

## Zoella (then vs now)



## Regulation

Zoella has become an ambassador for MIND.

She has been a figurehead for National Citizen's Service, which aims to foster community spirit.

She was part of 2014 Band Aid single.

She openly discusses her own anxiety and panic attacks.

Zoella became the fastest selling author since records began.

Critics have unearthed old Twitter posts: one, posted in 2010, said "I find it funny when gay men spit... it's like they're trying to be a bit macho but never works." Another, from 2011, said about the X Factor: "why did that fat chav go and stand next to him?" Other messages suggested a woman should "keep her legs shut" and described someone who thought a £2000 dress was too expensive as a "tramp".

Criticised for promoting "dangerous" ideas of beauty and perfection.

Cited as one of the causes of declining literacy among teenagers.

## Representation

- A range of stereotypically feminine codes, including pastel pinks, fairy lights and flowing fabrics construct a stereotypical representation of femininity.

## Representation (cont)

- The menu bar on Zoella.co.uk includes the hyperlinks "BEAUTY", "FOOD" and "STYLE", which reinforces stereotypical, hegemonic representations of women as just being interested in these areas.
- Zoella's gender performativity constructs a hegemonically situated and stereotypical construction of female identity, reinforcing and potentially manipulating the dominant ideological perspective of her target.
- Zoella subverts stereotypical representations of women, being open and honest about her issues with anxiety, and even occasionally appearing without makeup, once more making her more relatable to her young target audience.
- Postcolonial readings will focus on only white people being represented in her videos, inadvertently constructing a racial hierarchy and enacting symbolic annihilation.

## Media Industries

- YouTube channel homepage and her blog present a clear layout and clean user experience.
- Zoella presents in her videos a hyperreal construction of life, femininity and identity, presenting a fantastic yet relatable world to her target audience.
- Binary oppositions are constructed through Zoella, the idealised femininity, and Alfie, the stereotypical masculinity.
- Typical fashion and lifestyle channel, featuring a range of appropriate paradigmatic features
- Deliberately amateurish cinematography and editing constructs Zoella as relatable and human for her young target audience.

## Industry

- Audience engagement (time spent on respective sites) is maximised through algorithmically optimised aspects such as YouTube's autoplay and Zoella.co.uk's "Read Next" buttons.
- Revenue predominantly generated through advertising and click-through
- Zoella herself is an independent and vertically integrated organisation, utilising external distributors such as Hodder and Stoughton to publish her books.
- Zoella, like any other media industry, is motivated through profit and power.
- Self regulated, and occasionally has ran into legal implications from her Instagram feed, after she was found guilty of promoting brands without announcing it was paid-for content.

## Audience

- Zoella.co.uk adopts a friendly and welcoming mode of address to its white, working class, heterosexual female target audience.
- Audience are invited to participate with Zoella, as shown through her recipes and instructions for things such as making pancakes and other foods in her picnic articles.
- There are opportunities for audiences to directly interact with Zoella, for example through YouTube comments and sometimes in public events, such as VidCon - a YouTuber/fan meet-and-greet-style event.
- Negotiated and oppositional readings may take exception to the capitalist nature of Zoella's marketing strategy, as seen in the "fuckzoella" commentator on the old version of her blog.
- Since reinventing herself from Zoella to Zoe Sugg, Zoella has consciously targeted an older, yet still mainstream, working class female target audience.

### Audience (cont)

-- How Zoella targets the audience through her content and the ways in which the content is marketed, distributed and circulated --

- Gender, female -

**Emotive content**- the videos appeal to its **female audience through narratives that engage with subject matter emotionally**. Zoella continuously tells us how she "feels" about the problems she faces.

**Zoella foregrounds stereotypical female-based activities in her presentation: fashion, make-up, relationships.**

**Costume stereotypically female**- female colour palette deployed in mise-en-scene.

Use of **pets** and **pet-orientated references**.

Presenter **constructs a version of ideal beauty**- highly stylised, lots of makeup, attention paid to costume.

**Intimate confessional tone**- creates a relatable female character.

**A quiet/passive presentation style that fits with target audience expectations and female presenter stereotypes.**

- Age, 13-24 -

**Heavy use of social media** (Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube) - these sites **fit with the social media applications most prominently used by this age group**.

**Youthful co-presenters.**

**Deliberate amateur aesthetic suggests authenticity to this media-saturated audience segment.**

**Everyday activities of this demographic are incorporated into narratives to create connections with the target audience** (shopping, stopping at drive-through, eating at fast-food restaurants).

**Fan connections showcased in uploads** - fans represent the real target audience.

**Light comedic tone effected**

**Youth oriented slang deployed**

### Audience (cont)

**Use of YouTube commentary to create intimate connections with the target audience.**

**Secondary target audience** (parents and advertisers); engaged by **content that is safe in terms of sexual content and other taboo areas.**

- Socio-economic groups, BC1C2 -

- **Partnerships built with companies who target similar demographic groups** (ASOS/-H&M) - companies who **represent high street fashion at value prices.**

- Language **moderately formal** - some **extended language deployed with Standard English** used to **mirror lower-middle-class values and educational background.**

- **Zoella's house represents an ideal youthful environment** - a place of fun and socialising.

- **BC1C2 targeting allows uploads to be associated with more lucrative advertising tie-ins.**

- Lifestyle, Bachelor -

Foregrounding of her heterosexual relationship with Alfie.

- Activities -

Zoella foregrounds stereotypical female-based activities in her presentation.

- Psychometric grouping - mainstreamer/aspirer -

Narratives are **apolitical**, they **rarely deal with serious social commentary**. Choice of **cars and home residence represent an aspirational life-style based upon material possessions and their acquisition.**

- Aspirant tribe -

Zoella is concerned to be "on-trend", she is **constantly chasing the latest fashions.**

Zoella's vlogging lifestyle also represents an **ideal job choice**. Her wardrobe choices and hairstyles **reflect a brand-driven outlook**. Her partnerships and activities **foreground a concern to be a "social butterfly"**.

