

Portfolio of Notes

Brief summaries of the lectures/seminars are included below along with notes on any associated reading/research undertaken.

Introduction to Theme of Culture and Identity

This lecture was mainly the lecturers introducing themselves and their backgrounds. We were also told about what we had to do for this unit.

National Identities – Myths and Mythmaking in Scandinavian Design



Scandinavian design was discussed, in particular furniture design and how graduates were given the chance to design pieces in special collections for places like Ikea. People used to buy IKEA furniture as a stopgap until they could afford something better.

We were given the text *Untangling the Scandinavian Blonde, Modernity and the IKEA PS Range Catalogue 1995* by Susan Howe to read. It examines modern IKEA furniture designs and the extent to which the range clings to traditional Scandinavian Design.

Gender and Genre – Action Movies and TV Genres

This lecture looked at representations of masculinity and femininity in popular film and TV genres of the 1980s and 90s. We were shown clips of Terminator and Rambo which showed how masculinity was portrayed in different ways.

We were given the text *Dumb Movies for Dum People, Masculinity, the body and the voice in contemporary action cinema* by Yvonne Tasker which was an analysis of four films and the different ways they portrayed the male body as a spectacle together with an awareness of masculinity as a performance.

In the seminar we discussed how web sites are aimed at different genres and how each is portrayed differently. For example web sites like FHM¹ are aimed at men and portray women as objects of desire.

The West, the Cowboy, the Landscapes

This lecture examined how westerns are portrayed and the common characteristics between them. There are often small towns separated by many miles of nothing. We watched examples of traditional westerns along with one set in a more modern era.

We were given the text titled *Landscapes, Violence, Poker* which examined the landscapes within westerns.



¹ <http://www.fhm.com/>

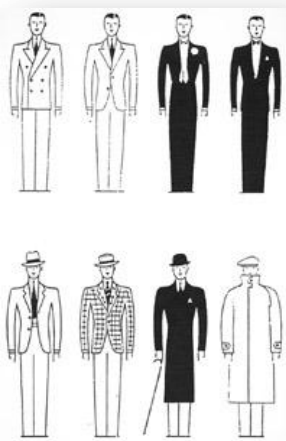
The Pleasures of Horror Narratives

Pleasures of Horror Narratives examined films and text such as Frankenstein and how they differed between the different formats. We were told to read a version/narrative of Frankenstein and compare how it was conveyed to the film version.

In the seminar we talked about the differences between books and those that have been made into films. In books you get to imagine what the characters are like, but in films you are told. If you had read a book, then watched the film you may be disappointed as the characters may not be how you expected them to be.

Showing Off the Nation: The Display of Ethnic Peoples in World Exhibitions

This lecture talked about how people were put on display at world exhibitions. Many people from very diverse cultures were put together within an exhibition that normally wouldn't be found together. For example Eskimos and the Chinese could be situated next to each other whereas in the real world they live thousands of miles apart. Is it right to display people at exhibitions where they are away from their country and to recreate their surroundings in a small space around them for the purpose of other people's entertainment?



The Ideal Body: Idealised Representations of the Body and Their Social and Psychological Functions

The ideal body can be thought of as different by everybody.

Everybody knows what their ideal body would be like, and what the ideal body type of the partner they want. Different images were discussed in the lecture, such as body builders and how they train for many hours a day to look like they do.

In the seminar I found information on how ideal bodies are categorised in surveys. People are given a chart like that to the left and are asked to pick the body that represents their current body, their ideal body and what they would like a partner's ideal body to be like.

The Horrors of War: Representations of War in Photography, Art & Film

This lecture looked at how war was represented in painting and photographs commissioned by the government to show the people back home what it was like whilst out there fighting in the wars. These were often swayed to make it look like the war was not as bad then what it actually was and often didn't show the negative aspects. Later on this changed and people saw how it really was.

In the seminar we looked at how war is portrayed now. We see pictures and films of what is going on out there almost instantly as they happen. The question proposed to use by the lecturer was that do we need to know what's going on in wars? I think the answer is yes as it helps us understand what the people fighting for us are going through.

What is a Design Classic? The Principles behind the Formation of a 'Classic'

This lecture looked at design classics and how some are still around today such as the London Underground Map which has changed very little since it was first brought out and the route master buses, most of which are no longer in service.

In the seminar we discussed how the classic channel suite comes back into fashion every 20 and how the Café Chair which design is still in use today.

Baa Humbug! Sentiment and Bad Taste?

This lecture/seminar did not take place.

Satire, Comedy and Counter Voices

The lecture looked at how comedy programs use satire to ridicule who they are portraying, for example Spitting image exaggerated people's features and their voices in order to make them more characteristic and emphasise them to the audience.

This can also be considered bad taste in the eyes of some or even the person who is been portrayed, however it does provide entertainment for those who find it funny.

Comedy has developed over the years from simple things like Charlie Chaplin to Little Britain which takes advantage of modern humour, but is more risky as it could easily offend someone.

