Audience response: contemporary non-mainstream magazines

Gerbner argues that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them.

It will be helpful to use some of Jonathan Bignell's ideas to understand how Gerbner’s theory could apply to women's magazines:

Bignell argues that ‘women's magazines encode the identities they offer to females in certain ways and not others. Some feminine gender identities are coded as ‘natural’ while others are not.... Despite the plurality of subject-positions constructed by the discourses of magazines, this plurality is contained by a small number of dominant ideological myths that encode femininity in particular ways.’ (Media Semiotics by Jonathan Bignell, 1997, p73)

Two of the ‘naturalised’ feminine identities that Bignell identifies are:

- A consumer of products
- A heterosexual woman whose identity is defined to a significant extent by her relationships with men

Having analysed your set historical magazine, identify other ‘naturalised’ feminine identities that have been constructed:

Other ‘naturalised’ feminine identities:

Hints

- Notions of female beauty/body image
- Female as wife/ mother/nurturer
- Female in the domestic sphere rather than a professional environment
Consider this idea in relation to Gerbner’s theory – it would be useful here to consider contemporary women's magazines, advertising etc. to identify those representations that are still perceived as 'natural' feminine identities.

This article is helpful in explaining some of the ways in which media representations of women have changed:

https://www.marketingweek.com/2017/03/08/portrayal-women-media/

**Question for discussion/debate**

*How far do you agree with Gerbner’s theory that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them?*