EPISODE 2

Production culture(s) and industry studies

What are the Media Industries?

Symbolic works – texts that generate and circulate meaning

Creative inputs – the generation of new ideas, concepts, and texts

Public goods – can be consumed without reducing availability

Experience goods – characteristics difficult to observe in advance

High risk; unpredictability; artificial scarcity; managed creativity

The Media Industries Today

A crowded, fragmented market:
A huge variety of screens, platforms, and channels offering near-incomprehensible amounts of content: a focus on attracting differentiated audiences.

Horizontal and vertical integration:
Massive conglomerates own businesses in multiple industry sectors and up and down the supply chain
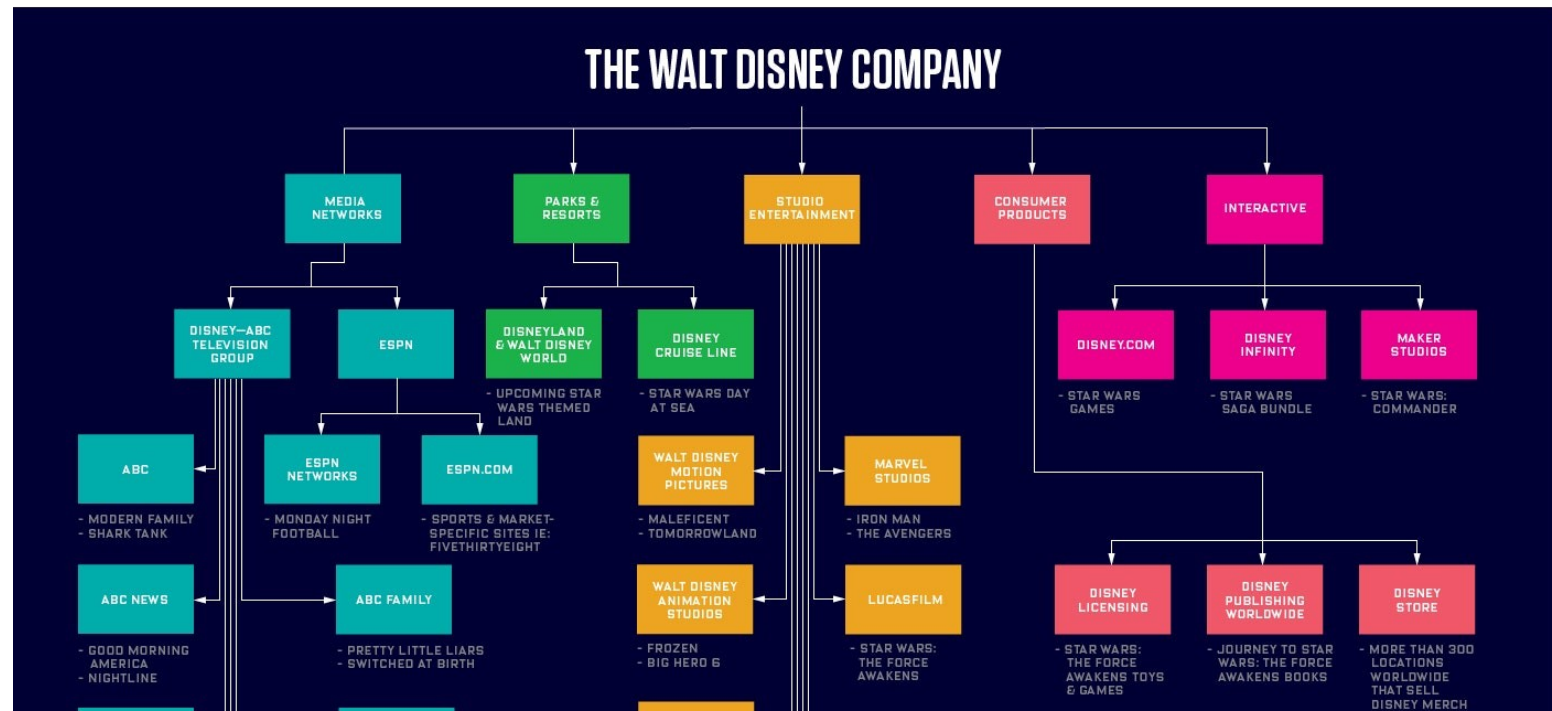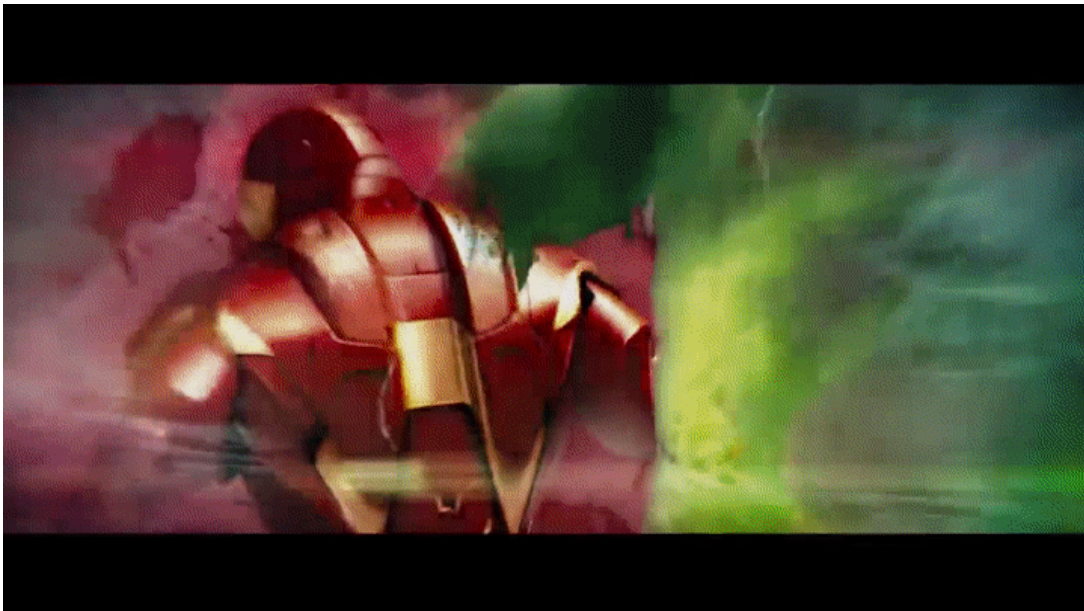
The Media Industries Today

The IP economy:
Product of the film and TV industries are no longer just movies or series, but product ranges linked by intellectual property.

Branding:
Companies creating distinct identities and creating relationships between products and consumers that extend beyond material properties

The Media Industries Today

Visible audiences, visible work:
Digital technologies enable – and thus demand – new forms of interaction with connected and participant media audiences.

Work in the Media Industries

https://uniofnottm.padlet.org/ajzlh1/pebp96fr2m7fc7b0

Creative, offer flexibility and "freedom"

Rewarding, self-expressive and self-actualising

Culturally celebrated, inspirational

BUT ALSO:

Precarious, hyperflexible, hypercompetitive

Project-, network-, and reputation-based

Hierarchical and structured (above/below the line)

Caldwell: Industrial reflexivity

"Film and television, in other words, do not simply produce mass or popular culture […] but rather film/tv production communities themselves are cultural expressions and entities involving all of the symbolic processes and collective practices that other cultures use: to gain and reinforce identity, to forge consensus and order, to perpetuate themselves and their interests, and to interpret the media as audience members."

Caldwell, John T. (2008). "Introduction: Industrial reflexivity and common sense", p. 8

JOHN THORNTON CALDWELL

Production Culture

INDUSTRIAL REFLEXIVITY AND CRITICAL PRACTICE IN FILM AND TELEVISION

Deep texts of industry

"Film and television today reflect obsessively back upon themselves and invest considerable energy in over-producing and distributing this industrial self-analysis to the public. Once considered secondary or backstory phenomena, industry self-analysis and self-representation now serve as primary on-screen entertainment forms across a vast multimedia landscape."

Caldwell, *Production Cultures,* P1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF8gd6UICx4
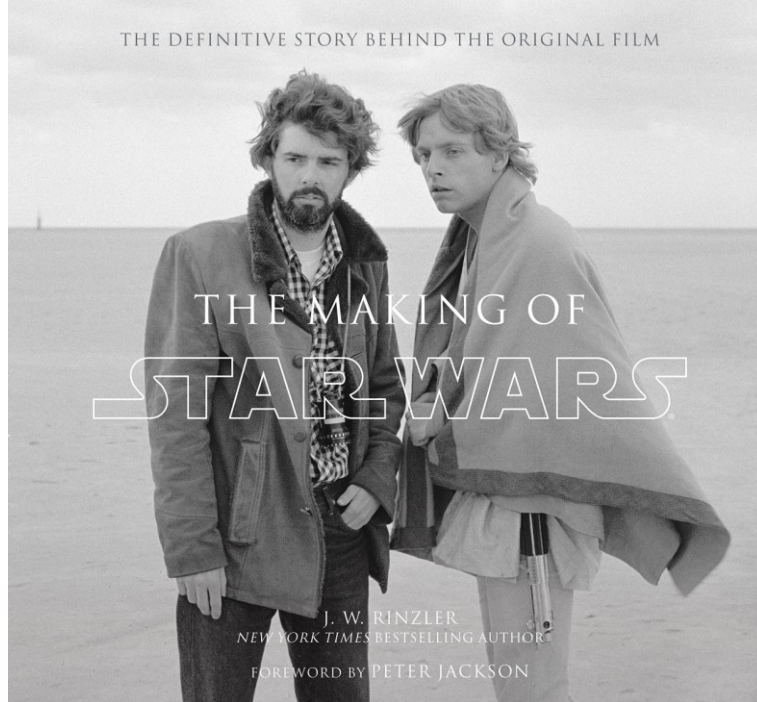
Industrial narratives: Marvel's "cinematic destiny"

"Trade stories ask us to consider how production personnel are themselves audiences of a kind for whom deep texts, as paratexts, offer branded meaning and identity to the media firms in relation to which they labor."

Derek Johnson looked at the trade stories around Marvel Studios' entrance to Hollywood. He found a number of key narrative tropes:

✓ Legitimizing managerial control by film industry outsiders: "The Marvel Way"

✓ Offering reassurances to the established Hollywood order

✓ Playing up the value of fandom and fan expertise

✓ Emphasizing communal bonds with contracted labor

✓ The language of destiny and inevitability

Derek Johnson, "Cinematic Destiny: Marvel Studios and the Trade Stories of Industrial Convergence" *Cinema Journal*, Volume 52, Number 1, Fall 2012, pp. 1-24

Industrial narratives: Marvel's "cinematic destiny"

In your groups, look at some of the articles Johnson used in his analysis: can you find the tropes he refers to? Where do you see them?

Borys Kit, "The Avenger," Hollywood Reporter, July 21, 2009

David Ward, "Sega Plays Marvel Video Game," Hollywood Reporter, May 2, 2008

Paul Bond, "Arad Jumps Marvel Ship for New Film," Hollywood Reporter, June 1, 2006,

Borys Kit, "Marvel's Universal Approach Makes It a World Apart from DC," Hollywood Reporter, May 13, 2008

Scott Bowles, "The Search for Fanboy," USA Today, July 25, 2007.

Matthew Garrahan, "From a Comic Fan to a Marvel Movie Maker," Financial Times, May 1, 2008

Scott Bowles, "Re-Hulk'd," USA Today, June 6, 2008

Lauren Schuker, "Studios' Latest Stunt: Less Risk, Less Reward," August 7, 2006

Devin Leonard, "Calling All Superheroes," Fortune, May 2007