the effective marketing of the product.
- Genre has an influence on the production and distribution of television programmes, it affects

the way in which they are marketed and scheduled.

- The supernatural thriller genre has a well-established cultural history and has a recognisable repertoire of elements. These conventions have evolved over time and developed to reflect social and cultural change and the needs and expectations of audiences. However, these programmes share similarities which place them in the supernatural thriller genre including:
- A **narrative** with a focus on the appearance of the undead/zombies within a community and their attempts to deal with this.
 - Supernatural thrillers may use a range of different narrative structures. The programme may conform to Todorov's theory where the structure is linear from the initial disruption through to a resolution, or non-linear where time and space is manipulated through for example, flashbacks or flashforwards. In *The Returned*, the narrative is fragmented and there are flashbacks to the crash at the beginning and end of the episode.
 - Narrative disruptions occur that change the course of the story, these can be events that happen or revelations that are made by characters. Sometimes the audience are in a privileged spectator position whereby they know more than the characters within the story world. For example, in the set episode of *The Returned* the audience is shown Victor's part in the bus crash, this allows the audience to anticipate how the narrative may develop in future episodes.
 - Binary oppositions function as part of the narrative structure in supernatural thrillers. In *The Returned*, these include past vs present, living vs dead, illusion vs reality, the truth vs the perception of truth and light vs dark. The resolving of some of these binary oppositions within the story world may have an ideological significance, for example the discourse around the nature of grief and

acceptance and the sense of unease within the familiar. (**Structuralism: Levi-Strauss**).

- Plot situations are included that are typical of the supernatural thriller genre. For example, the unexplained events, the arrival of the strange, cherubic child, apocalyptic weather, conversations about what cannot be explained, the slow opening of doors to reveal what is on the other side and the flickering of lights to connote a strange event.
- Story arcs and narrative strands occur in and across episodes of an episodic series. In *The Returned*, as the first episode of a new series, there are several complex, enigmatic narrative strands, which will be interwoven across the episodes, including: the focus on each of the returned in future episodes, in the first one the focus is on Camille, the dam, the quest to find the truth and the impact of the returned on the community of the living and the dead.
- **Stock characters** usually including a 'creepy' child, the undead, the maternal, nurturing characters, victims and representations of authority. Often the pairing of characters are binary opposites and their relationships contribute to tensions within the narrative, for example that between Julie and Victor.
- **Setting and locations.** These will become synonymous with the programme and the brand, may be used in the marketing and will relate to characters and the sub-genre. In *The Returned*, the setting is on the edges of a ski resort where the houses are isolated, the roads are long and empty and everything is surrounded by mist and darkness, typical of the genre. Within the individual homes there is a sense of claustrophobia reinforced by the darkness and the framing.
- **Iconography.** As well as conveying the genre, this can have a thematic significance. For example, mirrors and windows feature in this first episode as ways of replicating the world but also fabricating reality. Characters are often viewed through the windows as if being watched adding to the sense of unease, or look at themselves in mirrors as if trying to see the truth. At one point Claire and Jerome watch Camille through the windows from outside in disbelief at what they see.

Theoretical Approach: Narratology - Todorov

- All narratives share a basic structure involving movement from one state of equilibrium to another, separated by a disequilibrium. The

opening **equilibrium** in *The Returned* presents the bereaved community who are attempting to adjust to the deaths of their loved ones.

- The **disruption** to this equilibrium is the return of the dead, Camille is accepted by her family but there is further tragedy with M and Mme Costa and grief for Adele with the unbelievable return of Simon.
- The **recognition** that the equilibrium has been disrupted is evident in the tragic consequences, the suicide of M Costa and natural events, the receding of the reservoir waters.
- As this is an example of an episodic drama there would not be a **resolution** at the end of the first episode, instead there is a **cliffhanger** as the narrative returns to the initial crash and Victor is seen as the cause.



How genre conventions are socially and historically relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way:

- Although genres have never been stagnant, it is increasingly the case that they are more dynamic and seek to challenge audience expectations. The genre now is a starting point to target the audience and then surprise them through hybridity and intertextuality.
- Some programmes, for example *The Returned*, are harder to categorise due to their hybridity and the fact that, whilst they employ more typical conventions of the supernatural thriller, they also borrow from other genres. For example, *The Returned* includes references to the zombie genre as the characters are 'undead' and also to fantasy, but is also set amongst families in a domestic drama setting.

- The programme shares some similar codes and conventions of the science fiction genre in that it focuses on extraordinary events outside the realms of reality. However, whereas science fiction has a basis in some scientific reality and appeals because it could happen, supernatural thrillers are based on events that defy reality and explanation.

Theoretical Approach: Genre – Steve Neale

- Neale asserts that genres may be dominated by repetition, but they are also marked by difference, variation and change. The supernatural thriller genre has a recognisable repertoire of elements, but to appeal to audiences, new programmes need to display something different to set them apart from other examples. Difference is essential to sustain a genre, to simply repeat the codes and conventions of the form would not appeal to an audience
- *The Returned* demonstrates difference in that it focuses less on the gore and horror of more typical zombie dramas and more on the psychological impact on the community of the loss and then the return of the children.
- The children who return are not classic zombies in their appearance or behaviour, they outwardly appear 'normal' and are attempting to return to the life they left.
- In its style and aesthetics, the programme borrows from the 1930s French cinematic tradition of Poetic Realism. The visual style is minimalist, but lyrically constructed. The tone echoes with a sense of doom and the characters are on the edge of society within an isolated setting living with their grief. The focus is on the nature of the human condition and what it means to be happy.
- Genres exist within specific economic, institutional, and industrial contexts. The recognisable codes and conventions of the supernatural thriller make them easy to market to audiences. However, subverting and challenging these conventions by introducing more unique elements as with *The Returned's* characters, narrative and aesthetic, can also ensure commercial success.

How the combination of elements of media language influence meaning

Visual codes:

- **Codes of clothing:** The connotations of characters' clothing and appearance create meanings. Clothing is a rapid way of communicating messages in *The Returned*: the normal, everyday clothing of both the living and the dead challenges

the more typical codes and conventions of the genre and establishes the idea of the uncanny within the realistic.

- **Gesture and expression:** non-verbal communicators are quick ways of constructing meaning. Claire's shocked and confused expression when she sees Camille contrasts with Camille's apparent normality. The audience too are confused and empathise with Claire. Julie's gesture in holding Victor's hand and taking him into her home has intertextual references to the vampire genre.
- **Iconography and Setting:** the props, backgrounds and settings work to construct meaning and establish the supernatural thriller genre. The binary oppositions of the domestic setting, the isolated subway and the outdoor natural locations of the forest reflect the narrative themes and tensions. The opening scene when the butterfly escapes from the picture creates enigmatic unease foreshadowing the narrative. The fact that Camille's room has been kept like a shrine allows her to assume that everything is the same.

Technical codes

- Camera shots, movement and angles work together to communicate messages and 'show' the narrative.
- Close-ups advance the relationships between characters and establish tension and a dynamic. This is evident in the 'conversations' between Camille and her parents and her first meeting with Lena.
- Framing is also important in the establishment of characters and relationships, for example the interaction between Camille and Claire creates unease as Claire seems happy to accept that Camille has returned. The combination of framing, gesture and expression foreshadows the tension between Claire, Jerome and Pierre.
- Establishing shots are quick ways of communicating information. The early establishing shot of the town serves to create a sense of cultural verisimilitude establishing a real place in which the characters function, so reinforcing their believability.
- Long shots of the undead on the lonely road and Lucy alone in the subway are conventional of the supernatural thriller genre, as is Victor, the seemingly innocent child standing alone outside Julie's apartment.

Audio codes

Sound and music are effective in communicating meaning in this programme.

- **Music:** this effectively establishes characters and the genre. The sinister mood music at the start quickly establishes elements of the narrative and the genre. The audio track when Camille returns is disconcerting. When Claire, in a panic, hides the 'shrine' in Camille's room the music is discordant, contrasting with the seemingly normal act of fetching Camille's bathrobe.
- **Diegetic sound:** the panicked breathing as Camille is walking home is unsettling. The thunder is a conventional audio code in this genre signifying fear and unease. Camille's scream when she realises that Lena is her twin sister but is four years older than her communicates her grief, loss, and confusion. The disturbing noise from the film being watched by Julie before she sees Victor outside contrasts with his apparent innocence and offers a warning.
- **Dialogue:** this serves to establish the genre, advance the narrative, and construct the characters. The group meeting at the beginning of the episode adds to the back story and highlights tensions between the characters. The questioning by the undead of the living reinforces the strangeness of the situation and their confusion, for example Simon asking for Adele in the bar.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Consider how representations are constructed through a process of selection and combination.

- All representations are constructed and are not 'windows on the world'. Representations are constructed through media language, the information in the previous section will therefore be relevant when exploring representation in *The Returned*. Media products are created through a process of mediation to communicate meanings using elements of media language including:
 - **Technical codes.** Camera shots, angles, movements and editing combine to construct representations and to position audiences in relation to those representations.
 - **Audio codes:** diegetic and non-diegetic sound including a soundtrack, mood music and dialogue contribute to the construction of representations.
 - **Iconography:** clothing, props and settings, particularly in relation to the cultural context, contribute to the construction of representations and will have been a key consideration of the producers in creating the characters and their roles.

The way in which representations make claims about realism

- One of the aims of a television programme whether it is a documentary or a drama, is to make the audience feel that the representations constructed are accurate, plausible and true to life. This is regardless of whether the storyline is seemingly unbelievable and outside of the experience of the audience, as in *The Returned*. The aim is to suspend the disbelief of the audience.
- One of the ways this is achieved, particularly in fictional programmes, is through surface realism where the choice of sets, locations, costumes, and props contribute to an accurate representation.
- Another way is through generic verisimilitude, where the codes and conventions of the genre are adhered to and fulfil audience expectations, as a result the audience will believe what they see.
- Where representations are seen to be influenced by cultural and social circumstances, for example in the way gender and issues are represented in a programme, this contributes to the construction of realism. For example, the representations of gender in *The Returned* and the allegorical reference to the contemporary issue of migrants in France.

How representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences

- Representations carry ideological significance and reflect the time in which the product was made. There is ideological significance to the way in which representations are constructed in *The Returned* which positions the audience to look at social groups and issues in different ways, reflecting cultural shifts. For example, this episode invokes discourse around 'the unknown' and how those who are perceived as 'other' are treated in a culture – with fear and trepidation.
- The way in which the representations are constructed in *The Returned* means that French audiences who have personal experience of the migrant issue are more likely to take this reading from the programme.
- In *The Returned*, the way in which the representations are constructed positions audiences. For example, Claire's representation as the maternal figure positions audiences to empathise with her reaction to the return of Camille. The construction of Victor as the innocent young child positions audiences to sympathise with his enigmatic situation and Julie's initial response to him.

The effect of social and cultural context on representations

The effect of historical context on representations Representations of gender: Women/ Femininity

There is a range of female characters in the first episode, presenting different representations of women and they are central to the narrative. The construction of female representations creates a discourse around how women are presented and how the audience is positioned in relation to the female characters.

- The female characters are represented generally as passive and emotional in *The Returned*. They perform roles related to nurturing and domesticity. In the early scenes of the episode Sandrine announces her pregnancy, thanks Pierre and heralds it as a way of healing the past.
- **Claire** and **Julie** are both represented as carers, Claire welcomes the return of her daughter Camille without questioning the unbelievability of the event, whilst Julie tends to the basic needs of the unknown child Victor, feeding him and letting him stay the night.



- **Adele** is first seen by Simon in a wedding dress representing her more traditional female role. She is also seen to be emotional and hysterical after assuming that she has seen the ghost of Simon.
- Technical codes contribute to the construction of representation, for example the close-ups of Claire reinforce her passive representation, the intra-diegetic gaze between her and Jerome or Pierre show that she looks to others for help and explanation. In the meeting at the start of the episode, the camera repeatedly cuts to Pierre as the leader of the group, the women look up to him.
- **Camille**, the focus of this episode, goes some way to breaking the passive female stereotype. She is seen as active and resourceful in escaping from the valley and determined in her need to return home.

- **Lucy** is constructed as an object of the male gaze. Her clothing, gesture and the technical codes construct this representation and the fact that she is trapped in a menial job, in a subservient relationship with an older man on whom she relies for money. However, she does have some control over Jerome as he pays for her in a spiritual role to communicate with the dead Camille.
- **Lena** is constructed as a stereotypical rebellious teenager who has regular confrontations with her parents. Her representation is constructed through her code of casual clothing, her truculent behaviour and expressions. She is sexual, if not overtly sexualised. The shots of her in the bar reinforce this representation, particularly in her conversation with Simon. However, she is also vulnerable, as she is happy to take him to a remote part of the village.

Representations of gender: Men/ Masculinity

- Some of the men in *The Returned*, for example **Pierre**, are represented as dominant, rational and in control within the community. It is to Pierre that Claire turns initially after the return of Camille and he questions Camille about what she can remember, taking control of the situation.
- **Jerome** challenges this typical masculine representation and is presented as more emotional and unable to cope with his loss and grief. In the community meeting he is seated on the outside and questions the 'ugliness' of the memorial to the dead. The fact that he believes that Lucy can communicate with Camille reinforces his vulnerability. In the filming of the shot when Camille comes outside to join them in the storm, he cannot bear to look at her.
- Similarly, **Simon** is represented as 'other' and an outsider. Other than the bar, in the first episode he remains outside, looking into the life he once had.



Theoretical Approaches: Theories of representation - Stuart Hall

Hall's idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other', can be explored in relation to *The Returned*:

- Stuart Hall discusses the notion that the powerful elite groups, for example white, middle class males, control the media and create a 'norm' which reflects themselves. Representations of other groups are then constructed in terms of their difference to this, their 'otherness'.
- In constructing the representations of the undead in binary opposition to the living, Gobert has in *The Returned* created an allegory of the migration of Syrians into Europe, specifically France, and invokes a discourse around global migration.
- In making connections between the undead and migrants Gobert is making a political point about a humanitarian crisis.
- The returned/undead are not human, therefore are 'other' and are feared by the living in the same way that the French people feared the impact of migration on their communities. In *The Returned*, the community is established in the beginning as the equilibrium that will inevitably be disrupted.
- The undead are further reinforced as 'other' by linking them to unnatural events, for example the receding of the dam waters.

Theoretical Approaches: Feminist theory - bell hooks and Van Zoonen

- bell hooks' assertion that feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination can be explored in relation to *The Returned*:
 - Men are seen to be in dominant positions in the programme. They display the character traits associated with masculinity; they are on the whole rational, efficient, unemotional. Pierre is the one who attempts to rationalise the situation and to talk to Camille.
 - Claire is represented in a domestic role. She is maternal and a nurturer, she turns to the men in her life Jerome and Pierre for help, but her maternal instinct is dominant and overrides any rational questioning of the return of Camille. Similarly, Julie is a nurse and therefore in a role as a carer and responds maternally to Victor, welcoming him into her home.
 - Lucy is a clear victim of patriarchal oppression; she is on display for the gratification of men and is used by men.

- Van Zoonen's assertions can be explored in relation to *The Returned*:
 - The idea that gender is constructed through discourse, and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context
 - The idea that the display of women's bodies as objects to be looked at is a core element of Western patriarchal culture
 - The discourse around constructions of gender in *The Returned* requires the audience to consider how culturally there has been little change in the roles of men and women which function as binary opposites. The women in the programme are associated with domesticity, nurturing and appealing to men. They are emotional and less active in the narrative. Men are active, make the decisions and are rational, reinforcing the patriarchal diegesis.
 - Men are constructed more through the intradiegetic gaze; for example, Pierre is looked up to by the others with respect as a leader.
 - Lucy is sexualised and is an object of visual pleasure for both the audience and the male characters. Her role is passive and she is the one being looked at as an object of the male gaze (Mulvey). It is Lucy, who at the end of this first episode, is murdered by a man and seen as disposable.

PART 3: Starting Points – Media Industries

Processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups, and individuals in a global context

- Channel 4 was launched on November 2nd, 1984, 18 years after BBC2. The Annan Committee set up during the Wilson government of 1970 had recommended the setting up of a fourth channel. This was authorised by the 1980 Broadcasting Act.
- Channel 4 embraced the remit that it should cater for minorities and encourage innovation. In the early days, the channel caused controversy and was fodder for the tabloids who nicknamed it 'Channel Swore' and 'Channel Bore' and waged war on its tendency to show more sexually explicit material, to give voice to gay people and other minority groups and to discuss material regarded as too risky by other channels. This was echoed in their 2013 rebrand with the slogan 'Born Risky'.
- Channel 4, along with the BBC, has been at the forefront of broadcasting non-English-language programmes. *The Returned* achieved critical acclaim and was popular with audiences, but was the first fully sub-titled drama programme to be broadcast by the channel in over twenty years.

- Channel 4 was set up with a unique model as a publisher-broadcaster, meaning that the channel does not have any in-house production, but instead commissions content from production companies throughout the UK, or enters into co-production with other media companies. *The Returned* for example was originally broadcast by Canal+, a premium French cable channel, which is owned by multi-media conglomerate Vivendi.
- Channel 4 fulfils its statutory public service remit comprising 15 elements, including:
 - Be innovative and distinctive
 - Stimulate public debate on contemporary issues
 - Reflect cultural diversity of the UK
 - Champion alternative points of view
 - Inspire change in people's lives
 - Nurture new and existing talent(www.channel4.com)



The significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding to media industries and their products:

- Channel 4 is a publicly-owned and commercially-funded UK public service broadcaster, with a statutory remit to deliver high-quality, innovative, alternative content that challenges the status quo.
- In 1993 Channel 4 became the third largest broadcaster in Britain with an average audience share of nearly 11%. It also became the largest investor in the British Film Industry and a major investor in British Screen Finance Ltd, a company investing in new British films. It has played a key role in the revival of the UK film industry as co-producers of the Film on Four series.
- Channel 4 is in a unique position as a broadcaster as it is a self-sufficient business that reinvests all profits back into programmes, at zero cost to the taxpayer. 'A *'Robin Hood' model of cross-funding means programmes that make money pay for others that are key to delivering our remit but that are loss-making e.g., News and Current Affairs.*' (www.channel4.com).

- The channel regularly reminds its audience of its public service status through taglines used in advertising campaigns, for example 'Paid for by advertising, owned by you'.
- However, in June 2021, the government announced a consultation into the possible privatisation of Channel 4 in order to make it more able to compete with the big tech giants including Google, Amazon and Facebook, where at the time there is not a level playing field.
- Channel 4 argues that it is operating a remarkably resilient model and even during the pandemic had a surplus of £74 million. Its concern is that changing the channel's funding model will inevitably mean changing its remit to offer distinctive and diverse programming.
- Television programmes are funded in a range of different ways. *The Returned* received funding from regional agencies to support its production including The Rhone-Alpes Regional Fund that supports film and television projects in that region of France and the Centre National de la Cinematographie.

How media organisations maintain, through marketing, varieties of audience nationally and globally

- It is essential to use marketing to gain audience interest for a new programme. Different strategies are used designed to suit the genre, the narrative and the target audience.
- Programme makers and channels now have access to a range of digital platforms which facilitates creativity and audience reach including traditional television slots, posters, YouTube and social media platforms.
- Channel 4 created a multi-platform campaign for *The Returned* placing the audience in the seemingly realistic world of the programme. This created a social media buzz focusing on the recognisable genre with a narrative twist. The campaign included:
 - A trailer introducing *The Returned* as 'The No1 French thriller' and emphasising its hybridity through the inclusion of taglines including, 'When The Dead Return', 'History Resurfaces', 'Wounds Reopen', 'Murder Returns', 'Love Reignites' underscored by a haunting soundtrack.
 - Merchandising including T-shirts to target the fan community.
 - An innovative, interactive website.
 - A 360 virtual navigation of the town on multiple platforms.

- The marketing of the programme as a quality drama through focusing on Canal+ as a reputable broadcaster and the subsequent BAFTA Awards.

The regulatory framework of contemporary media in the UK

The role of regulation in global production, distribution, and circulation

- Channel 4, similarly to other commercial broadcasters, is licensed to broadcast and is externally regulated by Ofcom, which is accountable to Parliament and publishes standards which must be adhered to by broadcasters. One of the duties of Ofcom is to examine specific complaints made by listeners about programmes broadcast on channels that it has licensed.
- Channel 4 is in a slightly different position as it does not produce its own content, it is therefore the responsibility of all programme-makers together with Channel 4's editorial staff, taking advice from the lawyers in the legal and compliance department where appropriate, to ensure that programmes comply with Ofcom's code.
- Television companies and specific channels operate self-regulation through scheduling decisions, the watershed and announcements at the beginning of programmes giving information about possible areas of offence. *The Returned* was scheduled at 9pm, this post watershed slot indicates to viewers that the programme may contain content that is unsuitable for children, 'Unsuitable material can include everything from sexual content to violence, graphic or distressing imagery and swearing.' (www.ofcom.org.uk)
- Where versions of the programme are broadcast in different countries, there may be issues around different regulatory systems. Attitudes of other countries to offensive material including sexual content, violence and swearing may differ and amendments may have to be made to the programme.

Theoretical Approaches

Regulation: Livingston and Lunt

- Channel 4 as a public service broadcaster operates both a consumer-based regulatory model offering choice for audiences through the C4 remit which details the range of content that must be produced by the channel including news and current affairs, and also a citizen-based model playing a role in shaping society and taking responsibility for media content through self-regulation. This ensures a diverse range of

programming with an aim to offer programmes that challenge the status quo and 'represent unheard voices' (annualreport.channel4.com). For example, decisions made about the scheduling of *The Returned* ensured that citizens were protected from potentially offensive material.

- The fact that television companies now operate in a global market has introduced challenges with regard to regulation of content. In addition, the ways in which television content is distributed to audiences across a range of digital platforms means that regulation is more complex.

Cultural Industries: Hesmondhalgh

- As Hesmondhalgh suggested in his theory, cultural industry companies use a variety of strategies to minimise risk and maximise audiences. One of these strategies is **horizontal integration**. An example of this in relation to *The Returned* is the acquisition of Television Par Satellite by Vivendi's Canal+ Group in 2006. In doing so Canal+ bought out its main rival in the French pay television market and re-established control.
- **Vertical integration** is another strategy used by media companies. *The Returned* was produced and distributed by Canal+, a vertically integrated company.
- The consultation on the future of Channel 4 launched in June 2021 illustrates the issue of smaller companies having to compete against larger ones operating across a number of cultural industries.
- It has been suggested that public service broadcasters need help in order to survive against the big tech giants, including for example having more prominence on the apps on televisions and the programme guides. For example, More4 does not appear on the menu of many televisions.
- Another key strategy is the formatting of cultural products. Where audiences can anticipate what to expect from new products through, for example familiarity with genre conventions, then the risk is minimised. *The Returned*, whilst containing an enigmatic narrative, also contains typical codes and conventions of the supernatural thriller/zombie genre. The marketing materials for *The Returned* incorporated formatting by playing on the audience's fear of the unknown within the familiar.
- The programme format for *The Returned* was sold to the American A&E Studios and a US Version of *The Returned* was produced and broadcast in 2015 on Sundance TV.

PART 4: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

How media organisations reflect the needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting.

- *The Returned* appeals to a more niche, less mainstream Channel 4 audience who are targeted through their expectations based on the brand identity of the channel, offering something different and innovative. Channel 4 is able to commission programmes to target more specialised audiences by using their more commercial mainstream programmes to subsidise more niche productions.
- Whilst *The Returned* was initially broadcast on Channel 4, it was moved to the sister channel More4 which targets a more specialised audience.
- *The Returned* appeals across ages and gender due to the range of characters that audiences may find attractive or relate to. The primary target audience may be fans of the supernatural thriller/zombie genre, but the hybridity of the programme's genre will broaden the appeal. The fact that the programme is subtitled, and its aesthetic may appeal to a more specialised, intellectual audience.
- The programme may attract an inherited audience and fan base who will be familiar with other non-English-language programmes broadcast on this and other channels, for example in the Nordic Noir genre.
- The appeal of the genre. The supernatural thriller genre is popular and successful as it offers a range of audience pleasures. Audiences have expectations of the genre and gain pleasure in seeing expectations fulfilled (Neale). The genre offers escapism where the audience can be involved in alternative realism constructed by the programme.
- Narrative appeal. The narrative effectively highlights Neale's theory of how repetition and difference ensure the dynamic nature of genres. *The Returned* incorporates the typical codes and conventions of the supernatural thriller genre, whilst offering something different in terms of references to French culture and the surreal narrative structure.
- Marketing: the marketing campaign established the brand of the programme and created a buzz.

How audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same media in different ways

- Modern audiences may identify with the characters as the alternative world is similar to their own, this is helped by the surface realism and generic verisimilitude within the programme. Universal themes including love, loss and grief are

explored and the domestic, family setting will resonate with audiences.

- Audiences may use the programme for escapism and diversion. Although the domestic setting is familiar, the elements of fantasy, the surreal and the non-linear narrative offer diversion. The enigmas in the programme, the relationships and the puzzle of the flashbacks also offer diversionary appeal. The aesthetic pleasure of the visual aspects of the programme also offers escapism.
- The buzz around the programme facilitated social interaction whereby audiences used social media to discuss the programme and their ideas about 'solving' the puzzle set up in the programme's narrative. Active audiences engaged with the fan community and interactive experiences related to the programme.

Theoretical Approaches: Reception Theory – Stuart Hall

Consider Hall's assertion that there are three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be decoded, in relation to *The Returned*:

- An audience may understand and accept the producers' intended meaning, to construct a programme that appeals to audiences by including some typical conventions of the supernatural thriller genre, whilst offering something through the aesthetic that challenges the typicality. Some audiences will be attracted by the fact that it is French and by the allegorical narrative referencing the relationship between France and its migrant community. Audiences with cultural capital will be aware of how *The Returned* is influenced by French Poetic Realism.
- Some audiences may assume a negotiated position. These audiences may have been persuaded to watch the programme by opinion leaders including reviews and articles. They may enjoy elements of the programme including the narrative enigmas and the adherence to the more typical codes and conventions of the genre but may be more uncomfortable with the slow pace and the sub-titles.
- Some audiences may adopt an oppositional position and may feel that the programme offers nothing new and is merely an unsuccessful re-working of old ideas. They may feel that the more stereotypical codes and conventions of the genre, for example the violence and gore, is missing from the programme. Some audiences may be unhappy with the unfamiliar French aesthetic and the slow pace of the programme: '*Man, is it French — in the most stylish, morose and occasionally aloof ways. Episode by episode, 'The Returned'*'

unravels, savors (sic) and even overthinks its central mysteries... 'The Returned' is so beautiful to look at that it's easy to miss its shortcomings... the show takes a tad too long to connect its many plot threads; like most stylish Euro-mysteries, it has a habit of raising more questions than it can ever answer.'

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/tv/the-returned-a-morose-mesmerizing-tale-that-offers-a-new-twist-on-the-living-dead/2013/10/30/97b0160a-3b63-11e3-a94f-b58017bfee6c_story.html?utm_term=.db3c0ed7e56)

- In the present system of UK broadcasting, the advertising market is fragmented with channels competing for the same advertising revenue.
- Canal+, the original broadcaster of *The Returned* uses a subscription funding model and its vertical and horizontal integration strategies have ensured its financial stability.

Acknowledgements

Images: ©Haut et Court/Canal+

PART 5: STARTING POINTS – Media Contexts

Social and Cultural contexts. Consider:

- The role and remit of Channel 4 as a public service broadcaster and its cultural and social aims: *'We aim to create change in the wider world through all of our activities: from TV, to streaming, social media and film – and our day-to-day roles at Channel 4. It's the impact that Channel 4 has on society, on viewers, on British culture, on the creative industries and on the wider economy. It's why Channel 4 is – and will continue to be – different.'* (www.annualreport.channel4.com)
- The channel, in the commissioning of its programmes, reflects cultural diversity and stimulates debate over contemporary issues, for example in *The Returned*, the discourse around the environment and the way in which migrants are viewed in French society.
- *The Returned* is set in an alternative place, but in its domestic reality reflects contemporary themes of loss and grief.
- Audience responses to *The Returned* may reflect social and cultural circumstances.

Economic contexts. Consider:

- Channel 4 is in a unique position in that it is a public service broadcaster owned by the government and funded by advertising. In 2021 the government raised concerns regarding the difficulty of the channel in competing against the tech giants and is considering privatisation, this is despite the channel demonstrating its financial success in the 2021/21 report.
- This move may help the channel to compete more successfully globally. This may also be facilitated by the international marketability of the supernatural/zombie genre illustrated by the global reach of *The Returned* format.
- In the television industry, money can be made by owning intellectual property which Channel 4's publisher broadcaster model does not facilitate.

COMPONENT 2 - SECTION B: MAGAZINES (MAINSTREAM)



REPRESENTATION

GENDER

We learn what is expected of men and women.

This can be shown with the various topics, which provide aspects of conventional women’s identity including topics such as fashion and beauty to sex and relationships, this then creates instructions on how the magazine’s audiences should behave and Discussions regarding gender within women’s magazine (especially Women’s Realm) have largely focused on the influence that magazines have on the values and ideas of the audience in terms of gender socialisation.

Socialisation - is the process through which we learn the norms and values of our culture

Gender socialisation - refers to the way we in which look to fit into the social norm.

This conveys further messages to readers on who they are expected to be and what it means to be a woman, this is done through the overall content of the magazine and the representations of women (E.G. women in Women’s Realm are seen to be doing conventional housewife activities such as cooking and cleaning)

Further representations of female identity can also be found in other areas of Women’s realm including romance stories and knitting sections that are prominent in all issues of Women’s Realm. This then cultivates certain ideas for readers on how they should act.

The “48 page picture treasury of homemaking” this represents the feminist theory. This text shows that women are expected to be housewife from a cultural standpoint around the time of 1965, and within a modern day society this sort of thought process is derived from historical examples like this.

Bell hooks can also be applied because commonly around the time of 1965 white women were over represented within media texts such as women realm and there was a clear lack of racial diversity. Bell hooks believed that women of colour, because of race/sex have determined the amount that they are oppressed and under represented within the media.

Within the Atrixo advert we then see a gender representation with Judith butler. She believed that gender is a performance with that being said this is evident that the male plays the “hardworking performance where men always have to do the hard work around the house whereas women play the “conserved” where they are almost incapable of doing work that has a D.I.Y aspect to it.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Women in Society – Friedan

The conformist role of women, taken for granted as a norm of 50’s social norms, is reinforced throughout the magazines focus on housework, beauty and being a ‘good wife’.

Links nicely to Van Zoonen

Identity – Gauntlett

Women’s Realm provides young girls the tools to construct their own identities through their focus on cooking and the home. Note that the identities available are stereotypically feminine and so could be seen as a subversion or rejection of Pick & Mix

Gender Performance – Butler

Reinforces contemporary views of femininity and the role of women that were a part of the contemporary norms and values.

Links to Gramsci

MEDIA INDUSTRIES

The magazine industry has changed significantly since the 1960s when the historical set products were published. The marketplace was less crowded and the industry was dominated by a small number of major publishers.

Today, the industry is still dominated by major publishers (such as Hearst, IPC, Bauer) but there is a much wider range of titles available and much greater competition for readers. 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, in order to compete – many titles, such as Nuts and Loaded, have closed in recent years, and others, such as Company, have become online-only magazines.

- Woman’s Realm is published weekly by the International Publishing Corporation (IPC), 1958 to 2001, when it merged with Woman’s Weekly.
- IPC was acquired by Time Warner in 2001 and was renamed Time Inc. UK in 2014 after Time Inc. acquired the company in connection with its spinoff from Time Warner.
- Set edition: 7-13 February 1965
- Price: 6d (6 old pennies)
- Women’s magazines became very popular in the post-war period and, in the 1960s, sales of women’s magazines reached 12 million copies per week.
- Woman’s Realm was launched to take sales pressure of *Woman* – which was selling three million copies an issue.
- Woman’s Realms have always had a very different identity to the glossy monthlies, seeing themselves as a friend of the reader.
- Woman, Woman’s Realm and Vogue are mainstream publications and, it could be argued, can be seen to uphold many traditional ideologies surrounding gender (in relation to domesticity, motherhood, fashion and beauty for example) and perpetuate many narrow and stereotypical ideals of feminine beauty.
- 72% of GB adults 15+ consume print & digital magazines. That’s 37.7 million people.
- Combined research for Inside Magazine Publishing estimates that annual value of the magazine industry in 2012 to be £3.55 billion. This is split as follows:
 - - Consumers spend £1.8 billion on magazines at retail or via subscriptions.
 - - Print magazine advertising totals a further £750 million.
 - - Content marketing agencies (the producers of customer magazines) contribute a further £1 billion.
 - - There are in excess of 2,400 consumer magazines.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Power & Media Industries – Curran and Seaton

Woman’s Realm was released after the merger of three of the biggest UK magazine publishers to form IPC meaning the magazine industry was controlled by a relative monopoly in the UK.

Cultural industries – Hesmondhalgh

The horizontal integration of three magazine companies went into the creation of IPC and lead to it’s relative hegemony in the exciting as hell world of magazine publishing

Livingstone & Lunt—Regulation

They were regulated by the press council which was a British Voluntary press organisation.

Livingstone & Lunt applies as the struggle would have been between regulator and the consumer. The Voluntary nature of the Press council highlights Woman’s Realm’s desire for regulation but freedom to ignore it.

AUDIENCES

20-35 women, Aspirers and Mainstreamers

Working class (C1, C2, D, E)

Married mothers

Target Audience: Middle aged, housewives and normal everyday woman.

The target audience is mainly women who need help domestically but also in general family life. Also, the fact such a small section of the magazine is dedicated to fiction suggests the publishers believe actual stimulating content is not that important to the readership, reflecting the patriarchal society it was written in.

Demographics:

Middle-aged woman (25-45), supported by husband, middle class, high amounts of disposable income, interested in domesticity and family (“children’s raincoats”), and other stereotypes about woman at the time – Could link to Stuart Hall’s Representation theory which suggests stereotypes are made by those who have perceived power.

Psychographics:

Interested in stereotypical woman’s duties: kitchen, cleaning, childcare etc.

(‘Treasury of homemaking’, ‘Exciting new period romance’, reinforces stereotypes) This Woman’s Realm issue was published during the second wave of feminism. **Second-wave feminism** of the 1960s-1980s focused on issues of equality and discrimination. The second-wave slogan, “The Personal is Political,” identified women’s cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand how their personal lives reflected sexist power structures.

Betty Friedan was a key player in second-wave feminism. In 1963, her book *The Feminine Mystique* criticized the idea that women could find fulfillment only through childrearing and homemaking.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Cultivation Theory: Gerbner argues that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them.

Jonathan Bignell argues that ‘women’s magazines encode the identities they offer to females in certain ways and not others. Some feminine gender identities are coded as ‘natural’ while others are not.... Despite the plurality of subject-positions constructed by the discourses of magazines, this plurality is contained by a small number of dominant ideological myths that encode femininity in particular ways.’

4 Cs - Young & Rubicam: Women’s Realm is built around the Aspirer and Mainstreamer psychographics with their focus on middle class family life, shown off by her clothes, beauty and happy demeanor.

Hypodermic Needle Theory Women’s realm constantly pushes an idea of what a good wife should be and how women should behave – e.g. cooking section. **2 Step Flow – Katz** The Q&A / advice column section at the back of the magazine portrays the columnist as an opinion leader

Uses & Gratifications – Blumler & Katz Diversion: Articles for housewives to read when finished with housework Personal Identity: Identifying with other housewives and middle class women Surveillance/ Information: How to be a good housewife and mother

Reception Theory – Stuart Hall

Dominant Reading: accept the mainstream values of a woman’s role in society **Oppositional Reading:** Reinforces gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms at the expense of women’s rights

COMPONENT 2 - SECTION B: MAGAZINES (ALTERNATIVE)

MEDIA LANGUAGE

CODES & CONVENTIONS:

- Although Huck started out as a surfer/skater magazine it has diversified into a general lifestyle magazine for young people with a very global outlook.
- Very concerned with youth subcultures.
- **Element of commodification of rebellion**
- Subverts many conventions.
- Clean lines, lack of colour.
- **Masthead:** 'huck' (lower case masthead connotes contemporary cultural trends but also radical, anti-establishment) black on white – clear and uncluttered.
- **'The Defiance Issue'** connotes the ideology of the magazine - counter-cultural, resistance, also anchors the main image.
- **'Female Fighters'** – main image of lone female with gun subverts gender stereotypes – women are still not typically associated with combat roles in contemporary society.
- **'We live in a world where women are dominated by men. We are here to take control of our own future'** – the quote anchors the main image and relates to feminist principles.
- Central image is shot on location not in a studio, photojournalism.
- Lack of typical cover lines – reference to features/ articles at the bottom of the cover but these are descriptive, no use of linguistic devices or appeals to the reader.
- Lack of consumerist ideology reflecting the counter-cultural ethos of the magazine.
- Digital and print editions, print magazine offers long form journalism and reportage not included on website, content is not easily replicated.
- High quality collectable print magazine with excellent photography – luxury 'lean back' experience.

FRONT COVER ML ANALYSIS:

- **Masthead:** 'Huck' means to throw, this could suggest an outreach to the wider reaches of the world and their social problems. Or even to throw away conventional magazine traits and story coverage. This would link to the way they champion people going against the status quo.
- **Single individual on the cover**, is in keeping with their brand values, they value individualism. Also can link to the way the magazine is an independent magazine.
- **'Female Fighters'**, alliterated cover line, aggressive sound. This goes against conventional ideals of woman not being aggressive. **Contradicts stereotypes and a patriarchal structure. As well as challenging stereotypes of race and ethnicity.**
- **Unconventional house style** displaying its independence, Minimalist black & white juxtaposed with the natural colour palette of the landscape below.
- **Typography** is informal/casual displaying its attempts to not be like a mainstream magazine, displaying its independence. - Rather expensive as is £6, suggest **niche audience**, idea of wealth.
- All connotations suggest an audience who want actual change/something new.
- According to the 4 c's model probably will appeal to an **explorer consumer**, this being quite young, as it is about social change. Can link to the idea that the youth/younger audience is interested in inclusivity.
- **Enigma** used as their is a lack of developed information
- Body language suggests a captured candid moment, not constructed, displaying how they cover the truth of the situations.
- Ideology of diversification/acceptance, voice to the under-represented. (all of them)
- **Binary opposition** - Colour palette of minimalist header with the picture. Female character in armed forces clothing which

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Theories of identity - David Gauntlett -

The idea that whilst in **the past** the media tended to convey **singular, straightforward messages** about ideal types of male and female identities, the **media today** offer us a more **diverse range** of stars, icons and characters from whom we may **pick and mix** different ideas.

- Can be applied to Beyond Binary & Ocalan's Angels

Feminist theory - Liesbet van Zoonen -

The idea that **gender is constructed through discourse**, and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context - *'ethnicity, sexuality, class and a range of other discourses intersect with gender in various and sometimes contradictory ways'*

- Can be applied to Beyond Binary & Ocalan's Angels

SOCIAL CONTEXT:

Ocalan's Angels - This article is about young Kurdish women in Syria who have joined an organisation that is fighting ISIS. It addresses global socio-political issues and references the situation for Kurdish people, especially women, in Syria. Ocalan is the man in charge of the organisation PKK—he is currently in prison in Turkey. PKK is considered to be a terrorist organisation by some people, but not the United Nations. Argues that women make the decision to fight, partly to escape a future in poverty where they are expected to get married and be subject to 'masculine dominance'.

Beyond Binary - This article features representations of individuals/ social groups that have traditionally been underrepresented and misrepresented. The article can be viewed in a contemporary social/ cultural context where there is increased understanding of gender fluidity and non-binary notions of gender.

Teenage Utopia—This article focuses on skate culture in the Molenbeek district in Brussels, Belgium. This is a place in the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks that became synonymous with terrorist activity, it was seen as a breeding ground and hot bed of terrorist activity. This article offers a counter narrative that we hear voices and see images of people who would be denied access to the Media.

HUCK

CONTEMPORARY TEXT (THE DEFIANCE ISSUE)



PRODUCT CONTEXT:

- Published bi-monthly by TCO London, (The Church of London) 2006 to present.
- Set edition: Feb/March 2016 Defiance Issue
- Price: £6
- **60,000 print readership** (Huck website Apr 2017) 10 million readers – maximising audience reach
- Genre: **Independent/youth culture/arts and culture** – began as skating/ surfing magazine.
- Tagline: **'Radical Culture'** Counter-cultural magazine, subverting mainstream culture/ ideology, DIY ethos, campaigning.
- 'Huck celebrates independence: people and movements that paddle against the flow.'
- Huck is **independent published** by TCO – a **'publisher-agency'** encompassing Huck magazine and a film magazine (Little White Lies).
- Huck has 'brand partnerships' with many large **'blue chip' companies** including Nike, Van's, Microsoft and also features advertising from smaller/ niche companies such as specialist printers to reflect the independent, **counter-cultural** nature of the magazine.
- **Distribution:** Huck is available on Zinio, the World's largest digital newsstand (digital outlet). You can subscribe and get delivered to you (print outlet). **Cannot** be purchased in shops

ZINIO
THE WORLD'S LARGEST NEWSSTAND

Stuart Hall—Reception Theory

Preferred Reading - Dominant-hegemonic position – the intended meaning is accepted

Negotiated Reading - The intended meaning is generally acknowledged but adapted to fit the reader's experience or context

Oppositional Reading - The intended message is understood but the reader disagrees with it.

Curran & Seaton -

- The idea that the media is controlled by a small number of companies primarily driven by the logic of **profit and power**.
- The idea that **media concentration** generally **limits** or inhibits variety, **creativity** and quality.
- The idea that **more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions**.

7 KEY FEATURES

FRONT COVER

Image in Kurdistan of a female fighter, with rifle and army fatigues. She is giving direct address, although seems concerned., but is in a battle field. Cover line "women dominated by men... we are here to take control" links with bell hooks' theory = feminism is a political commitment. Cover lines consist of minimal list of content within the magazine.

G-STAR RAW AD

Two page advert for G-Star Raw jeans. Hip aspirational brand. The representation of femininity is very bold, confrontational. The costume is not stereotypically feminine, but there is a beauty standard clearly visible. Clear links to Gauntlett, Butler, Alvarado's ethnicity theory with the use of different ethnicities being presented as 'exotic' / other. Wealthy audience demographic as high end fashion brand.

DEFIANCE

Introduction to the issue's topic of Defiance. Uses reference to Catcher in the Rye, focusing on the character Holden Caulfield. Discusses "celebrating the voices of resistance" and "defiance is like disobedience, a prism that can distort the way we see things..." continues the idea of commodification of rebellion. Links to Curran and Seaton with diverse representations as an aim

OCALAN'S ANGELS

8 page feature, linked to cover. The article is accompanied with journalistic raw images of women on the front line. No male gaze. The article begins using a scarf to introduce us to a martyr and the militia who are fighting for a free Kurdistan and for gender equality. Focus on unity and community within the women. Not a mainstream story, links to bell hook's theory = girls fighting for girls.

TEENAGE UTOPIA

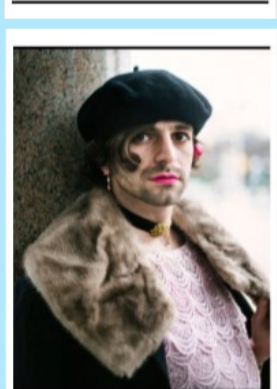
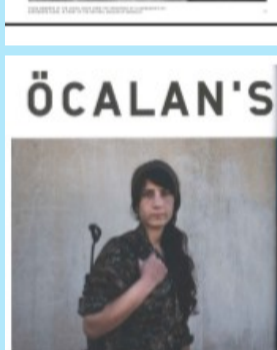
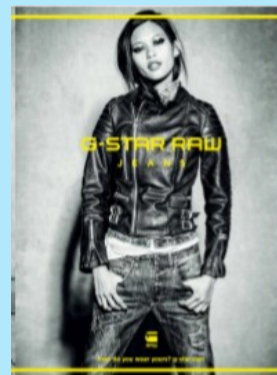
Explores skate culture in Brussels in an area that became synonymous with terrorist activity. This article offers a counter narrative e.g. Hijab wearing skateboarder. Links with Gilroy's theory - counters dominant narratives within the narrative. Links to Curran and Seaton's theory as it offers diverse and challenging representations and Gauntlett's pick and mix.

BEYOND BINARY

Two profiles that focus on people who refuse to be caged by the restrictive definitions of gender and sexuality. First hand accounts of their experiences in different global locations. Allowed to create their own identity and define for themselves who they are. Links to Gauntlett, Curran & Seaton, but also Butler's gender performativity theory as they are choosing how to 'perform' or present themselves.

GO PRO HERO 4

Advert for Go Pro Hero 4 camera, the image of the surfer has links to the magazine's origins of a surfer/skater magazine. Tagline 'This is your life. Be a hero'. Go Pro's are associated with extreme sports being used to film tricks etc. brand fits with the audience demographic. Links to Gilroy's and Gauntlett's theories as well as Curran & Seaton's alternative media offering alternative views.



COMPONENT 2 - SECTION B: MAGAZINES (ALTERNATIVE)

huck

REPRESENTATION

OCALAN’S ANGELS

‘Öcalan’s Angels’ – male in charge of the organisation (Öcalan is head of the PKK, currently in prison in Turkey) but has a vision to empower women.

The article points out that the PKK is considered to be a terrorist organisation by some people, but not the United Nations – balanced viewpoint.

Use of language to construct representation: ‘Feminist Army’, ‘female martyrs’ connotes a sense of ideological purpose.

‘Colourful scarf’ – belonging to a 17 year old girl, Cicek Derek, who died fighting ISIS- juxtaposes stereotypical features of a young girl (‘colourful scarf’, ‘braided hair’) with attributes more typically attributed to a male (‘fighter..military fatigues... militants... heroes’) constructing a contemporary, non-stereotypical representation of the young Kurdish female.

Article argues that women make the decision to fight, partly to try to defeat ISIS, partly to escape a future in poverty where they are expected to get married and be subject to ‘masculine dominance’ – promised ‘gender equality and an end to the oppression of women’ – highlighting the complexity of the social situation, and avoiding oversimplification.

DEFIANCE INTRO

‘But if... you choose to see things for yourself – admiring the strength of the outlier rather than the safety of the pack – defiance becomes a label you wear with pride’. There is an assumed level of **cultural capital** here as they assume we understand the reference to *Catcher in the Rye*. **Cultural capital** = education / knowledge and intellectual skills lead to higher social status.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

- Jonathan Bignell—Semiotics -**
- The idea that magazines construct ‘mythic’ representations of women that ‘represent the better self which every woman desires to become’.
- Betty Friedan - Feminism -**
- Alleged that magazines did not passively participate in enforcing these gender roles, but were in fact an active force behind the creation of what she termed the “feminine monster.” She claimed that the manufacturing sector “had decided to make women better consumers of home products by reinforcing and rewarding the concept of women’s total fulfilment through the role of housewife and mother”
- Liesbet Van Zoonen - Feminism -**
- ‘There is a depressing stability in the articulation of women’s politics and communication... The underlying frame of reference is that women belong to the family and domestic life and men to the social world of politics and work; that femininity is about care, nurturance and compassion, and that masculinity is about efficiency, rationality and individuality’
- Bell hooks - Feminism -**
- The idea that feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination. The idea that race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited, discriminated against or oppressed.
- Judith Butler - Gender Performativity -**
- Gender is a ritual / performance and is fluid *not* fixed.
- David Gauntlett - Identity Theory -**
- The media offer us lots of representations for us to pick and mix the ones that appeal to us.

MEDIA INDUSTRIES

- While the magazine market is under attack from some powerful commercial organisations, it is important to be clear that the **UK magazine market remains a major media sector and industry in its own right.**
- Combined research for Inside Magazine Publishing estimates that annual value of the magazine industry in 2012 to be £3.55 billion. This is split as follows:
- Consumers spend £1.8 billion on magazines at retail or via subscriptions.
- Print magazine advertising totals a further £750 million.
- Content marketing agencies (the producers of customer magazines) contribute a further £1 billion.
- There are in excess of 2,400 consumer magazines.
- Producing a **digital edition** of a magazine poses challenges for publishers as the technology required to create a digital edition is different to that required for print – so, if the content is going to work on a digital platform, it requires a **big investment.**
- Digital circulation of magazines is growing**, however currently accounts for a very small percentage of overall magazine circulation.
- As TCO distributes other magazines (**horizontal integration**) and produces, distributes content which is used to harness their **reformer/explorer** audience for mainstream brands (**vertical integration**).
- Curran and Seaton** - Huck is a creative and unique product so demonstrates more socially diverse patterns of ownership create more creative products.
- TCO London is **independent** but seeks partnerships with mainstream brands so works in **synergy** with **global organisations** such as Nike etc.
- As TCO is a marketing company it needs to follow **ASA** guidelines regarding the work it produces, as well as the **Non Broadcast Code (CAP code)** regarding the videos they make.
- Could be argued they are not always clear they are ‘**selling**’ their audience to Big ‘**blue chip**’ brands.
- Huck and all TCO products will need to follow **OFCOM** rules and regulations.
- Huck is not regulated by **IPSO** and are very critical of it.
- Huck is **self-regulated**.
- Huck chooses to work with only **ethical brands** which appeals to their **reformer/explorer audience**.
- Zinio** (which advertises itself as the world’s largest digital newsstand) distributes Huck.
 - Global reach—available worldwide
 - 10 Million readers—maximising audience reach
 - Available to download on almost every device.
- TCO are a **commercial organisation** delivering an **affluent niche audience to mainstream brands**.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

- Curran & Seaton - Power & The Media**
- The media are controlled by a small number of companies primarily driven by profit and power.
 - The concentration of media companies limits or inhibits variety, creativity and quality.
 - More socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous production.
- Livingstone & Lunt - Regulation-**
- Although Huck is NOT regulated by the **IPSO (Independent Press Standards Organisation)**. However they must adhere to strict regulations of **ASA, OFCOM & CAP code**.
 - Underlying struggle in UK regulation policy interests of citizens (protection from harmful material) VS interests of consumers (choice, value for money etc)
 - Power of global media and convergent media technologies (production, distribution and marketing) have placed traditional approaches to media regulation at risk.

AUDIENCES

- 55% Male to a 45% Female audience who are mainly aged 25-34, earn up to £50K and have an university degree, ABC1 reformer/explorer.**
- Appeal to audiences, who can access a much wider range of associated additional content, such as videos, online
- Online versions of magazines offer numerous opportunities for audiences to interact and become more loyal to the brand, including encouragement to follow on social media
- Regular updates mean that readers don’t have to wait until the next edition is published
- Publisher can reinforce its brand values by, for example, offering additional features on specific topics
- Publisher can offer prominence to specific advertisers
- Exclusive previews of magazine content online to encourage potential readers to buy the product e.g. on Huck’s Social Feed
- Cross-platform content reinforces the brand e.g. Huck TV ‘The interrogation of Kim Gordon’, Adbusters’ YouTube channel
- Online magazines cross-promote other products/ initiatives from the same publisher e.g. Huck recommends ‘Little White Lies’ (sister publication) in its ‘best of the web’ feature
- Huck* is published in English, German, French and Italian.
- Huck* is available in the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Croatia, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Brazil.
- Huck has a desirable **affluent niche audience** which would appeal to mainstream brands.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

- George Gerbner - Cultivation Theory -**
- Gerbner argues that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them. **Huck challenges rather than reinforcing dominant messages.**
- Stuart Hall - Reception Theory -**
- Preferred reading** also to enjoy having stereotypes / dominant ideology challenged.
- Oppositional reading**—Huck presents stories from a white/middle class perspective at people who are 'different'/other and simply to bring this audience to mainstream brands.
- Alvarado’s Ethnicity Theory -**
- The media present other ethnicities as either:
- Dangerous** - could be linked to Teenage Utopia & Öcalan’s Angels.
 - Exotic/other**—could be linked to Öcalan’s Angels.
 - To be Laughed at**
 - To be pitied**—could be linked to Beyond Binary
- Blumler & Katz—Uses & Gratifications theory -**
- Surveillance** - Informing readers of different perspectives and realities from around the World that aren’t usually seen in the Media.
 - Escapism** - Readers can read articles about things they may not be aware of and forget their reality.
 - Personal Identity** - Articles position the audience to relate to the characters within them.
 - Social Interaction** - Readers can discuss the articles within the magazine with other people.
- Richard Dyer - Utopian Theory -**
- Media Texts give audiences Utopian Solutions - **EATIC - Energy, Abundance, Transparency, Intensity & Community** to distract them from their boring and mundane everyday lives.

Glossary

ACTION CODE	Something that happens in the narrative that tells the audience that some action will follow, for example in a scene from a soap opera, a couple are intimate in a bedroom and the camera shows the audience the husband's car pulling up at the front of the house.
ACTIVE AUDIENCE	Audiences actively engage in selecting media products to consume and interpreting their meanings.
ANCHORAGE	<p>The words that accompany an image (still or moving) contribute to the meaning associated with that image. If the caption or voice-over is changed then so may the way in which the audience interprets the image. An image with an anchor is a closed text; the audience are given a preferred reading. A text without an anchor is an open text as the audience can interpret it as they wish.</p> <p>The same image of a school in a local newspaper could include a negative or a positive headline, which may change the way in which the same image is viewed by the reader.</p>
APPEAL	The way in which products attract and interest an audience, e.g. through the use of stars, familiar genre conventions etc.
ARC OF TRANSFORMATION	The emotional changes a character goes through in the process of the narrative. The events in the story mean that they will 'transform' by the end of the story.
ASPIRATIONAL	In terms of a media text, one that encourages the audience to want more money, up-market consumer items and a higher social position.
ATTRACT	How media producers create appeal to audiences to encourage them to consume the product.
AUDIENCE CATEGORISATION	How media producers group audiences (e.g. by age, gender ethnicity) to target their products.
AUDIENCE CONSUMPTION	The way in which audiences engage with media products (e.g. viewing a TV programme, playing a video game, reading a blog or magazine). Methods of consumption have changed significantly due to the development of digital technologies.

AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION	The way in which audiences 'read' the meanings in, and make sense of, media products.
AUDIENCE POSITIONING	The way in which media products place audiences (literally or metaphorically) in relation to a particular point of view. For example, audiences may be positioned with a particular character or positioned to adopt a specific ideological perspective.
AUDIENCE RESPONSE	How audiences react to media products e.g. by accepting the intended meanings (preferred reading).
AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION	Where a target audience is divided up due to the diversity and range of programmes and channels. This makes it difficult for one programme to attract a large target audience.
AUDIO	How sound is used to communicate meaning - voice-over, dialogue, music, SFX, etc.
AVATAR	A player's representation of themselves within a game.
BACK STORY	Part of a narrative which may be the experiences of a character or the circumstances of an event that occur before the action or narrative of a media text. It is a device that gives the audience more information and makes the main story more credible.
BINARY OPPOSITES	Where texts incorporate examples of opposite values; for example, good versus evil, villain versus hero. These can be apparent in the characters, narrative or themes.
BRAND IDENTITY	The association the audience make with the brand, for example <i>Chanel</i> or <i>Nike</i> , built up over time and reinforced by the advertising campaigns and their placement.
BROADSHEET	A larger newspaper that publishes more serious news, for example <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> has maintained its broadsheet format.
CAMERA ANGLES	The angle of the camera in relation to the subject. For example, a high angle shot (shot of a character from above) may make them appear more vulnerable.
CAMERA SHOTS	The type of shot and framing in relation to the subject, for example, close-up shots are often used to express emotion.

CAPTION	Words that accompany an image that help to explain its meaning.
CHANNEL IDENTITY	That which makes the channel recognisable to audiences and different from any other channel. Presenters, stars, programme genres and specific programmes all contribute to a channel's identity.
CIRCULATION	The dissemination of media products to audiences/users - the method will depend on the media form e.g. circulation of print magazines, broadcast of television programmes etc.
CONNOTATION	The suggested meanings attached to a sign, e.g., the red car in the advert suggests speed and power.
CONVENTIONS	What the audience expects to see in a particular media text, for example the conventions of science fiction films may include: aliens, scientists, other worlds, gadgets, representations of good and evil, etc. Useful headings to discuss conventions are: characters, setting, iconography, narrative, technical codes and representation.
CONVERGENCE	The coming together of previously separate media industries and/or platforms; often the result of advances in technology whereby one device or platform contains a range of different features. The mobile phone, for example, allows the user to download and listen to music, view videos, tweet artists etc. All this can be done through one portable device.
COVER LINES	These suggest the content to the reader and often contain teasers and rhetorical questions. These relate to the genre of the magazine.
CROSS-PLATFORM MARKETING	In media terms, a text that is distributed and exhibited across a range of media formats or platforms. This may include film, television, print, radio and the Internet.
CULTURAL CAPITAL	The media tastes and preferences of an audience, traditionally linked to social class/background.
DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORY	A group in which consumers are placed according to their age, sex, income, profession, etc. The categories range from A to E where categories A and B are the wealthiest and most influential members of society.
DENOTATION	The literal meaning of a sign, e.g. the car in the advert is red.

DIEGETIC SOUND	Sound that comes from the fictional world, for example the sound of a gun firing, the cereal being poured into the bowl in an advert, etc.
DISCOURSE	The topics, language and meanings or values behind them within a media text. The discourse of lifestyle magazines, for example, tends to revolve around body image and narcissism.
DISTRIBUTION	The methods by which media products are delivered to audiences, including the marketing campaign. These methods will depend upon the product (for example, distribution companies in the film industry organise the release of the films, as well as their promotion).
DIVERSIFICATION	Where media organisations who have specialised in producing media products in one form move into producing content across a range of forms.
EDITING	The way in which the shots move from one to the other (transitions), e.g. fade, cut, etc. Fast cutting may increase the pace and therefore the tension of the text, for example.
ENCODING AND DECODING	Media producers encode messages and meanings in products that are decoded, or interpreted, by audiences.
ENIGMA CODE	A narrative device which increases tension and audience interest by only releasing bits of information, for example teasers in a film trailer or narrative strands that are set up at the beginning of a drama/film that make the audience ask questions; part of a restricted narrative.
EQUILIBRIUM	In relation to narrative, a state of balance or stability (in Todorov's theory the equilibrium is disrupted and ultimately restored).
ETHNOCENTRIC	A belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture. For example, a newspaper will be more concerned to cover stories that are closely related to the reader and their concerns. Tabloid and local papers only tend to cover international news stories if they can relate them specifically to their readers.
ETHOS	The beliefs, values and customs of, for example, media organisations. In television, for example, what the channel believes in and what it sees as its role. The ethos is usually set out in the channel's charter.

FAN	An enthusiast or aficionado of a particular media form or product.
FEATURE	In magazine terms, the main, or one of the main, stories in an edition. Features are generally located in the middle of the magazine, and cover more than one or two pages.
FLEXI NARRATIVE	A more complex narrative structure with layers of interweaving storylines. This challenges the audience and keeps them watching.
FOUR CS	This stands for Cross Cultural Consumer Characteristics and was a way of categorising consumers into groups through their motivational needs. The main groups were Mainstreamers, Aspirers, Explorers, Succeeders and Reformers.
FRANCHISE	An entire series of, for example, a film including the original film and all those that follow.
GATE KEEPERS	The people responsible for deciding the most appropriate stories to appear in newspapers. They may be the owner, editor or senior journalists. They will only let the stories most appropriate for the ideology of the paper 'through the gate'.
GENRE	Media texts can often be grouped into genres that all share similar conventions. Science fiction is a genre, as are teenage magazines, etc.
GLOBAL	Worldwide - e.g. a media product with global reach is a product that is distributed around the world.
HEGEMONY	This derives from the theory of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony is the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. For example, the dominant social position in society is taken by men and the subordinate one by women.
HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION	Where a media conglomerate is made up of different companies that produce and sell similar products, often as a result of mergers. For example a company with interests in film, TV, magazines newspaper.
HOUSE STYLE	The aspects that make a magazine recognisable to its readers every issue. The house style is established through the choice of colour, the layout and design, the font style, the content and the general 'look' of the publication.

HYBRID GENRE	Media texts that incorporate elements of more than one genre and are therefore more difficult to classify are genre hybrids. <i>Dr Who</i> , for example, is a science fiction/fantasy television drama.
HYPODERMIC NEEDLE MODEL	Generally acknowledged to be an out of date media effects theory which suggests that an audience will have a mass response to a media text. The idea is that the media product injects an idea into the mind of an audience who are assumed to be passive and as a result will all respond in the same way.
ICONOGRAPHY	The props, costumes, objects and backgrounds associated with a particular genre; for example, in a police series you would expect to see, uniforms, blue flashing lights, scene of crime tape and police radios.
IDEOLOGY	A set of messages, values and beliefs that may be encoded into media products.
INDEPENDENT FILM	A film made outside of the financial and artistic control of a large mainstream film company. A truly independent film will be privately conceived and funded. However, few films made are really 'independent'. This more commonly refers to a film that is made by a smaller film company on a low budget.
INDEPENDENT RECORD LABEL	A record label that operates without the funding of, and that is not necessarily linked to, a major record label.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	A legal concept which refers to creations of the mind for which the owner's rights are recognised. These rights cover such intangible assets as music, literary and artistic works; discoveries and inventions; and words, phrases, symbols, and designs.
INTERACTIVE AUDIENCE	The ways in which audiences can become actively involved with a product, for example by posting a response to a blog or live tweeting during a television programme.
INTERTEXTUAL	Where one media text makes reference to aspects of another text within it. For example, referencing a scene from a film in a television advertisement. Audiences enjoy recognising intertextual references.
INTERTEXTUALITY	Where one media product intertextually references another.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN	The way in which a page has been designed to attract the target audience. This includes the font styles used, the positioning of text and images and the use of colour.
LINEAR NARRATIVE	Where the narrative unfolds in chronological order from beginning to end.
LUDOLOGY	The study of games and those who play them, relevant to video games.
MASCULINITY	The perceived characteristics generally considered to define what it is to be a man. These can change according to sociological and cultural variations
MASS AUDIENCE	The traditional idea of the audience as one large, homogenous group.
MEDIA CONGLOMERATE	A company that owns other companies across a range of media platforms. This increases their domination of the market and their ability to distribute and exhibit their product.
MEDIA FORMS	Types of media products, for example television, newspapers, advertising.
MEDIA LANGUAGE	The specific elements of a media product that communicate meanings to audiences, e.g. visual codes, audio codes, technical codes, language.
MEDIA PLATFORM	The range of different ways of communicating with an audience, for example newspapers, the Internet, and television.
MEDIATION	The way in which a media text is constructed in order to represent a version of reality; constructed through selection, organisation and focus.
MISE-EN-SCENE	In analysis of moving image products, how the combination of images in the frame creates meaning; how individual shots in a film or photograph have been composed.
MISREPRESENTATION	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be represented in a way that is inappropriate and not based on reality.
MMORPG	Massively multi-player online role-playing game.

MODE OF ADDRESS	The way in which a media text 'speaks to' its target audience. For example, teenage magazines have a chatty informal mode of address; the news has a more formal mode of address.
NARRATIVE	The 'story' that is told by the media text. All media texts, not just fictional texts, have a narrative. For example, magazines have a clear beginning, middle and end. Most narratives are linear and follow a specific structure (see Todorov).
NEWS AGENDA	The list of stories that may appear in a particular paper. The items on the news agenda will reflect the style and ethos of the paper.
NICHE AUDIENCE	A relatively small audience with specialised interests, tastes, and backgrounds.
NON-DIEGETIC SOUND	Sound that comes from outside the fictional world, for example a voiceover, romantic mood music etc.
NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE	Here the narrative manipulates time and space. It may begin in the middle and then include flashbacks and other narrative devices.
OPEN WORLD	In an open world computer game the player can move freely though the virtual world and is not restricted by levels and other barriers to free roaming.
OPINION LEADERS	People in society who may affect the way in which others interpret a particular media text. With regard to advertising, this may be a celebrity or other endorser recommending a product.
PASSIVE AUDIENCE	The idea (now widely regarded as outdated) that audiences do not actively engage with media products, but passively consume and accept the messages that producers communicate.
PATRIARCHAL CULTURE	A society or culture that is male dominated.
PICK AND MIX THEORY	Suggested by British sociologist and media theorist, David Gauntlett. He asserted the autonomy of the audience and challenged the notion that audiences are immediately affected by what they read. He maintains that audiences are more sophisticated than this and will select aspects of the media texts that best suit their needs and ignore the rest.

PLURALITY	In a media context, this refers to a range of content to suit many people.
POLITICAL BIAS	Where a newspaper may show support for a political party through its choice of stories, style of coverage, cartoons, etc. It may be subtle and implicit or explicit as in the case of the tabloid newspapers on election day.
PRIVILEGED SPECTATOR POSITION	Where the camera places the audience in a superior position within the narrative. The audience can then anticipate what will follow.
PRODUCTION	The process by which media products are constructed.
PRODUCTS	Media texts, including television programmes, magazines, video games, newspapers etc. as well as online, social and participatory platforms.
PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER	A radio and television broadcaster that is financed by public money (e.g. the licence fee in the UK) and is seen to offer a public service by catering for a range of audiences and providing information, as well as entertainment.
REALISM	A style of presentation that claims to portray 'real life' accurately and authentically.
REGULATOR	A person or body that supervises a particular industry.
REPERTOIRE OF ELEMENTS	Key features that distinguish one genre from another.
REPRESENTATION	The way in which key groups or aspects of society are presented by the media, e.g. gender, race, age, the family, etc. Literally, a re-representation or constructed version of that which is shown.
SELECTION AND COMBINATION	Media producers actively choose elements of media language and place them alongside others to create specific representations or versions of reality.
SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION	The practice of regarding a person as an object to be viewed only in terms of their sexual appeal and with no consideration of any other aspect of their character or personality.

SIGN/CODE	Something which communicates meaning, e.g., colours, sounds. The meaning of the sign changes according to the context, e.g., the colour red can mean passion, love, danger or speed depending on how and where it is used.
SIMULCAST	The streaming of live radio programmes from the website at the same time as they are broadcast on the radio.
SPECIALISED AUDIENCE	A non-mass, or niche, audience that may be defined by a particular social group (for example young, aspirational females) or by a specific interest (for example skydiving).
SPLASH	The story that is given the most prominence on the front page of a newspaper.
STEREOTYPE	An exaggerated representation of someone or something. It is also where a certain group are associated with a certain set of characteristics, for example all Scotsmen are mean, blondes are dumb, etc. Stereotypes can be quick ways of communicating information in adverts and dramas, e.g. the rebellious teenager in a soap opera, as they are easily recognisable to audiences.
STRIPPED	A technique used in radio and television whereby a certain programme is broadcast at the same time every day. In radio this attracts an audience who associate a particular programme with their daily routine, for example driving home from work.
SUB-GENRE	Where a genre is sub-divided into smaller categories each of which has their own set of conventions. For example, the television drama genre can be sub-divided into teen drama, hospital drama, costume drama, etc.
SUBJECT-SPECIFIC LEXIS	The specific language and vocabulary used to engage the audience. Subject-specific lexis used on the front cover of the magazine will make the reader feel part of the group who belong to the world of that magazine. For example, terminology used on the front covers of gaming magazines.
SYNERGY	The combination of elements to maximise profits within a media organisation or product. For example, where a film soundtrack sells the film and the film sells the soundtrack.

TABLOID	Refers to the dimensions of a newspaper; a tabloid is smaller and more compact in size. However, there are further connotations attached to the term and it also tends to refer to a newspaper whose content focuses on lighter news, for example celebrity gossip, sport and television.
TARGET AUDIENCE	The people at whom the media text is aimed.
TECHNICAL CODES	These are the way in which the text has been produced to communicate meanings and are part of media language (see Section 8).
TEXTUAL POACHING	The way in which audiences or fans may take particular texts and interpret or reinvent them in different ways e.g. by creating fan fiction.
UNDERREPRESENTATION	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be rarely represented or be completely absent from media products.
USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY	Suggests that active audiences seek out and use different media texts in order to satisfy a need and experience different pleasures.
VERTICAL INTEGRATION	Vertically integrated companies own all or most of the chain of production and distribution for the product. For example, a film company that also owns a chain of multiplex cinemas to exhibit the film and merchandise outlets.
VIEWPOINTS	Different perspectives in relation to values, attitudes, beliefs or ideologies.
VIRAL MARKETING	Where the awareness of the product or the advertising campaign is spread through less conventional ways including social networks and the Internet. Viral marketing is so named because many of the messages use 'hosts' to spread themselves rapidly, like a biological virus.
VISUAL CODES	The visual aspects of the product that construct meaning and are part of media language, for example clothing, expression, and gesture (see Section 8).
'WINDOW ON THE WORLD'	The idea that media texts, particularly those that present aspects of reality, for example news programmes, are showing the audience the 'real' world as it happens.