

## NEWS & THEORY OVERVIEW

Media Language	Representations
LEVI-STRAUSS BARTHES TODOROV NEALE BAUDRILLARD	GAUNTLETT VAN ZOONEN HALL 1 BUTLER hooks GILROY
Industries	Audiences
HESMONDHALGH CURRAN & SEATON LIVINGSTONE & LUNT	BANDURA GERBNER JENKINS SHIRKY HALL 2

**Almost all the arguments about the limitations of these theories are as follows:**

**Most of the theories were designed to comment on other media forms (TV, film, narrative) and so they cannot always be applied to newspapers.**

## PRINT NEWS & MEDIA LANGUAGE THEORISTS 'academic arguments and ideas'

### MEDIA LANGUAGE THEORISTS

Theorist	'thumbnail'	Comment & examples
Levi-Strauss	Binary opps	Creates interest & generates revenue. Conflict sells. Reps often lead the reader to favour one dominant (hegemonic) part of the pair. 'Us & them' creates a bond with reader – a community around the brand identity and ties in with moral panics: the creation of a joint enemy/scapegoat.
Barthes	Signifiers, connotation	Images are often encoded to manipulate the reader into making connections and drawing conclusions.
Todorov	3 part narrative	News is presented as a series of disruptions. esp in tabloid front pages. Conflict, drama & disruption are powerful aspects of negativity – a key news value.
Neale	Genre hybridity Rep & diff	Hybridisation of tabloids and broadsheets. Tabloidization of broadsheets. Dominance of soft news, lifestyle & entertainment features rather than hard news & events + (Digital) convergence.
Baudrillard	Replica, remix imitation intertextuality	Interdependence of news & entertainment. Traditional press relies closely on celebrity culture and the world of entertainment to draw in readers and attract advertising. Issue of fake news???

## Applying theorists to news and newspapers.

### INDUSTRIES THEORISTS

Theorist	'Thumbnail' summary	Comment & examples
HESMONDHALGH	Corporate control; Avoidance of risk: Safe, familiar formats, stars and genres	Commercial pressures and the drive for profit Evident in concentration of media ownership. Some degree of convergence in terms of content between tabloids and broadsheets. Tabloids stick to predictable typical codes and conventions. But: Guardian stands out as distinctive and different
CURRAN & SEATON	Corporate power & control. Ownership is hegemonic.	Patterns of ownership (concentration of ownership) mean lack of pluralist viewpoints in UK media, Dominance of right wing conservative bias. Protection of interests of elites. Explains tabloid news agendas and moral panics. Owners (press tycoons) have excessive power. Applies to print and online news sites.
LIVINGSTONE & LUNT	Regulation is harder in an age of online digital media.	Online news, social media and audience power means that 'fake news' can be a danger. It is harder to restrict and regulate online news. Newspapers are under guidelines (IPSO) following excesses of press intrusion and privacy-violation scandals of phone-hacking. BUT some celebs e.g. Meghan are still treated harshly by the tabloids

Applying theorists to news and newspapers.

**AUDIENCES  
THEORISTS  
PART 1**

Theorist	'Thumbnail' summary	Comment & examples
BANDURA	Hypodermic needle theory; direct effect of media content on behaviour	Some evidence that news can lead to <b>copy-cat imitative</b> behaviour. (racist attacks, knife crime, moral panics around certain films & games). More evidence to support Gerbner's Cultivation theory that media content can affect attitudes over time.
GERBNER	Cultivation Theory (desensitization) + Mean World Syndrome	Media messages affect attitudes over a period of time. Audiences are victims of 'cultural sedation' – they are fed ideas images and representations which subconsciously influence their attitudes. Sidebar of Shame can lead women to an unquestioning acceptance of their secondary role in society. Body shaming etc. Online news may also suggest that the world is more dangerous and troubled than it actually is. Can be a force for good eg climate change.
SHIRKY	'end of audience' Digital media is global social ubiquitous & cheap.	Traditional models of gatekeeping and professional journalism are declining in favour of more popular, participatory forms of media engagement by prosumers (producer-consumers) . Social media (FB, Inst, Twitter) has become the main source of news for many users. Danger of 'echo chamber'. News has become more localized, personalized and user-friendly. Audiences are able to contribute actively to the news agenda (submitting news & comment in the form of user-generated content, citizen journalism etc)

Applying theorists to news and newspapers.

**AUDIENCES  
THEORISTS  
PART 2**

Theorist	'Thumbnail' summary	Comment & examples
JENKINS	Fandom; 'if it doesn't spread, it's dead'	<p>Could be used to explain the popularity of celebrity news and gossip. News becomes dominated by personality-driven soft news and trivia (trivialization). Celebrities become the 'news'— this means that they are commodified (=turned into commodities) in order to increase sales and generate advertising revenue. Also means that news organizations will focus on content and people that encourage a social media buzz. Applies especially to online news sites and social media.</p>
HALL	<p>'reception' theory;</p> <p>Audiences <b>decode</b>/receive media messages in different ways</p>	<p>Tabloids use codes and conventions to limit negotiated and oppositional readings. They tend to avoid polysemy (=multiple meanings). So, they ensure that their messages and representations have clear, unambiguous dominant readings. Most broadsheets will do this too, to some extent, because of their right-wing affiliations. The Guardian however tends to encourage a more nuanced, pluralist view, favouring negotiated readings by exposing audiences to different viewpoints.</p> <p>Modern audiences (not just media students) are increasingly aware of the strategies of media producers and are mistrustful of attempts to influence their attitudes. This means that media professionals have to find increasingly sophisticated ways to manipulate audiences.</p>

## REPRESENTATION THEORISTS

Theorist	'thumbnail'	Comment & examples
<b>GAUNTLETT</b>	Modern media encourages fluid multiple identities	Useful when looking at reps of celebrities especially singers – use media to reinvent and rebrand themselves.
<b>BUTLER</b>	Gender is 'socially conditioned performance'	Useful when looking at reps of celebrities – tabloids may adopt a more negative, less sympathetic, more intolerant mocking tone towards modern gender issues. Guardian is more accepting- fits in with its liberal pluralist values.
<b>VAN ZONEN</b>	Patriarchy; traditional objectification of women	Look for reps of establishment figures as old grey white men in suits. Sidebar of Shame presents a view of women as fashion accessories, decorative, biological objects. Cultivation theory tells us that these views can be accepted over time.
<b>hooks</b>	Women are victims of multiple forms of discrimination	'intersectionality'. Look for reps of black, working class women. Tabloids will be more judgemental and unsympathetic.
<b>GILROY</b>	Post colonial melancholia	Tabloid patriotism and obsession with Royal family, army etc is a sign of a longing for a lost colonial age when Britain dominated other cultures. Also evident in neg reps of foreigners, migrants, refugees and even critical stories about black culture (gang –based criminality)
<b>HALL</b>	Encoding – decoding; 3 readings.	Media producers encode meaning – they construct representations to manipulate audiences into certain ways of thinking. This can be seen in photos, captions & headlines. Tabloids have a clear agenda in the way they impose their dominant/hegemonic reading.