

Media Persuasions and the Other Voice

COMM2112 Theories of Communication and Persuasion
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THE INDUSTRY OF ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

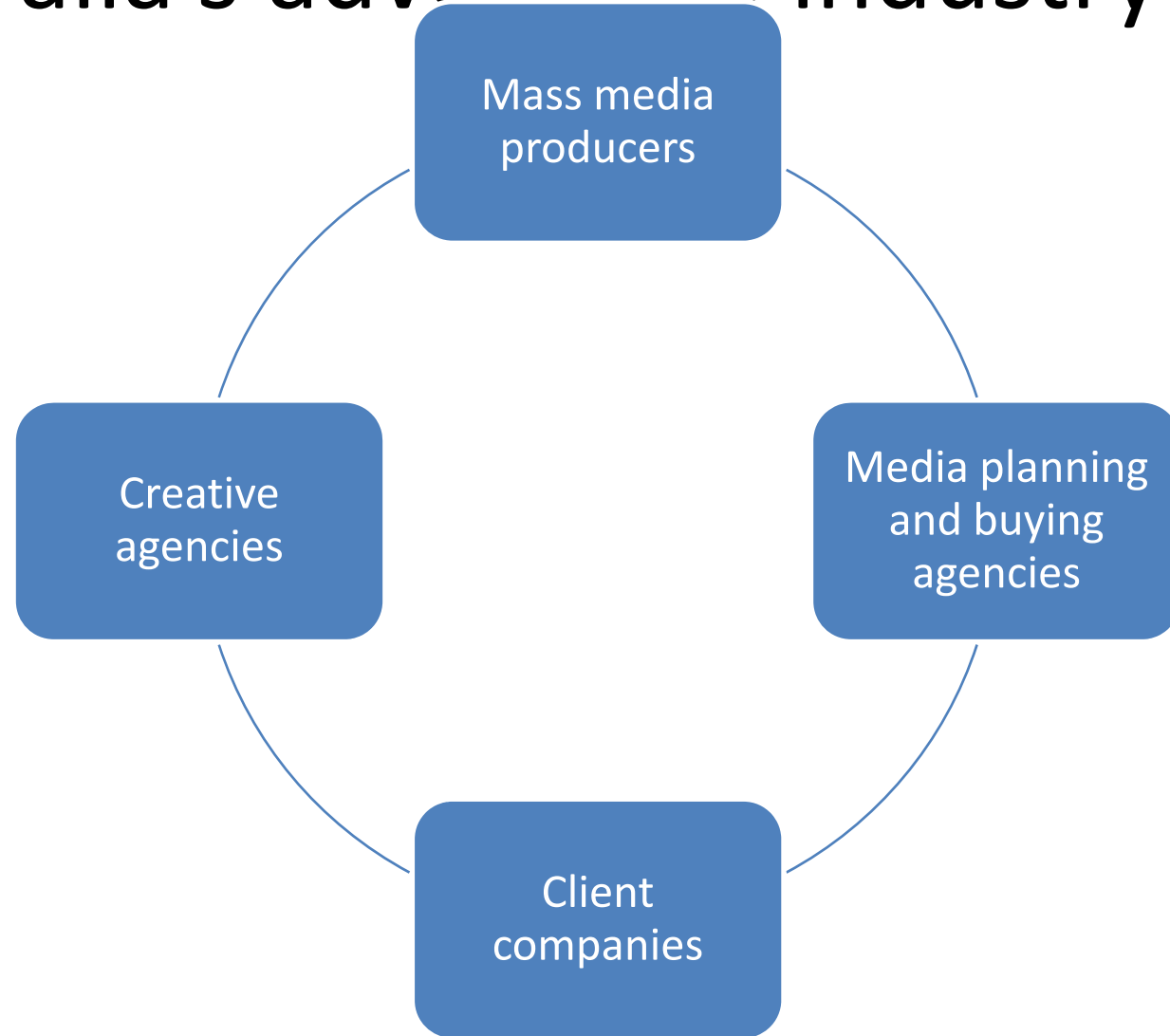
Social Marketing Theory

- Inducing audience awareness
 - E.g. ads on beer coasters
- Targeting messages
 - Aiming at those most receptive or susceptible
- Reinforcing messages
 - Utilising different media as constant reminder (ads on buses)
- Cultivating images & impressions
 - Used when difficult to arouse interest (Ian Thorpe endorsements)
- Stimulating interest & inducing information seeking
 - When sufficient interest is generated (BB website, merchandise)
- Inducing desired decision-making or positioning
 - Once people informed, can be prompted to take action
- Activating audience segments
 - Last chance to turn opportunity to action (“Last days!”)

Forms of Promotion

- **Advertising**
- **Direct marketing**
- Sales promotions
- Brand-level PR campaigns
- Product placement

Australia's advertising industry



The traditional money flows

- Advertising agencies began (19th century) as space salesmen for newspapers
 - Their commission was 10%; the newspaper got 90%
 - Found it easier to sell space if they showed the client what his ad would look like; so they added artists to make pictures and layouts, and writers to craft the words.
- When TV commenced, the complexity of TV creation and production led to separate fees to clients for production in addition to commission
- In small countries (e.g. Australia) a service fee was also paid by clients – usually about 7.5% of media spend. Thus, with both service fee and commission, agencies received about 18% of clients' overall spending on advertising – their “billings.”
- From the mid 1990s, agencies switched to revealing “revenues” – the total income received by the agency, without the media payments.

Major global agencies

- **Omnicom Group** (US based, US\$9.75 billion revenue)
 - In Australia owns (wholly or partly) three ad agencies, one media agency, two PR companies
- **WPP** (London-based, US\$9.37 billion revenue)
 - In Australia owns (wholly or partly) six ad agencies and three media agencies
- **Interpublic** (US based, US\$6.2 billion revenue)
 - Includes Australia ad and media agencies and PR
- **Publicis Groupe S.A.** (Paris based, US\$4.8 billion revenue)
- **Dentsu** (Tokyo-based US\$2.85 billion revenue)
- **Havas** (Paris-based), US \$1.9 billion revenue)

World dominance?

- These six major groups account for about 85 percent of global advertising agency income:
 - Omnicom 18 % (US)
 - WPP (with Grey) 18 % (UK)
 - Interpublic 18 % (US)
 - Publicis 16% (France)
 - Dentsu 10 % (Japan)
 - Havas 6% (France)

The impact of technological change

- Compared to today (in Australia)
- 40 years ago, agencies had three times as many staff
 - Every document was paper-based, hand prepared, physically transported
- 20 years ago, agencies had twice as many staff
 - Mainframe computers were being used instead of clerical staff
- 10 years ago, agencies had 50% more staff than now
 - Apple Macs had replaced many activities in art departments
 - PCs began to move to executive desks.
- 8-10 years ago, email
 - changed document delivery, reduced staff, face-to-face meetings
- Within the last decade, broadband
 - made possible borderless production
 - shooting in Hong Kong, digital manipulation in Los Angeles, editing in Tokyo, client approval in Frankfurt, voiceover change in Sydney, to air in all Australian capitals

The social impact of promotion and advertising

- Money raised by advertising pays for most global media
- Commercial media
 - sell audiences to advertisers,
 - so advertisers can sell products to audiences
- The function of programming is
 - NOT to communicate ideas or information
 - BUT to assemble people to sell their eyes
 - The more people media assemble, the more money they make.

The pragmatic function of advertising

- Information about products

The social functions of advertising

- To stimulate need, or cultivate desire
- To stabilise the consumer economy
- To cultivate difference
- To promote brand identity
- To entertain, and catch attention (thereby circumventing need to rationalise choice)
- To commodify life

Commodification

- Advertising can't make money out of ideas or experiences
- Selling involves converting insubstantials into commodities that can be sold
 - E.g. don't go on a holiday, buy a holiday
 - E.g. don't be happy, buy something to make you happy
 - E.g. don't fall in love, buy something to make someone love you

Commodification

- Repackages culture selectively
 - Minority groups ignored e.g. Neighbours, Friends
- Dramatises and exaggerates
 - Wildly happy holidays
- Intrudes
 - Constant product promotion
- Disrupts everyday life
 - Too much focus on entertainment
 - Changes to culture and tradition e.g. family dinner becomes TV dinner
- Offers inducements for self-destruction
 - E.g. alcohol, cigarettes
 - E.g. unnecessary consumption, widescreen TV

THE OTHER VOICE

Ethnocentrism and Racisms

- Ethnocentrism: a person's viewpoint is dominated by her/his ethnicity. The values of her/his ethnicity are the ones which she/he grows up with as 'natural' and 'right'

Racisms:

- There are a number of different forms of racism
- Racisms are culturally specific
- Racist oppression involves a system of social practices that prevent a group of people access that is given to other people

“Teaching race difference means including in the curriculum representation of the lives and concerns of the “Other” who are predominantly women located overseas with some inclusion of the “Indigenous Other” (Moreton-Robinson: 183).

Positionality

- Positionality: Refers to embodied positions that all subjects (people) identify with or are identified with – or cover up
- We all have multiple positions – white, woman, teacher, homosexual
- Not all positions have equal value
- Positionality demonstrates the importance of ‘who speaks’

Why Look at 'White'?

- White is the norm for humanity in the West
- You only have a race if you are not-white – a migrant, an 'ethnic', if you are 'other'

Survey (2004): "What is your ethnic background?"

- "I don't have an ethnicity, I am Australian" – many whites do not acknowledge their cultural specificity
- To study whiteness in order to *denaturalise* its position as the norm, to think its particularity and its limits
- see Dyer (1-2) [69-70] and Toni Morrison (90)

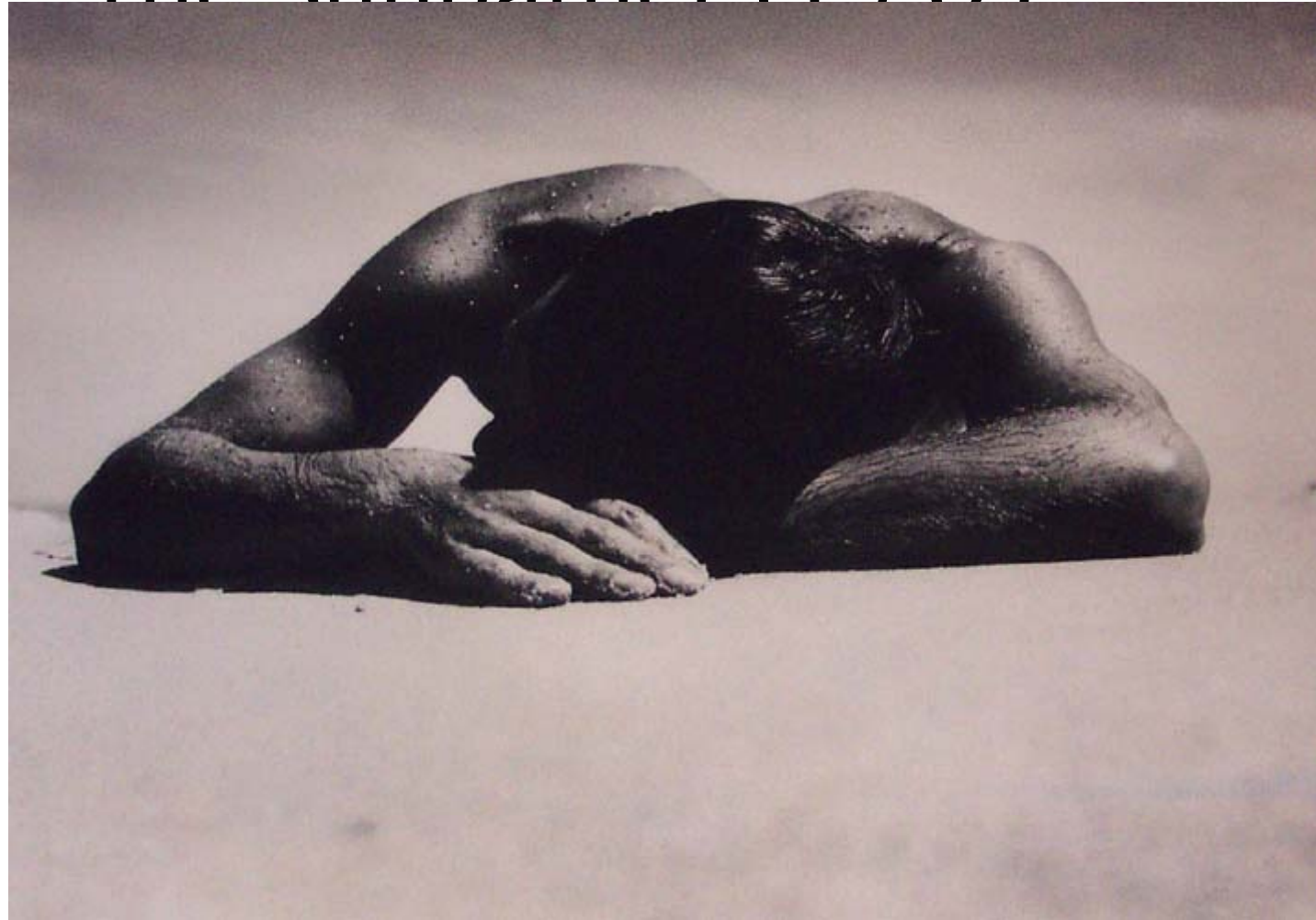
Pluralism

- Unlike Binary Logic, pluralism can present many different identities.
- Yet in Western Cultures, pluralism often remains dominated by 'white' as the master term or norm.
- EG: Roy Morgan Sunscreen Survey (Jan 2004)
- “What is your skin colour? Are you:
- White, Fair, Light Tan, Olive, Dark, Very Dark, Black?”
– a racist hierarchy in the order of these categories

Images of Whites in Australia

- White as clean and pure – links pale skin and privilege
- Pale white skin (especially women) as beautiful eg: Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett
- Pale white bodies are often presented as vulnerable
- Eg: *The Proposition* (2005) – Emily Watson's pale body in opposition to land
- Suntanned whites: (especially men) at home in Australia eg: Crocodile Dundee and Max Dupain's *The Sunbather* (1937)

The Sunbather (1937)



1. Feminist critiques on media studies

- The under-representation of women in higher education and as scientists
- The sexist use of science and the contribution of social sciences to sexist, racist, homophobic and classist social projects
- The male bias in the themes, theories and methodologies of traditional science
- Feminist challenge to science as socially constructed, situated knowledge, reflecting the social experience of its major practitioners – i.e. white, male, employed academics or corporate management

2. Stereotypes and socialization

- Women underrepresented in the media, both in production and content
- Representation of women biased:
 - Young and conventionally pretty
 - Defined in relation to males and male activity
 - Frequently passive, indecisive, submissive, dependent

3. Pornography

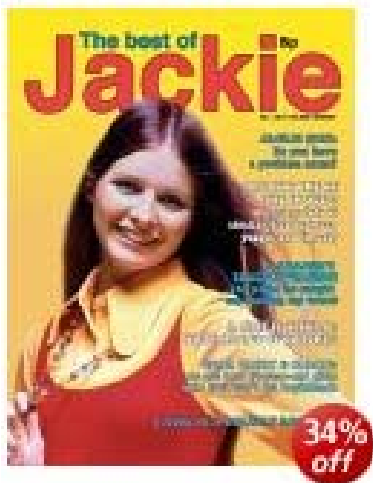
- Focus in studies has been on its function for males, ignoring its degradation of women
- The representation of women's bodies and objectification through the male gaze
- Pornography not just a representation, but an act of violence in itself

4. Ideology

- Media as a major arm of hegemony
- How and to whose benefit are the particular ideological constructs of femininity produced

Angela McRobbie's analysis of *Jackie*

- Heterosexual romance the key theme
- Girls' main task is to get and keep a man – in this other women can't be trusted
- A girl's life is defined largely through emotions
- Underlying theme of fear – of losing your boyfriend or never getting one



Example

- Man-woman relationships in *Law & Order* vs *NCIS*

Queer criticisms

- Heterocentrism
 - The marginalisation of homosexual partnerships
 - The marginalisation of transgender identity
- Homosexist acts
 - Treating men as women for ridicule or spectacle, e.g. *The Footy Show*
- Stereotyping
 - Allowing queers to fulfil certain roles and excluding them from others, e.g. *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *Sex and the City*

Examples in cinema and TV

- Al Pacino in *Cruisin'*
- Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia*
- Antonio Banderas in *La Ley del Deseo*
- Kelly Lynch and Sherilyn Fenn in *3 of Hearts*
- Robert de Niro in *Stardust*
- Frances O'Connor and Radha Mitchell in *Love and Other Catastrophes*
- Adoption of a straight son in *Queer as Folk*
- Courtney Act, Australian Idol finalist

What all these critiques do in common:

Show how ideologies in media

- Highlight, promote, give worth to certain points of view
- Shadow, devalue and criticise other points of view
- Exclude certain groups of people from certain positions in the textual space

Further reading

- Callahan, David “His Natural Whiteness: Modes of Ethnic Presence and Absence in Some Recent Australian Films” pp.95-114 in *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*, ed Ian Craven, Frank Cass London
- Dyer, Richard. *White*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp.1-14.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Imagination*, Vintage, New York, 1993.
- Liesbet van Zoonen, *Feminist media studies* (Sage, 1994)