



Representation

You will need to consider:

- the processes of re-presenting the 'real': selection, construction and mediation
- how representations of crime and criminality are constructed
- how representations of place and social/cultural groups, including cultural identity and gender, are constructed
- how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively
- how and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented
- how representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media
- the effect of social, cultural, historical and industry contexts on representations
- how audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them.



Critical perspectives

Critical perspectives on representation, including ethnicity - Stuart Hall

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

Critical perspectives on identity - David Gauntlett

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

Critical perspectives on gender – Liesbet van Zoonen

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

Critical perspectives on gender and ethnicity – 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-scene (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/I9KPrIQjCN9IrtLSPGq9N/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. work (urgency of the case), collaboration, having children. Consider dialogue (e.g. Saga doesn't pronounce Martin's surname correctly, when Martin summarises the Monique Brammer investigation he jokes 'do you want me to repeat that, a bit slower?')
- 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 under-represented 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:

- How 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 is a police officer, leads the investigation
- But - absence of ethnicities other than white implies social inequality
- Some representations of family challenge stereotypes e.g. Charlotte is a strong, independent female who effectively bribes the hospital administrator to operate on her weak, ailing husband. Martin has ‘five children by three different women’. However other representations uphold stereotypes (e.g. Veronika and her children as victims of an abusive husband, ‘rescued’ by Stefan)

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)

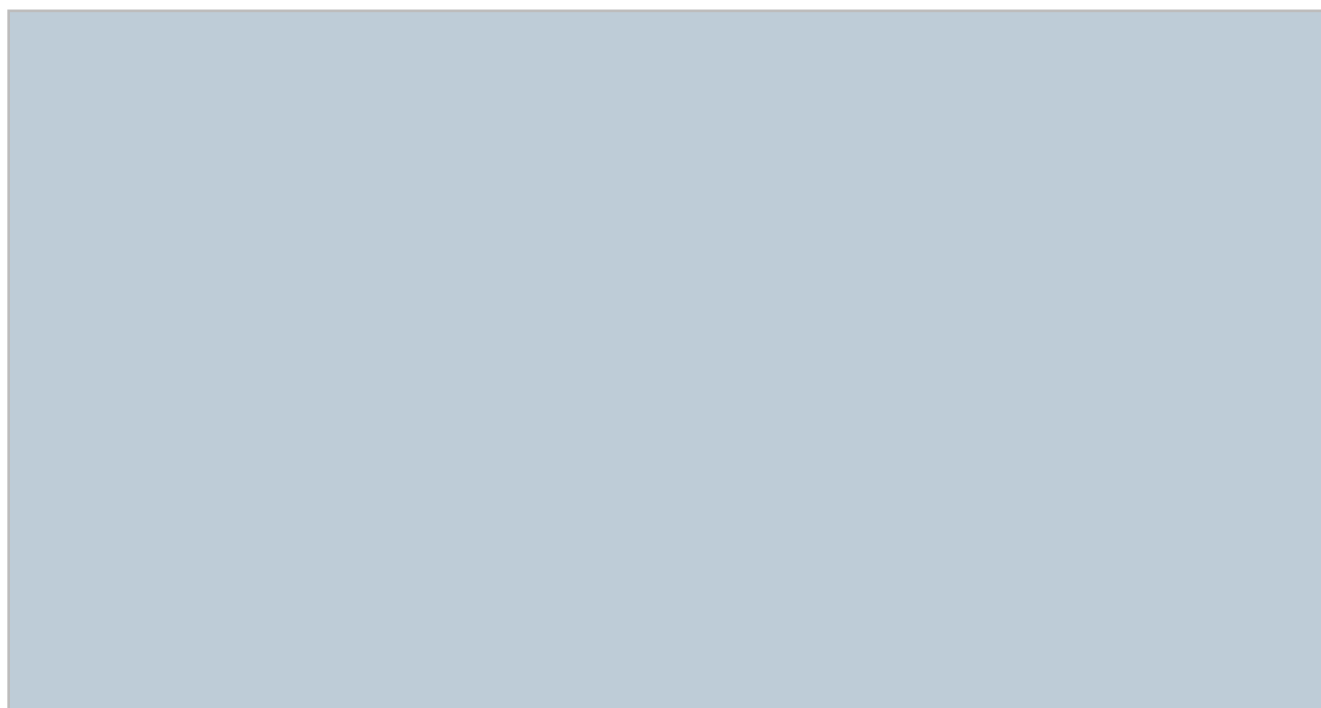
What does she suggest are the key differences between a:

- 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 (3.40 – 5.40). 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 (3.40 – 5.40) 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	
Peerformance	
Technical codes	
Are there other elements of her representation in the rest of the text which are not “feminine”?	