

Myths, Global Symbols and SOFT POWER Semiotics



**Roland Barthes and Structuralism as a Tool
for Understanding Global Culture**

CULTURE-FASHION/STYLE → POWER!

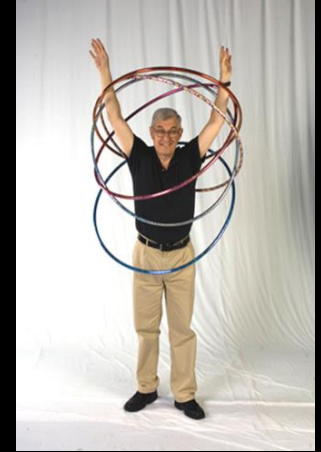
Louis XVI 1774-1793 – Paris-Versailles



Roland Barthes (1950s)



Joel Best (Current)



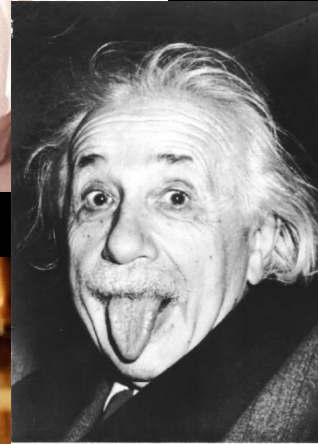
Roland Barthes → Mythologies (1915-1980)

- **French** literary theorist, philosopher, linguist, critic, and semiotician. Post-WWII Paris France.
- **1950s:** Series of essays in the magazine *Les Lettres Nouvelles* → Barthes began decoding myths, icons, trends of popular mainstream culture.
 - Influenced by linguists: Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss (creators of the disciplines of Linguistics and Semiotics)
 - Influenced by the vitalité and **MASSIVE** growth of French/Parisien/European **CAFE CULTURE** and **post-WW2 (1945) FASHION.**
 - **“POP-CULTURE”** becomes a more serious literary and academic concept worthy of sociological and psychological study (later business/marketing...politics, economics, etc.)
- **Book: Mythologies (1957) published** a full collection of his essays on popular iconic culture. Translated worldwide.
 - Barthes examines “the tendency of contemporary social value systems to **fabricate/create modern myths** about itself and its people and the important prioritized cultural values.
 - Barthes looks at the **process of myth creation** → and the people or organizations that are involved.
 - **VT connection:** 1957 Barthes visits the U.S. and teaches at Middlebury College.



Roland Barthes: 2nd-→3rd Level Semiotics

- **2nd Level Semiotics** → Personal Associations + Media Technical Strategies (photo, color, graphic, perceptual, etc.) to invoke a set of responses in you.
- **3rd Level Semiotics** → Culture-wide and Cross-Cultural Associations even on an international/GLOBAL SCALE
- The people, objects, organizations, designs who are **ELEVATED** to the level of mainstream symbolic **ICONS** or **MYTHIC** figures through media and cultural repetition.
- Cultural “**GODS**” – celebrity and “well-known-ness”
- Roland Barthes takes a stab at this (as do others) using Café Society in Paris + American/Hollywood Culture
- Semiotic **ICON/Myth** analysis is a key foundation of **cultural studies** and **STRUCTURALISM** (sociology, anthro, social sciences).
 - **Structuralism**. Every social system has a structured order of signs/symbols which we use to derive individual identities, meaning and relationships.
 - Cultural Niches or sub-cultures | **MARKETING** | **FASHION**
 - **Agenda Setting POWER**. Whoever controls “meaning-making” structures or “norming” processes also tends to have true **POWER** in our society. **SYMBOLIC**→**economic**→**political POWER**



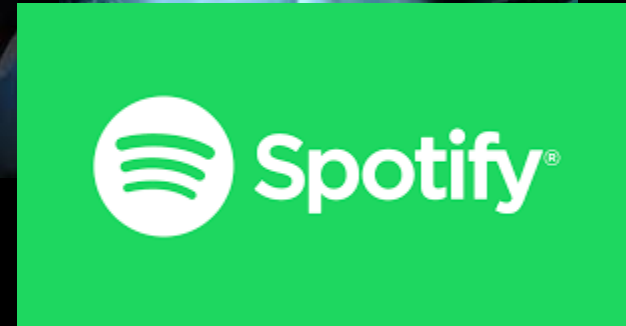
The RISE of SOFT POWER: Global Currency

1950s-60s: The Culture Industries ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

- ▶ HARD POWER = Military, Police, Political-Economic FORCE, (Laws, Tariffs/Taxes, Courts, Governments, etc.)
- ▶ SOFT POWER = MEDIA products and services. Education.Tourism “Culture.” Areas associated with ENTERTAINMENT and Leisure.

1. RAPID RISE of Mass Media and The “CULTURE INDUSTRIES” →

- ▶ Music
- ▶ Fashion
- ▶ Celebrity
- ▶ Fads/Trends
- ▶ Popular books/fiction
- ▶ Magazines
- ▶ Movies
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Video Games
- ▶ Food



2. The “ENGINEERING” of people, behaviors, markets & POPULAR CULTURE

3. MEDIA STUDIES as an INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINE (both the Technologies AND Techniques) Anthro, Soc, Bus, Econ, Psych, Health, Environment

4. MEDIA RESEARCH: AUDIENCE Behaviors, Trends, Enculturation, Education, and Identities (Mass and individuals)

5. CORPORATE FANDOMS – SPORTS, MUSIC, MOVIES, VIDEO GAMES, LEISURE



2025 Celebrity POWER (Social, Political, Economic, "Spiritual")



HIGHEST GROSSING FILMS OF 2025

RANK	TITLE	GROSS
1.	THE MOVIE	\$627.9M
2.	SUPERMAN	\$615.7M
3.	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE: THE FINAL RECKONING	\$598.7M
4.	REMNANT SLAYER: INFINITY CASTLE	\$563.7M
5.	THE FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST STEPS	\$521.7M



2025 TV GUIDE



TOP 12 MOST SEARCHED CELEBRITIES IN 2025

LAST GAGA	TAYLOR SWIFT	DRAKE	SAG BUMBY
24 MILLION	15 MILLION	14 MILLION	12 MILLION
JUSTIN BIEBER	SHAYNA	BELLE ELISH	CRISTIANO RONALDO
11 MILLION	10 MILLION	10 MILLION	8.3 MILLION
BIANCA	ARIANA GRANDE	SELENA GOMEZ	KANYE WEST
8.1 MILLION	8 MILLION	6.9 MILLION	6.8 MILLION



Political & Economic Power: Can you name these people?

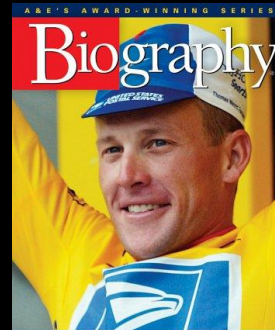


Global Transnational Corporate Logos

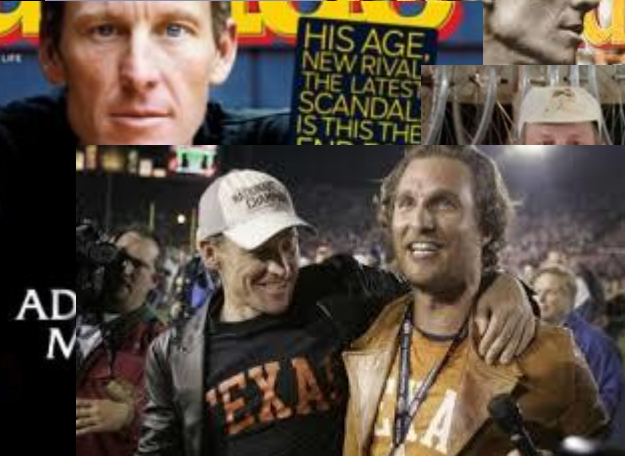


Manufacturing/Engineering Iconic Figures

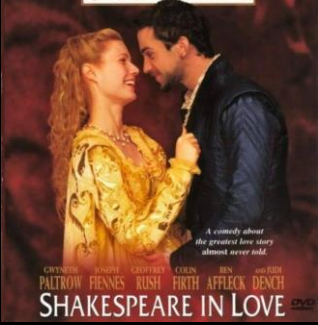
- The MEDIA engineering of Lance Armstrong
- Media scaffolding
- Media mgt.



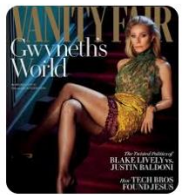
Lance Armstrong
Racing for His Life



Lance Armstrong
7-Time Tour de France
Champion



CULTURE INDUSTRIES Manufacturing/Engineering



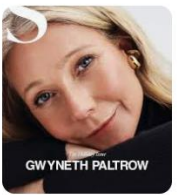
Celebrity magazines Gwyneth Paltrow ...



Interview Magazine Life Lessons from Gwy...



Glamour Gwyneth Paltrow Get...



Amazon.com Goop Founder Gwynet...



W Magazine W's September Relea...



Amazon.com Women's Health Gwyneth Paltrow Cov...



Celebrity magazines STYLE Magazine 24th ...



eBay - In stock SHAPE MAGAZINE----



Harper's BAZAAR Gwyneth Paltrow Get...



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People.com Gwyneth Paltrow on ...



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- 90's gwyneth paltrow
- gwyneth paltrow 2024 pics
- gwyneth paltrow photoshoots



Etsy - In stock March 2000 Fashion...



magazinecult VOGUE Magazine U...



VF Vanity Fair Gwyneth Paltrow G...



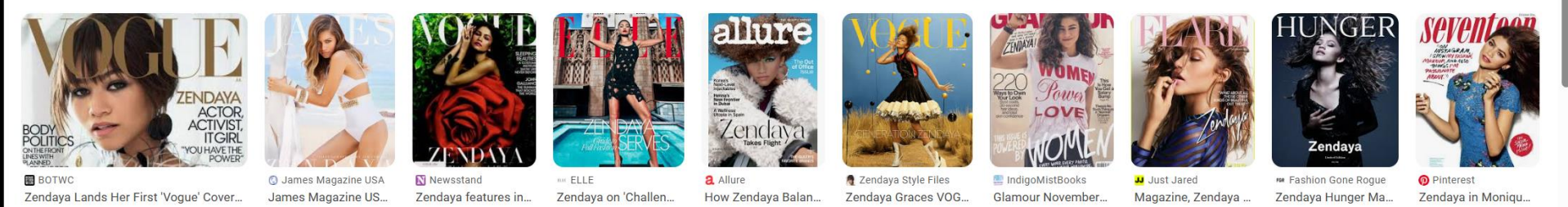
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CULTURE INDUSTRIES Manufacturing/Engineering



BeautifulBallad Zendaya Teams With Artist Simone Leigh ...
Fashion Gone Rogue Zendaya | Marie Claire U...
Related searches
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CULTURE INDUSTRIES Manufacturing/Engineering



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Celebrity magazines
ADELE - HOLLYWOOD...



Celebrity magazines
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British Vogue
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Adele Gets Candid ...



WWD
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The Hollywood Reporter
Adele is on the March 20...



Mercari
Magazine November 2...

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#E Adele @Adele is ...

VF Vanity Fair
Cover Story: Adele, Queen of Heart...

Interview Magazine
The Many Ages of ...

Idnfashion
Adele covers US Vogue...

News.com.au
Adele's Vogue cover: Singer stuns i...



The Guardian
Vogue cover marks a good year for Ade...

Artbamb's Blog - W...
Elle US May 2011 S...

People.com
Adele Baby: Thrilled...

Vulture
Cover of Cosmopolitan Magazine ...

Etsy
Adele Rolling Stone Mag...

Vogue
Adele on Her New A...

Poshmark
Adele Vogue Magazine |...

GMA Network
Adele stuns in Vogue magazine covers ...



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- adele vogue 2012
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vuitino
Adele Rolling Stone M...

ELLE
The Glorious Age of Adele

Pinterest
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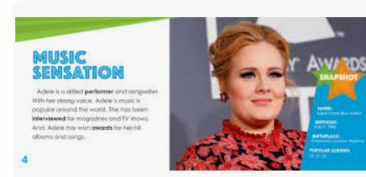
Amazon.com
Rolling Stone Maga...

GMA Network
Adele reemerges as cover star ...

Instagram
adele #officialadele...

Adele Wiki - Fandom
i-D (magazine) | Ad...

Let's Start Learning ...
My Amazing Magaz...

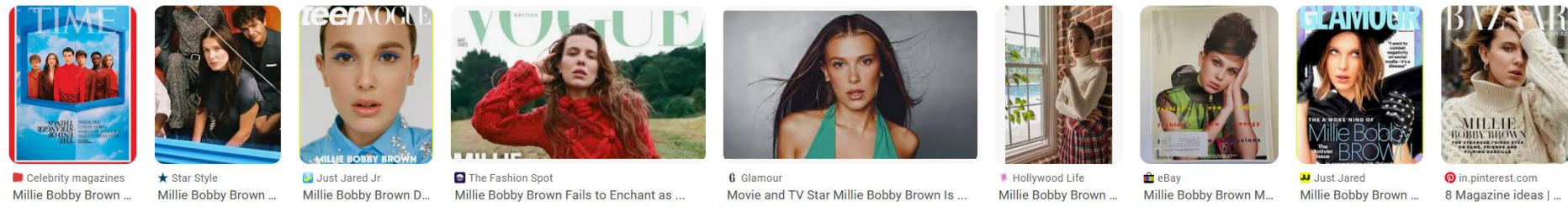
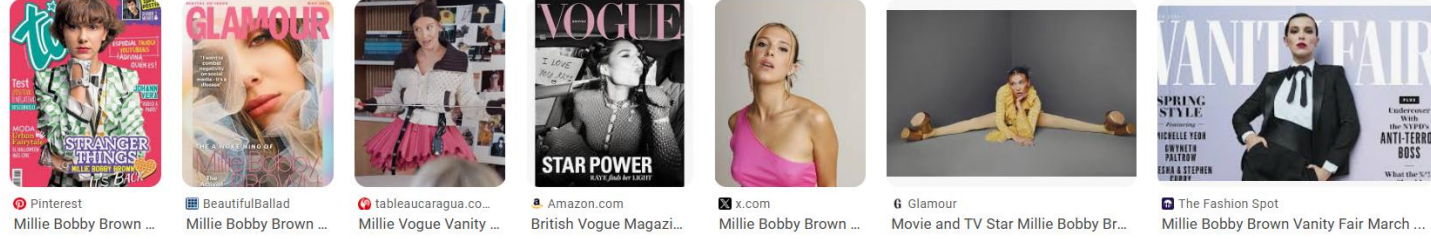


CULTURE INDUSTRIES Manufacturing/Engineering



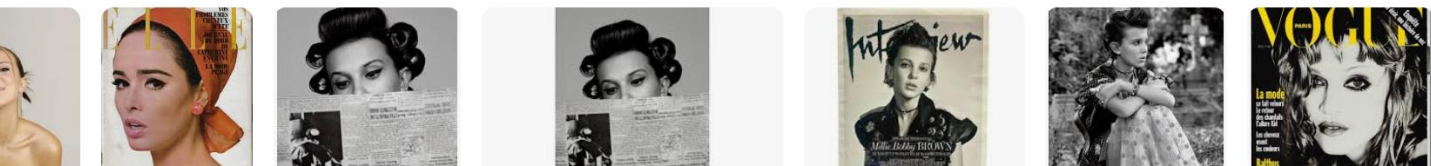
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- millie bobby brown photoshoot
- millie bobby brown glamour magazine photoshoot
- millie bobby brown magazine cover



Related searches

- millie bobby brown glamour magazine
- millie bobby brown wedding



Jacques Ellul (1912-1994)



Background:

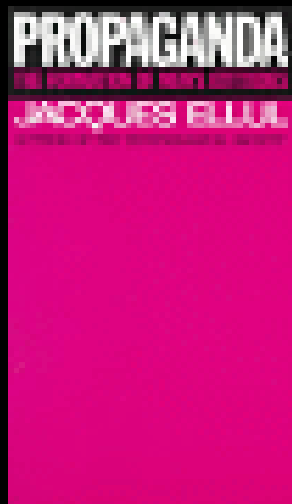
Bordeaux France (Serbian born)

Advanced Degrees in:

1. Law,
2. Philosophy and
3. Theology

Became part of the French underground Resistance Movement during WWII

Books: (wrote 43 books during his lifetime)



Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes
The Technological Society (1954)
Political Illusion