



Representation

In Film



Aim of Lesson

To understand how film constructs and communicates identity through

1. Gender - The Male Gaze
2. Race - Blaxploitation
3. Concept Development

The Male Gaze

Laura Mulvey : Male Gaze Theory

1. Women in media are viewed through the eyes of a heterosexual man.
2. These women are represented as passive objects of male desire.
3. Women are framed to satisfy male fantasies.

Historical Evolution of Feminist Film Theory

- Early cinema (1920s-1930s) Women as romantic and domestic (Metropolis, 1927)
- Golden Age (1940s-1960s) Beauty and dependence (Breakfast at Tiffany's, 1961)
- Feminist Era (1970s- 1990s) Woman take control (Thelma and Louise, 1991) Note: Laura Mulvey Publishes Book: Visual Pleasures and narrative cinema (1975)
- Contemporary Era (2000s-Present) Diverse Filmmakers challenge the gaze (Nomadland, 2020)

Case Study- Transformers (Megan Fox)

Questions for Analysis

1. How does the camera frame Megan Fox (angles, close ups, slow motion)
2. Does the scene prioritise her character or her body?
3. How is desire created visually or narratively?
4. How does her representation serve the male protagonist?
5. When was it made? Who made it? Have times changed?

Transformers - 2007



Blaxploitation Films - 1970-1979

How did blaxploitation films change black representation?

1. Instead of sidekicks or comic reliefs, black characters became heroes and fighters against injustice.
2. Prior Hollywood roles often reinforced stereotypes of black people as servants or comic relief.
3. Blaxploitation films addressed social issues, urban life, and resistance, portraying black characters in diverse roles.
4. The genre did however spark a debate over its poor representation of the black community. Crime and drug culture was a running theme.

Case Study - Foxy Brown

1. How does the scene position Foxy Brown as a central figure of power?
2. In what way does the scene challenge typical portrayals of Black women in 1970s cinema?
3. How might contemporary audiences interpret this scene differently from 1970s audiences in terms of race and gender?

Foxy Brown - 1974



Task - Concept Development (10-15 min)

Think about your adventure film idea

Answer these questions

1. Who or what do you want to represent? (Culture, community, gender race, or a particular perspective)
2. What story or values are you communicating through this representation?
3. How will your film influence your viewers?
4. Will your representation challenge stereotypes?