

Week 4: Men are from Marlboro Country and Women are from Wisteria Lane  
Gender Perspective

1. Sociologist Judith Lorber asserts that, “For individuals, gender means sameness. For society, gender means difference.” What does she mean here? How do you see sameness and difference reproduced in popular culture?

2. What is “gender parity?” What percentage of 2009 films reached gender parity in terms of speaking roles? How can we use Reflection Theory to make sense of this phenomenon?

3. What are “interpretive strategies?” What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of viewership through an interpretive lens? How does this method shape the average consumer’s perspective? How might sociologists use these strategies?

4. What is “symbolic annihilation?” What does it suggest in terms of gender representation? What about other intersecting identities? Which identities are annihilated? To what purpose?

5. Pick a recent or popular film. Does it pass the Bechdel test? Why or why not? Are you surprised by your findings? What must a film achieve in order to pass this test?