

Postmodern film

In postmodernity, film became the dominant narrative form and replaced the novel, which had been the dominant form during the 19th century. Postmodern film was a reaction against modernist cinema and attempted to capture the new reality and ways of thinking of postmodernity. Modernist cinema explored the consciousness of a protagonist in the hero's journey. Crime fiction films, such as hard-boiled thrillers, are an example of the valuing of modernist rationality. They explored the corruption of society in a surreal way, experimenting with film noir techniques. Modernist films often reflected a singular vision of self and the world that was unique for an auteur, such as Howard Hawks.

Postmodern films reflect the new themes and narrative techniques of Postmodernism and playfully experiment with the concept of the suspension of disbelief. The main themes of Postmodernism are: truth; language; reason, science and technology; the Other; power and oppression and creativity and the aesthetic.

Postmodernism is the culture of critical consciousness that defined postmodernity. It is marked by scepticism towards the past and its Western patriarchal ideological dominance.

Like postmodern fiction, films critique and reject the grand narratives of history and high modernism. These are known as the myths of progress. Scriptwriters and directors experimented with the optimistic narratives of progress, which valued rationalism and science, and the conventions of traditional Victorian realist storytelling. Film-making was a part of popular culture that had been devalued by high modernism in comparison to preferred forms, such as a satirical novel, modern poetry or an experimental short story. All these forms showed the elitist role of the author. In postmodern films, the concerns and techniques of previously classified high culture art forms blend with those of low culture art forms, such as comic books and advertising. This often gave the new form a set of contradictory concerns, styles and values, which reflect the cultural paradoxes within the postmodern condition. Postmodern films access the stories of ordinary people and celebrate cultural diversity. They critique the values of white

Anglo Saxon militaristic, capitalistic and imperialistic males or white patriarchy and their ideology.

Postmodern cinema reflects an outlook that a film is an artistic space where time and place are artificial constructions manipulated by directors. Representations of self and the world are constructed using a new aesthetic called anti-realism. This is known as playing with the film's textuality. A film's textuality can be extended to connect both with the composer's context and other texts that belonged to the cultural world. This concept is known as intertextuality and it introduced a large range of options for the film-maker to use. It meant that directors could borrow styles from the past and experiment with generic conventions using and subverting them, or by creating a generic hybrid using the conventions, or two or more genres in the same film.

Postmodern films have become self-conscious, drawing attention to their own constructed nature and breaking the fourth wall between audience and actors and, at times, the director. This has opened up new possibilities between the world of the film and its external, contextual world. Images in the filmic world can connect with images in the audience's world, giving them a more interactive and complete cultural experience. The use of cinematic gaze gave new opportunities to actors to challenge their viewer's thinking and cultural assumptions about cinema, human nature, social roles and the way the world works.

The invention of computer imagery and other technology gave the directors and the film crew new tools for film-making. Experimentation with special effects became a dominant feature of postmodern films, producing an audience's expectation of experiencing spectacular imagery at the cinema, which could at times become overwhelming. This saturation of imagery reflects the ideas of the post-structuralist theorist Jean Baudrillard and his analysis of hyper-real imagery in the postmodern condition. A fascination with the possibilities of visual imagery has downplayed the importance of dialogue and, in recent times, audiences have complained about the de-sensitising effects of it. Computer imagery and technology has led theorists to say that postmodern films are more concerned with cultural surfaces than exploring the deeper meaning of the human condition.