

Representation of Gender in Both Men's Health and Tomb raider

In this essay I am going to argue that females are represented in a less positive way than males. To do that I am going to mainly look at the front covers of each product and apply Gauntlets ideas of representation, as he has developed theories of identity associated with representation, particularly in his book, 'Media, Gender and Identity'.

First of all I want to analyse the way in which Lara Croft (who represents female identity) is constructed. There are a range of semiotic signs that are used to construct her image. For example, the indexical signs used in the front cover of Tomb Raider are: Lara Croft looks confident, strong and independent because she is holding a gun, her body language and her facial expressions. She also looks like she is linked to war and conflict. The iconic signs used in the front cover of Tomb Raider are: a gun and a woman. Lara Croft is constructed in a way that makes her seem like a strong woman however the way the creators have done this isn't so good. The Lara Croft character is sexualised and she is constructed in a way that appeals to the male fantasy. The idea of Lara Croft holding a gun is a radical idea and it challenges the reactionary view of women being incapable to fight in wars. Lara Croft's breast size was increased by 150% and this is accentuated through the use of her very small, tight clothing and her legwear is also very minimal hugging to her very unnatural looking curves. This has a negative effect on the woman stereotype as other women tend to compare themselves to the fictional character when Lara Croft is very unrealistic and portrayed in the wrong way.

I want to contrast this representation with the image of Vin Diesel presented on the front cover of Men's Health. The front cover of Men's Health isn't all that good either, Vin Diesel is portraying a man to be very strong and ambitious when in the real world this is very unrealistic. The reason this is represented like that is because people stereotype men to be the more strong gender when in reality that is just a very hard stereotype. This can lead to other men comparing themselves to this

front cover and just presume they are supposed to look like that when in actual fact the front cover is just creating a negative ideology for a man. However, this front cover can also be seen in a good light as other men may aspire to look like that and the magazine may be a lot of help. This can also help sales as they're appealing to their target audience of men who work out.

Overall, I think that both covers aren't intended in the wrong way however there may be some negative denotations of them, but the companies have been very smart as they are aware what appeals to which certain audience and they have used that to their advantage to benefit them financially.