

EVERY A LEVEL MEDIA THEORY & THEORIST YOU WILL EVER HAVE TO KNOW (AND ONE OR TWO MORE FOR GOOD MEASURE)

LANGUAGE

ESSENTIAL

Roland Barthes SEMIOTICS

- Texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification.
- Order of Signification: Denotation, Connotation, Myth, Ideology.
- Constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving myth status through a process of naturalisation.

Steve Neale GENRE THEORY

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

Claude Levi Strauss STRUCTURALISM

- Texts can be understood through examining their underlying structure.
- Meaning is dependent upon pairs of oppositions.
- How these binary oppositions are resolved can have ideological significance.

Jean Baudrillard POSTMODERNISM

- In Postmodern culture the boundaries between the 'real' world and the world of the media are no longer distinguishable.
- Simulacra = a world of images which aren't 'real'.
- Hyper reality = images more 'real' than reality.

Tzvetan Todorov NARRATOLOGY

- All Narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another.
- These two states of equilibrium are separated by a period of disequilibrium.
- Resolution can have ideological significance.

Vladimir Propp CHARACTER THEORY

- 8 distinct character types:
 - The Villain
 - The Hero
 - The Donor
 - The Helper
 - The Princess
 - Her Father
 - The Dispatcher
 - The False Hero

Jacques Derrida REFLEXIVITY

- A Postmodern concept - Reflexivity and self-consciousness refers to where the audiences are reminded that they are watching someone watching something.
- The acknowledgement that the text is created by revealing its underlying structures or staff.

Andrew Goodwin MUSIC VIDEO THEORY

- 5 Key aspects of music videos construction.
 - Thought beats: Seeing the sound.
 - Narrative & Performance
 - The Star Image
 - Relation of Visuals to song
 - Technical aspects of the Music Video

Syd Field NARRATIVE THEORY

- Similar to Todorov's theory, the theory describes 3 acts of a screenplay triggered by a variety of plot points including an inciting incident, a midpoint and a climax (near the end):
 - Act 1: Setup
 - Act 2: Confrontation
 - Act 3: Resolution

Roland Barthes CODES

- 5 codes that describe the meaning of a text:
 - Hermeneutic / Enigma codes
 - Semantic Codes
 - Symbolic Codes
 - Proairetic / Action Codes
 - Cultural / Referential Codes

Ferdinand de Saussure SIGNIFICATION

- The cornerstone of Semiotics - any sign is made up of two basic concepts:
 - Signifier: The simple form of the sign (photo, word, gesture, etc.)
 - Signified: The signifier's meaning or mental concept associated with it (Rose = beauty, romance, chivalry, etc.)

Charles Peirce 3 SIGN TYPES

- Icon: A physical resemblance to what is being signified.
- Index: A connection to what is being represented (smoke = index of fire).
- Symbol: No resemblance between the signifier and the signified - connection needs to be culturally learned (like language).

REPRESENTATION

ESSENTIAL

Stuart Hall REPRESENTATION THEORY

- Representation is the product of meaning through language and is governed by codes.
- Stereotyping reduces people to a few traits.
- The powerful stereotype the subordinate / excluded groups as 'different'.

David Gauntlett IDENTITY

- The media provides us with 'tools' that we use to construct our identities.
- Pick & Mix Theory: The Media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may 'pick and mix' different ideas and personalities.

Liesbet Van Zoonen FEMINIST THEORY

- Gender is constructed through discourse and it depends on context.
- Objectification of women is a core element of western patriarchy.
- Visual and narrative codes for male body spectacle differ from female body.

Paul Gilroy POST-COLONIALISM

- Colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity.
- Civilisation—ism constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.

Judith Butler GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

- Identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.
- No gender identity behind the expressions of gender.
- Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual.

Bell Hooks FEMINIST THEORY

- Feminism is a struggle to end sexist / patriarchal oppression.
- Feminism is a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice.
- Race, class, & sex decide the extent to which people are exploited / oppressed.

Edward Said 'OTHERNESS'

- Relating specifically to Post-Colonialism relates to how predominantly White Western cultures tend to classify Non West cultures.
 - 'Other' defines anything which doesn't conform with Western 'norms'.
 - Subaltern: Populations which are culturally outside of the West's hegemonic influence.

Marshall McLuhan GLOBAL VILLAGE

- World is metaphorically getting 'smaller' due to media saturation and the internet.
- Representation of races, genders and class are becoming internationally globalised.
- Cultures are merging as they clash and evolve.
- Regional cultural identity = 'Americaised'.

Laura Mulvey THE MALE GAZE

- Audience have to view characters from the heterosexual male perspective.
- The camera lingers on the curves of the female body (from the toes up).
- Relegates status of women as objects. Female must experience the narrative by identification with the male.

Manuel Alvarado RACIAL STEREOTYPES THEORY

- 4 types of representation of the black community within Western media:
 - The Exotic
 - The Dangerous
 - The Pitied
 - The Humorous

Tessa Perkins STEREOTYPE THEORY

- Challenging stereotype assumptions (4):
 - Stereotypes are not always negative
 - They are not always about minority groups
 - They can be held about one's own group
 - They are not rigid or unchanging
 - They are not always false

AUDIENCES

ESSENTIAL

George Gerbner CULTIVATION

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

Henry Jenkins FANDOM

- Fans are active participants in the construction and circulation of meanings.
- Textual Poaching: Fans appropriate texts & read them in ways that aren't authorised by creators
- Participatory Culture: Fans construct their social / cultural identities through mass culture images.

Clay Shirky END OF AUDIENCE

- The Internet / digital technologies have had a profound effect on the relations between media and individuals.
- Audience members as passive consumers of mass media is not longer tenable in the age of the internet—media consumers are now the producers (UGC) who 'speak back' to the media.

Albert Bandura MEDIA EFFECTS THEORY

- The media can implant ideas in the mind of the audience directly as they are passive.
- Audiences acquire attitudes, emotional responses & new conduct via modelling.
- Representations of transgressive behaviour (aggression) are imitable (Bobo Doll).

Stuart Hall RECEPTION THEORY

- Communication is a process of encoding by producers and decoding by audiences. 3 hypothetical positions to decode meaning:
 - Dominant / Hegemonic Position
 - Negotiated Position
 - Oppositional Position

The Frankfurt School HYPODERMIC NEEDLE

- Also called the 'magic bullet theory' - assumes the audience is a passive entity.
- Media based intended message is directly received and wholly accepted by the receiver.
- Messages 'injected'

Paul Lazarsfeld 2 STEP FLOW

- Like the hypodermic Needle model (aimed at a passive audience) only a intermediary is introduced.
- Opinion leaders: The individuals with the most access and understanding of the media influence and intervene between message and audience.

Abraham Maslow HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

- A basic model of human motivation - why anyone does or needs anything:
 - Physiological Needs
 - Safety Needs
 - Love / Belonging Needs
 - Esteem Needs
 - Self Actualisation Needs

Young & Rubicam 4 CONSUMERS (4Cs)

- 7 Types of media product consumer (Psychographic):
 - Mainstreamers
 - Aspirers
 - Explorers
 - Succeeders
 - Reformers
 - Strugglers
 - Resigned

Channel 4 UK TRIBES

- Research on 16-24 year olds by CH4 conducted by them discovered 5 distinct groups based on Psychographics:
 - Mainstream
 - Alternative
 - Urban
 - Aspirant
 - Leading Edge

Blumler & Katz USES & GRATIFICATIONS

- Assumes the audience is active and consumes media for 4 different purposes and functions:
 - Diversion & Escapism
 - Surveillance
 - Personal Identity
 - Personal Relationships

INDUSTRIES

ESSENTIAL

Curran & Seaton POWER & MEDIA

- The media is controlled by a small number of firms driven by profit & power.
- Media concentration limits variety, creativity & quality.
- Diverse patterns of ownership = more adventurous productions.

Livingstone & Lunt REGULATION

- Struggle in UK regulation policy between need to further the protection of citizens vs. need to further choice of consumers.
- Increasing power of global media + the rise of convergent technologies = traditional regulation at risk.

David Hesmondhalgh CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

- Cultural industries minimise risk & maximise audience through vert. & horiz. integration & formatting of products.
- Conglomerates operate across many industries.
- Potential of internet contained by incorporation into a large profit oriented set of cultural industries.

INTEGRATION

- Horizontal Integration: The expansion of an industry at the **same** level of the supply chain. Can lead to a monopoly.
- Vertical Integration: The expansion of an industry across **multiple** or **all** levels of supply and distribution of a product.

EXTRA

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