



Representation

You will need to consider:

- the way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination
- the effect of social and cultural context on representations
- how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively
- how and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be under-represented or misrepresented
- how media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world and how these may be systematically reinforced across a wide range of media representations
- how audiences respond to and interpret media representations
- the way in which representations make claims about realism
- the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- the effect of historical context on representations
- how representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances and interpret them



Critical perspectives

Theories of representation, including ethnicity - Stuart Hall

Representations are constructed through codes. Stereotypes exist as a consequence of inequality of power, maps of reality & deviance - "otherness."

Theories of identity - David Gauntlett

The media offer a more diverse range of characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

Feminist theory – Liesbet van Zoonen

Gender construction and context; "to-be-looked-at-ness" and the gaze, patriarchal ideology, feminist readings, construction of representations through codes.

Feminist theory – Bell Hooks

Political feminism and the inextricable links between gender, race and class in terms of representations.

TASK: Look at the characters. analyse how they are represented and how this representation has been constructed/encoded





How are representations constructed/encoded (Stuart Hall)?

- Narrative : Audiences identify/empathise with Saga through the restricted nature of our narrative positioning but we are taken aback and occasionally amused by her unusual responses – give examples
- Technical codes (language) – camera, editing, audio
- Lighting
- Framing
- Mise-en-scène (costuming, setting)
- Performance
- Barthes - cultural codes



How are the following characters represented? How is the representation constructed?





Representations and identity (Gauntlett)

- Look at the character descriptions on the 'The Bridge' website. Look at the page and the images of the characters.
- How are they described on the website?
- How are the characters constructed to create these impressions?
- How might audiences interact with the representations?
- Which characters might different individuals identify with and why?
- Is there a diversity of representations as suggested by Gauntlett?
- How might an audience 'pick and mix' ideas from this text and its representations?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/I9KPrIQqjCN9lrlSPGq9N/characters>





How is the representation of Sweden and Denmark (and their people) constructed?

- Create a Wordcloud of stereotypes of Scandinavia/Sweden/Denmark. Feed back to the group
- What existing stereotypes of Sweden/Denmark and their people can you identify? What would you expect to see

Discuss in pairs and feedback to group

- Does it conform to or challenge stereotypes? Look at the characters, attitudes to e.g. sex, settings, weather, dialogue (e.g. conflicting opinions about “political correctness” and gender neutrality – “a bit Swedish”; Helle Anker as an LGBT spokesperson; the less liberal views of Lise Andersen)
- Are the stereotypes ‘positive’, ‘negative’ or more complex than this? Is it suggested that society is at fault?
- Why are representations constructed in this way?





Bell Hooks

- Argues that feminism is a struggle to end patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination, and that the position of the underrepresented is by class and race as well as gender.
- “Women in lower class and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white, would not have defined women’s liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status.”

Task:

- Is “patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination” evident in “The Bridge”? Or does it challenge this concept?
- Write 3 paragraphs which express your ideas.

You may wish to include some of the following:

- This text challenges the notion of ‘ideology of domination’ to a great extent.
- Historical and political context – role and representation of women within police force – challenges norm - Saga and Hanne are officers; Lillian is the Danish Police Commissioner in Copenhagen.
- Representations of family challenge stereotypes. Helle Anker as LGBT spokesperson – acceptance of lesbian marriage within society. “Hen” – gender neutral pronoun.
- But - absence of ethnicities other than white implies social inequality.
- Lise Friis Andersen – middle class, wealthy vlogger with right wing views – teaches her daughter to hit (aggression/violence) her bullying peer.

Liesbet Van Zoonen

[There is] a depressing stability in the articulation of women’s politics and communication . . . The underlying frame of reference is that women belong to the family and domestic life and men to the social world of politics and work; that femininity is about care, nurturance and compassion, and that masculinity is about efficiency, rationality and individuality.’ – Van Zoonen

Give examples from ‘The Bridge’ that illustrate **or challenge** this concept.

Use the table on the next page.



Van zoonen table

Women	Men
Marginalised (or absent)	Efficient
Domestic	Rational
Sexualised	Individual
Nurturer	

- Van zoonen argues that there is a “variety of feminist Discourse” and identifies 3 distinct perspectives
- Read the paragraphs from Van Zoonen’s essay “Feminist Perspectives on the Media”.
- Pages 33 - 37, Feminist Perspectives on the Media in Mass Media and Society (Curran and Gurevitch) Arnold (1996)

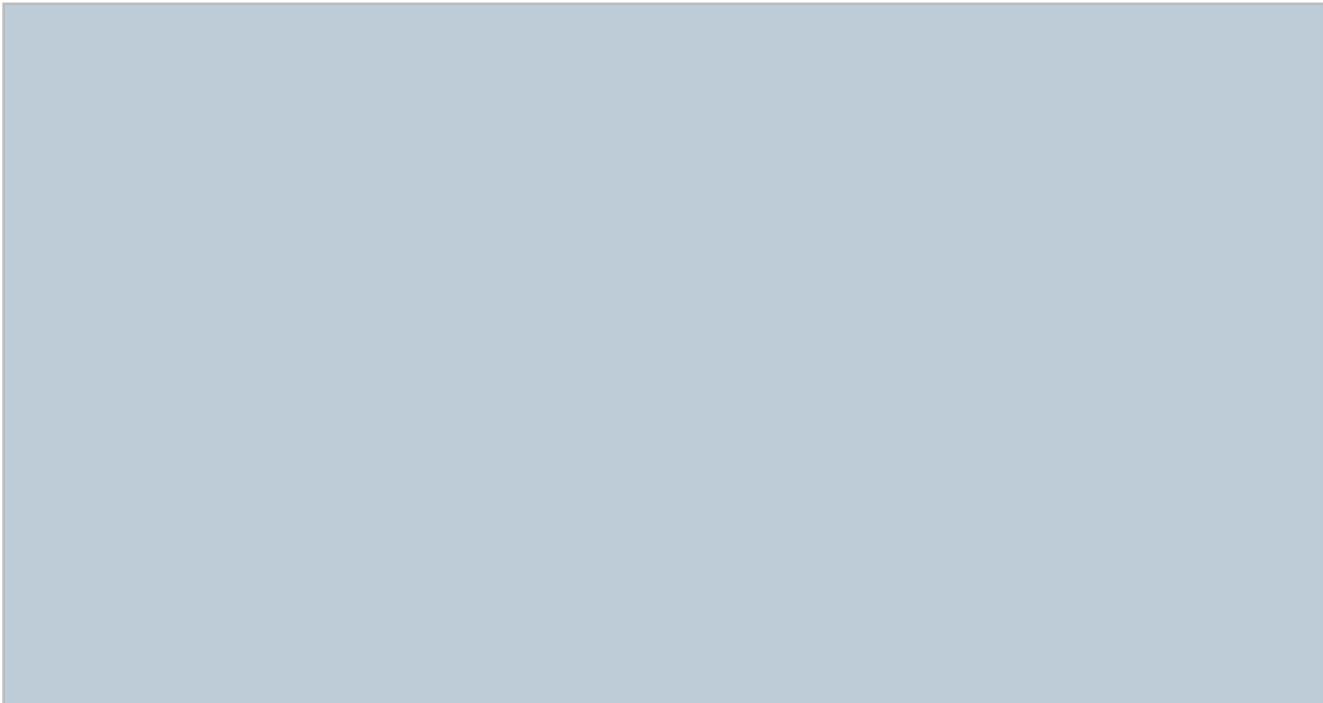
What does she suggest are the key differences between a:

- liberal feminist perspective?
- radical feminist perspective?
- socialist feminist perspective?

Use the digital resource '**Van Zoonen**' to compare your ideas with those suggested.



Apply the different feminist approaches to “The Bridge”



Liesbet Van Zoonen

- However Van Zoonen argues that gender is constructed and that its meaning varies dependent on cultural and historical context.
- She suggests that masculinity as well as femininity is constructed – and that the codes used to construct men ‘as a spectacle’ are different. But are they here?
- Look at the representation of Saga, particularly in the opening scene (4:04 – 7:56). Is this constructed more through “masculine” or “feminine” encoding?

Think about:

- Males constructed through movement (active)
- Silence and impassivity
- Strength, muscularity and aggression
- Competition – males as gladiators or combatants – ‘the spectacle’
- Constructed more through the intradiegetic gaze – the way they are looked at by other characters (e.g. with respect/fear)
- Allows narcissistic identification without erotic gaze



How might we apply this viewpoint to Saga in 'The Bridge'?

Look particularly at Saga in the opening scene (4:04 – 7:56) in terms of:

- framing
- costume and mise-en-scène
- performance
- technical codes
- Are there other elements of her representation in the rest of the text which are not "feminine"?

Framing	
Costume and mise-en-scène	
Performance	
Technical codes	
Are there other elements of her representation in the rest of the text which are not "feminine"?	