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 (Series 1: Episode 1)
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

