Tide (1950) Advert



Key

P&G - Procter & Gamble (Tide's producers)
DMB&B - D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles (Tide's advertisers)
Bold writing indicates an importance to the information, *italics* represents information that will likely gain you further marks but isn't necessarily important information.
Superscript indicates a recap of a theory.

Production Context

-- PRODUCT CONTEXT --
P&G is one of the world's biggest companies & leading producers. Designed specifically for heavy--duty, machine-cleaning, **P&G launched Tide in 1946 and it quickly became the brand leader in America**, a position it still maintains today.

Production Context (cont)

-- CONTEMPORARY INFO --
Tide is still the highest selling detergent brand in the world, with *14.3% share of the global market.*
-- ADVERTISING --
DMB&B advertising agency handled P&G's accounts throughout the 1950s.
DMB&B's advertising campaigns for Tide had referred explicitly to P&G because their market reach showed that **consumers had high levels of confidence in the company.**
DMB&B used **print and radio advertising campaigns concurrently** in order to *quickly build audience familiarity with the brand.*
Both media forms (print & radio) used the **housewife character** and **ideology that its customers "loved" and "adored" Tide.**
-- BROADER CONTEXT --
Post-WW2 consumer boom of the 1950s - rapid development of new technologies for home, designed to make domestic chores easier (vacuum cleaners, fridge freezers, microwave ovens and washing machines all became desirable products for the 1950s consumer).

Production Context (cont)

Products linked to these new technologies also developed during this time - for example, washing powder.

Examples of 1950's hair (2)



As seen on Veronica Lake

Media Language

-- COMMON CODES AND CONVENTIONS OF PRINT TEXTS --
Visual codes (what will be discussed later)
Slogans
Persuasive language (use of hyperbole)
Narrative
Soft-sell technique (selling a lifestyle- in this case, stereo-typical housewife character).
Hard-sell technique (aggressive language, directly telling you to buy the product)
Demonstration of product (product in action)
Logos and branding (familiarity)
Mode of address
Intertextuality
Product endorsement
Unique selling point
-- INDUSTRY CONTEXT --

Media Language (cont)

Print adverts from the **1950s conventionally used more copy than we're used to seeing today**. Consumer culture was in its early stages of development and, with **so many 'new' brands and products entering markets, potential customers typically needed more information about them** *than a modern audience*, used to more advertising, marketing and branding, might need.
-- HOW DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF MEDIA LANGUAGE AND THE COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS INFLUENCE MEANING --
Composition uses Z-line and a rough rule of thirds- your eye is constantly looking at something. **Bright, primary colours** connote the **positive associations the producers want the audience to make with the product. Headings, subheadings and slogans are written in sans-serif font, connotating an informal mode of address**. This is *reinforced with the 'comic strip'-style image* in the bottom right-hand corner with **two women 'talking' about the product using informal lexis ('sudsing whizz')**

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Media Language (cont)

The more **'technical' details of the product are written in a serif font, connoting the more 'serious'** or 'factual' information that the '1,2,3' bullet point list includes.

-- APPLYING THEORY --

Roland Barthes - Semiotics

Theory recap: (1) the idea that texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification. (2) the idea that signs can function at the level of denotation, which involves the 'literal' or common-sense meaning of the sign, and at the level of connotation, which involves the meanings associated with or suggested by the sign. (3) the idea that constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving the status of myth through a process of naturalisation.

Suspense is created through the enigma of 'what women want' and emphasised by the tension-building use of multiple exclamation marks.

Media Language (cont)

Barthes' Semantic Code **could be applied to the use of hearts above the main image**. The hearts and the woman's gesture codes have **connotations of love and relationships**, *it's connotated that* this *is 'what women want' (in addition to clean laundry).*

The **hyperbole and superlatives ('miracle', 'world's cleanest wash', 'world's whitest wash')** as well as the **tripling 'no other'** are used to **oppose the connoted superior cleaning power of Tide to its competitors.** This *symbolic code was clearly successful as P&G's competitor products were rapidly overtaken, making Tide the brand leader by the mid-1950s.*

Summary:

This section covers codes & conventions of print advertisements, industry context of print advertisements, the composition & typography, and applies Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory.

Examples of 1950's hair (3)



As seen on Rita Hayworth

Representation

-- INDUSTRY CONTEXT --

In the 1950s, while *men were being targeted for the post-war boom in America's car industry*, **women were the primary market for the technologies and products being developed for the home.**

In advertising for these types of texts, **stereotypical representations of domestic perfection,caring for the family and servitude to the 'man of the house'** became linked to a more modern need for speed, convenience and a *better standard of living than the women experienced in pre-war era.*

-- HOW SELECTION AND COMBINATION OF MEDIA LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTS REPRESENTATION OF GENDER --

The dress codes of the advert's main female character include a **stereotypical 1950s hairstyle**, incorporating *waves, curls and rolls made fashionable by contemporary film stars such as Veronica Lake, Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth.* The fashion for women having shorter hair had a *practical catalyst as long hair was hazardous for women working with machinery on farms or in factories during the war.*

Representation (cont)

The **headband or scarf worn by the woman also links to the practicalities** that women's dress codes developed during this time. For this advert, **having her hair held back connotes that she's focused on her work, though this perhaps binary opposes to the full makeup that she's wearing.**

-- APPLYING THEORY --

Stuart Hall - Representation

^Theory recap: (1) the idea that representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs. (2) the idea that the relationship between the concepts and signs is governed by codes. (3) the idea that stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people down to a few simple characteristics or traits. (4) the idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other' (e.g; through ethnocentrism).^.

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Representation (cont)

The **images of domesticity** (including the two women hanging out the laundry) **form part of the 'shared conceptual road map' that give meaning to the 'world' of the advert.** Despite its 'comic strip' visual construction, the **scenario represented is familiar to the audience as a representation of their own lives.**

David Gauntlett - Identity

Theory recap: (1) the idea that the media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities. (2) the idea that whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

Women represented in the advert act as a role models of domestic perfection that the audience may want to construct their own sense of identity against.

To summarise, this block covered the industry context of men and women being targeted for differently for products, the dress codes and how they are typical to 1950s through stars of that time and the new change of having women in the workplace, and finally the appliance of Stuart Hall's Representation theory and also David Gauntlett's theory of identity.

Example of 1950's hair (1)



As seen on American film-star Betty Grable

Audiences

-- HOW MEDIA PRODUCERS TARGET, ATTRACT, REACH, ADDRESS AND POTENTIALLY CONSTRUCT AUDIENCES --

Despite women having seen their roles in society change during the war (where they were needed in medical, military support and other roles outside of the home) **domestic products of the 1950s continued to be aimed at female audiences.** The likely target audience of increasingly **affluent lower--middle class women** were, at this point in the 1950s, **being appealed to because of their supposed need for innovative domestic technologies and products.**

Audiences (cont)

The increasing popularity during the 1950s of **supermarkets stocking a wider range of products led to an increased focus by corporations on brands and their unique selling points.** The likely **audience demographic is constructed through the advert's use of women with whom they might personally identify** (*Uses & Gratifications theory*, non-essential theory, but still useful to learn and apply).

These young women are *likely to be newly married and with the young families (the men and chin's clothing on the washing line creates these connotations).* The **endorsement from 'Good Housekeeping Magazine'** makes them an **Opinion Leader for the target audience**, reinforcing the repeated assertion that Tide is the market-leading product. The direct mode of address of the images in the top right and bottom left-hand corner link to the *imperative 'Remember!' and the use of personal pronouns 'your wash', 'you can buy'.*

-- APPLYING THEORY --

Audiences (cont)

Stuart Hall - Reception (NOT representation)

^Theory recap: (1) the idea that communication is a process involving encoding by the producers and decoding by an audience. (2) the idea that there are three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be encoded. (3) the dominant-hegemonic position (preferred reading): the encoder's intended meaning is fully understood and accepted. (4) the negotiated position: the legitimacy of the encoder's message is acknowledged in general terms, although the message is adapted or negotiated to better fit the decoder's own individual experiences or context. (5) the oppositional position: the encoder's message is understood, but the decoder disagrees with it, reading it in a contrary or oppositional way.^.

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Audiences (cont)

The **preferred reading** (Stuart Hall) of the advert's reassuring lexical fields ('trust', 'truly safe', 'miracle', 'nothing like') is that **despite being a new product, Tide provides solutions to the audience's domestic chores needs.**

The indirect mode of address made by the woman in the main image connotes that **her relationship with the product is of prime importance** (Tide has what she wants). This, according to Hall, is the **dominant or hegemonic encoding of the advert's primary message that should be received by 'you women'.**

George Gerbner - Cultivation Theory recap: (1) the idea 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 (i.e. cultivating particular views and opinions). (2) the idea that cultivation reinforces mainstream values (dominant ideologies).

Audiences (cont)

Advertising developed significantly during the 1950s and this theory, developed by Gerbner in the early 1970s, explains some of the ways in which audiences may be influenced by media texts such as adverts. The **Tide advert aims to cultivate the ideas that: this is the brand leader; nothing else washes to the same standard as Tide**; it's a **desirable product for its female audience; and its 'miracle suds' are an innovation for the domestic washing market**.

Gerbner's theory would argue that the repetition of these key messages causes audience sto increasingly align their own ideologies with them (in this case positively, creating a product that 'goes into more American homes than any other washday product').

Summary:
Context for audience of that time, targeting methods for women are the same despite the developing role of women, the use of the women in the advert used as 'ideal' females and ones that the audience may personally identify with, endorsement from 'Good Housekeeping Magazine', and finally applying Stuart Hall's Reception theory and George Gerbner's Cultivation theory.

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