

Deconstructing adverts

Analysing Print Adverts – A Framework of Questions

Portrayal of People – Representations

- Note the people's age/gender/ethnicity.
- Are they ordinary people/celebrities/experts?
- How are audiences encouraged to relate to/identify with/aspire to be like/trust them?
- What do the clothing codes suggest?
- Comment on their posture/pose/facial expressions and gestures.
- Are there recognisable stereotypes? Are stereotypes challenged in any way?

Comment on the surroundings – the mise-en-scène [everything else within the frame].

- What do the setting/surroundings add to the representations of the people in the advert?
- How do the representations link to the product being promoted?

Technical Codes

- What colour coding is used?
- What type of camera shot is used? Close up/mid shot/long shot/low angle/high angle? Explain why.
- Are all the elements of the image in focus? If not, why not? Is there a hierarchy of elements in the framing?
- What about lighting codes? Does it seem naturalistic? Is there high key or low key lighting?

Written/Text Codes

- How does the slogan relate to the images?
- Comment on the typography/font used. What does it add to the image of the brand?
- Is there a logo? Where is it positioned?
- What information is included in the copy? Why has it been included and what does it add to an audience's understanding of the product/brand?
- Have any persuasive devices been used?
- Does image dominate over text?

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Visual Codes

- Where is the advert set? How do we know? [indexical codes]
- What are the significant objects/features in the adverts?
- Does the product itself appear in the advert?
- If not, why not? Is the advert selling a concept/lifestyle? Or is it more of a hard sell – selling the product more directly?
- Is there colour coding? What are the connotations of the colours?

Purpose and Function of the Advertisement

- Is there any sense of narrative in the advert frame?
- Is the advert part of a campaign?
- What does the advert promise? What are the suggested rewards of buying the product?
- What underpinning persuasive techniques are employed? Guilt, threat, flattery, reward, promise of belonging?

Audience

- Who is the target audience?
- Do the audience need prior knowledge to appreciate the advert?
- In what publication might the print advert appear?
- If the advert is part of a wider campaign how does it fit in? What does it add to the campaign?