

SUPER.HUMAN AUDIO-VISUAL ADVERTISING
BOOKLET
REPRESENTATION



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjIP9EFbcWY>

YR 12 MEDIA KEY CONCEPTS KNOWLEDGE ORGANISERS

2.REPRESENTATION	(links to Component 1 A & C2 of the course)
Theories of representation - Stuart Hall	1. Stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people to simple characteristics or traits 2. Stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other'.
2.Theories of identity - David Gauntlett	3. Media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities 4. Media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.
Feminist theory - Liesbet van Zoonen	5. Gender is constructed through discourse (interaction), and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context 6. The display of women's bodies as objects to be looked at is a core element of western patriarchal culture.
Feminist theory - Bell Hooks	7. Feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination 8. Race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited, discriminated against or oppressed.
Theories of gender performativity - Judith Butler	9. Identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (it is manufactured through a set of acts) 10. Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual.
...ethnicity & postcolonial theory - Paul Gilroy	11. Colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity. 12. In the postcolonial era civilisationism constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.
+	
PLURALISM AND REPRESENTATION	13. Pluralists might argue that there is no such thing as a powerful stereotype, as we (the audience) ultimately have the power to make up our own mind and are active in our acceptance/rejection of stereotypes. 14. Add to this the publics' access to a much greater range of media texts (and hence representations) via the internet and multi-channel broadcasting that broadens the possibility of a much wider and diverse representations.
IDEOLOGY AND REPRESENTATION	15. The ideological implications (the implicit or explicit values expressed to audiences through the media text) of stereotyping are obvious, since the groups most likely to be stereotyped are those with less social and cultural power (for extension work you can research further into Marxist/hegemonic ideas).
BINARY OPPOSITES	30. Able vs Disabled Man vs Woman etc.
HABITS OF DISCUSSION	SENTENCE STARTERS
Introduce	Initial findings/ the evidence seem(s) to suggest that... / Most people might think that... / Arguably... / (Whilst) It could be argued/suggested that... / There is no doubt (that)...
Elaborate or Expand	I'd like to elaborate on ...'s response/idea / To build on ...'s response/idea ... / A further example of this is ... / I think that we also need to consider ... / This is further supported by... / Interestingly... / In contrast to...
Agree/Disagree	I agree/disagree with ... because... / I understand your point, however... / I think it's more complex than what you're saying, because... / I have the same/a different viewpoint... / Perhaps it could / Alternatively, it could...
Evaluate	In conclusion I would say that... / Consequently... (I believe that...) / To summarise... / Overall, it is clear / On balance, we can conclude that...
Useful conjunctions/adverbs	1. Although, Despite the fact that Whilst, whereas 2. Therefore, Thus, Yet 3. Furthermore, Additionally, Moreover 4. However, Similarly, Conversely

POSSIBLE PAST QUESTION (SUPER.HUMAN IS A NEW TOPIC SO IT'S NEVER BEEN EXAMINED BEFORE)

Compare how stereotypes are used in the film poster for Wonder Woman and the advertisement for SUPER.HUMAN.

In your answer, you must consider:

- the similarities and differences in how stereotypes are used in the products
- how the representations convey values and attitudes
- how far the representations reflect historical and cultural contexts. [25]

In the exam you are likely to be asked to compare this specific advert with an unseen media text with a focus on the representations offered. You could also be asked to consider how media products like this can be shaped by the time they were produced (contexts). It is important to remember that you will have to rely on your revision skills – they do not provide you with a copy of the previously studied case studies.



Semiotic analysis – Barthes

First watch: Super. Human. Micro elements – space for notes

Sound Audio track: <i>So You Want to be a Boxer</i> by Buggy Malone	
Editing	
Camerawork	
Mise-en-scene	
Written codes	

The representation of disability in this advertisement is affected by social and cultural circumstances. Channel 4 has taken the active decision to present the athletes neither as victims or as heroes, but just ordinary sports men and women facing extraordinary challenges. This constructs a more compelling social narrative reflecting the appetite of the time for success stories that are accessible. This is evident at the beginning of the advert when the dream sequence is shattered, and real life begins.

#WeThe15

Channel 4 wanted to support the launch of #Wethe15 – a campaign aimed at increasing awareness that people with disabilities make up 15% of the population

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHCDvdCaJhl>). So C4 created a #WeThe15 on-air ident with an overlaid purple filter that covered 15% of the screen. On 19th August 2021, there were accompanying continuity announcements and social media posts. To fuel conversations on disability, they also re-surfaced the We Don't Dis-ability collection, putting it on the homepage and driving a 2,000% spike in visits to the collection compared to the previous day.

Over the following month, C4 aired the WeThe15 campaign ad. Created by adam&eveDDB, it

features a montage of disabled people going about their everyday business – pushing prams, accidentally killing houseplants, watching reality TV, going on dates – reminding viewers that 'Only when you see us as one of you – wonderfully ordinary, wonderfully human – can we all break down these barriers that keep us apart'.

TikTok

Channel 4's bespoke sponsor-branded Paralympics Hub was a social media first. Never before had coverage from the Paralympic Games – or the Olympics – been showcased on TikTok in this way. The Hub gave fans and at-home a banner on TikTok's Discover page and tailored push notifications around big moments in the Games. spectators a new and creative way to feel connected to the excitement of Tokyo 2020. Throughout the Games, the 4Studio team created daily, gold medal-worthy content especially for the TikTok community, including behind-the-scenes footage, events and medals highlights and intimate moments with athletes. The narrated short-form videos used TikTok's 'text-to-speech' feature so users with visual and reading impairments could enjoy the content too.

FURTHER CONTEXT AND MARKETING:

Launching the campaign, Lynsey Atkin, 4Creative's Executive Creative Director, said: 'Following the last two Paralympics adverts was no small task – they exploded attitudes around disabilityYet we spotted an opportunity to present Paralympians in a way they hadn't been shown before – by pointing a camera at the realities of their lives, and, as with any elite athlete, the sacrifices they make in pursuit of greatness..... collectively these choices paint a story of mental determination, not of disability.'

The decision was therefore made to change the focus of a previous campaign 'Meet the Superhumans' and instead in the 2020 campaign to emphasise the 'Human' rather than the 'Super' and to juxtapose the images of the training regime with those of the everyday lives of the athletes, with the intention of making them relatable to audiences.

Why are particular social groups under-represented or misrepresented? Hegemony in ACTION.

Dominant groups in society largely control what is produced and as a result, minority groups tend to be marginalised, creating an unrealistic view of the contemporary world. This advertisement attempts to address the marginalisation of certain social groups, in this case, those with disabilities. Its aim, reflecting the ideology and ethos of Channel 4, is to give a voice to those who are not usually represented positively (or simply ignored) in other areas of the media.

The positive representation of disability in the advertisement and the coverage of the games changed attitudes. According to YouGov research, 65% of viewers felt that the coverage of the Paralympics had a positive impact on their perceptions of disabled people. 82% of viewers agreed disabled athletes were as talented as able-bodied athletes.

Covering the Paralympics fits into C4's brand identity and remit as:

Our purpose is to create change through entertainment. We do this by representing unheard voices, challenging with purpose and reinventing entertainment.

WHAT SETS SUPER.HUMAN APART? IN TERMS OF ITS APPROACH TO CODES AND CONVENTIONS OF CHARITY AND SOCIAL AWARENESS ADVERTISING?

All advertisements employ a recognisable repertoire of elements of the advertising form but will also have a set of conventions specific to their sub-genre. The aim of charity advertisements, and those **designed to raise awareness of issues and events**, is to have an immediate impact upon the audience to make them take notice; therefore, these advertisements need to be more memorable and hard-hitting. Some adverts rely on audiences feeling guilty.

The producers of this sub-genre of 'campaigning or social awareness' advertisements are very aware of **compassion fatigue** (can be caused by a long advertisement with multiple examples of suffering, or too many adverts in an acute time frame. Too much guilt can be counterproductive and make audiences not want to donate, due to the consistent invasive feelings of guilt and pity) and so will often aim to make advertisements that offer a different perspective on the issue or event, usually one that is more positive and upbeat.

The common conventions of charity/social awareness/behaviour change adverts are likely to include the following:

- Shocking, hard-hitting images
- Emotive non-diegetic sound e.g. music
- Use of a voice-over often with use of emotive language
- Personal narrative
- Emotive language
- Muted aesthetic/mise en scene
- Personal address and repeated use of personal pronouns
- Repetitive messages and motifs
- Narrated by recognisable actors/performers...

TASK:

DOES SUPER.HUMAN CHALLENGE OR REINFORCE CODES AND CONVENTIONS?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjIP9EFbcWY>

SIMILARITIES	REASONS	DIFFERENCES	REASONS

HOW DID YOU DO? COMPARE WITH POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES BELOW...

- The use of positive sound and imagery is evident in Super. Human. with the use of **audio codes**. The choice of the soundtrack of So You Want to be a Boxer from Bugsy Malone effectively communicates the struggles of the disabled athletes whilst giving the advertisement a positive feel.
- The more typical conventions, for example a voice-over and dramatic music, appear at the start of the advertisement, but rapidly change to the alarm and the realities of daily life.
- Sound effects underscore the music, emphasising the battle of training including grunts, groans and tape being applied.
- Advertisements have a limited amount of time to convey their message and so rely on **technical codes** and **editing** to do this rapidly.
- This advertisement uses **close-up shots** of expressions to engage the audience and to portray aspects of disability in a non-victim way, emphasising that this is part of their lives. For example, a range of shots are used to convey the strength and determination of the swimmer Ellie Simmonds, cutting between an **establishing shot** showing her alone in the pool, a close-up of her putting on her swimming goggles, a **low angle shot** creating power and an **extreme close-up** of her eyes connoting concentration.
- Slow motion is also used to show the cycling track crash combined with muting the sound for a more dramatic effect.
- Visual codes also communicate meanings. The iconography and settings are related to the athlete and the sport, for example Ellie Simmonds putting on her goggles in the pool, or training in the gym, but these settings are juxtaposed with domestic scenes of everyday life as a disabled person, suggesting the normality of their situation.
- Gestures communicate frustration, competition and celebration, visually highlighting the result of the hard work.
- The narrative follows the lives of the Paralympians and their battles through training. The sequence where the athlete is trying to sing 'Happy Birthday' to his daughter on a mobile phone whilst training on a bike reinforces the clash between the sport and the family and further establishes the athletes as real people.
- There are also some more stylised sequences constructed to convey meaning. The dream sequence reappears later in the advert and is edited with a Channel 4 news clip (cross-media promotion/synergy) announcing the postponement of the Games. The impact of this is shown as the athletes fall 'over the edge'.
- The advert also uses humour to convey information, for example, the image of the hamster on the wheel and the 'puke bucket' are recognisable visual signifiers of struggle.
- The animated sequences also insert aspects of the comic into what is a grueling regime.

Summary of Contexts

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABILITY:

[Disability stereotypes in the media | Aruma Disability services. Putting you first.](#) Note on the 5 stereotypes +

watch each video clip

notes:

1. The Villain

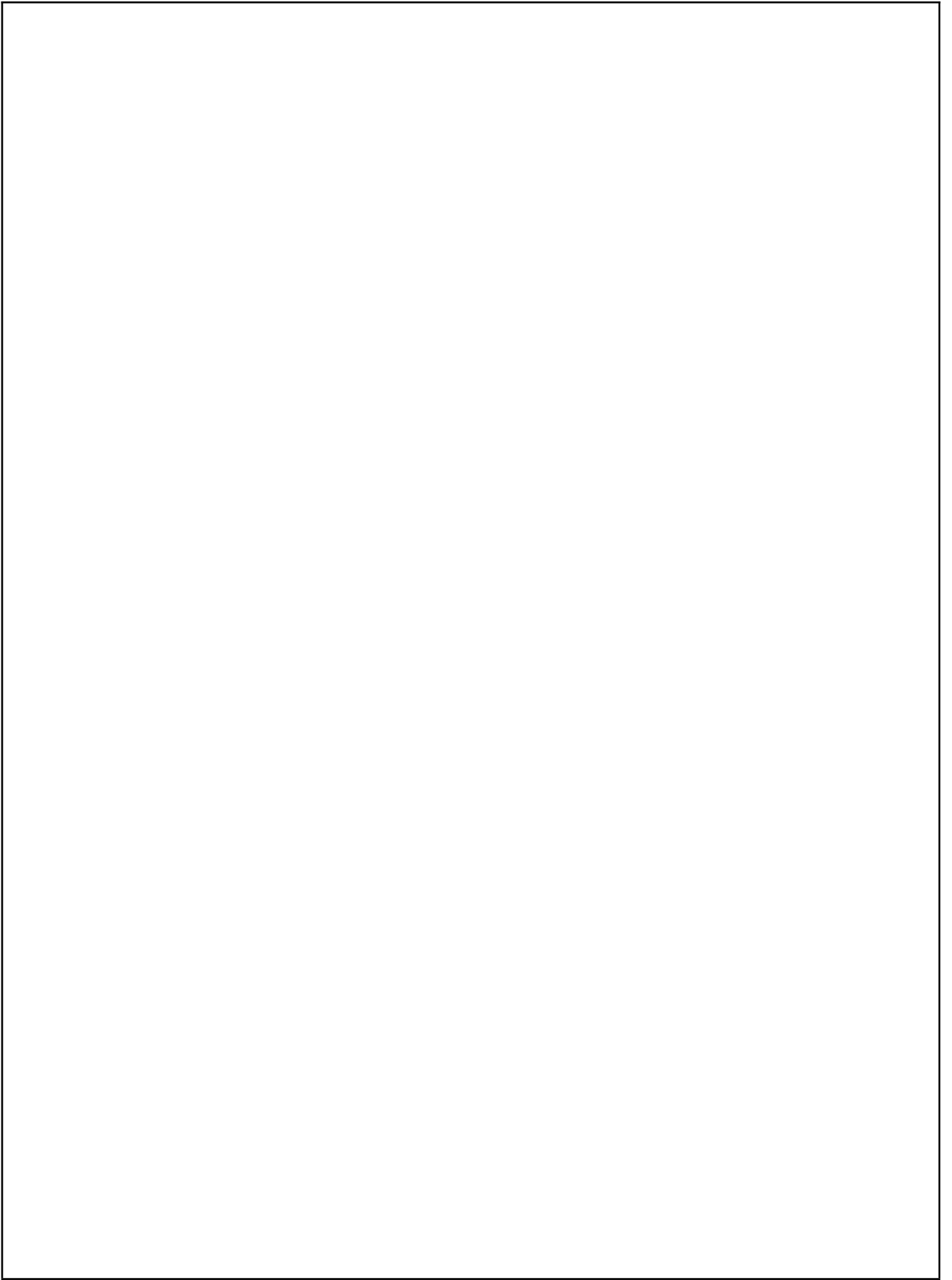
2. The Superhero

3. The Victim

4. The Butt of the Joke

5. The Eternally Innocent

[Disabled representation: Is TV finally starting to listen? | Royal Television Society \(rts.org.uk\)](https://www.rts.org.uk) 1 HOUR listen and make notes





Stuart Hall and 'Stereotyping':

...as a form of representation, reduces people to simple characteristics

...Stereotyping tends to occur where there are **inequalities of power**, as **subordinate** or **excluded** groups are constructed as different (especially through media language choices) or '**other, or absence**'.

+ Though a rather '**common-sensical**' concept it does explicitly highlight the issues of **power** and how it can be used by media makers to **marginalise** and offer **regressive re-presentations** which perpetuate character **tropes** to specific groups.

- Like the concept of **binary oppositions**, applying ideas of **stereotyping**, means that as audiences identify the obvious features of a representation, they may ignore the **complexity** of re-presentation that may actually be on offer to audiences in that media product.

Consider the following and apply Hall's concepts to the advert:

Who are 'stereotypically' targeted within conventional sports adverts: print and audio-visual? Why? (look up some real life examples – Nike, Adidas, The Tokyo Olympics on the BBC...)

CONSTRUCTIONS OF REPRESENTATIONS:

Choices have been made by the producers of the advertisement to create representations that challenge accepted ideas regarding disability and disabled athletes.

The advertisement actively avoids negative stereotypical representations of Paralympians as victims to be pitied, or heroes, 'superhumans', to be viewed in awe. Instead, the representations create a realistic, 'blood

and guts' feel to the advertisement. The representations cover both genders and give a different view of the world of disability to that of 'having something wrong with you'.

The narratives are centered around real people, but through re-presentation, a representation of reality is constructed focusing specifically on the challenges that the athletes face. The filming, editing and audio codes combine to construct a representation of this social group, raising awareness and creating positive representations of the Paralympians as athletes first, rather than disabled people 'doing their best'.

In constructing the representations as they have in Super. Human., the producers have aimed to avoid the stereotypes of disabled athletes as having to 'overcome' their disability to achieve success, instead celebrating them as high-performance athletes in their own right.

Are there any 'fixed and oversimplified image(s) or idea(s) of a particular type of person or thing' within the advert?

Would you say this advert follows or challenges Hall's theory? Because, But, So...

Encoding - the process by which a media text is constructed by its producers

Decoding – the process by which the audience reads, understands and interprets a media text

Selection – what has been included and what has been left out (and may identify the producer's ideology)
is constructed.

According to Hall, meanings are communicated through signs. This is very true of the advertising form where easily recognisable signs rapidly communicate meaning to an audience in a short space of time. For example, expressions of endurance and struggle are easily observable and understood.

This advertisement goes some way to address Hall's assertions that stereotyping occurs when there are inequalities of power, and that excluded groups, such as the disabled, are constructed as different. In the advertisement, the focus is on the athletes as ordinary sports men and women striving to achieve a goal. The athletes are three dimensional and distinct from each other; therefore, the advertisement avoids simplifying their representations.

Task: Find three examples from the text to support Hall's theory

APPLY YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF HALL'S THEORY OF REPRESENTATION LINKING TO STEREOTYPING/POWER.

Big Idea 1 + evidence:

Big idea 2 + evidence:

Big idea 3 + evidence:

Hegemony

What does this mean?

How can the idea of hegemony be applied to the Super. Human. advert?

“Role models serve as navigation points as individuals steer their own personal routes through life...”

- a. Whose theory of identity does this relate to and how might audiences use this advert as well as C4’s coverage of the Tokyo Paralympics to form aspects of their own identity?
- b. Why are the characters important in terms of constructing ‘identity’?

Initial Notes:

GAUNTLETT:

- Media provide us with ‘tools’ or resources that we use to **construct** our **identities**
- Media today offer us a more diverse range of **stars**, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.
 - + theory recognises the **pluralistic** and more **progressive** nature of media today in terms of the range and **complexity** of re-presentations on offer for audiences that they may choose to identify with today.
- In the context of a multi-media age, there are so many identities on offer to audiences, but it is still most likely that audiences’ for the **most popular media institutions** are by and large still being offered the most traditional versions of representation from which to build up their **schema** of people, groups and places.

APPROACHING THE ADVERT FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE.

Lisbet van Zoonen whose ideas include:

- The display of women's bodies as "objects to be looked at" being a core element of western patriarchal culture
- Women as submissive and passive. Construction focuses on an 'ideal' shape
- Seen within the domestic sphere as opposed to a working environment
- Gender is constructed through discourse (interaction), and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context

+ suggests that despite the advances in legislation put in place to support the advancement of women today, many of the ideas about women and their roles are embedded in the Media Language and codes and conventions of how media products are made and tell their stories to audiences.

- As the majority of media made today is commercial the theory ignores that the body: male and female has been commodified and hence both genders could be said to be sexualised and subordinated in equal measure to sell goods, products and narratives. However, it is still valid to explore the Media Language used in the re-presentation to explore the differences in how their representations are commodified.

Using the above information consider whether the Super. Human advert follows or subverts van Zoonen's theory? Why? Can you provide specific examples to support your observations?

For this task integrate **BECAUSE**, **BUT** and **So...** into your responses

Big Idea 1:

Big Idea 2:

REPRESENTATION: GENDER PERFORMATIVITY - Judith Butler

- Identity is 'performed' through the construction of what 'gender' is considered or expected to be.
- Gender Performativity is not a 'singular' act, but a repetition of what has gone before and a ritual. This concept that roles linked to gender, but could also be applied to disability, are, in part, socially constructed (through institutions such as the media, school and family) rather than innate.
- Identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (it is manufactured through a set of acts and rituals)
- Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual.
+ recognises the importance of the wider influences of institutions such as the media, in presenting and telling audiences what is expected of a man, woman, girl, boy, non-binary...
- Appears not to consider that some aspects of re-presentation and identity may be innate and enhanced further through performativity.

How might Butler's theory be applied to the Super. Human. advert?

WE Notes:

REPRESENTATION: Paull Gilroy's Ethnicity/ Post-Colonial theory.

- The notion that control is still maintained by dominant cultures – more often Western and white through the implementation of stereotypical images that often subordinate/ subjugate minorities.
- Colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity.
- In the postcolonial era **civilisationism** constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness and difference.

+ appreciates the ideological impact that colonialism can have both on the way the coloniser and the colonised may approach the re-presentation on offer within media products.

- Digital age means that regressive representations presented to audiences can quickly be challenged and addressed by media producers via the direct action of audiences using social media.

Consider specific representations from the advert and assess the relevance of applying Gilroy's theory to the Super. Human advert.

Remember to include **BECAUSE, BUT** and **SO...**