

My lecture Notes

Week 2 Gender and representation and the Media

Gender defined

Gender – psychological, social and cultural differences

1. Sex refers to the physiological differences of male and female bodies
2. Gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences
3. The characteristics that are often stereotyped as male or female

Social construction of gender

1. The social construction of gender is the notion that society, media the people we interact with teach us how we should behave
2. They teach us what is appropriate for our gender

Gender roles (who does what)

1. -so society, the media, popular culture teach us what our roles are and what is appropriate for women
2. There may be more subtle gender roles – Ann Oakley has written about how housework still remains a female role,

Butler, Foucault

1. Some theorists you will come across are that of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault.
2. Butler has written about how gender is fluid and can change within different contexts over time
3. That gender is imposed on us – but that the characteristics are not male and female
4. Foucault highlights the discourses in relation to gender – for both men and women

Feminism

Social movement

1. Feminism is a social movement
2. A campaign on different levels
3. It is about equality and freedom

First wave

1. The first wave refers to feminist activity during the 19th and early 20th century which included women who fought for the right to vote
2. The world wars, it is argued, also changed perceptions as women were able to do jobs that men had always done

Second wave -50s and 60s Civil Rights,

1. This is sometimes aligned to the civil rights movement in the 50s and 60s
2. And male power structures began to be challenged
3. Betty Friedan wrote the Feminine Mystique in 1963 - Suggesting that women had been encouraged to live through their husbands and children, rather than from their own work

Slide 4: Waves of feminism

Third wave

1. Diverse strands of feminist thought
2. Response to second wave failures such as its ignoring black feminism
3. Avoids essentialist definitions of feminism or femininity
4. It encompasses queer theory, post-colonial theory, ecofeminism for example.
5. Includes the original political ideas of Girl power and Riot Grrrl – although these messages were commercialised by the music industry.

Fourth Wave

1. Current re-politicisation
2. Where older feminists and younger feminists are grouping together to challenge the status quo and to argue for equality
3. But, for example, the heforshe campaign and younger feminists being proactive
4. It is associated with online feminism and online activism.
5. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/fourth-wave-feminism-rebel-women>

Post-feminism

Different strands

1. One is that we are All equal: no need for feminism

2. Others: inequality still exists and need to be addressed e.g. wages that are unequal
3. Personal choice may be relevant in post-feminist ideas
4. The notion that we can choose to be what we want
5. But, there are limitations imposed on us (are there?)

Mulvey

Male gaze – film (but applied to other media)

1. Women used to viewing themselves from other's viewpoints
2. I suppose we have to mention Mulvey because her ideas are really useful when we analyse media
3. She looked at film but we can apply her ideas to other areas such as the representation of women in advertising.
4. Where women are represented and shown from a male point of view and become used to themselves being looked at by men and also by other women [The BOND Gaze](#) highlights this well.

Masculinity

1980s men's studies emerged

1. Men's studies emerged around this time in academia
2. Connell sees masculinities as part of the gender order
3. We cannot talk about masculinities or masculinity without inferring something about femininities or femininity

Dominant and subordinated masculinities

1. There are also masculinities which are subordinated to the dominant forms of masculinity
2. Hegemonic masculinity is associated with heterosexuality, authority, paid work, strength and physical toughness

Masculinity in crisis

1. It has been suggested that in pre-industrial societies men's roles were clearly defined

2. In modern societies these roles are less available
3. There is also the loss of economic power – women can earn and be independent
4. So there is a crisis in the roles associated with masculinity and with what it means to be male in our society

Masculinities

1. Some argue that there are particular versions of masculinities on offer

New man - Nurturer,

- New man as nurturer is in touch with his feminine side
- He is caring, sensitive, emotionally skilled

New Man - Narcissistic

- Fashion conscious and health conscious consumer
- Muscular body achieved through diet and exercise
- Stylish, groomed and uses beauty products
- Constructs masculinity through style and taste

New man as sex object

- New man is also a sexual object in the same way that women have been presented

Metrosexual

- Emerged in 1990s
- Young, middle class, trendy, lives in urban areas
- Invests money in time and appearance and fashion
- Heterosexual but can play with sexuality at some level
- Beckham – embodiment of metrosexual

New Lad

- 1990s – re-emergence as a backlash to feminism
- Interested in football, drinking, sex and often loutish and aggressive
- Draws on traditional discourses of masculinity including misogyny, drunkenness, womanising
- But new elements include interacting with other lads in a juvenile way

Toxic masculinity

Advertising

- Last week looked at how ads persuade us
- This week – look at advertising as a source of gender images
 - Masculinities and femininities
 - For example, - sport is used in relation to masculinity in advertising
 - Male gaze in relation to females used in advertising
 - Some ads also use aggression in relation to males and passivity in relation to females in advertising

Films

- Another source of gender roles and stereotypes is film
- So you get mainstream films that focus on fighting and aggression
- There are some with female leads that do this as well – but often they are sexualised (although there are one or two exceptions)
- In the 80s and 90s you had films emerging with very tough, muscular male characters
- Film, and other media, are sites of struggles of meaning in terms of tender
- There are films that will draw on stereotypical gender roles and characteristics
- And there are films and other media that challenge those gender roles and characteristics
- Maybe think about the films you watch and whether these reinforce/challenge fixed or fluid gender identity.

References

- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Gill, R. (2007) *Gender and the Media*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Richardson, N. & Wearing, S. (2014) *Gender in the Media*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.