

Why do we care about...

Representation lies at the heart of many media debates. As students of Media Studies we are interested in whether these representations are **positive** or **negative**, **truthful** or **false** and what impact these might have on audiences and societies

Groups commonly represented in the Media:

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality



Media producers encode ideas and values into their texts through the way they choose to REPRESENT groups in their media texts.

these groups in the media?
Q. What stereotypes are commonly associated with

Representation Theory

George Gerbner's Mean World Syndrome

Gerbner explored the potential impact of representations within the Media on audiences. He argued the more an audience member engaged with a media text that represented the world in a negative way (common in police dramas and action/horror films) the more likely it was that the audiences would believe the society in which they live is a dangerous one.

Q. Carry out a mix of primary and secondary research to find out whether Gerbner's theory is valid in modern day society.

REPRESENTATION

noun: the way in which the media portrays issues, events, individuals, social groups, or sets of beliefs

Re-Presenting the World

A useful way to think about representation is to think of it as the way in which a media text re-presents the world back to the audience. They create the diegetic world of the text to reflect a world that is recognisable to the audience. This process often involves using stereotypes within the text as they are easy to identify and communicate information to the audience in a short space of time.

STEREOTYPES Stereotypes are everywhere in the Media. It is important to explore why these stereotypes exist and how they may have changed over time.

Q. Make a list of positive and negative stereotypes commonly found within the Media- how might these representations shape audience's views on these groups?

Gender Representation



Judith Butler and bell hooks

Feminist theorists such as Butler and hooks have explored how the media and images within media texts construct characteristics and behaviours associated with gender. bell hooks explores the role the media has played in suppressing black women through their roles and representations in media texts. Whilst Judith Butler explores how gender is a construction that is influenced by representations of men and women within the Media.

Q. Can you find examples of media texts that represent females in a non-stereotypical way? Research the Bechdel Test, then apply this to the last film you watched.

Representation Theory

Stuart Hall

Hall argues that whilst the media appears to reflect reality they actually construct reality. This is a challenging concept, simplified this refers to the power the media has to shape peoples' views and beliefs on different groups or ideas within a society, through the way they are portrayed within media texts such as TV programmes and films.

Q. Does the media offer audiences a window on the world?

Hall also explores how important the role of the producer is in constructing representations within media texts. It is important to understand the purpose of a text when exploring this issue. Hall argues the producers encode their own values and ideologies in their texts through their representations of

Q. Think about how different newspapers report stories differently based on their political bias.

Representation Theory

David Gauntlett- 'Media, Gender and Identity'

Many media theorists such as Gauntlett have explored how representations in the media communicate messages, values and ideas that are adopted by audiences and used to construct their understanding of their own identity as well as the identity of certain groups they see in the Media. These values are reinforced over time and through repeated representations.

Q. Find examples of repeated representations of certain groups within the Media. What might be the potential impact of these?

Digital Media & Representation

We live in a media saturated world, and through the advancements in digital technologies audiences are constantly exposed to digitally manipulated images of men and women each day. These images have been heavily criticised as

providing unrealistic aspirational figures of men and women. **This links to the connection between representation in the media and the values and beliefs within a specific culture.**

Representation Key Terms

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Preferred Reading | Mediation |
| Symbolic Codes | Construction |
| Cultural Imperialism | Propaganda |
| Gatekeeping | Bias |
| Ideology | Hegemony |
| Stereotypes | Archetypes |

Can you research the definitions of these key terms, then write them up in your own words, or even make an informative media text about them?