A GUN OF ONE S OWN
GENDER REPRESENTATION IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERNS

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MASCULINITIES

3. Film form and hegemonic masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is constructed through content, but also through film form. Using *Appaloosa* and *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*, this section analyses how neo-classic film form (Casetti and Di Chio, 1990) and slow cinema theory (De Luca and Jorge, 2016) helps to construct a discourse on hegemonic masculinity.

4. Queer Masculinities

The classic Western is based on the figure of the hegemonic heterosexual male (Tompkins, 1992), and homosexuality is erased or subordinated. The contemporary Western has deconstructed this in *Brokeback Mountain* and in *Deadwood*.

5. Black Masculinities

Apart from homosexuality, non-White masculinities have been subordinated in the Western: Native Americans, Asians, and Black Americans. Some Westerns have challenged this notion through violence and fantasy, as *Django Unchained*, or through labour discourses around the railroad building, like *Hell on Wheels*.

6. Contemporary Masculinities

The Western has become a hybrid genre, able to permeate other kinds of films (Paryz, 2015). Western iconography and bodily discourses (Connell, 1995) are key in the construction of contemporary masculinities in films like *Logan*.

1. Introduction

Since 1990, a trend of contemporary Westerns has challenged the ideology and form of the classic Westerns. Historical representation, race, the economy of the West, and the role of gender have been approached from new perspectives by revisionist films. This research aims to focus on how gender has been constructed in Westerns after the film *Unforgiven* (1992). Focusing on configurations of masculinities and femininities, it will be analysed whether the Western is able to embody feminist discourses or not. If this research can prove a feminist reversal in a traditionally masculine film genre, it would help it to maintain social relevance, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, it could result in some valuable dissemination of feminist ideology.

2. Critical framework

This research utilizes the concept of gender hegemony as critical framework. As a way to understand gender relations, gender hegemony is split into the ideas of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) and hegemonic femininity (Schippers, 2007). On the one hand, hegemonic masculinity refers to dominance over women and competition between men in order to be regarded as hegemonic. On the other hand, hegemonic femininity is constructed in order to legitimise such masculine domination.

FEMINITIES

7. Film form and hegemonic feminity

A new output of feminocentric Westerns (McGee, 2007) has challenged the notion of hegemonic femininity and has proposed other forms of female characters through neo-classic or slow film form, such as *Hostiles* and *Meek's Cutoff*.

8. Queer Feminities

Alongside heterosexual female leading characters, the contemporary Western has focused on queer femininities as an alternative to the classic Westerner. Queer theory, economic property and self-consciousness configure liberation discourses in the TV series *Godless* and *Westworld*.

9. Intersectional Feminism

From the perspective of black women, feminism needs to address racial situations differently (Carby, 1982). The interplay between Black and White femininities, the absence of it, and their relation to masculinitiy will be analyzed in *The Keeping Room* and *The Beguiled*.

10. Contemporary Feminities

The spread of the Western has also played an important role in the definition of non-hegemonic contemporary femininities, from *Kill Bill* and the liberation from patriachy and capital, to the de-sexualization of the body of Charlize Theron in *Mad Max* or the performance of Frances McDormand as a classic Westerner.

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Westworld (2016-). Created by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy [TV]. USA: HBO.
Hostiles (2017). Directed by Scott Cooper [Film]. USA: Entertainment Studios Motion Pictures.