Introduction: Gender and New Media

- Possibilities of the Internet
- Facebook and writing styles
- Gender in the online world
- Online gaming
- Cyberbullying

- Learning outcome 1: Show critical understanding of gender theories with regard to a variety of popular culture forms (new media)
- Learning outcome 3: Assess the ways in which gender are constituted and or challenged in and through particular forms of culture (Facebook, Second Life, Gaming)
Possibilities of ‘new’ media

- New forms of media – convergent culture, participatory culture, user generated content
- Either multiple identities online or reinforcing real life identities
- Fantasy identifications (authentic fantasy) and or real authenticity
Facebook

• Same stories told and retold
  ◦ Especially in photographs
• Is online self more real than real life identity?
• *Baudrillard’s hyperreality* = representation more real than reality
• Performances — may lead to exaggerated caricatures
• Gender fixity
Report/Rapport styles of writing

- Report style = list, telling people things without emotion, political, sport
- Rapport style = linked with others – emotion in language used, connections with others
- No difference in terms of genres, but people tended to stick with one or other
- Examples
Who wrote these FB comments Male or Female?

- ‘finally has a face book profile picture see left!’
  - (Female)
  - (Male)
- ‘My lovely daughter is 13 today.’
  - (Male)
- ‘RIP Pete Postlethwaite :-( Too young!’
  - (Female)
- ‘Tickets booked! :oD’
  - (Female)
- ‘My bloody car is broke. I’m not happy.’
  - (Male)
- More complex than simple dichotomy of report/rapport
Queering gender online

- Internet reinforcing hegemonic gender conventions
- Gaydar – young men asked to appraise body image and gender performance
- Attacks on performances which violate traditional masculinity
- ‘I only like men who are men. If you are a man who thinks he is a woman then that is just wrong. Do not message me.’ (Richardson and Wearing 2014: p.140).
Online gaming

- Can be aggressive, macho, homophobic and misogynistic
- Display of technical knowledge
- Difference between: playing like a girl – playing as a girl
  - Lara Croft – Tomb Raider (objectified but cross-gender identification)
- Motivations for playing: competition and self-challenge
- Greenberg et al. (2010: p.242) ‘The majority of video games have direct competition, clear role definitions and explicit goals – all strong features of male play.’
- Female gamers suffer abuse
Other studies

- Schott and Horrell (2000) men have control over game technology in households
- Jenkins (2006) video games mirror gendered play spaces
- Females – domestic sphere and males more fantasy scenarios
Virtual supermodels

• Webbie Tookay – Stephen Sthalberg for Elite agency.
  ◦ E.g. Miss Digital World (and 2012 Miss Virtual World)
• ‘She never ages, never gains weight, never develops cellulite or throws a tantrum’ Stephen Stahlberg
• Virtual sexism
Cyberfeminism

- Intersections between gender identity, body culture, technology
- Cyborgs with ambiguous gender identities
- Cyborg = human and machine
- Often given female identity or a definite gender
- Machines often described as female
- Possibility exists to challenge this but often confirms to norms
- Second Life norms of avatars
Trolling and cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying – intimidation and harassment online
- Those who are too feminine or too masculine and those who ‘don’t fit into hegemonic norms’
- But also women tend to be targeted online
  - E.g. Caroline Criado-Perez online threats of sexual violence
  - Campaign for a woman to be featured on British Bank Notes
- Gender and sexuality - one of the battlegrounds of new media
Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones — gender relations of family, friendship, work are inscribed and revealed.
- Used more by women than men for care-giving and emotion (Green and Singleton, 2013)
- Particularly when we focus on personal relationships and doing family, friendship and community
- Interpersonal connectedness — you can agree/disagree with this research.
- An interesting survey on Tinder
Character: Sherlock Holmes

- Holmes – rationality and logic, science and reason.
- But also challenges this e.g. shows daring and bravery
- Challenges an essentialist masculinity
Summary

- Identities on the internet – new possibilities versus pessimistic internet
- Facebook and writing styles – (report/rapport styles note gender based but individualistic)
- Gender in the online world - often reinforcing gender stereotypes
- Online gaming – dominated by males both industry and perceived audience
- Learning outcome 3: Assess the ways in which gender are constituted and or challenged in and through particular forms of culture
- Essay Question: You can also focus on specific new media e.g. Facebook, specific game, specific website etc.
References


