

# Marxist analysis of film

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Marxist Analysis of Film \* What is it? \* It is a form of critique that can be applied to any text or Film. \* A Marxist Analysis can be boiled down to how economics drives the plot and is basically a critique of capitalism. \* Marxism was founded by Karl Heinrich Marx \* Karl Marx was a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist and revolutionary socialist. \* His most notable work being "The Communist Manifesto" (1848), these ideas played a significant role in the development of social science and the socialist movement. \* His theories hold that all societies progress through the dialectic of class struggle: a conflict between an ownership class which controls production and a lower class which produces the labour for goods. Heavily critical of the current socio-economic form of society, capitalism. \* These ideas are the basis for Marxist Film criticism although Marxist critics must be wary of how cinema supports dominant ideology (as in, it is easy to see capitalism's dominance through mainstream cinema). \* Marxist Analysis Can be broken into four areas 1. Narrative content 2. Narrative structure. 3. Political and economic contexts of production. 4. Aesthetics of representation. \* Narrative content \* Analyze To what extent does the narrative (characters/ events /settings/ themes) reflect or propagate capitalist ideologies or critique them? \* Characterization - class positions? Who are the protagonists/antagonists? What identity positions do they embody? \* Settings - social/work environments and ideological connotations? \* Events - dominant ideology de-stabilized or reaffirmed by major events of the storyline? \* Themes — bourgeois ideology i. e.; relating to, or characteristic of social middle class, marked by a concern for material interests and respectability and a tendency toward mediocrity dominated by

commercial and industrial interests). Are they at work? E. g. 'follow your dreams', 'it is your destiny', \* Narrative structure \* Analyze a film to see whether or not it contains a structural scheme that can be considered as inherently bourgeois \* If it's a drama based on conflict/competition (which is the essence of capitalism) \* If the Main character can be defined as a "hero" who triumphs over adversity and is rewarded with wealth, status or sex \* If there is an emphasis on individualism throughout the film. (key ideology of capitalist societies) \* 3 act structure — linear, progressive, character driven story development. (The status quo is maintained because the characters experience change but social order does not.) \* Political and economic contexts of production. \* Marxist analysis can go as far as to criticise dominant capitalist ideologies in terms of film production and distribution \* After all, Bourgeois production creates bourgeois films \* Alternatives include \* Independent production companies \* Communal film-making \* And state funding \* In terms of Distribution, one can argue that a film is distributed by media controlled by capitalist interests, solutions to this include: \* Distribution by film festivals and galleries. \* Audiences accessing media through sharing digital reproduction \* Obviously, this critique depends largely on what degree does economics influence culture which is debateable. \* Aesthetics of representation. \* Marxist theory argues that the way in which the aesthetics of a film (camera, editing, Mise-en-scene etc.) create and naturalise ways of looking at the world that reflect bourgeois ideology. \* E. g. Cinematic realism \* Applying Marxist Critique \* Film I wish to analyse is Pixar's film "Wall-e". \* In terms of Narrative Content \* Pro-capitalism \* Wall-e is a product of assembly line industry \* He was mass

produced \* Film shows benefits of this as Wall-e repairs his eye easily and efficiently; also his motherboard is repaired, which is his symbolic “ heart”. \*

Film depicts how Capitalism helps advance technology \* But we can argue that it is at the cost of skilled labour i. e. fat humans that are immobile, only able to hover and consume \* In terms of Narrative Structure \* Class division is represented with Wall-e, who would be working class (dirty) and all the other robots aboard The Axiom inc. Eva representing the pristinely clean Bourgeois class. \* Also Wall-e is the hero who struggles with adversity (being alone a fish out of water aboard the Axiom), succeeds and is rewarded with his love interest. \* In terms of Aesthetics of representation. \* Wall-e is bombarded with a myriad of advertisements for “ Buy and Large” ( the name itself is pro consumerism as it suggest to buy and in large quantities) \* BNL is an exaggerated representation of the bourgeois class \* The audience can easily identify with the heavy corporate advertisement as in reality we are constantly bombarded with ads from big corporations (Coca-Cola, McDonalds etc.), in this way BNL is made to seem naturalised to the audience despite its exaggerated nature. \* In terms of Political and economic contexts of production. \* Wall-e was produced by Pixar, which is a massive corporate entity and dominates the industry. \* Conclusion \* BNL epitomises capitalism in the sense that it gained profits, expanded and conquered its competitors (absence of any other corporate ads.) \* Because of this, Earth’s resources were depleted \* This in turn lead to BNL spreading out to populate the moon and other planets \* “ Wall-e” shows us the effects of a corporation acting in the place of government.