

INTRODUCTION

- Cross-Dressing
- Whether the gender is challenged/reinforced through clothing
- Slippages of gender transgression in films
- Butler and Drag
- Learning Outcome 2: Assess critically the ways in which gender are constituted and/or challenged in and through particular forms of culture

CROSS DRESSING IN FILM

- Clothing tends to reflect the dominant established, unquestioned sex of the wearer
- Cross-dressing can challenge the relationship between the body and social appearance
- Terminology
 - Cross-dressing – general term for anyone routinely wearing clothes typical of another gender
 - Cross dresser" is a general term for any person who routinely wears clothing typical of another gender, regardless of their reasons for doing so.
 - Transvestism – wears clothing of another gender as a sexual fetish, or act of expression of social defiance.
 - Drag – cross-dressing as theatrical performance



RELATIONSHIP TO CLOTHES

- Stoller (1968) places an emphasis on the real sex of the cross-dresser
- And rejects the idea that transvestism/cross-dressing can alter an individual's core identity
- Garber (1993) proposes that cross-dresser/transvestite needs a third term
- Outside of the gender binaries



CINEMA



- Cross-dressing in mainstream cinema
- Often forced on the characters e.g. *Some Like It Hot*, *Tootsie*, *Mrs Doubtfire*, (1.57 mins) *Victor/Victoria*.
- Slippages – male cross-dresser tripping up in high heels, hitching up stockings, (*Shakespeare in Love*)
- Performer is uneasy in the clothing and ready to discard them

CONTEMPLATING THE IMAGE

- Various categories of transvestism ?
- Segregation between actual body image and the different gender
- And those who contemplate their own cross-dressed image in the mirror
- Embodying difference as both genders are inscribed on performative image
- Sexuality is also often challenged

ENDINGS

- The endings often reinforce the binary
- Male to female cross-dressers in film are often coded as undesirable
- with out of fashion clothing often set against more conventionally attractive pictures of femininity



THEATRE



- National theatrical traditions – Greeks to Romans, Italy, Japan, China, England
- Cross-dressing accepted as performance
- China – female impersonators rose to prominence in late 18th century
- Confusion between Chinese female impersonators and women formed the basis for the play/film, [M. Butterfly](#) (1.50 mins)

BUTLER AND DRAG

- Butler focuses on the relationship between the exterior and interior of the drag performer
- Male/female binary is enacted by the clothing
- E.g. femininity on the outside and masculine on the inside or vice versa
- The visible clothes are defined as costume –
- Where drag indicates difference
- There is also misogyny in relation to drag
- (Has this changed [Ru Paul's Drag Race](#)(0.59 mins))

GENDER IDENTITY AND CROSS-DRESSING

- The emphasis is on fluidity of identity
- Construction of identity at that moment
- Clothes are performative – function as signs or enactments on the body
- But may not be read as such.
- In most drag scenarios, the use of a name symbolises the way a character is viewed
- In comedy – there is always a sex which is disguised
- And a gender which is constructed
- Some films/TV more serious e.g. [Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#) (2.27 mins)

SUMMARY

- Cross-Dressing – debates
- Whether the gender is challenged/reinforced through clothing
- Slippages of gender transgression in films
- Butler and Drag
- How the humour works in films (9.14 mins)
- Learning Outcome 2: Assess critically the ways in which gender are constituted and/or challenged in and through particular forms of culture

REFERENCES

- Bruzzi, S. (1997) *Undressing Cinema. Clothing and Identity in the movies*. Oxon, Routledge.
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- Stoller, R. (1968) *Sex and Gender. Volume 1. The Development of Masculinity and Femininity*. London, H Karnac Books Ltd.