

Kari McNabb

200464686

December 10, 2021

Question Two: Representation

The word representation has many meanings for all sorts of people and studies. The term can be very common in cultural studies and media studies with the representation of people being the main source of the usage (Representation and Practices). Representation can be thought of as a simple word, when in reality the term is complex (Representation and Practices). A definition of representation could be to represent an image, depiction, or to just re-present what is there (Representation and Practices); and can have a double meaning (Hall). Another way that representation is defined as is to stand in for or take the place of (an example of this could be a representational democracy) (Representation and Practices). The term can be split into two meanings of the same correlation with icons and indexes. Icon representation is physically resembling an object (like an ID card or a photocopied image of your face), while index representation is the implication/correlation of an existent (like seeing dark clouds and thinking rain clouds) (Price). With representation being such a broad topic it's no surprise that there can be many semblances with a few being topics, types of people, events, and situations (Representation and Practices). The main way we see representation in school settings is the types of people there are in the world and all the different cultures; and while this is getting better with the usage of social media and being able to have places where children can see all the different cultures/people in one place, their representation can still be skewed by familial beliefs

and the way cultures are viewed in a household. These wrongful depictions of these contrasting cultures are the main influence of stereotypes, othering, and discrimination.

Stereotyping is defined as being excluding and exaggerating/reducing the representations of different cultures or organizations (Dyer). The representations of self and other can be harmful through the stereotypes of others. While at first could be innocent, the stereotypes are influenced by culture and have expectations of how the people in certain should look or act (and the actions/looks are mostly incorrect) (Hall). Examples of this could be the treatment of Muslim people, LBGTQ+ people, and lots of other cultures that are not Caucasian or straight. The depiction of people in those groups are quite frankly misrepresented so as to create more humor or to gain more of a following (views on TV for example) (Representation and Practices). The stereotypical representations reduce and defines the stereotype as well as splitting humanity and creating the boundary of Us vs. Them, and thus creating exclusions (Representation and Practices). Media representation is a major player in the consequences of the portrayal of others, with the appeal to desire such as beauty/fame and the focus on appearance (Representation and Practices). The representation of bodies in the media is extremely harmful, not only to the models who practically starve themselves to look like the perfect body (or are edited to look a certain way) but to the people who see the magazines or tabloids that are in the 98% that cannot attain the “perfect” body without extremely damaging their bodies and mindsets towards beauty (Representation and Practices). The representations that are accepted in media can be toxic to those included or excluded; with hypermasculinity, happy violence, and bro culture being some of the acceptations in media (Representation and Practices). The exaggeration of masculinity with stereotypical male behavior (strength) and the violence being accepted in media but not in reality gives men this stereotype that they must be the aggressors and that they must look/be

tough which sets less-masculine men up to be looked down upon in society. Gender is something that is heavily influenced by media and representation; Disney being a good source of representation of girls in media. With the rise of the different fairytales made and the movies that Disney made to go with each story gives good insight to how gender was represented (Representation and Practices). Amidst all the movies made, the older generation princess storylines focus on the gender roles of the time (being saved by a prince not themselves), which can harm young girls and make them believe that they aren't supposed to be powerful and that they must have a man to take care of them. This is very untrue, especially now in 2021/2022 where we see in Disney many girls being able to take care of themselves and not need a prince; however, that stereotype still remains prominent in many people's beliefs. Representation, while good at times, can harm a lot of different groups where the stereotype or social norm is still seen as a normal thing today. This causes consequences that are having to be dealt with every day by the groups affected by misrepresentation, and is almost cancelling out the good representation that has been created in society.

Question 3: Gender

Gender and its categories are a hot topic in today's society with the changes made and the progress formed within the last 20 years. Gender is a socially constructed role with behaviors aligned in each role that are deemed appropriate (Feminism and Gender). The social construction of gender is a concept of a certain group (female, male, nonbinary) and has attributes to each role (the Bem test for example) to give definition and create groups within gender (Feminism and Gender). However, gender is not fixed like the sex of a person and changes as each individual grows up and experiences who they really are (Oakley). The gender of someone does not have to match the sex assigned to them at birth but it is okay to be the gender of your assigned sex. With

the concept of gender coming to a larger light in the 2000's, and finally being able to be accepted as the gender they feel they are, there comes much controversy with the original gender roles that society has believed in for thousands of years. The social construct of gender can be linked to socialization and the roles that masculinity and femininity had in the media (Feminism and Gender). With the media portraying gender as being either masculine or feminine, children learned very early that it was only socially acceptable to be one of the two and that there were no other options (Feminism and Gender). This led to heavy regulation of gender that affected many daily routines and the understanding of gender as a social construct (Feminism and Gender). This leads to many unrealistic expectations of gender and gendered items. Gendered items are also a huge part of why the social construction of gender is still being fought every day; with items that shouldn't need to be gendered are being advertised in either feminine/masculine ways and only people of that assigned gender can use them (examples could be Chapstick, workout gear, alcohol, and coffee). Gender and sexuality expectations are the main factor behind discrimination of those with a not normal gender or sexuality. The expectations could be how someone with a certain sexuality (gay for example) and with that sexuality comes unrealistic expectations on how they act or what their beliefs are. This could be every lesbian hating men, gay men being hyperfeminine and super into drag, or transgender people not actually being the pronouns that they say they are which then leads others in the same category to be thought of in the same way when sexuality looks different on everyone. Queer theory is the study of issues relating to such sexual orientation and gender identity, with the focus being on diversity. However, diversity scares many people who want the world to stay the same which is highly unlikely as society is everchanging and with the fear of change came the unrealistic expectations and discrimination of the LGBTQ+. A case of discrimination could be the Stonewall Riot (Heterosexual Privilege). In

1969, people who were gay were ostracized and could not be served liquor at any bar so they created their own place at an inn owned by the mafia (most gay bars were) (Frizzell). This bar was one that was raided by police pretty much nightly, and this one night everything changed for the LGBT movement (Frizzell). When the police raided the inn that night, the people inside fought back and helped instill a sort of fire in everyone which then led to the gay liberation movement (Frizzell). Another case could be a student in a Christian school being expelled over her mom posting a picture of her with a rainbow cake (Heterosexual Privilege), with the cake being seen by the administration as an association of the LGBTQ+ movement. Religion is a factor into the discrimination of gay people with the church's believing that people who agree with same-sex marriage is a sin and blasphemous. With such acts of discrimination, we can see how unrealistic the expectations are on people of non-conforming gender/sexuality which is most of society wanting these people out of the social norm to adhere to the codes they made.

Works Cited

Frizzell, Nell. "Feature: How the Stonewall Riots Started the LGBT Rights Movement."

PinkNews, 28 June 2013, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2013/06/28/feature-how-the-stonewall-riots-started-the-gay-rights-movement/>.