Film as Social Practice

FOURTH EDITION

Graeme Turner

109-125

This process has an ideological dimension; that is, it carries a burden of social and cultural meanings which need analysis, and we will look at this in Chapter 6. For the moment, though, it is important simply to understand the fact that there is a common structural process in narrative which has a determining effect on what we see on cinema screens. Despite its immense variety and difference in forms, narrative is something we can describe. We need to consider now what differentiates one narrative from another.

Codes and conventions

When we want to deal with bodies of films, film movements, or even a single text, we need to look at the specific relations established between one film and the whole context in which it is viewed. This context will include other films as well as the full range of media constructions, advertising strategies, and so on, that frame the particular film. This is ultimately a social context. The satisfaction an audience finds in a film does not emerge from the narrative alone. At the simplest level, film narratives are viewed within a context that is both textual and social. From the social context, connections can be implied between a film and social movements – *Rambo* and Reaganism, for example – or between a film and contemporary events – *Jaws* as a Watergate film, *The Fly* (1986) as an AIDS allegory, or the remake of *The Quiet American* (2002) which implied strong parallels between Vietnam and the war in Iraq and was in fact embargoed from release by a cautious studio for some time after 9/11. As we shall see in Chapter 6, this can oversimplify the relationship between film and society.

For now, however, we need to be aware that the myths, beliefs, and practices preferred by a culture or group of cultures will find their way into those cultures' narratives where they can be reinforced, criticized, or simply reproduced. It is possible to apprehend social change through shifts in thematic or formal trends in narrative over time. For example, in the nineteenth-century novel, narrative closure was often provided through the use of marriage as a mechanism which symbolized the education of the character(s) and the

final achievement of their lives. Usually this marriage indicated that all the problems within the relationship were now solved. This was not a direct reflection of social attitudes, of course. Whatever the existential reality of marriage in Victorian times (and there are plenty of accounts which reveal that the novels did not accurately depict, let alone reflect, a social fact), ideologically it was central to the society. Today, our films are unlikely to use marriage as such an uncomplicated mechanism for closure. Even in a film as conventional as *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) it is not marriage that provides closure, but a comic–romantic clinch that is promptly unravelled in the sequel. In a number of films during the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the abandonment of the marriage was presented for the same automatic approval from the audience as marriage once was. Roles identified with such actresses as Jill Clayburgh or Jane Fonda in the films *An Unmarried Woman* (1978) and *Nine to Five* (1980) represented marriage as a domestic trap which is limiting and boring, and even sexist. Many contemporary films, from the discomforting drama of *American Beauty* (1999) to the comedy star vehicle *The Banger Sisters* (2002), also depict marriage as a limiting and constricting institution. The meaning of marriage in Western societies, and thus its capacity to happily close off a narrative, has been altered by shifts in traditional attitudes to gender relations and in the ideologies which support them.

Again, this change is not reflected by film in any simple way, nor is the change evenly distributed. Indeed, the career of such a film as *Thelma and Louise* (1991) reveals deep unease, in the audience and the producers, about the female behaviour the film depicts. *Thelma and Louise* is reputed to have been screened to a preview audience to test two alternative endings: the existing one, and a more optimistic version in which Thelma and Louise escape. Apparently, the preview audiences opted for the 'harder' ending, where the women are emotionally supported by the freeze frame and the music track but narratively punished for their deeds by dying, presumably, on the floor of the Grand Canyon. Even this ending, however, provoked bitter media critiques for its alleged advocacy of 'female violence towards men' (*not* something we encounter in many Hollywood movies!). Given such reactions, it is hard not to see the

12 Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis: *Thelma and Louise*

reception of the film as enclosed within contemporary ambiguities and uncertainties about the kinds of power available to women in our society.

With *Thelma and Louise*, the problem was not so much the idea of women 'striking back', one suspects; rather it was the way in which it was handled that offended some critics. This highlights the fact that the social dimension of film narrative is not necessarily found at the deep structural levels explored by Todorov, Propp, or Lévi-Strauss. Rather, it occurs at the level of discourse – the ways in which the story is told, inflected, *represented*. This discursive level is also the location of cultural specificity – where we can differentiate the dominant discourses of one culture from those of another.

This is not to launch us into the hunt for cultural specificity in mainstream film. But it does alert us to the social influence on film, an influence which is most active in establishing the sets of codes and conventions which make communication possible. At the most elementary level we understand the societies depicted in films through our experience of our own society. As we watch a film and understand it, we look at gestures, listen to accents, or scan a style of dress, in order to place characters within a particular class, taste group, or subculture, for instance. And if the gestures, accents, and styles are not those of our society, we understand them through our experience of them in other films or by way of constructing analogies between the film's society and our own. All of these 'clues' are codes – systems by which signs are organized and accepted within a culture.

The dominance of Hollywood and its corporate successors has meant that film does not always exploit cultural differences as actively as some other forms of narrative. There is a high degree of cross-cultural coding where audiences agree to accept an imported system of meaning for the purposes of enjoying the film. So if audiences accept the gung-ho invocation of America that they find in many American films – from the *Lethal Weapon* series to more overt examples such as *Black Hawk Down* (2001) – this does not mean that they are being traitors to their own countries or necessarily accepting an American version of patriotism. It has become a way of coding the dominant filmic representation of certain definitions of

duty, honour, and masculinity. An upper-class British accent linked with a certain style of dress and behaviour is coded to read 'comic Englishman' in many Hollywood films; in Britain, it is seen as a characteristically American view of the British. Even the coding of Hollywood, while accepted for the purposes of entertainment, will be subject to further definition and mediation by other cultures.

Narrative events can themselves become 'coded': in film we accept that a knock on the head can cause amnesia, and that a further knock can cure it. Such cases exemplify an even more complex and conscious system of coding communication and representation: that of conventions. Conventions are like codes, systems which we all agree to use. 'Manners' are conventional – a system of constraints on and expectations of behaviour that is aimed at organizing social interaction to particular ends. In the cinema, we have learned to use a wide range of conventions which organize the film and which greatly assist the film-maker and his or her attempt to communicate. At the simplest level, it is conventional for us to accept ellipsis in film – the omission of non-essential parts of the story in order to avoid matching screen time with real time. So when a character gets into a car in one shot, and in the next has arrived at his or her destination, we understand that this is a convention, a shorthand method for getting a character from A to B without wasting screen time. It is conventional that films are realistic only within certain unspoken limits: they do not try to imitate the full complexity of life if this would hold up the narrative unnecessarily. For example, characters going somewhere by car in a big city can usually find somewhere to park immediately – something we know is highly unlikely but which we agree to accept in order to continue the narrative. No one really wants a twenty-minute sequence showing the hero looking for a parking space. When we talk of popular films as 'realistic', then, we do not necessarily mean they are like 'real life'; we mean that we have in a sense agreed to respond to their codes and conventions – their established systems of narration – as if they *were* like real life.

The clearest example of a conventional narrative system was established within classical Hollywood cinema (Bordwell 1985). Even now, within most mainstream Hollywood productions, audiences expect to encounter a plot centred around a main character

played by a star; driven by a consistent set of cause and effect relationships; employing a double-plot structure which links a heterosexual romance with another sphere of action (adventure, business, crime, for instance); and which uses the romantic clinch as the sign of narrative closure. Departures from such conventions within contemporary Hollywood cinema are usually seen as especially realistic and 'confronting' (*Silence of the Lambs*, 1991; *The Accused*, 1988), as especially 'arty' (*Being John Malkovich*, 1999), or as fantasy (*Pirates of the Caribbean*, 2003).

Conventions have built up around the representation of the female in films. Particularly in Hollywood film since the adoption of colour, the female is shot in a different way to her male counterpart. There is more emphasis on individual parts of the body, even to the extent of cropping out the head or face; more attention to the moulding produced by lighting; and a greater use of *mise-en-scène* for display. Hollywood film has turned the female form into a spectacle, an exhibit to be scanned and arguably possessed by the (male) viewer. Although the conventions of the 'halo' and the 'soft-focus' effects (achieved through veiling the camera or spreading vaseline on the lens) defy reality, they are widely accepted in representations of women. In films we are offered an impossible image of female beauty as the object of male (and even female) desire. This convention is no longer seen to be as 'natural' as it used to be. Laura Mulvey (1975) has argued that narrative film necessarily places all viewers (male and female) in the position of the male voyeur and that this is a direct result of narrative film's conventions rather than an incidental by-product.

Certainly, the male body has never been displayed in the same ways as the female body or to the same degree, although it is possible to argue that certain male stars today, such as Antonio Banderas, Brad Pitt, Nicholas Cage, or Bruce Willis exploit their bodies as spectacles. Miriam Hansen's work on Rudolf Valentino and the female audience for silent cinema (1994) demonstrates that this would not be the first time Hollywood exploited the male body as an object of the desire within its narratives. Yvonne Tasker's *Spectacular Bodies* (1993) talks of the increased visibility of the muscular male (and, also, female) bodies in contemporary Hollywood action films but it

is still accepted that, in general, men are not usually employed as secondary characters who exist simply as spectacles of desire in the way that 'starlets' are still used in a typical James Bond film, for instance. Impossible images of femaleness can only exacerbate the already highly constructed view of women most Western men pursue. Conventions of representing the female in film are examples of the dialectic action of film upon society, in that the production of such images has made it more likely that further examples of such images will continue to be produced until the convention itself is overturned. This has been an object of concern to feminists and increasingly to cultural studies over many years, and rightly so.

The breaking down of such conventions relies upon audiences understanding that they are, in fact, conventions. That such an understanding is possible is an important reminder that all the parties involved – film-makers, audiences, critics – are very well aware of the working of conventions. Many films will themselves operate as a series of comments upon conventions – sometimes invoking a convention only to break it. In *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) Indiana Jones is pursuing his abducted partner through a bazaar when he is suddenly confronted by a giant Arab wielding a scimitar. Up to this point, the film has shamelessly and self-consciously exploited every convention of the action adventure serial, milking every situation for its dramatic potential in order to offer as many 'thrills' as possible. In this scene, the Arab is grinning and chuckling in threat and challenge, and the crowd draws back in expectation of a battle. Similarly, the audience. We are given medium close-ups of the Arab, and he is a convincing threat. When we cut to Indiana Jones he looks irritated, preoccupied; he pulls out his revolver, shoots the Arab in the most offhanded of ways, and then resumes his search. The expected battle turns to burlesque as the conventional expectations of a fair fight to the death are comically overturned.

Raiders of the Lost Ark, of course, manages to have it both ways: while it sends up the conventions of action adventure movies at particular moments, it also works within them for the bulk of its narrative. Working against the conventions which frame the representation of women in film, however, is not nearly so easy. As we

have already seen in relation to *Thelma and Louise*, these conventions have their social origin in how women are generally seen and valued within the community. The social construction of the feminine rules out most of the possibilities we might suggest as avenues for changing the representational conventions in film. For women to take on more power within the narrative (that is, becoming the one who drives the action forward) is to risk being seen as masculinized – the so-called 'phallic woman'. For women to resist acting as the object of male desire is also to reject most of the codes and conventions which structure them as attractive, sexual, beings. The trend towards the muscular heroine (Demi Moore in *GI Jane*, 1997, or Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2*, for instance), exhibiting what Tasker calls 'musculinity' (1993: 3), can be seen as an erasure of the female body rather than a redesigning of its potential for power. It becomes, that is, masculine and powerful rather than feminine and powerful.

There are many examples, however, which would seem to indicate a shift in women's role within the Hollywood narrative system – which changes their meaning for male as well as for female viewers. Consequently, there is a growing critical literature dealing with the new, narratively powerful, Hollywood heroine (Creed 1993; Tasker 1993, 1998; Brunsdon 1997; Bruzzi 1997). Carol Clover (1992) has argued that low budget horror–slasher films relied upon a powerful feminine heroine for many years before a similar trend was discernible in mainstream popular films. In relation to these mainstream films, Sigourney Weaver's Ripley in the *Alien* trilogy is most often seen as naturally powerful and commanding, without becoming 'masculinized' or asexual. Geena Davis's Charley in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* (1996) explicitly deals with the apparent incompatibility between power and maternity. Frances McDormond's performance in the Coen brothers' *Fargo* (1996) broke most of the existing conventions: her character was unassuming and domestic, narratively powerful but not 'musculine', folksy rather than sexy or charismatic – and pregnant. It is not difficult, however, to find contradictory examples which demonstrate that conservative ideologies of gender remain in place. The negative side to the narratively active heroine is apparent in films which depict
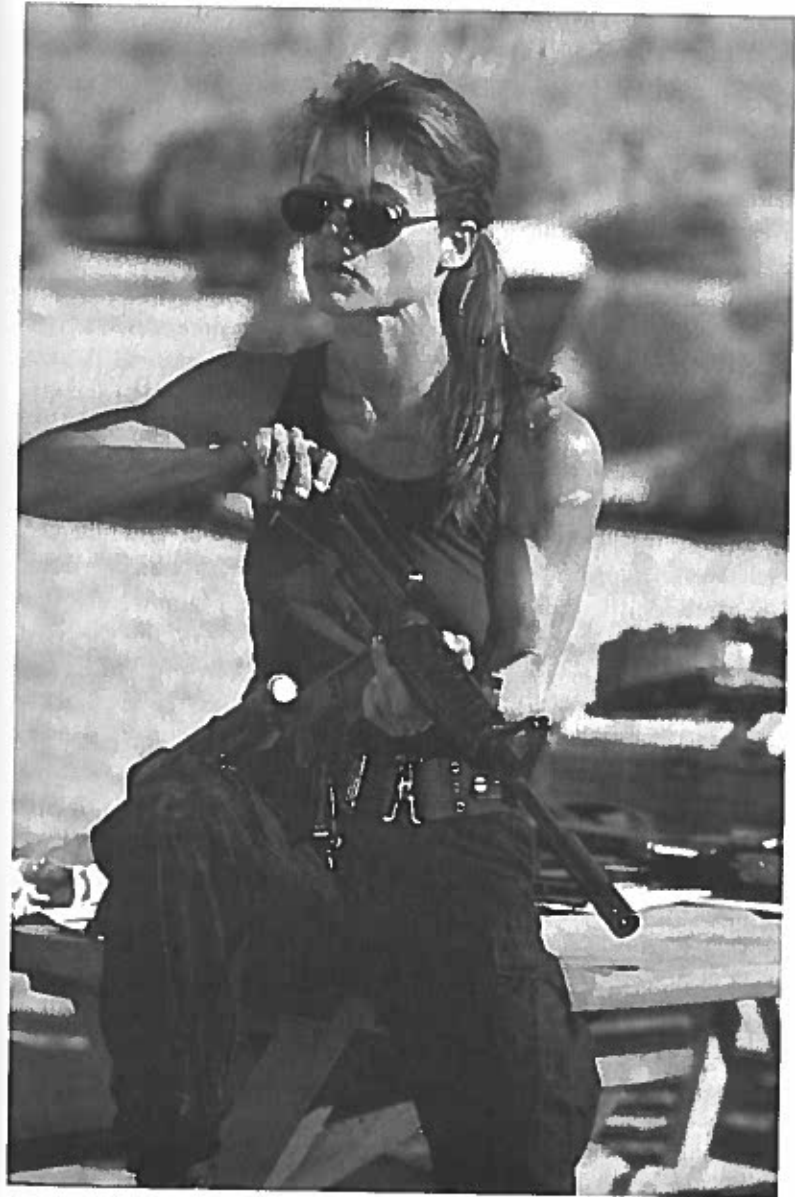
13 Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2*: a sign of new constructions of female power?

female power as pathologically threatening: in *Fatal Attraction* (1987), *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* (1992), *Single White Female* (1992), *Basic Instinct* (1992), and *Body of Evidence* (1993), the powerful, self-possessed woman is insane, obsessive, and needs to be destroyed. A slightly modified version of this can turn up even in more formulaic action spectaculars – such as Halle Berry's Ginger in *Swordfish* (2001). Despite such instances, however, it is certainly the case now that there is at least a competing set of minor conventions at work which problematize the traditional representation of women in the cinema; among the consequences, one might say, is Quentin Tarantino's celebration of Uma Thurman as a full-blown martial arts heroine in his *Kill Bill* movies.

Within popular film generally, of course, it is never easy to challenge or disregard existing conventions. Popular films need their shorthand, their accustomed routes, to operate effectively. Once accomplished, however, the breaking of a convention can itself become conventional. *The Searchers* is a film which follows the search for a lost child kidnapped by Indians. A familiar plot line in westerns, it has a surprise twist in *The Searchers*. When the child is found she does not want to return. This break in convention has spawned a number of movies which are, as Stuart Byron (1979) has pointed out, precisely similar to *The Searchers* in structure and in the key fact that the object of rescue does not wish to be rescued. A group of films from the 1970s – *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Star Wars*, and *The Deer Hunter* (1978) – all use this convention. In another example, over the last two decades action films which involve an all-powerful killer of some kind – an alien or a particularly demented murderer – have given their villains a 'second wind'. Typically, after the villain has been dramatically and bloodily 'killed', the camera moves off to (usually) the threatened couple who comfort each other with the knowledge that it is all over. But, of course, it is not. The villain – often made even more repulsive by supposedly mortal wounds – returns for one last attack, a reprise performance of incremental mayhem, so that the hero or heroine must find yet another still more cataclysmic way to exterminate them properly. This became fashionable, particularly, in the mid-1980s and early 1990s: *Cape Fear*

(1991), *The Terminator* (1984), *Terminator 2* (1991), *Predator* (1987), *Dead Calm* (1989), and *Fatal Attraction* (1987) are just some of the films which come to mind as employing this strategy. Rather than surprising us, this convention is now so familiar that we have built it into our expectations, deliciously waiting for the surprise attack we know must eventuate and which is now signalled by the hero (and usually the heroine) turning his (or her) back on the apparently vanquished villain/monster/alien.

What we have been describing, then, is a dynamic system of conventions, rather than one that resists change. At its best, it works to give us a great deal of pleasure in our mastery of the conventions, and at its simplest it enables us to recognize what we see on the screen as pictures of reality. It is a system that makes possible the most interesting method of classifying films: that of genre, to which we turn next.

Genre

One of the ways in which we distinguish between different kinds of film narratives is through genre. Borrowed from literary studies, where it is used to delineate the difference between satire and comedy, tragedy and farce, and so on, the term 'genre' has become a useful tool in film analysis. In film, genre is a system of codes, conventions, and visual styles which enables an audience to determine rapidly and with some complexity the kind of narrative they are viewing. Even the musical accompaniment to the titles can indicate to an audience whether the film fits into broad generic categories like the comedy or the western. Finer discriminations develop as the film continues, involving the recognition of a visual style perhaps, or a recognizable set of moral and ideological values which will be inscribed into such genres as detective thrillers.

What genre does is recognize that the audience watches any one film within a context of other films, both those they have personally seen and those they have heard about or seen represented in other media outlets. This aspect of genre, *intertextuality*, polices the boundaries of an audience's expectations. It can tell them what to

expect or it can deliberately mislead them by offering expectations that are not going to be met. In general, the function of genre is to make films comprehensible and more or less familiar. Even parodies or criticisms of a genre depend on the audience's recognition of and familiarity with the target. The choice of a black sheriff in the Mel Brooks spoof western *Blazing Saddles* (1974) is comic only if one is aware of how radical a departure this is from the conventions of the genre. Sometimes parodying of genre can be risky, however. Reviews of *Starship Troopers* (1997) suggested that its difficulty in reaching its audience was in part due to its slightly obscure relation to the genres of the space adventure and the teen romance; some audiences couldn't decide if it was a parody or just plain unconvincing.

A genre often includes specific narrative expectations – recurrent settings, set-piece sequences of action (the shoot-out, the car chase) – so that the task of resolving the film's conflicts can be deferred on to the genre. The western's final confrontation between opposing forces is almost ritually represented as a shoot-out. Through the management of the shoot-out (who wins and how) the film-maker 'closes' the film. Similarly, sci-fi films which routinely pit humans against machines lead to a resolution where human ingenuity (or some other dimension of specifically human behaviour) rather than brute force is used to defeat the machine's technical superiority. Generic conventions assist closure, confirming it as a textual force, and sharing some of the film's responsibility for articulating an individual resolution.

Genres depend on the audience's competences and experience: on the skills they have developed in understanding films and the body of similar experiences they can draw upon. Although many films fail because they are too predictable and too much bound by the limits of the genre, many others fail because they are simply not comprehensible. One of Francis Ford Coppola's few commercial disasters was *One from the Heart* (1982). Promoted with the tag line, 'When Francis Ford Coppola Makes a Love Story . . . Don't Expect Hearts and Flowers', it mixed genres unpredictably as well as moving frequently between fantasy and reality. As a result, and despite Coppola's reputation as a director (*The Godfather* (1972) and its sequel *The Godfather Part II* (1974) both won three Oscars

and *Apocalypse Now!* (1979) won two Oscars), the film irritated and confused its audiences, who soon stopped coming. Films need to encourage expectations that they can satisfy; or if they fail to satisfy them there must be a plausible reason and a reward for the audience in the final denouement. A mystery thriller, for instance, will offer many possible resolutions to the problem it sets up as a way of misleading the audience until the appropriate moment to reveal the killer. Audiences accept this. As long as the real culprit is revealed in a satisfying and convincing manner, the audience can forgive the deception. But a film which arbitrarily ushers in a solution without the support of a generic convention or without foreshadowing is in danger of offending and irritating audiences. Contemporary viewers of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* usually react in this way to the contrived ending of the film.

It is easy to make genre sound like a deterministic threat to creativity. It is true that all popular media, not just film, have to deal with the familiar and the conventional more than do, say, painting or poetry. The individual perception is not given the privileged place in the popular arts that it is in more elite forms like literature. Instead, there is a pleasure in the familiar, in recognizing conventions, and relishing their repetition and restatement. Nevertheless, there is innovation and originality in genre films, and the best examples can achieve a very complicated and delicate balance between the familiar and the original, repetition and innovation, predictability and unpredictability. Producers of popular film know that each genre film has to do two apparently conflicting things: to confirm the existing expectations of the genre, and to alter them slightly. It is the variation from the expectation, the innovation in how a familiar scenario is played, that offers the audience the pleasure of the recognition of the familiar, as well as the thrill of the new.

Genres are dynamic. They change. Christian Metz (1975) has argued that genres go through a typical cycle of changes during their lifetime. In his view, the genre evolves through a classic stage, to self-conscious parody of the classics, to a period where films contest the proposition that they are part of the genre, and finally to a critique of the genre itself. It is a little early in the history of film to be certain of such propositions but there is certainly evidence that
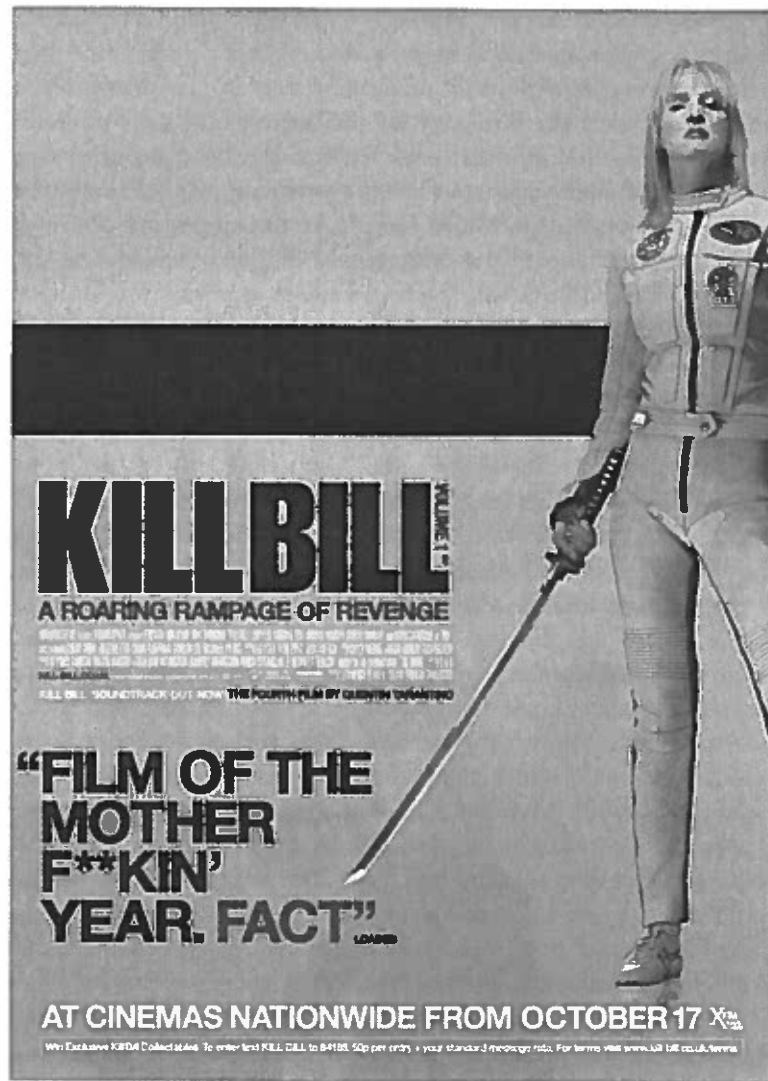
14 Genres and stars: the key elements in movie posters – *Kill Bill*

such a genre as the western has evolved and exhibited the kind of dynamism we are discussing.

In his *Six-Guns and Society* (1975), Wright examines the kind of cyclical development Metz argues is characteristic of film genres. He employs the combination of the methods of narrative analysis we have already met in this chapter: he uses the notion of myth associated with Lévi-Strauss, the use of oppositions as a means of describing narrative structure also developed by Lévi-Strauss, and describes a 'deep' narrative structure in the same terms as Vladimir Propp. Wright argues that the western genre goes through a thematic and approximately chronological change from what he calls the 'classic' western (*Shane* (1953), *Dodge City* (1930), *Canyon Passage* (1946), and *Duel in the Sun* (1947) are among his examples) to the 'transitional' western (*High Noon* (1952), *Broken Arrow* (1951)) and finally to the 'professional' western (*Rio Bravo* (1959), *The Professionals* (1966), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1970)). He acknowledges a further variation on the 'classic' western which he calls the 'vengeance' western and which includes films such as *Stagecoach* (1939) and *One-Eyed Jacks* (1960). The transition he describes reorients the hero in relation to his society, and reflects, according to Wright's analysis, social and political shifts in America over the period concerned. Briefly, the changes represent American society as inadequate, the heroes as more isolated, and all parties as less effective at resolving problems (in the professional western, death often resolves the narrative problem for heroes who are basically antisocial). The development is, Wright argues, not merely one internal to the film texts; there is clearly a broader social and political dimension involved as well.

Finally, to bring this discussion of genre to a close, it is important to emphasize that genre is the product of at least three groups of forces: the industry and its production practices; the audience and their expectations and competences; and the text in its contribution to the genre as a whole (see diagram on p. 124).

For the industry, there is often enormous market pressure to repeat successful versions of popular genres; hence the rash of sequels we are seeing these days. Within the industry, films are often conceived in terms of genre, marketed through their associations

GENRE

industry ← → audience ← → text
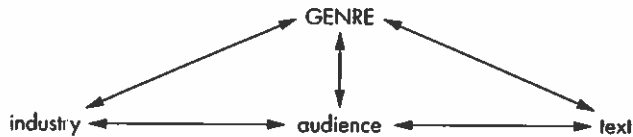
with other films within the genre, and produced with an eye on the conventional limits of the genre. *Romancing the Stone* (1984) was a film which, in a sense, was made possible by the success of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which itself allowed its audience to understand its genre by carefully referring to the serial adventure film throughout its length. Genre is one of the determinants of the audience's choice of a film, not only in terms of whether or not they possess the competences to appreciate that genre, but in terms of which kind of film it is they want to see, and whether the specific example of that general kind of film (say, a comedy) suits their taste – is it a teen comedy like *American Pie* (1999) or an adult romance like *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993)? Or, to pick up this last example, among the ways that *You've Got Mail* (1998) specified its audience was through repeating the pairing of Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan that had been so successful in *Sleepless in Seattle*. Finally, the film itself indicates how it is to be understood through its own signifying systems by its intertextual links with other films.

Chapter 5 will discuss the specific roles of the audience in greater detail but it is worth suggesting here that audiences make genres as much as film-makers do. Also, genre can be as much of a challenge to directors as a restriction on them. While it may tend to restrict audience hypotheses about a film to the 'how' rather than the 'what', it enables complex narratives to be told in a minimum of screen time, actually enhancing the capacity of the medium to deal with complex and sophisticated material. Its familiarity, on the other hand, offers the many of us who want it the pleasure of seeing the predictable happen in unpredictable ways.

Narrative and narration

Before leaving the subject of narrative, however, I need to acknowledge an alternative approach to those emanating from structuralism. Work within the cognitivist tradition, particularly *Narration in the Fiction Film* by David Bordwell (1985), shifts the focus onto the process of narration, proposing a much more active model of the film viewer. The use of the term 'viewer' is significant here. Rather than approach film through the idea of spectatorship, which implies a passive consumer unconsciously positioned by the film text, this group of theorists examines the active viewer consciously making sense of film texts. Some, such as Stephen Prince (1996), suggest that a great deal of this activity is available to us as empirical information. 'Questions about how people process, interpret, and respond to cinematic images and narratives', says Prince, are empirical questions 'or at least incorporate an empirical dimension which can be investigated by observing the behaviour of real viewers' (1996: 72).

Bordwell, more characteristically, insists on recognizing the importance of perception and cognition in understanding our relation to film texts. The cinema depends upon certain physiological characteristics of our 'visual system'. First, the retina's inability to follow rapidly changing light intensities and thus its tendency to view a light flickering very quickly (more than fifty flashes per second) as a steady one; second, the phenomenon known as 'apparent motion when the eye sees a string of displays as a single moving one' (1985: 32). In terms of cognition, Bordwell emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge and experience. This can involve what he calls *schemata*, organized clusters of knowledge which guide the hypotheses we make about the world, and the inferences we draw from what we experience. Schemata assist in all perceptual or cognitive processes, and, Bordwell argues, they play an important part in story comprehension as well.

When Bordwell moves into discussing the viewer's activity with film, he starts with the viewer's perceptual capacities, their prior knowledge and experience, and only then deals with the 'material and structure of the film itself' (1985: 33). Engaging with the film text, he operates in a distinctive manner, arguing that the narrative