

MAGAZINES



Medium Studied: Magazines

TEXTS: PRIDE (November 2015) GQ (August 2019)	ASSESSED FOR: Media Language (analysis) Representation
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Keywords for this Topic

KEYWORD

MEANING

Connotations	What an image suggests or symbolises (e.g. getting the idea of love from looking at a picture of a rose).
Constructed	An idea or a person can be 'constructed' if they are built up in the mind of the reader using things like images, texts and positioning.
Cover line	A line on the front page of a magazine that briefly describes an article inside.
Direct address	Where the cover model looks directly at the camera, often inviting challenge from the reader.
Indirect address	Where the cover model looks away from the camera, often inviting the gaze of the reader to stay on them.
Masthead	The title of the magazine in a specific font and colour-scheme that fits in with the magazine's branding.
Messages and Values	The things the product is trying to communicate (messages) and what it thinks is important in the world (values).
Strapline	Like a 'slogan' for the magazine. Often appears beneath the masthead.
Stereotypes	An over-simplified idea about a group of people based on a very small number of people, e.g. all football fans are hooligans; all women are bad drivers; all Asian people are good at maths and science.

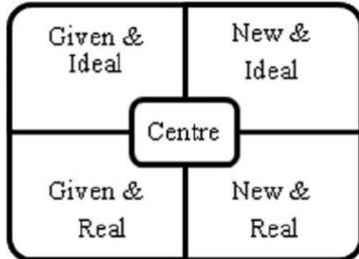
Useful Theories

THEORY NAME	THEORY EXPLANATION
Richard Dyer's Star Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stars are constructed by media products – audiences only see what they are shown – their images are carefully controlled. Stars need to appear ordinary (to be relatable) and extra-ordinary (for people to aspire to them) at the same time. Stars are present in our lives through the media, but absent from our lives really (they are 'just out of reach').

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Kress and van Leeuwen's Theory of Layout



Information is placed in certain parts of the page for different reasons:

- **Top Left or Centre:** this is where we look first – aspirational information goes here – the idealised version of the world;
- **Top Right:** this is still aspirational, but you can put more risk or controversial content here as it won't be the first thing the reader sees;
- **Bottom Left:** this is where less-aspirational information goes; things that are real, important, but not controversial
- **Bottom Right:** this is where the most controversial, most real information goes – readers look here last.

Set Products and How to Use Them



- Strapline highlights long running success (24 years).
- Confident pose and expression of Naomi Harris ties in with idea of “Bond and Beyond”;
- Cover model not sexualised, in keeping with the “Women of Colour” audience stated on Pride’s website, and the focus on “Feminism” and “women’s bodies” identified in cover lines.
- Cover model’s head in front of title – magazine confident that audience will spot it without the need for the full name.
- Red font connotes seriousness and danger – fits in with FGM and sexism cover lines.
- Use of big name star invites analysis using Star Theory:
 - Ordinary as simple dress; no expensive jewellery; extra-ordinary as film star, been in Bond, looking beyond success

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- Presents a mainstream, macho style of masculinity:
 - Raheem Sterling is a footballer (mainstream appeal), and has his shirt off, showing off his body;
 - The black wings and black leather trousers can connote Sterling's 'bad boy' reputation; when taken with the **coverline** 'Guardian Angel' and the **explanatory text** about him 'saving' football, the cover presents a redemption storyline about the bad-boy-turned-good;
 - Thick, chunky font chosen for **masthead** – gold repeated on main coverline, connoting wealth and status.
- Other coverlines suggest the diverse appeal of Gentleman's Quarterly (politics in the 'dictatorship' and 'Westminster' coverlines; music with 'Machine Gun Kelly', celebrities in the 'GQ Heroes' coverline);
- Sterling appears behind the title GQ, suggesting magazine is more important.
- GQ – Gentleman's Quarterly is already aimed at men, promoting fashion and positioning itself as a 'trusted friend' through the skylines: 'How to wear a broken suit' and 'Why it's finally OK to wear a beltbag'.
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Important Content and Issues

- Pride is a magazine that aims at women of colour; GQ is man's magazine with no specific racial audience (though this issue has Raheem Sterling as a person of colour on the front) – all issues surrounding race and representations of race are relevant:
 - BLM (both as an organised movement and the hashtag more generally);
 - Racism and discrimination, specifically of black people at the hands of white people;
 - Historical contexts of racism, including slavery and (worth knowing about) Windrush.
- Issues of masculinity as they relate to GQ:

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- Macho men and other forms of masculinity;
- The subordination of women (and some groups of men), by dominant groups of males.
- Issues of feminism as they relate to Pride:
 - Abuse of women and girls, including FGM, cat-calling, objectification;
 - Successful women of colour and what different models of 'success' look like for non-white women (e.g. movie star, musician, trophy girlfriend).

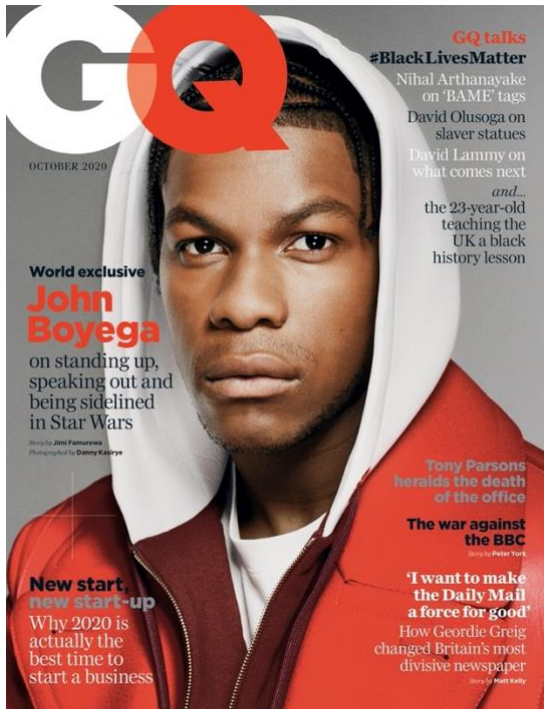
Likely/Practice Questions

Question with command and keywords highlighted:	Number of marks
Name one group that might be represented .	1
Identify this magazine's strapline .	1
What is a stereotype ?	1
Explore how this front cover of GQ magazine uses media language to communicate meanings .	15
Briefly explain how celebrities can seem ordinary and extra-ordinary .	4
Explain how political contexts (e.g. Race) affect the contents of a magazine's front page.	5
Compare the representation of ethnicity on the cover of Pride and [unseen magazine] .	25

How to Answer the Long Comparison Question

- The focus of the longer question will be **Representation** (and Contexts).
- You will be asked to compare **ONE** of the magazines you have studied with a **magazine cover that you have not seen before**.
- You will be expected to **find points of comparison** that relate to the keyword (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity – here it will probably be ethnicity/race).
- Try to work in theory where you can.
- You should aim to make at least 3 developed points.
- Talk about EACH of the bulleted prompts in the question (see below).
- Spend at least 30 minutes on the 25-mark question.

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Sample Answer: Compare the representation of ethnicity in the *Pride* and *GQ* front covers. [25]

In your answer, you must consider:

- the choices the producers have made about how to represent ethnicity
- how far the representation of ethnicity is similar in the two magazine front covers
- how far the representation of ethnicity is different in the two magazine front covers.

The first choice the GQ editors have made is to produce an edition that focuses primarily on black issues: GQ is not a niche magazine aiming at black audiences, as opposed to *Pride*, which is. Both through the selection of articles connected with black issues (“BLM”, “BAME tags”, “slaver statues”), and with the feature article about John

Boyega’s experiences with race and racism on the set of *Star Wars*, GQ is choosing to focus this issue around the #BlackLivesMatter movement. On the one hand, this could be seen as an example of tokenism – where one instance of something is used to signal diversity, e.g. one black issue of an otherwise white-focused magazine. The inclusion of John Boyega as the cover model might seem to support this view, but there are other editions of GQ that engage with issues of race beside this one. By contrast, *Pride* always focuses on black issues – its website proclaims that it is “Celebrating the Woman of Colour”, however, here the choice has been taken not to draw specific attention to ethnicity, except in the cover line “Black women’s bodies examined”. The assumption appears to be that *Pride* knows that its target audience will recognise it as a magazine dealing with issues of race, so these do not need to be drawn attention to.

One of the similarities of the two magazines is that they both focus on things that have been *done to* black people. John Boyega has been “side-lined on the set of *Star Wars*”. As this is a #BLM-focused issue, the reader naturally assumes this is because of his race. Similarly, black women’s bodies have been “Objectified. Sexualised. Mocked.” In both instances, this represents black people as having less power to resist such things when they happen. The fact that these problems are highlighted by the magazines positions the magazines as allies to black people and shows the messages and values that this sort of treatment is wrong.

Another similarity of the two magazines is that they have both chosen a movie star to put on their front cover. John Boyega is perhaps most famous for his role as Finn in *Star Wars*; Naomi Harris as Money Penny in *Bond*. But here the similarities end. One way to understand these similarities and differences is to use Richard Dyer’s Star Theory. The theory states that

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stars are manufactured by the media and that they must appear at once both ordinary (so audiences can relate to them) and extra-ordinary (so audiences can aspire to be like them).

The representation of John Boyega appears to aim at the ordinary. He is dressed in a hoodie and staring directly at the camera, his direct address both a challenge to the movie industry and an appeal to others to read his story. The associated cover line tells his story of being “side-lined on the set of Star Wars”; presumably because of his race. Boyega’s is a story that could have happened to any young black man – his experience of blackness, for all his stardom, is painfully ordinary. Naomi Harris, by contrast, is dressed less casually, in a dress, and is posing with her hand on her hip. Her direct address is confident and hopeful. The associated cover line aims at the extra-ordinary. She has already starred in a James Bond film and is now looking to go “beyond” that. James Bond is a major movie franchise, and for most people, starring in one of those films might be seen as the highlight of their career. But Naomi Harris is represented as expecting to go beyond that. While race seems to be represented as a limiting factor for John Boyega, it is shown here as not holding Naomi Harris back at all.

Mark Scheme

GCSE Media Mark Schemes are divided into FOUR BANDS. The specifics of the mark scheme changes with the question, but there are some common words used.

- **Band 4 (Grade 8/9):** Excellent; consistent use of “the specifics” throughout.
- **Band 3 (Grade 6/7):** Good; mostly appropriate use of “the specifics.”
- **Band 2 (Grade 5/4):** Satisfactory; occasional appropriate use of “the specifics.”
- **Band 1 (Grade 3/2/1):** Basic; Limited; very little use of “the specifics.”

The definition of Excellent/Good/Satisfactory/Basic is set by the board.