Researching Gender in Film and Television Studies
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Areas of Interest

- Representations of the American family, family values and shifting family forms
- ‘Older bird’ chick flicks and the potential for sex
- Metrosexuality and heteronormativity in Doctor Who
- Wedding dresses and feminist potential in romantic comedies

Findings

- Recognition of shifting family realities, but a difficulty in letting go of ‘traditional’ values
- Older women are rarely visible in popular culture, sex is the pursuit of youth
- Metrosexuality and male interest in fashion used to reinforce patriarchal structures
- Wedding dresses have subversive potential but women are still resigned to heteronormative romance

Current Research Project

Overview

Case study of Nancy Meyers, one of highest grossing female directors working in Hollywood, focusing on style of her films, place within a male-dominated industry, and popular and academic discourse focused on Meyers and her films

Early Findings

- Meyers as (female) director of ‘women’s films’ is not taken seriously
- The emphasis on feminist critique frequently overturns any focus on individual voice and style
- There exists a language of women’s cinema – female filmmakers are subject to different critique
- Critique of Meyers’ work has been dominated by a discussion of gender at the expense of her style, influences and industrial context
- Meyers’ films need to be understood as fantasies rather than as realistic films about women’s lives
- Visual excess is more readily accepted in masculinist genres such as action and adventure cinema, but critiqued in women’s genres of romance
- Meyers negotiates a tensions between the often patriarchal values of mainstream Hollywood – seen in her mainstream style – and an ability to tell nuanced stories about women’s lives