



learning goals

- you will learn to analyse a film using literary theory
- you will learn how to identify and explain satire/irony
- you will learn to identify and examine the film for intertextual and real-life connections

success criteria

I will be successful if I can ...

A L P A C I N O
SIMONE

A star is... created.

S1MONE + A HABIT OF WASTE

-analysis + connection-

- a. What is the theme(s) in this film? Provide a detailed explanation.
- b. What truths about society does the film allude to? Comment on three.
- c. What ideas in the film, S1MONE, and the short story, A Habit of Waste, are connected?
- d. Is the film, S1MONE, ironic?

irony: figure of speech in which what is stated is not what is meant. The user of irony assumes that his reader or listener understands the concealed meaning of his statement. Perhaps the simplest form of irony is rhetorical irony, when, for effect, a speaker says the direct opposite of what she means.

- e. Is the film, S1MONE, a satire? Explain.

satire: a literary, musical or visual work holding up human vice or follies to ridicule or scorn. Satire often targets political issues, social issues or legal issues in hopes of exposing flaws and inadequacies. Satire often uses 'dark humour' (trenchant/perceptive wit, irony, sarcasm) and an extreme and exaggerated 'message' to let the audience know that a dominant or accepted system of beliefs and behaviour is ridiculous and in need of change. Satire and parody often work in tandem.

- g. What questions from STRUCTURALISM and NEW HISTORICISM could be applied to the film, S1MONE?

S1MONE + A HABIT OF WASTE

-analysis + connection-

a. What is the theme(s) in this film? Provide a detailed explanation.

There are various MAJOR themes in the film, S1MONE, for example:

- Celebrity causes us to be blinded from the truth
- Beauty is a manufactured product; true beauty is unseen and natural.
- Hollywood creates the illusions we react to as real.
- We value style over substance.

b. What truths about society does the film allude to? Comment on three.

The film alludes to the following truths about society:

- Our undying fascination and obsession with celebrities as the neo-royalty (new/nouveau royalty).
- Our uncritical belief in media messages (whatever is in the papers we believe must be true).
- Hollywood taints/influences/creates our perceptions of reality (i.e. love, beauty, success).

c. Is the film, S1mone, trying to persuade or manipulate us? Explain.

The film, S1MONE, is not overly exaggerated, thus, it is not manipulative. The ideas expressed within the film are well within the realm of belief (i.e. technology is currently capable of creating near complete computer generated films; magazines technologically manipulate images for covers/ads, etc. to enhance the beauty of a model).

d. What ideas in the film, S1MONE, and the short story, A Habit of Waste, are connected?

The film, S1MONE and the short story, A Habit of Waste, connect thematically. Both texts deal with the idea that perfection has caused us to become blinded to the very opposite "truth": imperfection is what makes us perfect. Hopkinson requires that we infer this truth through the overall tone of her writing, while Andrew Niccol is more overt in telling us the truth. When Viktor auditions Nicola Anders he comes to the realization that though she may be imperfect, her acting is perfect for the part. Both texts inform us that it is impossible to create, manufacture or control perfection, though both texts criticize the

media for continually assaulting the masses with the false promise that perfection is purchasable.

e. Is the film, *S1MONE*, ironic?

irony: figure of speech in which what is stated is not what is meant. The user of irony assumes that his reader or listener understands the concealed meaning of his statement. Perhaps the simplest form of irony is rhetorical irony, when, for effect, a speaker says the direct opposite of what she means.

Irony (not dramatic irony) plays on our expectations, yet the opposite or unexpected occurs. Like the poor English teacher who you'd expect to be a mass consumer of fine literary gems, is sadly, unable to read a page. A terrible, sad irony. The film, *Simone*, is a terribly ironic masterpiece (a loaded and biased choice of words!). It is a story of how the created (*Simone* and *Lainey*) creates the creator (*Viktor*). Backwards? Paradoxical? True. Think about it in these terms: the inventor (*Viktor*) is supposed to have control of the machine (*Simone*), but in the end, the machine develops its own 'identity' and shadows the inventor. The product of our minds, hands and bodies are not SUPPOSED or EXPECTED to control – or create us. But they do. It's true (irony is not necessarily false, just so you know). We are not mothers or fathers without a child; we are not writers without a page of writing. A child creates a mother or father; a novel creates a novelist and *Simone* the Actress creates the Film Director *Viktor Taransky*. Without the created, the creator can not exist. An ironic and paradoxical moment for you to meditate on. OTHER POSSIBLE IRONIC TWISTS: the unreal is more real than the real; truth composed of frauds (the magazines in the police interrogation room); ironic in the sense that *Viktor's* intent was to invent *S1mone* to enhance his image/identity, yet the creation over-shadowed and diminished his presence.

f. Is the film, *S1MONE*, a satire? Explain.

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This film is a satire. Strictly defined, satire is a creation determined to find problems with an idea and present an extreme, exaggerated impression of the idea in hopes of changing it. *Simone* is just that. A satire on us who are so bewitched and bedazzled (the check-out magazines are not number one sellers for nothing) by celebrity in the most extreme sense. The film, *Simone*, presents the actress *Simone* as the fresh new 'opiate-of-the-frenzied-masses' and the drug dealer – the media – willing to indulge our constantly growing addiction. The Foolish Tabloid Journalist (the one sniffing every article touched by *Simone's* 'body') spoofed/satirized the lengths a 'dealer in celebrity' will go to satiate our appetite for celebrity. We – us the pathetic masses – are even willing to forgive *Simone's* indiscretions and xenophobic rants 'as unique and refreshingly honest for a film star'. There seems to be no end to what we will fall for over a pretty face and charming eyes. But maybe *Simone* is not a satire. Maybe it is a mirror.

SIMONE

-analysis-

a. What is the theme of this film? Provide a detailed explanation.

There are various MAJOR themes in the film, S1MONE, for example:

- i. Celebrity causes us to be blinded from the truth
- ii. Beauty is a manufactured product; true beauty is unseen and natural.
- iii. Hollywood creates the illusions we react to as real.
- iv. We value style over substance.

b. Find examples of the following literary devices in the film:

foreshadowing: the character Hank – the god-like creator of S1mone – foreshadows the metaphoric ‘deaths’ of Viktor Taransky and ‘reality’ in the film. Hank’s obsession with S1mone – his ideal vision of perfection and beauty – actually caused his literal demise. His character symbolically foreshadows the mass reaction and fanaticism (their undying, uncritical adoration) of S1mone’s audience, as well as Viktor Taransky’s dependence on S1mone and his ultimate downfall for it. Hank’s tragic flaw is projected (foreshadowed) throughout the film as a reminder of the problems unleashed by his creation.

allusion: Grace Kelly; Audrey Hepburn; the film, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*

dramatic irony: nearly the entire film is dramatically ironic. Once Viktor receives his inheritance from Hank, the audience is aware that S1mone really computer generated, but the characters – other than Viktor – are not.

c. What truths about society does the film allude to? Comment on three.

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