

AQA A2 MEDIA THEORIES

1. MEDIA STRUCTURAL THEORY

- THESE THEORIES EXPLORE HOW AUDIENCES GAIN MEANING FROM MEDIA TEXTS.
- **SEMIOTICS** IS THE STUDY OF CODES OR LANGUAGES VIA THE USE OF SIGNS.
- **GOOGLE IMAGES** EXAMPLES.
- <http://www.tabbysplace.org/felis-catus/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/insurance-salesman.jpg>
- WHAT'S THE WOMAN'S JOB?
- WHY?
- <http://www.4yea.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/2009-konigseder-porsche-carrera-gt-front-side-588x392.jpg>
- http://bmwcoupe.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/BMW_7-series.jpg
- WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT THE OWNERS OF THE CAR?
- http://californiahorseback.com/images/303716_f260.jpg
- WHAT IS THIS COLLECTION OF ITEMS USED FOR?
- WHAT CLASS OF PEOPLE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ITEMS?
- WHY?
- HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?
- **SIGNS SIGNIFY MEANINGS.**
- THIS IS KNOWN AS **DECODING** A MEDIA TEXT.
- **SAUSSURE** (1983) THEORISES ABOUT THREE LEVELS ON HOW WE READ MEDIA TEXT. THESE ARE;
- **SYNTACTIC LEVEL**
- THIS REFERS TO THE MOST BASIC OF MEANINGS OF THE SEMIOTICS.
- *SHOW IMAGES ON MAC DESKTOP FROM Syn Rep Sym Images FILE. (THREE COLOURS)*
- WHAT DO THE IMAGES CONVEY IMMEDIATELY?

- WHY IS THIS?
- **REPRESENTATIONAL LEVEL**
- THIS LOOKS AT WHAT THE TEXTS CONVEYS AS IN REPRESENTATION.
- WHAT DOES THE COLOUR AND IMAGE REPRESENT IN THE THIRD PICTURE?
- IN PICTURE 4, WHAT IS REPRESENTED?
- **SYMBOLIC LEVEL**
- THIS IS ON A DEEPER LEVEL, LOOKING AT THE HIDDEN CULTURAL OR SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF A TEXT.
- WHAT DOES PICTURE NUMBER 4 (PERFUME BOTTLES) SYMBOLISE OR SAY ABOUT THE PURCHASERS OF THE PRODUCT?
- THE FIFTH PICTURE (AIDS ADVERT) ENCOMPASSES ALL THREE LEVELS. DISCUSS WHY?
- MEDIA READ ON A SYNTACTIC LEVEL OCCURS IMMEDIATELY TO THE AUDIENCE. THIS UNDERSTANDING IS KNOWN AS **DENOTATION**.
- MEDIA READ ON THE REPRESENTATIVE AND SYMBOLIC LEVELS OFTEN DEPENDS ON A WIDER CULTURAL AUDIENCE TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING. THE ABILITY TO SEE MORE THAN ONE MEANING IS KNOWN AS **CONNOTATION**.
- THE FINAL IMAGE (HITLER) IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND VIA **DENOTATION** AND **CONNOTATION**.
- IN SMALL GROUPS SPEND FIVE-TEN MINUTES DISCUSSING THE MEANINGS CONVEYED VIA THE IMAGE AND FEEDBACK TO THE WHOLE CLASS VIA DISCUSSION.
- LOOK AT WHO IS IN THE PICTURE. WHY IS THIS? WHAT IS HAPPENING AND WHY? WHAT ABOUT THE LIGHTING IN THE PICTURE?

2. STRUCTURAL THEORY

- **SEMIOTICS**
- SASSURE (1983) THE FOUNDER OF SEMIOTICS
- SYNTACTIC LEVEL
- REPRESENTATIONAL LEVEL
- SYMBOLIC LEVEL
- DENOTATIONS
- CONNOTATIONS

3. **STRUCTURAL THEORY (CONTINUED) NOTES AND DISCUSSION**

- ROLAND BARTHES (1967)
- MEDIA TEXTS IN RELATION TO CULTURE
- LINKED TO FREQUENTLY TOLD STORIES/MYTHS
- **CINDERELLA** MYTH? WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS?
- ANY OTHER EXAMPLES?
- WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT MALE AND FEMALE ROLES?
- UNDERSTANDING OF THESE REACTIONS DIFFER FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY.
- DISNEY CORPORATION **PRINCESS** MAGAZINE (SEE SEMIOTICS LINKS DOCUMENT)
- WHAT DOES THE IMAGE TELL US FROM A DENOTATIVE PERSPECTIVE?
- WHAT ARE THE CONNOTATIONS?

4. **UNDERSTANDING SIGNS**

- **SIGNIFIER**
- THE SIGN ITSELF, IN WHATEVER FORM
- **SIGNIFIED**
- THE IDEA OR MEANING REPRESENTED BY THE SIGN
- ICONIC SIGNS
- THE SIGN IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE SIGNIFIED ASPECT OF THE SIGN. EG. A PHOTOGRAPH

- ANY OTHER EXAMPLES?
- INDEXICAL SIGNS
- SHOWS A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SIGNIFIER AND THE SIGNIFIED. WE EXPECT TO GET A PARTICULAR MEANING FROM A PARTICULAR SIGN. EG. SMOKE SIGNIFIES FIRE
- ANY OTHER EXAMPLES?
- SYMBOLIC SIGNS
- NO OBVIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SIGNIFIER AND THE SIGNIFIED. EG. RED FOR HOT AND BLUE FOR COLD ON TAPS
- ANY OTHER EXAMPLES?
- REACTIONS TO SIGNIFICATION DIFFER FROM CULTURE TO CULTURE.
- THE SIGNIFIERS ARE NOT JUST VISUAL.
- WHAT ABOUT WORDS?
- HOW DOES A WORDS MEANING CHANGE TO SIGNIFY SOMETHING ELSE?
- GIVE EXAMPLES. **FIT** WAS TO DO WITH HEALTH. WHAT DOES IT SIGNIFY NOW? **GAY** IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE.
- CAN WE THINK OF ANY MORE?

5. STRUCTURALISM

- THIS SUGGESTS THAT A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE CAN BE APPLIED TO SOCIETIES AND CULTURAL PRACTICE.
- MEDIA TEXTS CAN BE ANALYSED AS LANGUAGE OR SIGNIFYING SYSTEMS.
- BARTHES (1974) IDENTIFIED NARRATIVE CODES IDENTIFIABLE OVER A RANGE OF MEDIA TEXTS.
- **ACTION CODES**
- A SERIES OF ACTIONS ENGAGE THE VIEWER TO ABSORB THEM IN A NARRATIVE. EG. EXPLOSIONS, FIGHTS AND CAR CHASES IN AN ACTION MOVIE.
- **ENIGMATIC CODES**

- THE AUDIENCE STAYS WITH THE NARRATIVE WISHING TO FIND THE ANSWERS TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS OR CONNUMDRUMS PERFORMED IN THE TEXT. EG. A DETECTIVE SERIES, OR A CLIFFHANGER IN A SOAP.
- **SYMBOLIC CODES**
- THIS LOOKS AT HOW AUDIENCE RESPOND TO A STRUCTURED THEMATIC APPROACH WHERE THE ROLES INVOLVED ARE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED. EG. MAN AND WOMAN AS ACTIVE AND PASSIVE. POLICE AND CRIMINALS AS GOOD AND BAD.
- PSYCHO ANALYTICAL THEMES ALSO COME UNDER THIS SYMBOLIC CODE UMBRELLA. EG. FATHER VERSUS SON COMPETITION.

6. CASE STUDY: NARRATIVE CODES

- SELECT ANY VISUAL MEDIA TEXT THAT YOU FEEL EMBRACES ALL THREE NARRATIVES CODES; **ACTION / ENIGMATIC / SYMBOLIC**
- OPEN UP A PAGES DOCUMENT AND CALL YOUR WRITTEN WORK **Narrative Code Analysis.**
- WRITE DOWN THE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT WHERE EXAMPLES OF ALL THREE NARRATIVE CODES APPEAR IN YOUR CHOSEN TEXT.

7. GENRE & AUTEUR THEORY: STRUCTURALISTIC APPROACHES

- STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO GENRE & AUTEUR THEORY LOOKS AT PATTERNS THAT ACT AS SIGNS IN THESE AREAS.
- THEY ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO SOME OR, POSSIBLY, ALL CODES OF STRUCTURALISM.
- FOR EXAMPLE, IN GENRE, A HORROR FILM WILL HAVE CERTAIN PATTERNS THAT WEAVE A STORY OF FEAR VIA IT'S ACTION (ACTION CODES). IN THEMATIC TERMS THERE WILL BE BINARY

OPPOSITES (SYMBOLIC CODES) AND WE WILL WANT TO SEE IF THE VICTIM SURVIVES AND THE KILLER/CREATURE GETS THEIR COMEUPPANCE (ENIGMATIC CODES).

- WITH AUTEUR THEORY, THE CONVENTIONS PLACED IN THEIR FILMS BY A PARTICULAR DIRECTOR IS ANALYSED FROM A STRUCTURALIST APPROACH TO FOLLOW CERTAIN PATTERNS THAT, AGAIN, TOUCH ON SOME OR ALL OF THE THREE CODES. QUENTIN TARANTION IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THIS. IN TERMS OF THEMATIC APPROACHES TO FILMS HE ALWAYS USES VIOLENCE AND INVESIGATES MACHISMO. GOOD & EVIL IS EXPLORED (SYMBOLIC), THERE'S ALWAYS QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERING (ENIGMATIC) AND THERE'S ALWAYS REPRESENTATIONS OF EXTREME VIOLENCE AND, INVARIABLY, CAR CHASES (ACTION).
- READ THE SECTION ON STRUCTURALSIM
- LOOK AT PAGE 49 IN THE A2 TEXT BOOK
- WITH A PARTNER, DEFINE GENRE WITH STRUCTURALIST APPROACH, USING TWO EXAMPLES FOR DISCUSSION TO SHOW UNDERSTANDING.
- DEFINE AUTEUR THEORY WITH A STRUCTURALIST APPROACH, USING TWO EXAMPLES TO SHOW UNDERSTANDING.
- WRITE THIS UP IN NOTE FORM IN A PAGES FILE TITLED **A Structuralist Approach to Genre & Auteur Theory**. SAVE IT TO YOUR MEDIA FILE ONCE COMPLETED.

8. POST-STRUCTURALISM

- POST STRUCTURALISM CHALLENGES THE CONCEPT BEHIND STRUCTURALISM'S SINGULAR APPROACH TO MEDIA TEXT.

- IT PLAYS DOWN THE CONSTRUCTIONALIST APPROACH OF AUTEUR THEORY AND ENCOURAGES A WIDER MEANING BASED ON AUDIENCE RESPONSE.
- THIS THEORY EMPHASISES THE NOTION OF FLOATING SIGNIFIERS THAT DICTATE THAT A TEXT CAN HAVE MANY MEANINGS TO A VARIETY OF AUDIENCE.
- **POLITICAL THEORY**
- THE INSINUATION OF BIAS OR CONSTRUCTIONALISM IN MEDIA IS REPRESENTED BY THE MARXIST THEORY. THIS EXPLORES THE NOTION THAT MOST MEDIA IS CONSTRUCTED TO PERSUADE THE PROLETARIAT THAT A CAPITALISTIC IDIOM IS THE ACCEPTABLE STANDPOINT IN SOCIETY.
- THE NOTION OF EXPLOITATION IS AVOIDED BY THESE MEDIA. THEY CAREFULLY ENGINEER THEIR TEXTS TO PLACE THE CONSUMER IN A POSITION OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL. THE OPPOSITE IS THE CASE.
- ANTONIO GRAMSCI EXPANDED ON THIS BY INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY (THE DOMINANCE OR LEADERSHIP OF ONE SOCIAL GROUP, OR NATION, OVER ANOTHER, ACCEPTED BY SOCIETY)
- GRAMSCI (1971) PUT FORWARD THE IDEA THAT DUE TO THE SATURATION OF MIDDLE CLASS REPRESENTATIONS IN THE MEDIA THAT CLASS DIVISION WAS SEEN AS NATURAL AND ACCEPTABLE.
- HEGEMONY AS A CONCEPT CAN ALSO BE APPLIED TO ANY POWER RELATIONS IN GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RACE.
- CHOMSKY AND HERMAN (1988) ARGUED THAT MEDIA MANIPULATES POPULATIONS TO PREVENT THEM REBELLING AGAINST THE POWERFUL OR DOMINANT CLASSES. THEY SAY THAT MEDIA'S OWN CENSORSHIP OF ITS OUTPUT CONTROLS THE POPULUS.
- CONSEQUENCES ARE THAT EVENTUALLY THE SOCIETY GRADUALLY DISCOVERS THE TRUTH AND REVOLUTION CAN TAKE PLACE.
- 1989-FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL.
- 2011-THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES REGAINING CONTROL.

- CRITICISM OF MARXIST THEORY SUGGESTS THAT THE AUDIENCE (THE PROLETARIAT) ARE PASSIVE OR NOT INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO SEE THROUGH THE HEGEMONY.
- IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THE POPULUS ACCEPT IN POLITICAL MEDIA TEXTS AND WHAT THEY REJECT IN TEXTS THAT ARE NOT AIMED AT OVERT POLITICAL CONTROL?
- ALL MEDIA SEEK TO EXERCISE SOME RESPONSE IN THE CONSUMER, WHETHER POLITICAL OR NOT. DISCUSSION POINT.
- STUART HALL (1981) SUGGESTS THAT THE HEGEMONY IS FLEETING AND, MORE OR LESS, HAS TO BE EARNED VIA AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE DISCERNING PUBLIC'S ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON.
- HE AFFIRMS THAT, DUE TO THIS, MEDIA TEXTS ARE POLYSEMIC, AS IN THEY HAVE MORE THAN ONE CONTROLLING MEANING.

9. POLITICAL THEORY

- MARXIST THEORY
- HEGEMONY
- GRAMSCI (1971)
- CHOMSKY AND HERMAN (1988)
- *What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream?* Noam Chomsky, 1997.
- <http://www.chomsky.info/>
- CRITICISM OF MARXIST THEORY.
- STUART HALL'S POLYSEMIC MEDIA TEXTS (1981)
- REFER TO LECTURE NOTES.

10. MEDIA INVESTIGATION: HEGEMONY

- ***HEGEMONY IS THE PROCESS BY WHICH A POWER RELATIONSHIP IS ACCEPTED, CONSENTED TO AND THEN SEEN AS NATURAL OR COMMON SENSE.***
- OPEN A PAGES FILE AND CALL IT **An Investigation into Gramsci's Hegemony Theory**. SAVE IT TO YOUR MEDIA FILE.
- CHOOSE THREE CURRENT FORMS OF MEDIA WHERE YOU BELIEVE THAT GRAMSCI'S HEGEMONY THEORY APPLIES. SPEND TIME RESEARCHING YOUR FORMS OF MEDIA TEXT.
- FOR EACH MEDIA TEXT WRITE ABOUT HOW YOU BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE.
- DO ANY OTHER OF THE MEDIA THEORIES COVERED PREVIOUSLY AND IN THIS SECTION APPLY TO YOUR CHOSEN TEXTS? AGAIN, STATE WHY.
- INCLUDE SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, IF POSSIBLE.

11. LIBERAL PLURALISM

- THIS IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE MARXIST APPROACH
- THIS CHALLENGES THE MARXIST APPROACH. THE PROLETARIAT IS NOT DOMINATED AND CONTROLLED BY THE BOURGEOISE.
- IT SUGGESTS THAT THE MEDIA IS AT THE BEHEST OF ITS CONSUMERS. THEREFORE, HEGEMONY IS ERADICATED. THIS IS KNOWN AS A MARKET LIBERALISM APPROACH.
- LIBERALISTS MAINTAIN THAT A VARIED ARRAY OF OPINION IS EVIDENT IN MODERN MEDIA. AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE FACT THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE A RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS AIRED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION BEFORE AN ELECTION.
- ***DISCUSS THIS POINT FURTHER. IS THE STATEMENT CORRECT?***
- LIBERAL PLURALISM PORTRAYS THE MEDIA AS BEING A DEMOCRATIC TOOL OF THE PEOPLE. THEY RESPECT AN AUDIENCE'S ABILITY TO DISCERN AND APPROVE OR OBJECT TO A VARIETY OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS.

- THE EMPHASIS APPEARS TO BE ON POLITICAL CHOICE RATHER THAN SOCIOLOGICAL CONTROL, HOWEVER.

12. REPRESENTATION IN SOCIETY

- IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT HOW DIFFERING SOCIAL GROUPS FIT INTO SOCIETY ACCORDING TO THE MEDIA.
- GRAHAM MURDOCH (1999) THAT MINORITY SOCIAL GROUPS ARE MARGINALISED BY THE MEDIA AS THEY ARE NOT A DOMINANT MAJORITY, AND, THEREFORE, APPEAR TO BE PIGEON HOLED BY MASS MEDIA.
- THIS IS BECOMING LESS EVIDENT BUT THE FACT THAT MARGINALISATION STILL EXISTS IN SUCH A GLOBAL MULTI MEDIA WORLD IS STILL IMPORTANT.

13. FEMINISM

- THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT OF THE 1960'S AND 1970'S HIGHLIGHTED THE SOCIAL DIVISION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN WITH REGARD TO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND REPRESENTATIONS IN THE MEDIA.
- THEY REGARDED THIS AS A FORM OF HEGEMONY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT ACCEPTED SOCIAL NORMS DICTATED THAT A WOMAN'S PLACE WAS IN THE HOME.
- *Watch a Public Information Film from 1944 **How to Explain Safety Rules to Women Workers***
- *DISCUSS THIS CLIP WITH REGARD TO IT'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN*
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goOHAhHEU_I&NR=1
- *Watch an excerpt from **Harry Enfield's Television Programme***
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sjx9rZwNGU>
- *WHY IS THIS CLIP ACCEPTABLE, WHEREAS THE FIRST CLIP IS CLEARLY NOT?*

- MANY FEMINISTS ARGUED THAT TOO OFTEN THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA RELIED ON A WOMAN'S SEXUALITY RATHER THAN HER SUBSTANCE.
- LAURA MULVEY'S **VISUAL PLEASURE AND NARRATIVE THEORY** (1975) ARGUED THAT THE CONTROL EXERCISED BY MEN IN HOLLYWOOD MERELY REINFORCED THE OFTEN ACCEPTED NOTION OF WOMEN AS PURELY SEXUAL BEINGS.
- MEN WROTE THE SCRIPTS AND NARRATIVE WAS CONTROLLED BY WRITERS AND MALE DIRECTORS
- WOMEN WERE REPRESENTED AS PASSIVE OBJECTS OF THE MALE GAZE.
- THIS VOYEURISM, SHE ARGUED, CAME FROM MEN'S TENDENCY FOR SCOPOPHILIA, THE FINDING OF PLEASURE IN LOOKING AT OTHER PEOPLE AS OBJECTS. IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT SHE WAS INFERRING THAT THIS ALLOWED THE MAN TO FANTASISE AND NOT BE REJECTED.
- IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT FILM REPRESENTATIONS WERE MATCHED BY TELEVISUAL AND PRINT MEDIAS, PRIOR TO THE 1960'S (ASIDE FOM THE FEMME FATALES OF FILM NOIR) BUT REPRESENTATIONS ARE IMPROVING ALL THE TIME IN THE CASE OF WOMEN. WOMEN IN FILMS ARE OFTEN STRONG, DOMINANT CHARACTERS, THOUGH THEY STILL SELL FILMS BASED ON WOMEN'S SEXUALITY.
- IS MULVEY'S ASSERTION THAT WOMEN ARE PORTRAYED AS SEXUAL OBJECTS FAIR?
- *GAMMON AND MARSHMENT (1988) POINT OUT THE LIMITATIONS OF MULVEY'S THEORY. THEY POINT OUT THAT A NUMBER OF TEXTS LABEL MEN AS OBJECTS FOR THE FEMALE GAZE. THEY SUGGEST THAT WOMEN, FAR FROM BEING PASSIVE, HAVE PARITY WITH MEN IN BEING MOVED OR STIMULATED BY MEDIA TEXT. THIS IMPLIES THAT, BY DEFINITION, MULVEY'S THEORY COULD BE SEXIST IN ITSELF.*

- *IT IS FOR THE AUDIENCE TO DECIDE HOW THEY FEEL MEDIA IS CONSTRUCTED FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING. CLEARLY, THIS THEORY LEANS TOWARDS LIBERAL PLURALISM.*

14. POST FEMINISM

- POST FEMINISM ARGUES THAT DUE TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FEMINISM IS NO LONGER NECESSARY.
- POST FEMINISTS ARGUE THAT MEDIA TEXTS NOW PLAY AROUND WITH TRADITIONAL GENDER DIVISIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE 'GIRL POWER' OF THE SPICE GIRLS, IN THE LATE 90'S, WAS SEEN AS A GENUINE POSITIVE STEP FORWARD FOR WOMEN, IN GENERAL. THEIR MESSAGE WAS WOMEN WERE NOT JUST EQUAL TO MEN BUT BETTER.
- JUDITH BUTLER (1999) ASSERTED THAT GENDER REPRESENTATION AND GENDER BEHAVIOUR WAS CONSTRUCTED AND NOT DOWN TO NATURE. SHE ASSERTS THAT THE WAY WE PLAY OUT OUR SPECIFIC GENDER ROLES IS DOWN TO US, AND OUR INTERPRETATION.
- BUTLER'S **GENDER TROUBLE** THEORY ASSERTS THAT GENDERS CAN EXAGGERATE OR SUBVERT THEIR ACCEPTED ROLES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GREATER PROMINENCE. AMY WINEHOUSE EFFECTIVELY CARICATURES THE 'BAD GIRL' IMAGE WITH HER EXCESSIVE USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. THESE REPRESENTATIONS, BUTLER AFFIRMS, ARE NEITHER NATURAL NOR IDYLLIC.

15. QUEER THEORY

- BUTLER'S THEORIES RELATE TO QUEER THEORY. THIS THEORY EXPLORES THE NOTION THAT HETEROSEXUAL PORTRAYALS ARE CONSTRUCTED TO BE NORMAL AND HOMOSEXUALITY, FOR GAY MEN AND WOMEN, HAS LIMITED REPRESENTATIONS.

- LIKE GENDER PORTRAYALS IN EARLY CINEMA, WHERE WOMEN WERE PORTRAYED AS WEAK OR SINFUL CHARACTERS, SO GAY PEOPLE ARE TOO, WHEREAS, HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN FILM ARE NORMALLY PORTRAYED AS HAPPY AND NORMAL.
- QUEER THEORY CHALLENGES ACCEPTED CLASSIFICATIONS OF SEXUALITY. IT LOOKS AT POSITIVE MEDIA PORTRAYALS AND SEEKS TO VIEW SOME OF THESE AREAS AS POSSIBLY BEING LINKED TO NOT ONLY THE HETEROSEXUAL COMMUNITY, BUT THE HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITY TOO.
- THE 1960's CLASSIC TELEVISION SERIES **BATMAN** WAS AIRED BEFORE HOMOSEXUALITY WAS DECRIMINALISED IN 1967 BUT QUEER THEORISTS POINT TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BATMAN AND ROBIN AND POINT OUT THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP COULD BE, IN TERMS OF GENDER REPRESENTATION, A PORTRAYAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY, THOUGH THEY DON'T ASSERT THIS TO BE IN THE CASE.
- THE CHARACTERS IN **FRASIER**, THE BROTHERS FRASIER AND NILES, HAVE A TASTE FOR FINE WINE, OPERA AND THE FINERIES OF INTERIOR DÉCOR. THESE TASTES ARE TRADITIONALLY SEEN AS FEMININE, THUS, SUGGESTING THAT FRASIER AND NILES MIGHT BE GAY. THE OPPOSITE IS, IN FACT TRUE.
- IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TO HOMOSEXUALITY. THIS GIVES SOME CREDIBILITY TO QUEER THEORY'S ASSERTION THAT THERE IS SHOULD BE A MORE FLUID APPROACH TO SEXUALITY.
- MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS AND PORTRAYALS OF THE GAY COMMUNITY ARE NOW MORE CONSIDERED WITH MORE POSITIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF GAY CULTURE. *QUEER AS FOLK* (1999) ACTUALLY DEALT WITH A MAIN CAST OF GAY CHARACTERS AS OPPOSED TO THE TOKENISM OF THE ONE GAY CHARACTER AS AN ALMOST TRENDY APPENDAGE TO THE STRAIGHT CHARACTERS IN *THIS LIFE* (1996-97).

- CAMP BEHAVIOUR IS LINKED TO QUEER THEORY. IT'S CONVENTIONS ARE INCLUDE EXAGGERATED PERFORMANCE OF FEMININITY, AN EMPHASIS ON STYLE, IMAGE, IRREVERENCE, BREAKING TABOOS AND POKING FUN AT AUTHORITY. EXAMPLES ON TELEVISION INCLUDE GRAHAM NORTON AND PAUL O'GRADY. THIS STYLE CHALLENGES ACCEPTED NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY.
- IT IS ONLY IN RECENT YEARS THAT LESBIANISM HAS BEEN POSITIVELY REPRESENTED IN THE VISUAL MEDIA. *TIPPING THE VELVET* (2002), *THE L WORD* (2004) AND *SUGAR RUSH* (2005-2006) ARE THREE EXAMPLES OF THE SUBJECT BEING EXPLORED POSITIVELY ON MAINSTREAM TELEVISION.

16. POST COLONIALISM

- THE ISSUE OF RACE, AND THE WAY IT HAS BEEN REPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA, HAS CHANGED CONSIDERABLY OVER THE YEARS.
- EARLY COLONIAL REPRESENTATIONS BASICALLY DICTATED THAT THE CONTROLLING EMPIRES WERE IN SOME WAY SUPERIOR OR MORE INTELLIGENT THAN THE PEOPLE WHOSE COUNTRY THEY HAD TAKEN OVER.
- DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONTROLLING COLONIAL EMPIRES THE TERM POST COLONIALISM IS USED TO REFERENCE THIS ERA. DOES THIS MEAN THAT COLONIALISM IS A THING OF THE PAST? MANY COMPANIES HAVE STRONG LINKS TO COUNTRIES THAT WERE PART OF THE EMPIRE.
- POST COLONIALISM CENTRES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND MILITARY DOMINANCE OF THE PAST. IT REJECTS THE NEW, INTER RELATED MEDIA WORLD.
- IT LOOKS AT THE DOMINANCE OF WHITE IMAGES IN MEDIA. THE THEORY WANTS US TO LOOK AT NOT JUST WHAT IS THERE, BUT WHAT ISN'T THERE.

- THE DOMINANCE OF WESTERN MEDIA IS STILL DEEP ROOTED AND HAS ALMOST A FASCINATION AND A FEAR OF ANY FURTHER INFLUENCE. EDWARD SAID (1995) CALLED THIS **ORIENTALISM**.
- THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHAT HAPPENS IN ASIAN SOCIETY SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING THE WEST IS VERY INTERESTED IN BUT ALSO VERY WARY OF AT THE SAME TIME. THIS IS PORTRAYED IN MANY FILMS, SUCH AS, *DIE ANOTHER DAY (2002)*, WHERE A NORTH KOREAN PLAYS BOND'S ARCH ENEMY, MIRRORING FEAR OF NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR CAPACITY.

17. DIASPORA IDENTITY

- THIS OCCURS WHEN PEOPLE FROM A PARTICULAR COUNTRY FEEL ALIENATED IN THAT COUNTRY AND ARE OFTEN RACIALLY ABUSED. THIS CAN INCREASE THEIR SENSE OF 'OTHERNESS' AND MAKE THEM WANT TO GET BACK TO THE INFLUENCES OF THEIR ROOTS. DOES MEDIA CONTRIBUTE TO THIS?
- ***DISCUSS SOME REPRESENTATIONS OF ETHNIC GROUPS.***
- DIASPORA IDENTITY CAN BE POSITIVE. A GOOD EXAMPLE OF TWO CULTURES COMBINING FOR POSITIVE EFFECT IS THE GURINDER CHARDA FILMS *BHAJI ON THE BEACH (1993)* AND *BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM (2002)*. THE FILM MOVED AWAY FROM ASIAN STEREOTYPES PORTRAYING ASIAN PEOPLE AS THE SAME AS THEIR WHITE PEERS BUT STILL INFLUENCED BY THEIR ASIAN BELIEFS AND IDEALS. CHARDA'S *BRIDE AND PREJUDICE (2004)* IS SEEN AS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE FUSING OF CULTURES IN A POST COLONIAL REPRESENTATION.
- SADLY, THIS ISN'T ALWAYS THE CASE. TOO MANY TIMES MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS ARE FOUNDED ON NEGATIVE MYTHS OR STEREOTYPES. MANUEL ALVARADO (1987) CRITICISES WHAT HE SEES AS THE FOUR REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK PEOPLE.

- **HUMOROUS:** LENNY HENRY, EDDIE MURPHY
 - **EXOTIC:** MODELS SUCH AS NAOMI CAMPBELL
 - **PITIED:** NEEDY BLACK COMMUNITIES. ETHIOPIA, ERITREA
 - **DANGEROUS:** GHETTO BLACK COMMUNITIES & GUN CRIME
-
- WHERE IN THE MEDIA DO WE SEE POSITIVE/NEGATIVE IMAGES OF BLACK PEOPLE?
 - POOR REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BLACK AND ASIAN COMMUNITY STILL RELY TOO HEAVILY ON THE MYTHS OF THE COLONIAL PAST. HOWEVER, IS THE NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE OF THE GREEDY ASIAN SHOPKEEPER A POSITIVE STEREOTYPE OF A SHREWD, ACCOMPLISHED BUSINESSMAN?
 - IT IS THE ASSERTION OF BINARY OPPOSITES IN SOCIETY THAT PLACES PEOPLE IN CATEGORIES. THIS ONLY SUCCEEDS IN EXAGGERATING DIFFERENCES AND DILUTING THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GROUPS.
 - THE MORAL PANIC CAUSED BY REPRESENTATIONS OF TERRORISTS AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS THROUGH THE MEDIA HAS CREATED A SOCIETY WHERE A LACK OF TRUST, AND, AT TIMES, A FEAR OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL HOSTILITY TOWARDS CERTAIN GROUPS, HAS BECOME APPARENT. RIGHT WING MEDIA AND SOME TV PRODUCTION COMPANIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR A CONSIDERABLE PART OF THIS.
 - A POSITIVE IS, IS THAT AS WE BECOME MORE APPRECIATIVE OF OUR MULTI CULTURAL SOCIETY THE NEGATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF ETHNIC GROUPS IS BECOMING LESS.

18. AUDIENCE THEORY

- THE POWER OF AN AUDIENCE TO INFLUENCE MEDIA TEXTS IS AN ISSUE CONTINUALLY DEBATED BY MEDIA THEORISTS. ADDITIONALLY, HOW THE MEDIA TEXTS CAN SHAPE AUDIENCES CREATES AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION.
- AUDIENCE THEORIES CENTRE ON THE FACT THAT AUDIENCE INFLUENCES MEDIA TEXTS. THESE THEORIES ARGUE THAT AS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES IN THE WORLD THEN THAT GIVES MORE CONTROL OF TEXTS TO THE CONSUMER.
- IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE LOOK AT SPECIFIC AUDIENCE CONSUMPTION. IN RELATION TO SOME MEDIA TEXTS. SOME TEXTS ARE AIMED GLOBALLY AND OTHERS ARE MORE SPECIFIC.
- **CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA**
- THOUGH MOST MEDIA TEXTS ARE PRODUCED WITH SPECIFIC AUDIENCES IN MIND, THERE ARE THREE CATEGORIES THAT THESE TEXTS CAN BE PLACED INTO;
- *PRIMARY MEDIA* – SUCH AS FILMS SHOWN IN A CINEMA OR SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT. THE ENVIRONMENT DEMANDS ATTENTION OF THE AUDIENCE.
- *SECONDARY MEDIA* – RADIO OR TELEVISION, WHEN IT PROVIDES A BACKGROUND FOR AN AUDIENCE WHEN THEY ARE OTHERWISE ENGAGED.
- *TERTIARY MEDIA* – THESE TEXTS ARE CONSUMED ALMOST WITHOUT NOTICING. ADVERTS TEND TO FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY, OR BROADCASTING IN STORES WHILST AN INDIVIDUAL IS OUT SHOPPING.
- ADORNO AND HORKHEIMER (1940'S-60'S) EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT CULTURAL INDUSTRIES COULD EMBED THEIR MEDIA TEXTS WITH PARTICULAR VIEWS AND IDEOLOGIES. THEY ARGUED THAT CERTAIN MEDIA TEXTS INFLUENCED ORDINARY CITIZENS TO SUPPORT FACISM IN NAZI GERMANY IN THE 1930'S.
- THIS ENCODING OF MESSAGES IS NOW SEEN AS A MODERN DAY CONVENTION OF ADVERTISING THROUGH SUBLIMINAL MESSAGING.

- GERBNER (1956) DISAGREED WITH THIS THEORY, SUGGESTING THAT IT'S UP TO THE AUDIENCE TO DECIDE WHAT THEY FEEL ABOUT A TEXT AND RESPOND TO THIS ACCORDINGLY TO ACQUIRE CONTROL OVER THAT TEXT, SO REDUCING ITS POWER.
- THE POWER OF MEDIA TEXTS DEPENDS UPON THE MEDIA TEXT BEING OFFERED. FOR EXAMPLE, MORE ENCODED MESSAGING WILL BE APPARENT IN A CLEVER TV ADVERT THAN IN A TEXT SUCH AS A SOAP OPERA.
- IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT TO REACH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE SOME MEDIA TEXTS ARE POLY SEMIC IN THEIR CONSTRUCTION. IN **TOY STORY (1995)**, FOR EXAMPLE, THE NARRATIVE IS EQUALLY APPEALING TO ALL AGE GROUPS DUE TO ITS CLEVER CONSTRUCTION AND HIDDEN JOKES. IT'S CONTENT APPEALS ON DIFFERING LEVELS TO THE VARIOUS AGE GROUPS, DEPENDING ON THEIR AGE OR EXPERIENCE.
- IT CAN ALSO BE ARGUED THAT AUDIENCES HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE A PARTICULAR MEDIA TO SUIT THEIR NEEDS. BLUMLER AND KATZ (1974) PUT FORWARD THE NOTION THAT AN AUDIENCE USES MEDIA SOCIALLY AND FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL GRATIFICATION. THIS IS KNOWN AS THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY.
- SOME EXAMPLES OF 'USES' ARE;

- SHARING AND DISCUSSING EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS
- OBTAINING INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORLD
- HELPING TO GAIN IDENTITY

- SOME EXAMPLES OF 'GRATIFICATION' ARE;

- FINDING A DISTRACTION
- SEEING AUTHORITY FIGURES EXALTED
- SEEING OTHERS FAIL OR RIDICULED
- SEEING JUSTICE PREVAIL

- USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY ALSO DICTATES THE REASONS WHY WE CONSUME MEDIA. McQUAIL (1977) SUMMARISES THESE AS;

- INFORMATION
- LEARNING
- PERSONAL IDENTITY
- SOCIAL INTERACTION
- ENTERTAINMENT

- FROM ANOTHER STANDPOINT IT IS ARGUED THAT PEOPLE CONSUME MEDIA FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS;

- TO PROVIDE A SENSE OF ROUTINE
- AS A REWARD
- TO ESCAPE LONLINESS
- AS AN ESCAPIST FANTASY
- FOR FOCUSING ON SOCIAL AND MORAL ISSUES

- SHAUN MOORES (1998) ARGUES THAT MEDIA TEXT CONSUMPTION ALLOWS SOME AUDIENCES TO BECOME MEMBERS OF AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY.
- USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY SUGGEST THAT THE CONSUMER HAS THE POWER TO DISCERN AND PLACE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION ON A MEDIA TEXT. THIS LINKS TO LIBERAL PLURALIST THEORY AND GERBNER'S THEORY ON AUDIENCES.

19. POSTMODERNISM

- POSTMODERNIST THEORY WORKS ON A STRUCTURAL AND POLITICAL LEVEL.
- IT CAN BE DEFINED AS DEALING WITH THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VALUES THAT WERE PREVALENT AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING OF THIS ONE.
- POST MODERN CONTEXTS INCLUDE;
 - DECLINE OF PARTY POLITICS AND TRADE UNIONS
 - COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM AND GOVERNMENT'S CENTRAL PLANNING FOR SOCIETY
 - IN SECURITY AND UNCERTAINTY
 - MEDIA SATURATED SOCIETY'S MODERN COMMUNICATION
 - EMPHASISING DIFFERENCE RATHER THAN UNIFORMITY
 - IMPORTANCE OF STYLE AND THE VISUAL
 - POSTMODERNISTS ARE PRONE TO AN 'ANYTHING IS ACCEPTABLE' ATTITUDE WHEN IN RELATION TO THE WAY CULTURE IS REPRESENTED IN CONTEMPORARY MEDIA TEXTS, LEAVING THE AUDIENCE TO MAKE THEIR OWN MEANINGS FROM MEDIA TEXTS.
 - POSTMODERNIST VERSIONS OF OLDER MEDIA TEXTS ARE VERY POPULAR. THE REMAKE OF **ALFIE** (1966) IN 2004 IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS.
 - LYOTARD (1984) SUGGESTS THAT THE OLD METANARRATIVES OF, FOR EXAMPLE, CAPITALISM AND MARXISM, AND REPRESENTATIONS OF RELIGION, HAVE BEEN DISCARDED BY POST MODERNISTS AS THEY CREATE AN UNSTABLE SOCIETY. A POST MODERNIST SOCIETY OFFERS MORE CHOICE DUE TO ITS MULTI-CULTURAL IDIOM AND BETTER COMMUNICATIVE MEDIA.
 - MEDIA TEXTS NEED TO BE BROKEN DOWN INTO DIFFERENT GROUPS TO DISCERN THE VAST AMOUNT OF MEDIA THAT WE CONSUME. CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS INCLUDE;

- INTERTEXTUALITY. TV'S **THE SOPRANOS** (1999-2007). POLITICIANS HAVE EVEN USED INTER-TEXTUAL REFERENCES FROM THE SHOW TO FURTHER THEIR CAMPAIGNS.
- BRICOLAGE
- MERGING OF STYLES OR GENRES. MODERN FILMS PORTRAY OLD CINEMATIC THEORIES AND GENRES.
- EMPHASIS ON IMAGE AND STYLE RATHER THAN MEANING
- ELEMENTS THAT DRAW ATTENTION TO THE TEXT'S CONSTRUCTION. ON DVD'S YOU HAVE EXTRAS THAT SHOW YOU HOW THE TEXT WAS MADE.
- A MIX OF ELEMENTS OF **HIGH OR ELITE CULTURE** WITHIN POPULAR CULTURE. BAZ LUHRMANN'S **ROMEO & JULIET** (1996) AND **MOULIN ROUGE** (2001).
- FRAGMENTATION
- DIVERSITY OF VIEWS OR STANDPOINTS
- PASTICHE AND PARODY
 - BAUDRILLARD (1983) ARGUED THAT WE LIVE IN AN ERA OF HYPER- REALITY WHERE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE REAL WORLD AND THAT OF EVERYDAY LIFE IS BECOMING MORE BLURRED.
 - WHEN MEDIA REPRESENTS OTHER MEDIA THIS IS CALLED A SIMULACRUM. **HEADCASES** (2006) IS BASICALLY AN UPDATED VERSION OF **SPITTING IMAGE** (1984-96).
 - SIMULACRUMS ALSO WORK VIA SYMBOLISM. LONDON CAN BE REPRESENTED BY RED BUSES OR BIG BEN. NEW YORK MAY BE IDENTIFIED BY YELLOW CABS OR THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. AS TIME MOVES ON IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THIS SEMIOTIC RESPONSE WILL BE STIMULATED BY MORE MODERN IMAGERY.
 - A GREAT EXAMPLE OF POST MODERN MERGING OF GENRE MEDIA FORMS IS THE INTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERING MEDIA PLATFORMS. THE OLD MARVEL COMIC CHARACTERS HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED IN FILMS, GAMES AND

TV SERIES. THE MORE ADVANCED THE MEDIA PLATFORMS BECOME, THE BETTER FOR THE PEOPLE BEHIND THESE ENTERPRISES AS THE MERCHANDISING BECOMES VERY SUCCESSFUL, OFTEN ON THE BACK OF POOR QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT.

20. CYBERSPACE & VIRTUAL REALITY

- CONSUMERS CAN MOVE AROUND AN IMAGINARY 3D WORLDS WHEN PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES. PEOPLE CAN LOSE THEMSELVES IN THESE WORLDS TO THE EXTENT WHERE, AGAIN, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE REAL AND IMAGINARY WORLD CAN BE BLURRED.
- THIS VIRTUAL REALITY CAN BE USED IN THE WORKPLACE. TEACHERS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN TRAINING ARE ASKED TO VISIT A VIRTUAL CLASSROOM AND DEAL WITH ISSUES AS IF FROM A REAL CLASS. HOWEVER, THE VAST MAJORITY OF CONSUMERS OF VIRTUAL REALITY ARE GAMERS.
- CRITICISMS OF THIS ARE;
 - GAMING DESTROYS A SENSE OF REALITY
 - IT INHIBITS NORMAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
 - NULLIFIES THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS
- MORAL PANICS ARE CREATED, USUALLY BY RIGHT WING MEDIA, TO SUGGEST THAT OUR YOUNG WILL TURN INTO WEAPON WIELDING MONSTERS DUE TO THE MEDIA THEY CONSUME.
- HYPER-REALITY IS A CONCERN WITH SUCH ISSUES.
- THE USE OF CYBERSPACE IS ANOTHER ISSUE THAT CREATES MAJOR CONCERN IN OUR POST MODERN WORLD. THE EXTENSION OF VIRTUAL REALITY TO INCLUDE ACTUAL REALITY, WHERE PEOPLE CAN LITERALLY INVITE PEOPLE INTO THEIR LIVING ROOMS ON SCREEN, IS OBVIOUSLY OPEN TO ABUSE.

- IN TERMS OF VIDEO GAMES, WE CAN ASSUME AN IDENTITY AND PLAY AGAINST OTHERS FROM THE PRIVACY OF OUR OWN ROOMS. HARRAWAY (1991) ARGUES THAT THE ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT IDENTITIES UNRESTRAINED BY THE RESTRICTIONS OF OUR PHYSICALITY IS ONE OF THE MOST LIBERATING ELEMENTS OF CYBERSPACE.