Richard Dyer Star Theory

Richard Dyer is a British media theorist, who discussed a star’s special place in the audiences’ lives. He (similarly to Hall) suggests that a star’s meta-narrative impacts on the consumption by the audience. He argued that the star image is manufactured and artificial and that individual stars have their own unique selling point (brand values) in order to grab and hold our attention – for example – Justin Bieber’s hair, JLS’ colour codes...

The Paradox of the Star

Dyer’s central idea was that the star image could be discussed using two key paradoxes. ‘What on earth is a paradox,’ you may ask – well, it’s a statement that contradicts itself. Dyer suggested that a star image simultaneously has two contradictory representations. He said...

‘...a star is both ordinary & extraordinary.’

- Dyer suggested that a star must be represented simultaneously as, just like us (the audience/regular people), but also at the same time possess something we do not have and something that makes them special, different, extraordinary... This might mean they are more talented, gifted, confident, passionate, artistic, sensitive, carefree or sexy, but also they are allowed to be rebellious, anti-social, or angry maybe. They are idealised version of humanity...idols.

‘...a star is both present & absent.’

- Dyer also thought that the audience struggles with another paradox; and that is that the star is simultaneously present in our lives, be this in our social groups chat, our style, our identity, and our consumption habits. However they are also absent, something that we perceive as out of reach, on a pedestal, and not actually there.
  - Note: This links in really nicely with a postmodern theory called hyper-reality that we will look at next term.

Dyer argued that as an audience we strive to complete the star image through consuming their products, shows, merchandise etc. We strive to complete the image by engaging with the star’s meta-narrative and, if possible, seek the ultimate satisfaction, seeing them live! The problem of course is that the meta-narrative shifts and changes and we are constantly striving to complete the image and constantly frustrated in our attempts to do so.
Through use of costume and performance

Through iconography in the narrative which reference self destructive nature

Through aggressive editing and camera movements during crescendos

Through performance and direct address to the audience during the performance

Through the layering of video and use of ghosting filter.

The Star

Vindictive
Talented
Heart Broken
Artistic
Ghostly
Socially Aware
Dangerous
Subversive
Gamorous
Bereft

Positioning them in isolated and barren looking mise-en-scene

Tearing the photos and rejecting ex-girlfriend

Using close-ups of band playing instruments in the performance

In the narrative using thought bubbles to show thoughts and through placing the teddy bear in the bin

Through use of shot composition and through surreal nature of narrative