

Film and Society: How Movies Shape Our Worldview-

Level 2

Introduction:

Welcome to “Film and Society: How Movies Shape our Worldview” a comprehensive course designed to delve into the intricate relationship between the art of filmmaking and its impact on our cultural, social, and personal perspectives. Throughout the history of cinema, films have not only served as a source of entertainment but have also played a pivotal role in reflecting, shaping, and sometimes challenging the societal norms and values of their times.

In this course we will explore the multifaceted ways in which movies influence our understanding of the world around us, our social interactions, and our individual identities. This course is structured to provide a thorough understanding of the various genres of film, the historical context in which they were produced, and the critical theories that help us to interpret their meanings.

Throughout the course, we will examine key films that have left an indelible mark on society, analyse the techniques filmmakers use to convey their messages, and consider the ethical implications of representation in cinema. By engaging with the content in this course, you will develop a deeper appreciation for the power of film as a medium of communication and its capacity to inform, persuade, and provoke thought.

Whether you are a film enthusiast or simply interested in the social implications of media, this course will equip you with the analytical tools to critically engage with films and understand their place within the broader tapestry of societal discourse. As you progress through the material, you will be encouraged to reflect on your own experiences and consider how films have influenced your own worldview.

Section 1: The Societal Impact of Film Genres

Introduction to Film Genres and Their Influence

Films, like any art form, have the power to reflect, shape, and sometimes challenge the cultural and societal norms of their times. Over the years, various genres have emerged, each with its unique style, themes, and influence on the audience. This section will delve into how specific film genres have historically impacted society and contributed to shaping our collective worldview.

The Role of Drama in Reflecting Society

Drama films often provide a mirror for society, reflecting back to us the complexities of human relationships and the intricacies of societal issues. They have the power to evoke empathy, allowing viewers to walk in another person's shoes, if only for a couple of hours. By presenting stories that resonate with people's everyday experiences, drama films can foster a deeper understanding of social issues.

For instance, British social realist cinema, with films like "Kes" (1969) and "I, Daniel Blake" (2016), offers a stark depiction of working-class life and the struggles within the British welfare system. These films often lead to discussions about social policy and can sometimes influence public opinion and even policy-making.

Comedy and Social Commentary

Comedies, while primarily focused on creating laughter, frequently incorporate social commentary, using humour as a tool to broach difficult topics. Satirical comedies, in particular, have a long-standing history of challenging societal norms and political systems. They can highlight the absurdities within society, encouraging audiences to think critically about the status quo.

A British example is "The Full Monty" (1997), which, while being a comedy about a group of unemployed men turning to striptease to earn money, also comments on themes of unemployment, masculinity, and class in post-industrial Britain. Through its humour and heart, the film opened conversations about the effects of de-industrialisation on communities and individuals.

Horror Films: Fear and Social Anxieties

Horror films often play on society's deepest fears, and in doing so, they reveal the underlying anxieties of an era. Whether it's the fear of the unknown, technology, or the breakdown of societal norms, horror movies can act as a barometer for what terrifies us collectively.

The horror classic "The Wicker Man" (1973) can be seen as a reflection of the tension between modernity and traditionalism, as well as the clash between pagan and Christian belief systems. By exploring these themes, the film taps into societal fears about religious cults and the loss of community values, resonating with audiences on a psychological level.

Action Films and the Cult of Heroism

Action films often celebrate individual heroism and can reinforce or challenge traditional gender roles and societal expectations of masculinity and femininity. They can also reflect cultural attitudes towards violence, authority, and justice.

In the UK, the James Bond series has had a significant influence on the image of Britishness, heroism, and masculinity. Although the depiction of the iconic spy has evolved over time, the character remains a symbol of national pride and a certain set of values, thus influencing perceptions of British identity.

Science Fiction: Imagining Future Societies

Science fiction films offer a canvas for exploring 'what if' scenarios, pushing the boundaries of our imagination to consider future societies, technologies, and ethical dilemmas. They can challenge audiences to think about the impact of science on society and the potential consequences of technological advancements.

Films like "A Clockwork Orange" (1971), while controversial, have sparked debate on topics such as free will, state control, and the nature of violence. By presenting a dystopian vision of society, the film encourages viewers to reflect on the moral implications of using psychological conditioning to deter crime.

Romance Films and the Ideals of Love

Romance films shape and reflect societal notions of love, relationships, and gender dynamics. They can perpetuate certain ideals, such as the concept of soulmates, or challenge them by presenting unconventional love stories.

A film like "Bridget Jones's Diary" (2001), with its relatable protagonist and modern take on romance, has contributed to discussions about singleness, the pressure to conform to social expectations, and the reality of modern relationships. It also presents a more realistic portrayal of contemporary womanhood, moving away from traditional stereotypes.

Documentaries and Shaping Public Opinion

Documentaries have the power to inform, persuade, and sometimes mobilise viewers on various issues. They present real-life stories and factual information, with the potential to significantly affect public opinion and spur societal change.

British documentaries such as "The Act of Killing" (2012) confront audiences with the harsh realities of historical events, in this case, the mass killings in Indonesia during the 1960s. By documenting these events and their aftermath, the film has the potential to impact viewers' understanding of history, justice, and the human capacity for violence.

Each film genre, through its unique approach and style, contributes to the tapestry of societal discourse, influencing and reflecting our collective worldview. As viewers, we engage with these genres on various levels, often subconsciously absorbing the messages and themes presented to us. Understanding the societal impact of film genres enables us to be more critical and aware of the media we consume and the messages we internalise.

As we delve deeper into the specifics of how these genres influence society, it is essential to consider not only the content but also the context in which these films are produced and received. In the following sections, we will explore the role of filmmakers, the film industry, and the audience in shaping and being shaped by the cinematic landscape.

1. Which film genre is known for reflecting the complexities of human relationships and societal issues?

- A. Comedy
- B. Drama
- C. Action
- D. Science Fiction

2. "The Full Monty" (1997) uses humour to address themes of:

- A. Religious cults and community values
- B. Unemployment, masculinity, and class
- C. Psychological conditioning and crime
- D. Love and relationships

3. Horror films often reveal societal fears and anxieties. Which film is mentioned as reflecting the tension between modernity and traditionalism?

- A. "A Clockwork Orange" (1971)
- B. "Bridget Jones's Diary" (2001)
- C. "The Act of Killing" (2012)
- D. "The Wicker Man" (1973)

4. What is a significant influence on the image of Britishness, heroism, and masculinity within the action film genre?

- A. British social realist cinema
- B. The James Bond series
- C. British documentaries
- D. Satirical comedies

Answers:

1. Which film genre is known for reflecting the complexities of human relationships and societal issues?

B. Drama

2. "The Full Monty" (1997) uses humour to address themes of:

B. Unemployment, masculinity, and class

3. Horror films often reveal societal fears and anxieties. Which film is mentioned as reflecting the tension between modernity and traditionalism?

D. "The Wicker Man" (1973)

4. What is a significant influence on the image of Britishness, heroism, and masculinity within the action film genre?

B. The James Bond series