

**FINAL EXAM**

Written - Due 12/9  
Objective 12/4

**CRITICAL PAPER**

Due 12/4  
**NO PAPERS ACCEPTED AFTER 12/5**

**ALL WORK**

Submitted by  
12/9  
No exceptions

**Feminist Criticism**

From her point of view

## Feminist criticism

- ▣ A thousand types of criticism all in one name
  - Feminisms
- ▣ All about habits of seeing the world
  - Canon of authors
  - Drug testing
  - Eye of the camera has gender

## Feminist criticism

- ▣ Patriarchal
  - Any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles
- ▣ Traditional gender roles
  - Men = rational, strong, protective, decisive
  - Women = irrational, emotional, weak, nurturing, submissive
- ▣ Sexist
  - Based in Biological essentialism
  - Women are born inferior

## Feminist criticism

- ▣ Difference between *sex* and *gender*
- ▣ Know your programming
  - Crying
  - Providing for a family
  - Relations with others of the same gender
- ▣ “Good girls” vs “bad girls”
  - Power
  - Idealization
  - Double standards

## Feminist criticism

- ▣ Women are the Other
- ▣ Western culture is phallogocentric
- ▣ Gender is a cultural construct
- ▣ Feminism is an attempt to force assumptions into the open and challenge them; the solutions are legion

## Multicultural Feminism

- ▣ A woman's experience is not just a factor of her gender...it is also a result of
  - Race
  - Socioeconomic class
  - Sexual orientation
  - Educational experience
  - Religion
  - Nationality

## Feminist criticism

- ▣ Look at the film as an expression of gender and roles
  - Camera
    - "the look"
  - Character
  - Social norms portrayed
  - Fetishism
  - Role of "other"

## Genre Criticism

So what *kind* of movie is it?

## Genre Criticism

Criticism of films based on their genre.

Problem is...how do you define or categorize genre?

Genre is:

- Not just targeted at a small audience...it is part of an ongoing tradition with rules and conventions.
- Really, really hard to define since genres overlap, integrate and evolve

## Genre

- ▣ Tends to be imprecise
  - Based on physical properties (silent, color...)
  - Based on subject matter (western, gangster)
  - Based on purpose (comedy, horror)
  - Overlap of genre in a single film
- ▣ What influence does the “genre” label have on the film maker and/or audience?

## Genre

- ▣ Tends to be imprecise
  - Based on physical properties (silent, color...)
  - Based on subject matter (western, gangster)
  - Based on purpose (comedy, horror)
  - Overlap of genre in a single film
- ▣ What influence does the “genre” label have on the film maker and/or audience?

## Genre Criticism

- ▣ “Genre” focuses on the connection of a film to a pre-existing structure
  - May be viewed as cultural, historical, fiscal/ideological
- ▣ Viewed as limiting or liberating
  - Plays within a pre-existing concept
  - Allows the audience to see the film as differentiation or commentary
    - i.e. violence in western/gangster vs. modern “PC” conceptions

## Genre criticism

- ▣ Can be viewed as breaking the grip of “high art”
- ▣ “Genre films strike beneath our intellectual appreciation of high art and make us one with a large mass audience, often despite our more articulate and elitist views.” – Leo Braudy

## Criticism of genre

- ▣ Genre films are all too traditional to be considered “great.”
- ▣ Rules can provide greater freedom; familiarity allows a deeper examination of issues and social values
  - i.e. horror - scrutiny of values
    - Psychological
    - Structuralist
    - Marxist
    - Feminist

## Auteurist Criticism

The power of the director's touch

## Auteur

- ▣ Origins
  - Film was viewed as the product of an assembly line
  - Film was not art, it was commercial entertainment
- Originally, that argument was countered by a return to “classical” values of art

## Auteurist criticism

- ▣ Francois Tuffaut (1954)
  - “On a Certain Tendency of the French Cinema”
  - Auteur -
    - Director rather than scriptwriter
    - “Signature”
      - Style
      - Basic themes or motifs
    - Must view all/large part of body of work to detect

## Auteurist criticism

- ▣ NOT just “personality will manifest”
  - Belief in the individual
  - Triumph over the cookie-cutter system
  - Includes personal expression & control
  - Must have some substantiation to be considered viable

## Criticism of Auteur

- ▣ Language and method are more important than any individual will
- ▣ Other artists better deserve to be called auteur
- ▣ Too many people touch a film to have *anyone* be an auteur