

[illegible]

# Think! Drink Drive Print Campaign (2014 - 2016)

## Unit 1: Investigating the Media Section A: Selling Images – Advertising, Marketing and Music Video

### Focus areas: Media language Representation Audiences Media contexts

#### PRODUCT CONTEXT

- The *Think!* brand began in 2000. It is a public service campaign that raises awareness of road safety. The brand has been known for its hard hitting and emotive advertising.
- The 2014 campaign was designed by the advertising agency Leo Burnett London. The agency is well known for promoting brands in a new and creative way.

#### PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

##### Cultural context:

- Public service advertising must be strategically placed to target a specific **audience** with the chosen message. Britain has a history of strong campaigns dating back to 1963 when the early road safety adverts encouraged the use of seat belts.
- The earliest drink drive advert was broadcast in 1964. A polite voice asked 'If he's been drinking, don't let him drive,' a far cry from the shock tactics used today. 1976 saw the first hard hitting campaign which featured a woman being stretchered into an ambulance to a menacing soundtrack. This persuasive **ideology** of focusing on the consequences of drink driving has prevailed to the modern day.
- In December 2000, when the *Think!* brand was first introduced, the campaign consisted of TV and radio adverts alongside a

**distribution** of posters and cards to pubs and clubs. The TV adverts played **contrapuntal** Christmas music over horrific images of the emergency services dealing with crashes.

##### Consider the use of moving image media language, and codes and conventions:

- Public service advertising must use the voice and language of the audience in order to communicate its message.
- The *Think!* adverts use a **direct gaze** and the **pronoun** 'You', to put the focus on the individual which is a typical persuasive feature of advertising.
- Another typical convention is to create an **emotional reaction** in the audience so that the message has resonance. The emotion created in the *Think!* advert is one of fear of the consequences.

##### Consider how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings:

- The first posters all contain a **close up** of a multi layered face. The black background of the **mise-en-scène** connotes an ominous, serious atmosphere to the audience.
- The image uses a **direct gaze** to form a relationship with the audience. This is further reinforced by the use of 'You'. The **facial expression codes** are grave. This, combined with the **iconography** of the police hat, reminds the audience of the nature of the topic.
- The final poster uses present and future tenses to put forward a realistic scenario to the audience, highlighting that if they are caught they will be like every other criminal. This is to force young drivers to realise that drink driving isn't just socially unacceptable, it has severe consequences for the individual.

##### Consider critical perspectives: Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- At first glance the advert is something of

an **enigma** because the human face appears distorted. The audience has to focus carefully in order to read the meaning. Therefore, the visual is an example of **Barthes' Hermeneutic code**.

- The representations of the characters could be considered a **semantic code** as it communicates that they represent a varied British demographic showing the wide appeal of the advert.
- Black is a clear **symbolic code** for death and mystery. This sets the atmosphere for the rest of the visual images.

### Advanced Theory:

#### Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

- A visual **binary opposition** is created through the **chiaroscuro** lighting which highlights areas of light. This creates a contrast between light and darkness. This is further emphasised by the contrast of the white font on the black background, signifying that the facts are black and white regarding this topic. There are no grey areas and that if you drink drive these are the consequences.

## PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

### Social context:

Alongside the print campaign were a number of audio visual adverts that used humour and shock tactics to gain the attention of the target audience. The most successful of these ran on social media accounts with the hash tags #publooshocker and #stillalive. The TV adverts feature males to identify with the target audience.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TADO4LG29bs>

### Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:

- A key point about representation in the print adverts is the diverse nature of the faces. They are there to appeal to a wide demographic and show the multicultural nature of British society.
- There is a clearer representation of men in the audio visual adverts. Representation is created through **dress codes, body language and gesture**. **Stereotypes** are used to signal to the audience that the characters are ordinary men, not criminals.
- The dress codes of the characters in the audio visual adverts vary but they all suggest realism. This links to the desire for them to have points of **identification** with the audience.

### Consider critical perspectives:

- **Stuart Hall's theory of representation** – the representations of the images in the print and audio visual adverts work to create a **verisimilitude** for the audience. It's important for the brand to convince the audience, through the shared concept, that this could happen to them. The familiar images of the pub setting engage the audience.
- **David Gauntlett's theory of identity** – in the #stillalive adverts the male characters could be considered as representing **role models**. They choose to defy peer pressure and the opinions of others to follow the law and ultimately 'stay alive'.

### Advanced theory:

- **Liesbet Van Zoonen's feminist theory** – the advertising is targeting a male audience, so female characters do not feature significantly. In the print advertising there are positive representations of females. The text names them as DVLA employer, Job Centre advisor and Secretary. However, the higher positions of power are filled by the males – Magistrate, HR Manager and Police Officer.
- **Gilroy's ethnicity and post-colonial theories** – The British public is represented through a variety of different ethnicities. Ethnic minority groups are represented in positions of authority such as the Prison Officer. In the audio visual advert, #publooshocker, the black customer is the only one to have the **dress code** of a smart suit which has positive connotations for the audience.

## PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

### Social / cultural context:

Public service advertising has to study the needs of its audience carefully in order to get its message to the right people. *Think!* realised that modern audiences have a decreased attention span, so needed to address how to get its message across. The 2014 campaign used owned and private advertising methods. First it advertised on its website [www.think.direct.gov.uk](http://www.think.direct.gov.uk) to create initial awareness. Then, social media was utilized with 18,000 Twitter posts communicating the message to a younger audience. Awareness for the campaign was also raised by 221 pieces of PR in the wider media. *Think!* partnered with the brand Coca Cola to offer 2 for 1 drinks to designated drivers in a

push to raise awareness and encourage positive behaviour. They also partnered Johnny Walker to provide free rides home with the Taxi App, Uber.

### Consider how industries target audiences, and how audiences interpret and use the media:

- The primary audience of the advert is young males between 17 and 29. This is the group that has been targeted by *Think!* since their early campaigns. This group make up 82% of those who are charged with drink driving. The secondary audience is women between 20 and 39. They have a high rate of breathalyser failures.
- The advert positions the audience with a **direct gaze**. The text identifies key individuals from well-known members of wider society. It assumes that the audience are familiar with their functions and know how the situations will affect them, i.e. the magistrate will punish them.
- The communicated **ideology** is to get the individual to see how they and the wider community are affected by the consequences of drink driving.
- According to the **Uses and Gratifications** model the adverts offer information and identification to audiences.

### Consider critical perspectives:

#### Reception Theory - Stuart Hall

- The **preferred reading** of the advert would be that behaviour that results in drink driving charge ruins lives. The only safe option is not to drink. *Think!* ultimately wants drink driving incidences to decrease. The adverts support **hegemonic values** of following the rule of government and not indulging in damaging behaviour.
- An **oppositional response** could be considered a **counter hegemonic** reaction as it defies the laws of the state.

#### Cultivation Theory - George Gerbner

- The 50 year campaign has had an influence on the culture of Britain. Statistics have shown that the long term effects of the adverts are that the number of people convicted of drink driving has nearly halved since 2003. Furthermore, in 1967 there were 1 640 deaths associated with drink driving, that number is now 230.