




Syllabus

Week	Date	
1	3 Oct	Introduction
2	10 Oct	Communication as structure
3	17 Oct	
4	24 Oct	Communication as ritual
5	31 Oct	
6	7 Nov	Communication as performance
7	14 Nov	
8	21 Nov	Communication as discourse
9	28 Nov	
10	5 Dec	Student presentations
11	12 Dec	Individual tutorials





Activity

1. Watch these videos. For each video note down three images that made an impression on you:

Madonna - "Frozen" (1998)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS088Opj9o0>

Madonna - "Ray of Light" (1998)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4tD8dy9Reg>

Madonna - "What it Feels Like for a Girl" (2000)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYwgG2oyUbA>

Lady Gaga - "Bad Romance" (2009)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrO4Y7eyl0I>

Lady Gaga - "Judas" (2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wagn8Wrmzuc>

Lady Gaga - "Marry the Night" (2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LY4Ra0rkW8>

**What do your chosen images symbolise?
 How do they relate to each other?
 How is the video using them to convey its meaning?
 Come to class ready to discuss your findings**

2. Take the test on academic good practices on Moodle
<http://moodle.coventry.ac.uk/uni/course/view.php?id=313>



Communication as structure 1

Visual analysis

Iconicity

Narrative







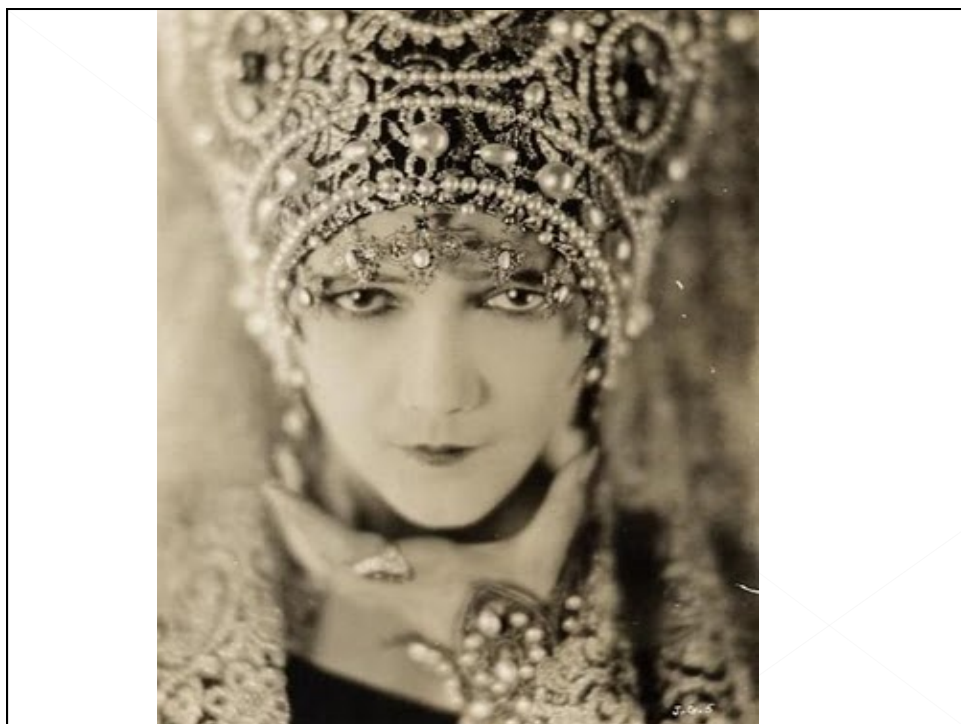
Activity

Visual Analysis: How to read an image

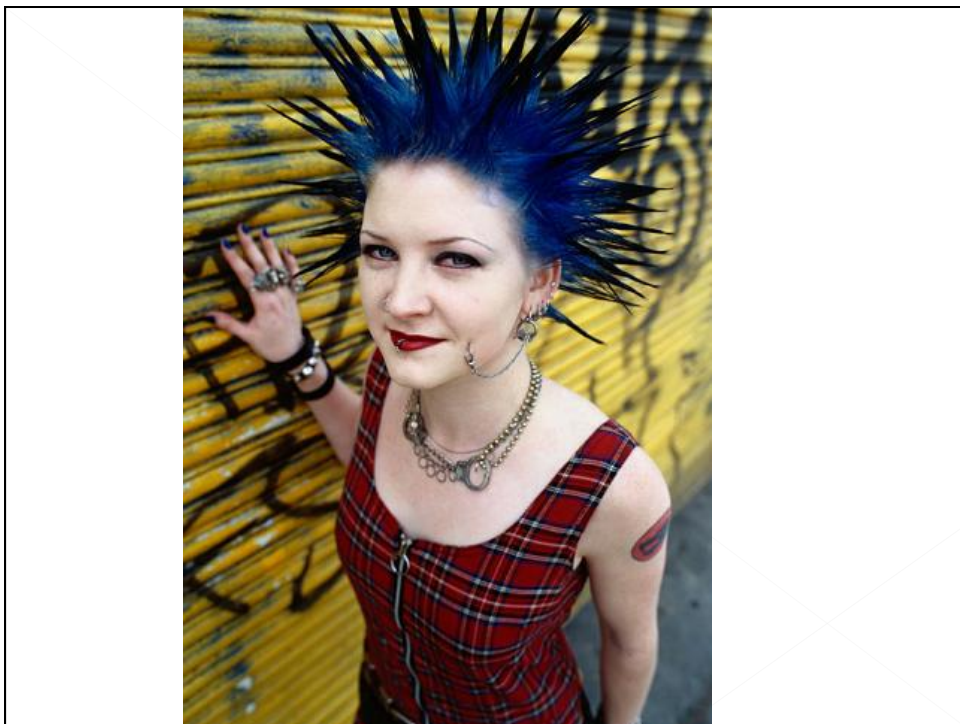
Look at each of the following images:

- What is it?
- How was it made?
- Who made it?
- What was it made for?
- Where is it?
- Why am I looking at it now?
- What sort of picture is it?
- What other pictures is it like?
- What is the meaning of the picture?
- What does it make me think about?

Note down your impressions, thoughts and reactions









Activity

Visual Analysis: How to read an image

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... But how does it FEEL?



Plaisir “pleasure”

- About textual construction
- technical execution
- Can be explained and analysed

Jouissance “bliss”

- before or beyond meaning
- emotive response to the text
- defies and resists translation (e.g. bodily reaction to music)





What is a Sign?

A sign stands for something else, according to three types of relationship (C.S. Peirce)

- Icon – likeness
- Index – association, cause
- Symbols – arbitrary convention



Icon:
likeness



Index:
association



There is no 'natural' relationship between signifier and signified – the symbol and what it represents

Donna
Woman
Femme
Mujer
Žena
Mwanamke
Sievieta
Nǚ

M - A - D - O - N - N - A



Symbol: arbitrary convention

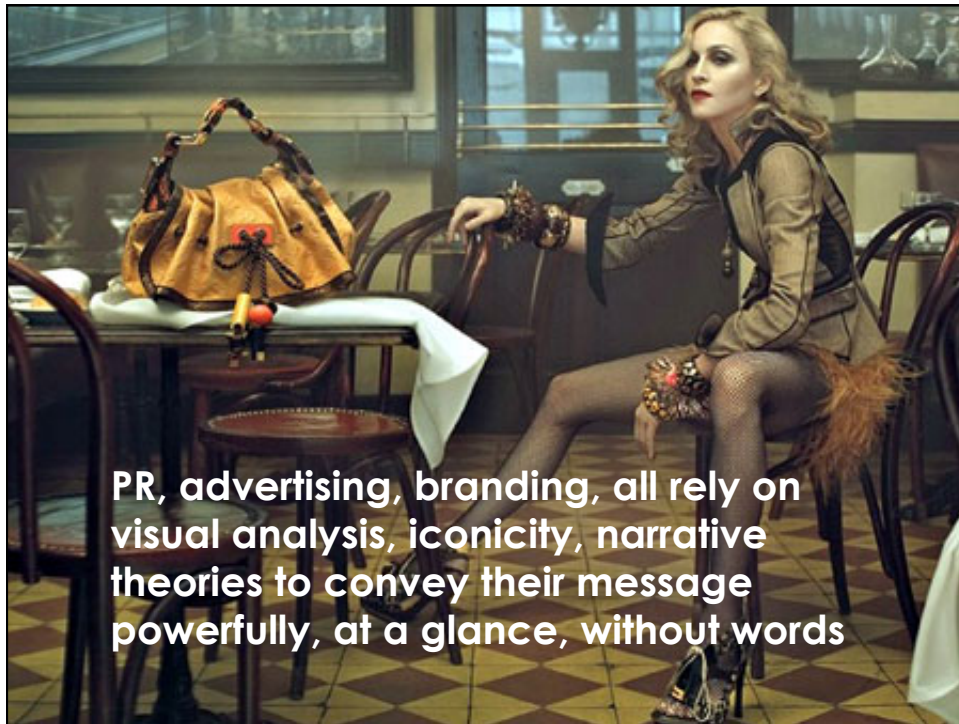
Denotation vs. Connotation

A woman with a crown



A woman with a crown







Activity

Narrative analysis

Lady Gaga – "Paparazzi" (2009)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2smz_1L2_0

Watch this video and outline the sequence of events
e.g. *woman meets man – woman loves man – and so on*

Woman meets man
Woman loves man
Man betrays woman
Woman is hurt
Man cheats (?)
Woman heals (?)
Woman exacts revenge
Woman triumphs

How does she heal?
Is she a different woman at the end?
Is the end a flashback?
What are the non-narrative inserts about?
Are they really non-narrative?

Narrative Theory

What is the purpose of narrative, or storytelling?

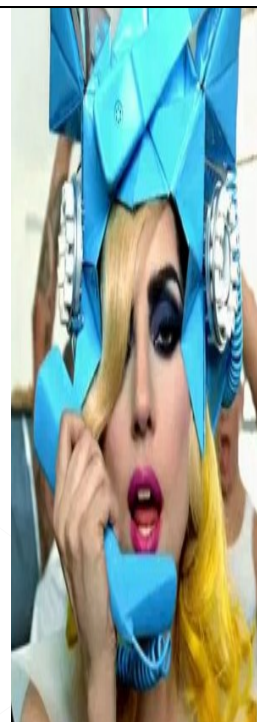
What are the essential features of narrative?

How do these essential features vary from one media form to another (e.g. videos, lyrics, interviews...)?

How does genre affect the mode of narration?

Who narrates? What is "real"?

Can we do without narrative?



Narrative gives meaning to a story



A story is what happens

A narrative is how the story is told

- A story is a sequence of events where something happens
e.g. *Lady Gaga is betrayed and hurt by her boyfriend, but she triumphs in the end*
- A narrative is the telling of the story, an account of the events
e.g. *The video "Paparazzi" itself*
- A narrative has a point of view: character(s), or a narrator
e.g. *The camera work and the mise en scene in the video*

Features of narrative

Narrative messes with time

Narrative is selective

Narratives use different formal techniques and devices to tell the story


Narratives mediate reality





Narrative Needs...


- Narrator**
organises, selects and comments on events and characters
- Point of view**
gives a perspective on action and characters
- Audience**
and the ways in which the audience will respond to the narrative
- Structure**
beginning, middle and end(?)
- Genre**
codes and conventions



Propp: Narrative Structures

- 31 Functions**
 - Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked
 - Hero is branded/wounded/marked
 - Hero withstands/fails the test
 - Hero acquires use of a magical agent
 - Hero is delivered or helped by donor
 - Hero and villain join in direct combat
 - Villain is defeated
 - Initial misfortune or lack is resolved
 - Hero returns
- 8 Characters**
 - The hero (or victim/hero)
 - The villain
 - The prize
 - The donor (helps hero)
 - False hero (takes credit for the hero's actions or tries to get the prize)

Limitations:
how about
content,
aesthetics,
difference?



**“Realism” “Truth”
“Authenticity”**

Our perception of a narrative will be heavily dependent upon:

Who is the author
who is telling the story
whether we believe the narrative to be “truthful” or “realistic”


I'M ON THE EDGE
OF GLORY
AND I'M HANGING
ON A MOMENT
OF TRUTH



<http://song-lyric-quotes-in-text-image.blogspot.com/>

**Realism is not
the Real**

The term ‘realism’ does not mean ‘the real’ itself. In any form of media the real is always, by definition, a re-presentation of the real



‘Realism’ is the attempt to make the narrative appear real; to have the illusion of being real; to be believable

Realism is a narrative device that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting authenticity'

What matters is to make the story is credible and believable

Realism is the set of formal devices and codes and conventions within particular media forms and genres that makes stories believable



Authenticity, Image, persona
Where is the 'real' Lady Gaga?



Recap: Narrative Theory

Communicating is always telling a story

Stories help interpret the world and the self

Stories are socially determined and contextual

Stories have specific structures and rules

Genre, realism, authenticity



The importance of narrative theory for the communication strategies of celebrities

Mastering structures and conventions of different media

Using genres, codes, conventions

Determining and targetting audience

Creating an enticing storytelling

Cultivating an 'authentic' public image and persona

Influencing celebrity culture



What is going on here? Constructions of "Authenticity"

Troy Carter, Gaga's manager since 2007, described their dynamic as "95-5." "The only thing I do is manage the vision," he said. "Ninety-five percent of the time I won't comment on creative, and 95% of the time she lets me run the business. The other 5% is where we debate about things like, 'Do you really want to bleed to death on stage at the [MTV] VMAs?' She wins even when we do have those debates 5% of the time." Dyana Kass, who heads pop-music marketing for Universal, has teamed with marketing firms like Flylife for Gaga's outreach to the gay community and ThinkTank to supplement her online efforts, but otherwise lets Gaga maintain a hands-on relationship with her fans and marketing empire.

"Lady Gaga has truly turned culture on its head and has done so from the ground up on her terms," she said. "You can't buy that kind of authenticity, and as a result the demand for her involvement in projects is staggering."

<http://vandymkting.typepad.com/files/2010-2-22-adage-gaga-oooh-la-la--why-the-lady-is-the-ultimate-social-climber.pdf>



For next week

1. Assignment

Pick either Lady Gaga or Madonna, and find three of her interviews from different media (audio, video, in print). Apply a narrative analysis: what narratives are present? What is told, what is not? What formal techniques are used? What personas does she build? How she constructs and represent her "authentic" self?

2. Readings

Prieto-arranz, J.(2012) "The Semiotics of Performance and Success in Madonna." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 45: 1732-197.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00917.x/pdf>

Ott, B. and L.Mack (2010) "Rethorical Analysis" in *Critical Media Studies*, pp. 99-122
Online

