

Introduction

- Emotion and rationality. Is it an existential crisis?
- The current discourses of masculinity (simplistic)
- New Man, New Lad, Home, Work
- Magazines, television, Clothing
- Learning outcome 2: Critically analyse the ways in which gender are constituted/challenged in and through particular forms of culture
- Learning outcome 3: Apply with tutor support. appropriate philosophical theory to popular cultural texts



Topic relationship to assignment

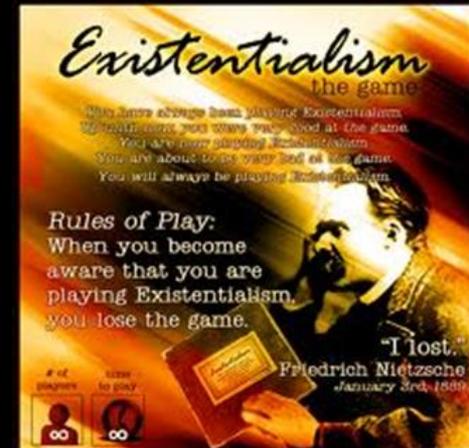
- Assignment Q1: Analyse one form of popular culture in relation to gender theory (theories) studied on the module.
- Q 2: Analyse one form of popular culture in relation to philosophical theory (theories) studied on the module.

Rational Men

- Hard to analyse men's own experiences
- Absences of emotional needs
(<https://youtu.be/KUDcafR9PU> (2.39 mins))
- Reason (Kant/Descartes)
 - Independent faculty
 - Masculinity and reason
- Need to reflect on own masculinities
- Masculinity as power/relational to women

Existential Crisis?

- Exerting will
- Inauthentic/authentic
- What one does is important
- Men are confused and anxious of how to be



Discourses of Masculinity

- Several
 - Changes since the 60s
- Three main discourses
 - Old man/new man/new lad
- Traditional – typical male values and behaviours
 - Fashion and consumption still present
 - heterosexual
 - Logical thinking



New Man and Metrosexual

- Beynon (2002) two strands
 - New man as nurturer e.g. more caring, father, new man as narcissistic
- New lad
 - Backlash against feminism
 - Football, drinking, sex



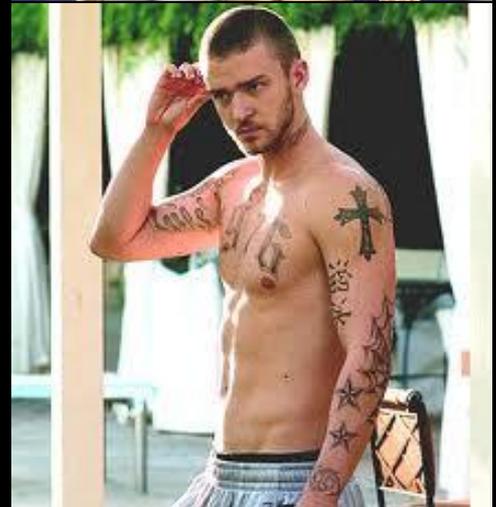
End of session 1

Contemporary discourses

- Simplistic to have three discourses (for example 0.47 mins)
- Masculinity – revolves around issues, themes and behaviours (bricolage)
- Representations of males/men in popular culture are often partial
- Sex and sexuality are important for masculinity
 - Sexual conquests/women as sex objects (men's magazines)

Men at work and home

- Work in men's magazines tends to be absent
 - Less stable, more fragmented
 - Source of masculinity is now the body
 - Boundaries of work/home are more blurred



Television

- Hospital dramas
 - Men as doctors - infallible to more vulnerable characters (doctor hero) (such as Casualty) (3.13)
- Crime dramas
 - Male dominated – less moral certainty and more flawed characters
- Soap operas (e.g. EastEnders) (1.06)
 - Private/public blurred but men still unable to communicate true feelings
 - Fatherhood is central
- Rise of the trendy Geek in popular culture Mad Men
- Rationality and masculinity? Reinforced or challenged?

Television

- Make over style programmes
- Queer Eye for the Straight Guy (first few minutes)
- Beauty and style presented as consumption
- Detective films
 - Male centred action heroes use force, violence and detective skills
- Where do superheroes fit? E.g. Batman (Dark Knight)?

Character: House (1.06 mins)

- House – based on Sherlock Holes
- Cases are factual and mathematical
- Embodies new man and new lad
- Contains self-awareness of shortcomings but still follows the stereotypes
- Challenges contemporary masculinities



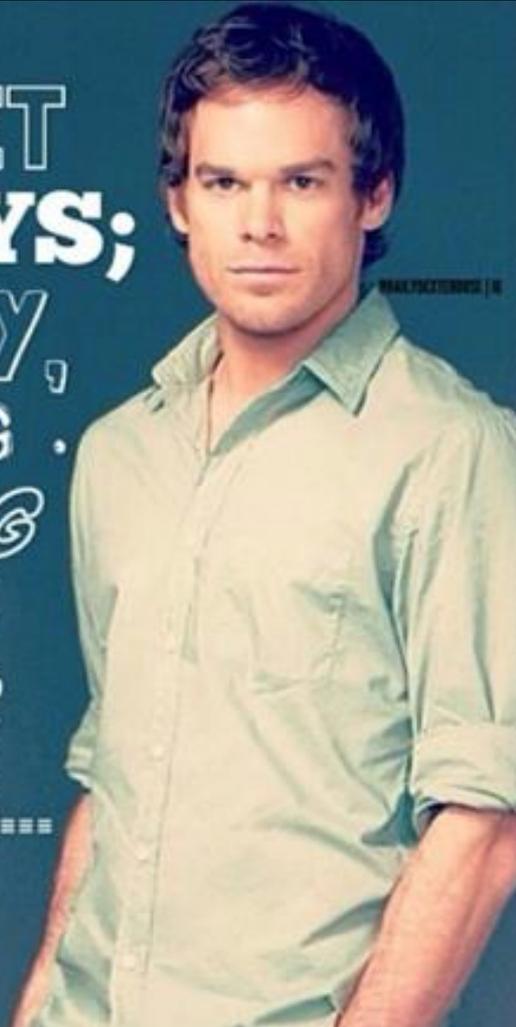
Dexter

- Dexter Morgan is a serial killer who kills criminals
- Dexter tries to fit in so that he won't be discovered
- Applying Existentialism
 - Feelings of alienation/life as absurd
 - Develops his reasons for actions
 - He strives for authenticity
 - Confined by a code of ethics
- Nietzsche: one should never go against one's true nature
- At the end he is totally alone – completely free of attachments.



I DON'T GET
BIRTHDAYS;
THE PARTY,
THE SONG.
CELEBRATING
ANOTHER YEAR
JUST BEING
ALIVE FEELS...
FORCED.

-DEXTER MORGAN





Transferable skills

- Communication
 - Through answering questions, discussing ideas with someone next to you
 - Communication in group work and also in feeding back to the whole group
- Creative thinking
 - You have to think for yourself and come up with your own opinions in relation to masculinity/masculinities

Summary

- Representations are diverse
- But there are continuities as well as change
- The rational man is still evident
- Men in popular culture are nearly always working men
- An existential crisis of masculinity perhaps?
- Focus in relation to masculinity/masculinities:
 - The popular culture (e.g. I focused on Television)
 - Or the characters themselves – e.g. House

Bibliography

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- Sanders, S. and Skoble, A. (2008) *The philosophy of TV Noir*, Kentucky. The University Press of Kentucky (EBOOK).