

Film and television worksheet

[Sociology](#)



Film and Television Worksheet of the film or television show you viewed: Mad Men Respond to each question with a paragraph of at least 50 words. State your point of view and explain it thoroughly.

What is the primary emphasis of the film or show? Examples: artistic expression, technological achievement, informative. Explain your answer.

The primary emphasis of the show Mad Men, according to me, is the limitations of consumerism in answering key problems facing humanity. By showing the lavish and promiscuous lifestyles of Ad executives of the 1960s, the show is simultaneously questioning their beliefs and attitudes.

What cultural values is the film or show attempting to promote? Do you agree or disagree with those values? Explain your answer.

To the extent that the show is meant as entertainment and not as a moral instruction, I should be said that Mad Men is not trying to promote any cultural values. In contrast, the show is a realistic depiction of the hedonism and obscenities of the early 1960s, before the Civil Rights Movement took off.

What is the surface-level subject matter of the film? Describe the plot.

The plot of the show surrounds the personal and professional life of Don Draper, the dashing and handsome Creative Director of ad agency Sterling Cooper. The excesses and opulence of his life does not fully compensate for a lingering sadness that is a product of both past circumstances and present misadventures.

What trends in this film or show are also commonly found in other films or shows?

Mad Men is a unique American Television Drama that doesn't lend itself to easy classification and comparison. But centered on the events happening

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within the premises of Sterling Cooper offices, one could relate the show to The Office. Mad Men is also not targeted to a particular demographic group, like say, how Desperate Housewives were.

What is the subtext or underlying theme of the film? What issues or values are explored in the film or show?

There are several parallel themes explored through the lives of various characters. Through the lead actor Don Draper's life, themes such as the futility of ostentatious materialism, marital infidelity, misogyny, unethical conduct during military duty, etc are explored. Through Peggy Olson's character issues of unwanted pregnancy, women's equality at the workplace, etc are explored.

What cultural stereotypes or archetypes are present in the narrative? What is the purpose behind the stereotype or archetypal character?

A prominent cultural stereotype in Mad Men is the male characters' internalized misogynistic attitudes and chauvinism. This is evident in the portrayal of all the major characters excepting Mr. Roger Cooper, the dignified and disciplined leader of the Sterling Cooper partnership. The likely purpose of these stereotypes is to showcase to the viewer the kind of society and norms that precipitated the Civil Rights Movement and, later, the Women's Rights Movement.

What is the source of conflict in the narrative of the film or show? How is the conflict resolved in the film or show?

One perennial source of conflict emerges from Sterling Cooper's competition with its corporate peers. Another source of conflict is between employees of the firm, as they try to outdo each other to move ahead in their careers.

Often, ethics is laid by the wayside during these conflicts. Those with power

and charm usually win over the honest and sincere types.

In what way is sound or music used to tell the story or to manipulate the viewer response?

Music plays a key role in the series. The opening credits are accompanied by a lively yet somber tune that depicts the inner confusion of the characters amid the charming and cheerful outer visage. Each episode also ends with a song from pop culture that captures the mood of the concluding scene.

Hence, music is generally used to accentuate the theme as and the drama.

What ethical issues or moral dilemmas are explored in the film? Describe your reaction to issues. Do you agree or disagree with how the issues were portrayed? Why or why not?

Issues such as the legitimacy of power hierarchies within the business corporation, underrepresentation and subordination of female employees, the slack code of conduct as exemplified by the incessant smoking and drinking within the office premises – these are the ethical issues dealt on the professional side. Coming to the personal lives of major characters, marital infidelity, patriarchal mindset, mindless consumerism, etc are the issues dealt with. Though some of these are a little shocking for the modern audience, they are a realistic portrayal of the heady, hedonistic culture seen during the days of Nixon and Kennedy. The show does not criticize some of the unacceptable behavior and beliefs in a direct way, but merely exposes it creatively and as an aid to the plot.

What types of editing techniques or technical effects are used to tell the story? Examples: close ups, flashbacks, or computer generated imagery, or special effects.

Flash back is a key narrative technique employed by the directors. In fact, <https://assignbuster.com/film-and-television-worksheet/>

the inner torment of Don Draper is most skillfully exposed through the numerous flashbacks that he encounters during the course of a regular week. Close ups are also used to good effect to capture even the slightest smirk or grimace that betrays much meaning to the context.

Does viewing films or shows like this affect how you form your individual identity? Why or why not?

Given the overall brilliance of Mad Men, I have to admit that the show has made an impression on me. Although I look at the show as a chronicler of American social and cultural history half a century back, it doesn't affect me as in terms of my personal identity. The fact that most adults in the show indulge in petulant, indulgent and selfish behavior, the lesser one assimilates these qualities into the personality make-up the better. I find the non-stop smoking and drinking quite repugnant, and certainly a feature that I would not want to incorporate into my life.