GQ: CONTEXTS

Production Context

First named Gentleman's Quarterly in 1931, GQ was rebranded in 1961 and is published quarterly (3 monthly). It is a men's fashion and lifestyle mag. Produced by Conde Nast, GQ is a mulit-platform brand, published in print and on the iPad along with it's own website. It hosts an annual event 'GQ Men of the Year'. Circulation = 115K, readership = 400K. Catchphrase = "the magazine for men with an IQ"

Social/ Cultural Context

In 1994, Mark Simpson coined the word 'Metrosexual'which was about men looking after their appeaance with skincare regimes etc. Mark attended 'GQ Man of the Year'. It was socially acceptable for men to care about themselves. GQ Embraced this. Thenin 2014, Simpson introduced the term 'spornsexuals', men who are extremely body focused and used the gym to make them look their best. The selection of the image on the front cover supports this with The Rock's bicep being the main focus.

Key Terms and conventions

Strapline, Cover line, colour palette, address, flashes, left third, masthead, anchorage, polysemic, 'Man up!', Mind, Body & Masculinity, pose Metrosexual, body language, facial expressions, Image as commodity. Red connotes physical strength, power, courage, energy., Black connotes power, sophistication, classic, stylish.

The Target Audience

'Men with an IQ': Middle class or higher, many would have a good education, they would be interested in style, fashion and metrosexual topics, would spend a lot of money on products to support this lifestyle. includes coverage of executive concerns and targets a more serious minded, conservative, older reader than some other men's lifestyle magazines such as Loaded and FHM.

Messages and Values

Key message- Be the best man you can be. Be strong, powerful and care about yourself. Having the 'right' look is very important to success.

MEDIA LANGUAGE: How the fron page communicates with the audience using the different codes:

Technical Codes

1. Masthead - Big and bold, recognisable
2. Strapline- Mind, body and masculinity
3. Colour Palette suggests power, strength strong
4. Cover lines- 'The Rock' connotations of strength and stability. Masculinity, metrosexual,
5. Breaks left third rule
7. Narrative- cover lines start of a story
8. Extreme close up- showing bicep and serious facial expression

Symbolic Codes

1. Pose is confident and serious
2. He looks at us- direct address
3. Costume tight casual T Shirt
4. Serious facial expression- he's serious!
5. Colours are eye catching, contrasting
6. Body language- shows muscles flexed to reveal large muscles, supporting spornsexual image of what men should be like.

Written Codes

1. Direct address - 'How to be a man' draws TA in,
2. Pronouns- 'you'- speaks directly to the audience
3. 'World exclusive' and 'essential' - persuasive technique to entice the audience
5. Extraordinary truth- more serious topic to appeal to the educated target audience and shows the more serious side of the stories.

REPRESENTATION *Ethnicity, Gender and Issues*

Ethnicity

Dwayne Johnson is a successful black actor and a role model. Historically, many films depicted black characters that supported the dominant stereotype of the time: incompetent, hyper-sexualised and/or criminals. It wasn't until the growing momentum of the Civil Rights Movement that there was a push against this status quo and there evidently there is still a way to go. Using a hugely successful black cover star (Dwayne Johnson is half Samoan and half African American) as their dominant image, GQ is presenting a role model for its readers, someone to aspire to be like. Although Johnson's Hollywood success might be outside of most reader's possibilities, his work ethic and desire to want to better himself isn't.

Gender

The use of Johnson's iconic bicep with its Brahma bull tattoo reinforces the stereotype of men as having to be hyper masculine, strong and muscular.

Issues

Cover lines such as "How to be a man in 2016" suggest that the reader cannot possibly already know this and will need the magazine to help show him the way. This is similar to the female magazines that tell their readers how to be beautiful, get fit and dress well. The importance of body image and consumerism doesn't change just because of gender.

My Notes