

# Genre Theory

By Emily Bedford & Dana McLean

# Definition Of Genre

‘A style or category of art, music, or literature’

# Steve Neale – background info

- ◉ Born 9<sup>th</sup> January 1958
- ◉ Studied at UCL and Stanford University
- ◉ Main interest = Philosophy of Language



'genres are instances of  
repetition and difference'

Neale (1980)

He adds that 'difference is absolutely  
essential to the economy of genre'

- Steve Neale argues that pleasure is derived from 'repetition and difference' (Neale 1980); there would be no pleasure without difference. We may derive pleasure from observing how the conventions of the genre are manipulated (Abercrombie 1996). We may also enjoy the stretching of a genre in new directions and the consequent shifting of our expectations.
- Other pleasures can be derived from sharing our experience of a genre with others within an 'interpretive community' which can be characterized by its familiarity with certain genres (Daniel Chandler).

## 2 Functions of Genre..

Neale argues that Hollywood's generic regime performs 2 inter-related functions:

- ◉ To guarantee meanings and pleasures
- ◉ To offset the considerable economic risks of industrial film production by making them focus on utilising the genre's conventions.

# How does this apply to our trailer/film?

- The types of conventions found in genres might be grouped within the following categories

**Iconographies:** (symbolic forms associated with the genre)

**Narrative:** (structure, open/closed)

**Representations:** (characters/stereotypes)

**Ideologies** (beliefs and ideas of the 'ideal' concept, themes)

# Representations

- ◉ **Sexuality**- typically a heterosexual relationship is presented, with their being equality between the two individuals
- ◉ **Gender**- Both genders are represented and within their relationship are seen as equals, however external factors such as job/financial status/personality, may create a subtle 'superior gender' (usually the male), and inferior (usually female)
- ◉ **Age**- stereotypically romance films are aimed at a younger audience therefore the characters included are of a similar age



**Iconographies:** (symbolic forms associated with the genre)

**Narrative:** (structure, open/closed)

**Representations:** (characters/stereotypes)

**Ideologies** (beliefs and ideas of the 'ideal' concept, themes)

# Narrative

- Often a voice over is used to introduce the audience to the film and this 'love theme'
- Usually the characters follow Todorov's theory of equilibrium and go their separate ways because of an argument (**disruption of equilibrium**) but reunite afterwards (**reinstatement of equilibrium**)
- Emotional events which may cause disruption of equilibrium, for example the female's father dies, or there is a car crash

**Iconographies:** (symbolic forms associated with the genre)

**Narrative:** (structure, open/closed)

**Representations:** (characters/stereotypes)

**Ideologies** (beliefs and ideas of the 'ideal' concept, themes)

# Iconographies

- ◉ Hearts
- ◉ Flowers
- ◉ Wedding Bells
- ◉ Sun
- ◉ Snow