



Formative feedback

Student name	Pete Walker	Student number	514508
Course/Unit	An Introduction to Film Culture	Assignment number	4
Type of tutorial	Written / Audio-Visual		

Overall Comments

You've built up a real head of steam lately, Pete, and it's really good to see you hitting your assignment deadlines and staying on course for assessment. After a really enjoyable and readable third assignment, this one is also extremely thoughtful, engaging, and promising.

As this is the first time that we've had a live feedback session, some clarification: the **Feedback on assignment** section is where I've briefly outlined my immediate thoughts as I read your essay. They're not as detailed as you've been used to in the standard written feedback I've given you, but will work as a complement to our live session. I'm assuming that you were making some notes as we chatted, but please feel free to shoot me an email if there's anything you'd like me to clarify.

Assessment potential

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to pass at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.

Feedback on assignment

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity

After a couple of awkward and uncertain first steps, your essays have greatly improved and become far more considered, thoughtful, well-structured and clearly written. There has been a definite feeling of the bull being grabbed by the horns, and this essay continues on this trajectory. I really like how you've conceived of the rite-of-passage film as one where 'a weird

parallel reality always seems to be a good testing ground for the child who is in the process of making the painful transition into adulthood.' Astute and well considered stuff.

- 'The box office figures tell us that everybody loves a coming of age film. If it has elements of science fiction and/or fantasy as well, then success is almost guaranteed.'

I take your point, Pete, but this is a slightly throwaway and general way to start an essay. After this, the paragraph improves greatly and sets the rest of the essay up with a clear and easy confidence. Good.

- 'These films are important, because they are carriers of contemporary cultural values and aspirations, reflecting, and perhaps also in some cases challenging, the norms of everyday social action.'

Lovely stuff! (but how about offering a quick, specific example of a film that's done this?)

- 'When a new film appears, it is often difficult to attribute it to any one style or genre.'

Good. Eclecticism and the 'random cannibalisation' (F Jameson) of styles has long-since been the norm rather than the exception. Do some research around 'postmodernism' and cinema to find out a little bit more about this. Also do some wider research around genre. I think just a little more thought about what it is and how it's been understood would add an additional note of detail to the essay. Genre can be thought of both in terms of a) plot and narrative and b) iconography, i.e., the 'visual stuff', e.g. saloon bars, stetsons and cacti in westerns.

- The paragraph that starts with 'The father figure in *After Earth*' is generally ok, but I do think you could have called on some wider research here to give everything an added oomph. I dare say that the Brian McNair book I recommended could be useful here, but I've also highlighted another two that are specifically interested in media and gender in the Suggested reading/viewing section.

- 'This film shows that the adult male action hero stands supreme in American cinema, and is not looking to give up his dominance lightly.'

Maybe!! However, I do think that there is room for a bit more discussion here, Pete. You could certainly call on David Gauntlett to help you do this. Equally, I think there's room to say offer a bit more detail re 'in fact it can be argued that even Ripley is just a female equivalent of the clichéd male action hero.' How so? And how might we attempt to theorise this in relation to wider literature?

- 'It is possible to read this film from a feminist perspective'

→ What type of feminism

No doubt. So why not take a look at Rosalind Gill's book and be more explicit about this? I do take your point, but 'a feminist perspective' is incredibly general. The material you cover beyond this is generally good, so a closer eye on literature and ideas in this field would make it even more convincing.

- '...this subverts contemporary Western societies' tendency to depict children as passive creatures who are guarded by adults, but not allowed to participate in any important matters.'

Another lovely reading, Pete. You're really starting to find your feet with the unit, and are approaching everything in an appropriately detailed and committed manner. If you're interested in doing some further reading around children, age and the lifecourse, take a look at Andrew Blaikie's *Ageing and Popular Culture* and *Childhood* by Chris Jenks.

- 'Gender roles truly have been reversed in this film.'

This assumes that gender operates on a 'simple' binary principle- something that's been increasingly challenged in academic research in recent years, and that is starting to find its way into the mainstream. This is Judith Butler's *raison d'etre*. If you want to find out more, I'd suggest looking at the sections that explore here ideas in Rosalind Gill and David Gauntlett's books. Butler's own texts are notoriously inaccessible (but the ideas that underpin them are quite breathtaking).

- '...perspective is offered by De Toro's film'.

Del Toro.

I appreciate its sentiments, but the concluding paragraph is a bit mushy, Pete! Reel it in a bit. It doesn't end a highly readable and astute essay in quite so striking a manner.

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Much improved. You're clearly committing yourself to wider research- your bibliography provides ample evidence of this. Keep going though. The more you seem to be reading, the better your essays are becoming.

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Your blog can still be a little cluttered and tricky to navigate, Pete. Your essays have improved enormously over the last couple of assignments, so I'm going to add a little extra time to the next deadline so you can whip your blog into shape. Keep it simple, elegant and accessible, and remove anything that doesn't provide evidence of learning and development.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

Take a look at David Gauntlett's *An Introduction to Media, Gender and Identity* and *Gender and the Media* by Rosalind Gill. Anthony Easthope's *What a Man's Gotta Do: Masculine Myth in Popular Culture* should also get you thinking.

Pointers for the next assignment / assessment

Keep going. There have been huge improvements in the assignments you've been producing, and your work is consistently engaging, thoughtful, astute and encouraging. This seems to coincide with you finding your feet with independent research, so I'm confident that you can carry this into the final assignment.

Let's also do the final feedback session on Skype?

Tutor name	Andrew Conroy
Date	25/5/17
Next assignment due	19/7/17