



Camden Council Library Services – Movie Club

Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior (1981)

Discussion Questions

1. How would you characterise the time period the film is set in? Is it dystopian, apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic, before a war, during war, after a war? Is there evidence of this being a post-nuclear war world? How does it compare with other post-apocalyptic/dystopian films? Think of films like [On the beach](#) (1959), [Clockwork Orange](#) (1971), [Blade Runner](#) (1982), [Brazil](#) (1985) [The Matrix](#) (1999), [Children of Men](#) (2006) [The Road](#) (2009), [The Hunger Games](#) (2012) et al., [The Rover](#) (2014).
2. The film is in every way over-the-top, from the opening narration, to the comic book style costumes of the marauders, the cult-like uniform of the settlers, to names like “Warrior Woman” and “Feral Kid”, and the high octane action sequences. What is the point of these exaggerated qualities? How does it relate to the setting and the story?
3. What are the differences between the two groups (the marauders and the settlers)? Are the settlers more civilized, moral, human? How so? How are the differences represented in this ‘over-the-top’ style? What is the goal each of the ‘tribes’ wish to achieve by the end of the film?
4. Max is still in grief from the events of the first film (revealed as flash backs at the opening). He has chosen to live a life removed from all others. Visually Max has more in common with the marauders than the settlers. Also like with the marauders, he is in search of petrol to help perpetuate his long journey from nowhere to nowhere (Canby, 1982 [Review](#)) What is the purpose of Max’s travels? Why is Max hesitant to help the settlers? And how does he come to help them? Does he join them? What does his acting as decoy reveal about his connection with the two groups?
5. The marauders are generally classified by reviewers as biker-berserkers, conjuring the image of ancient, crazed, and fearsome warriors. “The road warriors of the title take their costumes and codes of conduct from a rummage sale of legends, myths, and genres: They look and act like Hell’s Angels, samurai warriors, kamikaze pilots, street-gang members, cowboys, cops, and race drivers.” (Ebert, 1981, [Review](#)). Does this ‘rummage sale’ style apply to other aspects or characters of the film? Can you identify specific elements? Do the different elements add to an overall coherence?

6. The film has a Western influence, with screen writer Terry Hayes admitting that it was based on [Shane](#) (1953) (Hayes, 2014, [Australian Gothic Cinema](#)). Is it an authentic rendition of the western model? To what extent does the film use or distort the western model? Think of things like the desert landscape, the villains, the reluctant hero, the convoy. What other elements of the genre can you identify and how have they been upheld or distorted?
7. The film is extremely masculine, with women being featured sparingly. The only noticeable female character is the Warrior Woman, and part of that is her stark difference to other women in the film. Even her name implies that she is unique to her sex. Is this a sign of poor writing by the creators, or is there a narrative reason for this lack of strong females? (It is worth noting that in the third film of the series, [Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome](#) (1985), the main antagonist is Aunty Entity played by Tina Turner) What is the role of women in this high-octane, dystopian landscape? Do any of them have power, control, or authority? What do you make of the inclusion of the relationship between Wez and Golden Youth?
8. The road is particularly important. "Existence in *The Road Warrior*", Vincent Canby asserts, "is reduced to an unending, two-lane, blacktop highway that stretches from one horizon to the next, the landscape empty of houses or trees or any other sign of life except an occasional wrecked vehicle" (Canby, 1982, [Review](#)). This is particularly interesting as "When the world has come to an end, there's no place else to go." What do you make of this juxtaposition of the road (a symbol of going somewhere, progressing) with that of having nowhere to go, having no future?