

# GQ magazine front cover

(July, 2016)



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### Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Launched in 1931, *GQ* began its life as a quarterly publication called Gentleman's Quarterly, aimed specifically at fashion industry insiders. Its popularity with customers caused its rebranding in 1967 to *GQ*.
- Produced by Condé Nast, today *GQ* is a multi-platform brand. Each issue is published in print and on the iPad; it has its own acclaimed website, iPhone apps and an annual event called 'GQ Men of the Year'.
- GQ* has an average circulation of around 115,000 and a readership of almost 400,000 through its various platforms.
- GQ*'s catch phrase is 'the magazine for men with an IQ.' The brand is built around more traditional ideas of masculinity. It includes coverage of executive concerns and targets a more serious minded, conservative, older reader than some other men's lifestyle magazines such as *Loaded* and *FHM*.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Social and cultural contexts:

In 1994, Mark Simpson an author and journalist coined the word '**Metrosexual**' in an article for the Independent newspaper after he attended Britain's first *GQ* style exhibition. He is famously quoted as saying "I had seen the future of masculinity and it was moisturised." This term gained global popularity in the early 2000s, epitomised by men like David Beckham, when it became more **socially acceptable**

for men to openly care about their **looks, clothing and skincare** regime. **Men's magazines** embraced this through their **content and advertising**. Arguably, the primary role of such magazines is to encourage spending amongst its readers.

In 2014, Simpson then introduced the term 'spornosexuals', men who are extremely body-focused, who spend all their time at the gym and make their bodies their best accessory. The selection of the *GQ* cover shot, with Johnson's bicep in the foreground and the rest of his image secondary to it, and the choice of cover lines surrounding it all support this concept.

##### Consider how choice of elements of media language influences meaning:

- The overarching **theme** for this issue appears to surround ideas of **masculinity**:
  - The **strapline** tells us it is a special issue dealing with "**Mind, Body & Masculinity**".
  - There is an **extreme close up** of Dwayne Johnson with his huge bicep in the foreground.
  - The **cover line** to the right tells the reader to "Man up! How to be a man in 2016".
  - If we consider the **selection** process that takes place when creating a magazine cover, there was clearly a conscious decision to **associate** ideas of **masculinity with physical strength**.

##### Semiotic analysis:

- The red, black and white **colour palette** used for this particular cover helps to support the idea of **power**. Red is associated with strength and the black is also a strong, bold statement.
- Johnson is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common **convention** of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could also suggest how seriously he expects to

be taken and maybe how seriously the readers should take themselves and their own bodies.

- Johnson's experience as a professional wrestler earned him the ring name, '**The Rock**', which has **connotations of strength and stability**. This name is used prominently here, across his image, with his actual name appearing smaller and below it. Perhaps he is more famous as 'The Rock' or perhaps the magazine is suggesting that his persona and look are more important than the man beneath.

## Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- The **strapline** on the right third of the cover, "Your ideal beach watch. The best for under £300" should be considered when thinking about the magazine's **target audience**. Modern print magazines survive predominantly because of their advertising revenue, they are adept at selling you things you didn't even know you wanted – a £300 watch specifically for the beach implies a certain level of wealth of the target audience.
- Further down the page, there is another **cover line** advertising 'The Style Guide', a new section inside. In today's competitive society, which focuses heavily on **aesthetics** and where having the 'right' look is apparently very important, the reader then begins to think of this magazine as a casual 'how to' guide when it comes to being a man.
- Finally, at the very bottom of the page there is a more **newsworthy topic** mentioned, "The extraordinary truth behind the Viola beach tragedy." This is a reference to the band Viola Beach who all died in a tragic car crash in Sweden. There is a lot of speculation around the crash and this cover lines suggests that *GQ* has the answers. By including some **serious journalism** as well as entertainment and fashion advice, the magazine is broadening its range of offerings for its audience members.

## Possible areas for further investigation are:

- **Genre: codes and conventions** of magazine covers: layout, use of cover star, house style, mastheads. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever changing nature and hybridity. For example, Men's Lifestyle magazines could be specifically about fashion or health and fitness and still come under the umbrella term 'lifestyle'. It might be helpful to compare two quite different types of men's lifestyle magazine such as FHM.

- **Narrative** - cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes' enigma codes).

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Historical and Political Contexts:

**African Americans** have had a long and complex **history** in the motion picture industry. At the start of the 20th century, many films depicted black characters that supported the dominant stereotype of the time: incompetent, hyper-sexualised and/or criminals. It wasn't until the growing momentum of the **Civil Rights Movement** that there was a push against this status quo and there evidently there is still a way to go.

In 2015 April Reign, the Broadway Black managing editor, created the hashtag **#OscarSoWhite** to bring attention to the Academy's tendency to overlook performances and achievements by non-white professionals. By 2016, little had changed and so many actors and actresses boycotted the 2016 Oscars, branding it 'racist' and 'too white'.

### Consider the representation of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a hugely successful black **cover star** (Dwayne Johnson is half Samoan and half African American) as their dominant image, *GQ* is presenting a role model for its readers, someone to **aspire** to be like. Although Johnson's Hollywood success might be outside of most reader's possibilities, his work ethic and desire to want to better himself isn't.
- Johnson's success as a wrestling character allowed him to cross over into more **mainstream culture**, most importantly an actor. Black actors have, historically, always been paid less than their white counterparts and so for Johnson to be considered one of the most bankable **Hollywood stars** is an achievement and his success is even greater than one first realises.
- The use of Johnson's **iconic** bicep with its Brahma bull tattoo reinforces the **stereotype** of men as having to be **hyper masculine, strong and muscular**.

### Consider the social, cultural and political significance of particular representations:

- For modern men, there is a **societal expectation** that they have to 'have it all': health, wealth and strength and the image of Johnson supports

this as he epitomizes all three. Also, just like their female counterparts, the very essence of men's lifestyle magazines is **consumerism** and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this, informing men of what they supposedly need, "the essential wellness gadgets" and also showing them thing to covet, "your ideal beach watch".

- The cover line reads, "How Dwayne Johnson became the Hollywood's most bankable star." The reader understands this to mean that he is a success in Hollywood, he brings in a lot of revenue for film companies. This is reinforcing the **capitalist ideology** that for a man to be thought of as successful you must be wealthy and make a lot of money.
- Cover lines such as "How to be a man in 2016" suggest that the reader cannot possibly

already know this and will need the magazine to help show him the way. This is similar to the female magazines that tell their readers how to be beautiful, get fit and dress well. The importance of **body image and consumerism** doesn't change just because of gender.

### Possible areas for further investigation are:

- We might want to consider the **image as a commodity**. Most of the images used in magazines are to sell and advertise both the magazine and its advertised products. Celebrity cover stars sell magazines as people often want a window into their lives.
- This could be further considered in relation to Blumler and Katz's '**Uses and Gratifications**' theory which considers why people interact with media texts.



# Quality Street print advert

(1956)



**CHOCOLATE  
STRAWBERRY CUP**  
*Strawberry jam and cream  
encased in milk chocolate.*

**HARROGATE TOFFEE**  
*The delicious, smooth toffee  
with a most distinctive flavour.*

**CHOCOLATE TOFFEE FINGER**  
*Delicious toffee covered  
with plain chocolate.*

**What a delicious dilemma!**

**18** delightfully different  
toffees and chocolates in

**Mackintosh's**  
**'Quality Street'**  
REGD

JOHN MACKINTOSH & SONS LTD., HALIFAX

Neil Baylis / Alamy Stock Photo

# Quality Street

## print advert

### (1956)

#### Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Quality Street* sweet tin made by Mackintosh.
- Originally created in 1936, inspired by the name of a play by J.M Barrie.
- In the 1930s, only the wealthy could afford chocolate boxes but the creator Harold Mackintosh aimed to sell them at a more reasonable cost to appeal to working families. By the 1950s, when this campaign started, society was in a post-rationing period where luxuries were once again becoming an acceptable part of grocery shopping.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Historical context

The icons of the *Quality Street* brand were two characters from the Regency era of British history. In the Regency era, Britain went through a period of elegance with regard to Fine Art and Architecture. The Regency era could also be compared to the 1950s for its significant social and cultural development. Between 1811 and 1837 the country was under the rule of Prince Regent and developments in technology (e.g. the steam-powered printing press), fashion and architecture were mirrored by a population boom. These similarities can be compared to England in the 1950s.

##### Social and cultural context

The 1950s saw a change in “high culture”, a time where fine art, decadence and theatre that had previously only been accessed by the upper classes

and those with money were now going to be made more affordable to the mass audience.

The Conservative Party’s 1951 election campaign was spearheaded by the slogan “Set the People Free”, and this supported drastic change as entertainment and arts became more accessible and affordable.

#### Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- **Structure and design of the advert:**
  - » anchorage of the gold frame – connotations of a halo effect around the man and the product
  - » typical triangular geometric **composition** of the poster to help secondary anchorage of the product
  - » product takes central **framing**.
- **Typography** is strong, forming the bottom third of the poster, and the strong purple colour stands out to draw the consumers’ eyes to the name.
- Hand-drawn, artistic nature of the design, with a rich **colour palette** of primary and secondary colours, links to the post-war consumerist culture.
- **Persuasive language techniques** such as alliteration, emotive language and superlatives are all indicative of a well-read educated audience; further enhanced by the bold, serif font styles connoting richness.

#### Consider how media language creates narratives:

- **Connotations** of the female characters being dressed similarly to the sweets that are shown close-up on the bottom third of the poster.
- Inference of a **dilemma** can be investigated at two levels:
  - » male ‘hero’ choosing between two ‘damsels in distress’ (Propp’s theory)
  - » females choosing the chocolate (see Representation section for discussion on female stereotyping).
- **Costume** and dress of male character indicating



the formal nature of his dilemma; connotations of a higher class and richer society.

- **Patriarchal** narrative, which is part of a range of similar adverts of this time.

## Consider intertextuality:

- The characters in the gold frame, Miss Sweetly and Major Quality, are part of the **brand Identity** of the product since 1936.
- The characters are symbolic of the Regency era of British history referenced by the dress codes of the characters in the gold-framed picture at the back of the advert.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- The advert is part of a **campaign** from this time that uses a similar design. The brand identity of Major Quality and Miss Sweetly goes back to the origin of the product in the 1930s, so it is interesting to look at how their advertising has developed with these characters:  
[http://www.nestle.com/media/newsandfeatures/quality\\_street\\_75](http://www.nestle.com/media/newsandfeatures/quality_street_75)

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

1956



1956



## Social and cultural context

Gender roles in the 1950s were remarkably different to the present day and it is important to consider the advertisement in this context.

The product itself was designed and planned for working families and the imagery is very aspirational of a higher class which links to the post-war era in Britain. Much of the branding indicates that the product was symbolic of elegance and

aspiration. The two female characters appear to be of a lower class than the man in the suit, and the man in the suit is of a lower class than the two characters in the gold frame. The item that brings all these classes together is the product in the centre of the image.

## Consider the representation of gender:

- The image suggests a **male dominated society** with regards to 'choice' – he is in control of the product and is centrally framed. This links to Mulvey's male gaze in relation to the framing (**feminist theoretical perspective**). The male character anchors the audience's eyes to the product which has significant phallic symbolism.
- The dress code relates to the modern working businessman who may be the 'provider' of the brand.
- The women have two **stereotypes** being relied upon in the advert: firstly, that of their need for chocolate, a common and very traditional stereotype that still exists today, and secondly their subservient body language to the dominant man. The implication is that to be successful you will need to be romantically led by a man.
- There is also a secondary and **deeper analysis** here – a sense of manipulation with the women distracting the man through romance to access the 'prize' that is the product in the gentleman's lap. This advert could be seen to be representative of the way in which society was moving at this time.
- The **historical** representations of the Regency characters show typical strong feminine colours, and the showing of flesh for Miss Sweetly, and the formal uniform dress of Major Quality signify importance and power in their own relationship.

## Consider the representation of age:

- To discuss the representation of age, it would be important to make a comparison to a similar advert in this campaign with a much older couple in two chairs (see above).
- This advert is purposely for the young to middle aged adults (25–40), and the **target audience** could see themselves in the characters in the main section of the advert.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- Consider the **role of women** in advertising which is key to this discussion.
- Use some **examples of advertising from the early 1950s** to help understand the role of the housewife and how they would provide

for the man of the house. The images below show subservient women with their eyes not providing an address to the audience.



**"Anyway, you didn't burn the Schlitz!"**

There's hope for any young bride who knows her man well enough to serve him Schlitz Beer. For what man (or woman) can resist the taste of Schlitz Beer... a taste millions prefer to the taste of any other beer. No, we're not just saying that. Here's the simple proof:

Schlitz tastes so good to so many people, it's first in sales in the U.S.A.

RADIO HEADLINES: "The Halls of Ivy", with the Roast Caters, Wednesdays, NBC. TELEVISION: "Schlitz Playhouse of Stars", Fridays, CBS-TV.



**The Beer that made Milwaukee Famous**

© 1952, JSC. SCHLITZ BREWING CO., MILWAUKEE, WIS.

**4.**

**SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!**

**1. GOOD, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING AND I'M ALL TICKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?**

**VITAMINS, DARLING! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS**

**2. REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR TOLD YOU — YOU CAN'T HAVE PEP WITHOUT VITAMINS? WELL, I'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING — A PERFECTLY DELICIOUS BREAKFAST CEREAL CALLED KELLOGG'S PEP. THAT'S RICH IN VITAMINS B AND D, AND I'VE ALREADY LAD IN A SUPPLY FOR OUR BREAKFASTS**

**3. HONEY, IF VITAMINS CAN GIVE ME EVEN A LITTLE OF YOUR ZIP AND SPARKLE, YOU'VE MADE THE DISCOVERY OF THE AGE!**

**IF YOU, TOO, HAVE LACKED VITAMINS, DISCOVER THE GRAND THINGS THEY CAN DO FOR YOU. AND TO HELP GET YOUR VITAMINS, EAT KELLOGG'S PEP FOR BREAKFAST. IT'S A SUPREME DELICIOUS CEREAL — CRUNCHY GOLDEN FLAKES OF WHEAT AND OTHER PARTS OF WHEAT — ENRICHED WITH VITAMINS B AND D. EAT IT EVERY DAY AND SEE IF YOU DON'T HAVE MORE ZIP AND ZEST!**

**Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!**

\*Pep contains vitamins B and D. Each source contains 1/3 of an adult's and 4/3 of a child's daily requirement of B, and about 1/2 the daily requirement of D. Copyright 1938, Kellogg Company

**5.**

**Hoover**

*Give her a Hoover and you'll get the best*

**Christmas morning she'll be happier with a Hoover**

It's the best about the Hoover you know, and if you really want about her, you'll get it for Christmas. Hoover's the best. Price cut at \$99.95. Model D-150000. See your nearest Hoover dealer.

**THE HOOVER COMPANY**  
New Haven, CT

## Acknowledgements:

1. Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives
2. Neil Baylis / Alamy Stock Photo
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5. Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



# Spectre



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# Spectre

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas:

Media Language (poster)

Representation (poster)

Media Industries (cross-media study)

Media Contexts (poster and cross-media study)

### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Spectre* is a James Bond film released on 26 October 2015, starring Daniel Craig as 007 in his fourth performance as the fictional MI6 agent.
- Based on a book by Ian Fleming, the film was produced by the British company Eon (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed by United Artists.
- The film was created with an estimated \$245 million budget making it the most expensive Bond film and one of the most expensive films ever made. It grossed over \$880 million at the worldwide box office.
- The poster was designed by Empire Designs, a British film promotion agency. The poster was released on 3 September 2015, as part of a wide global marketing campaign for the film.

### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

#### Social and Cultural Context:

The masked man in the background is wearing a skeleton mask used to symbolise the Mexican festival of the ‘**Day of the Dead**’. The opening sequence to the film shows a ‘Day of the Dead’ parade in Mexico City, which isn’t something that actually took place in real life. However, the interest in the film, and the government’s determination to promote pre-Hispanic Mexican culture, meant that one year later the local authorities decided to organise such a parade (Dia de los Muertos) on October 29th 2016. It was a huge success and attended by 250,000 people.

The Tom Ford white tuxedo worn by Daniel Craig revived a fashion trend from the 1970s. Previous Bonds have worn a white tuxedo, and

John Travolta famously sported one in the film *Saturday Night Fever* in 1977. It has been argued that Daniel Craig initiated a fashion trend, as many celebrities including David Beckham and Benedict Cumberbatch were photographed wearing a white tuxedo around the time of the release of *Spectre* publicity, underlining the cultural significance of the Bond franchise.

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:

- The central **image** is a **long shot** of James Bond, smartly dressed, arms folded, with the gun pointing to his left. The dominance of his image suggests he is the film’s **protagonist** and so probably a ‘good guy’. According to Vladimir **Propp’s** theory, he would be considered the ‘**hero**’.
- This is reinforced by the use of **colour** – Bond’s white jacket connotes his heroic status, contrasting with the dark, shadowed antagonist in the background.
- Bond’s **clothing** connotes business and professionalism and the gun, an **iconic** part of Bond’s ‘uniform’, is a common **prop** used in the action/thriller **genre** and so audiences can expect violence, action and danger. The gun is casually pointed, connoting that Bond is never off duty, he is always alert and ready for action.
- The **tuxedo** is iconic of the Bond image, and the white tuxedo connotes luxury, wealth and sophistication, the ‘high life’ that off-duty Bond enjoys (linked to martinis, women, gambling etc.). The red carnation has connotations of romance and passion, but also of danger.
- By placing Bond in such a strong yet casual **pose**, the audience is reminded just how cool, calm and collected Bond is. He is a trained assassin and working for MI6; he is relaxed here, but in control, and we are reminded of his ability to keep his composure in any situation.
- Bond is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common **convention** of film posters and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format. The

intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could suggest how seriously he expects to be taken.

- A common **convention** for film posters is to have the **actor's name(s)** placed quite prominently as another way to entice the audience. However, this poster doesn't do that - his name is in a very small font in the upper left corner of the poster. This may be because the producers are confident that the audiences will all recognise him and any text may detract from the visuals. Craig's name also appears alongside many other names 'Albert R. Broccoli's EON Productions presents Daniel Craig as Ian Fleming's James Bond', reflecting the many iconic figures involved in creating the franchise.
- At the bottom of the poster, the **title** of the film appears along with the iconic 007 **logo**. The gold font connotes luxury, wealth, aspiration and exclusivity; the capitalised title suggests power and strength. The title *SPECTRE* relates to the organisation that is in opposition to Bond in the narrative, but also connotes a 'ghost' from Bond's past.
- Beneath this is another typical convention of film posters, the credit block. This gives industry information such as other star's names, directors and producers, and is much smaller and tucked away so as not to divert the audience away from the main image or the rest of the poster.



©ullstein bild / getty images

Consider Intertextuality:

- The white tuxedo intertextually references earlier Bond films (previous Bonds, including Roger Moore, have worn the white tuxedo, however this poster specifically references Sean Connery in *Goldfinger*), providing a sense of familiarity, nostalgia and pleasure to fans who recognise the link.
- Bond films have often deliberately referenced earlier films in the franchise, for example the 'Bond girl' emerging from the sea (Ursula Andress in *Dr No* and Halle Berry in *Die Another Day*). Daniel Craig also emerged from the sea in *Casino Royale*, his first outing as Bond, however it was denied that this was a reference to the earlier films.

Consider narrative:

- In the **background**, behind Bond, there is an image of a man wearing a skeleton **mask and bone design on his jacket**. The skeleton has connotations of death and danger and the mask is covering up someone's identity, someone who wishes to remain hidden, someone lurking in the shadows.
  - » It is quite easy to guess that this character would be **Propp's villain** and his mask that is reminiscent of such holidays as Halloween or Day of the Dead means he is Bond's **antagonist** and no doubt wants to kill him.
  - » This acts as an **enigma code** for the audience (could reference Roland Barthes) as we want to find out who this character is and why he wants Bond.
  - » The skeleton also references the title of the film, *Spectre*, connoting a ghostly, haunting presence from Bond's past.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and Cultural Context:

James Bond is an action hero who, since the 1960s, has been constructed to embody many masculine stereotypes of strength, independence, sexual prowess etc. The representation of women in the franchise has traditionally been similarly stereotypical: the 'Bond Girl' who is the beautiful 'love interest' for Bond (Propp's princess), insignificant to the narrative and ultimately disposable. The representation of gender in the Bond franchise has evolved over time - to an extent - to reflect the changing social context. It would be useful to consider the poster for *The Man With The*



*Golden Gun* here. Craig's Bond is not as sexist and overtly stereotypical as the earlier incarnations and reflects some contemporary notions of masculinity as his Bond is older, more thoughtful and shows signs of vulnerability. Interestingly, the poster does not reflect this development and represents Bond as the familiar action hero to 'sell' the film.

Consider representations of gender

- Bond provides an image of **masculinity** that connotes bravery, intelligence and strength:
  - » Bond's **posture** is strong and dominant, his arms are folded in a stereotypically masculine stance. This closed body language connotes his lack of emotion, his independence, and also his professional role as a rational, ruthless assassin.
  - » The use of the **key light** on Bond is stark and highlights his chiselled features, constructing a representation of tough, inscrutable masculinity.
  - » The **gun** suggests danger but his posture connotes confidence with a relaxed attitude toward such dangers.
  - » This '**hero**' archetype is typical of the action genre and audiences are led to believe, through this representation, that this is how a man should be.
- The **villain** in the background is also male, reflecting the male-dominated nature of the franchise – the main protagonist and antagonist who drive the narrative are both male.

Possible areas for further investigation:

Feminist theoretical perspectives

- The absence of female characters on this poster reflects a **feminist perspective**, as women are still under-represented within action film franchises. There are stronger female characters in *Spectre*, however this poster does not feature them and so we can infer that much of the marketing prioritises Bond as an iconic figure who will appeal to audiences.

### PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Industry

Historical Context

Hollywood is the oldest **film industry** in the world, originating in the 1890s. The first motion pictures were less than a minute long, due to the limitations of technology, and sound was not introduced into films until 1927. **Hollywood** is considered the 'film factory' of the world and exports its products to most countries.

Consider the nature of media production, including by large organisations, who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups:

- Film production consists of five major stages: development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution.
  - » **Development** – ideas are created, if necessary rights are bought, screenplay is written and financing is sought.
  - » **Pre-Production** – Cast and film crew are found, locations chosen and sets are built.
  - » **Production** – The film is shot
  - » **Post-production** – The recorded film is edited. Crew work on the sound, images and visual effects
  - » **Distribution** – Finished film is distributed. It is screened at the cinema and released for home viewing.

While the poster above is set for Section A, and does not need to be analysed textually for Section B, it can be used as a starting point for exploring the industry issues:

Company names: MGM, EON, Columbia, Sony can be researched in terms of production and distribution, ownership issues, including conglomerates.

Names of actors – exploration of previous roles, 'star' appeal.

Director, writers, other crew e.g. DOP, Costume Designer – exploration of these roles and their importance in the production process.

IMAX – role of technology in exhibition/ circulation of products.

Hashtag, website – role of new technology and social media in marketing film products.

Soundtrack on Decca Records – synergy and convergence of different platforms to promote the film.

Consider the effect of ownership and control of media organisations, including conglomerate ownership, diversification and vertical integration:

- The James Bond series is **produced** by Eon productions, a British film production company based in London, Sony Pictures and MGM. The video rights of all of Eon's films are owned by MGM Home Entertainment and are controlled by MGM's **distributor** 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.

- On April 9th 2010, a year and a half into the making of the 23rd Bond film (subsequently titled *Skyfall*), the **producers** decided to suspend production due to MGM spiralling towards bankruptcy. It wasn't until the end of 2010 when the new owners of MGM were able to secure a \$500 million revolving credit line that the film could continue. Luckily, it made \$1.1 billion at the global box office, more than any other Bond film. This allowed the Bond **franchise** to continue.
- Bond has always been well known for its exotic **locations** across the globe and *Spectre* was no exception. Bouyed on by the success of *Skyfall*, *Spectre* used Pinewood studios in London as its base, but then was also shot in Mexico City, Rome, Sölden, Morocco and Austria.

Consider the functions and types of regulation of the media:

- Film and video releases in Britain are amongst the most tightly regulated in the Western world. Age restrictions are placed on all commercially released films by the **BBFC** and some are even expected to make cuts or alter the film in some way to conform to the guidelines.
- Sony had to cut some violence from *Spectre* in order to secure a **12A UK rating** instead of the 15 classification the BBFC originally recommended. This may seem like a sensible decision in order to secure a much wider audience, however, it could be argued that it is no longer the original movie that Sam Mendes, director, wanted the audience to see.

Consider how the media operate as commercial industries on a global scale and reach both large and specialised audiences:

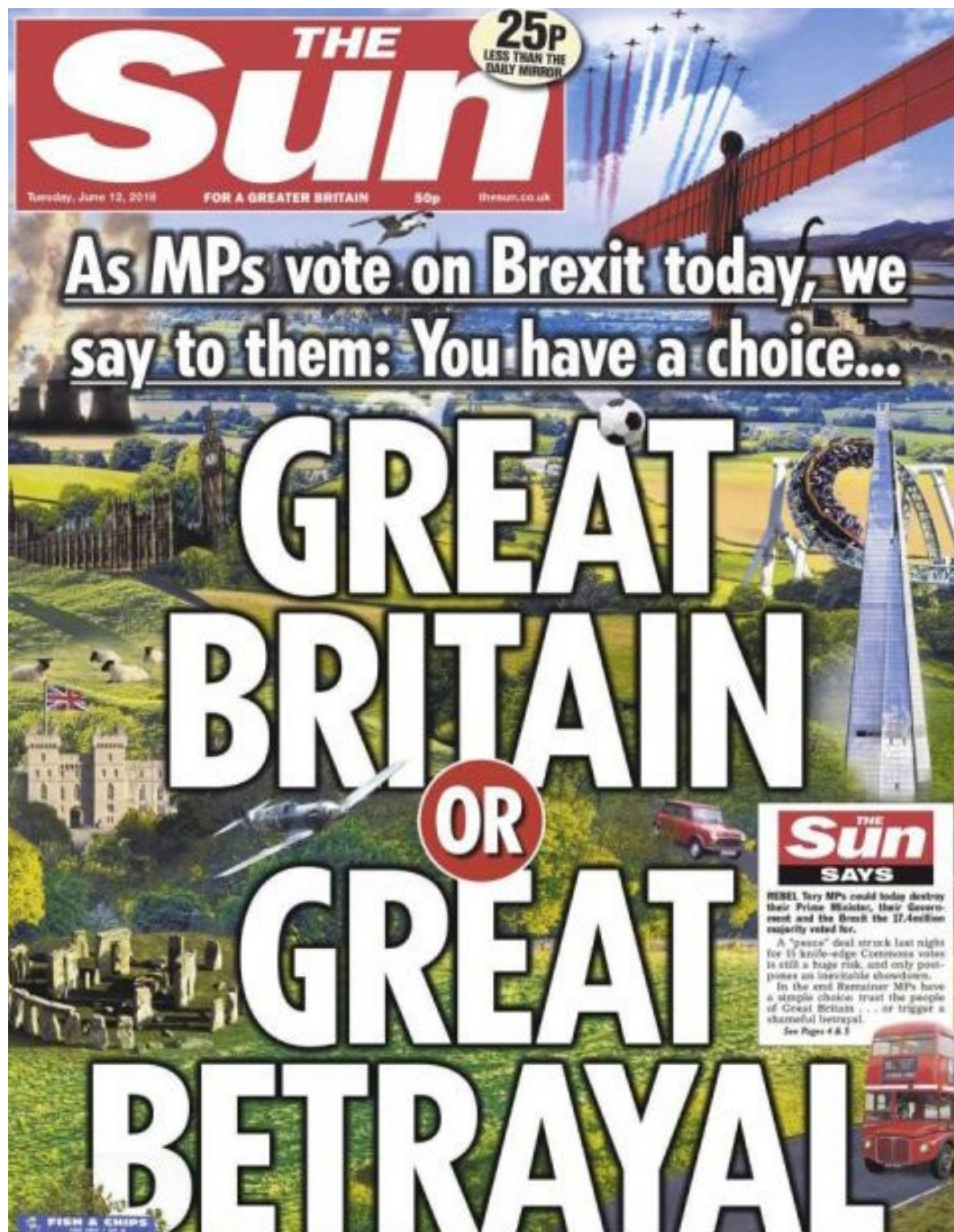
- The long-running Bond **franchise** has an established fan-base and *Spectre*, a US/UK co-production, received **global distribution** (theatrically and on DVD/Blu-ray) to reach a very **large audience**.
- Unlike many media products, it is difficult to specify a specific **target audience** for Bond. The reason for this being that it has spanned so many decades, so many leads and so many directors. However, it is clearly intended for **mass** audiences and has great **commercial** appeal:
  - » Bond is iconic and has **universal** appeal – he is charming, suave, good looking and, most importantly, always catches the 'bad guys'. Arguably, men want to be him and women want to be with him, providing a

form of **escapism** from their everyday lives.

- » Bond also provides a **narrative** we feel comfortable with ('bad guy' does something wrong, 'good guy' catches him and wins the day) and reinforces dominant **messages and values** about 'good' and 'bad'.

# The Sun

(12 June 2018)





# The Sun

(12 June 2018)

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media Language**  
**Representation**  
**Media Industries**  
**Audiences**  
**Media Contexts**

### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

*The Sun* is a British tabloid daily newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

It was originally published six days a week until News Corp. also started producing *The Sun on Sunday* in February 2012 to replace the *News of the World*.

With an average daily circulation of roughly 1.6 million copies of their print edition in the UK and a daily readership of around 4.1 million (<http://www.newsworks.org.uk/The-Sun>), *The Sun* has the largest circulation of any daily print newspaper in the United Kingdom. In addition, *The Sun on Sunday* is the UK's biggest selling Sunday newspaper.

On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union. This was nicknamed 'Brexit'. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting leave and 48.1% voting remain. This reflects the divisive nature of the referendum and the sometimes ugly nature of the campaigns where the Leave camp was accused of fuelling racism and xenophobia (fear of strangers), and the Remain camp was accused of 'betraying Britain' (nationalism).

Almost two years later (on the date this edition of *The Sun* was published) different factions were still arguing. The Prime Minister, Theresa May was trying to put a bill through Parliament to approve her plan for Brexit, but many MPs (from both sides) were critical.

## PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Historical and Cultural Contexts:

The Sun started life as a broadsheet in 1964, becoming a tabloid in 1969 after being purchased by its current owners. Sex was an important feature of the paper's marketing strategy and the first topless page 3 model appeared in November 1970. This soon became a regular feature of the paper and has been an area of contention for some people.

The Sun has always been considered controversial in terms of its output, partly due to its over-reliance on sensational news and partly due to complete fabrication for the sake of a story ('Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster', 1986). It has also maintained an 'anti-elitist' agenda where it regularly exposes the sex or drug scandals of celebrities or authority figures.

In the past five years there has been a surge in 'populist nationalism'. This is a political ideology that distrusts 'experts', statistics and mainstream politicians in favour of returning control to 'the common people' (populist). In many countries across the world, there has been a rise in nationalism; the belief that your country and customs are superior to all others. Positively, nationalism could be seen as pride in your country's culture, traditions and achievements. Negatively, the dismissal or fear of other cultures could be viewed as xenophobia or racism.

The Sun is unashamedly right wing, and part of its brand is to support a nationalist ideology - especially in sporting events and stories about the royal family, but also extending into politics. These have been controversial: during the 1980s Falkland War they featured a photo of a sinking Argentine battleship with the headline 'Gotcha!'. They often employ outspoken columnists like Katie Hopkins whose descriptions of migrants as "cockroaches" were condemned by the UN Commission for Human Rights.

During the Brexit campaign and aftermath, The Sun enthusiastically supported the leave party and published a number of exaggerated or plainly untrue stories that linked into

nationalist beliefs: that migrants from the EU are stealing British jobs, overwhelming the welfare services, planning terrorist attacks etc. They even reported the Queen supported Brexit, a claim that Buckingham Palace denied.

## Consider codes and conventions and how media language communicates meanings:

- The **dominant image** is a **photo-montage** of **iconic** British landmarks or traditions. There are key historical sites like Stonehenge and the Shard; popular British brands like Minis and red buses and spitfires; and even the Houses of Parliament to show a respect for our political system. These are set on backdrops of rolling fields, forests and coastline. It creates the image of Britain as a ‘green and pleasant land’ (a common term from William Blake’s poem ‘Jerusalem’, itself a song with a nationalist message). This is a very **positive representation** but also quite a stereotypical one.
- This montage is **anchored** by the **headline**, “Great Britain or Great Betrayal”. The headline’s use of the emotive term ‘betrayal’ make it clear that the cultural icons featured on the cover are at risk from politicians.
- There is also a **strapline** that reads “For A Greater Britain” that suggests *The Sun* has a clearer idea than MPs what is good for the country.
- The start of the headline addresses MPs directly, and has a threatening tone. The huge letters for the ‘choice’ is phrased more like an **ultimatum**. This reduces what is obviously an extremely complex piece of legislation to something very simple and emotive. ‘Cutting through bureaucracy’ is something right wing populists favour, and this kind of ‘straight talking’ is what *The Sun* is renowned for.
- The **opening to the article** can be seen on the left third of the cover beginning, “The Sun says...” suggesting the newspaper has real influence when it comes to the decisions MPs make.
- The **masthead** is in block, capitalised text and uses the colours red and white. Other newspapers in the UK also use this design (such as *The Mirror*, *The Daily Star* and the *Daily Sport*) and these are termed “red tops” as they specialise in tabloid journalism – journalism that often relies on sensationalism, celebrities and gossip. Tabloids are also renowned for simplifying complex political issues.

- The masthead also has a puff box to show the price and how much cheaper it is than *The Mirror* who are *The Sun*’s main competitor.

## Possible areas for further investigation are:

- **Code and conventions of newspaper covers:** layout, use of cover photographs/ images, house style, mastheads.
- **Emotive vs Formal language** to engage different audience responses.
- Roland Barthes **enigma codes** - headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Historical and Political Contexts:

In its early years, *The Sun* nominally supported the Labour party but has moved back and forth between Labour and the Conservatives, depending on party leadership. The paper has always been very vocal in telling its readers how they should vote (“Why it must be Labour” 1970; “Vote Tory this time” 1979; “Do you really want this old fool to run Britain?” 1983).

Today, *The Sun* is described as having **political allegiance** to the **Conservative party** and does not support the EU, so it is not surprising they are backing offering a **pro-Brexit** viewpoint that links to nationalist values. The paper does have an **ambivalent** representation of politicians. They often flatter and endorse specific MPs and policies, but also regularly feature articles that expose government policies they consider too left wing (especially concerning immigration or multiculturalism). This links to the populist belief that politics is run by an ‘elite’ who have ‘lost touch with the people’.

### Consider the representation of immigration as an issue:

- The cover is a montage of different British cultural traditions that we should be proud about (including fish’n’chips and the Loch Ness monster!) These are also quite **stereotypical** elements of British identity, what foreign tourists may expect from a visit to the UK. *The Sun* isn’t just reinforcing these stereotypes; it is saying that if we don’t celebrate and protect them then we will be ‘betraying’ Britain. The only way to ‘protect’ British identity is for MPs to vote in favour of the Brexit bill.
- The landmarks and traditions are closely associated with England and particularly the South of England where there was strong support for Brexit. There is only one Northern landmark

(the Angel of the North) and no representations of Scotland and Northern Ireland except for Loch Ness. This may be because Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted to remain, so are not part of *The Sun's* target audience. *The Sun* does have specific Irish and Scottish editions, so this may also explain the focus on England.

- The strapline 'For A Greater Britain' implies, along with 'The Sun Says...' suggests *The Sun* has a clearer definition of what makes Britain great than others, and implies the reader should trust its vision.

## PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Media Industries

### Consider the importance of funding

- Increasingly newspapers earn revenue from their advertisements and so, in this sense, journalism is being seen more and more as a commodity whose purpose is predominantly for profit. £1 in every £7 spent on groceries is spent by a *Sun* reader making it a very attractive advertising vehicle.
- As **readership figures of print news continue to drop** and advertisers choosing to leave if figures drop too low, newspapers are under **increasing pressure to capture audiences**, so the populist nationalist ideology and emotive ultimatum that dominate the cover is a clear bid to attract those readers who voted leave. The range of British cultural institutions, from royalty to the Red Arrows is trying to appeal to the largest range of audience interests.

### Consider the impact of technologies, and convergence:

- In August 2013, *The Sun* launched Sun+, a **subscription service digital entertainment package**. Subscribers paid £2 per week but were able to access all of *The Sun's* regular content as well as have exclusive access to Premier League clips, a variety of digital rewards and a lottery. Despite the cost of this, Sun+ had 117,000 **subscribers** who they could **engage** with on a more personal level due to the **brand loyalty** created from the subscription. This was just one of the ways *The Sun* adapted to people's reading

habits, with people now having little time to spare and increasingly 'reading on the go'.

- However, in November 2015, the paper had to remove the paywall and offer most of its web content for free in order to compete with major rivals such as *The Mail Online*. Since removal of the paywall, it now has around 1 million browsers per day.
- Despite the move of most news services to online platforms, the print edition continues to be extremely popular with approximately 3 million daily readers, compared to 4 million who consume it on their mobile devices.

## PART 4: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

### Consider target audiences:

- *The Sun* targets the **lower middle social classes**, most of whom haven't attended higher education. Two thirds of its readers are over 35 years old, 54% are male and its biggest audience share comes from the C2DE demographic.
- According to [www.see-a-voice.org](http://www.see-a-voice.org), the average reading age of the UK population is 9 years old. *The Sun* has a reading age of 8 years. Using of words in bold, lots of visuals and smaller chunks of text means they are purposefully making their product **accessible to everyone** and especially appealing to members of our society who have **weaker literacy skills**.
- In addition, this way of formatting makes it easier to read at speed – on the daily commute for example - and to skim and scan the paper to find specific articles that interest you. This could help explain why *The Sun* is "**Britain's most popular paper**" as stated by its tagline, as it is an easy read.

### Consider theoretical perspectives:

- **Active/Passive audience.** Historically, readers of print newspapers were considered to be passive (i.e. they read what was in front of them and believed it), especially as there is an expectation that what is shared in the news genre is true. However, today's audiences are much more active and understand how tabloids often don't report full facts. This potentially changes the way they interpret the information they are given.



# This Girl Can advert (2016)



© Sport England [www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/](http://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/)

# This Girl Can advert

## (2016)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas:  
Media Language  
Representation  
Media Contexts

#### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- *This Girl Can* is a national campaign developed by Sport England and in conjunction with a wide range of partnership organisations.
- The purpose of the campaign is to break down the primary barrier holding women back from participating in sport – the fear of judgement. The campaign seeks to target and celebrate ‘active women who are doing their thing, whatever that may be, no matter how well they do it, no matter how they look or even how red their face gets’.
- The campaign is currently funded by the National Lottery and backed by a government body, Sport England; there is no commercial aspect to it at all.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Social and Cultural Contexts:

- **Sport England** carried out a lot of research to figure out why there was such a big gender gap in **sports participation**. They discovered that two million fewer 14-40 year old women than men partake in sport regularly and they wanted to understand why.
- They discovered that:
  - » 13 million women said they would like to participate more in sport and physical activity.
  - » Just over 6 million of these are not currently active at all.
  - » Fear of being judged was the number one barrier for most women who felt they were unable to participate in physical activity.
- **As a result of the campaign, 1.6m women have started exercising** and the number of women playing sport and being active is increasing faster than the number of men.
- Soon after the launch of the “This Girl Can” campaign, **Nike** released a more motivational campaign called “**Better for it**” which also portrayed a more ‘real’ side to fitness.

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how media language influences meaning:

- A **central, striking, image** that encourages the reader to become intrigued to find out more about the **advert**:
  - » A **mid-shot of a woman in her thirties, exercising**. Unlike many advertising campaigns, this female is **not a celebrity**. By purposefully avoiding using a sporting legend or an athletic goddess, the campaign is able to **target ordinary women of all ages**, encouraging them to take part in sport and showing them that they can achieve.
  - » The lack of celebrity means that the woman in the advert feels **familiar**. The female in the image has her hair scraped up into a ponytail, she is sweating a lot and her clothes are not what society would consider fashionable. For all these reasons, there is a sense that you know someone like her or, in fact, you are her.
- The **dominance of this image** suggests she is the **protagonist of this narrative**, the ‘hero’ according to Vladimir Propp’s character theory. She is heroic because she is embracing sport; she doesn’t appear to care what anyone thinks and has shed any inhibitions. She is an inspiration to other women as it is obvious from her facial expression that she is really enjoying herself and is completely lost in the moment.
- Across the image is what the **campaign** itself calls a **mantra**, “Sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox.” The campaign has taken a derogatory comment, “sweating like a pig” and turned it into something more positive.
  - » **Historically** it was considered un-ladylike to break into a sweat and, for many women, it is still the case. They don’t want to be seen sweating as it makes them red in the face, ruins their make-up and makes them feel unattractive. However, this mantra turns

this on its head and perhaps suggests that by working out, you are becoming healthier and therefore will become more attractive, “like a fox” – a fox being a young, beautiful lady.

- Towards the bottom but still central is the name of the **campaign, or brand logo**, “**This Girl Can**”. This is a very positive statement with **connotations** of determination. It is used to reinforce the idea that all women should exercise and also to convince them that if they try they can succeed in sport.
- If you were unaware of this campaign, the limited text and unusual image would act like an **enigma code** (Roland Barthes) for the audience, as we want to find out who this character is and what the advert means by, “This Girl Can”.
- In the top left hand corner of the advert, there is the **hashtag** “**#thisgirlcan**” connecting readers to the campaign’s social media pages, should they wish to follow it or find out more, and there are logos for the **producers** of the campaign – Sport England and the Lottery. These are much smaller and tucked away so as not to detract from the visuals. Use of the hashtag will hopefully connect women with like-minded others and bring a sense of **social cohesion**. It also allows the print campaign to take readers to the complete YouTube advert, allowing them to understand the campaign and see more positive representations of women enjoying sport.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Consider the social and cultural significance of representations of femininity:

- The campaign’s agenda is to encourage women to participate in physical activities by **challenging the dominant ideology**. In order to do this, the campaign portrays women extremely positively.
- **Stereotypically**, women have often been thought of as the weaker sex and often less successful, particularly where sport is concerned. However, this advertising campaign is seeking to **challenge these stereotypes** and convince women of their potential. The female in this image is portrayed from a positive viewpoint: she is represented as independent, confident and happy. There is a clear focus on her face, showing an expression of enjoyment and fun. By **selecting** such an image, the **producers are seeking to challenge the sexism** and male dominance in sport.
- The **processes of selection and production** have been carefully managed. This advert,

like the others in this campaign, has a certain ‘rawness’ to it, focusing on ‘**real**’ women. There is no glossy finish and it doesn’t resemble any of the high-end adverts produced by commercial sporting brands.

- » The females are supposed to be seen as heroic - **aspirational role models** for the readers. Audience members should see something of themselves in these women, bringing their own fear of judgement to the forefront and considering whether it is actually an appropriate fear to have when they see the amount of fun and enjoyment these women seem to be experiencing.
- In addition, the **brand name**, “This Girl Can” uses the noun “**girl**” as an all-encompassing term. It is used to represent (and target) **the whole of the female population** and make them feel **included**, a force to be reckoned with, a team, a united front.
- When used in the context of sport, “**girl**” can be thought of as having some negative connotations – “throw like a girl” is a common simile used to mock someone who cannot throw. It plays on the **stereotype that girls can’t do sport**. Perhaps then this statement is in response to that idea, “This Girl Can”.
- Interestingly though, considering that the campaign is targeting females of all ages, the word “girl” has been used rather than “woman”. “Girl” is usually associated with younger females and there is an argument to say that women over a certain age may feel disconnected from this campaign.



# The Guardian

(12 September 2018)

**How to stay fit for the rest of your life**

by G2

**Larry Elliott** The great crash could happen again Page 27

Wednesday  
12 September 2018  
Issue No 53,512  
£3.00

**The Guardian**

**Dairy food may protect the heart, study finds**

**Sarah Boseley**  
Health editor

Dairy products such as cheese and milk may protect against heart disease and strokes despite their saturated fats, according to a study. The research suggests a moderate amount – three servings a day – can protect the heart rather than damage it.

The study was carried out mostly in low and middle income countries, where less dairy is consumed, but the lead researcher said she believed the findings held good for those in wealthier countries who avoid dairy, thinking it benefits their health.

Dr Mahshid Dehghan from McMaster University, in Ontario, Canada, said: “We encourage people who have very low dairy consumption to increase their consumption, especially in low and middle income countries but also in very high income countries.”

Concern over dairy stems from the recognition that

**Jaguar chief warns May: thousands of jobs at risk from your Brexit tactics**

**Pippa Cresser**  
Deputy political editor

Britain's biggest car manufacturer, Jaguar Land Rover, has launched a blistering attack on Theresa May's handling of Brexit, as leading Eurosceptics claimed there was “nothing to fear” about leaving the EU without a deal.

Ralf Speth, the company's chief executive, told the prime minister that if she failed to reach an agreement with Brussels “tens of thousands” of jobs in the sector could be lost and its factories faced grinding to a halt.

In a surprise intervention at a landmark car industry summit organised by the government, Speth described the prospect of a cliff-edge break with the EU as “horrifying”, warning that if “wrong decisions” were taken now it could result in the “worst of times” for the UK.

He stressed the company was committed to the UK but said a hard Brexit would cost it £1.2bn a year, wiping out profits. “What decisions will we be forced to make, if Brexit means not merely that costs go up, but that we cannot physically build cars on time and on budget in the UK?”

The comments follow similar warnings from other industry chiefs, including those of Airbus and BMW, about the potentially damaging consequences of Britain's decision to leave the EU. May, who was waiting backstage as Speth delivered his speech, did not mention Brexit in her address to the Birmingham summit.

Downing Street said that one of the key elements of the Chequers plan was to try to protect the industry's supply chains with the EU, with the common rulebook proposal helping ensure frictionless trade. The issue came up at a round table later.

Speth told the conference friction at the border could put production in jeopardy at a cost of £50m a day. He also warned that traffic jams on the approach to Dover meant that “bluntly we will not be able to build cars”.

In an ominous passage, he pointed out it was now cheaper for the company to make cars in Slovakia than in Britain.

“Six months from Brexit and uncertainty means that many companies are being forced to make decisions about their businesses that will not be reversed, whatever the outcome, just to survive,” he added.

May is holding a cabinet meeting tomorrow where ministers will discuss their plans in the event of the government failing to reach a deal with Brussels. No 10 insiders, however, are growing

**Orbán v the EU**  
**Rightwing Hungarian PM defiant over sanction threat**

World Page 18 →

# The Guardian

## (12th September 2018)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

**Focus areas:**  
**Media language**  
**Representation**  
**Media contexts**

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *The Guardian* is a British national daily newspaper with an average daily circulation of roughly 134,000 copies of their print edition in the UK. (April 2019)
- *The Guardian* newspaper targets a well-educated, relatively young and liberal audience. The demographic is 89% ABC1. Fifty-two percent of *Guardian* readers are male, and the average reader age is 44.
- *The Guardian* has a UK online edition which has over 42.6 million readers (as of October 2014).
- In 2006, *The Guardian* went through a complete redesign. It became smaller, had a new typeface and balanced the longer pieces of journalism out with many shorter stories. The reasons for this were twofold: to adapt to what was going on in the market (*The Independent* and *The Times* had already changed to a tabloid format) and to adapt to people's reading habits, with people now having little time to spare and increasingly 'reading on the go'.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Political context

On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU). This was nicknamed 'Brexit'. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting leave and 48.1% voting remain. This reflects the divisive nature of the referendum. The campaigns before the referendum were quite aggressive. The leave camp was accused of fuelling racism and xenophobia (fear of strangers), and the remain camp was accused of 'betraying Britain'. Boris Johnson and the other politicians featured in the photo were very fervent Leave campaigners. One of their catchphrases was to label the economic

concerns of the remain party 'Project Fear' while they called theirs 'Project Prosperity'.

The economy was a key element in both campaigns. After the financial crash of 2008, the state of the national and global economy became a popular concern. In terms of Brexit, numerous business leaders backed one side or the other. Popular entrepreneurs like James Dyson supported leaving the EU and insisted it would be good for UK businesses, especially smaller companies. This appeals to 'populist nationalists' who believe the EU takes control from the 'common man'. Alan Sugar (host of *The Apprentice*) insisted Brexit would be terrible for the UK economy, because without the trade deals, big businesses would move abroad. Britain's plan to leave the EU, and especially to limit migration, found support from other EU nations unhappy with their position. One such country is Hungary, whose prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has directly challenged the EU about migration issues. Along with other infringements of other EU laws about freedom of speech and democracy, this has led to direct conflict between Orbán and the EU.

##### Cultural context

A reliable topic to attract especially middle class (ABC1) audience is health. This demographic has disposable income to spend on healthier food, gym memberships etc. Many newspapers aimed at this audience, both left and right wing, feature stories about the latest scientific studies and reports about how to live longer, healthier lives. Often these stories are noteworthy because they contradict or complicate a popular health belief e.g. that too much dairy is bad for our health.

##### Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- Unlike many of its counterparts that use block, capitalised text for their mastheads, *The Guardian's* **masthead** is written all in lowercase and uses a curved font. This uniqueness makes the newspaper stand out from the crowd when competing for sales on the news-stands and, arguably, is a more personal **mode of address**, one that offers an alternative form of journalism

to the rest of the industry. It also suggests sophistication, which links to *The Guardian's* brand identity of strong investigative journalism.

- The **choice** of stories is serious and complex, suitable for a well-educated target audience.
- The **dominant image** is of a group of politicians looking sad and frustrated. Usually these politicians, particularly Boris Johnson, appear extremely confident and optimistic, so to see them looking so despondent is a striking image.
- The photograph is **anchored with the caption**, explaining they are at a meeting with Brexit supporters. The fact they look so despairing and tired implies that even they have doubts how positive Brexit will be for the UK. This would agree with the left wing, anti-Brexit beliefs of *The Guardian's* target audience.
- Behind them is a sign that reads "From Project Fear to Project Prosperity". The optimistic tone of this slogan is **ironic** when **juxtaposed** with the defeated, sad posture of the politicians.
- The **emotive language** used in the **main headline** further **anchors** the meaning of the photo: words like 'warn' and 'risk' suggest that Brexit is not going to lead to 'prosperity' as the Leave party promised. Again, this reinforces the left wing political beliefs of the target audience.
- The audience is positioned in such a way so as to worry about the effects of Brexit on the UK economy, but to also take pleasure from the defeated postures of the pro-Leave politicians in the photo. This reinforces their personal and collective identity as it tells them they were correct to vote Remain.

## Consider how choice of elements of media language portrays aspects of reality and conveys messages and values:

- Alongside the main article, there is a **linked article** about Orbán in conflict with the EU. Though it doesn't mention the economy, the labelling of Orbán of 'right-wing' immediately tells the liberal target audience of *The Guardian* that this man is a political enemy and reinforces their support for the EU.
- The photo **anchors** the image here, showing Orbán with a belligerent facial expression which suggests he is an aggressive, uncooperative figure.
- There is a **cover line** (or **puff box**) at the top right, for an article in the paper further exploring economic issues, and **graphic** of a dipping line that has become **symbolic** of the financial crash.

- There is a headline for the health story that dairy foods might be good for the heart. This fulfils the news value of unexpectedness as the dominant medical advice has been to eat less dairy.

## Consider the codes and conventions of media language:

- A much smaller part of the front page is given over to the **G2 supplement**, a **regular segment** in the paper which, because of its placing, when displayed on news-stands may well be the section people see first. This supplement offers a lighter alternative to the hard hitting news stories of the rest of the newspaper.
- There is also a **cover line** (or **puff box**) announcing a guide to fitness in the **G2 supplement**. The 'How to...' phrasing makes a healthy lifestyle seem achievable, even when the "for the rest of your life" seems **hyperbolic**. The cartoon of the woman running indicates that this might be a more light-hearted article, and helps to balance the serious tone of the rest of the cover.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Code and conventions** of newspaper covers – layout, use of cover photographs/ images, house style, mastheads.
- **Narrative** – headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories (could be linked to Roland Barthes – enigma codes).
- **Active/Passive audience**. Historically, readers of print newspapers were considered to be passive (i.e. they read what was in front of them and believed it), especially as there is an expectation that what is shared in the news genre is true. However, today's audiences are much more active and can interact with the news they read. They have the option to read it online, comment and discuss below an article, as well as sharing it on social media. The comments section in newspapers are known as 'below the line' commentary. *The Guardian Online* has a renowned 'below the line' section called *Comment Is Free* that reflects the liberal readers' strong belief in freedom of speech. In 2008, the editor said the future of the press lay in "newspapers becoming *views-papers*" i.e. forums for discussion and opinion.



**PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation****Political context**

*The Guardian* is described as having mainstream left political values. It does not have an affiliation with any political party, but does lean towards the left and has a very liberal tradition. It is therefore not surprising that the main photo seems to be mocking well-known and outspoken right wing politicians.

*The Guardian* isn't owned by a group of shareholders like most other newspapers, for whom making a profit is imperative. Therefore they believe that they can hold true to their core journalistic principles.

The paper supported the Remain campaign in the run-up to the Brexit referendum, and has continued to be very critical of the negotiations for Britain to leave the EU.

**Consider the representation of politicians, and Brexit as an issue:**

- The **text** of the headline is carefully constructed to position the audience into accepting the newspaper's **viewpoint, analysis and opinion**. Though it doesn't explicitly state an opinion in the style of tabloids (e.g. 'The Sun Says...'), the choice of these main cover stories portray Brexit as dangerous for the economy, and perhaps the cause of future financial crash.
- In both the photograph and the article, politicians are portrayed as ridiculous and clueless. Those in the photo look defeated, in contrast to their slogan on the wall behind them, and the tone of the headline suggests that May, the Prime

Minister, doesn't know what she's doing.

- The **omission** of any positive stories about Brexit and the economy reinforces the target audience's beliefs on this issue.
- The article about Orbán's conflict with the EU and his combative facial expression suggests the EU is a positive organisation and that the UK is foolish to leave.

**Consider the functions and uses of stereotypes:**

- Politicians are often portrayed as inept and useless in both left/right wing press, and in both tabloids and broadsheets. By exposing their weaknesses and mocking their decisions, this portrayal of the most powerful people in the country could offer audiences a sense of superiority. Politicians pretend to be intelligent and well-meaning but by **satirising** them, newspapers bring them down to the level of the general public.

**Possible areas for further investigation:**

- **Theoretical perspectives** (e.g. Stuart Hall) – representation, stereotype, selection/omission and perhaps how, in some ways, this newspaper front page is reinforcing the **populist ideology** that the political 'elite' are inept and out of touch with reality.
- It would be helpful to **compare this article** with another from the tabloid right-wing press, such as *The Sun*, which portrays politicians similarly but which support Brexit.

# The Man with The Golden Gun film poster

(December 1974)



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# The Man with The Golden Gun film poster

(December 1974)

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas:  
Media language  
Representation  
Media contexts

### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *The Man with the Golden Gun* is a James Bond film released on 19 December 1974, starring Roger Moore as 007. This was only Moore's second appearance as the fictional MI6 agent.
- Based on a book of the same name, written by Ian Fleming, the film was produced by the British company Eon (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed by United Artists. The film was created with an estimated \$7 million budget and grossed over \$97 million at the world wide box office.
- To reflect the popularity of the Martial Arts film genre, with the rise of stars such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, there were several Kung Fu scenes and the film was filmed predominantly in Asia, having being shot in Hong Kong, Thailand and Macau.
- The artwork for poster itself was produced by artist and illustrator Robert McGinnis.

### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Historical Context:

Prior to the 1990s, illustrations were much more commonly used on film posters due to the limited **technology** that was available.

The film was set in the middle of the 1973 energy crisis, when the oil producing Arab nations proclaimed an oil embargo causing an oil crisis which had both short and long-term effects across on **politics and the economy** across the globe. This is hinted at through the poster's

iconography of the power plant in the lower left corner and the energy beam directed at Bond.

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:

- Typically, film posters are very **visual** and rely on **images** and limited text to promote the film. The images need to give the audience an idea of the film **genre** and hint at the **narrative** – here, rather than just one dominant image, there is so much going on that the reader is expected to work through the images to understand the film's plot.
- The **central image** is a **mid-shot** of James Bond, smartly dressed holding a gun across his body. The dominance of his image suggests he is the film's **protagonist** and so probably a 'good guy'. According to Vladimir **Propp's** theory, he would be considered the '**hero**'.
- Bond's **attire** connotes business and professionalism and the gun, an iconic part of Bond's 'uniform', **signifies** danger and action.
- Bond is **looking directly at the audience**, seemingly making eye contact. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could **connote** how seriously he expects to be taken and that he appears calm despite the chaos surrounding him. This informs the audience of one of his great strengths, his ability to keep his composure in any situation.
- A common convention for film posters is to have the **actor's name(s)** placed prominently as another way to entice the **audience**. Roger Moore had become a household name after starring in the well-known TV series *The Saint* and playing Bond in the previous film, *Live and Let Die*, so his name is placed directly above Bond's image to reinforce the link.
- The **title** of the film appears with the name of the author who wrote the books (on which the films are based) at the bottom of the poster. The



**credit block**, detailing **industry information** such as other star's names, directors and producers, is much smaller and tucked away so as not to divert the audience away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

Consider narrative:

- At the bottom of the frame, in the foreground, is an extreme close up of a golden gun. It is pointed right at Bond and someone is loading it with a bullet engraved with his name so the reader can interpret this as an attempted assassination on the protagonist.
  - » The **colour** of the gun **connotes** wealth and status and the fact we can only see the hand of the shooter creates intrigue and what Roland Barthes would term an **enigma** code for the audience, as we want to find out who is trying to kill Bond.
  - » Also, continuing **Propp's** character theory, we would consider this person to be the '**villain**'.
- Surrounding Bond are even more enemies and people trying to kill him. These images, combined with the images of destruction and explosions, are **codes that signify** to the audience this is from the action/thriller **genre**.
- As is **typical** of Bond films, the protagonist is flanked by **females** wearing very few clothes:
  - » Two of these women are highly **sexualised**: bikini-clad, slim with perfect hour glass figure and long flowing hair.
  - » **Body language**: one appears to be looking at the golden gun assassin whilst pointing at Bond whilst the other seems to be putting her arm out in front of him, seemingly protecting him. Barthes might argue that this is another enigma code, suggesting to the audience that Bond has female allies and enemies, yet all look the same making it hard for him to distinguish between them.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and Cultural Contexts:

At the start of the 20th century, many film depictions of minority ethnic groups supported the dominant **stereotypes** of the time: to be pitied, to be laughed at, the exotic and/or dangerous. While society was progressing towards racial equality by the 1970s, some of these stereotypes were still in evidence in mainstream films. In addition, it is interesting to consider this poster in the context of the move towards gender equality and

increased women's rights in the 1960s and 70s.

Consider the representation of gender and ethnicity:

- At this time, Bond was already **iconic**. He was the nation's favourite secret agent; charming, suave, good looking and, most importantly, always caught the 'bad guys'. This **representation of masculinity** told audiences that this was what a man had to be at the time – intelligent, strong and prepared to put yourself in dangerous situations. If you were all of those things, you would be successful, gain respect and women would want you. The assumption then is that men should also be heterosexual.
- Two of the three **females** on the poster are wearing bikinis which show off their slim bodies. Both are heavily made up and wear earrings and bracelets as accessories to the 'outfit'. The two women also have long flowing hair.
  - » A feminist theoretical perspective would argue that this **sexualised representation** of women suggests that they are little more than bodies to be looked at.
- Another female, however, is dressed in a karate uniform and is shown in a martial arts pose, and appears to go against this **stereotype**. She too has flowing hair but this time it is much darker and her skin tone suggests she is from a different ethnic group to the other females. This goes some way to explaining why she seems not to support the dominant sexualised stereotype portrayed by the other females; she is seen as exotic, different, the 'other'.

Consider the representation of issues and events:

- Interestingly, one of the main themes in this Bond film was an actual world event – the 1973 **global energy crisis**. With the embargo on oil, countries were considering alternative power sources and this is portrayed through the **iconography** of the power plant and the related explosions. By including this theme, the producers are encouraging audiences to consider what might happen if oil really did run out and predict what the outcomes would be for society.

Possible areas for further investigation:

- Consider ideas about **encoding** and **decoding** texts (could reference theorists e.g. Stuart Hall). The producers have encoded certain ideas into this text but it depends on the viewer's own social and cultural context how this image is decoded:
  - » **For example**, the depiction of a female

doing martial arts could be seen to support the idea that she is dangerous and to be feared or could be seen as a progressive way of looking at females, those who are strong, confident and fearless.

- **Feminist theoretical perspectives** - Laura Mulvey (in her 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema') coined the term the '**male gaze**' which discussed how the audience is put into the perspective of a heterosexual man. In this poster, the audience is forced to

**focus** on the curves of the women's bodies, putting them in the eyes of a male.

- » Mulvey goes on to argue then that this denies the women human identity and relegates them to the status of **objects** to be admired for physical appearance. This could be further argued as the producer of the artwork was a male, Robert McGinnis.

# Fortnite

(2017)





# Fortnite

## (2017)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

#### Focus areas: Media industries Audiences

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Produced by Epic Games, the *Fortnite* franchise is a series of multiplayer **free-to-play** battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices. It was launched in July 2017
- The franchise includes *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, *Fortnite: Save The World*, and *Fortnite: Creative*
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the *Battle Royale* version was offered for free.
- The *Fortnite* franchise had **revenue** of £2.4 billion in 2018
- The franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

#### Gameplay

- Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
- The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
- As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
- In terms of **genre**, *Fortnite* could be considered as fusion of battle games (like *Battlegrounds*) and construction games (like *Minecraft*).

### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media industries

#### Social and cultural contexts:

The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.

In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.

The range of genres - from first-person-shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.

Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

#### Consider the impact of new technology and convergence:

- One of the things that have made *Fortnite* so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you

can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of **technological convergence**.

- Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop *Fortnite*. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like *Batman: Arkham City* and *Infinity Blade*.
- *Fortnite* is also a good example of **cross-media convergence**, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. *Fortnite* is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media **brands** and **franchises**. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special *Avengers: Infinity War* segment and recently a tie-in with *Godzilla*. The format of *Fortnite* means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh. Films/TV/sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep *Fortnite* in the news and social media.
- Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

## Consider Epic Games as an institution:

- Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur games designers.
- In 2014, the *Guinness Book Of Records* named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
- Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer Cloudgine, and has sub-studios in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
- Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.

## Consider different funding and profit models:

- *Fortnite* is an example of the '**Games as a Service**' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from '**in-game purchases**' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)
- Some of these are '**micro transactions**' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In *Fortnite*, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is *Candy Crush*.
- Unusually in *Fortnite* the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
- Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer '**season passes**' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
- *Fortnite* offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

## Consider regulation of the media:

- **Age ratings** are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as computer games, are clearly labelled by age according to the content they contain. Age ratings provide guidance to consumers (particularly parents) to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product. The rating on a game confirms that it is suitable for players over a certain age.
- In 2012 the **PEGI** system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- *Fortnite* has the PEGI rating of 12 for "frequent scenes of mild violence". It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audience

### Historical and Political Contexts

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many **moral panics**. These ranged from fears that violent games encourage **copycat** behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of ‘**screen time**’ that is healthy. *Fortnite*, when compared to other successful titles like *Grand Theft Auto* or *Call Of Duty* contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players.

In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender ‘skins’ at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the **collaborative** nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale).

The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is ‘dangerous’.

### Consider the way media industries target audiences:

- *Fortnite* has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.
- The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
- The rise of ‘eSports’ stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where *Fortnite* is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major

celebrities. Ninja, the most famous *Fortnite* player has over 10 million subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo!

- This creates gamer celebrities that have become **aspirational role-models** for some audiences.
- The use of **non-traditional** gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of ‘Twitch Girls’ (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
- *Fortnite*’s use of ‘seasons’ - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/ on-line subscription style of **long-form TV drama**.

### Consider active and passive audience responses:

- The basic gameplay of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative.
- *Fortnite: Creative* is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing ‘skins’, ‘emotes’ and landscapes.
- In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of games developers.

### Consider theoretical perspectives:

- Blumler and Katz’s ‘**Uses and Gratifications**’ theory considers why people interact with media texts.
- *Fortnite* - along with many videogames - could relate to the ‘**escapism**’ and ‘**catharses**’.
- However, the collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide **social interaction**.
- The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to **Dyer’s ‘Star Theory’**.



# Pride magazine

(November, 2015)



# Pride magazine

## (November, 2015)

### Component 1: Exploring the Media

#### Focus areas: Media language Representation Media contexts

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Pride* is a UK monthly women's lifestyle magazine that targets women of colour.
- It has been in publication since 1990 and has a circulation of over 30 000 copies per month and a readership of over 146 000.
- *Pride* is distributed in the UK by COMAG, part of Condé Nast.
- It's easy to see how people may mistake *Pride* for a gay magazine, as this word has become synonymous with the gay community over recent decades. In fact, the modern gay movement has its roots in the black liberation movement of the 1960s with Gay Pride borrowing its name from Black Pride.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Social and cultural context

In the 1950s and 60s, women's magazines moved away from articles on homemaking and moved towards articles on beauty. Fashion also moved up the agenda, with less about how to make it and more about how to wear it. So, with consumption at the top of the agenda, readers were being reminded that they should look and feel the best they could and the best way to achieve this was by purchasing the latest cosmetics and hair care advertised within the magazine's pages. This is still very much the case today and is evident in this magazine.

The 'Uses and Gratifications Model' suggests that audiences interact with texts for different reasons: information, personal identity, social interaction and entertainment. Although all of these reasons could be argued for why *Pride* has such high readership figures, arguably the personal identity aspect is

probably the main one. In fact, its unique selling point is that it is the only black media company that still remains in black British ownership.

##### Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- **Title** of the magazine, *Pride*, has connotations of self-respect, self-esteem, dignity and strength. There is a subtext of resistance and an affirmation of cultural identity.
- Some of the **masthead** is lost behind the cover star's head, suggesting her dominance and showing how confident the magazine is that their readers will still recognise their brand, despite not being able to see all of the title.
- The **strapline** tells us that the magazine is "celebrating 24 years at the top!". At the top of what, we're not entirely sure, but the phrasing encourages the reader to feel a part of something great. The assumption is that they are reading one of the best magazines of its kind.
- The red and black **colour palette** used for the cover lines helps to support the idea of pride. Red is associated with pride and strength and the black is a strong, bold statement, perhaps representative of their target audience, women of colour.
- The **pose** used by the **cover star**, Harris, with her hand on her hip suggests confidence and sass. It's also a photographer's trick to lengthen the appearance of the torso, helping to make her look taller and slimmer, trying to add to her beauty and further improve her body shape making her figure aspirational to the target audience.
- Harris is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format.

##### Consider how media language portrays aspects of reality, constructs points of view and conveys messages and values:

- Many of the cover lines focus on **body image** reminding readers that they could and should look better, and also that they

will be judged on their appearance.

- One **cover line** references Female Genital Mutilation but uses only its acronym (FGM). There's an assumption then that the reader will understand this and so have a certain level of social and cultural understanding of the practice. It's a controversial topic, illustrating how the magazine is comfortable covering such serious topics through investigative journalism and sees their target audience as mature enough to handle the subject matter, and educated enough to engage with it.
- **Harris' cover line**, "Bond And Beyond", suggests that her role as Eve Moneypenny in the Bond film was a defining role for her, and her career has continued to improve ever since. However, it's argued that her defining role was in fact Tia Dalma in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Perhaps though, this image of her as a voodoo witch doesn't fit with the mainstream ideals of feminine beauty. Whereas Bond females have certain attributes associated with them – those of beauty, femininity and overt sexuality.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Genre codes and conventions** of magazine covers: layout, use of cover star, house style, mastheads. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever-changing nature and **hybridity**. For example, lifestyle magazines could be specifically about cookery, fashion or health and fitness and still come under the umbrella term 'lifestyle'.
- **Narrative** – cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes – enigma codes).
- The **function** of magazines – linked to media language and cultural context – "to provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in this mythic feminine identity" ('Media Semiotics', Bignell, 1997, p61). Magazines promote a "feminine culture" and therefore "define and shape the woman's world" ('Feminism and Youth Culture', McRobbie, 2000, p69), so they become a familiar friend for the female filled with advice, entertainment and provide a form of escapism for the reader.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Social and cultural context

**Black Lives Matter (BLM)** is an international

activist movement which originated in the African American community. It campaigns against violence and systematic racism towards black people. The movement started in 2013, with the spread of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter after the controversial acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of Trayvon Martin. It then became nationally recognized through social media and street demonstrations following two more black deaths in 2014. The dominance of this movement on social media may possibly have something to do with the huge number of twitter followers and Facebook likes *Pride* magazine now has. According to their website, they have 300% more followers and likes than any other title in the ethnic market – (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>)

### Historical and political context

Around the time of The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Black Pride was a response to dominant white cultures and ideologies that encouraged black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage. At this time, the Afro hairstyle, which was associated with everything natural, came to symbolise Black Pride and Power, in contrast with the artificial hairstyles of those wearing wigs or having relaxed hair, both of which were seen as pandering to European notions of beauty. Interestingly then, this text has a cover line which references "The wig revolution" and Harris herself has straight hair rather than her natural curls. Could this have something to do with the consumerist context of the magazine, a text most likely filled with adverts for hair care products such as relaxers, and featuring photographs of black women with long, flowing, straightened hair?

### Consider the representation of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a successful, black, British **cover star** as their dominant image, *Pride* is presenting a **role model** for its readers but, importantly, someone from their community. Harris was raised in a single-parent household and came from a working class background. This very 'normal' upbringing makes it easier for the readers to aspire to be like her. The magazine declares itself to be "the face of this new young black Britain; outgoing, confident and ambitious, whilst still maintaining pride in their culture and origins" (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>), so having Naomie Harris, who appears to epitomise all of this, works very well.



- **Stereotypical representation of femininity**, especially in relation to body image:
  - » Harris is also attractive and slim – this is no coincidence. For women, it is a constant struggle to be successful by holding down a job, whilst also looking good and dressing fashionably. The very essence of all women's lifestyle magazines is consumerism, and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this. This is just as true of *Pride* as it is of *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*.
  - » Cover lines like “How far would you go to be beautiful?” suggest that the reader cannot already be naturally beautiful, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, black women reading or starring in *Pride* are represented as having just as many beauty problems as their white peers. The importance of body image and consumerism doesn't change just because of skin colour.
  - » In *Pride*, readers are reminded that they could and should look better and that they will be judged on their appearance – “objectified, sexualised, mocked. Black women's bodies examined.” The subtext of all of this is no different from any other lifestyle magazine – you are inadequate.

## Consider the representation of issues:

- It's also worth considering the representation of the issue of FGM. The initial belief that the magazine is including some hard hitting journalism doesn't completely hold together when you read the second line, stating that it is happening on Harley Street, an area of London well known for cosmetic procedures. From this, we could argue that the magazine's only angle when covering this issue is wholly focused on beauty and body image.
- However, perhaps it could still be seen as a brave move to put it on the cover of a popular lifestyle magazine, bringing a very serious topic into the public domain.
- Furthermore, the exclamation mark makes the magazine's point of view on the topic clear, illustrating a tone of shock. The statement suggests that, for some people, the practice is more about aesthetics than religion, culture or tradition. This is another way that the magazine is able to engage with their target audience as, for them, the idea that some women are paying for FGM at expensive clinics is shocking.

## Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Theoretical perspectives** on representation (could reference theorists, e.g. Stuart Hall) –stereotyping, selection and perhaps how, in some ways, this magazine seeks to move away from the typical representations of ethnicity and gender, but in other ways cannot help but reinforce them.
- We might want to consider the **image as a commodity**. Most of the images used on a women's magazine cover are produced to sell and advertise the magazine. If there wasn't an attractive figure on the front, the magazine may not stand out and sell as many copies.

# The Archers

## Component 1: Exploring the Media

### Focus areas: Media Industries Audiences Media Contexts

#### BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- *The Archers* is aired on Radio Four, has over 5 million listeners and is considered a significant part of British popular culture. Running for 65 years, with six episodes a week and an omnibus on a Sunday, it is the world's longest running radio soap opera.
- *The Archers* follows the residents of the fictional farming community of Ambridge, in the fictional county of Dorsetshire, in the English Midlands. Its tagline is, "contemporary drama in a rural setting".

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Industries

##### Historical Context:

- *The Archers* was originally established in 1951 to **educate** farmers which, it was hoped, would increase food production after the second world war. It was thought that the show could be used as a way for the Ministry of Agriculture to communicate important **information** to farmers.

##### Social and Cultural Context

- Wherever possible, *The Archers* happens in **real time** i.e. it portrays **events** taking place on the date of broadcast, allowing a variety of **topical subjects** to be included. If a real-life event can be predicted, it is often written into the script. Even unforeseen events have been weaved into the script with scenes being re-written and re-recorded at short notice such as the 9/11 attacks, the death of Princess Margaret and the 2001 foot and mouth crisis.

##### Consider the importance of different funding models and production processes:

- Like TV, radio broadcasting falls into two categories: **public service** and **commercial** broadcasting. Commercial broadcasting is funded

by the sale of advertising slots and public service broadcasting is funded by public money either directly from the government or a licence fee. In the UK, **BBC radio is funded by a licence fee.**

- *The Archers* is aired on **Radio Four**, the BBC's main spoken-word channel, and so is funded by the licence fee. The BBC has a **public service remit** (to educate, inform and entertain) and *The Archers* was originally established to **educate** farmers. The show soon became a major source of **entertainment** for people from all walks of life, not just the rural community. However, the show still prides itself on the quality of its research and its ability to portray real rural life.
- **Producing** a radio series like *The Archers* requires tight **schedules** and long term **planning**.
  - » The production team meet biannually to plan the following months, and sometimes even years' worth of storylines.
  - » Monthly script meetings then take place where four writers have to produce a week's worth of scripts each.
  - » Recording takes place every four weeks and actors only receive their scripts a few days before. Actors are employed for six days in which they record 24 episodes. There is very little room for error as each 13 minute episode is only allocated two hours of studio time.
  - » Episodes are then broadcast 3-6 weeks after recording.
- Due to these recording schedules, actors are not held on retainers and are not employed full time on a show and often have careers in film, theatre, television and other radio shows.

##### Consider regulation of the media:

- Radio broadcasting is regulated by **Ofcom**, the government-approved regulatory authority for broadcasting. Ofcom sets **standards** for programmes and one of its duties is to examine specific **complaints** by listeners about programmes broadcast on channels that it has licenced.

##### Consider the impact of technologies and convergence:

- In order to keep up with the different

ways people prefer to **consume** their media, there are a variety of **ways for fans to engage** with the show:

- » Aside from the **regular radio slot**, listeners can catch up with the **omnibus** on a Sunday, hear recent episodes repeated on **BBC Radio Four Extra**, download the **podcast**, or listen 'on demand' through **BBC iPlayer Radio**.
- » Alternatively, they can check out *The Archers*' page on the **BBC website**, follow the show on **social media** by following it on **Twitter** or liking their **Facebook** page.
- » All of these **platforms** are provided to help audiences increase their enjoyment of the show and make it as accessible as possible for them to keep up to date with it.

## The Brand

- *The Archers* is big business for the BBC as it's the most listened to BBC programme online. In today's society, **market share and brand identity** are massively important and *The Archers* succeeds on both of these. If the BBC was ever to lose its **licence fee**, there are certain shows that it is guaranteed people would pay to subscribe to – *The Archers* is one of these. Therefore, it's important that the producers keep the show fresh. One way of doing this is by introducing new characters or pushing the boundaries on plotlines.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

### Social Context

Not one to shy away from controversy, the BBC has opened the gates to less talked about topics and issues in recent years. The **domestic abuse storyline** of Rob and Helen has been building for some time. The **listeners' privileged position** of being able to eavesdrop in on characters' private conversation has added a very real touch to the storyline. Audiences have witnessed first-hand Rob's controlling nature, his coercive behaviour and insidious ways (e.g. constantly undermining Helen's looks and clothing), and listened whilst he has progressively isolated her from friends and family. The **realistic portrayal** of this storyline has even prompted audiences to raise over £100,000 in charitable donations, proving the **importance** of such a show – and the strong relationship it has forged with its **audience**.

### Consider the ways in which media organisations target audiences:

- Historically, radio soap operas have always

focused primarily on women's lives, particularly family relationships, domesticity and marriage. Therefore the target audience was traditionally **females** who looked after the home.

- Listeners from different walks of life could engage with the show in different ways due to its multi-stranded **narratives**. As a listener you might be rooting for one particular character whilst your friend might be interested in another character relationship entirely.
- *The Archers* is perceived as a high quality soap opera and distinguishes itself from TV soaps by providing soap for the educated middle-classes. Radio Four has a **high cultural status** and so the audience for *The Archers* consists mainly of well-educated middle-class professionals, most of whom are middle aged and above, white women.

### Consider how audiences may respond to and interpret media products, and the social, cultural and political significance of media products:

- For many of these listeners, *The Archers* was a **familiar friend** which provided a comforting background and, until fairly recently, there was an unwritten rule that nothing too terrible would ever happen.
- However, in recent years some listeners have complained that *The Archers* is beginning to mimic the excesses of TV soaps such as *EastEnders*. The most notable example of this is the 2016/17 storyline of Rob's abusive relationship with his wife. For some listeners, the show they once considered to be light, mellow drama, has now morphed into actual **melodrama**.
- That being said, such a move has attracted **new listeners** which are welcomed by the broadcasters, and there is an argument that such shows should reflect the **society** in which they are aired. This move has also given the BBC the opportunity to open a conversation about **topics** like domestic violence.
- Because the BBC can be accessed from around the world, it's important to understand that some of the online audience is **global**, including British people living abroad. Listening to *The Archers* is a crucial way for them to keep in touch with **British life**. In fact, even within the UK, some listeners from urban areas have stated how they like the sense of rural life that is evident in the show. Perhaps, like many, they dream of getting away from the city and moving to the country and *The Archers*



helps them imagine this for a short time.

- If we consider Blumler and Katz's **Uses and Gratifications theory**, we could argue that audience members listen for all of those given reasons:
  - » simply for **entertainment**/diversion from their everyday lives
  - » to be **informed or educated** about rural life or topical issues that the

storyline may be dealing with

- » for **social interaction** to discuss with family/friends or by continuing the conversation on Twitter or Facebook
- » for **personal identity**, to compare their life experiences with those of the characters.