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| Subject | WOMEN’S STUDIES |  |
| Assessment type: | TEXT ANALYSIS |
| Name of Assessment: | Deconstruct, analyse and reconstruct a text or texts of your own choice. | |
| **Task description:**   * Select, deconstruct and evaluate a text or texts of your choice for gender bias. * Your text can be selected from advertisements, magazines, children’s books, films, TV programs, newspaper articles, song lyrics, video clips, and electronic games, negotiated. * Consider ways of effecting change through reconstructing the text/texts to eliminate the original gender bias. * Present your deconstruction, evaluation and reconstruction of the text/texts in either report form or a presentation to the class.   **How to complete this task:**   * Select text/texts that demonstrate gender bias. * Deconstruct the language, images and messages about femininity and masculinity in the text/texts. (This means discuss how gender is constructed in the text/texts).   To do this you will need to ask yourself the following questions:   * + How are women represented in the text?   + What roles do they play?   + What qualities do they display?   + What language and images are used in the construction?   + What messages are conveyed about women?   + How does this representation demonstrate gender-bias? * If a text features men, compare the representation of masculinity. * Use and refer to references and class handouts/ * In reconstructing the text you will need to rewrite or reconstruct the text so that there is no gender bias. * When discussing your reconstruction, explain how you have eliminated gender bias.   Your report or presentation should include an introduction and conclusion about the text genre and its representation of women in general terms.  **OR**  Select a children’s book and answer the following questions:   1. What is the title of the book and what does the title make you think that the book will be about? 2. How many female characters feature in the story? 3. What roles are played by the female characters in this text? 4. What qualities of femininity are reinforced by this text? 5. How many male characters feature in the story? 6. What roles are played by the male characters in this text? 7. What qualities of masculinity are reinforced in this text? 8. Does the text demonstrate gender-bias? Explain your answer. 9. How could you reconstruct the text to eliminate gender-bias? | | |
| **Assessment Conditions:**  DUE DATE:  100 word maximum if a written response, or 6 minutes maximum for an oral presentation. | | |
| **Learning Requirements:**   1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.   3. Analyse representations of women for gender bias, and identify ways of effecting change to address gender bias  **Assessment Design Criteria:**  Knowledge and Understanding  KU1 Knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.  Gender Analysis  GA2 Analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  GA3 Identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias.  Communication  C2 Use of the language of gender analysis | | |

**Stage 2 Women’s Studies**

Text Analysis: Cultural texts and gender bias in Anime

Cultural texts are any form of text or media that characterises a society, which communicate messages to men and women about their gender role and construct ideas about femininity and masculinity. Anime[[1]](#footnote-1) is a powerful cultural text specific to Japanese culture, however due to its popularity is viewed worldwide and influences a wide range of foreign audiences. The roles men and women play in these texts and the way males and females are represented contribute towards young people's perceptions and ideas about their role in society depending on their biological sex. In particular, several animes are characterised by content in which women and girls are underrepresented, objectified, degraded, sexualised, and their power trivialised. The following animes will be used to illustrate these forms of gender bias in anime: *Katekyo Hitman Reborn*, *Kaichou wa Maid-sama!*, *Bakuman*, and *High School of the Dead*[[2]](#footnote-2).

Underrepresentation is common in battle, sporting and martial arts[[3]](#footnote-3) animes where brave and powerful male characters are used to represent strength and superiority. Japanese culture enforces the idea that women should be timid and gentle or 'like a flower’[[4]](#footnote-4), and their lack of prominent roles in these animes means that the idea of a powerful, headstrong woman is not viewed as acceptable or desirable in Japan. For example, *Katekyo Hitman Reborn* stars several male protagonists. The only women are Kyoko and Haru whose roles are to 'support' the team by cooking the boy's meals and they also 'cheer them on' from the sidelines. Chrome and Bianchi, who are the only women with powerful roles, both have unnatural characters[[5]](#footnote-5). Bianchi's role enforces the stereotype of women's role as wives in the kitchen and cooking and her skill trivialises any power she actually holds in the story, and Chrome's character being abnormal represents the idea that women who take on powerful or prominent roles will not be accepted in society.

**Figure 2:** Bianchi is famous in the mafia world as an assassin who kills with her poisonous cooking

**Figure 1:** Chrome is psychologically disturbed and is a social outcast on the team

**Knowledge and Understanding 1**

An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction is evident.

Trivialisation of power is not an uncommon feature of several animes and carries many indirect messages about how it is inappropriate or undesirable for women to dominate over men or wield a significant amount of power or influence. *Kaichou wa maid-sama!*'s plot demonstrates this, where the heroine is brutally strict and headstrong, and thought of as a tyrant and dictator; boys in the school observe that she is not romantically desirable because of her forceful nature. Misaki secretly works in a maid cafe[[6]](#footnote-6) and this is seen as her weakness; when it is discovered by some boys, they change their views of her and she becomes an object of lust, because "After all, she's still a girl". This casts a critical view of women in positions of power and does not endorse wilful or outspoken qualities as traits of femininity. The anime also carries the message that women in lower corporate roles can be exploited and viewed as a sexual object; femininity is also portrayed as a sign of weakness.

**Communication 2**

Perceptive use of the language of gender analysis.

The subordination of women in anime also serves to undermine what authority and confidence women come to believe they should hold, and the same occurs when women in animes are objectified, degraded or sexualised. Many women's roles in animes are purely

**Figure 3:** In this frivolous bathing scene the female characters all frolic in the bath and discuss breast size while the make characters seriously consider weaponry and their strategic situation

for "fan-service"[[7]](#footnote-7), and it is not uncommon for women to frequently appear in a story for panty-shots[[8]](#footnote-8) or the size of their breasts. The representation of women in *High School of the Dead*[[9]](#footnote-9) is disempowering as it criticises women's level of intellect and illustrates that girls do not play significant roles in important decision-making and serious discussion. It also objectifies women by depicting them only as sexual objects for the audience's pleasure and amusement. In another anime, *Bakuman*, Kaya Miyoshi marries Takagi when he becomes a mangaka[[10]](#footnote-10), and aids Mashiro and Takagi by cleaning their workplace, bringing them meals on New Year's Day and Christmas, and sometimes helping out as an assistant artist. The other female protagonist is loved for her gentle nature and beauty. This text reinforces the stereotype of women's value in domestic roles, and supports the gender-biased notion of timid women as being desirable.

**Gender Analysis 3**

Discerning identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias.

**Figure 4:** The school nurse Ms. Shizuka is a ditzy, air-headed character

**Gender Analysis 2**

Perceptive analysis of representations of women for gender bias

These animes can be reconstructed in several ways to convey equal representations of women without gender bias. This would mean equality in their power roles and level of representation in stories, where female protagonists are granted the same level of power as males, and stereotypes play no role in influencing the skills they have. *Soul Eater* and *Naruto*[[11]](#footnote-11) are examples of animes which have minimal gender bias. Even though the animes are named after a male protagonist, *Soul Eater* has equal representations of male and female characters and Naruto also equally represents girls and boys in support roles. Females are not sexualised in any way and often hold significant roles of power; in *Naruto* a woman becomes head of the nation, and Sakura is a medical ninja who holds a key role in every team. In *Soul Eater*, Maka is Soul's wielder and the other female characters have equal relationships with the male characters. In this way, children and teenagers are instead given the message that women are able to embrace roles of power in society and can have equal give-and-take relationships with the men in their lives without being dominated, without being in danger of being seen as a sexual object, being degraded, or having their power trivialised.

Word count: 1,000

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| **Additional Comments**  This work is illustrative of an A+ grade. |

**Performance standards for Stage 2 Women’s Studies**

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|  | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Gender Analysis** | **Investigation and Evaluation** | **Communication** |
| **A** | **In-depth** knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | **Astute** and **detailed** analysis of social implications of gender relations for a **diversity** of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  **Perceptive** analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  **Discerning** identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | **In-depth** **investigation** and **evaluation** of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  **Perceptive** and **insightful** evaluation of a **range** of strategies for empowerment. | **Perceptive** and **coherent** communication of **informed** ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  **Perceptive** use of the language of gender analysis.  **Discerning** use of **highly** **appropriate** forms, including persuasive communication, and with **clear** acknowledgment of sources. |
| **B** | **Some depth** in knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | **Detailed** **analysis** of social implications of gender relations for a **diversity** of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  **Well-considered** analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  **Clear** identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | **Some** **depth** in **investigation** and **evaluation** of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  **Well-considered** evaluation of strategies for empowerment. | **Mostly** **clear** and **convincing** communication of **informed** ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  **Thoughtful** use of the language of gender analysis.  **Well-considered** use of **appropriate** forms, including persuasive communication, and with **clear** acknowledgment of sources. |
| **C** | **Considered** knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | **Generally** **competent** analysis of social implications of gender relations for a **diversity** of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  **Considered** analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  **Competent** identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | **Competent** **investigation** and **evaluation** of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  **Considered** evaluation of strategies for empowerment. | **Generally** **clear** communication of **informed** ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  **Generally** **competent** use of the language of gender analysis.  **Considered** use of **mostly** **appropriate** forms, including persuasive communication, and with **generally** **clear** acknowledgment of sources. |
| **D** | **Recognition** and **some** awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction. | **Some** **attempted** analysis, with **mostly** **description**, of social implications of gender relations for women.  **Some consideration** of representations of women for gender bias.  Identification and **some** description of **one or more** ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | **Consideration** of **one** **or** **more** ways in which social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  **Some** **description** of strategies for empowerment. | **Some** endeavour to communicate basic ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  **Some** use of the language of gender analysis.  **Some** use of **one** **or** **more** forms that **may** **be** **appropriate**, and with **limited** acknowledgment of sources. |
| **E** | **Emerging** awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction. | **Brief** **description** of **one** **or** **more** social implications of gender relations for women.  **Limited consideration** of representations of women for gender bias.  Identification of **a** way of effecting change to address gender bias. | **Attempted** **description** of **a** way in which social structures, cultural practices, or ways of thinking disempower women.  **Identification** of elements of **a** strategy for empowerment. | **Limited** attempt to communicate basic ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  **Emerging** use of the language of gender analysis.  **Attempted** use of **one** **or** **more** forms, with **limited** appropriateness, and **limited** acknowledgment of sources. |

1. Japanese animation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See **Appendix A** for anime synopsis and character descriptions [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Animes which focus on fighting or power, a particular sport or a martial art [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The perfect Japanese woman is referred to as “Yamato Nadeshiko”, a nadishenko being a pink carnation [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Figures 1 and 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A café where the waitresses are outfitted in maid uniforms and ‘serve’ the customers, calling them “Master” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. When a scene, line or character is present only to please the viewers, often in a sexual way [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Unnecessary flashes or full views of a woman’s or girl’s underwear [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Figures 3 and 4, and Appendix B [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Professional manga artists and authors; manga is the Japanese version of comics/cartoons, and are often converted into animes [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See Appendix C for synopses and character descriptions [↑](#footnote-ref-11)