

A study on the postmodern identity in Madonna costume

-Focusing on the intertextuality-

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The icon of 20th, 21st century popular culture, image maker, Madonna has made a transgressor identity through combining conventional and unconventional gender roles. While Madonna has become a site of controversy by audiences, academics, business, in terms of subversive cultural revolution, she has a powerful effect of fashion, style, culture.

Madonna constructs an undecidable identity by gender, sexuality, attitude, fashion and reinforces the norms of consumer society that offers the possibilities of a new commodity "self" through consumption and the products of the fashion industry.

The purpose of this thesis is to research the postmodern identity by intertextuality and to understand the femininity as a subject, the aesthetic subjectivity

A complex Madonna puts in question aesthetic categories. She is deploying modernist aesthetics, presenting irony, camp, shock and excess, destruction of convention. But she has been theorized as "postmodernist" in the light of simulation, pastiche, implosion of gender, racial and sexual boundaries, undecidable identity.

Derrida's theory of "Deconstruction" deploying deconstruction of text, intertextuality, and undecidability succeeded to postfeminism which deconstruct the gaze of male subject and female object. Madonna represents prosex feminism which expresses a pleasure of female, powerful controlling femininity through whore performances, contradiction of power and powerlessness, power dressing.

The postmodern subject is characterized by non-essential, socially constructed, fragmented, non-stable and multiple. In her constructed public image as a series of non-stereotypical role and widely varied looks, Madonna illustrates this denial of the body as essence, object and empowers woman to change subject position.

By destabilizing the image she participates in J. Butler's "parody of gender roles", recontextualization, effects a defamiliarisation of female iconography, and thus occupy a resisting subject position. Clearly, she represents active subjectivity as a "generator of new descriptions". Using an intertextuality strategy (i.e. place, time, class, religion) and creating a shock effect, Madonna heads for the open costume as deconstruction from the inside.

1. Intertextuality of place costumes are to be seen a Spanish style, a Thailand look, a geisha look, a Scotland kilt skirt, a Western cowgirl look, which create an expanded aesthetic experience through geographical alienation, multiple gaze, global publicity.

2. Intertextuality of time costumes are to be seen a Medieval empire dress, a robe a la francaise of Rococo, the 3rd species look mixing all sexes and ages, which express a playful utopia through simultaneous, fantastic image.

3. Intertextuality of class costumes are to be seen graffiti, punk fashion, supermarket style, Monroe look, voguing, Evita look, which deconstruct the tastes of good and bad, the dichotomy of virgin and whore and reconstructs a double-sided identity resisting bourgeois and admiring materialism.

4. Intertextuality of Catholic religion costumes are to be seen a punky christian, erotic christian look, which deconstructs a dichotomy of blacks/whites, good/bad, divinity/sensuality, beauty/ugliness, modesty/immodesty and reconstructs anti-authoritative, tragic identity through aesthetic subjectivism.

Being a subject of gaze, power, pleasure in sexuality, deconstructing good/bad, beauty/ugliness, modesty/immodesty in categories of aesthetics, postmodern identity of Madonna reconstructs a fluid subject and gives a enlarged possibility.