

Richardson & Robinson – Chapter 11: Media and Pop Culture
Lecture Notes (not covered in class)

- **Men Producing Culture**

- Significance: Consumption of media content
 - Media Organizations = Mostly owned & run by “powerful white men”
 - Structures & Perpetuates ideas about Gender **READ P. 194**
- Angela McRobbie (1978) – Study structure CODE of girl's magazine
 - First Code: Heterosexual Romance
 - Advised girls that their ideal destiny was MARRIAGE
 - Second Code: Ideal Girls = Passive, blonde
 - Brunette = Bitches, competition for male attention
 - Minorities almost NEVER shown
 - Third Code: Feelings = Problems one eventually grows out of
 - Result:
 - Purpose:
 - Girls’ Magazines = Beauty Tips
 - Boys’ Magazines = Action, Adventure, Sports, & Hobbies
 - Conclusion: Ideologies hard to resist **READ P. 194**
- Criticisms of McRobbie's Conclusion
 - Girls more able to resist feminism idealized in such media
 - Contemporary Magazines:
 - Focus: Sex & Careers (NOT Love & Marriage)
 - Images: Broader range of races & sexualities shown
 - More women involved in the production of magazines

- Tone Shift: Problem Page → Advice Column
- Problem: Still FOCUS on consumption, body maintenance, & beauty
- Growth of '**Men's & Lifestyle Magazines**' **READ P. 195**
 - Significance: Men = Important target market (Idealized '**new man**')
 - 1990's – Refocusing
 - Images of Men → Images of Heterosexual Women = Escape homosexual suggestions
 - '**Laddification**' of men's magazines = Champion politically incorrect male interests
- Negative Representations?
 - Cinema: Also Restrictive
 - '**Casting couch**' = Casting women in roles where they are only valued for their looks
 - '**Madonna/whore dichotomy**' = Two Kinds of Representations:
 - Good women = Madonna (virgin)
 - Bad women = whore (Example: '**Femme fatale**') **READ P. 196**
 - Significance: Women = Moral Values
 - Connection: Femme fatale & Film noir = Reflects misogynist paranoia
 - '**New noir**' = Offer more positive & interesting roles/role models for women
 - Problem:
 - Femme fatale = Masculine/bad woman
 - Women derive pleasure from watching them **READ P. 197**
 - Problem: Women's Sexuality
 - Men's Perspective: Sexuality = Promiscuity

- Promiscuity → Infidelity
 - Infidelity → Domestic Violence/murder
 - Problem: Men's pleasure in watching film noir
 - Different Gender Roles in film noir:
 - Men = Act – move the plot forward
 - Women = Appear – to look good as a reward for the men
 - Men = Produce, direct, & edit films
 - '**Male gaze**' – Affects audiences experience
 - Result: '**Scopophilic**' pleasure from looking **READ P. 198**
 - Example: Romantic scenes
 - Women's bodies = Objects for male consumption
 - Conclusion: Women educated in lesbianism at the movies
 - No – Women watch film in a 'transsexual' way = Women who watch as men
 - Solution to Negative Representations: Polysemic symbols
 - Multiple meanings = Multiple interpretations
 - Go against the intended meaning
 - Benefits – Idealized representations make us feel bad
 - Guilty for not meeting such expectations
 - Result: Popularity of realistic representations of women
- **Feminine Forms**
 - '**Mass culture**' **READ P. 199**
 - Problem for Feminists: Bad + Women enjoy it
 - Other Examples:

- Romantic novels = Popular ('**Bodice rippers**')
 - Pornography for Heterosexual women ≠ Popular
 - New Fiction ('**Red Dress books**' & '**Chick lit**')
 - READ P. 200

- Why women enjoy such literature

- Romance Novels perform key functions:

1. Provide a sense of escape from boring house work

2. Compensate for lack of male attention at home

- Allow women to reinterpret lack of feelings as inability to express feelings

3. Allow women time for themselves away from family responsibility

- Why this is a problem (Example: 'Harlequin Romances')

- **The Pleasure of the Text**

- Viewing pleasure – many forms [Reading & Watching (Example: Soap Operas)]

- Why women enjoy watching Soap Operas

READ P. 200

- Criticized by Men

- Result: Women have difficulty explaining why they enjoy them

- How women REALLY feel about Soaps:

1. Haters – deploy ideology of mass culture

- Common knowledge that Soaps are disliked

2. Lovers – have difficulty explaining

- Make excuses to not go against mass dislike

3. Ironic viewers – enjoy watching despite it being 'bad' TV

- Really secret lovers

- Why women cover up their love of Soaps

- **'Emotional realism'** = Kind of pleasure that soap operas offer women
 - Realism allows 'translatibility' from culture to culture
 - Real Issues: Rape, Domestic violence **READ P. 201**
 - Significance: Responsible representation of real women's issues
- Recent Trends:
 - **'Action heroine'** = female characters in film which are warriors yet still relate to real life
 - Result: **'Girl power'** = popularized concept which is meant to inspire younger generations of women
 - Most TV ≠ gender neutral
 - **'Lifestyle TV'**
 - Significance **READ P. 202**
 - Women have made significant gains in independence
 - But perhaps only on the condition that they "look good"
 - Problem: Negative representations of women are being
 - Perpetuated & Intensified
 - Feminist Criticism: **'ladettes'**
 - New Liberation = Old Objectification
 - Objectification is now coming from WOMEN = **'female chauvinist pigs'**
 - Criticizing themselves on behalf of men
 - Problem: Chauvinism = Feels Empowering
 - Result: Back to the beginning
 - Unrespectable Women = overtly sexualized for men's pleasure
 - Respectable Women = desexualized & heterosexual