BFI
Film Forever

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Applying Media Concepts to TV Fiction (and beyond)
Steph Hendry

What are the media concepts?

- Media concepts are at the heart of an understanding of the media
- Different awarding bodies may define the concepts slightly differently but they generally include the following:
    - **Media Language** and **Forms**
        - includes **Narrative** and **Genre**
    - Media **Audiences**
    - Media **Institutions**
    - Media **Representations**
        - including **Ideologies and values**

Aides Memoire!

MAIR
or
MIGRAIN
or
RAILING

Why are media concepts important?

- The media concepts are the tools that students can use to help them analyse media products
- Detailed analysis is the skill that underpins successful **case studies**
- Detailed analysis enables students to create effective **productions**
- So - understanding media concepts and learning how to use them are crucial for all media students

Knowledge, Understanding, Application

Knowledge
- Each media concept brings with it some terminology
- Students can show knowledge by **using terminology** in their writing

Understanding
- Media concepts break down the way a media product constructs a relationship with its audience
- Each media concept works in conjunction with the other concepts

Application
- Analysis **uses** media concepts to discuss media products and the way they create meaning
- Analysis is a skill that can be learned and will develop with practice...

Practical Analysis

Analysing TV Fiction

The first stage of any analysis is to identify the **form** and the **function** of the product itself.

What is it?

- *Marvel's Agents of SHIELD* (ABC: 2013-present) is a serialised television fiction.
- It is a hybrid genre product using codes and conventions of sci-fi, action/adventure, superhero and spy narratives.

What is its function?

- *Marvel's Agents of SHIELD* seeks to generate a loyal audience by being entertaining.
- It seeks to entertain by creating excitement and tension (with some humour).

We are about to watch a **trailer**.

[It's on YouTube here](#)

Analysing TV Fiction (1a)

- **First of all… what are trailers for?**

- Whilst watching make notes on any media language choices that you find interesting. Make a note of your observations.

- How do these choices help the trailer fulfil its function(s)?

Analysing TV Fiction (1b)

- Select one media language observation. How is the media language choice relevant in a discussion on:
    - **Genre** and/or
    - **Narrative** and/or
    - **Representation** and/or
    - **Audience** and/or
    - **Ideology**?

Analysing TV Fiction 2

Here is the opening of episode 1, season 1 of *Marvel's Agents of SHIELD*

2a)
- What is the function of an opening sequence?
- What is the function of the TV programme itself?
- Whilst watching make notes on any media language choices that you find interesting. Make a note of your observations.
- How do these choices help the opening/programme fulfil its function(s)?

2b)
- Select one observation. How is the media language choice relevant in a discussion on:

    Genre and/or
    Narrative and/or
    Representation and/or
    Audience and/or
    Ideology?

Analysis Means Asking Questions

What is the **product** and what is its **function**?
What **media language** choices have been made in its **construction**?
How do the choices help the product meet its **institutional function**?
Why were those choices made?
What **meanings** are created by the product?
What are the **effects** of the media language choices?
How are **representations** created?
What meaning is created by the **representations**?
Does the product use (or subvert) **genre** conventions?
How does the product construct a **narrative**?
Who is the **target audience**?
How do the **media language** choices relate to the **target audience?**
What is the **audience's relationship** with the product?
What **ideologies** does the product reinforce, question and/or challenge?

Extended and In Depth Analysis

Higher level analysis needs more theoretical and contextual understanding

Analysing Magazine Covers

3a) What is a **magazine cover** for?

3b) What media language choices are most likely to be used if:
- Megan Fox was pictured on the front cover of *Elle*
- Megan Fox was pictured on the front cover of *GQ*

How close were you?

Analysing Magazine Covers - more complex observations

- *Elle* **selected** an ivory dress that looks similar to a wedding dress for the Megan Fox front cover
- The connotations of bride and princess are **reinforced** by the serene look on Fox's face but are **undermined** slightly by the expanse of skin exposed by the plunging neckline and off-the-shoulder styling
- This conflicting image **creates** a combination of madonna/whore imagery which **reflects** a complex approach to women's sexuality where the simple madonna/whore binary has been **destabilised**
- *Elle's* audience are **able to view** Fox as an ideal because of her 'princess-like' beauty but her sexuality is also aspirational

Why? The answers are in the media concepts.

Analysing Magazine Covers

Media Language ... is used to
Create **representations** ... that
Meet (or subvert) **genre** codes ... and
Construct **narratives** ... that
Appeal to **audiences** .... by
Reflecting (or subverting) **audience** exceptions ... and
Reflecting, consolidating or challenging dominant
   ideological values.

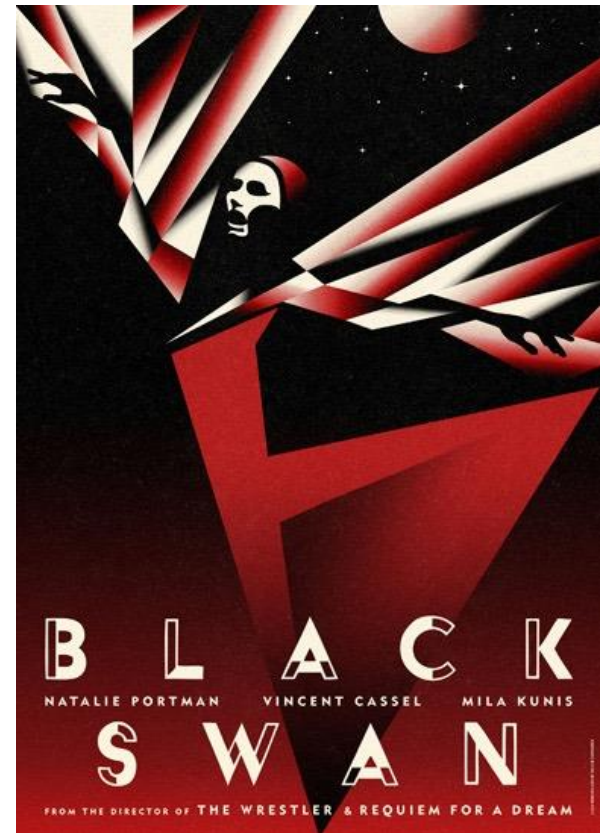All this is done is to meet the **institutional** aims.

So…

Analysing Magazine Covers - more complex questions

- How do the media language choices reflect **dominant ideological** positions?
- How do the media language choices relate to **Perkins**' ideas about representations of '**other**'?
- How is Fox engaged in gender performance (**Butler**)?
- What do we learn about hegemonic masculinity (**Connell**) from the covers? How are these ideas created?
- How do the covers relate to the 'madonna/whore' dichotomy (**Freud**)?
- How do the two covers interpellate (**Althusser**) the gaze (**Mulvey**)?
- How do the media language choices relate to the **postmodern context**?
- How do the media language choices speak to ideas about **gender** (roles, relationships etc.) in **modern society**?
- How do the media language choices reflect **institutional/social economic imperatives**?

Black Swan (Aronofsky: 2010)

In the pack - the start of a conceptual analysis of the [Black Swan Trailer](#)

Any Questions?