

LECTURE NOTES ON GENRE

History/Studio System

Majors/Minors Intergrated Vertical System.-broken in 1948 law suit on paramount

Cultural Ritual/Sociological Event

Genre as standardization in Studio system of 30's to 60's
Regimentation/price/financial success

Arts vs Commerce

Genre has roots in classic lit, pulp romances/novels, theatre and music halls, vaudeville-low and high art.

Mass media feed back loop. Audience \$\$\$ effect variation on theme/plots in ever evolving genre films.

400-7000 films per year in classic era- heavily dependent on formula, and successful techniques.

Hollywood films 70-90% of South American and European screen time.

90% films fall in to some genre category

Genre and Auteur

Non-genre films initially garnered more attention as art (Citizen Kane)

French New Wave (1959)-400blows, Hiroshima Mon Amour, Breathless
Trauffaut, Goddard, Eric Rohmer (Andre Bazin – founder of Cahiers du Cinema)
Auteur Policy – Camera Stylo – directorial style and influence over body of work.
Revival of AMERICAN directors overlooked because of genre
films and work with studio system (flood of American films after
WWII in france)

Ford, Hawks, Hitchcock, Fuller, Mann, etc.

Andrew Sarris in US popularizes Auteur theory in “the American Cinema”

Auteurism rejects high/low art...art and entertainment

Autuer and Genre Theory (until recently) dominated film theory (now Semiotics, structuralism, feminims, marxism etc) Cinematic FORM vs Individual vision/art

Auteurism seeks DEEP structure of directorial personality
But other DEEP structures exist...economic, social, political, stylistic, narrative

Genre Narrative Conventions

Variations on themes/structure – promoted by economy of film industry
Directors, sets, technicians, props, writers, etc...expert in one
TYPE of movie

Narrative context and meaning in genre

Standard narrative conventions –protagonist, 3 acts, 1hr -2hrs, plot points,
clear motivation/need of protagonist, subordination of time/space to
plot/motivation, invisble editing, clear continuity, etc

Genre films the significance of narrative components come with pre-
laddend meaning /significance

Analysis involve weighing variations of these factors against pre-ordained
value laden narrative.

Viewers expectation and familiarity with genre world.

GENERIC WESTERN GUNFIGHT?? FORM???

Genre as SOCIAL FORCE/EVENT

Cumulative process over time, audience expectations, and socializing influece
because of thematic content

Audience involvement-\$\$\$ (like Greek/Renaissance theartre, pulp novels)

Genre formulates and reinforces collective values????? (automatic writing-
between author and audience – pop entertainment)

Popular Art, High Art, Cultural Ritual????

Bazin- American Cinematic Genuis/System that provides a tradition of
technical/visual and narrative excellence. How American wants to see it self.

40's – 90 million viewers per week (repeated viewing of film in one week)

Film Genre and the Genre Film

Film/art as an end to itself- transcending social imperatives that produced /purely for aesthetic value

This is Genre study in terms of iconography sans social/cultural values from which it was born.

- 1) Genre as “Privileged” Form
- 2) Audience/studio interaction creative form /systemr
- 3) Not an arbitrary system-organic origin and classification

Genre is both static and dynamic