

Media Psychology



METAMORPHOSIS

Subliminal Messages and The Human Consciousness

Metamorphosis
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Dream Analysis and Archetypes

Psychology in The Media



The Hero's Journey

Metamorphosis— a biological transformation, usually associated with the maturing of a caterpillar into a butterfly. The name of the magazine comes from the concept of the “monomyth.”

The term was coined by Joseph Campbell, in relation to the hero archetype defined by Carl Jung. The “monomyth,” or hero's journey consists of 17 sub-stages, but there are three main stages.

The first stage that we are going to define is the separation – when the hero is separated from the world as they know it. Think of the scene where Hagrid tells Harry Potter the famous line, “Harry – yer a wizard.” And Hagrid introduces 11-year-old Harry to the magical world where he learns that he is famous for surviving when he was a baby and Voldemort killed the parents of “The Boy Who Lived.”

The second main stage is the initiation. This is when the hero

learns to adapt to and navigate in their “new world.” In Harry Potter's case, he does his best trying to take in as much of the wizarding Britain world as he can when Hagrid takes him to Diagon Alley and later, when he meets Ronald Weasley on the Hogwarts Express and asks him about what it is like to grow up in the wizarding world.

The third main stage of the hero's journey is the return, but before the return there is the hero's death – which is usually metaphorical but can be literal. The “hero's death” is when the hero sacrifices themselves in some way causing them to undergo a change.

This change usually occurs after the climax of the hero's journey and is the inspiration behind the name of this magazine, which is “Metamorphosis.”

Sincerely, 
Aya El-kadri

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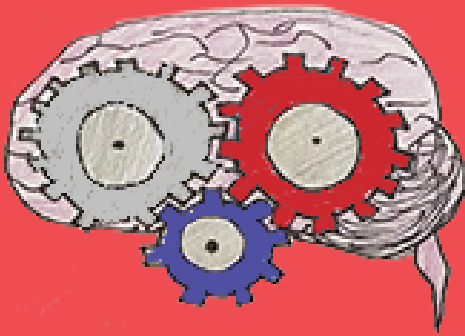
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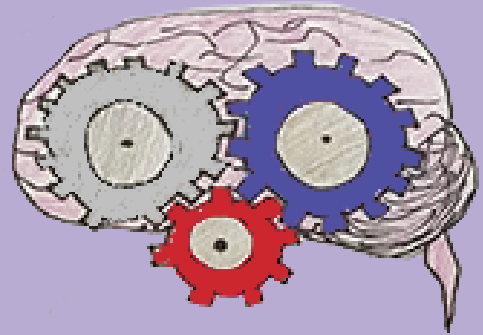
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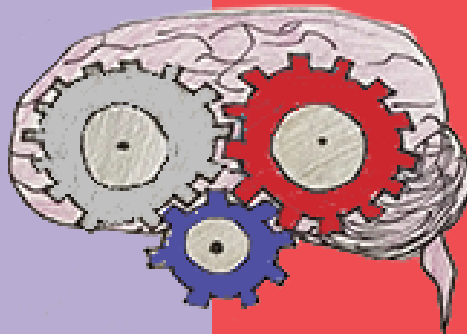
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Subliminal Messages and The Human Consciousness



By Aya El-kadri

You may or may not have already noticed that the moment you picked up this issue of Metamorphosis magazine you were exposed to a multitude of subliminal messages.

From the red letters of the logo on the front page that spell out “me A,” to the inner page where “Aya El-kadri” is written several times in bright red.

All this and more in an effort to embed the idea that I want an “A” for “me” on this assignment into your – as the reader– mind.

The use of the colour red is a semiotic component based on the fact that the colour red tends to be associated with the psychological ability to attract your attention.

It is not always as obvious when advertisers use subliminal messaging techniques to influence audiences to exhibit specific behaviours.

According to Wilson Bryan

Key, it is normal for humans to not be able to accept the possibility that we can be easily influenced by subliminal advertising.

We believe that as rational human beings we are able to see through any form of deception that the media can throw at us.

The way that subliminal advertising typically works is that it draws upon our innate desires that are hidden deep inside our psyche.

Sigmund Freud, father of behavioural psychology, defines psyche as the combination of our conscious and unconscious mind which makes up the human consciousness as a whole.

Our conscious mind is the part of our mind that we are aware of – one example is that inner voice in your head that you are currently ‘hearing’ while reading this magazine.

Freud described our psyche using an iceberg metaphor. The unconscious or subconscious mind is split

into two parts.

The first part is the preconscious, our preconscious mind is what facilitates the framing of our thought processes.

We are not completely aware of our preconscious, although “thinking about thinking,” also known as metacognition – is possible.

An example of a preconscious thought is when you might find yourself entertaining thoughts about a group of people that can be seen as innately racist.

You are not overtly aware of why you associate that particular group of people in that light, but it is possible to deduce that these preconceived stereotypes might be influenced by the group’s portrayal in the media, what biases you were taught about them growing up, or even an experience that you have had with an individual from the group in question.

The second part of the unconscious mind is called the Id, which is our deeper

subconscious which is where we repress our inner trauma.

The psyche can also be divided into two components. These components are the superego and the ego.

The superego is basically our conscience, the part of our mind that determines our sense of right or wrong. I like to think of it like those cartoons where there is a devil on one side of the character's shoulder encouraging them to cause mischief, and an angel on their other shoulder telling them that they should do the right thing.

The ego is the part of the subconscious that makes you – for lack of better terms – you.

Repression is when the human mind buries a memory or thought – within the deepest part of your subconscious or Id – that the conscious mind is unable to cope with and thus suppresses.

Another type of repression happens when Freud's reality and pleasure principles clash.

The reality principle can be summarized as what society as a whole deems as right or wrong. One such example is the concept of a taboo.

The pleasure principle is the more free part our inner conscience, essentially it is the part of us that lacks any and all inhibitions. It is the part of your mind that says, "I want to eat a whole tub of ice cream, while watching anime, and forget about all the work I need to do."

The reason that we do not do that is the reality principle. It would be wrong for me to shirk my responsibilities and embark on an anime and ice cream binge, because society would not approve of such destructive behaviour. Also, consuming that much ice cream is the ultimate recipe for a major stomachache.

Preying on the pleasure principle of the collective unconscious is how advertisers are able to create subliminal messages and embeds in print advertising.

The collective unconscious, as portrayed by Carl Jung, is based on the concept of shared meanings behind particular constructs – such as universal symbols – that large groups of people can all agree on.

By portraying the product or service in a way that draws upon what the consumer wants, the next time the consumer's subconscious mind encounters that particular product it will associate it with that 'guilty' pleasure, and in turn, make the consumer want to purchase the product or service.

This idea can also be equated to a form of "Pavlovian response." Ivan Pavlov was a physiologist who is one of the key scientists involved in the behaviourist theory known as classical conditioning.

Pavlov had trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell by forming an association between food and the ringing

of a bell.

Other similarly notable advances in behaviourism are B.F. Skinner's "Skinner box," and John B. Watson's "Little Albert experiment."

What all three experiments managed to prove was that it is possible to influence behaviour by changing what that particular "conditioning" is associated with.

Without our conscious mind's awareness, we take in the advertisements' subliminal embeds and messages – which draw upon our collective pleasure principles – and causes our brains to release dopamine.

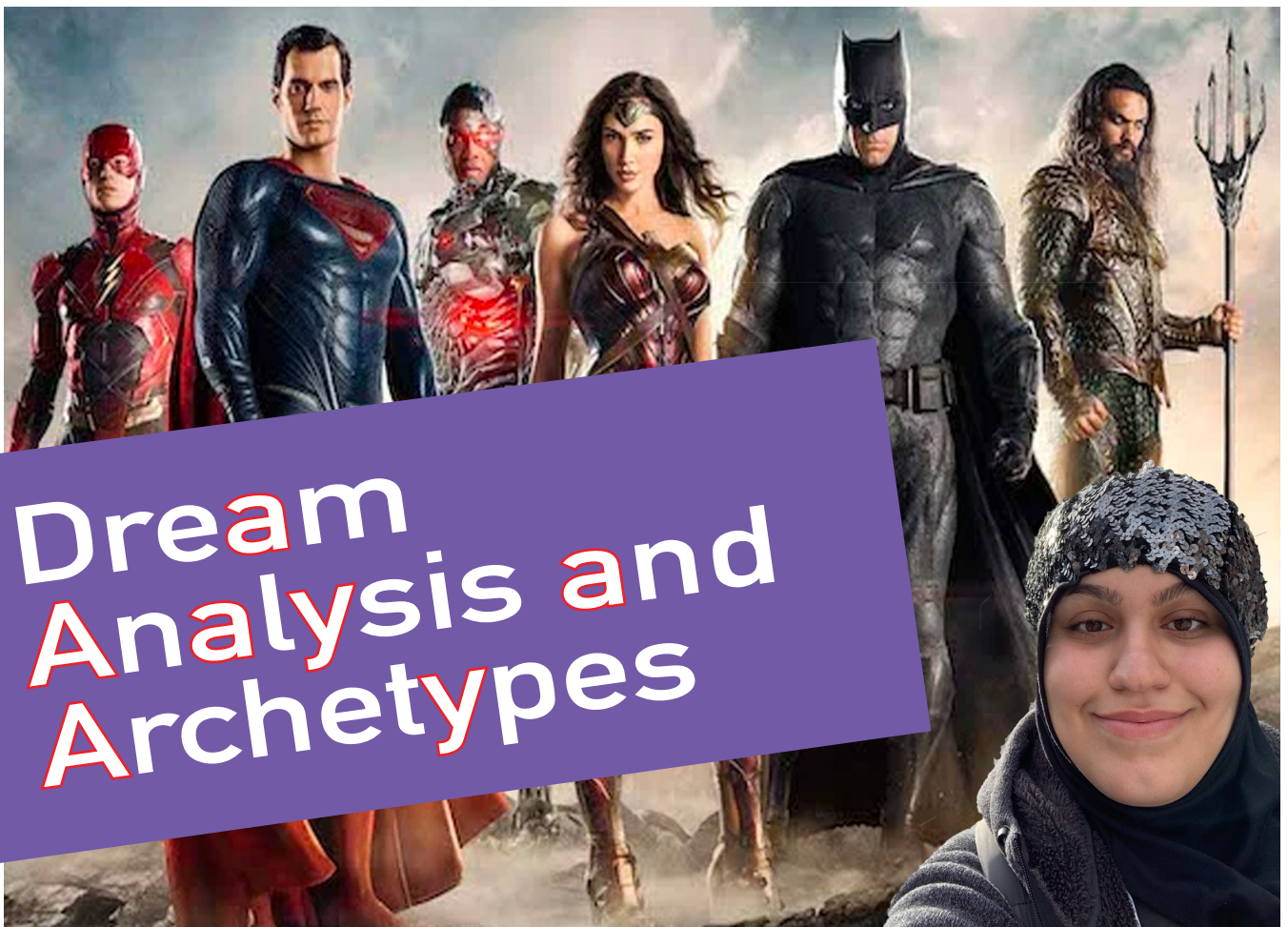
Changing what we associate with the subject of the advertisement ensures that the next time we encounter the subject of the advertisement we will receive that same release of dopamine, which will make us want to purchase the product or service without even realizing why.

We encounter these embeds and subliminal advertisements not only in advertising, but in everyday life. Both intentional and not.

Whether it is a movie at the cinema, a book where characters are eating a particular brand of food, or even in the logo of a famous tortilla chip brand.

Next time you find yourself with a sudden urge to purchase a product ask yourself if you have seen an advertisement for it recently.





The Justice League takes a selfie with **Aya El-kadri** (right). The members of the Justice League that are present (from left to right) are the Flash, Superman, Cyborg, Wonder Woman, Batman, and Aquaman

By Aya El-kadri

Have you ever dreamt that you were flying? Or had that dream that no matter how hard you tried you were unable to move or even speak?

You could be having a normal dream, but then suddenly find yourself facing something weird or unusual.

Psychoanalysis is the idea that dreams can be interpreted and the meanings and symbolism behind these dreams can explain the thoughts and feelings hidden within the depths of your sub-

conscious.

Experts believe that certain objects, symbols, or signs that are depicted in dreams can represent something happening in the dreamer's life, whether physically, spiritually, or psychologically.

Dream interpretation is not considered an exact science, but a lot of research on dream interpretation has been conducted over the years.

Dream interpretation is frequently influenced and affected by religious, psychic, or even spiritual theories.

That which is manifested within dreams usually belies what is going on in the deeper recesses of the human unconscious.

Sigmund Freud – the founder of psychoanalysis and modern psychology – said that dreams reflect the wishes within the “unconscious” of the dreamer.

Freud speculated that with “symbolization” — objects in a dream can have a latent meaning or represent a desire of the “unconscious self.”

Freud explained how dreams can be a portrayal of

the subconscious feelings the dreamer is experiencing.

Freud, like with many of his psychological theories, tends to interpret dreams as being related to the dreamer's sexual wants, urges and desires.

Freud – believed that the meaning of the dream was heavily dependent on the individual.

On the other hand, Carl Jung – the father of analytical or Jungian psychology and a student of

Freud – theorized that the unconscious self was derived of “archetypes.”

In Jungian psychology, “archetypes” are the symbols and images embeded within the “collective unconscious,” which Jung categorized as representing concepts of the “collective unconscious.”

Jung believed that the psyche consisted of different components made up of a combination of consciousness, individual and collective unconsciousness which when combined is called the “integrated self.”

Jung viewed the signs and symbols prevalent in dreams as more of a gateway to unlock the collective unconscious of the masses.

Jung said, “the contents of the collective unconscious are archetypes.” The collective unconscious is based on the existence of meanings behind universal symbols that large groups of people can all agree on.

Jung describes archetypes



Aya El-kadri The Photographer and The Lightning Thief.

as, “primordial images that reflect patterns that are common to us all, and which have existed universally since the dawn of time.”

Jung identified 16 archetypes, although screen theorist and literature analysts have come up with additional archetypes since then.

The four major archetypes that Jung defined are: “the self,” “the shadow,” “the persona,” and “the anima (or animus).”

The rest of the archetypes identified by Jung includes “the hero,” “the rebel,” “the wizard,” “the jester,” “the lover,” “the caregiver,” the normal guy or girl, “the sage,” “the ruler,” “the innocent,” “the creator,” and “the explorer.”

The “self” is the several conscious and unconscious aspects that makes up the essence of the main character.

Archetypal manifestations often crop up in myths and media, we typically see these

types of symbols as a biproduct of “the self” archetype.

The “shadow” archetype usually contains the darkest parts of the psyche. The “shadow” in media is typically depicted as the antagonist or character foil of the protagonist.

Some examples of shadows in media are like how Batman has the Gotham’s Prince of Crime – the Joker, Superman has his archenemy – billionaire and supervillain – Lex Luther, Sherlock Holmes has his adversary – the consulting criminal mastermind – Jim Moriarty, The Avenger’s faced Thanos, and there are also several examples of shadows that can be found playing main villain or monster in any Disney movie.

The “persona” is the “mask” we don to present ourselves to the world. It basically ties into the concept of self-penetration theory.

The masks that we wear

are interchangeable, and the “you” that you show the world is not necessarily the same “you” that is present when you are around your friends and family.

The persona archetype is like the differences between the Gotham billionaire, Bruce Wayne, and his cowl-clad alter ego Batman, as well as his fellow Justice Leaguer, Superman and his secret identity as the –glasses-wearing Daily Planet reporter known as Clark Kent.

The final main archetype is the anima or it’s masculine synonym which is called the animus. The anima or animus is kind of like an avatar.

Typically represented by the female love interest of the main lead – like Clark Kent’s Lois Lane, the anima is meant to be the psyche’s “true self” characteristics personified.

An example of a male “animus” is Wonder Woman’s romantic interest, Steve Trevor.

The most well-known archetype is “the hero,” also called the main character or the protagonist.

The “hero” is also the part of the psyche that feels a need to defeat or vanquish their “shadow,” and to master or conquer their anima or animus.

The “hero” embarks on a journey, while struggling with temptations from their shadow at every turn.

The “hero’s journey” or “monomyth” is comprised of 17 subcategories with three

main parts as described by Joseph Campbell.

The three main stages of the hero’s journey are the separation, initiation, and the return.

When describing Campbell’s monomyth and his theory on “the hero” modern mythology scholars Eva Thury and Margaret Devinney said, “we are all heroes struggling to accomplish our adventure. As human beings, we engage in a series of struggles to develop as individuals and to find our place in society. Beyond that, we long for wisdom: we want to understand the universe and the significance of our role in it.”

According to Campbell, first the “hero” (or heroine) is separated from the ordinary world as they know it. The hero then receives “the call,” which the hero ignores at first.

It is kind of like the first book of the Percy Jackson series – Percy Jackson and Lightning Thief, where the main character, Percy Jackson, suddenly finds himself in a world where math teachers turn into real monsters and his best friend is a “half-donkey” (“I’m half goat!”) satyr. Mix in a rampaging minotaur and his mom’s disappearance via his uncle Hades, who is another Greek God as is his father, Poseidon, and Percy had an extremely eventful initiation into the world of the Olympians.

The hero meets their “mentor” who offers them advice after “crossing the threshold”

into this new unfamiliar world.

It is like how Harry Potter had Dumbledore as a “mentor” in the later books in the popular series. In the case of Percy Jackson, his former Latin teacher, Mr. Bruner – also known as Chiron the centaur – is his mentor albeit for a brief amount of time.

The hero faces a series of tests and ordeals throughout their quest. The hero will often encounter a powerful person – usually a woman – or a “goddess” who tries to tempt the hero away from the objective of their quest either by promising power or some other fulfillment of desire.

For Percy Jackson – in all three of Rick Riordan’s related book series – this encounter with a “God” or “goddess” is often literal considering the fact that the series takes place in a world where the Greek and Roman “gods” or “goddesses” have half-blooded children who need to fight monsters and other supernatural threats in order to survive to half-human adulthood.

The hero’s journey will have various other steps. In the end the hero will undergo an irreversible change by sacrificing themselves and experiencing a “resurrection” from which they return as a “master” of both worlds and the cycle will continue again and again until writing sequels gets boring.

Kind of similar to how at the end of each book Percy Jackson always ends up going

Psychology in The Media

home to his mom's apartment in New York after all of his adventures and struggles to balance his "normal" life in the mortal world and his – not at all – normal life as a half-blood until the beginning of the next book.

Jung believed that archetypes were essential to comprehending the way the world works.

According to Jung's student, Erich Neumann, archetypes can be compared to the functions of the body's physical organs.

Neumann said, "The archetypal structural elements of the psyche are psychic organs upon whose functioning the well-being of the individual depends, and whose injury has disastrous consequences."

Basically, although we are not always consciously aware of it the archetypes, like our internal organs, are constantly working together in harmony within our psyche throughout our daily functions for the rest our lives.

Archetypes are not discernible by or conscious senses, but instead can be viewed through the resultant manifestations produced in consciousness via symbols and imagery.

Archetypes can be found all around us. In our dreams, in books, in tv shows, in movies, within the people around us, and even within the depths of our own minds.

By Aya El-kadri

How many times have you watched a movie where an orphan boy or girl is suddenly and unwittingly thrust into a new world not of their own volition?

Later that same main character encounters a wise old man (or woman) who encourages them to go out there and find their destiny, but the main character is reluctant.

That right there is a prime example of how the archetypes of Carl Jung –analytical and Jungian psychologist – has been applied throughout the history of popular media.

It is a common

plot trope that can be found in most of the more popular movies, tv shows and books.

You have probably heard of the terms "introverted" and "extroverted," but did you realize that these words never existed until Jung devised the concepts and since then it has spread across multiple media channels to the point where we now use these terms to identify ourselves.

There are so many different psychological theories and concepts that has circulated throughout the ages influencing different aspects of both media and culture.

Media psycholo-



gy is the study of mass media which explores psychological study in fields other than psychology.

We have all had those moments where we are watching a movie or tv show and we feel a sense of attachment or resentment towards a random character.

One possible reason for this stems from the depths of our subconscious or unconscious self.

Our unconscious self is derived from our concept of “archetypes.” Archetypes are the symbols and images that are embedded within the “collective unconscious.”

Jung believed that the psyche consisted of different components made up of a combination of consciousness, individual unconsciousness and collective unconsciousness which when combined is called the “integrated self.”

The archetype that may or may not be responsible for the way that one feels towards a character is called the anima or animus.

The anima or its male counterpart, the animus is the subconscious’s avatar. The more we feel like we can relate to the character, the stronger the connection there is as a physical manifestation of the anima.

The anima is meant to be the psyche’s “true self” characteristics personified.

In a way, the character

that our subconscious can relate or connect with is our representative. We are sort of “living” vicariously through the characters accomplishments and achievements.

It is not just in film and television – music and other forms of art are more powerful and influential if the listener can sense the emotions that the artist or musician is projecting and are able to emulate those emotions.

Another archetype that can affect how we feel about a fictional (or even a non-fictional) character is the “shadow.”

The shadow contains the darker parts of a person’s psyche. Basically, it is the darkness within us that we would rather not acknowledge.

Naturally, when we perceive some of these lesser qualities that reflect our not so positive characteristics, we tend to dislike its representative considering it embodies the negative qualities that we try to forget that we have.

British film theorist, Laura Mulvey, is credited for her contribution of “screen theory” – or “psychoanalytic feminist film criticism.”

Mulvey took a more feminist approach to the psychoanalytic theories of behavioural psychologist Sigmund Freud.

Technically, according to

Mulvey, we can all consider ourselves as being a little bit narcissistic because to an extent we identify or “recognize” the main character in a movie as an ideal or perfect version of ourselves and of who we want to become.

When a person watches a movie, they are constantly reaffirming their own identity and beliefs – typically in relation to their gender – throughout the film.

Therefore, this is why the media we consume and the archetypical correlations that our subconsciousness draws upon heavily impacts both our individual and collective perception of the real world and how we interact within the environment in which we live.

Media is an umbrella term that accounts for any source of entertainment or any channel that facilitates an exchange of information. That includes the internet, newspapers, television, and radio – even this magazine is considered a form of media.

We are molded by our personal and collective experiences, and this includes any third-party experiences we encounter through media consumption.

Even if our conscious mind is aware that the way the medium portrays things might not be true, and no matter how many times we recall the fact that what we

are seeing is not necessarily real.

The problem is that even if we dismiss the information, we just end up repressing the knowledge and not actually discounting it entirely.

The fact that it is buried within our subconscious means that our unconscious mind has no choice but to adjust to the messages it constantly receives and adapt this new idea of “normal” to fit into our updated mental construction of reality.

We are not aware of the fact that our way of thinking has shifted, but the aspect of the matter is that the world we live in has an abundance of media all of which contain a form of message intended to inform, promote, educate, or entertain its audiences.

Even the way the media chooses to portray specific issues affects the way that we respond to that issue.

For example, the way the media talks about mental health have been the cause of a wide range of stigma and stereotyping. This leads to an increase in the spread of misinformation.

Media consumption is also a factor in the development of our concept of beauty and the concept of the audience’s identity that it is meant to represent.

Mulvey described it as a form of objectification of women through what she called “the male gaze.”

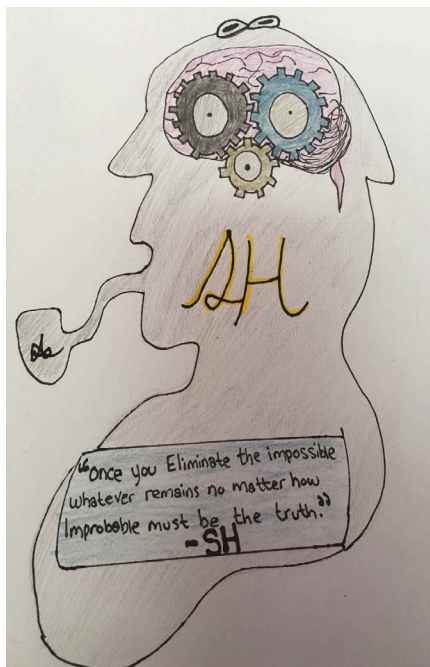
Mulvey argued that “the male gaze” could be considered “voyeurism” or “scopophilia,” because the presence of the “beautiful actress” in the movie is meant to attract the “gaze”

of the male audience.

It is quite similar to the subliminal communication embeds and messaging theorized in works by Wilson Bryan Key and Vance Packard.

Media can and has influenced us not only in the development of our identities and sense of “self,” but it also impacts what we think we want or need, what we buy, the way we think or approach certain things, the labels and symbols and its associations within our collective unconscious, and several other aspects of our psyche.

From social media to popular culture – we are being constantly bombarded by these different – yet similar – perspectives. We live in an age where media is prevalent throughout multiple facets of life.



In a way, all of the photographs used in this issue of *Metamorphosis* magazine can be considered a form of active audiences in media – like a form of fanart.

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